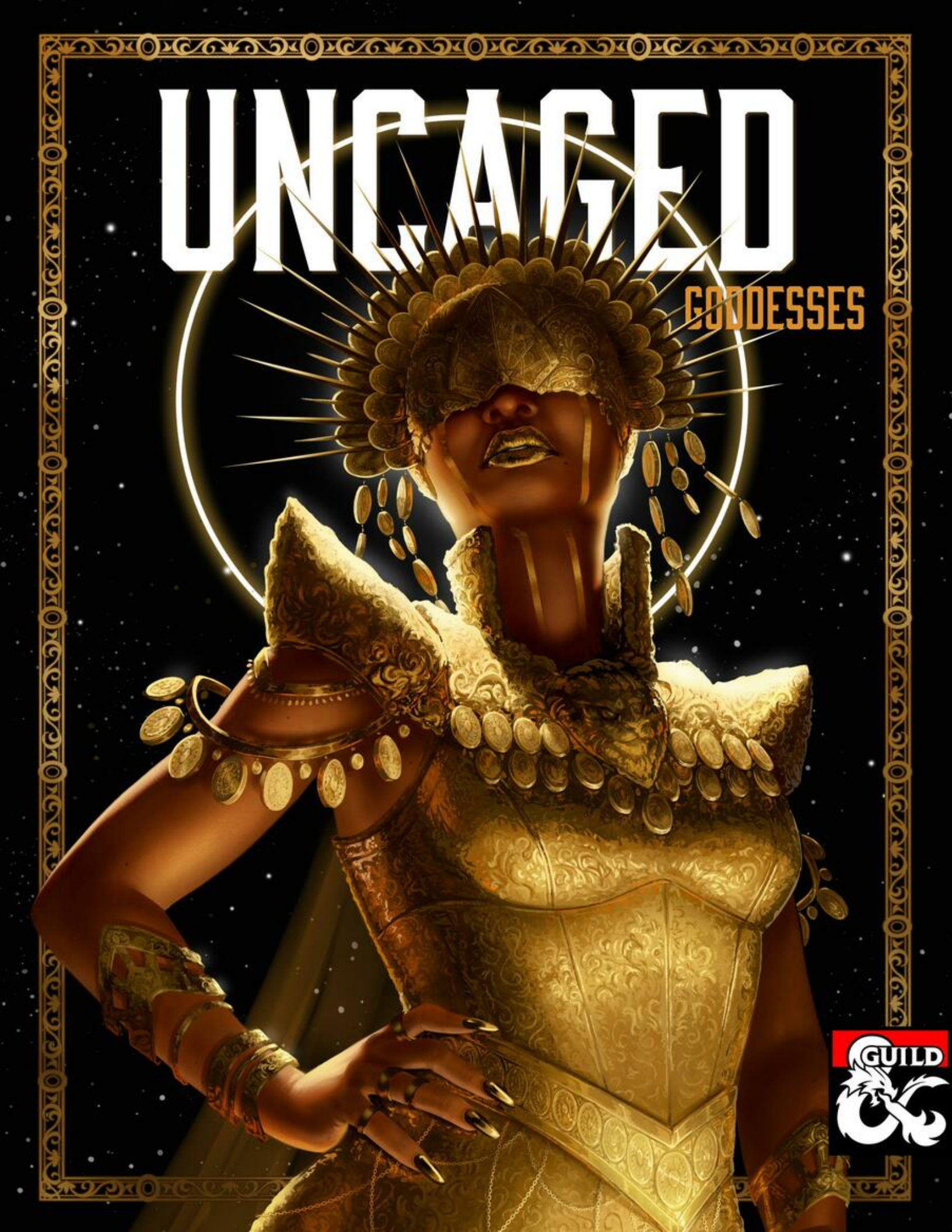
UNCAGED

GODDESSES



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PRODUCERS' NOTE

As with all things *Uncaged*, the idea for *Uncaged: Goddesses* first came from its founder Ashley Warren years ago, when the first four volumes of *Uncaged* were still in production—perhaps an inevitable idea, given the number of writers and artists excitedly talking to each other in the project's Discord server. But, with a team already in the thick of creating four books, the idea of a fifth volume was quietly set aside.

Still, as all the best ideas do, *Uncaged: Goddesses* stuck in our brains and wouldn't ever quite leave. In June 2021, with Ashley's blessing and oversight, we officially took on the task of making volume 5 a reality. What you see before you is the result of months of hard work from some of the most professional, talented, and thoughtful creators to work in tabletop RPGs, and also us.

As contributors to each of the first four *Uncaged* volumes, the series has always meant so much to the both of us. It was where we got our start in TTRPGs, but it's also been so much more than that. *Uncaged* has always been, and will always continue to be, about the community that springs up around it, the work it inspires, and the stories told at every table that runs its adventures. It's been an honor and a very humbling experience to bring a new group of truly stunning creatives into the fold, and we can't wait to see what wonderful things they do next.

Words cannot express how grateful we are to Ashley for letting us, two unsolicited artists, elbow our way onto *Uncaged* all those years ago, and for trusting us to bring the anthology to a close with this final volume. We couldn't have done any of this without her, and Ashley, we hope we've made you proud.

– Gwen & David

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FOREWORD

It's been a while since *Uncaged Volume I* was released, and I remain awed by the community that has formed—and continues to grow—around the *Uncaged Anthology* project. Who knew that a Tweet made more than three years ago would lead to such an epic, ongoing endeavor? Of everything that has come out of the project, I'm proudest of our amazing creator community composed of writers, artists, editors, designers, and project managers from around the world. I truly believe everyone who has been involved in this series is an integral part of the future of tabletop, and their diverse and unique perspectives on storytelling are a huge boon to the industry.

The *Uncaged* family talked about making this special fifth volume for a long time. I knew in my heart that it was time to hand over the reins—collaboration, after all, is what makes *Uncaged* so special. It wouldn't be what it was without the different perspectives brought to the table. And even though I had no doubt that this team of terrific organizers would knock this book out of the park, I am still astonished at how absolutely beautiful this book turned out to be. I can attest to how difficult it is to produce a project like this, and they made it look easy (which it's certainly not!). Additionally, it's been very exciting to bring new voices into the fold and I'm so glad we've had the opportunity to expand the *Uncaged* family. I hope those new to our community have enjoyed the experience.

Writing high-level adventure content for Dungeons & Dragons is no easy feat, but this collection is EPIC in every sense of the word. Continuing in the *Uncaged* tradition, these adventures will challenge and inspire gaming tables. Reimagining the deities in the D&D pantheon has been a fun thought experiment for everyone involved; I believe those both familiar with goddess lore, and those new to it, will have unforgettable interactions with these fascinating figures. As always, our goal is to push the limits of D&D, and this volume certainly does that.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for all of your support of *Uncaged*, and a special thank you to the team behind this book for lovingly carrying on its tradition. I remain honored to have served on *Uncaged* and I know that this is far from the end of what these contributors have to offer.

– Ashley Warren, *Uncaged* founder

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Uncaged: Goddesses*, an epic collection of Tier 4 adventures spanning the multiverse. Each adventure centers around an evil- or neutral-aligned goddess from the various pantheons in Dungeons & Dragons. Many of these goddesses have been featured in past D&D publications, but rarely do these stories opt to explore the goddesses' own histories, conflicts, and goals. As with the first four volumes of the *Uncaged Anthology*, we invite you to explore some of what makes these often ignored, flattened, or maligned beings tick. After all, every villain has her reasons.



CECILIA NESTI

VOLUME OVERVIEW

Unlike previous *Uncaged* volumes, which spanned all tiers of play, *Uncaged: Goddesses* is entirely composed of adventures designed and playtested for Tier 4 (levels 17 to 20). The adventures are not connected, although clever Dungeon Masters may find ways to weave the stories together or incorporate them into longer-running campaigns. Each adventure is designed as a standalone module that can be completed by most groups between 1 and 3 sessions.

USING THIS BOOK

Dungeon Masters will need access to information from the following books, which contain monsters, items, or specific rules referenced in the adventures in this book.

- *Dungeon Master's Guide* (DMG)
- *Player's Handbook* (PHB)
- *Monster Manual* (MM)
- *Volo's Guide to Monsters* (VGtM)
- *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* (XGtE)
- *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* (MToF)
- *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* (TCoE)

Creatures and monsters whose names are **bolded** can be found in the Monster Manual unless otherwise annotated. Item names are *italicized* and can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* unless otherwise annotated. New monster stat blocks, stat blocks for monsters appearing in books other than those listed, and new item descriptions all appear at the end of their corresponding adventure.

A selection of pregenerated Tier 4 player characters and printer-friendly maps are found in the Appendices at the end of the book, with 4 additional pregenerated player characters available as a free PDF download for anyone who purchases this book through DMs Guild.

> Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players.



A QUICK GUIDE TO RUNNING TIER 4

It's well known that many campaigns rarely make it to Tier 4. This, tied in with the increased power of the players, leaves Tier 4 adventures shrouded in mystery and DMs often too apprehensive to run them.

Uncaged: Goddesses is here to remove the veil from Tier 4. Whether you run one adventure from the book or all 21, we want you entering the world of Tier 4 with confidence.

What follows are a few guidelines to consider when running higher-level play, especially in this book:

UTILIZE SAFETY TOOLS

Not specific for Tier 4, but for running games generally. Every adventure in this book comes with relevant content warnings. Inform your players of the content warnings prior to running the adventure. If it's not the right adventure for your table, feel free to skip it and play another one instead! There's a lot of adventures here! We also recommend utilizing the X-Card (designed by John Stavropoulos) and/or Lines & Veils (designed by Ron Edwards) with your table. For more information on all of the above, please refer to the TTRPG Safety Toolkit (http://bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit), curated by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk.

ADJUST THE DIFFICULTY AS NEEDED

Though the adventures in this book have been playtested, Tier 4 parties vary widely in skillsets and capabilities. At the end of the day, no one knows your table better than you. Feel free to raise or lower the DCs for ability checks and saving throws as needed so you can hit the sweet spot of "possible but difficult" where players shine. Add or remove monsters from encounters as needed. Heck, feel free to futz around with a monster's HP or AC. It's your table and we want everyone to have fun!

INFORM PLAYERS OF DIFFICULTY SPIKES

Some checks in this book are very high for a reason. Not every challenge can be overcome with a single roll, not every check is meant to succeed on the first try, and not every fight against a deity is meant to be won, though of course, success feels delicious. If passing an essential check requires preparation and coordination from the players, inform the table and give them time to discuss their next steps. If they are about to engage in a group check that involves several steps, inform them of the steps prior to their rolls.

WISH IS NOT YOUR ENEMY

In short: don't be afraid of your players' top-tier abilities and spells. Most parties rarely get to play at this level, so let them enjoy feeling a bit overpowered. When they do absurdly powerful things that break the world a bit, roll with it! The most fun parts of roleplaying come when players do what is unexpected... and they almost always do what's unexpected.

ALWAYS FAIL FORWARD

A failed check should never halt or end an adventure. The adventures in this book are written so that failed checks allow players to find alternative routes or open up new paths for roleplaying. There may be checks you add or even remove when running these adventures, just like with any pre-written adventure. Be mindful to introduce opportunities so players can continue the adventure while failing a check, especially if it leads to an unexpected turn or sudden new danger. No one is happy when an adventure ends because of a locked door and that should never end an adventure for Tier 4 play.

HAVE FUN

Running Tier 4 adventures follows the same basic principles of running any other 5e game, only the players are more powerful and the stakes are higher. Remember that you're also a player and your enjoyment is just as important as everyone else's! Now go out there and have fun with some goddesses!



LORE EVANS


BEATRIZ F. VALVERDE

WINTER'S MOURNING

by Laurie O'Connel

Goddess: Auril | **Level:** 17

Content Warnings: Inter-family Conflict, Grief, Mass Death

SYNOPSIS

A band of heroes is drawn to Icewind Dale following rumours of strange magic and terrible deeds. Auril, the cruel goddess of Winter, has been driven to desperate acts by the death of her daughter, Nalkara. As Auril pursues brutal blood rituals to resurrect her loved one, the quest begins when one of Auril's oathsmen convinces her to enlist the characters in pursuing a less bloody solution.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Word of Auril's bloodthirstiness spreads across the world like frost on spring's first crop. Citizens are fleeing Icewind Dale, braving the dangerous journey through the ice-filled sea or over the blizzard-torn mountains. They cannot pay the characters for their services; still, they beg for aid. Less than a week ago, Auril visited the town of Caer Konig. The survivors ask the characters to investigate the now-ruined town and find out what became of those they left behind.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This adventure is specifically set in Icewind Dale, but if that doesn't suit your campaign, any frozen area can be made to work. If *Rime of the Frostmaiden* has been completed, treat Auril's encountered physical incarnations as her less powerful avatars.

Every night in Icewind Dale, Auril the Frostmaiden takes to the sky on the back of her roc and casts a spell which plunges the Dale into eternal winter. But recently, as a result of Auril's grief, this winter has become harsher—bitterly, deadly cold, with lethal magical storms and gales. The DM should show the effect that the winter has on the citizens, with food shortages, extinction of local wildlife, and extreme weather. Make it clear that the adventure is about more than Auril—lifting the curse affects the wellbeing of an entire region.

THE STORY OF AURIL AND NALKARA

Long ago, the goddess Auril was married to Thrym, the giant god of cold and ice, and together they bore a daughter, the Empyrean Nalkara. Once grown, Auril brought Nalkara to war against Akadi, the goddess of storms, seeking to claim the Tempest domain for herself. A divine war in Pandemonium was fought between the two. When Auril was close to victory, however, Akadi killed Nalkara through treachery, and Auril retreated to Icewind Dale to mourn and to search for a way to resurrect her.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Auril The Frostmaiden (she/her, god, neutral evil). *The bitter frost knows no kindness and receives no pity.*

- The goddess of winter, her tenets are cruelty, preservation, endurance, and isolation.
- Auril does not inflict cruelty for its own sake, but is very willing to kill mortals if it would be useful; mercy and sympathy are unfamiliar to the goddess of unrelenting seasons.
- Her war with Akadi to claim the domain of the tempest has brought her great personal loss, but she is unrelenting in her ambitions.
- Auril's true form, which she can manifest only at her shrine on Kelvin's Cairn, is cloud-like and incorporeal. Attacks on her by anyone other than another god simply have no effect in this form. Her lesser avatars, which do her bidding in Icewind Dale, are significantly weaker and use the **Auril** statblocks from *Icewind Dale: Rime of The Frostmaiden*.

Nalkara Host-Shatterer (she/her, **empyrean**, true neutral). *A war-weary shieldmaiden of honour and renown, sacrificed to a mother's greed.*

- The daughter of Thrym and Auril.
- Formerly the general of Auril's divine armies, she was killed in the war against Akadi.
- The bearer of the legendary shield Svalinn.

Einar The Ancient (he/him, see appendix). *A warrior of ten thousand years, bound to many oaths and many lieges.*

- Nalkara's guidefather, a storm giant who achieved immortality through drinking the blood of Thrym.
- After breaking his oath to protect Nalkara's life, he lives out his days in service to Auril but finds her bloodier deeds distasteful.



BEATRIZ F. VALVERDE

CHAPTER 1.0 – THE DOOM OF CAER KONIG

ARRIVAL AT CAER KONIG

The sleepy village of Caer Konig is tucked away at the base of Kelvin's Cairn—the tallest peak in Icewind Dale. The village is completely deserted. The only thing left of interest is a pile of bodies in the market square, the victims of a sacrificial ritual. A storm giant, Einar the Ancient, is burying the bodies. Einar explains that the massacre is Auril's work, as she is attempting a very powerful spell. If pressed for details, he hints at information in The Story of Auril and Nalkara (see sidebar), but due to his personal connection with Nalkara, is too grief-stricken to reveal much.

DEVELOPMENT

Einar explains that the Frostmaiden can't be turned from her purpose, but she might be convinced of a less murderous route. He begs the party to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Auril at the peak of Kelvin's Cairn, where they will be able to speak directly to her. He is willing to accompany the party if asked.

CHAPTER 1.5 – THE SNOWBOUND SHRINE

The next stop for the characters is Auril's shrine at the peak of Kelvin's Cairn. The pilgrimage up the mountain requires characters to pass through three gates, which take about four hours to reach each time.

THE TABLETS

A great stone tablet marks each of the three gates through which the characters must progress in the mountains. Each tablet is engraved with a verse written in Giant (or Jotun). Characters can make history checks to interpret the information on the tablets.

Tablet I. **Facing an engraving of a hunched woman with an owl's face wearing a white crown.**

UNTHAWING THRONE-WIFE ||
THANE OF WINTER,

FOR THY FAVOUR || FEARFUL WE BEG.

IN SUNLESS-MONTHS' STYLE ||
SILENT THOU GOEST,

SORROW UNSATED ||
YOUR STORMS SHATTER US.

A TERRIBLE TALE ||
IN YOUR NAME WE TELL.

WORSHIP TO YOU, WINTER-QUEEN ||
WORSHIP TO THEE!

Tablet II. **Facing an engraving of a young woman going into battle wielding a shield and spear, surrounded by a retinue of giants.**

BOLD BATTLEMAIDEN, ||
GIANT-BORN DAUGHTER,

PROUD SHIELD-BEARER ||
OF SWORD-BREAKING SVALINN,

FATED TO FLAME ||
AND FIRE-BORNE SORROW.

FATHER'S FAIR-RULING ||
FALLS UPON HER,

GIANT-KING THRYM ||
THANE OF FROST-FALL.

FROST-MOTHER'S FAVOUR ||
FALLS UPON HER,

WOE-BRINGING WINTER-QUEEN ||
STRONG-WILLED AND UNWAVERING,

POWER-LUST DRIVEN ||
PLANS SHE PROVIDED FOR HER,

ILL-FATED AFFECTION ||
FONDNESS WISTFUL-FLOWN.

Tablet III. **Facing a depiction of mourners, including a giant in a king's circlet and the same owl-faced woman, surrounding a funeral pyre.**

AIR-BORNE AKADI ||
ANCIENT TEMPEST-LORD

BATTLE-BOUND WAR-WIFE ||
WIND-RIDING DEVIL.

AGAINST HER STOOD AURIL ||
ARMED AND BATTLE-READY,

BOLD NALKARA BY HER ||
HOARFROST-BORN HOST LEADER

LEFT STORM-MOTHER'S BATTLE LINES ||
BROKEN AND BLEEDING.

VICTORY NOT FAR-FLUNG ||
NIGHT FELL ON THE FIELD.

WHEN MURDER-BOUND GALE-GODDESS ||
IN WIND-GUST'S GUISE,

THROUGH WINDOW-CRACK CREEPING ||
QUIETLY ENTERED

HER FOE SHE FOUND ||
FROST-BORN NALKARA

SEEING HER SLEEPING ||
SHE SAVAGELY SET ON HER

HER WINDS FED THE HALL-FIRES ||
HER FLAMES SHE SET FEASTING,

SPEAR-BREAKING SHIELD-BEARER ||
SCORCHED DOWN TO FIRE-SAND,

CURSES TO YOU, SQUALL-KEEPER ||
CURSES TO THEE!

PILGRIMAGE CHALLENGES

The extreme magical weather on the pilgrimage is sympathetic to Auril's grief. Use the Magical Weather Table and roll every time the characters pass a gate. The phenomena last until the next gate, checks only need to be made once.

The Second Gate

Just beyond the second gate, an **abominable yeti** leaps from a cliff above the group and attacks. Its pack of four **abominable yeti grunts** (use the statistics of an **abominable yeti** with 50 hp and AC 17 (shield)) attack from a hidden position (noticeable with a successful **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check**) camouflaged against the snow. The yeti are performing the same pilgrimage as the party, and are looking for an appropriate (and still living, if possible) sacrifice to offer at Auril's shrine.

The Grave of Nalkara

An hour after passing the third gate, you push through the mountain mist into a clear blue sky. The stunning panorama below is nothing compared to the grandiosity of the shrine which lies before you. A huge marble sarcophagus stands on the mountaintop. At its head is a sword the size of a grown man, half buried in the snow.

DEVELOPMENT: AURIL'S APPEARANCE

When the party reaches the gravesite, the weather calms and Auril appears, revealing that her rituals are attempts to resurrect Nalkara. On Einar's advice, she is willing to enlist help to see if there is another way to bring Nalkara back. Auril believes there is powerful resurrection magic hidden within the Athenaeum in the city of Ythryn, but she is tied up in her war against Akadi and can only send very weak avatars to the Material Plane, limiting her ability to investigate. All she can offer the PCs is a location (near the Ythryn Mythallar) and a password (*ipsa scientia potestas est*).

Auril promises to lift the winter and provide the characters with her blessing if they agree to help bring her daughter back. If they refuse Auril, Einar will appear to the party and beg them for assistance on the first day of each season for the next year. After that he will give up.

MAGICAL WEATHER TABLE

1d4	Result
1	**Mountain Gale.** *A terrible wind blows up from the valley.* • All movement speed is halved. • Characters must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength saving throw** or get blown off the precarious path up the mountainside. Characters take 10d6 bludgeoning damage as they fall from a great height, and this sets the characters back by 4 hours in their travel. A **remorhaz** nest blocks their route back to the main pathway.
2	**Whiteout.** *A heavy fog descends suddenly, making it impossible to see the path or tell which direction you are walking in.* • Characters are considered blinded. • Characters must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** or **DC 20 Intelligence (Perception) check** to avoid getting lost. If the check is failed by 5 or more, characters fall into a hidden crevasse, taking 6d6 bludgeoning damage, and characters discover a skeleton in the crevasse holding a *bag of holding* containing 50 gp and a *spell scroll* of *Leomund's tiny hut*.
3	**Avalanche.** *The mountain echoes with an eerie cry of grief, which causes a sudden snowfall from a slope above.* • Avalanche rules can be found in *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.
4	**Man-Killer Frost.** *A terrible feeling of sadness and loss falls upon the group as the temperature drops.* • Characters gain no benefits from a long or short rest. • Characters must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or they take a level of exhaustion for every hour spent without heat and shelter as frostbite sets in.

CHAPTER 2 – THE PRICE OF KNOWLEDGE

The city of Ythryn is an ancient Netherese city buried within the Reghed glacier in Icewind Dale. A map of Ythryn and more information about the city is found in *Rime of the Frostmaiden*. The entrance to the Athenaeum is hidden near the Ythryn mythallar in the heart of the city.

THE YTHRYN MYTHALLAR

Arcane Power of the Ancients. *Mythallar* are glowing spheres of pure magical energy which kept the floating cities of Netheril aloft. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that these *mythallars* are products of decades of labour by Netheril's most powerful archmages and are capable of powering magical rituals which break the normal boundaries of magic.

The *mythallar* can be *teleported* (as per the spell), but only by a creature attuned to it. Alternatively, an attuned creature can move the *mythallar* as allowed in the item's description.

YTHRYN ATHENAEUM

The door appears near the mythallar when the passphrase is uttered. The location in which the entrance appears is marked by an obvious stone carving of a door.

The Athenaeum has been perfectly preserved by the Reghed Glacier. Before Ythryn fell, it functioned as a library and school for fostered children seeking adoption into Netheril's magocratic ruling class.

Area 1: Entrance

A stone entrance hall decorated with bright panels depicting the eight schools of magic. Before each panel is a gem in a bracket, glowing with magical light. A door to the east leads to Area 2.

The door at the end is locked and does not open to any mundane or magical means. Eight small hollows large enough to hold the gems are carved into the locked door alongside an inscription in Loross, which can also be read by characters who understand Draconic. To the left of the door are carvings of Netherese archmages in study, while to the right are depictions of the goddess Mystryl hiding arcane knowledge from them. The inscription reads:

THE SCHOOL OF TRANSMUTATION
HOLDS CHAOS IN ITS WAKE,
ITS EVER CHANGING FACE ALLOWS IT ANY
PLACE TO TAKE.
EVOCATION AND NECROMANCY HAVE
ONLY ONE BESIDE THEM;
BETWEEN THE TWO, NECROMANCY MUST
HAVE MYSTRYL BEHIND THEM.
THE SCHOOL OF CONJURATION MANY
VARIED PATHS MAY WEND,
SOMEWHERE TWIXT FIRE AND CHAOS
MUST BE WHERE ITS JOURNEY ENDS.
AND FINALLY THE SIBLING SCHOOLS
MUST HAND IN HAND RESIDE;
BUT DIVINATION CANNOT THE
DECEPTIVE TWINS ABIDE;
AND WARDING AND ILLUSION MUST
HAVE DEATH OR FLAME BESIDE.

SOLVING THE PUZZLE

A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** knows the following: Within the eight schools of magic, certain pairs are known as "sibling schools". Conjuration and Abjuration are considered to be "siblings", as are Illusion and Enchantment.

In order to solve the puzzle, the gems which correspond to each school of magic must be placed in the following order: Evocation, Abjuration, Conjuration, Divination, Transmutation, Enchantment, Illusion, Necromancy. If the gems are placed in the wrong order, nothing happens.

If your group has a high number of casters, consider requiring them to "power" each gem with their own spells from the different schools, rather than the gems already being enchanted.

Area 2: The Hall of The Fosterlings

A large hall with stone beds and desks. The room is infested with ten **nothics**, who were once students here. They can perform one random cantrip from the wizard list each. Painful echoes of a lost past, the nothic students reenact the events of their last day. They can use their Weird Insight ability to discover the characters' goals in the Athenaeum, and will trade the following information for sweets or interesting facts.



FERNANDO SALVATERRA

- The Athenaeum was once a school for young mages, but had a second, secret function as a place to store knowledge the Netherese mages wanted to hide from prying eyes.
- Scrying is impossible within the Athenaeum, as is divine intervention or intrusion. Teleportation in and out of the Athenaeum is only possible with permission from the current schoolmistress, Hateira Octavia.
- Powerful alchemical recipes are stored in the laboratory to the west. Spellbooks and other research is kept in Hateira's Sanctum to the east. Both lie through the puzzle door in the hall.

Area 3: The Laboratory

An alchemical laboratory infested with living spells. Three **living blades of disaster** (RotF) and one **living Bigby's hand** (see adventure appendix) attack as soon as they see the characters. Also in the laboratory is a *Tome of Alchemical Miracles*.

Room 4: Hateira's Sanctum

You enter a large, open room lined with bookshelves and piled floor to ceiling with ancient tomes. Stairs lead up to a slight dais where a large, cluttered desk is illuminated by green light streaming in from a broken stained glass window. At the desk, a stout bespectacled woman, covered in golden jewelry and dressed in a mage's robes, looks up and angrily hushes you. "Can't you see I'm working on something? Be quiet and return to your own studies!"

Hateira Octavia, the librarian, is a **lich** who maintains her former appearance using a *circlet of disguise*. Hateira cares only for her library and her students. Unless the characters attacked the nothics in Room 2, she is not immediately hostile, but is unwilling to share any of the library's knowledge. She will agree to share the spell *eternal resurrection* (see "Chapter 3: Shield-Maiden's Slumber") under two conditions:

1) One of the characters bests her in a duel, or

2) The characters agree to take her least favourite student, the troublesome nothic Octavius Cassius, as an apprentice.

Dueling Hateira

Hateira is assisted by her swarm of **animated grimoires** (see adventure appendix). Hateira is not particularly enthused about dueling, but sees it as the quickest way to convince the characters to go away, treating it like an inconvenient chore unless her opponent proves to be worthy of the effort.

If Hateira reduces a character to 0 hit points, they are left unconscious but stable. If one character is knocked out, another may take their place. Unless the characters are actively trying to kill or incapacitate Hateira, reducing her to 0 hit points instead causes her to forfeit. She remains conscious and able to communicate with the characters.

Development

Hateira Octavia shares the spell *eternal resurrection* (see the following page) with the party. The spell looks incredibly difficult, but with a bit of luck, it might just be possible...

Chapter 3 – Shield-Maiden's Slumber

The Ritual

The party must now attempt to perform the ritual that will return Nalkara to life. For this, the characters must return to Nalkara's grave with the components for the ritual. Having performed the pilgrimage once, they do not have to do so again and are protected from its unusual trials. Once they begin, they will not be able to back out, so allow them sufficient time to prepare. Run the ritual in initiative order.

The Elder Tempest

Akadi attacks the group in the form of one of her lesser avatars, an **elder tempest**, as soon as the ritual begins. After five rounds pass or the ritual is complete, Auril will also appear to fight Akadi, and combat ends for the characters as they drag each other back to their battlefield in Pandemonium.

If the elder tempest is reduced to 0 hp before five rounds or the ritual is complete, have Auril appear earlier, taking advantage of Akadi's momentary weakness to teleport them both away.

ETERNAL RESURRECTION

A ritual to return a murdered immortal to eternal life.

Components:
5,000 gp worth of frankincense and myrrh.
5,000 gp worth of powdered silver.
A legendary or rarer magic item to provide power for the spell (such as the *Ythryn Mythallar*).
At least three casters.

THE RITUAL

Completing the ritual is a skill challenge which requires ten successes or six failures to complete. Whilst casting the ritual, casters are only able to perceive, react to, and act upon the ritual and their fellow ritual casters. If a caster's physical body is forcibly moved 15 or more feet away from the ritual, they perform checks with disadvantage until someone moves them back.

With every success, 1 is added to all DCs.

DC 35: full success, add a tick to the success clock.

DC 25: mixed success, add a tick to the success clock and choose one consequence.

- Add an additional tick to the failure clock
- Destroy the artifact used in the ritual (1 use).
- The land becomes barren and infertile in a radius of 33 miles (1 use).
- Permanently reduce the character's max hp by 2d10 (1 use).
- Permanently age one of the characters by 1d4 x 5 years (1 use).

Choose one of the mages casting the spell and direct their life force into the ritual. This kills the caster, who can only be resurrected with divine intervention or a wish spell, and reduces following DCs by 4.

Failure: Add a tick to the failure clock and choose a consequence from the list above.

Upon success or failure, the spell cannot be cast again for 60 years.

DM Advice. In order to hit the sweet spot of "possible but difficult" you may wish to adjust the DCs and requirements for your party. For example, in a smaller party, smaller clocks may be required. Similarly, consider your party's buffing potential when setting the ritual DC. Wizards with *skill empowerment*, artificers with Flash of Genius and *guidance*, and bards with Bardic Inspiration will consistently be able to roll higher checks. For those with a little extra prep time, using a probability calculator and adjusting the DC according to your party's skills is highly recommended.

Warn the players of the high DCs of the skill checks. Don't keep the ritual rules secret from them. They should be given time to prepare to give themselves the highest possible chance of success.

SUGGESTED ADJUSTMENTS TABLE

Party Size	Number of Casters	Success Clock	Failure Clock
1-3	2+	6	4
4	2+	8	5
5	3+	10	6



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Party Expertise	Mixed Success DC	Full Success DC
Low-magic (lacking buffs, expertise, or sources of advantage)	15	25
High-magic (access to buffs and expertise, but not deliberately min-maxed)	25	35
High-magic, min-maxed (for players who like to get numbers as high as possible)	30	40

Casters & Non-Casters

The ritual requires at least three spellcasters. If there are not enough in the party, an NPC such as Hateira Octavia or an ally from a previous game can assist. Auril is also capable of sending one of her minor avatars to assist in the ritual if she is asked. Those not participating in the ritual have a twofold job—buff the casters to improve their skill checks, and defend them from the elder tempest.

Whilst the challenge requires skill checks, the checks need not be solely Arcana—a charismatic sorcerer could intimidate the Weave into obedience, while a cunning warlock could attempt to deceive Death itself. Have the players describe what they are doing to make the check. A ritual of this power can grant players all sorts of prophetic visions of Nalkara's death or her soul trapped in the afterlife. Use the opportunity to foreshadow future games, encourage revelations, or force characters to come to terms with their past.

Conclusion

Success

If the party succeeds, Nalkara is returned to life. However, Nalkara loves her mother but does not want to return to fighting in her war. Nalkara requests that the characters allow her and Einar (if he is with the group) to leave the Material Plane and return to her father, Thrym, before Auril returns from her battle with Akadi.

If the characters force a weakened Nalkara to remain, seeking Auril's favour, Auril thanks them on her return, offering them the *Blessing of the Frostmaiden* (RotF). If the characters help Nalkara leave, the disobedience of both her daughter and mortal servants displeases her and she warns them not to seek further favours from her. Nalkara, on the other hand, rewards the characters with a 64 year-long loan of her legendary shield, *Svalinn*.

In either case, an oathbound Auril keeps her promise to lift the curse of winter.

Failure

If the party fails the ritual, Nalkara appears to them in a vision. She tells them she does not wish to return to a life of war and desires to pass on. If Einar is told of this, he gives the group one of his own possessions, the *Belt of the Huskarl*, in thanks for respecting Nalkara's wishes. Communicating Nalkara's wishes to Auril will grieve her—but there's still a chance that the characters can persuade her to end the winter, knowing Nalkara does not wish to return.

Adventure Appendix

Items and Boons

Belt of the Huskarl

Wondrous item, very rare, requires attunement

An ornate leather belt given to Einar the Ancient by Thrym the Giant Lord, it allows him to momentarily lend his strength to his allies.

Once per day, the wearer can use a free action to activate the belt by speaking the command word 'comrade'. Doing so calls on Einar's strength, setting the wearer's Strength score to 29 for the next 10 minutes.

Blessing of the Frostmaiden

Divine Boon

Your eyes become as cold as ice. You gain immunity to cold damage. In addition, you can cast the *cone of cold* spell (save DC 15) once. You regain the ability to cast this spell when you finish a long rest.

Svalinn

Wondrous artifact, legendary, requires attunement

The legendary shield of the Empyrean Nalkara, inscribed with the name Svalinn, written in Giant. Ancient Giant poetry suggests that Svalinn is in fact older than the Jotun civilization, dating its make back to the time of the ancient Ostorians.

Aspect of the Protector. While holding this shield, you have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects, and spell attacks have disadvantage against you.

Aspect of the Giant. Once per long rest, while holding this shield, you can use a bonus action to enlarge yourself for 1 hour. Whilst enlarged:

- Your size doubles in all dimensions. This growth increases your size by one category—from Medium to Large, for example. If there isn't enough room for you to double your size, you attain the maximum possible size in the space available. Until the effect ends, you also have advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. Your weapons also grow to match your new size. While these weapons are enlarged, your attacks with them deal 1d4 extra damage.

Aspect of the Celestial. Whilst you are under an effect that increases your size (such as the *enlarge/reduce* spell) you gain a pair of radiant blue wings and a fly speed of 60 feet. This ends when you return to normal size.

Tome of Alchemical Miracles

Wondrous item, very rare

A book of powerful alchemical secrets collated by Netherese archmages.

The tome allows a character to transform any spell of 5th level or lower that they are able to cast into a potion. It takes one working day and 100 gp per spell level to carry out this process.

A character can only be affected by one such potion at a time, and all take an action to use.

The DM describes how the potion must be administered in action, for example:

- *Cloudkill*: A bottle containing a sickly green gas. The bottle can be thrown as an action and shatters upon impact, releasing a poisonous cloud.
- *Shield of Faith*: A pungent oil that can be rubbed onto a character's clothes, armour or skin to increase their natural defenses.
- *Haste*: A small pill which dissolves on the tongue to give its user a sudden boost in speed.

Ythryn Mythallar

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

A *mythallar* looks like an enormous crystal ball held in an ornate cradle. The globe sheds bright light in a 300-foot radius and dim light for an additional 300 feet. The globe draws magic from the Weave that can be harnessed for various purposes. For example, Netherese mages used *mythallars* to keep their cities aloft and empower their magic items. The bigger the *mythallar*, the more magic it can hold. The largest *mythallars* are 150 feet in diameter.

The *Ythryn mythallar* is a relatively small device—a mere 50 feet in diameter. To attune to this *mythallar*, a creature must finish a short rest within 30 feet of it, meditating on the *mythallar*. Up to eight creatures can be attuned to it at one time; otherwise, the *Ythryn mythallar* follows the attunement rules in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. If a ninth creature tries to attune to the *mythallar*, nothing happens.

All creatures attuned to the *Ythryn mythallar* can sense when the device is being used. A creature attuned to the device can use any of its properties, but only if all other creatures attuned to the device agree to allow it. The *Ythryn mythallar's* properties are as follows:

- While you're on the same plane of existence as the *Ythryn mythallar*, you can use an action to cause it to fly in any direction you choose at a speed of 30 feet. All matter within 500 feet of the device moves with it. The *Ythryn mythallar* and all structures held aloft by it hover in place when not in motion.
- As an action, you can cause one magic item you are holding within 30 feet of the *Ythryn mythallar* to immediately regain all its expended charges or uses. A magic item recharged in this manner can't be recharged by the *Ythryn mythallar* again until after the item regains expended charges or uses on its own.
- You can use the *Ythryn mythallar* to cast the *control weather* spell without requiring any components and without the need for you to be outdoors. This casting of the spell has a 50-mile radius. For the duration of the spell's casting time, you must be within 30 feet of the *Ythryn mythallar* or the spell fails.
- Touching the *mythallar*. Any creature that touches the globe of the *mythallar* must make a **DC 22 Constitution saving throw**, taking 180 (20d10 + 70) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Undead have disadvantage on this saving throw. Any object that touches the globe, other than an artifact or the *mythallar's* cradle, is disintegrated instantly (no save).

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Saga playtested the adventure in its current form and helped a lot. Lewis Anderson deserves particular thanks. His characterization of Nalkara when we played together was inspirational for this version of the adventure, and he came up with the poem on tablet 1 of the pilgrimage, without which the other poems could not have been written.

A final note—Nalkara is actually a canonical character in Forgotten Realms, and yes, she is the daughter of Auril and Thrym. Another item I did not originally create is *Svalinn*, which is based off the legendary shield described in the *Grímnismál*.

AUTHOR BIO

Laurie O'Connel is a UK-based game designer whose work can be found at **laurieoconnel.itch.io**. His other work includes *Hieronymous: exploring strange worldscapes*, a game based on the work of medieval artist Hieronymus Bosch, and *Lichcraft*, an RPG about trans necromancers seeking immortality to get to the end of a 300 year long NHS waiting list. You can keep track of what he's been up to recently on Twitter **@laurie_eee**.

Swarm of Animated Tomes

Medium Swarm of Tiny Constructs, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10(+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

False Objects. If the swarm is motionless at the start of combat, it has advantage on its initiative roll. Moreover, if a creature hasn't observed the swarm move or act, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to discern that the swarm is animate.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a 1-foot-tall, 8-inch-wide, 2-inch-thick object. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Maddening Secrets (Recharge 6). The swarm shows an arcane secret from one of its pages to a creature within 10 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or expend one of its spell slots of 3rd level or lower and deal 26 (4d12) force damage to each creature within 30 feet of it. A creature that fails the saving throw but can't expend a spell slot is instead stunned until the end of its next turn. After succeeding a saving throw against this effect the creature cannot be targeted again.

Book Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage if the swarm has half its hit points or fewer.

Einar the Ancient

Huge Giant, Lawful Good

Armor Class 18 (plate mail), 20 (with Svalinn)
Hit Points 230
Speed 50 ft., swim 50ft., fly 50ft (with Svalinn)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +10, Wis +9, Cha +9
Skills Arcana +8, Athletics +14, History +8, Perception +9
Senses passive Perception 19
Damage Resistances Cold
Damage Immunities lightning, thunder
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Amphibious. Einar can breathe air and water.

Magic Resistance. While holding *Svalinn*, Einar has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects, and spell attacks have disadvantage against him.

Empyrean's Wings. Whilst holding *Svalinn*, Einar can manifest a pair of wings which grant him a fly speed of 50ft.

Arms of The Gods. Einar's weapons count as magical for the purposes of overcoming resistance and immunity.

Divine Blood. Einar gained immortality thousands of years ago by drinking Thrym's blood. When killed he returns to Thrym's halls and can manifest again on the Material Plane when the first frost of the season falls.

Oathkeeper, Oathbreaker. Over his thousands of years Einar has sworn fealty to tens of liege-lords, represented by the rings attached to his greatsword. Most recently, he broke his oath to protect Auril & Thrym's daughter, Nalkara, and Auril can invoke this debt at any time to force him to do her bidding.

Actions

Multiattack. Einar makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (6d6 + 9) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (4d12 + 9) piercing damage.

Lightning Strike (Recharge 5–6). Einar hurls a magical lightning bolt at a point he can see within 500 feet of him. Each creature within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Innate Spellcasting. Einar's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *detect magic, feather fall, levitate, light*
3/day each: *control weather, water breathing*

Living Bigby's Hand

Large Construct, Unaligned

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 73 (7d10 + 35)
Speed 25 ft., fly 25 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities force
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)

Amorphous. The living spell can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Magic Resistance. The living spell has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The living spell makes 2 Magical Strike attacks or one Magical Strike and one Spell Mimicry attack.

Magical Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (5d6 + 5) force damage.

Spell Mimicry. As an action, choose one of the following options:

1. ***Forceful Hand.*** The hand attempts to push a creature within 5 feet of it in a direction of its choice. Make a check with the hand's Strength contested by the Strength (Athletics) check of the target. If the target is Medium or smaller, the hand has advantage on the check. If successful, the hand pushes the target up to 20 feet. The hand moves with the target to remain within 5 feet of it.
2. ***Grasping Hand.*** The hand attempts to grapple a Huge or smaller creature within 5 feet of it. Use the hand's Strength score to resolve the grapple. If the target is Medium or smaller, the hand has advantage on the check. While the hand is grappling the target, it can use a bonus action to crush it, dealing 2d6 + 5 bludgeoning damage.
3. ***Interposing Hand.*** The hand protects one creature of it's choice, interposing itself between them and one hostile creature. The hand moves to stay between the creatures, providing the protected creature half cover against the hostile creature. The hostile creature can't move through the hand's space if its Strength score is less than or equal to the hand's Strength score. If its Strength score is higher than the hand's Strength score, the hostile creature can move through the hand's space, but that space is difficult terrain for it.



THE SEA BENEATH THE TREES

by Matthew Campbell

Goddess: Umberlee | **Levels:** 17-20

Content Warnings: Drowning, Natural Disaster, Thalassaphobia

SYNOPSIS

Strange calamity has come to the Moonstone Reach. What was once a foreboding forest is now completely underwater, the gods Umberlee and Mielikki locked in dispute over the wondrous biome. Umberlee calls for homage and claims dominion over what she sees as rightfully hers.

ADVENTURE HOOK

- Religious characters might hear of a conflict between gods, their own temples sending them to avert disaster.
- The sudden appearance of an entire sea has upset the balance of power among coastal nations. Whatever the outcome, they need a new status quo. Uncertainty is dangerous.
- Rumors of this underwater forest have drawn curious souls wishing to study strange flora and fauna hitherto undreamt of.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Umberlee is the goddess of a chaotic, often dangerous biome. The same is true of Mielikki, yet she is loved where Umberlee is hated. In anger (or perhaps frustration), Umberlee has raised her seas into the disputed Moonstone Reach, creating a bewildering underwater forest.

CHAPTER 1 – ROCKS AND SHOALS

The characters arrive in the village of Sedgewyck. Perhaps they came on prize horses or a magic carpet of inestimable value. Perhaps a local king simply teleported them here. Whatever the method, regional rulers have spared no expense to get the characters to Sedgewyck, a meaningless nothing of a town on the outskirts of the Moonstone Reach.

The Moonstone Reach was once a forested valley under the bailiwick of the goddess Mielikki. It still is a forest, but it has changed. The seas have raised and spread, leaving the whole forest valley underwater. Trade and forestry are in disarray, and while many still live in the depths below, numerous people have fled the valley for fear of what might come next.

VILLAGE AT THE EDGE

Until recently, Sedgewyck was a tiny hamlet. But now it borders the new sea, quickly swelling to a bustling village. The tavern has expanded beyond its modest building, providing dry tents and bowls of fish stew to all. Carters turn their trade to rowboats, and refugees have constructed a wooden wharf and slipway.

The village is also the home of "the tablet", a megalith of floating pumice upon which Umberlee has scorched a message in fulgurite. It rests in the centre of the village, bearing primordial words that are difficult to translate:

MIELIKKI CLAIMED NOT FROM TIME, FOR WE BOTH RESIDED IMMEMORIAL

BUT FROM LOVE, OF GOODNESS AND BOUNTY TO THOSE WITHIN

YET THE WRATH OF THE SEA IS NO MORE EVIL THAN THE FOREST,

ITS WILDERNESS NO MORE CONFUSING,

ITS STORMS NO MORE DEADLY,

ITS CREATURES NO MORE VENOMOUS,

MEN FEAR BY MY WILL, BUT THEY LOVE BY THEIR OWN.

The characters' contact here is Kepesk (they/them, **archdruid** (VGtM), neutral), a priestly lizardfolk who venerates Umberlee. Kepesk sits meditating outside the tavern, awaiting the adventurers' arrival; as soon as they hear the group approach, they open their eyes and voice a welcome.

ROLEPLAYING KEPESK

Kepesk raises the emotional detachment of lizardfolk to an artform, embodying a neutral attitude to nature. It would be wrong to say they worship Umberlee; they respect her power. To Kepesk, Mielikki and Umberlee represent forces of nature with no moral component. Attributing good or evil to weather or animals is an irrational, emotional idea.

Kepesk explains that in the forest, the power of the two gods is in conflict, the magical effects of their presence concentrated around "nodes" in the same way whorls form in water or wood. Umberlee has a temple under construction somewhere, and Mielikki has a similar stronghold. Currently, their powers are roughly balanced, an untenable situation that will lead to war if not tipped to one side or the other, which requires finding and disrupting these nodes. Kepesk's philosophy prevents them from taking a side—not only are nature gods no better than any other, but intervention from a devotee of Umberlee would reinforce the idea of the Sea God as aggressive. Instead, Kepesk defers to the adventurers; if they want payment and gratitude, they'll need to prevent conflict between the gods and affect a permanent solution.

Kepesk points them to the slipway at the edge of the village. The archdruid explains that once below the surface, the characters will see a glowing marker on the forest floor, which leads into the valley proper.

DEALING WITH NODES

Throughout the adventure, there are several nodes of godly power. These can be disrupted or rededicated in any number of ways: poison, magic, carvings, spells, and more. DMs should allow any method that involves sufficient roleplay and effort on the part of the adventurers. They can even dedicate the nodes to their own deities and patrons if they wish.

Near the slipway, one person sticks out among the villagers: the half-elf trader Gyeong (she/her, **abjurer** (VGtM), lawful evil) reclines on a goods-cart pulled by a **giant crocodile**. She stocks a bewildering array of items, prices varying wildly based on wealth and need (characters who wish to conceal their wealth can make a **DC 25 Charisma (Deception) check**). Gyeong stocks non-metallic chitinous versions of all weapons, armor, and gear in the *Player's Handbook* (add at least 50% to the cost of all items). She has a wide range of potions and scrolls and at least one of every minor magic item in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*. She stocks at least *some* items from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but those that aid swimming or water-breathing have eye-watering markups. If adventurers can't or won't pay for something they need, Gyeong offers it as payment for killing Kepesk (who hinders her ambition to price-gouge every soul in the region).

SOMETHING IN THE WATER

From the slipway, the characters quickly submerge into the magical seawater. Once under the surface, they see the distant glowing route marker Kepesk dropped for them. Traversing down to it through rocks, coral, and vines requires each player character who lacks a swim speed to make two successful **DC 20 ability checks**; **Acrobatics, Athletics and Nature** are all appropriate (although creative adventurers might use other skills or proficiencies). Failed checks mean a character has slipped or fallen, causing 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

AQUATIC ADVENTURING
Most of this adventure takes place underwater, which presents certain problems.

Characters who can breathe underwater (or hold their breath indefinitely) will be unhindered. For others, *water breathing* is the obviously ideal spell; scrolls of this are available from Gyeong at great expense. The DM might also allow other spells to help, such as allowing *control water's* 'Part Water' effect to create large air pockets.

Assume that adventurers aren't buoyant; they sink slowly, only taking falling damage if they collide with something dangerous (urchins, gorse). Climbing is easier, but grappling hooks are effectively useless. Remember that ice (such as that created by *Tomb of Levistus*) floats.

Certain weapons suffer disadvantage underwater (see *Player's Handbook*). Nonmagical flames are extinguished; written texts and paper items need protection. Finally, the water here is (magical) seawater, not freshwater.

Approaching the glowing marker, the source of the light becomes clear; Kepesk merely stuffed an anglerfish into a lobster pot, the fish snapping greedily at moths captivated by its lure. However, other things have also been drawn to the light: four **giant sharks** lurk nearby, hungry. (This encounter exists to acclimate the adventurers to underwater combat. If you wish to give the party more of a challenge, then a **hydra** is drawn to the din of combat).

Once on the forest floor (and hopefully not drowning), the adventurers face a twisting road flanked by ancient trees, the dense vegetation making travel off the path extremely difficult. Unless they wish to return to the surface, they must go forward.

CHAPTER 2 – BRAVING THE DEEPS

The locations described in this chapter are presented in an order that assumes the party will be following the route of a road called 'the old course' (see map), but the DM should feel free to adjust the order as appropriate. The Old Course is actually the route of a long-gone ancient river, the first clue that Umberlee might indeed have an ancient claim to the valley. (Recognizing the terrain as an old riverbed requires a successful **DC 25 Intelligence (Nature) check**. An optional random encounter table is included in the appendix for use between major locations.

GAMMELVASSEN

Here, the dense vegetation stops abruptly, opening into a clearing; inside is a hamlet of sealskin tents and sod houses. The threshold of the clearing is unnaturally sudden—plants reach out and stop as if striking an invisible sphere.

The villagers of Gammelvassen approach: an array of merfolk and humans, clearly prepared for underwater life. They don't have a designated leader; instead arguing until consensus emerges. Characters can learn the following information based on what is shouted at them:

- Bihaar is a local triton adventurer who helps everyone, but she's been gone for days. Worrying!
- The villagers are used to uncaring deities, but others they've encountered don't realise how indifferent the forest god is!
- They've heard dragon noises!
- A new Umberlee temple is being built somewhere nearby. Good times!

The villagers do not initially reveal why the forest is held back here: this site was an ancient font of Umberlee's power, and they have rediscovered an enchanted well that was built here after the local river dried up. If the party gains the trust of the villagers, they are invited to drink from the well; doing so heals 1d4 hit points and grants the ability to breathe underwater for the next 24 hours. If the adventurers have not already guessed, a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) check** confirms that this is one of the nodes that Kepesk mentioned.

Characters can disrupt Umberlee's power over this area by destroying the well, and can re-dedicate the area if they wish. Most of the villagers flee in the event of violence, but some will fight. The fighting force comprises eight **merfolk**, eight human **scouts**, eight **giant octopuses**, and two **water elementals**. (To expedite this encounter, see "Handling Mobs" on p.250 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

BRIAR AND CORAL

Ahead, countless briars grow impossibly fast, curling themselves into geometric lines, the beauty of the area making it no less dangerous. Thorns bear the fur of numerous animals and every few yards, a hungry moray pokes out. Here the adventurers will encounter Bihaar. She uses the stats of a **kraken priest** (VgtM); if the characters attack, she tries to frighten them using Voice of the Kraken. If Bihaar is reduced to 0 hit points or killed, a **kraken** bursts from her corpse in a huge rush of divine energy.

ROLEPLAYING BIHAAR

Bihaar is a regular Triton, but she is also an avatar of Umberlee. Some time ago, Bihaar volunteered to serve as a corporeal vessel of her god's power; their consciousnesses are now mystically intertwined. Characters with a passive Perception 30 or higher notice something odd about Bihaar. Her type remains Humanoid; spells that specifically affect Celestials have revealingly strange results. Bihaar now personifies all the potential good in Umberlee—beauty, bounteous seas, and harmonic cycles of nature. Anything she says or does is, for all intents and purposes, being done by Umberlee. Accordingly, she will always take Umberlee's side, will gently reinforce the idea that Umberlee has an old and valid claim to the Reach, and outright refute suggestions that the Sea Goddess is an unalloyed evil.

Bihaar will direct the player's attention to two oxen trapped among the briars. She explains that the oxen belong to halflings from Reëmstaple—she saved the villagers but has decided to let the oxen die to teach the villagers how hostile the forest is. Slowly but surely, two **coral myconids** (see adventure appendix) are closing on the beast. They have the shape and features of myconids, but are bewilderingly large: Instead of fungus, they are bedecked with polyps of coral moving and acting as one. Bihar explains that the myconids are being drawn here by leylines, which also account for the geometric plants—this is a node, but it is currently not dedicated to anyone.

The adventurers can dedicate the area to Umberlee, Mielikki, or another entity. If they save the oxen, then Reëmstaple should be their next stop.

REËMSTAPLE

It is obvious when structures are artificial, as is the case here, where pathways are blocked by woven walls of branches. An agitated villager atop a gate calls out to the characters, interrogating them about their identities and declaring that they cannot risk opening the gate because dangerous sea creatures may be nearby. The guard will only open the gate once assured that it is safe. Whether the guard is merely paranoid or whether there actually are monsters nearby (six **killer whales** and two **plesiosaurus**) is at the discretion of the DM.

Behind the wall, Reëmstaple village comprises a grove of massive trees, each with a small house built into the trunk. **Unicorns** wander around without fuss, munching on seagrass. The weary halfling villagers have little wealth, and the arrival of the water has only made life harder. Their burgomaster McLop (he/him, **cult fanatic**, lawful neutral) has been expecting a group to "come fix this water nonsense" and approaches the adventurers directly. He explains that his own limited magic has kept the village alive, but they need peace and rest, and he's of the view that the only way to achieve this is the defeat of Umberlee.

The whole grove is a node dedicated to Mielikki, which must be razed to disrupt it. Doing so means fighting McLop, four **unicorns**, and two **shambling mounds**. McLop wears a *cloak of the manta ray* made from a still-living ray.

The greatclub *Greenbough* (see adventure appendix) is hidden in one of the houses, wrapped in fine silk and kept under a bed. McLop will offer it to the adventurers if they swear to defeat Umberlee, if they rescued the oxen, or if the adventurers are willing to slay a pair of **froghemoths** living in a nearby mire.

SHELL GAME

Here, the dim light is pierced by a cold blue glow, illuminating a chaotic blockfield. Piles of boulders hinder tree growth, giving way to kelp, lichen, and an intimidating number of crustaceans. The light emanates from the summit of the blockfield 120 feet away, where there stands a statue holding a glowing spear.

This area is a complex trap (see *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*).

Trigger: The trap is triggered by a total of three failed **Dexterity (Stealth) checks** (see below), whereupon the adventurers must battle five **moss crabs** (see adventure appendix).

CONSTANT ELEMENTS:

Predatory Lair. The boulder field is difficult terrain. At the end of each round, characters within the field must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check** to avoid being noticed by the crabs.

Pinchy. Characters within the field must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity saving throw** at the end of each round or take 1 bludgeoning damage from a small crab.

DYNAMIC ELEMENTS:

Out for Blood. Characters who don't have all their hit points have disadvantage on **Dexterity (Stealth) checks**. At the DM's discretion, this penalty can apply to any character who does something to attract attention,

Bigger They Are. Within 50 feet of the statue, the Pinchy damage increases to 1d6 bludgeoning.



ANGELA O'HARA

COUNTERMEASURES:

Pest Control. Characters can 'disarm' a crab by succeeding on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check**, or by crushing it; each crab has AC 11 and 2 hit points (increasing to AC 15 and 13 hit points within 50 feet of the statue). Six total successful disarm attempts permanently ends the Pinchy effect. Failing to kill a crab (by missing or not causing enough damage) counts as a failed **Dexterity (Stealth) check**.

The statue (assuming the adventurers reach it) is a stone figure wearing scale mail, etched with primordial script reading "For the mighty, until felled by hubris." It holds the spear *Keelbreaker* (see adventure appendix) loosely in one hand. (This area is not a node; the crabs were merely attracted by the spear.)

GNOMES AWAY

This encounter is special: due to the transport involved, it can be relocated to help adventurers who are lost, confused, or need further exposition.

A glowing blob descends through the water to meet the adventurers. As it gets closer, they realise that it is a huge jellyfish carrying a wicker basket beneath. This is the forest gnome Florin Baum (they/them, neutral good) and their companion Wuvovov. Florin is fascinated by the forest and wishes that it could remain a united biome, but realises that this requires both locals and goddesses to agree. It also occurs to Florin that such a deal might be reached if both factions were in a weak position, but the gnome hasn't the heart to harm anyone.

Florin is the owner and annotator of the map shown on the next page, and happily gives the adventurers a copy. In the unlikely event the characters try to fight Florian, use the stats of a **morkoth** (MToF) and a **drow priestess of Lolth** (albeit reflavored).

DEVELOPMENT

With the greater part of the valley explored, the adventurers will have positioned themselves to confront (or negotiate with) the mighty guardians who dwell in the two temples.



CHAPTER 3 — EYE OF THE STORM

Two temples are described below. Depending on the events of Chapter 2, the strength of each temple's forces varies. Characters can attempt to negotiate a peaceful outcome—something a faction may be more open to if it is in a weaker position than its opponents. Otherwise, the characters face off against one of the temple guardians (or both, if they want to tear everything down).

MIELIKKI'S TEMPLE — DRAGON'S GROVE

Here, the curved rows of trees form geometric patterns; the only pathways are open routes the forest seems to leave deliberately. Slowly but surely, the plant life closes in, making a dim tunnel that twists and turns—a sure sign that this is the lair of a green dragon (if the party possesses Greenbough, they are immune to any damage caused by the 'regional effects' of this lair). Eventually the organic tunnel opens out into a cave-like dome, brightly lit by countless fireflies.

This is the lair of Old Akronyctus, an **ancient green dragon** with a bristling hide bright with colors that warn of a thousand potential poisons. If the adventurers made enemies of the Reëmstaple halflings, the dragon is joined by two **unicorns**.

ALEX NIEDERBERGER

ROLEPLAYING OLD AKRONYCTUS

Like most green dragons, Akronyctus is manipulative and territorial, but he is also fundamentally lazy. While nominally in charge of the forest, he is concerned only with the ecosystem providing enough creatures to eat. He is unperturbed by the water and will aggressively dispute notions that he has anything to fear from Umberlee's forces. He views most things as either beneath his notice or as an active threat to his majesty; there is little middle ground. Surrender is preferable to death, but only just.

Reduce the dragon's available lair actions by one for each of the following (which actions are lost is at the discretion of the DM):

- If the node at Reëmstaple was raised
- If that node was re-dedicated to Umberlee
- If the leylines at the briar patch were dedicated to Umberlee

UMBERLEE'S TEMPLE — STORM PLAZA

The approaches to this temple are murky with sediment and shredded plants, a declaration that there are natural forces stronger than oaks and redwoods. This isn't a place: it is the absence of one. Huge sections of vegetation have been uprooted, leaving a vast plaza of volcanic basalt. If Keelbreaker is in the party's possession, they may ignore the effects of dim light while in the plaza.

Several shipwrecks are scattered across the plaza, an aesthetic addition made by the voracious and mighty Vilicealizmaj (he/him, **dragon turtle**). He is attended by Zel (she/her, **sea hag**) a broom-wielding fey who acts as his back-scrubber and translator.

> **ROLEPLAYING VILICEALIZMAJ**
> Vilicealizmaj is more stubborn than he is aggressive. He is waiting for the opposing side to either give up or force a confrontation. He does not seek conflict with Mielikki's forces, but neither will he back away from a fight. He cannot be persuaded that his presence here is illegitimate, but he is mercenary enough to appreciate practical and strategic arguments. Vilicealizmaj's words are terse and slow, and he relies on his attendant to translate into mortal languages.

Vilicealizmaj can make use of the following lair actions designed specifically for dragon turtles:

Lair Actions. A dragon turtle can make use of lair actions while in their den. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), they take a lair action to cause one of the following effects; they can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- With a mighty crash, the dragon turtle topples or hurls a shipwreck, which lands in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point they choose within 60 feet. Any creature in that area must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The area also becomes difficult terrain until the end of the next lair action.
- Whirlpools of force thrash the water in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point the dragon turtle chooses within 60 feet. Characters within this area must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength saving throw** or be knocked prone and pushed by the dragon turtle to anywhere in the sphere.
- Smoke and bubbles emerge from geysers and vents in the basalt, creating a haze as though the dragon turtle had cast the fog cloud spell. The fog lasts until initiative count 20 on the next round.

Reduce the number of available lair actions by one for each of the following (which actions are lost is at the discretion of the DM):

- If the node at Gammelvassen was deactivated
- If the node at Gammelvassen was rededicated to Mielikki
- If the leylines at the briar patch were dedicated to Mielikki

If the people of Gammelvassen view the party as a threat, Vilicealizmaj is joined by three **water elementals**.

If Bihaar has reason to view the adventurers as an active threat, she will defend the temple, but will still allow Vilicealizmaj to negotiate on Umberlee's behalf.

CONCLUSION

Umberlee prevails if Akronyctus is slain or banished. The forest will slowly die, and the few arboreal plants and animals able to adapt will be the only ones who remain. The people of Reëmstaple begrudgingly leave, and Sedgewyck will become a vital port on the "Storm God Reach."

Mielikki prevails if Vilicealizmaj is slain or banished. The water recedes in a torrent that strips branches from trees, Sedgewyck reverts to a meaningless hamlet, and Reëmstaple returns to farming unicorns. For the next decade, storms blight the coast. Of the people who made Gammelvassen their home, no trace remains.

If peace is negotiated, war is averted, and the magical forest remains. Sedgewyck becomes a tourist hub and eventually a centre of learning, where new creatures are studied and new magic created. The peoples of Reëmstaple and Gammelvassen become friends, rightly proud of their unique and wondrous homeland.

Perhaps, though, both goddesses *lose*. If Akronyctus and Vilicealizmaj were *both* defeated, slow calamity unfolds. The sea retreats, the forest dies, and residents of all kinds flee. Perhaps the adventurers responsible have dedicated the Reach to their own patrons? What enclave of hell now blights the mortal realms?

REWARDS

As long as the immediate crisis is resolved, the mortal kingdoms will reward the characters with a coffer of 888 pp, regardless of whose side they took.

If the characters take Mielikki's side, they receive a magic chestnut. When planted, it creates a wooden castle similar to the effect of *mighty fortress*. The chestnut can only be used once, but the fortress does not degrade after seven days.

If the characters side with her, Umberlee raises a shipwreck from her temple. The group receives either a galley or a warship, with a nacre-patched hull and kelp sails. It comes with a barnacle-encrusted **skeleton** crew.

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

DMs who wish to add random encounters into the forest exploration, or who wish to add more danger to existing encounters, can roll on the following table. As the table is split into water and forest style encounters, DMs can also use a d10 to select one biome or the other:

UNDERWATER ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1d20	1d10	Encounter
1	1	2d12 **swarms of quippers**
2	2	4d10 **dolphins** (VGtM)
3	3	3d12 **dimetrodons** (VGtM)
4	4	1d12 **hunter sharks**
5	5	2 **bullywugs** and 2d8 **giant crabs**
6	6	1d6 **water elementals**
7	7	**wastrilith** (MToF)
8	8	2 **marids**
9	9	3 **hydras**
10	10	**leviathan** (MToF)

FOREST ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1d20	1d10	Encounter
11	1	2 **lizardfolk shamans** and 1d8 **lizardfolk**
12	2	1 **druid** and 1d6 **giant constrictor snakes**
13	3	4d8 **giant spiders**
14	4	1d6 **stegosauruses** (VGtM)
15	5	1 **nagpa** (MToF) and 2d6 **swarms of ravens**
16	6	2 **treants** and 1d8 **tribal warriors**
17	7	1d6 **giant apes**
18	8	2 **guardian nagas**
19	9	1d4 **brontosauruses** (VGtM)
20	10	3 **young green dragons**

ITEMS

GREENBOUGH

Weapon (greatclub), legendary (requires attunement)

Greenbough was carved in the Reach by followers of Mielikki many decades ago for no other purpose than a display of strength and devotion. Its magic is powerful, and while it is not a sophisticated weapon, striking an enemy with a heavy lump of wood is always an effective tactic.



SAMARA LEE

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Additionally, it can be used as a spellcasting focus by a ranger.

This greatclub has 10 charges and regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC (if you do not have a spell save DC, the DC is 17): *entangle* (1 charge), *heat metal* (2 charges), *erupting earth* (3 charges), *grasping vine* (4 charges), or *insect plague* (5 charges).

Keelbreaker

Weapon (spear), legendary (requires attunement)

A gift from a goddess who does not normally bestow gifts, *Keelbreaker* is a mighty tool for anyone sailing dangerous waters. Its blade glows a soft blue-white, accompanied by a whiff of ozone. *Keelbreaker* promises destruction to Umberlee's foes as surely as it grants protection to her followers.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. While holding this weapon, you have resistance to thunder damage.

The spear has 10 charges and regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC (if you do not have a spell save DC, the DC is 17): *fog cloud* (1 charge), *aid* (2 charges), *call lightning* (3 charges), *control water* (4 charges), or *destructive wave* (5 charges).

Author's Notes/ Acknowledgments

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Author Bio

Matthew Campbell is an all-round nerd from Aberdeenshire in Scotland. In addition to this adventure, he has also written material for the *Necromunda* tabletop game and articles for Unwinnable.com, and is an editor for the *Unbreakable* adventure anthology. His Twitter is **@social_scifi**, and he likes it when people show him cool pictures of cats, birds, and dinosaurs.

Moss Crab

Large Beast, Unaligned

A strange new hybrid creature, or perhaps merely a rare type of sponge-crab, moss crabs are bulky and aggressive creatures who have adapted to the forest quickly (... too quickly). While not belligerent, these auroch-size crustaceans happily attack anything they can eat—and given that they have claws capable of felling trees, this includes most organic material. When not eating, moss crabs are usually idle, although sometimes groups of them will all move in a single directionless swarm. Travelers quickly learn to avoid moss crabs, assuming they survive their first encounter with them.

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 76 (8d12 + 24)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities frightened, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Amphibious. The moss crab can breathe air and water.

Actions

Multiattack. The moss crab makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). The crab has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

Coral Myconid

Huge Plant, Unaligned

Nominally humanoid in shape, these rare coral myconids are actually composed of hundreds of tiny polyp creatures acting as a whole. While slow, they are much larger than the more common varieties of myconid, and their stony extremities pack quite a punch. Grievously wounded ones are also capable of regrowing over time, so long as a handful of their polyps remain alive. Much more aggressive than their fungal cousins, they will violently defend plants and trees.

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 195 (19d10 + 85)
Speed 30 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, petrified, poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages understands Druidic but can't speak
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Limestone Camouflage. The coral myconid has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in reefs and rocky terrain.

Colony Split. When it is reduced to half its hit points or fewer, the coral myconid spawns 1d4 **violet fungi**. When killed, it splits into 1d6 **violet fungi**.

Actions

Multiattack. The coral myconid makes two Polyp Fist attacks.

Polyp Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. Until this poison ends, the target is paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poison on itself on a success.

Stinging Spores (3/Day). The myconid ejects polyp-spores at one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Ground Strike (Recharge 5–6). The coral myconid strikes the ground with its fists. Each hostile creature within 15 feet must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 18 (4d8) thunder damage and falls prone. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and does not fall prone.



GWEN BASSETT



MINA DUPONT-ISSALYS

BE ALL MY SINS REMEMBER'D

by Theo Thourson

Goddess: Blibdoolpoolp | **Levels:** 17-20

Content Warnings: Enslavement, Mind Control, Mental Health, Racism

SYNOPSIS

The kuo-toa are a piscine race with a psychic affliction that makes them behave erratically and invent gods when feeling threatened. That same affliction gives them the power to bring those gods to life. Blibdoolpoolp is the most widely worshipped, and thus most powerful, of their gods.

Blibdoolpoolp views the kuo-toa as her children despite having been born after them. Like all good mothers, she nurtures and protects. One of her chief concerns is understanding the kuo-toa's psychic affliction, which causes them to undermine themselves whenever they strive for greatness. She discovers that a corrupted elder brain deep in the Underdark has a connection to the race; though the connection gives them psychic powers, it also turns them into powerless thralls, explaining their self-destructive behaviors.

Constrained by the same leash on her children, Blibdoolpoolp seeks adventurers to destroy the elder brain. Its death would free the kuo-toa, but potentially at great cost: if the kuo-toa lose their powers, will Blibdoolpoolp die?

ADVENTURE HOOK

Blibdoolpoolp uses one of the following methods to bring the party to a nearby sunken cave, where she has gathered enough kuo-toa to manifest her physical form:

- When characters attempt to contact a greater power through prayer or a spell, they receive a disjointed but passionate appeal from a mysterious deity, summoning them to the cave.
- Characters are haunted by disturbing dreams that make them experience the thoughts of a kuo-toa. In these dreams, the characters are trapped underground with tendrils attached to the backs of their heads, and find it impossible to compose full thoughts or maintain concentration for more than a few seconds. From somewhere deep underwater, a female voice asks for rescue from this terror, summoning them to the cave.
- Characters see or are asked to investigate unusual kuo-toa behavior that has never been seen before. Hordes of kuo-toa have been seen swimming off the coast and marching through forests all toward the cave.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The kuo-toa once had a prosperous civilization before humans and elves drove them underground, where illithids (mind flayers) subjugated them. A creature that has been psychically dominated by an illithid experiences extreme paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and an inability to plan and organize. When the illithid empire collapsed, other races became free of such mental influences, but the kuo-toa only felt the illithids' influence diminish.

One elder brain was able to maintain a tenuous hold on the kuo-toa thanks to a merger with a beholder that amplified its reach. That beholder was Quormea, who dreamed of being a parent. As happens with beholders, her dream became reality, and Quormea birthed four smaller beholders who resembled herself. They lived happily for a time until a nearby mind flayer colony captured the smaller beholders and transformed them into mindwitnesses—telepathic hubs used to extend an elder brain's control.

Quormea sought revenge, assembling an army to destroy the colony and free her children. The two sides nearly destroyed each other; she alone made it to the elder brain's chamber. Their minds grappled psionically, and each felt something new. Quormea felt her children's minds, but realized they would forever be part illithid—while the elder brain pulled power from its mindwitnesses, only to feel Quormea's children longing to be with her again.

In that moment of empathy, Quormea and the elder brain merged. The resulting corrupted brain found itself master of a lifeless colony, alone save for the four mindwitness children. The mindwitnesses felt a connection to the kuo-toa in their shared desire for a mother, and thus held onto them when everything else was lost. It is Quormea's influence that gave the kuo-toa their paranoia and their power to create deities with belief alone.

CHAPTER 1 – THE WHIPS AND SCORNS OF TIME

Blibdoolpoolp's sanctum is located in a cave off a nearby rocky shoreline. Characters must swim underwater for 1 minute to travel from the entrance of the cave to a dry fantastical chamber filled with kuo-toa of all ages. The presence of this much kuo-toa psychic energy alters reality within the cave. As characters move toward the back of the cave, the air shimmers with possibility. Huddled groups of worshipping kuo-toa manifest minor deities—humanoids with various body parts replaced by those of aquatic creatures, their forms shifting at the whims of their creators' imaginations. Half-completed murals and sculptures are scattered among piles of disorganized supplies. Some works of art appear to have been started long ago and abandoned, only to be completed more recently by another hand.

The kuo-toa are wary and suspicious but chatter in Undercommon about how they expected the party's arrival and that the characters should be honored to be summoned into the presence of the great Blibdoolpoolp herself.

BLIBDOOLPOOLP'S OFFER

The back of the cavern opens into a smaller chamber guarded by six **kuo-toa whips**. Inside is a circular pool of saltwater 30-feet wide. When the party enters the chamber, a whirlpool forms, and Blibdoolpoolp rises out of it. Blibdoolpoolp (she/her, goddess, neutral evil) is a 15-foot-tall humanoid woman with the upper body of a red crawfish and a layered, articulated shell going down her arms to her lobster-claw hands. Two long antennae flow down her back, giving her the semblance of hair.

Blibdoolpoolp speaks telepathically to the characters. She describes her role as the kuo-toa's mother, the historical suffering that the kuo-toa experienced under the illithids, and their residual connection to an elder brain that she wants killed. She does not share any information about her own origin or the psychic abilities of the kuo-toa. She doesn't know about Quormea or the illithid colony's fate, only that this elder brain is different from others.

Use the following information when roleplaying Blibdoolpoolp:

- She has historically been hostile to creatures other than kuo-toa, and has a special distrust for elves, drow, and humans, due to their past history of conflict. She is now turning to adventurers for help only as a painful last resort.
- She'll do anything to protect and help her children.
- She shares some of the traits of the kuo-toa, occasionally becoming forgetful, anxious, or angry, though not hostile.
- She believes the kuo-toa would have power and influence equal to humans and elves if not for illithid influence.

If the adventurers agree to help free the kuo-toa by defeating the elder brain, Blibdoolpoolp promises the rewards detailed at the end of the adventure: an alliance with the kuo-toa race, as well as access to an underwater base.

Characters who succeed on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** deduce that if the elder brain connection is severed, the kuo-toa lose their psychic abilities. In theory, this would end Blibdoolpoolp's existence.

FIDDLELOOP

Blibdoolpoolp assigns a kuo-toa archpriest named Fiddleloop (he/him, neutral) to accompany and guide the characters. Though he understands the importance of the mission, he's quick to suspect treachery, frequently loses focus during conversations, and is slow to trust the characters. He also gets hungry frequently and asks for snacks at inopportune moments.



MINA DUPONT-ISSALYS

As an archpriest, Fiddleloop has an especially strong connection to the elder brain; he's prone to rambling cryptically in ways that can impart important background information to the characters that they fail to learn in other ways.

If characters treat him with respect and kindness, he provides healing and other aid to the party.

Fiddleloop uses the statistics of a **kuo-toa archpriest**, with the following changes:

- His alignment is neutral.
- He speaks and understands Undercommon and Common.
- He has an AC of 15 (thanks to a +2 bonus to AC from his enchanted robes, which only kuo-toa can benefit from).
- He carries two *potions of superior healing* and a *potion of vitality*, which he can consume if needed or give to the characters if they earn his trust.

The Blib Score

Blibdoolpoolp observes the whole mission. Use the Blib Score point system to track her opinion of the party and their actions. While she wants the characters to free the kuo-toa, she fears what may happen if she ceases to exist, leaving her children without a protector. Her opinion of the party affects the final outcome of the adventure. The Blib Score starts at a value of 0, a neutral attitude.

The party loses the listed number of points for each of the following events that occur over the course of the adventure:

- -1 point if the party shows disrespect to Blibdoolpoolp or the kuo-toa
- -3 points if the party deliberately hurts a kuo-toa during the adventure
- -1 point if the party requests additional rewards for helping the kuo-toa
- -1 point if the party lets harm come to Fiddleloop through inaction
- -4 points if Fiddleloop dies

The party gains points for each of the following events that occur over the course of the adventure:

- +1 point if the party shows respect to Blibdoolpoolp and the kuo-toa
- +1 point if the party accepts the mission without requesting additional rewards
- +1 point if the party assists Fiddleloop during the adventure
- +5 points if the party brings Fiddleloop back to life after dying

Additional score adjustments can be made at the DM's discretion. The characters should not be aware that Blibdoolpoolp is always watching and that this score is being tracked, but Fiddleloop's mood and actions can be a clue that their actions have consequences. Fiddleloop is aware that his goddess is monitoring the mission.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the characters agree to the mission, Blibdoolpoolp tells them to jump into the whirlpool to be teleported deep into the Underdark. To return, they must pray to her after their victory. Blibdoolpoolp won't teleport the characters back until the elder brain has been destroyed. If Blibdoolpoolp dies, the characters have to find their own way back.



CHAPTER 2 — TAKE ARMS AGAINST A SEA OF TROUBLES

THE FALLEN COLONY OF POLSANA

Many centuries ago, Polsana served as the control center of the mind flayers' kuo-toa operation. Now, it's just a haunted husk.

All areas in Polsana have several common features, summarized here:

Light. Shimmering pink and purple energies emanate from fungi on the walls that are infused with psionic energy, causing these areas to be enveloped in dim light.

Passages. The rooms and tunnels are made of carved stone created by the mind flayers' minions. Circular designs are engraved into the walls and floors. All ceilings are 15 feet high unless otherwise noted.

Quormea. Quormea is aware of anyone who enters Polsana, and telepathically communicates with the characters as they explore. Her statements are often muddled non-sequiturs but express her fear, anger, and longing for her children.

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Fallen Colony of Polsana.

P1. Entrance

The characters find themselves deep underground in a cold and quiet cave. Ahead of them lies a damaged stone archway. Something flickers across the archway every few moments. The room beyond lies in shadow tinged with a faint purple light.

D.W. DAGON

Characters who succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** are able to see that the flash is an image of a stone wall that matches the cavern walls around them. A *detect magic* spell uncovers a faint aura of illusion magic over the entrance; a permanent *hallucinatory terrain* spell once concealed the colony's entrance, but its magic is merely a flicker now.

Characters who succeed on a **DC 16 Intelligence (Survival) check** recognize that the archway's damage was not caused by erosion or other natural phenomena, though they are unable to identify the true cause of the damage. (In fact, the archway was damaged during Quormea's attack on the colony.)

P2. Guard Room

This guard room originally housed the colony's defenders and was the primary battleground during Quormea's incursion. Now, it contains rubble and destroyed furniture. An archway on the western side leads further inside. Unusual grooves crisscross the walls, floors, and ceilings. A successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that the grooves were caused by a magical disintegration effect—in this case, the beholder's disintegration eye ray. If the characters spend at least 5 minutes searching the room and succeed on a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check**, they discover an intact *survival mantle* (see adventure appendix) buried under rubble.

The western archway contains a magical trap. A character proficient in Arcana must make a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check** while exploring the room to notice the magical runes carved into the archway. A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of enchantment magic. The first creature to cross through the archway must succeed on a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** or be charmed for 1 round. The charmed creature believes the closest other living creature is a mind flayer and attacks that creature. Once triggered, the trap deactivates for 1 hour, after which it resets. The trap can also be disarmed with a successful **DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or by using the *dispel magic* spell.

P3. Brain Library

This conical chamber contains rows of shelves that hold dozens of preserved brains in brine-filled jars, some of which are shattered on the floor. Two jars contain telepathic brains that move under their own power. They belong to two cantankerous, bickering wizards: Broderick Fitz-Rogers (formerly a human) and Talandoo (formerly an elf). Their brains were extracted long ago when humans and elves were driving races such as the kuo-toa underground. They can provide context for the history between the races.

P4. Prison

Threats and potential thralls were once held in the three cages in this chamber. The cages have rusted, broken locks. The first cage is empty, the second contains the skeleton of a human, and the third contains the skeleton of a githzerai. This githzerai knight was a scout sent to find the mind flayer colony long ago. His confiscated *greater silver sword* (see adventure appendix) can be found in the rubble with a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

P5. Transformation Chamber

Captured subjects were brought to this chamber and bombarded with psionic energy. Most of these experiments failed, leaving the victims transformed beyond their ability to survive. The remainder emerged as stronger, tougher thralls for the mind flayers. Broken metal beds and tables litter the floor.



SAMARA LEE

At the back of the room stand Breanna Torgroth (she/her, **death knight**, chaotic evil) and her **nightmare**. Breanna was a paladin of Torm captured by the mind flayers. Faced with the threat of transformation, she gave up the location of the other members of her hiding adventuring party. After capturing and experimenting on them, the mind flayers betrayed their vow and did the same to Breanna, who died during the procedure. She arose as a death knight and awaits living creatures to destroy. She and her nightmare attack the characters immediately.

If destroyed, the death knight reforms in 1 hour in the transformation chamber. If Blibdoolpoolp turns against the party (see Chapter 3), she makes the death knight her paladin and sends it to attack the party. If this occurs, the following changes are applied to the death knight and nightmare's statistics:

- The death knight can use Hellfire Orb 2/day (instead of 1/day), and she has 250 hit points.
- The nightmare takes on the appearance of a giant fiery crab. Its Hooves action is removed and replaced with the following:

  Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). The nightmare has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

P6. Tadpole Chamber

This chamber contains a number of brine pools and does not show evidence of combat. The neglected tadpole pools are now the home of a **neothelid** (VGtM), which immediately attacks any intruders. In addition, two **cloakers** hide in the southeast corner of the room by the ceiling, and attack the nearest foe during the second round of combat.

Development. Fiddleloop's hatred for the illithids surfaces when he sees the neothelid, and he rushes to attack it, putting himself in danger.

P7. Flumph Colony

A broken wall leads to this large, naturally formed chamber, which contains a colony of sixteen **flumphs** drawn to the psionic energies still lingering in the colony. If the party contains at least one good-aligned character, the flumphs reach out telepathically with greetings. Otherwise, the characters must convince the flumphs that they mean no harm in order to be welcomed in. If they are welcomed in, the characters can safely rest in this chamber. If they rest elsewhere, two **purple worms** erupt from the ground and attack.

Development

If the mindwitnesses in area P8 are spared and brought to the flumph colony, the flumphs adopt them. The mindwitnesses' listless demeanor changes as they absorb the good nature of the flumphs.

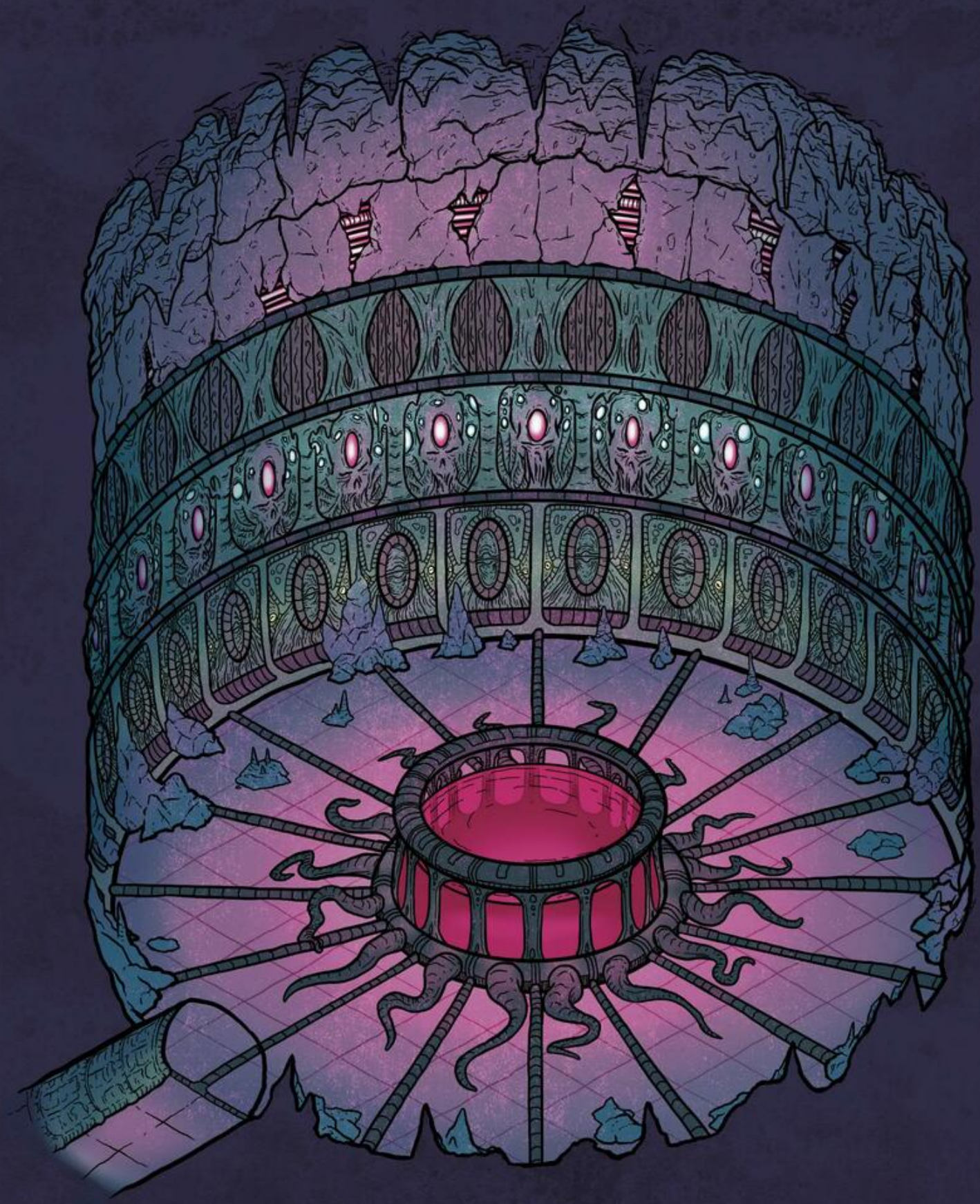
P8. Entrance Chamber

This small, unadorned room once housed numerous guards to protect the elder brain chamber. Now three **mindwitnesses**—Quormea's children—float around the room, unwilling to move far from their mother. Fiddleloop senses a strong influence from the mindwitnesses—the beholder brain calling out to the kuo-toa—and is drawn to them. The mindwitnesses are not hostile unless attacked and are attracted to Fiddleloop, offering debris to him like treats for a pet.

Characters can make appropriate ability checks at the DM's discretion to gain more information by encouraging the connection between Fiddleloop and the mindwitnesses. Intimidating Fiddleloop results in a -2 to the Blib Score. Each character can make one ability check to try to support this connection. The results of these ability checks are cumulative; on a successful check, the characters should learn all of the information for lower results as well. (The DM can share the relevant information from the "Adventure Background" section at the start of this adventure.)

Result	Information Gained
10+	Story of the mindwitness children being kidnapped
14+	Story of Quormea's battle to save them
18+	Story of Quormea and the elder brain melding
22+	Explanation of Quormea and the elder brain still warring
26+	A plea from Quormea for an alliance to help slay the elder brain persona to save her children

If Quormea proposes an alliance, the characters can close the deal with a successful **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check** or **DC 22 Charisma (Deception) check**. Quormea will then do her best to aid the characters during the fight, and she shares three helpful details from the beholder brain's stat block (see adventure appendix).



D.W. DAGON

CHAPTER 3 — IN THAT SLEEP OF DEATH WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

In the last room awaits the melded beholder brain. By psionically merging their minds, Quormea has permanently altered the elder brain's form and abilities, but their two minds still clash in a perpetual stalemate. A third party can tip the balance—or slay them both.

P9. Elder Brain Chamber

This conical room is 50 feet tall at its highest point. The walls and floor are carved with intricate swirling designs that are disconcerting to gaze upon. At the center of the room is the beholder brain, which floats in a large pool 20 feet in diameter. As the characters enter the room, the psionic energy in the room is strong enough to manifest a ghostly version of Blibdoolpoolp before them.

If the Blib Score is positive, Blibdoolpoolp gives a rousing speech about it being time for the kuo-toa to stand on their own. She admits that killing the brain will kill her too, but she trusts the characters to help the kuo-toa become independent. She pledges what power she can manifest here to support the party in the fight. She grants each of the characters and Fiddleloop a Blessing of Protection, which grants them all a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws.

If the Blib Score is 0 or negative, Blibdoolpoolp declares that she has changed her mind. She has seen how the characters treat Fiddleloop and fears that the characters will betray the kuo-toa if they lose their powers. She summons Breanna Torgroth, the empowered death knight from area P5 who has pledged herself to Blibdoolpoolp, to kill the party. Fiddleloop also becomes hostile.

Either way, after this happens, the **beholder brain** emerges from the pool. It is a bulbous brain with tentacles trailing down into a vat of pink liquid; ten tentacles crisscross the folds of the brain and extend beyond it, each ending in a round, milky eye. The center of the brain opens into a beholder's telltale single large eye and toothy maw.

When the beholder brain is reduced to 100 hit points, a psionic flash fills the room. The characters suddenly find themselves in a white void; in front of them, they see Quormea (she/her, **beholder**, neutral evil) and the **elder brain** (it/its, lawful evil). Depending on the prior actions of the characters, Quormea and the elder brain may each propose an alliance with the characters.

Quormea

If the characters harmed the mindwitnesses in area P8, Quormea is hostile and attacks the characters. If the mindwitnesses are not harmed, Quormea offers to assist the characters as long as she and her children can go free.

If the Blib Score is positive and the characters side with Quormea, Blibdoolpoolp decides to trust them and give Quormea a chance. In return, Quormea offers to let Blibdoolpoolp's consciousness merge with hers, allowing both to survive in a new combined body.

Elder Brain

The elder brain scans the minds of the characters to identify their greatest desires. It promises to use the power of the entire mind flayer network to give the characters what they want in return for killing Quormea, which will reconnect it to the network. If the characters agree to the elder brain's offer, the Blib Score becomes negative (if it isn't already).

DEVELOPMENT

Another flash, and the characters return to the elder brain chamber. The beholder brain is gone, replaced with a **beholder** and **elder brain**, both of whose hit points are equal to their hit point maximum. If Quormea is hostile to the characters, she is a **death tyrant** instead of a beholder. The battle continues until the characters defeat all hostile creatures. After the battle, a **mindwitness** floats into the room from a destroyed wall, moving toward Quormea.

CONCLUSION

The possible outcomes of the final confrontation can be found in the Final Outcomes Table on the next page.

If the kuo-toa become free of psionic control, they become disoriented for some time, as if a burden they did not know they had been carrying is suddenly lifted. Over time, they are able to form functioning communities, maintain good relations and trade with friendly neighbors, and reestablish the traditions of their former civilization.

FINAL OUTCOMES TABLE

Blibdoolpoolp	Quormea	Elder Brain	Outcome
Ally	Lives	Dies	Blibdoolpoolp and Quormea merge. The kuo-toa retain their psychic abilities and are free of psionic control. The characters earn the rewards listed below. The mindwitnesses return to Quormea and are happy.
Enemy	Dies	Lives	Once the elder brain is freed, the kuo-toa lose their psychic abilities, and Blibdoolpoolp thereby ceases to exist. The elder brain grants the characters' desires. The mindwitnesses can be adopted by the flumphs.
Ally	Dies	Dies	The kuo-toa lose their abilities and Blibdoolpoolp ceases to exist, but the kuo-toa are free and become the characters' allies. The characters earn the rewards listed below. The mindwitnesses can be adopted by the flumphs.
Enemy	Lives	Dies	Blibdoolpoolp forcefully merges with Quormea, the way Quormea did with the elder brain. The kuo-toa retain their psychic abilities and are free, becoming greater enemies of the other races. The mindwitnesses ally with the merged goddess beholder and enhance the power of the kuo-toa.
Enemy	Dies	Dies	Blibdoolpoolp forcefully merges with the elder brain just before it dies. Blibdoolpoolp distorts reality and teleports the characters away. The kuo-toa gain powers similar to those of the mind flayers, and wage war on the surface.

REWARDS

If the characters succeed and stay on Blibdoolpoolp's good side, they gain an alliance with the newly revitalized kuo-toa race. Blibdoolpoolp also grants them access to an underwater base, the entrance to which appears as a 50-foot-tall living coral statue of Blibdoolpoolp with her arm extended. Under her outstretched hand is a large semicircular dome of force. The dome contains a multi-room base with a breathable atmosphere and two permanent arcane gates (which function like the *arcane gate* spell) that lead to the surface world and to the Underdark.

ITEMS

Greater Silver Sword

Weapon (greatsword), legendary (requires attunement by a creature that has psionic ability)

This magic weapon grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. While you hold the sword, you have advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma saving throws, you are immune to being charmed, and you have resistance to psychic damage. In addition, if you score a critical hit with it against a creature's astral body, you can cut the silvery cord that tethers the target to its material body, instead of dealing damage.

Survival Mantle

This carapace-like augmentation encases portions of the wearer's shoulders, neck, and chest. A survival mantle is equivalent to a suit of nonmagical half plate armor and takes just as long to don or doff. It can't be worn with other kinds of armor.

A creature wearing a survival mantle can breathe normally in any environment (including a vacuum) and has advantage on saving throws against harmful gases (such as those created by a *cloudkill* spell, a *stinking cloud* spell, inhaled poisons, and the breath weapons of some dragons).

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All of my creative endeavors are possible only because of the encouragement and support of my partner, Grady. I never thought I would be able to engage in any creative art, but I've somehow managed it with Grady's endless support, the structured learning environment formed by Ashley Warren, the guidance and encouragement generously provided by Satine Phoenix, the wisdom of this project's editors and project leads, and the kind words we receive from fans of the Gallant Goblin. Their words provide nourishment to me as brains do to mind flayers.

AUTHOR BIO

Theo Thourson is the co-proprietor of The Gallant Goblin, a company that publishes TTRPG content, including supplements, product reviews, interviews with creative minds in the industry, and actual plays. He lives in Texas with his partner, Grady Wang (also appearing in this anthology!). His best-selling adventure *I Am Your World* appears on DMs Guild.

Beholder Brain

Huge Aberration, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 429 (50d12 + 104)
Speed 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Int +12, Wis +9, Cha +14
Skills Arcana +12, Deception +14, Insight +9, Intimidation +14, Perception +9, Persuasion +14
Condition Immunities prone, stunned
Senses Blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 5 miles
Challenge 23 (50,000 XP) **Proficiency** +7

Creature Sense. The beholder brain is aware of the presence of creatures within 5 miles of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each one's Intelligence score, but can't sense anything else about it. A creature protected by a *mind blank* spell, a *nondetection* spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.

Antimagic Cone. The beholder brain's central eye creates an area of antimagic, as in the *antimagic field* spell, in a 150-foot-cone. At the start of each of its turns, the beholder decides which way the cone faces and whether the cone is active. The area works against the beholder's own eye rays.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The beholder brain's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts, levitate*
1/day each: *dominate monster, plane shift* (self only)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the beholder brain fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The beholder brain has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Telepathic Hub. The beholder brain can use its telepathy to initiate and maintain telepathic conversations with up to ten creatures at a time. The elder brain can let those creatures telepathically hear each other while connected in this way.

Psychic Link. The beholder brain can form psychic links with creatures through several of its eye ray actions. Until the psychic link ends, the elder brain can perceive everything the target senses. The target becomes aware that something is linked to its mind once it is no longer unconscious, and the beholder brain can terminate the link at any time (no action required). The target can use an action on its turn to attempt to break the psychic link, doing so with a successful DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a successful save, the target takes 10 (3d6)psychic damage. The psychic link also ends if the target and the beholder brain are more than 5 miles apart, with no consequences to the target. The beholder brain can form psychic links with up to ten creatures at a time.

Actions

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 37 (8d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15) and takes 14 (2d8 + 5) psychic damage at the start of each of its turns until the grapple ends. The beholder brain can have up to four targets grappled at a time.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The beholder brain magically emits psychic energy. Creatures of the beholder brain's choice within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or take 49 (8d10 + 5) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Sense Thoughts. The beholder brain targets a creature with which it has a psychic link. The beholder brain gains insight into the target's reasoning, its emotional state, and thoughts that loom large in its mind (including things the target worries about, loves, or hates). The beholder brain can also make a Charisma (Deception) check with advantage to deceive the target's mind into thinking it believes one idea or feels a particular emotion. The target contests this attempt with a Wisdom (Insight) check. If the beholder brain succeeds, the mind believes the deception for 1 hour or until evidence of the lie is presented to the target.

continued

Eye Rays. The beholder brain shoots three of the following magical eye rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one to three targets it can see within 120 feet of it:

1. **Charm Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the beholder brain for 1 hour, or until the beholder harms the creature. The beholder brain forms a psychic link with the charmed creature.
2. **Paralyzing Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The beholder brain forms a psychic link with the paralyzed creature. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the paralyzed effect on itself on a success.
3. **Fear Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
4. **Slowing Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target's speed is halved for 1 minute. In addition, the creature can't take reactions, and it can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
5. **Enervation Ray.** The targeted creature must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
6. **Telekinetic Ray.** If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or the beholder brain moves it up to 30 feet in any direction. It is restrained by the ray's telekinetic grip until the start of the beholder brain's next turn or until the beholder brain is incapacitated.

   If the target is an object weighing 300 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, it is moved up to 30 feet in any direction. The beholder brain can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a door or a container.
7. **Sleep Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or fall asleep and remain unconscious for 1 minute. The beholder brain establishes a psychic link with the unconscious creature. The target awakens if it takes damage or another creature takes an action to wake it. This ray has no effect on constructs and undead.
8. **Petrification Ray.** The targeted creature must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.
9. **Disintegration Ray.** If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 54 (12d8) force damage. If this damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, its body becomes a pile of fine gray dust. If the target is a Huge or smaller nonmagical object or creation of magical force, it is disintegrated without a saving throw. If the target is a Huge or larger object or creation of magical force, this ray disintegrates a 20-foot cube of it.
10. **Death Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 66 (12d10) necrotic damage. The target dies if the ray reduces it to 0 hit points.

Legendary Actions

The beholder brain can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The elder brain regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Shatter Concentration. The beholder brain targets a creature within 120 feet it is either grappling or with which it has a psychic link. The target's concentration on a spell it has cast or an ability it is maintaining ends, and the target takes 19 (3d12 psychic damage).

Eye Ray. The beholder brain uses one random eye ray.

Psychic Pulse. The beholder brain targets a creature within 120 feet of it with which it has a psychic link. Enemies of the elder brain within 10 feet of that creature take 21 (6d6) psychic damage.

Psychic Command. The beholder brain casts the spell command (spell save DC 20) on one creature with which it has a telepathic link.

Sever Psychic Link. The beholder brain targets a creature within 120 feet of it with which it has a psychic link. The elder brain ends the link, causing the creature to have disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the end of the creature's next turn.


ELAINE HO

VILLA LOVIATI

by Arnout Brokking

Goddess: Loviatar | **Levels:** 17-20

Content Warnings: Self-Harm, Scars, Implied Sexual Content, Implied Drug Use

SYNOPSIS

On the eve of her wedding, Sita Obarskyr, princess of Cormyr, has vanished. The only clue: an invitation from Irina Ruthven, an avatar of Loviatar. Can the adventurers meet with Irina, face their hidden desires, and help Sita?

This adventure explores the theme that avoiding pain is avoiding life. It's light-hearted, kink-positive, and erotic. Eroticism is a dance with our senses. It's about anticipation, about wanting rather than getting. It is not pornography, and need not be sexual or romantic.

Because the characters' desires shape the narrative, it is important to talk to your players beforehand. Ask them if desire is something they want to explore in their characters, and if they are willing to share narrative responsibilities with you.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The region of Cormyr's most important wedding in decades is taking place tomorrow, but the bride-to-be has gone missing and the court is panicking. Desperate, Yeshana Spargo (she/her, half-elf **noble**, lawful neutral), the Obarskyr's chamberlain, sends a message to the characters asking for help in this delicate matter of the utmost importance.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

As any noble house knows, you gain as much from a well-arranged marriage as from bloody conquest, and at a lower body count. That's why the upcoming wedding between princess Sita Obarskyr of Cormyr and Lord Dushan Lodoro (he/him, human **noble**, chaotic good), the wealthiest bachelor in Harrowdale, is so important for the region. Negotiations have been tough. The parents of both parties repeatedly threatened to walk away, but last month a brittle accord was reached, and a date set: tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Sita Obarskyr has fallen in love with Zara Sternwood (they/them, elf **bard** (VGtM), neutral good), a minstrel hired for the feast. Every night since their meeting, the princess has prayed to Loviatar, Goddess of Pain, to take away the agony of her forbidden love. Then an invitation for a party held by the mysterious Lady Ruthven arrived. Leaving everything behind, Sita disappeared into the night.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Cilly Esser (she/her, dragonborn dancer, chaotic neutral). A dancer who will be performing at the wedding. She prayed for a release from failure. Likes: the gasp of the audience. Dislikes: counting steps; "if it's good enough for you, it's good enough for me."

Conrad Lux (he/him, dragonborn dancer, chaotic evil). Cilly's dancing partner. He prayed for a release of poverty. Likes: coins rattling; preening his feathers. Dislikes: Children, especially when they cry.

Dushan Lodoro (he/him, human **noble**, chaotic good). An ambitious young man. This union allows him to make a difference. Often at odds with his domineering parents. Likes: the scent of horses after a ride through the forest. Dislikes: cotton balls; people who say "traditions are our only compass towards peace."

Irina Ruthven (she/any, tiefling deity, neutral evil). Flamboyant, in control of everything and enjoying it, secretly the avatar of Loviatar. Likes: the chase, rather than the catch. Dislikes: people giving in.

Sita Obarskyr (she/her, human princess, neutral good). Love and duty play tug of war with her heart. Likes: poetry; the Dragonmere lapping at her feet. Dislikes: statues of her ancestors staring at her in the castle corridors.

Yeshana Spargo (she/her, half-elf **noble**, lawful neutral). In charge of the Obarskyr household since time immemorial. Likes: cleaning the royal seals and arranging them by size. Dislikes: the tick tock of a clock; pillow creases in her face.

Zara Sternwood (they/them, elf **bard** (VgtM), neutral good). A guarded writer. They carry the heart of their drowned husband in a locket. They prayed for a release from grief. Likes: stories by the fire; the feel of velvet. Dislikes: people standing too close.



H. "INK" KUGLER

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

First, consider how the characters know each other. Then have everyone write down a secret erotic fantasy for their character and a fear or insecurity that their character prefers not to look at. For example:

> *Sophie's character Godomar wishes Arzela would push him up against the wall and kiss him. He longs not to be the "strong" one, but he doesn't want to burden anyone. And fears he is too much.*

Gather the pieces of paper and divide them between the eight gray rooms on the map. These are the Chambers of Introspection. Then add Chambers of Exploration (see Chapter 3) to the remaining gray rooms until you run out of space or out of rooms.

Once you've done this, distribute four tablets between the Chambers of Introspection. All four of these tablets will need to be collected to open Villa Loviati's cellar door and complete the adventure. If there are fewer than four Chambers of Introspection, or if characters fail a challenge, distribute the remaining tablets among the Chambers of Exploration. Chambers that don't contain a tablet instead offer a *favoured collar of Loviatar* (see adventure appendix) as a reward.

RUNNING CHAMBERS OF INTROSPECTION

Chambers of Introspection are created through collaborative storytelling. When the adventurers enter, everything is mist until the character whose desire is on the paper joins them. They are the Dreamer. The Dreamer shares their desire and fear and determines if they are alone in their fantasy or if there are others present. Everyone who is not an active character in the scene (including the DM) becomes the Choir.

The fantasy is a conversation between the Dreamer and the Choir. The Choir starts by asking: "Where are you?" The Dreamer sets the scene. They describe where they are and what they're doing. When they pause, the Choir can:

- Agree and ask a follow-up question to further the scene;
  Yes, it's dark outside. Does Godomar join Arzela by the fire?
- Agree and ask for a modification or concession;
  Yes, Godomar takes his wet clothes off, but what if he sheepishly clings to his undergarments? How does Arzela react?
- Disagree and request a different direction;
  No, Arzela is not interested in wine, but she could wrap her arm around him and pull him close? What would Godomar do?
- Ask a question to test the Dreamer's resolve;
  What about the voice in Godomar's head telling him that Arzela won't want to be with someone "weak"?

Together, make a scene filled with as much longing and tension as possible. Always move the scene forward, closer to the Dreamer's desire. Right before they get all they want, the DM gives the Dreamer the choice between giving in to their desire or not. Then the scene fades to black.

> DM: She leans in to kiss him, asking him to surrender what does Gondomar do?
>
> Dreamer: Godomar's lips are dry and thirsty as old paper. 'It's okay,' Arzela says. Her fingers trail over his skin. 'I'm here.' He gives in, closes his eyes, and when she wraps herself around him, her touch breaks the chains that held his heart for so long.
>
> DM: The dream fades, the mist returns. Skin still tingling, you find yourself in the villa again.

Want to try once beforehand? Here's a simple set-up:

> Cinderella wants to be seen, to be coveted; however she has trouble standing up for herself and fears there's nothing special about her. This scene starts as she is whisked away from normal life to the ball. There she sees someone extraordinary. The Dreamer describes the ball and this person. Does the Choir agree?

CHAPTER 1 – THE FIRST PATH TO TRUTH

Yeshana Spargo has called the adventurers to Castle Obarskyr, the royal seat of power in Cormyr, where the wedding preparations are in full swing. A pair of Purple Dragon Knights wait outside, arguing whether the famed knight Da'alag the Chaste was real or a metaphor for chivalric ideals. They escort the characters to the Chamber of Crossed Dogs, named after a carving of leaping hounds, where Yeshana and Dushan await.

Yeshana offers a king's ransom if they return Sita without causing an incident. She hands over the invitation found in Sita's bedroom, together with a poem: *"Absence; 'Ah! she is gone—and I alone!—'"*. Unbeknownst to them, the handwritten poem is a gift from Zara. Dushan fears that if Sita is not returned his parents might take it as a personal affront and resort to violence. He fears not only for her safety, but for the safety of many.

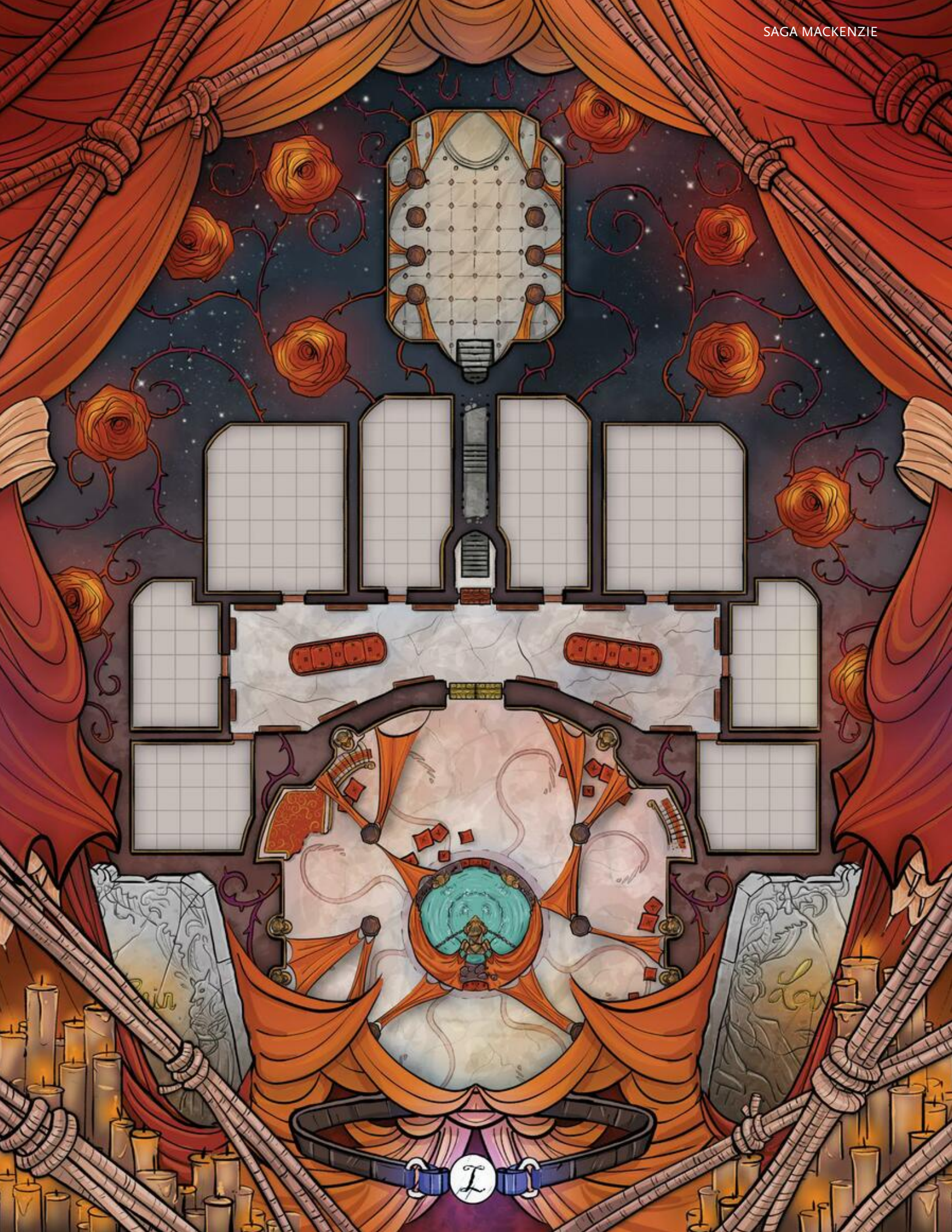
Neither knows much about Irina Ruthven. No one knows where she comes from, but she owns a villa a short distance from Suzail.

CHAPTER 2 – ALL THAT'S BEST OF DARK AND BRIGHT

Irina Ruthven's manor boasts spectacular views. In the mornings, the Dragonmere shimmers like diamonds, while in the evening, the sun paints the cliffs and crags of the Storm Horns the colour of fire. In between, nestled in vineyards, groves, and pleasure gardens, stands Villa Loviati. Two rows of marble pillars depicting naked figures flank the front door. Its knocker is a brass hand holding a flogger. Irina greets the adventurers with a smile. She has been expecting them.

Irina escorts the characters to the ballroom, where blindfolded musicians entertain a mix of inebriated guests. There's song and dance, elaborate costumes and naked skin, good food, better drinks, and the best company of artists and aristocracy. All were invited to forget about their pain. They include Zara Sternwood, Cilly Esser, and Conrad Lux.

Irina offers to lead the adventurers to Sita if they agree to play a game. They must find the answer to four questions within the villa. When asked what questions, she says that if she told, they would guess. And she doesn't like guessing games. Only one room can be opened at a time, and a room cannot be visited twice.



IT'S A PARTY, NOT A SLEEPOVER
The villa is its own demi-plane. Characters cannot take a long rest while inside. Irina has cast *forbiddance* on the rooms. Characters that leave the house aren't easily let in again.

CHAPTER 3 – VILLA LOVIATI

The hallway beyond the ballroom is a mosaic of marble. Paintings on the walls depict salacious scenes: a couple perform the Nimbrian Rocking Chair; a naked man is caught in a wild hunt. Their faces are ecstasy and agony. Upon closer viewing, there's a recurring figure in all of the scenes: Irina. The age of the paintings varies from ancient to recent. Irina, however, always looks the same.

Doors in the villa are made of cherry wood. When one is opened, the others magically lock. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 18) or **DC 27 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** opens a second door, behind which there's only dust-covered furniture. In the center of each door, a small symbol is carved. Each Chamber of Introspection has a symbol relevant to the fantasy within (for example the symbol of a bear—strength—for Godomar). For Chambers of Exploration, see below.

Across the gallery is a large arched door, bearing a depiction of a rose bush with opal thorns and ruby flowers. It has four indentations where the handle should be. This is the door to the cellar and the final scene. It can only be opened by pressing four tablets from the Chambers of Introspection and Exploration against the indentations.

If the adventurers return to the ballroom, they find more and more people missing as each guest walks their own path towards the inner sanctum.

CHAMBERS OF INTROSPECTION

When the adventurers enter a Chamber of Introspection, play out the corresponding desire as detailed in the "Running Chambers of Introspection" section.

When the fantasy fades, if the Dreamer didn't give in to their desire, they feel a yearning to return and must succeed on a **DC 19 Wisdom saving throw** or taker 13 (2d12) psychic damage. If the Dreamer did give in, a stone tablet appears in their hands (or if there is no tablet in this room, a *favoured collar*). One side says "Pain", the other "Love". Irina's voice echoes through the mist: "What will you do now you know?" The other adventurers have also seen the dream and can offer advice.

CHAMBERS OF EXPLORATION

The Butterfly Chamber (Butterfly Symbol)

A burlesque room with a raised stage in its center. Upon entering the room, and then once every 10 minutes, the adventurers must succeed on a **DC 18 Constitution saving throw** or age 1d4 x 10 years.

Two ageless people hang from the ceiling above the stage. Wrapped in knotted ropes, they look like gigantic butterflies. They wear nothing but the cords that hold them. What little skin you see between the threads is criss crossed with scars, both old and new.

Beneath them, trembling, is the spectral shape of Yeshana looking older than ever. She doesn't respond when spoken to, staring only at her weathered hands. When the characters approach, the bound figures offer to end Yeshana's nightmare if the adventurers know the answer to their nature.

"I am the reason you run," one says. "I am the reason you scream. I am the cause of your pain. I am a cage from which you will never be free."

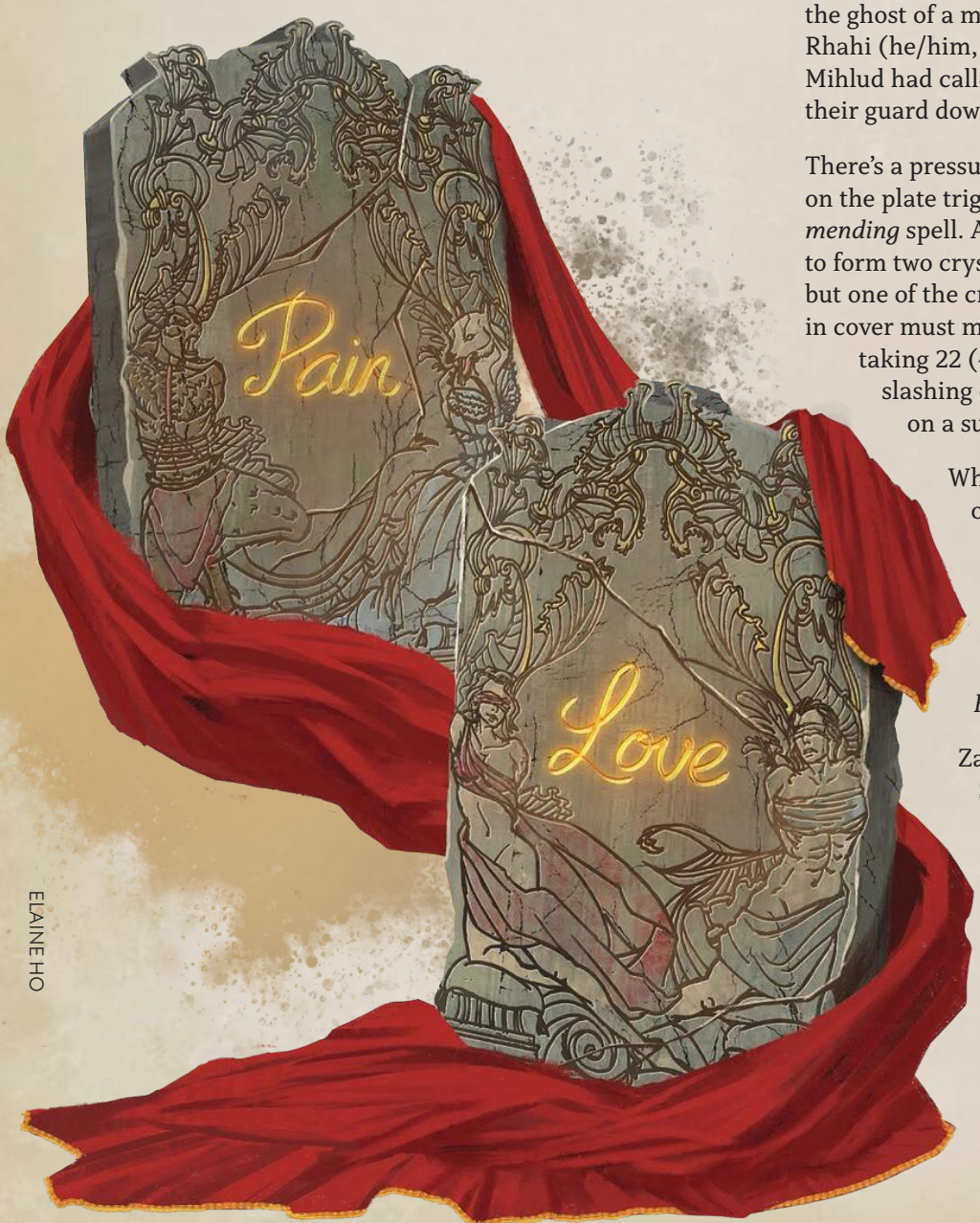
"I am the reason you quiver," the other continues. "I am the reason you scream. I am the cause of your pleasure. I am a tool to create many things, including me."

The answer is: the body.

The figures are talkative and, before long, suggest asking for a clue. A character who does feels a searing pain, taking 21 (6d6) acid damage as a hint carves itself in their flesh. Possibilities are: "I am that upon which this is written," or spell out "BODY" one clue at a time. When the correct answer is given, an unnaturally long and thin arm appears from between the ropes, holding a tablet or *favoured collar of Loviatar*. Then the ropes coil and the figures embrace, disappearing in their hempen cocoon.

Yeshana can now see the adventurers. She explains that she had a dream filled with all she wished for; seeing the jagged beauty of the Spine of the World, and lying naked with a stranger under stranger stars. She was young and her skin was soft, and they were warm and strong and eager. Then it vanished, and she found herself caught in despair, fearing herself too old for those pleasures. Maybe the wedding can give her life meaning instead?

The adventurers have a moment to talk to her before Yeshana hears her name called. She wakes up and is gone.



ELAINE HO

The Chamber Of Shards (Broken Heart Symbol)

Shards of glass cover the floor. Cracked mirrors line the walls. An opaque wall of fire cuts the room in half. The temperature in the room feels normal. A voice calls for help from beyond. In the mirrors, the fragmented faces of Sita and a young man shimmer in and out of view. Characters with *detect magic* active notice there is illusion magic at work. However, the fire is real: It's the cool temperature that's the illusion. The wall of fire deals 36 (8d8) fire damage to any creature that moves within 10 feet of it or starts its turn there.

On the other side of the fire stands a statue of Zara Sternwood with two heart-shaped holes in their chest. At its feet, teardrops spring out of thin air and fall on the stones below. Characters that can see invisibility notice the ghost of a man weeping—Zara's husband, Mihlud Rhahi (he/him, human **commoner**, chaotic good). Mihlud had called out for help, wishing Zara could let their guard down and find happiness again.

There's a pressure plate in front of the statue. Stepping on the plate triggers a *glyph of warding* which casts a *mending* spell. All the shards of glass fly across the room to form two crystal hearts on the ground. Mihlud is gone, but one of the crystals has a faint glow. Each creature not in cover must make a **DC 23 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 22 (4d10) piercing damage and 11 (2d10) slashing on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save.

When the crystals are placed into the statue of Zara, it wakes and demands if they know what it's like to lose someone. The door locks. Tears stream from their eyes, dousing the fire and filling the room at a rate of 3 feet per round, reaching the ceiling after 4 rounds (see the *Player's Handbook* for rules on suffocation).

Zara fears the fierceness of their passion for Sita, and dreads losing her like they lost Mihlud. If the characters can earn their trust and convince them love only works when you risk it all, or if they can make Zara see that they always carry Mihlud with them and that love is never lost, they stop crying. Stone transforms into flesh and Zara stands before them wearing only their locket, still glowing.

Vulnerable but unafraid, they hold out a tablet or *favoured collar of Loviatar*. Zara accompanies the adventurers if asked, otherwise they make their own way to the cellar.

Alternatively, the chamber door can be broken open or its lock picked, causing water to spill into the hallway and the statue to topple over, smashing on the floor. Breaking the statue also stops the water. It has an AC of 17 and 65 hit points. Casting *dispel magic* has no effect on the statue. If the statue is broken or the door opened, the water recedes, but there is no reward, and Zara is absent in the final scene.

Danse Macabre (Dancing Skeletons Symbol)

This chamber is a theater decorated with exotic tapestries. Cilly Esser and Conrad Lux are practicing their Dances of Decadence, Lust, and Ecstasy, which they plan to premiere at the wedding. Cilly is a perfectionist, and her fear of failure is tearing her physical and mental well-being apart. Her toes bleed and she is covered in bruises, but still she is unhappy. Desperate, she asks the adventurers for help with their routine.

The characters must describe how they add to the show and its themes, coming up with music, lyrics, moves, and special effects, and making an applicable **DC 16 skill check**. Once they succeed on three different checks, Cilly listens to reason. She accepts that mistakes are part of life. She rummages through her bag and hands over a tablet or *favoured collar of Loviatar*.

Alternatively, they can convince Cilly to rest and not kill herself in the pursuit of perfection by talking about their own failures, or that imperfection is part of Decadence, Lust, and Ecstasy. Conrad, who has been riding Cilly's coat-tails for a while now, disagrees. He insists fame and fortune await them if she only pushes on a little further.

If the characters run out of new ideas, Cilly sends them away and returns to her practice with terrifying fervour. She is absent from the final scene and succumbs to fatigue before the wedding.

The Error Of Knight Errantry (Purple Dragon Symbol)

This room is made of crude stone blocks and filled with the smells of candles and incense. A ragged knight stands in front of a shrine. Long ago, Da'alag the Chaste, Commander of the Purple Dragon Knights (he/him, undead **death knight**, lawful neutral), vowed to cleanse this villa of "vice" to atone for his sins. However, Irina overpowered him and cut him into pieces. Over time he reformed but missing one thing: his famed purity, which she locked in a box.

Despite being free to go, Da'alag anxiously guards his purity. He attacks at the slightest provocation unless a character succeeds on a **DC 30 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check**. Da'alag has the following ability:

> ***Summon Wights (Recharge 6).*** *As an action, Da'alag summons 1d4 + 1* **wights** *of fallen comrades in unoccupied spaces he can see within 30 feet.*

Defeating Da'alag doesn't kill him. When he falls, he reforms and calls the fight a draw, offering to parley.

> On the shrine lies a box of exquisite beauty in the suggestive shape of a feminine flower. When touched, the lips move and a voice says: "Call me by a name that makes me laugh, and I will open."

Da'alag, too prudish to even look at the box, blames the temptress Irina. His virtue forbids him to name the box and he is thus imprisoned. When someone makes up a suitably funny name, the box opens. At first glance, it is empty. "Purity is a lie we tell ourselves to feel superior," it says. Da'alag, cowed, crumbles to dust, finally at peace.

Reaching into the box, a character finds a small button. Pressing the button opens a hidden compartment with a tablet or *favoured collar of Loviatar*.

The Final Door

When the characters have four tablets, Irina calls them to the cellar. Holding the tablets against the indentations opens the door. Stone steps spiral downwards.

If they have failed to collect four tablets, Irina offers those that were unsuccessful a second chance. If they confess their failure and pledge themselves to one year of service, Irina hands over the missing tablets.

If the adventurers tamper with the cellar door by breaking it down (AC 20 and 72 hit points), casting *dispel magic* (DC 22), or succeeding on a **DC 32 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** to tinker with the indentations, the stairs don't lead to the inner sanctum, but to a cave where scared faces are drawn on the stone in ochre and blood. In rattling chains is Corsair, a **sibriex** (MToF) with the variant Flesh Warping rule, who represents the adventurers' undefeated fears. At its command, 2d4 **rutterkin** (MToF) shackled to the walls detach themselves and attack. Defeating the sibriex leads back to the hallway, and a locked cellar door.

CONCLUSION – THE CAVE YOU FEAR TO ENTER

The steps lead to a marble hall with similar pillars as outside. Hooded figures, including the guests, part to reveal Irina standing regal in the center of the room. Next to her, bound like a cocooned butterfly, hangs Sita. Her face is serene, her eyes closed.

"There are only four questions of value in life," Irina says. "What is sacred? What's our spirit made of? What's worth living for, and what's worth dying for? The answer to each is the same: love and pain. One cannot exist without the other."

A silent, almost imperceptible wave rolls through the hall. Not much has changed about Irina; her tail and horns are gone. And everything has changed about Irina. She is a cloudy pond turned clear ocean. She is the sun burned through the mist, her presence almost painful to look upon. In the dizzying depths of her eyes lie the woes and wonders of life; everything thought but never written; everything wished but never gotten. And without her saying so much as a word, you know her. Down into the marrow of your bones, you know her for who she is: Loviatar.

Loviatar smiles. "Avoiding pain, hiding from shame, is losing life. There has been no victory. No love without pain."

As Loviatar explains how Sita called on her to end the torment of her love for Zara, the ropes uncoil and the princess opens her eyes. Now it's up to the adventurers, Loviatar says, to give Sita the advice she needs. She asks each adventurer for an answer in turn. If the adventurers are split, Sita agrees with the winner of an **opposed Charisma (Persuasion) check**.

Before Loviatar lets them leave, she invites everyone carrying a *favoured collar of Loviatar* to become her apostle, spreading her message. A big task, but as they have learned, nothing of worth comes easily.

EPILOGUE

Her choice made, Sita's life is forever changed. She can never return to the way she was before. And that's how it is for all of us. We can never go back, only forward. Below are some possible endings

Choosing her ancestral duty—and the happiness of many—over love, Sita is a bride made of porcelain and bone. Her beauty is fragile, almost translucent. Although the country prospers, and Dushan proves a fair and compassionate co-ruler, a distance of unspoken words and quiet regrets grows between them. Over the years Sita diminishes, turning hard but brittle. Zara, whose heart-wrenching performance at the wedding transforms Cormyrian bardic tradition, retires to Ambrath, on the southern coast of Faerûn, where they start a refuge for the destitute.

Choosing love and passion over the responsibility of her birth, Sita and Zara flee the country and disappear from the annals of the world. However, for years after their departure, the Sword Coast is abuzz with rumours of a mysterious bard and their foreign princess. Meanwhile, Cormyr and Harrowdale teeter on the brink of war until Dushan's father perishes in a convenient hunting accident. An uneasy truce is reached not long after, but it comes too late for those who have lost their lives in the border skirmishes.

Refusing to accept the binary choice between love and duty, between Dushan and Zara, Sita confesses her feelings to the groom. Together the three decide to cut their own path, breaking from outdated conventions and expectations. Their wedding is a glorious and scandalous affair. His family is not pleased, but some deft political manoeuvring and a fortunate hunting accident that befalls his father allow Dushan to calm emotions. The three share governing duties and parental responsibilities for their three sons equally. They fail, and fall many a time, but that's life. And they've gone all-in.

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

ITEMS

Favoured Collar of Loviatar

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

A collar that changes appearance to compliment the outfit of the wearer, but for a stylized L in the center.

Attunement. To attune to this item, you must pledge to inflict meaningful pain on at least one creature every day. When you attune to it, you gain immunity to one damage type of your choice. If you fail to inflict pain on a day, this damage immunity becomes a damage vulnerability until you inflict meaningful pain again.

Critical Failings. While wearing the collar, any critical hit against you becomes a normal hit, and whenever you roll a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, you take 4d6 damage of the attack's damage type.

Focus Pain. As a bonus action while wearing the collar, you give yourself advantage on your next attack roll. You can use this ability three times, and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Shared Torment. While wearing the *collar*, you can use an action to summon 1d4 + 2 clerics of Loviatar (**priests** with 54 hit points). Once you use this action, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

Spellcasting. The *collar* has 7 charges and regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. While wearing it, you can use an action and expend 1 charge to cast one of the following spells from it (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks): *alter self*, *cure wounds*, *detect thoughts*, *spiritual weapon*, or *wall of fire*.

Touch of Agony. While wearing the *collar*, you can use your action to touch a creature, inflicting it with wracking pain. It must succeed on a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** or take 4d10 psychic damage and be stunned until the start of your next turn.

Destroying the Collar. The *collar* disintegrates if the wearer turns away from their fantasy and gives in to their fear once more. Life with the *collar* can only be lived to the fullest.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I pitched for Loviatar, I knew I wanted to do something different—to step away from the outdated image of the goddess, and give players the opportunity to explore the inner workings of their characters. Villa Loviati (a reference to Byron & the Shelleys) gave me the opportunity to do just that. Violence and trauma are common themes in roleplaying games, but desire, fantasy, and longing are powerful narrative tools as well. As such, I feel Villa Loviati works both as a one-shot and as an interlude in a long-running campaign with established characters. I hope you (and your players) enjoy this adventure as much as I did writing it.

I'd like to thank everyone who has helped bring this adventure to life: Elaine, Saga, and Ink for the amazing art; Bridie and Kai for their invaluable editorial help; my partners Olga and Camilla for their endless support; all the playtesters for their enthusiasm and feedback; David, Gwen, Lore, and Jess for believing in this crazy adventure, and all my *Uncaged* colleagues for being a great creative family.

AUTHOR BIO

Arnout Brokking (he/she) is a Dutch writer of fiction, film, and (immersive) games. Arnout believes in the power of story to shape both our world and ourselves. He lives in the Netherlands together with his beloved Camilla and Olga and their three children. You can find him online at:

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KATA KEMI

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

by Cat Evans

Goddess: Shar | **Levels:** 17-18

SYNOPSIS

When the moon vanishes from the sky, Selûne's clergy are certain her sister Shar, goddess of night and secrets, has abducted and imprisoned her. A group of heroes must cross the Astral Sea, breach Shar's Towers of Night, and rescue the goddess of the moon from captivity.

ADVENTURE HOOK

At this level, characters are likely to be heroes of great power and renown. When the moon goes out, they're the first people Selûne's priests come to for help.

- Characters with lands or titles have a responsibility to the people under their protection.
- If characters are footloose or mercenaries, the cult of Selûne can pay well for their assistance—they promise a miracle from the goddess herself.
- Characters serving a higher power as clerics, paladins, warlocks, or in any other capacity, are instructed by their patron (probably through signs and portents) to journey to the Astral Plane and set matters right.

This adventure works best if the characters are in a large city where high-ranking clergy are likely to be present, but can start anywhere, as at this tier of play, the characters and their allies are capable of rapid travel.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The clerics are wrong. Shar and Selûne aren't feuding sisters but two aspects of a dyad. Humans idolise Selûne and suppress and minimise Shar. They've forced the two sides of the dyad out of balance, and the dark side of the moon has finally rebelled. Shar has suppressed Selûne, not kidnapped her.

All Shar wants is to feel her full power—but that's just another imbalance. To save the Forgotten Realms, the characters will have to find a way to restore equilibrium.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Dark Side of the Moon assumes a party of five 17th to 18th-level characters. For larger parties or higher level characters, increase the number of antagonists, and/or increase their maximum hit points and inflict maximum damage instead of using average values/rolling.

CHAPTER 1 – INTO THE DARK

The world is plunged into chaos when the moon goes out. Selûne's priests solicit the characters' help. The characters cross to the Astral Plane.

THE LIGHTLESS CITY

At the end of a perfectly normal day, the sun sets... and the moon doesn't rise. As it should be the first night of the full moon, this causes some consternation. Characters proficient in the Nature skill know that in the long term, this is catastrophic for the world. It will disrupt tides, seasons, and animals' hunting and mating cycles. The more immediate problem is the gleeful manner in which Shar's clergy step up to seize control of the night.

To demonstrate the danger the cult of Shar poses to regular people, roll or choose one or more encounters from the Cult Encounters Table below. These encounters aren't meant to challenge the characters: they're easily capable of standing up to a few clerics and mercenaries.

LIGHT IN THE DARK

If the characters don't head straight to the priests of Selûne to ask questions, her high priest comes to them just before dawn. Selûne's emissary is **Anrathe Corasune** (they/them, half-elf, neutral good).

Anrathe tells the characters what they believe to have happened, based on their divinations and knowledge of scripture. Characters proficient in Religion know Anrathe's explanation makes sense according to the teachings of both Shar and Selûne. Those who succeed on a **DC 25 Intelligence (Religion) check** know Anrathe's isn't the only possible explanation but would need several days of research to pin down the alternatives.

ANRATHE CORASUNE

Anrathe is a tall, fat, pale half-elf with short-cropped, white hair. The upper part of their right ear is missing (an old adventuring injury), and they wear bindings of silver cloth around their wrists and hands for support (injuries from decades of spellcasting).

They're scared for their congregation and junior members of their priesthood, and concerned for their goddess, but they're hiding it well. Their fear manifests only as anxious clasping and unclasping of their hands.

Anrathe believes everything they tell the characters. They're doing what they think is best.

Anrathe's Account

Anrathe explains the following:

- Shar has kidnapped Selûne. The moon goddess must be alive, as Anrathe and the rest of her clergy still have access to the magic she grants them.
- The sister goddesses of the moon and darkness have always been at odds. They once famously battled above Waterdeep. Shar has finally tipped the balance in her favour.
- Anrathe fears that terrified people will turn to Shar's worship, which means turning to evil deeds. This is already happening on a small scale (see #3 on the Cult Encounters Table).

CULT ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1d6	Description	Antagonists
1	A group of Shar's clerics storm a temple of Selûne, murdering the priests, despoiling the shrine, and declaring the temple theirs.	Four **priests**, two **knights**, eight **bandits**.
2	A priest of Shar auctions off secrets in a city plaza, written on black scrolls sealed with glistening black wax.	One **priest**, one **blackguard** (VGtM) bodyguard, six **archers**.
3	Dozens of people cluster around a temple of Shar, begging for protection. The price of admission to her cult is a bath in black water and the forgetting of a precious memory.	Four **priests**, two **knights**, eight **bandits**.
4	Assassins equipped with cloaks formed of living shadow attack a high-profile city figure.	Three **assassins**.
5	Clerics of Shar demand tribute from magic users to access the Weave. Unless the characters kill the archmage, bards, sorcerers, and wizards who don't pay lose access to their highest level spell slots.	Three **priests**, one **archmage**.
6	Bands of shadows roam the streets, preying on bystanders.	Thirteen **shadows**.

- The characters are the only people powerful enough to free Selûne from Shar's prison.
- To free Selûne, they need to cross into the Astral Plane, travel to Shar's stronghold the Towers of Night atop the highest mountain on the plane, breach the tower, and rescue Selûne.
- Fighting Shar in the Astral plane would be unwise: she's a goddess, therefore indestructible.
- However, Anrathe can provide a *net of stars* (see adventure appendix). This unique, one use, magic item makes it possible for the characters to fight Shar. They can't kill her forever, merely disrupt her essence for a brief period. Warn the players of this in advance: you're not trying to trick them here, just make them consider whether violence should be their go-to solution.
- It would be more effective to bribe or threaten Shar. She likes powerful secrets, loss (in the sense of "loss of a loved one" or "loss of one's faculties"), and darkness.

If the characters have a reputation for selfless heroism, Anrathe is surprised by any suggestion they should reward them for their aid. They're restoring the natural order of the world, after all. If it seems the characters aren't motivated by the desire to do good for its own sake, Anrathe promises them a future miracle from Selûne, after the goddess has been freed.



KATA KEMI

PROACTIVE PLAYER CHARACTERS

Characters can find out any of the information in Anrathe's Account through their own methods and connections. Don't give them anything that points to another explanation: everyone, including Shar's clergy and other gods, has drawn the same conclusion as Anrathe.

Planar Travel

The characters probably have their own way to get to the Astral Plane (a *plane shift* spell, for example). If not, Anrathe can cast the spell for them the following night (they need to rest first, and prepare the spell), taking them to the city's High Temple of Selûne, a half-mile-tall spire, its highest levels ringed by swirling clouds. The ritual space is a stone circle, 30 feet in diameter, open to the night sky.

Once on the Astral Plane, the characters need to find the Towers of Night on their own. Before they go, Anrathe explains that destination is a matter of intent: if the characters want to go to the Towers of Night, they'll get there. They can also learn this with a successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check**.

Darkness Within

However the characters travel, they arrive in a place of profound darkness. It's warm, cosy, and full of soft sounds: the rasp of breathing, the gurgle of digestion. They're inside an astral being, **sentient darkness** (see adventure appendix), sent by Shar to dispatch the intruders (of course she knows they're coming, she's a deity).

Development

Once the characters escape the sentient darkness, they need to press on with their mission: find the Towers of Night, and save Selûne.

CHAPTER 2 — DARK ROADS

The characters cross the Astral Sea, learn more about Shar, and trespass in the Towers of Night.

THE ASTRAL PLANE

The Astral Plane is a great silvery sea, its few features constructed from the thoughts and dreams of denizens. Movement is possible by force of will alone: a creature's walking speed is equal to 3 × its Intelligence score. For more information, see Chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Unless the characters take special precautions, the journey to the Towers of Night takes 30 hours.

DISCOVERIES

These short vignettes break up the characters' journey through the Astral Sea and provide them with clues to what awaits at the Towers of Night.

Shar's Pain

Two hours into the journey, the Astral Sea blackens to darkness around the characters. Those with **passive Perception 12 or higher** hear something following them, lurching along and wailing to itself. It's a loping, long-limbed, grey form that radiates wisps of black shadow every time it screams. Its body and limbs trail chains forged of silvery light. Characters within 5 feet see luminous charms depicting phases of the moon and others made of pure darkness, hanging from the chains.

The creature, an astral being formed of Shar's pain, follows the characters howling plaintively. Characters who can understand its Deep Speech make out fragments of words:

> "TRAPPED SO LONG; SMOTHERED AND CHOKED; STRANGLED BY MOONLIGHT."

Shar's Pain doesn't harm the characters unless attacked (use the statistics of a **star spawn hulk** (MtoF) with double hit points and damage), but does attract astral predators (1d3 **lonely** or **lost** (MtoF) every 2 hours). If destroyed, Shar's Pain reforms 30 feet behind the characters after 1 hour, and resumes following them.

If they dominate, intimidate, or befriend Shar's Pain, it leads them to the Towers of Night. The group still has the other encounters listed in this chapter, but Shar's Pain takes them directly to the Petitioner's Gate on reaching the Towers of Night, providing them with a fairly easy way inside.

Dark Moon Temple

Sixteen hours into the journey, the characters stumble across the echo of a temple long vanished from the material world. Amongst the pillars and crumbled black and white masonry is a statue depicting a two-faced goddess. In one hand she holds a jet sphere of darkness, and in the other a marble half moon. The figure is immediately recognisable as depicting both Shar and Selûne as two aspects of the same goddess.

This is a safe place to rest.

Githyanki Refugees

Twenty-four hours into the journey, the characters see a group of githyanki (six adult **githyanki warriors**, two juvenile noncombatants) accompanied by a **young red dragon** travelling towards them. The githyanki, led by Tuleime (she/her, **githyanki gish** (MtoF), lawful evil; curt speech, military bearing, laughter lines around her eyes), don't want a fight. They wave the characters over to issue a warning, though they only speak Gith.

If the characters can't understand Tuleime, she casts *tongues* on herself. Once the two groups can communicate, Tuleime explains:

- Shar has been in pain and out of balance for centuries. It's common knowledge on the Astral Plane that Selûne's clergy unconsciously suppress the 'dark' aspect of their goddess. All that pent-up power has resulted in Shar assuming control.
- The goddess is at war with herself and will probably destroy this entire region of the plane with the external manifestation of her inner conflict. She'll definitely destroy herself.
- Tuleime strongly advises the characters leave the plane immediately.

ALLIES

The characters can convince Tuleime and some of her warband to follow them into the Towers of Night. This requires a successful **DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, lowered to DC 20 if:

1. The characters provide a demonstration of power sufficient to survive a goddess's rage (such as destroying Shar's Pain).
2. The characters convincingly promise they can keep Tuleime's people alive.
3. The characters convince them they'll be able to extract a reward from Shar.

THE TOWERS OF NIGHT

The Towers of Night loom up before the characters: a trio of interconnected black towers atop a dizzyingly tall black mountain peak, like holes in the universe. The rules of Astral travel persist: focus on the destination, and move by force of will.

Entrance

Reality stabilises near the towers. They're still made from Astral mist, but they're a very convincing simulacrum of adamantine. There are no doors: visitors aren't welcome.

PETITIONER'S GATE

A successful **DC 30 Intelligence (Religion) check** reminds a character there's one way inside: the black well outside the walls, into which dead worshippers of Shar speak their life story, that they may find peace in forgetting their identity. Unless Shar's Pain is guiding the group, finding the well requires two hours of searching and a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check**. Characters who leap into the well must choose something to surrender: a treasured memory, a skill or tool proficiency, or 1d4 + 2 levels of known or prepared spells. Characters who don't surrender something must succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom saving throw** or forget the last year of their life. Whatever is lost returns when they return to the Material Plane.

The well is full of swirling memories, whispered too softly to make out words, and the current carries the characters up to a black stone fountain in a courtyard just within the walls.

OTHER ENTRANCES

Characters at this power level should be able to reason out other ways inside. Options include:

- ***Magical Force.*** Because they're not made of physical substance, the towers are immune to magic such as *stone shape*. They have vulnerability to psychic damage; characters who succeed on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** understand almost everything on the Astral Plane is a psychic construct, so psychic damage can be highly effective.
- ***Physical Force.*** A 5-foot-cube section of wall has AC 18, 120 hit points, a damage threshold of 30, and vulnerability to psychic damage. Destroying a wall attracts two **shadow demons** per character present, who fight to kill the intruders. They're intelligent, and can be intimidated (DC 20) into taking the characters directly to Shar, dragging them bodily through the tower walls. This inflicts 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.
- ***Changing Form.*** There are numerous arrow slits small enough for a Tiny creature to squeeze through.

CASTLE INTERIOR

The interior is shrouded in magical darkness and patrolled by groups of 4 (1d6 + 1) **shadow mastiff alphas** (VGtM), which howl to summon 7 (2d6) **shadow demons** when attacked. The shadow demons, in turn, alert Shar's vizier Tothis (see "Black Wings") and Shar herself.

RECONNAISSANCE

Exploring the Towers of Night could take days, leading characters through endless store rooms, temples, shrines to night itself, chambers of whispering secrets, and tight corridors that evoke the fear of a knife in the dark. Characters who succeed on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Stealth) check** explore unhindered; those who fail encounter shadow mastiff alphas and shadow demons—and eventually Tothis—as described in the Castle Interior section above. If more than one character explores, make a group ability check (if at least half the group succeeds, they all do; otherwise they all fail). Briefly narrate a recon expedition, allowing them to see the characters and locations described elsewhere in this section.

Cult of the Sisters

One area of the towers is illuminated in soft, cool light. Here, identical grey humanoids with barely discernible facial features perform endless ritual service to the goddess united, the Shar-Selûne dyad. These clergy explain the goddesses are aspects of the same being. They've worked tirelessly to restore balance all these millennia, soothing Shar's pain while she was subjugated and minimised in favour of the moon goddess. They warn the characters the only way to save both goddesses is to restore balance between them. They don't know how to do that.

Black Wings

After thirty minutes of wandering around the towers, Shar's vizier, the huge raven made of shadow named Tothis, finds them and enfolds them in their wings. While Tothis (they/them, astral being, neutral evil) is initially inclined to execute the characters, the group can convince the raven to take them to Shar with an appeal



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to the vizier's loyalty to their goddess: if she doesn't find balance, she'll die. This can require a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, or if the party prefers to handle this through roleplaying, without a skill check, let them. Either way, Tothis won't trust the party if only one of them speaks (unless there's only one character in the party): they have to hear at least two, preferably more, of the characters agree.

If combat occurs, use the stats for an **ancient black dragon** (removing the Tail attack, and replace any acid damage with necrotic damage) for Tothis.

DEVELOPMENT

Either the characters find Shar, or Shar finds them. Either way, Chapter 3 commences shortly.

CHAPTER 3 – TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

The characters confront Shar-Selûne and restore balance. Or not.

CONFRONTATION

Shar-Selûne waits in her throne room, a 50-foot-wide, 200-foot-long chamber drenched in nonmagical darkness (which intensifies to magical darkness if combat occurs). The goddess is a female figure thirteen feet tall, reclining on a throne of shadows. She's inclined to entertain her visitors for a few minutes before she erases them from existence.

Shar asks about the situation on the Material Plane, and is pleased by any indication that Selûne's clergy are suffering or that more people are turning to her worship. She's proud of her newfound freedom and unwilling to give it up. She's well aware that her overthrow of her Selûne aspect will destroy her, but she doesn't care: better to enjoy a brief, glorious embrace of power than an eternity of submission.

Sweet Reason

Ultimately, the best outcome for the world of Toril is for the characters to convince Shar to let Selûne share power. Doing so requires a group skill challenge. Each character gets to speak once, making a **Charisma or Intelligence check** (their choice) with an appropriate skill. There's no DC. Instead, the characters must achieve a combined total of at least 20 × the number of characters on the outcomes of their roll (i.e., 20 for a single character; 40 for a pair; 60 for a trio).

Encourage characters to roleplay their speech, or at least summarise their arguments, by letting characters who do so roll with advantage. Award an additional +5 to the result of any character who:

- Expresses they understand how it feels to be kept down, oppressed, and treated as inferior and undesirable.
- Suggests that dying just so her sister ceases to exist makes Shar the selfish, evil creature people paint her as.
- Credibly promises to spread the truth about Shar's nature and validity across the Material Plane.
- Has befriended Shar's Pain (award this bonus only once).

The Worst of All Worlds

If the characters fail to convince Shar, or don't try, they can still fight her. She uses the **manifestation of Shar** stat block (see adventure appendix).

Development

Defeated or victorious, the characters return to the Material Plane.

Conclusion

There are two ways this adventure can end. Either the characters convinced Shar-Selûne to rebalance their twin natures and exist in harmony, in which case life goes on (albeit with longer nights, deeper darkness, and more secrets in the world), or they didn't. In the latter case, whether they won in battle or not, there's an apocalypse coming as the goddess tears herself apart. Her pain ripples through the Weave of magic, changing the world irreparably—and leaving a vacuum for at least one new deity of the night.

Adventure Appendix

Rewards

The priests of Selûne owe the characters a favour, as Anrathe promised. If they restored Shar-Selûne to balance, they can call on one additional boon from the dual goddess.

Items

Net of Stars

Wondrous item, artifact

A 5-foot-square net made of starlight, with gleaming points of light at each intersection of the filaments. The net weighs less than 1 lb. but has the strength to restrain or subdue a deity.

As an action, you can fling the net at a target you can see within 30 feet of you. The DM privately rolls a d100. On a result of 50 or lower, the net fails and fades to nothingness. On a result of 51 or more the net blazes brightly as it expands to cover and constrict the target. If the target is Shar her Superiority ability is suppressed for the next 10 minutes. The net vanishes early if the target dies.

Author's Notes/Acknowledgments

This adventure is for everyone who's ever been told to "smile more." Shar, like any woman, is entitled to be seen in totality. She's not required to suppress her full self in favour of a pleasant, palatable demeanour that lets other people feel comfortable. Also, please remember that the next time you tell a woman to smile, she might explode and destroy you and the entire world.

Author Bio

Cat is a transmasc writer and RPG designer from the UK. He does freelance work for Onyx Path Publishing, Dirty Vortex, and others, and has released a metric ton of indie work on the Dungeon Masters Guild and itch.io (**https://perpetualgloom.itch.io/**). When not writing, he tweets as **@perpetualgloom**, usually while buried under a wriggling mound of spaniels.

Sentient Darkness

Gargantuan Aberration, Unaligned

Armor Class 20
Hit Points 400 (32d20 + 64)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	24 (+7)	15 (+2)	10 (0)	10 (0)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Dex +7
Damage Immunities cold, fire, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, grappled, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Cold as the Void. The sentient darkness emanates an aura of profound cold in its space, and extending 10 feet from it in every direction. When a creature moves into the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or take 27 (6d8) cold damage.

Incorporeal. The sentient shadow can occupy another creature's space, and vice versa.

Isolation. A creature that starts its turn inside the sentient darkness must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or have their Intelligence score reduced by 1. They die if this reduces their Intelligence to 0. The first two reductions can't be restored except by a wish spell. Any further reductions last until the creature finishes a long rest.

Solitary Confinement. Creatures inside the sentient darkness are surrounded by magical darkness, and cannot perceive other creatures inside it with any physical sense.

Legendary Resistances (3/day). When the sentient darkness would fail a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The sentient darkness makes two Tendril attacks, then uses either Contract or Enfold.

Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) force damage and 13 (3d8) cold damage.

Contract. The sentient darkness closes in on itself. Creatures in its space must make a DC 21 Strength saving throw, taking 40 (9d8) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Enfold. The living darkness temporarily expands its mass outwards, increasing its size by 10 feet in every direction. If this causes the sentient darkness to enter a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving. On a failed save, it becomes enfolded within the sentient darkness. On a successful save, it is pushed to the nearest unoccupied space. It returns to its regular size at the start of its next turn, but any creatures inside it remain there until they escape.

If the sentient darkness takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, it must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or expel the creature who damaged it. The creature falls prone in an unoccupied space within 10 feet of the sentient darkness. If the sentient darkness is reduced to 0 hit points, it disperses, freeing all engulfed creatures.

Manifestation of Shar

Large Celestial, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)
Hit Points 285 (30d10 + 120)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +12, Wis +13
Skills Deception +12, Insight +13, Perception +13, Stealth +12
Damage Immunities cold, fire, necrotic, psychic, poison, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages All, telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Embodied Night (Mythic Trait; Recharges after a short or long rest). If the manifestation of Shar is reduced to 0 hit points, she doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, she regains 200 hit points and her body is stitched and woven together with tendrils of darkness, granting her 100 temporary hit points. Additionally, the manifestation can now use the options in the "Mythic Actions" section for 1 hour.

Legendary Resistance (5/day). If the manifestation of Shar fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The manifestation of Shar has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Superiority. The manifestation of Shar can choose to succeed on any saving throw or ignore any damage from creatures that are not also manifestations of a deity.

Actions

Multiattack. The manifestation of Shar makes three Spear of Night attacks.

Spear of Night. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or reduce their maximum hit points by 2d6. This effect is permanent unless removed by a wish spell.

Spellcasting. The manifestation of Shar is a 20th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks).

The manifestation of Shar can cast darkness and greater invisibility at will, and has the following spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, frostbite, mind sliver,*
1st level (4 slots): *arms of Hadar, cause fear, command, inflict wounds*
2nd level (3 slots): *crown of madness, darkness, hold person, silence*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, enemies abound, hunger of Hadar, spirit shroud*
4th level (3 slots): *blight, guardian of faith, summon greater demon*
5th level (3 slots): *enervation, far step, negative energy flood*
6th level (2 slots): *circle of death, soul cage*
7th level (2 slots): *divine word, finger of death*
8th level (1 slot): *maddening darkness*
9th level (1 slot): *power word kill*

Legendary Actions

The manifestation of Shar can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The manifestation regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Detect (1 action). The manifestation makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Attack (1 action). The manifestation makes one Spear of Night attack.

Cast a Cantrip (1 action). The manifestation casts one of the cantrips she knows.

Mythic Actions

If the manifestation's Embodied Night trait is active, she can use the options below as legendary actions as long as she has temporary hit points from that trait.

Spear (1 action). The manifestation makes two Spear of Night attacks.

Dispel Magic (2 actions). The manifestation casts dispel magic as a 6th-level spell, without expending a spell slot.

Maddening Darkness (3 actions). The manifestation casts maddening darkness without expending a spell slot.



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BONDS, WASTED AWAY

by Garrett Colón

Goddess: Talona | **Levels:** 17-20
Content Warnings: Diseases/Poison, Insects, Mummy Interaction (Non-Animated), Sickness (Nondescript)

SYNOPSIS

A wasting sickness creeps through city streets, powerful spells and cures only pausing the disease. Talona's name is called out in anger as the possible culprit and in prayer for the disease to be cured. Only she knows the truth: An ancient deity's corpse, sequestered millenia ago by Talona, floats in the astral sea and is the source of this affliction. Will adventurers be able to stop this sickness at its source? And what will they do with the knowledge they discover?

For 3-6 characters of level 17 to 20, optimized as written for level 20 characters.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Where to begin?

1. ***Her Devout.*** A High Cleric of Talona has reached out to the adventurers, offering Talona's blessings and other rewards for helping resolve this plague.
2. ***Her Machinations.*** While some pray to Talona to cure this affliction, but many more blame Talona as its source. One of her High Clerics is calling for heroes to help bring the accusers to heel.
3. ***Hear, Feel, Think.*** Characters receive a dream from Talona, showing a silhouette of the affliction's source. The dream urges them to speak with the High Cleric of Talona.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Millenia ago, Talona and her sibling Kiputytto fought for control of their combined domains. The final days involved the two vying for prayers and power from the citizens of the Netherese city of Asram, but Kiputytto's methods killed the citizens without her power increasing beyond her sister. It was then that Kiputytto was killed by Talona, almost all of her divine domain stripped away. Kiputytto's final moments of rage and curses gave Talona pause, and so she worked with the newly divine God of the Dead, Myrkul. After a deal was arranged to allow Myrkul access to the body for research purposes, the two combined to mummify Kiputytto's corpse, sequestering her away in a fortress on the Astral Sea.

As the centuries passed, Kiputytto's rage at Talona, broken memories, and remnants of divinity crystallized within the mummy. This alone was inconsequential until Cyric, God of Lies, briefly took over Myrkul's domain and learned of Kiputytto's location. If Cyric could get past the millenia old wards, the prize of Kiputytto's fragmented power and possibly more from Talona was a prize too great to ignore.

Now, his plans have finally borne fruit. Ygorl the first slaad gained entry and gave Kiputytto's corpse an outlet for her rage. Kiputytto's mummified corpse now leaks its diseased essence through the sea and into the Material Plane, causing the Withering Disease. Talona must now confront her past actions to keep the balance of life and death to preserve or possibly increase her own power.

CHAPTER 1 – SYMPTOM TO SOURCE

THE HOUSE OF PESTILENCE

Torpor (she/they, water genasi), a High Cleric of Talona, has settled into an abandoned town. Other followers of Talona, called Talontar, offer services under her watch. Thousands touched by the Withering Disease have since come: for aid, to plead, to blame, or to bribe.

> Many wander in the House of Pestilence, followers of Talona moving between them, save one. The High Cleric. Their attention is on a small wooden cage covered in glyphs and what lies within:
> a translucent winged insect from the Astral Sea.

The insect's exact form is distinct for each viewer, shaped by their own memories and emotions, but in all visions the form pulses with a dull light.



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Characters may offer aid or try to gather information. Below are some suggestions for this.

- Any healing magic or other remedies provide only temporary relief from the Withering Disease: nothing on the Material Plane can cure the afflicted.
- Those diseased or close to someone sick do not know why or how the Withering Disease began. Some say Talona sends it to demand worship. Others say rival nations magically crafted it, etc.
- The Talontar confirm that others have used potent magics and prayers, only to have the disease continue. Something divine is behind this, and Torpor is studying one possibility now.

When the characters make their presence known, Torpor calls each character by name and thanks them for coming. Visions from Talona have provided her knowledge of both the characters and the insect: This small creature, one of many, carries the disease from its source in the Astral Sea to the Material Plane. If returned to the Astral Sea, it will return to its source.

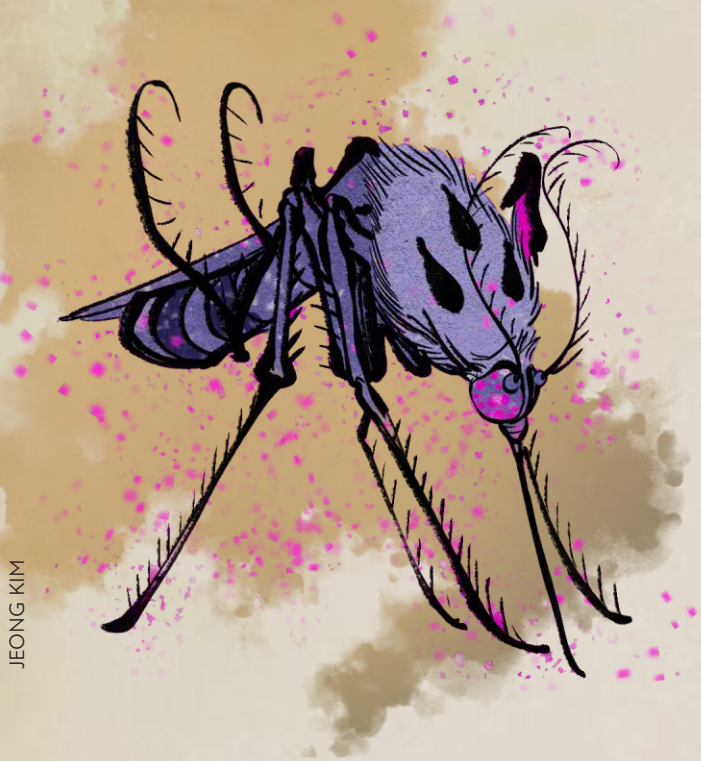
Torpor is neither lying nor withholding information. They want this resolved, as the sickness is destroying the balance of life and death. For incentives, Torpor offers gold, treasure, and written notice of land and title. And from Talona, an offer of power. If the party cannot travel to the Astral Plane themselves, Torpor can use the gate spell to put them as close as possible.

Once characters are prepared, Torpor gives them the caged insect and blesses them in Talona's name.

FROM SEA TO PULSING SEA

> The Astral Sea spreads out in all directions, its calmness broken only by your presence and the insect. It has shrunk in size and is drifting out of its cage, pulsing in response to a light far away.

While travelling in the Astral Sea, characters have a fly speed equal to three times their Intelligence score. Throughout the Astral Sea, characters will come upon multiple pools of rippling colors that lead out to other planes of existence. These portals only exit this portion of the Astral Sea for all but Far Realm creatures. In addition, other insects of various forms will wander in and out of sight, sometimes entering silver pools of color that



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lead to the Material Plane. Last, as the characters follow their insect, refer to "Kiputytto, Broken Phage Regional Effects" for changes in the environment.

During the characters' six-mile journey, roll twice on the Encounter Table. After the first encounter, the characters receive a very rare consumable from the following list, either given by those they help or taken from those they vanquish.

- *spell scroll* (8th level)
- *potion of speed*
- *potion of vitality*
- *potion of supreme healing*

The second encounter takes place within 1 mile of the destination. Following this encounter the characters find an *amulet of the planes* whose chain is composed of silver clouds chasing one another, unceremoniously dumped by a fast-moving cloud before it dives into an Astral Plane portal.

If they stray from the path, the characters may face additional encounters. Before they reach the Phage they have the opportunity to take one short or long rest.

KIPUTYTTO, BROKEN PHAGE REGIONAL EFFECTS

These affect the party once they start towards the mummy.

Within six miles, creatures hear whispers and have flashes of memories from Kiputytto's mind once per hour. See adventure background for some details you can use here.

- Within six miles, all food and drink becomes noticeably diseased. If consumed, the eater is immediately affected by the *contagion* spell. Spells such as *purify food and drink* will purify the food and drink for 1 hour.
- Within one mile, creatures have their immunity or resistance to necrotic damage negated, and diseases require two successful attempts to remove.

In addition, the structure housing Kiputytto imposes the following on all but Ygorl and Far Realm inhabitants.

- Within six miles, teleportation and planar magic targeting the structure or a six-mile radius around it automatically fail. Short-range teleportation effects (range under 1,000 feet) work as intended.
- Scrying and other magical ways to see the area from afar show an empty area of the Astral Sea.
- Within six miles, planar portals are only able to take creatures away from the structure, and not closer. No planar portals naturally occur within 1000 feet or within the structure itself.
- Far Realm creatures are able to enter and exit the Astral Sea, up to two miles away, due to their nature and the structure's weakening defenses. Once the divine core is removed in Chapter 2, Far Realm creatures can enter and exit at their leisure. Ygorl, due to their divine chaos nature, was able to enter the structure with Cyric's guidance but does not know how to replicate this for others.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d4	Encounter Examples
1	The remnants of a Githzerai illithid hunting party (one **githzerai anarch**, two **githzerai enlightened**, MToF), are trying to escape the diseased region after a disastrous run-in with an ooze-like being from the Far Realm. They have been infected and are under the illusion that the characters are possible enemies! Trust is hard but possible to obtain, and stymying the disease or attacking each Githzerai non-lethally to 0 hit points will uncloud their judgment, allowing them to escape the region successfully.
2	One **death slaad** (*control gem* variant) and two **gray slaadi** are bullying a **green slaad** and **blue slaad** for being unable to find their boss. When the characters enter the scene, the green and blue slaad see an opportunity for upward growth and plead for the characters aid in killing the death slaad in a hostile takeover or convincing the gray slaads to reject the death slaad's leadership. The death slaad sees this as amusing and underestimates the characters.
3	A **lesser star spawn emissary** (see adventure appendix) comes through a sudden tear into the Far Realm without warning to fight. The tear twists the area into something viscous and wrong, making the entire 300-foot radius area of this fight difficult terrain. **Zazzaluth** (see adventure appendix) uses this as an opportunity to probe the characters while still in the Far Realm, using its Tentacle and Fling legendary actions exclusively to attack characters within 30 feet of the star spawn. Zazzaluth's legendary actions stop when the star spawn and it's second form are destroyed.
4	An **astral dreadnought** (MToF), infected with the Withering Disease, is grappling an unconscious and near-death **adult red dragon** (0 hit points, 1 death save failed) with one claw, githyanki saddle still attached. A **githyanki supreme commander** (MToF) hides nearby, his body and pride wounded, and is asking for help with saving his hunting companion from the dreadnought. The commander is willing to make deals for some of their gear or future aid from the forces he usually leads.

DEVELOPMENT

The Astral Sea shifts. Thousands of insects highlight a non-euclidean structure hundreds of feet tall and more in width, their bodies flowing back and forth via cracks in the walls. The sounds of nonsensical humming echo outward.

CHAPTER 2 – YGORL'S HAPPY ACCIDENTS

An object of wrapped flesh and divinity floats in the center of the structure: The mummified, 40-foot-tall corpse of a deity, an internal core pulsing with the same light as the insects. Insect bodies are rapidly absorbed and reborn from its flesh, with many moving away from a slaad's shimmying form. Its fingers and scythe are rummaging through the mummy in bliss.

Identifying the creature requires a DC 18 skill check, but characters knowledgeable with slaad lore automatically succeed. This is the slaad **Ygorl, Lord of Entropy** (see adventure appendix).

His goal is to use Kiputytto's essence to bring about more entropy. He is the reason that Kiputytto's containment broke, per Cyric's plans, and he is the reason her core has corrupted.

Kiputytto, Broken Phage

Complex trap (level 17-20, deadly threat)

Ygorl's tinkering with Kiputytto's corpse has awoken her remaining power into a divine trap. Characters will need to undo what Ygorl has done in desecrating Kiputytto's form before removing the divine core from within.

The room is a 200-foot-tall cylinder with a 400-foot-radius, with unstable walls and thousands of insects. The corpse's feet dangle 3 feet off the ground.

Kiputytto's core reacts once Ygorl deems the characters a threat. Roll initiative.

The corrupted core acts on initiative count 20 and initiative count 10.

Kiputytto's corpse and divine core will lash out with diseased insects and other energy as follows:

Swarmed (Initiative Count 20). All diseased insects in the vicinity form a 10-foot-thick and opaque barrier around the room to prevent escape. Any creature within the room but more than 100 feet from Kiputytto's mummy must make a **DC 20 Strength saving throw**. On a failure, the creature takes 22 (4d10) force damage and is knocked prone and pushed to a point within 100 feet of Kiputytto's mummy. On a success, they take half damage and are moved but not knocked prone. This effect only happens on the first initiative count 20 and does not repeat.

Consume Essence (Initiative Count 20). The insects swarm any enemy creatures in the room. Each creature must make a **DC 20 Constitution saving throw**, taking 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. As the swarm grows over time, the damage increases by 5 (1d10) each round after it activates, to a maximum of 44 (8d10).

Protection (Initiative Count 10). The swarm moves with Ygorl's chaotic will and Kiputytto's reflexive rage. Roll on the following table, excluding Ygorl from all negative effects.

PROTECTION EFFECTS TABLE

1d6	Effects
1	Insects densely pack around Ygorl and Kiputytto's mummy. All damage dealt to Ygorl is halved, and movement within 10 feet of the Broke Phage is halved for 1 round.
2	Divine anger floods the mind, cursing Talona, Myrkul, and mortals. Each creature must make a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** or be stunned for 1 round.
3	Insects attack and absorb the essence of each creature, weakening their physical forms. All skill checks are made with disadvantage for 1 round.
4	The divine core sends out a pulse of divine energy. Any ongoing spell effects 6th level or lower are temporarily negated for 1 round. Concentration must still be maintained during this round.
5	No effect, as the core takes a moment to gather more energy.
6	An outburst of insects explodes into tiny motes of energy. The room is considered heavily obscured by a magical effect for 1 round.

If Ygorl is defeated, the trap will only take its turns every other round.

Undoing the desecration to Kiputytto's corpse renders the divine core dormant, ending its initiative effects so it can be removed. The characters will need to succeed a number of skill checks equal to the number of characters prior to removing the core unless they wish to reactivate the core by mistake. Each skill check should start at DC 20 and be adjusted as needed. Failures on these skill checks will cause an effect from the Protection Effects Table to trigger. Some examples of possible skill checks:

- Modify arcane or religious sigils on the mummy (Arcana/Religion)
- Rearrange corrupted tissue and bone structures (Medicine/Survival)
- Remove slaad tadpoles and eggs in less dry sections (Animal Handling/Nature)
- Remove new tablets grafted into the spine (Investigation/History)
- Remove new lines of power forcing outside energy into the core. (Arcana/Sleight of Hand)

Once they've achieved enough successes, the party can attempt to remove the core. If Ygorl is gone, it is an automatic success. If not, removing the core requires a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check** or **DC 20 skill check with artisan's tools**. On a failure, the Consume Essence effect triggers immediately.

If the characters try to remove the core before achieving the requisite number of skill check successes, increase the core removal DC by 2 for each missing success.

DEVELOPMENT

With the core successfully removed, Ygorl leaves if not already gone, insects dissipating as Kiputytto's mummy goes dark. All characters receive the benefit of a short rest as the dissolving insects fill the air with their stored vitality, giving brief respite. The Withering Disease is wiped away, regional effects gone, and a *gate* spell opens in the middle of the room.

CHAPTER 3 – DIVINE INTENTIONS

A 40-foot-tall avatar of **Talona** (see adventure appendix) emerges, her tension visible. Her eyes scan the room before lingering on her sister's form, tension lessening as Kiputytto's core teleports into one of her hands.

"I am glad to see my sister's corruption has been ripped out, before that damned toad took what was left of Kiputytto and sowed further chaos." Touching her sister's wrapped form, Talona sighs.

If the characters have questions, Talona is willing to give the following information. Characters should be aware without any checks that Cyric is a recently raised god with nicknames such as The Prince of Lies, and Myrkul is a much older god with nicknames such as The Lord of Bones.

- The Withering Disease is stopped, giving a chance to restore the balance of mortal life and death. When Talona returns to her domain with Kiputytto's core, she will reverse the destruction of many of the dead souls. Who she chooses to resurrect is her choice alone, but she will consider requests.
- The two sisters did fight, with Kiputytto eradicating a Netherise city's population with a poorly timed disease in the process of trying to take Talona's domain. Talona hid her sister's body away after her death with Myrkul's support to preserve her so that it would not cause problems with its lingering power for both herself and the Material Plane.
- Talona recently learned that Cyric, God of Lies, has used others to try and find Kiputytto for reasons known only to him, with all except Ygorl failing. Far Realm entities have also gotten close, their motives unknown to her.
- Ygorl's corruption altered the restrictions set in the region, blocking Talona from entering or affecting anything directly. This is why she had her followers find those deemed capable and why she was only able to enter the area now.

The conversation ends when a rip in space forms in the air from undulating tentacles. An avatar of Cyric, in the shape of an unnaturally large human skull, emerges with black tendrils floating off the bone.

THE DARK SUN

"Talona, committer of fratricide, we have much to discuss." The words echo from the skull's form before a wave of necrotic energy from Talona breaks him apart. The skull then reforms, a dry chuckle echoing from the bones.

Cyric is here to further his plots, sowing doubt with half-truths. His goal is to convince the characters to take the core from Talona, so he can steal it from them later on. An aberration primordial that accompanies Cyric's avatar, named **Zazzaluth**, waits on the other side of the Far Realm rift and uses its Primordial Lock and Key ability to prevent leaving or entering from other creatures.

Cyric questions Talona's motivation, implying that she wanted the core for herself but was unable to do so due to her sister's lingering rage preventing her. He goes on to imply that Ygorl's corruption and entry were simply the slaad's curiosity, noticed by Talona but allowed to continue, a smokescreen to have others retrieve it for Talona once Myrkul's wards were removed. The Withering Disease's destructive course on the Material Plane would only strengthen her power via prayers and curses in her direction, and her sister's core would further enhance her. At the end of the day, he believes the characters are better suited to oversee the core.

Cyric tells two small lies (discernable with a **DC 30 Wisdom (Insight) check**) in his arguments:

- He claims that Ygorl found Kiputytto's mummy on his own and acted on his own free will while Talona allowed it to happen. The truth is that Cyric sent Ygorl to the location to see if the slaad could find a way inside, though Talona did in fact let the Withering Disease play out for over a tenday.
- He claims that the characters are better choices to look after Kiputytto's divine core, which while partially true, his true goal is to have easier targets to backstab mortals. In addition, having the characters be the focus of Talona's ire upon her reformation is one less trouble for Cyric.

Talona will continue to attack Cyric's avatar form, accusing him of deception. This continues until the characters make a decision.

Let Talona Leave with Kiputytto's Core, or Not

Let Talona Leave

> "We are done here." Talona clenches her free hand, Kiputytto's core glowing briefly before dimming in response. Cyric's head sways side to side before dissolving in a sea of tentacles, as portions of a gargantuan Far Realm creature emerge from tears in the Astral Sea.

Cyric's avatar commands Zazzaluth to fight as he leaves, with the Far Realm primordial using the action Planar Rift to start combat. Talona does not actively fight, instead focusing her power on integrating with Kiputytto's core, the extra power needed to overpower Zazzaluth's trait "Primordial Lock and Key". The characters do not need to help her with this, so long as they keep Zazzaluth's attention.

If Zazzaluth is not defeated by the end of the fourth round of combat, Talona, now fully augmented by Kiputytto's core, overcomes Zazzaluth's innate power and banishes the aberration via the following box text. If Zazzaluth is defeated before the end of the fourth round, Talona will laugh in exaltation and openly show affection to the characters for their prowess in defeating the primordial, and you may ignore or adjust the following box text as needed.

> Zazzaluth's remaining body pieces twist before disappearing in a thunderous boom, Talona gripping the glowing divine core tightly. "The banishment is complete. I can finally bring her home to my domain, work with her power to restore some of the dead and keep the balance. You have my undying gratitude."

Talona returns to her domain, but not before bestowing a gift unto the characters for their service and loyalty.

Do not let Talona leave

Talona's avatar attacks the moment the characters show any aggression. In addition, Zazzulah continues to wait in the Far Realm, while Cyric's avatar watches from above.

This is a three-phase fight, set up in the following order:

Phase 1. Use Talona's stat block as the base for her avatar, setting Talona's avatar's hit point maximum and current hit points to 150. The avatar only uses Multiattack, saving Nexus of Corruption, legendary actions, and any other recharge abilities for when her true form emerges. Lastly, this avatar was not created with Talona's stat block ability.

Once the avatar is destroyed, read the following before restarting combat with Talona's full stat block, all hit points and resources restored.

> Talona's body dissolves into a sluice before expanding rapidly, her voice coming from within it.
>
> "I see."
>
> The sluice stops, pulsing before Talona's true form emerges from within.
>
> "Your hubris, much like your flesh, will waste away soon enough."

Phase 2. Use Talona's full stat block without her Mythic Trait activated.

When Talona's Mythic Trait activates at the end of this phase, the following box text can be read to convey the start of Phase 3.

> A mist of toxins and pathogens seeps from Talona's wounds as they rapidly self-suture, leaving the air thickened and oppressive with their presence and her fury. Venom and diseases unknown to mortals begin to pulse under her skin, enhancing her abilities and degrading the weave around her.

Phase 3: Use Talona's full stat block, with her Mythic Trait activated.

If the fight looks grim, Cyric offers a deal to the characters: He will help in exchange for the characters aiding Cyric at a time of his choosing. If agreed to, Cyric suppresses the effects of Talona's Mother of All Plagues, heals each character for half of their maximum hit points and grants them 50 temporary hit points, and grants advantage on their next two saving throws against Talona's effects.

If Talona is defeated, Kiputytto's core floats erratically until held by a character. Zazzaluth and Cyric withdraw, the Prince of Lies congratulating and rewarding the characters before leaving.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the characters side with Talona, she grants each character a +2 bonus to one ability score of their choice. In addition, each character receives the Boon of the Plague-Mother (see adventure appendix). This manifests as a birthmark or scar on their body, three small tear-like impressions that ripple and fade when the boon is used.

If Talona is defeated, Cyric bestows upon each character a Blessing of Protection, manifesting as a small skull-shaped birthmark behind an ear or similar appendage. In addition, his avatar recommends the characters "bend the core into a more suitable form". This makes things easier for Cyric's future plans.

- To make Kiputytto's core an artifact, each participating character must first permanently reduce their hit die total by 3 dice and reduce their hit point maximum accordingly.
- The same characters must then spend 3 days and nights doing nothing but focusing on the core while within 15 feet of it. If distracted for more than 1 minute, the group must make a **DC 24 Constitution saving throw**. On a success the ritual continues without incident. On a failure the ritual cascades to an abrupt completion, giving each character involved 5 levels of exhaustion as the core consumes vitality and becomes the final artifact. Exhaustion gained this way takes ten days per level to recover. Those who fail the saving throw by 10 or more drop to 0 hit points and die instantly.
- Whether by purposeful or accidental completion, Kiputytto's core becomes an artifact; *The Broken Phage* (see adventure appendix). This transformation cannot be reversed.

CONCLUSION

Characters who return to Torpor are treated as heroes by the common folk, the sickness stopped!

Torpor gives the characters their promised rewards. This includes 50,000 gp in rare gems and platinum per character and one Mark of Prestige per character. Last, one of the following happens:

If Talona has Kiputytto's divine core, the majority of creatures killed from the Withering Disease are resurrected within ten days. The resurrected remember most of their time previously alive, but nothing of the afterlife save for one distinct memory: Talona holding Kiputytto's mummy in a bittersweet embrace.

If Talona was defeated and sent back to her domain, the dead stay dead. Torpor demands to know what happened in the Astral Sea, as Talona's defeat was felt by many in the clergy. All Torpor immediately knows is that Cyric was involved in the defeat.

- If the characters successfully deny their role in Talona's defeat (**DC 24 Wisdom (Deception) skill check**) Torpor regrets their failure but is still thankful for the characters' help. She also asks that if they find more information about Cyric, to let her know immediately.

  When Talona reforms, Torpor will be unsure of who to trust, placing the blame on Cyric first and foremost despite visions from Talona. Few Talontar will go after the characters, mainly as spies with the rare assassination attempt, and Torpor will cautiously keep an eye on the character's future endeavors.
- If caught in a lie, or if they admit to stopping Talona, Torpor will go silent and command the rest of Talona's followers to leave with her immediately.

  Those who admit to stopping Talona for more than just a simple power grab, such as to preserve the balance of life and death, give Torpor pause as to what vengeance is required. This will lessen the retribution from the Talontar, and give characters a chance at finding peace with Torpor and the Talontar later in time.

  Those who lie and are caught earn enemies for life from the Talontar and Torpor, who will never trust them again and curse them until the end of days. Talontar know not to fight the characters without preparation, subtlety being a better course of action against powerful foes.

Those who do not return to Torpor have rewards delivered to their last known base of operations, either by Torpor or region officials (if Talona was defeated).

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

ITEMS AND BOONS

Boon of the Plague-Mother

You are immune to all diseases, the poisoned condition, poison damage, and necrotic damage. Once per short rest, as a bonus action, you can make a creature within 120 feet of you susceptible to disease and poison. For 1 minute, this negates all the target's immunities to disease and poisons, gives disadvantage on saving throws, and makes the target vulnerable to necrotic and poison damage.

The Broken Phage

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

A black star sapphire pendant necklace that changes size to fit the user, *The Broken Phage* is an artifact formed from the divine core of the mummified god Kiputytto. The golden needles within the pendant shimmer and pulse with a soft yet unnatural light, their tips protruding out and twisting together to form the necklace.

Properties of The Broken Phage. When attuned to *The Broken Phage*, tiny golden veins emerge from its rear and burrow into the attuned creature's nearest body part, holding the necklace snug while numbing and mummifying the body part around the veins. Those who participated in the artifact's creation can limit the numbness and mummification to within a few inches of the pendant itself, for easier concealment. The veins and side effects disappear after ten days unattuned.

Creatures that remain attuned to *The Broken Phage* for more than 24 hours, or are not chaotic aligned and are attuned for more than 8 hours, must make a **DC 24 Charisma saving throw** as the core's personality and memories bleed into and take over the wearer's own. Those who participated in the creation of this artifact make this saving throw with advantage. On a success, nothing happens, and the attuned creature need not make the save again for thirty days. On a failure, the attuned creature becomes possessed by Kiputytto's remaining essence and becomes an NPC under the DM's control, mixing the two individual personalities but driven wholly by Kiputytto's goals. If the possessed body is targeted by magic such as *dispel evil and good* or similarly powerful 5th level or higher spells twice in one hour, the connection is severed and attunement ends. 8th level spells or higher, Divine Intervention, *wish*, and other similar effects will end the connection and attunement with one use.

Kiputytto's Pride. As an action, you can use *The Broken Phage* to cast one of the following spells (spell save DC 20) without using a spell slot: *contagion*, *mass suggestion*, *Nystul's magic aura*, *insect plague*, *raise dead*, and *wall of thorns*. Once a spell is cast this way, it cannot be cast again from the artifact until next dusk. In addition, you can have Kiputytto's essence cast one spell from this list that has not already been used that day as a bonus action, once per dusk.

Plague Buster. While attuned to and wearing the pendant, you have immunity to all diseases and resistance to necrotic and poison damage. Once every ten days, you can share this effect with up to ten other creatures of your choice for ten hours or up to 100 creatures of your choice for one hour.

Touch of Corruption. When you hit with a weapon attack while attuned to the artifact, your attacks count as magical for overcoming resistances, and deal an extra 2d6 necrotic damage. This necrotic damage ignores resistances and immunities.

In addition, once every ten days, you may use an action to channel Kiputytto's essence, causing the next attack you hit within the next minute to shock a creature's system with divine disease. The creature must make a **DC 22 Constitution saving throw**, and on a success they take 55 (10d10) necrotic damage. Creatures immune to disease succeed automatically.

On a failure, the creature becomes diseased, requiring two *greater restoration* spells, a *wish* spell, Divine Intervention, or similar powerful effects to remove. The creature becomes paralyzed for one round after contracting this disease, and any damage taken while diseased reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount. This effect cannot be undone until the disease is removed, and if it reduces their hit point maximum to 0, they die instantly. Every 24 hours that the disease is not cured, the creature gains one level of exhaustion, which can only be removed with a *wish* or Divine Intervention while still diseased. If the disease is cured, exhaustion can be recovered from as normal.

Sentience. *The Broken Phage* is a sentient, chaotic evil artifact with an Intelligence of 16, a Wisdom of 18, and a Charisma of 22. They have hearing and truesight out to a range of 120 feet, can read and understand the languages of the creature attuned to them, and communicate by transmitting emotion to the creature attuned to them.

Personality. *The Broken Phage* retains some memories of their life as Kiputytto, driving them to hunt down all things Myrkul, seek Talona's presence, and an all-consuming hatred for toads and toad-like creatures.

Destroying The Broken Phage. *The Broken Phage* is destroyed if taken to either the Netherese ruins of Asram or Talona's realm located in Carceri, named the Palace of Poison Tears, and attuned to by Talona's true form or physically attacked by her bare hands.

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AUTHOR BIO

Garrett Colón freelance game designs for mostly D&D (**https://www.dmsguild.com/browse.php?author=Garrett%20Colón** while the portfolio is fixed), organizes events large and small, does non-profit work, city committee work, plays FFXIV (Mateus!) along with a slew of other video games, and stares into the abyss that is biotech in the United States. He occasionally posts on Twitter (**@DM_GMC**) when he remembers, but he really needs to do it more: The world needs more photos of his two cats, Jasper the black cat and Hermes the half-Maine coon.

Greater Star Spawn Emissary

Huge Aberration

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 290 (20d12 + 160)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	13 (+1)	26 (+8)	27 (+8)	22 (+6)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +15, Int +15, Wis +13, Cha +14
Skills Arcana +22, Perception +13
Damage Resistances acid, force, necrotic, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages All, telepathy 1,000 ft.
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Legendary Resistance (4/day). If the emissary fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Unusual Nature. The emissary doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The emissary makes three attacks.

Lashing Maw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d12 + 7) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) acid damage.

Psychic Orb. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +15 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 27 (3d12 + 8) psychic damage.

Unhealthy Bile (Recharge 5-6). The emissary expels bile that splashes all creatures in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point within 120 feet of the emissary. Each creature in that area must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) acid damage on a failed dave, or half as much damage on a successful one. For each creature that fails the saving throw, a gibbering mouther appears in an unoccupied space on a surface that can support it within 30 feet of that creature. The gibbering mouthers act right after the emissary on the same initiative count, gaining a +7 bonus to their attack and damage rolls, and fighting until they are destroyed. They disappear when the emissary dies.

Legendary Actions

The emissary can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The emissary regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. The emissary teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see and makes one attack.

Warp Space (Costs 2 Actions). The emissary causes the ground in a 20-foot-square that it can see within 90 feet of it to turn into teeth and maws until the start of its next turn. The area becomes difficult terrain for the duration. Any creature takes 10 (3d6) piercing damage for each 5 feet it moves on this terrain.

Mind Cloud (Costs 3 Actions). The emissary unleashes a psychic wave. Each creature within 30 feet of the emissary must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or take 32 (5d12) psychic damage. In addition, every spell ends on creatures and objects of the emissary's choice in that area.

Lesser Star Spawn Emissary

Medium Aberration

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 241 (21d8 + 147)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	25 (+7)	20 (+5)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Int +13, Wis +11, Cha +12
Skills Arcana +19, Deception +18, Perception +11
Damage Resistances acid, force, necrotic, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages All, telepathy 1,000 ft.
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Aberrant Rejuvenation. When the emissary drops to 0 hit points, its body melts away. A greater star spawn emissary instantly appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of where the lesser emissary disappeared. The greater emissary uses the lesser emissary's initiative count.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If the emissary fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Unusual Nature. The emissary doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The emissary makes three attacks.

Lashing Maw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) acid damage.

Psychic Orb. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +13 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) psychic damage.

Change Shape. The emissary polymorphs into a Small or Medium creature of its choice or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

Legendary Actions

The emissary can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The emissary regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Psychic Orb. The emissary makes one Psychic Orb attack.

Teleportation Maw (Costs 2 Actions). The emissary teleports to an unoccupied space it can see within 30 feet of it and can make a Lashing Maw attack.

Psychic Lash (Costs 3 Actions). The emissary targets a creature it can see within 30 feet of it and psychically lashes at the creature's mind. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or take 36 (8d8) psychic damage and be stunned until the start of its next turn.

Talona

Gargantuan Humanoid (Deity), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)
Hit Points 648 (35d20 + 280)
Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	24 (+7)	26 (+8)	26 (+8)	30 (+10)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +15, Dex +16, Con +17, Int +17, Wis +19, Cha +18
Skills Arcana +17, Athletics +15, Deception +18, Intimidation +18, Medicine +28, Perception +28
Damage Immunities acid, necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, restrained, stunned
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, radiant
Senses darkvision 240 ft., truesight 240 ft., blindsight 120ft., passive Perception 38
Languages All, telepathy 240 ft.
Challenge 30 (155,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +9

Corrupted Touch. Talona's melee and ranged weapon attacks are magical, and she uses her Wisdom modifier for the attack and damage rolls (included in the attacks below). When she hits with any weapon attack, the weapon deals an extra 11 (2d10) necrotic damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage (included in the weapon attacks below).

Discorporation. When Talona drops to 0 hit points, and has no avatar, her body is destroyed but her essence travels back to her domain in Carceri, and she is unable to take physical form for a time.

Legendary Resistance (5/day). If Talona fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Limited Magic Immunity. Unless she wishes to be affected, Talona is immune to spells of 6th level or lower. She has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Mother of All Plagues. All creatures within 1000 feet of Talona are vulnerable to necrotic and poison damage, and if a creature is immune or resistant to necrotic or poison damage that is bypassed. Necrotic and poison effects also last for twice their usual duration. If a creature is immune to diseases or the poisoned condition, that is negated. If a creature tries to remove a disease or poison condition, it requires two successful attempts to be removed.

Last, Talona can sense the location of any diseased or poisoned creature within 1000 feet of her.

Scourge of Creation (Mythic Trait, Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If Talona would be reduced to 0 hit points, she doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, her current hit point total instead resets to 600 hit points and regains any expended uses of Legendary Resistance. Additionally, Talona can now use the options in the "Mythic Actions" section for 1 hour. Award a party an additional 155,000 XP (310,000 XP total) for defeating Talona after Scourge of Creation activates.

Unusual Nature. Talona doesn't require air, food, drink, sleep, and is immune to diseases and aging. In addition, effects to change her physical form, or effects to trap her soul have no effect outside of her home domain.

Actions

Multiattack. Talona first uses Nexus of Corruption if available. She then makes two attacks with her Diseased Touch, or one attack with Toxic Rend and one with Diseased Touch.

Diseased Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (4d12 + 10) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) necrotic damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage. If a creature is hit with this attack twice in one round, they become diseased and poisoned. If they are already diseased and poisoned, Talona compels the creature to use their reaction and move their full movement speed in a straight line away from her regardless of other dangers, unless they are immune to being frightened.

Toxic Blast. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d8 + 10) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) necrotic damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage.

If a creature is hit, they must make a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature becomes affected by a nonmagical *slow* spell effect until the end of their next turn, that does not use Talona's concentration. On a success, nothing happens.

Nexus of Corruption (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Talona draws from her full divinity, granting all creatures of her choice within 1000 feet a corrupted blessing. Each selected creature is coated with diseases

continued

and poisons and must make a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or become diseased and poisoned. For the duration, all attempts to heal the creature will only restore half as many hit points. Any creatures that fail by 5 or more are blinded and stunned until the start of their next turn, and those who fail by 10 or more and currently have 50 hit points or less drop to 0 hit points and die instantly. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poisoned effect and reduction in healing on itself on a success.

Innate Spellcasting. Talona's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 27). Talona can innately cast the following spells, and does not require any verbal, material, or somatic components when casting these spells.

1/day each: *dominate monster, foresight, gate, plane shift, power word kill, teleport*

Reactions

Disrupt Health. When a creature within 500 feet of Talona uses a spell, ability, or magical effect to try and heal at least one other creature, Talona can disrupt the effect. The creature trying to heal another must make a DC 24 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they take 18 (4d8) necrotic damage and Talona receives the intended healing. On a success, the amount healed is evenly split between the intended target(s) and Talona.

Legendary Actions

Talona can take 5 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Talona regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn. Once Talona chooses a legendary action option, she can't choose the same one until the start of her next turn.

Teleport. Talona magically teleports, along with any equipment she is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space in a direction of her choice.

Disease Shift. Talona can move up to her movement speed without provoking attacks of opportunity as a mist of pathogen and poison, able to go through enemy spaces or anywhere water or air could pass through. She can then choose to make one Diseased Touch attack.

Toxic Blast (2 actions). Talona makes one Toxic Blast attack.

Positive Reinforcement (3 actions). Talona gains 5 temporary hit points per creature that is diseased or poisoned within 500 feet of her, up to a maximum of 50 temporary hit points.

Vector Pulse (3 actions). Talona targets a point that they can sense within 500 feet. Creatures within 30 feet of the point must make a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw as a pulse of disease and poison erupts into existence. On a failure, a creature takes 18 (4d8) necrotic and 18 (4d8) poison and has disadvantage on their next saving throw. On a success, the creature only takes half damage.

Mythic Actions

If Talona's Scourge of Creation trait has activated in the last hour, she can use the options below as legendary actions.

Divine Corruption (4 actions, recharge 5-6). Targeting a point within 500 feet that she can sense, Talona's divinity degrades and corrupts all things within 60 feet of the target.

- All magic is corrupted, automatically ending any spells in effect on creatures or objects in the area of her choosing. Summoned creatures, magical items not attuned or that do not require attunement, and other non-spell magical effects are also suppressed until the end of Talona's next turn as if affected by an antimagic field.
- Creatures in the area that are attuned to one or more magic items must make a DC 24 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 13 (2d12) force damage per attuned item, which cannot be mitigated. Additionally, one attunement of the creature's choice is suppressed until the end of the creature's next turn. If a creature fails by 5 or more, the chosen attuned item is instead unattuned. On a success, a creature only takes half damage and does not have an attuned item suppressed or unattuned.

Culture Creation (5 actions, recharges after a short or long rest). Coaxing the vitality and essence from those diseased or poisoned around her, Talona creates an avatar of herself in the heat of battle in a space within 60 feet of her. Up to three creatures that are diseased or poisoned within 1000 ft. of her must make a DC 27 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature's hit point maximum is reduced by half, and on a success the creature's hit point maximum is reduced by one quarter.

The avatar of Talona uses the same stat block as Talona, except for the following changes: The avatar's hit point maximum and current total hit points equals the combined hit point maximum reduction of all creatures affected by the avatar's formation. The avatar shares their initiative with Talona, has 2 Legendary Resistances, and does not use Legendary Actions or any rechargeable abilities or actions. If Talona's main body is destroyed while an avatar of Talona is alive, the avatar becomes Talona's main form and gains full use of her stat block instead of her Discorporation trait activating. This changes the avatar's hit point maximum to the stat block's maximum, total hit points equal to 210, and its remaining Legendary Resistances, Legendary Actions, and recharge abilities equal to what Talona's main body had left before being destroyed.

Ygorl, Lord of Entropy

Large Aberration, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 325 (26d10 + 182)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +14, Wis +10
Skills Arcana +12, Deception +15, Intimidation +15, Persuasion +15
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages All, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 23 (50,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Entropic Aura. Each creature that is not a construct or undead that ends its turn within 15 feet of Ygorl takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Ygorl fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Ygorl has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Ygorl makes three attacks: two with its scythe, and one with its Entropic Touch.

Scythe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) slashing damage plus 19 (3d12) necrotic damage. Any creature reduced to 0 hit points by this attack dies, with its body and everything it is wearing and carrying, except magic items, exploding into a cloud of ash. The creature can be restored to life only by means of a wish spell.

Entropic Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 7) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

Innate Spellcasting. Ygorl's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 23, +15 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *blight, blink, chaos bolt, darkness, detect magic, fly, shield*
3/day each: *circle of death, enervation, phantasmal killer, symbol (discord only)*
2/day each: *finger of death, harm, mental prison,* power word pain
1/day each: *power word kill, power word stun, symbol (death only), weird*

Summon Slaadi (1/day). Ygorl summons 1d4 + 1 death slaadi. A summoned slaad appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of Ygorl, acts as an ally of Ygorl, and can't summon other slaadi. It remains for 1 minute, until it or Ygorl dies, or until Ygorl dismisses it as an action.

Teleport. Ygorl teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Legendary Actions

Ygorl can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ygorl regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Scythe. Ygorl makes one attack with its scythe.

Teleport. Ygorl uses its Teleport action.

Call the Void (Costs 3 actions). Each creature that is not a construct or undead within 30 feet of Ygorl must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw against the lord of entropy's attempt to unmake life, taking 42 (12d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Ygorl then regains a number of hit points equal to half the total damage taken by all affected creatures.

Zazzaluth (ZAHZ-zah-looth)

Gargantuan Aberration (Primordial), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 555 (30d20 + 240)
Speed 120 ft. (burrow, unique hover - see Primordial Lock & Key)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	20 (+5)	26 (+8)	27 (+8)	24 (+7)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Str +19, Con +17, Int +17, Wis +16, Cha +19
Skills Arcana +26, Athletics +19, Perception +25
Damage Immunities acid, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned
Damage Resistances force, necrotic, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 120 ft., blindsight 500 ft. (psionics), passive Perception 35
Languages All, telepathy 1000 ft.
Challenge 30 (155,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +9

Formless, Encroaching (Mythic Trait; recharges after a short or long rest). When Zazzaluth is reduced to 0 hit points, it doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, the creature doubles in dimension from 25x25 feet to 50x50 feet, its hit point total resets to 555 hit points, and its Legendary Resistances reset to 5. Additionally, Zazzaluth can now use the options in the "Mythic Actions" section for 1 hour, and Zazzaluth can choose at the start of each of their turns to teleport up to two unoccupied tentacles from their body to an open space within 500 feet, where they stay and can be used by Zazzaluth until the start of their next turn. Award a party an additional 155,000 XP (310,000 XP total) for defeating Zazzaluth after Formless, Encroaching activates.

Legendary Resistance (5/day). If Zazzaluth fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Limited Magic Immunity. Unless it wishes to be affected, Zazzaluth is immune to spells of 5th level or lower. It has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Primordial Lock & Key. Zazzaluth can choose to enter any other plane of existence of its choosing as an action, unless denied by two or more divine or primordial beings. When Zazzaluth emerges into another plane of existence, and until it leaves or is destroyed, Zazzaluth chooses which creatures and objects can planar travel, be summoned, or teleport in or out of a one mile radius centered on its main body. Creatures and objects teleporting up to 500 feet are able to do so in this radius, but take 9 (2d8) force damage per used spell level each time they teleport unless they are a deity (non-spell teleportation abilities take the minimum force damage), and Zazzaluth innately senses their start and end points. Last, Zazzaluth can move through any material not created to stop Far Realm incursions with its hover speed: A Far Realm tear surrounds them, rearranging space as Zazzaluth moves.

Psychic Absorption. Whenever Zazzaluth is dealt psychic damage, it takes no damage and instead heals for that amount of damage. Zazzaluth then adds 36 (8d8) psychic damage to its next attack.

Regeneration. Zazzaluth regains 30 hit points at the start of its turn. If it takes cold damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn.

Unusual Nature. Zazzaluth doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep. It also cannot be forced to another plane of existence except by at least two divine beings or primordials, and cannot have its shape changed unless it chooses to allow it. If Zazzaluth's main body is destroyed, the Far Realm recreates the primordial's body and mind in their entirety within the next 555 days.

Actions

Multiattack. Zazzaluth makes four attacks using Tentacle or Fling in any combination. Alternatively, it can make two Tentacle or Fling attacks and use Planar Rift, if available.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +19 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Hit: 29 (3d12 + 10) magical bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d10) psychic damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 23). Zazzaluth has 6 tentacles total, each of which can grapple one target. If the target is already grappled, Zazzaluth attacks the target with advantage.

continued

Fling. A creature or object that is grappled by Zazzaluth is thrown up to 120 feet, knocking it prone. If a thrown target strikes a solid surface, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown, up to a maximum of 42 (12d6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw or take equal damage and also be knocked prone.

Innate Spellcasting. Zazzaluth's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 27). Zazzaluth can innately cast the following spells, and does not require any verbal, material, or somatic components when casting these spells.

2/day each: *dominate monster*
1/day each: *feeblemind, gate, maddening darkness*

Planar Rift (Recharge 5-6). Zazzaluth targets a space within 500 feet, where a tear to the Far Realm opens until the end of their next turn. Anything not native to the Far Realm that starts their turn or voluntarily moves into its 30-foot radius area of effect must make a DC 23 Intelligence saving throw to resist the rift. On a failure, the creature is incapacitated and then hurled into the Far Realm, taking 52 (8d12) psychic damage before reappearing at the start of their next turn in their previous location. On a success, the creature takes no damage and is not sent to the Far Realm, but instead loses half their movement speed until the end of their next turn.

A Stunning Feast (only while mythic trait is active, once per short or long rest). Zazzaluth sends out a psychic pulse to sense all intelligent creatures within 500 feet, then psychically assaults up to 10 creatures of their choice that they can sense. Creatures that have an Intelligence score of 2 or lower are unaffected and not sensed by the pulse.

Each selected creature must make a DC 23 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage and is stunned. On a successful save, a target takes half damage and isn't stunned. If Zazzaluth attacks a creature stunned by this ability, in addition to the attack's regular damage they also take 49 (12d6) force damage and must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or have their hit point maximum reduced by the same amount. Last, the creature has the stunned condition removed after making the above Constitution saving throw.

Last, a stunned target can make a DC 23 Intelligence saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a successful save, the stunning effect ends. If a creature fails this saving throw three times, including the mythic action's initial saving throw, the creature instead gains one level of exhaustion and the stunning effect ends.

Legendary Actions

Zazzaluth can take five Legendary Actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. It regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn. Once it chooses a legendary action option, it can't choose the same one until the start of its next turn.

Tentacle. Zazzaluth makes one Tentacle attack.

Fling. Zazzaluth makes one Fling attack.

Move. Zazzaluth's moves up to its full movement speed.

Render Silent (2 actions). A creature currently being grappled by Zazzaluth must make a DC 23 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 36 (8d8) psychic damage and is unable to cast spells, activate magic items besides consumables, read, or speak for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Inescapable (3 actions, recharge 5-6). Psionic tentacles sprout from briefly formed Far Realm planar tears, targeting up to three targets within one mile of Zazzaluth. Each target must make a DC 23 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the target takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage, 29 (3d12 + 10) force damage, and is teleported by Zazzaluth to any open point up to 500 feet away from Zazzaluth's main body. On a success, the target only takes half damage and is not teleported.

continued



Mythic Actions

Zazzaluth can use the options below as Legendary Actions for one hour after using Formless, Encroaching.

Far Realm Step (4 actions). Zazzaluth rapidly enters the Far Realm and re-emerges in a space not occupied by another creature up to 500 feet away, leaving hundreds of micro-rifts into the Far Realm in its wake. Each creature within 20 feet of Zazzaluth's starting location and teleported location must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or take 26 (4d12) force damage and gain one level of exhaustion.

Throw Open the Gates (5 actions, recharges after a short or long rest). The entirety of Zazzaluth's form undulates and twists, opening a gargantuan unstable portal to the Far Realm that will quickly break apart. The following effects occur in order.

- Each target of its choice within 500 feet of its body is subjected to a 6th level *dispel magic* (+10 to dispel), cast without using any components.
- Each target of its choice that it can sense within 500 feet and is not native to the Far Realm must make a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or take 42 (12d6) psychic damage and become vulnerable to psychic damage for the next three rounds. On a success, they take half damage and do not become vulnerable to psychic damage.
- Each target of its choice within 500 feet of its body must make a DC 23 Charisma saving throw or take 55 (10d10) psychic damage and become incapacitated as they are thrown into the Far Realm. Targets re-emerge at the same location at the end of their next turn.


WAR
DAVID MARKIWSKY



SABAA BISMIL

THE WOUNDS ONCE MADE

by D.E. Chaudron

Goddess: Lolth | **Levels:** 18-20

Content Warnings: Violence (Including Attempted Assassination Against a Pregnant Person)

SYNOPSIS

When the goddess Eilistraee suddenly vanishes from the Realms, all eyes turn to her mother, Lolth. Yet the Queen of Spiders rebukes the accusation, claiming someone has cut through time to prevent her daughter's birth. She offers substantial power to any adventurers who prove the truth, sending them back to the Dawn Age in search of answers. Thousands of years ago, Lolth was known as Araushnee, a minor goddess of destiny and Corellon Larethian's consort. Can the party save Eilistraee, knowing Lolth's evil will emerge soon after? As time unravels, will they ever be able to return to the present?

ADVENTURE HOOK

This adventure is designed for 4-5 adventurers of levels 18-20. If they are not recruited directly by Lolth, the party may be contacted by members of Eilistraee's church seeking assistance or come under attack from a **chronophage** (see adventure appendix). These horrifying eldritch beasts seek to devour broken timelines, and will keep rampaging through the world until Eilistraee is restored.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In truth, Eilistraee's disappearance was caused by her twin brother, Vhaeraun. He hid in the Demonweb Pits until Lolth turned her attention elsewhere, then used her *Web of Eternity* to leap back to the Dawn Age and sabotage his mother's pregnancy. While this has given Vhaeraun a massive boost of power in his sister's absence, he is unable to control the ripples in time that now wreak havoc upon the Realms. Desperate to keep his new strength and finally triumph over Lolth, he does everything to slay the adventurers who come to her aid.

In the Dawn Age, Araushnee is at a crucial tipping point. Her love for Corellon Larethian has transformed into bitter disdain, as she is but a minor goddess compared to their unrivaled authority over the elves. Carrying his children has changed little in their relationship, driving Araushnee to seek out Wendonai, a balor who has promised to aid her ascension into a major deity. Her new attitude has attracted the suspicion of others in the Seldarine, but they are forbidden from acting against the woman their lord loves.

Note: The DM should be familiar with the gods of the Seldarine, as they are the primary cast of the adventure—save for Angharradh, who does not exist in her present form until after Araushnee's rebellion and transformation into Lolth.

With respect to Corellon Larethian's fluidity, all third-person pronouns are appropriate, and Dungeon Masters are encouraged to keep this in mind.

CHAPTER 1 – A BLOODLESS DAWN

Lolth (she/her, greater deity, chaotic evil) is loath to have visitors in her private plane, but welcomes the party to the Demonweb Pits with a show of careful neutrality. Any creatures present in the Pits—primarily giant spiders and chwidencha—give adventurers a wide berth unless directly threatened.

Despite the Spider Queen's restraint, the Pits themselves are an unpleasant locale. Lethal chasms surround web-choked cliffs, and a silent army of petrified arachnids watches passerby with thousands of unblinking stone eyes. A distant crimson sun provides the plane's only illumination in a swath of bloody light, and when it sets, eight massive red stars conquer an otherwise pitch-black sky.

The goddess herself awaits in an iron citadel that guards her most sacred temple—a place of unconscionable heat, from which there is no relief save in Lolth's personal chamber. There, she welcomes the party as she sits on her throne, beside the *Web of Eternity*.

Lolth's brief is to the point: her daughter Eilistraee has been ripped from reality and no longer exists in any form. Despite accusations by the other gods of the Seldarine, Lolth insists that she is not responsible; rather, she believes someone has used her mirror to write Eilistraee out of existence. She promises each member of the party a divine favor of their choosing in return for proving her innocence and bringing her daughter back. Shrewd adventurers can negotiate a greater reward at the risk of earning Lolth's ire; she is in the unenviable position of having few allies to call upon in this matter.

Once the party accepts, Lolth warns them to be careful not to disrupt the past any further, as the consequences will cascade exponentially. She was fated to give birth to Eilistraee and Vhaeraun, just as she was fated to become Lolth. She says that when the adventurers' mission is complete and they wish to return to the present, they should find Araushnee's loom.

PAST BECOMES PRESENT

By stepping through the mirror, the adventurers are transported tens of thousands of years into the past and arrive just outside the Crescent Grove of Arvandor, the divine realm of Corellon Larethian. It is a pleasant but rather chaotic environment, as the marble boundaries of the palace constantly shift into new walkways, and white-barked trees bloom into existence without warning.

The palace guards welcome adventurers without reserve; the elves and their gods are at the height of power in the Dawn Age and are used to curious travelers seeking a glimpse of Corellon's domain. Visitors are directed to the Moonhold Plaza, where Corellon (any pronouns, greater deity, chaotic good) is giving a speech to those assembled. The party is welcome to explore as they wish; merchants and places of respite are present all over the palace, offering their services.

At the plaza, Corellon Larethian stands before the assembled Seldarine, with a heavily pregnant Araushnee sitting at his side. While the Ruler of All Elves speaks of joy and unity, even a cursory **Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that the rest of the pantheon is fraught with tension.

WEB OF ETERNITY
Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

A violet, enwebbed mirror sits in the heart of the Demonweb Pits, bound to Lolth alone. While she often uses its massive reflective surface to scry upon her enemies, the Web's true purpose is to serve as an interactive archive of the Spider Queen's life. At a touch, Lolth can bring any memory of her past to the mirror and open a portal to that moment in time. Ironically, that same power presents a distinct restriction for Lolth: her current self cannot exist simultaneously with that of the past without irrevocably shattering the flow of time. As such, she only sends her most trusted servants through the Web, often to seek information that will become potent later.

The Web of Eternity is 8 feet tall and 8 feet wide. It is embedded in an enchanted adamantine web designed to prevent its removal or destruction. Lolth is immediately alerted if anyone attempts to damage the artifact.



FERNANDO SALVATERRA

It's also a perfect opportunity for court drama. Any adventurer can speak to the members of the Seldarine, and even Corellon herself, to try to learn more about the situation at hand. However, only Sehanine Moonbow (she/her, deity, chaotic good) is honest about having a grievance against Araushnee (and only if Corellon does not happen to be in earshot). Sehanine's suspicions are only heightened when Corellon dismisses everyone for a night of celebration, and Araushnee promptly leaves without a word, rather than staying in her lord's presence.

ROLEPLAYING CORELLON LARETHIAN

Charming, intoxicating, and often chaotic, Corellon is the undisputed leader of the elves during the Dawn Age. Equal parts proud conqueror and guiding figure, her role in this story depends on how the party seeks to deal with the corroding relationship between him and Araushnee. While Corellon's intentions are kind, they are presently the only greater deity among the elves, and oblivious to how their dominion has wounded Araushnee's heart.

Shadows of Treachery

When the party seeks out Araushnee, they notice her being stalked by a demonic figure that flits between the columns of the palace like a shadow.

- If the party attacks the figure or tries to warn Araushnee of the ambush, the adventurers discover that the shadow is Wendonai, a powerful **balor** lord. The goddess is defensive of his presence and immediately intervenes to prevent the fight, demanding to know why a party of strangers is interfering in her affairs. She knows they're outsiders, as she cannot see their threads in her loom of destiny, which makes Araushnee quite wary.
- Adventurers that rely on stealth can follow Araushnee back to her room instead and witness Wendonai taking his true shape. He speaks to the goddess about their plans, directly encouraging her to take vengeance on Corellon. Araushnee is clearly interested but insists her children must be born first. If the adventurers let Wendonai leave without attacking, Araushnee notices their presence immediately afterward and demands to know why they're eavesdropping on her.

Araushnee speaks to Wendonai:

"Of course I love Corellon, but they have never seen me as an equal. Why am I consort and not queen, not her wife? I am but a spider in the shadow of such might, weaving the destinies of those far greater than myself. I hoped carrying his children would change that, and yet I feel like nothing more than an ornament upon Corellon's belt—scarcely noticed and easily forgotten."

ROLEPLAYING ARAUSHNEE

A minor goddess in the Dawn Age, Araushnee is both the weaver of destiny and a friend to elven artisans. Her rule over the Ssri-tel-quessir—ancestors of the drow—is fair but distant, as her relationship with Corellon Larethian became the centerpiece of her life. She has a keen sense of justice that serves as a double-edged sword, as those who wrong Araushnee find that she will go to any lengths to pursue vengeance. At this point in the Dawn Age, she is deeply embittered by what she feels is Corellon's neglect, and well aware that Sehanine Moonbow seeks his affection. More than anything, Araushnee is wounded by the notion that centuries of her love were not enough to make her Corellon's equal and seeks to claim that power by any means necessary.

DEVELOPMENT

Despite her tense relationship with Corellon, Araushnee is fiercely protective of her soon-to-be-born children, and asks the party to help keep them safe. She insists that Wendonai presents no threat to her, noting that the only enemies she has are other members of the Seldarine. Adventurers who choose to warn Araushnee about her future as Lolth are dismissed out of hand, as the goddess insists such a possibility has never appeared on her loom of destiny. She is correct that it hasn't—yet—but such knowledge only makes the coming threads of fate bind tighter.

CHAPTER 2 – A POISONOUS PROPOSITION

Feeling his power waver in the present, Vhaeraun realizes the party has arrived to prevent his planned murder of Eilistraee. Desperate to prevent Araushnee from realizing what is about to happen, he returns to the Dawn Age. That evening, he plans to drug Araushnee's drink with a poison tied to Eilistraee's essence, killing his sister while leaving his future self intact. If he cannot ensure her death, time will right itself again and reclaim the power he has in the present.

WHERE SON MEETS SHADOW

Corellon Larethian presents the party with an invitation to dinner with the Seldarine. If the adventurers mention Araushnee's desire for vengeance, the Lord of All Elves is quite compassionate and gently rebukes any assertion that her consort is plotting betrayal. More personal critiques about their relationship rouses Corellon's ire, who notes that they have had quite enough gossip for one week.

If the party has been avoiding Corellon, Araushnee can offer the invitation instead, wanting to keep the adventurers close so they can ensure her safety.

At the first opportunity, Vhaeraun sends a band of his finest warriors to distract the party, intending to slay them and enact his plot before Corellon notices anything untoward. This warband is led by an empowered **ancient black dragon**, with the following modification: its Frightful Presence has a DC of 25. It is accompanied by four **assassins of Vhaeraun** (see adventure appendix), all disguised as palace guards.

Vhaeraun's warriors wait for an opportunity to ambush the party, as they have been ordered to slaughter the adventurers in secrecy. The ancient black dragon opens with Frightful Presence, while the assassins surround the party, trying to weaken the party with their Acid Breath and Touch of the Long Death. The dragon focuses on more martial foes, using its Acid Breath and Wing Attack whenever available, unless the characters appear to be resistant to acid damage.

Once victorious, the party must decide whether to warn Araushnee and the Seldarine of Vhaeraun's influence, or to attend the dinner and hope to subdue him there. If the adventurers interrogate any of the members of the warband, they can discover the poisoning plot before Vhaeraun strikes.

A Common Affair

If anyone but Araushnee is warned, Corellon Larethian sends the goddess to remain in her private grove under heavy guard. Araushnee is incensed at what she views as overprotectiveness, and escapes the grove as soon as the Seldarine gathers for dinner.

Vhaeraun (he/him, deity, chaotic evil) is forced to change plans on the fly, but having Araushnee isolated is an incredible boon. He takes the appearance of Fenmarel Mestarine and seeks her out, well aware that the Lone Wolf eventually has an affair with his mother. The true Fenmarel Mestarine is leagues away from Corellon's palace, oblivious to his appearance being usurped.

If the adventurers do not intervene, the disguised Vhaeraun talks Araushnee into sharing a poisoned wineskin with him before slipping away. The virulent toxin begins to work in a matter of minutes. If the party has yet to discover Araushnee, she seeks them out, ill and enraged.

ARAUSHNEE'S GROVE

This quiet corner of the palace serves as Araushnee's divine realm. Every tree shines with illustrious silver bark and moonlit webs, its leaves caught in the eternal transformation of autumn, rich and red. Despite its pleasant atmosphere, the only creatures that linger in the grove for long are Araushnee's songspiders, small and pearlescent beings that play harp-like tunes upon their silk. She speaks to them often, but they are quite wary around visitors.



HERMAN LAU

A Dinner to Die For

If the party only warns Araushnee about Vhaeraun's ambush or decides to keep it secret, Corellon's banquet continues as planned. It is an utterly lavish affair, highlighting all of the bounty that Arvandor has to offer. Each member of the Seldarine has their own banner raised in the largest hall of the Crescent Grove, with attendants passing out wine and sacred charms for health and good luck to every guest.

Consuming any food at the banquet has the same benefits as the *heroes' feast* spell. With Araushnee's or Corellon's personal invitation, the party is welcome to sit at the Seldarine's table. All may seem well—beyond a few sharp comments passed between the gods—until a servant carrying wine places a fresh cup in front of Araushnee. In an instant, she draws a dagger and stabs the servant directly in the throat.

Chaos ensues as the servant's magical disguise falls away, revealing his identity as a **mask of Vhaeraun** (see sidebar); the wine glass he carried contained the poison designed to kill Eilistraee. He uses his dying breath to draw Vhaeraun's attention—and his wrath. Vhaeraun promptly commands 4-6 guards **(level 20 eladrin rangers)** inflicted with *dominate person* to attack Araushnee, each carrying a blade dipped in the same poison. While the Seldarine assists the party in subduing the guards, their main priority is to make sure Araushnee avoids being exposed to the poison at all costs.

Mask of Vhaeraun

Masks of Vhaeraun use the stat block of a **drow matron mother** (MToF) with the following adjustments:

- When using *summon servant*, it summons a marilith instead of a retriever or a yochlol.
- *Lolth's fickle favor* is replaced with *Vhaeraun's cowl*, which allows the Mask to cast *greater invisibility* as a bonus action once per day.

Development

If Araushnee is poisoned, not all is lost. The adventurers should have a wealth of options at their disposal to help cure her, whether by using a spell such as wish, magic items, or even the intervention of another deity. If they fail to cure Araushnee, and Eilistraee's essence is permanently destroyed, time unravels and shunts the adventurers backward, resulting in **chronophages** (see adventure appendix) spawning to hunt them.

Whether Araushnee's attempted poisoning happens in public or private, she gets into an argument with Corellon about her safety shortly after. The entire court is on guard, with some daring to accuse Araushnee of arranging the attack herself. If needed, the goddess will summon the party to speak in her defense. Corellon rebukes the accusation, but Araushnee snarls for all of them to stay away from her—or face the consequences.

Chapter 3 – Weaver of Destiny

Stymied by the party and on the edge of losing his hold on this timeline, Vhaeraun hunts down Araushnee at the first opportunity, showing his true face and telling her that he is her future son. He insists that Eilistraee will be her downfall and intends to poison his mother the second she drops her guard. The party must intervene before he harms her, but depending on their prior choices, Araushnee will react differently.

Fate's Strangling Thread

If the adventurers try to steer Araushnee away from her future as Lolth, they face not only Vhaeraun but also the encroaching chronophages as conflicting timelines continue to unravel. Araushnee is despondent, seeing herself at the mercy of her own fate, and must be encouraged to take power into her own hands. The moment she does, Vhaeraun sics an **avatar of Vhaeraun** (see sidebar on the next page) and four **masks of Vhaeraun** on the party to enact his vengeance. He then escapes back to the present, fearing that his mother will be able to kill him permanently. Chronophages are hostile to all parties, save for each other and Araushnee.

Revelations in Red

If the adventurers encourage Araushnee's ambitions in order to save Eilistraee, Araushnee summons Wendonai to aid them in the battle against her son and casts *globe of invulnerability* at 9th level to protect herself. Wendonai, a **balor**, aggressively defends the goddess.

Vhaeraun casts off a portion of his power into an **avatar of Vhaeraun** and four **masks of Vhaeraun** to try and kill the adventurers. He then flees, wary of dying in the Dawn Age with no way to escape. Once Vhaeraun's minions are defeated, Araushnee thanks the party for proving that she is in control of her own destiny.

VHAERAUN'S AVATAR
Vhaeraun's Avatar uses the stat block of a **nightwalker** (MToF) with the following adjustments:

- AC of 20
- A 5-6 recharge on *finger of doom*
- The addition of the **doppelganger's** Shapechanger ability. Its primary appearance is that of Vhaeraun himself.

ROLEPLAYING VHAERAUN
As Lolth's eldest son, Vhaeraun has been at war with his mother since the drow were cast away from the other elves. While he believes that all drow should live equally, Vhaeraun also claims that his people are unambiguously superior to others, and will viciously sabotage any who attempt to prevent a drow ascension to the surface. The fact that Lolth finds his betrayal more amusing than anything else is the source of Vhaeraun's rage—he longs to rule in her place and sacrifices everyone around him in singular pursuit of that goal.



SABAA BISMIL

DEVELOPMENT

Once Vhaeraun's minions are dealt with, any remaining **chronophages** (see adventure appendix) will phase out of existence, as the timeline around them has been restored. Araushnee comes to terms with her own power, taking one step closer to her future transformation into Lolth.

CONCLUSION

Araushnee goes into labor and gives birth to her twins. She marks their threads on her loom of fate, but seems unbothered by her son's betrayal, saying that he has given her a reason to never truly trust him in the future. The goddess offers the party a path home through a portal in her scrying pool, noting that one day her loom might weave a far mightier web.

When the adventurers return to the present, they find that Eilistraee is restored, her birth protected by Araushnee's foreknowledge marked in the loom. If the party attempted to restore or repair Araushnee's relationship with Corellon, Lolth notes it bitterly, but rewards the party handsomely for their success nonetheless.

REWARDS

Lolth grants each adventurer a sacred statue symbolizing her favor (worth 8888 platinum pieces). She also will bless them with an epic boon of their choice from the following list: the Boon of Fate, Boon of Perfect Health, Boon of the Night Spirit, or Boon of Undetectability (DMG).

If the party is in contact with Eilistraee, Eilistraee gives each adventurer a *charm of the moon* (DMG) as thanks for rescuing her; each one is marked with a phase of the moon and provides a single stress-free cast of *wish*. Once it has been used in this way, the charm functions as a *+3 amulet of the devout* (TCoE).

AUTHOR BIO

D.E. Chaudron is a queer, nonbinary writer whose work has previously appeared in *Uncaged Volumes III and IV*. They work full-time as a games writer and narrative designer, with notable credits for *Baldur's Gate 3* Early Access and DLC for *Divinity: Original Sin 2*. They love monsters with heart, deeply conflicted villains, and women with unimaginable power.

Assassin of Vhaeraun

Medium Humanoid (Elf), Chaotic Evil

Each assassin is the equivalent of a level 20 monk following Way of the Long Death, has the half-dragon (black) template applied, and is carrying attuned *bracers of defense*.

Armor Class 21
Hit Points 104 (20d8 + 20)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +2, Dex +10, Con +7, Int +6, Wis +11, Cha +7
Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +2, Insight +11, Perception +11, Stealth +10
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities disease, poison, sleep
Condition Resistances charm
Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages All
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Ki Points. The assassin has 20 ki points available. The DC to resist their effects is 19.

Martial Arts. The assassin uses Dexterity for both damage and attack rolls while using monk weapons or an unarmed strike. When using the Attack action on their turn, they can make one unarmed strike as a bonus action.

Evasion. If the assassin makes a successful Dexterity saving throw against an effect, they take no damage from the effect. On a failed save, they take half damage.

Diamond Soul. The assassin may spend 1 ki point to reroll a failed saving throw, but must use the second result.

Empty Body. As an action, the assassin can spend 4 ki points to become invisible for 1 minute. During that time, they also have resistance to all damage except force damage.

Touch of Death. When the assassin reduces a creature within 5 feet to 0 hit points, they gain 25 temporary hit points.

Mastery of Death. When the assassin would be reduced to 0 hit points, they can expend 1 ki point (no action required) to drop to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Multiattack. If using the Attack action, the assassin may attack twice, rather than once per turn.

Unarmed Strike. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1d10 + 5 bludgeoning damage.

Sling +1. Ranged Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, range 30 ft. (120), one target. Hit: 1d4 + 6 bludgeoning damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). The assassin exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Every creature in that line must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Hour of Reaping. Once per encounter, the assassin can unleash an aura tied to the fear of death. Each creature within 30 feet that can see the assassin must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be Frightened of the assassin until the end of their next turn.

Touch of the Long Death. The assassin can touch one creature within 5 feet of them, and expend 1 to 10 ki points. The target must make a Constitution saving throw, taking 2d10 necrotic damage per ki point spent on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Chronophage

Huge Aberration

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 290 (20d12 + 160)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	13 (+1)	26 (+8)	27 (+8)	22 (+6)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +15, Int +15, Wis +13, Cha +14
Skills Arcana +22, Perception +13
Damage Resistances acid, force, necrotic, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages All, telepathy 1,000 ft.
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Legendary Resistance (4/day). If the chronophage fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Unusual Nature. The chronophage doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The chronophage makes three attacks.

Lashing Maw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d12 + 7) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) acid damage.

Psychic Orb. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +15 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 27 (3d12 + 8) psychic damage.

Unhealthy Bile (Recharge 5-6). The chronophage expels bile that splashes all creatures in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point within 120 feet of the chronophage. Each creature in that area must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) acid damage on a failed dave, or half as much damage on a successful one. For each creature that fails the saving throw, a gibbering mouther appears in an unoccupied space on a surface that can support it within 30 feet of that creature. The gibbering mouthers act right after the chronophage on the same initiative count, gaining a +7 bonus to their attack and damage rolls, and fighting until they are destroyed. They disappear when the chronophage dies.

Bonus Actions

Plane Shift. The chronophage casts the *plane shift* spell as a bonus action.

Legendary Actions

The chronophage can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The chronophage regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. The chronophage teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see and makes one attack.

Time Stop (Costs 2 Actions). The chronophage casts the *time stop* spell.

Mind Cloud (Costs 3 Actions). The chronophage unleashes a psychic wave. Each creature within 30 feet of the chronophage must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or take 32 (5d12) psychic damage. In addition, every spell ends on creatures and objects of the chronophage's choice in that area.



WILLIAM HALLETT

KNIGHT TO CRIMSON CAGE

by Isla Lader

Goddess: The Red Knight | **Levels:** 17-20
Content Warnings: Body Horror, Gore, Gambling, Starvation

SYNOPSIS

The Crimson Cage, an infamous castle that levitates through the Material Plane, preys upon individuals of interest to the castle's master, The Bronze Bishop. The Bronze Bishop's motives are elusive, but calculated as he sets his sights on trapping the party in the puzzle halls of his casino domain. With no other allies, the characters realize that their only hope lies with an enigmatic strategy goddess, a set of magical rings, and a deck of playing cards.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Whether by prophetic visions or mysterious rumors, the party becomes aware that they will be the next victims of The Crimson Cage. A dream propels them to seek out the ruins of a temple that once belonged to The Red Knight. There they encounter the persona of The Red Knight, Caïssa Sanguine, in their hour of need.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Red Knight (she/her, deity, lawful neutral) is the goddess of outwitting the odds. While she is traditionally a war goddess, she is presented in the adventure as having dual natures that bring a multifaceted outlook to the domain: violence versus strategy. Her deific form wears a fantastical helm and intricate armor, while the persona she presents to mortals is that of an inquisitive young woman, fascinated by games.

Her rival, the archdevil **Bael** (he/him, lawful evil; MToF), has disguised himself as The Bronze Bishop to usurp her Divine Domain. The Crimson Cage insults The Red Knight's tenets by forcing mortals into situations where their wit and cunning mean nothing. Bael's refusal to admit defeat inspires The Red Knight to infiltrate his casino with help from the characters.

Knight to Crimson Cage is a linear adventure that focuses on a balance between puzzles and combat.

CHAPTER 1 – A BROKEN BOARD

For days the party has been pursued by The Crimson Cage, which hangs overhead emanating an aura of mockery. Visions have led them to a ruined temple, filled with decaying cards and shattered game tokens. Caught in a dead end with The Crimson Cage fast approaching, they have little hope of continuing forward without being captured. Read the following text:

> In the darkness of the ruins you see a pair of eyes peering back at you. Gliding forward, an elven woman appears with a self assured grin and a wooden checkerboard under her arm.

ROLEPLAYING THE RED KNIGHT

The Red Knight rewards inquisitiveness by willingly answering the characters' questions. She is fascinated by complex beings and the tenacity of mortal creatures. Having The Red Knight respond telepathically to characters during the adventure is encouraged. Through the rings' abilities, characters should begin to understand her as a quietly cunning divinity.

The Red Knight's persona appears in unassuming red vestments and introduces herself as Caïssa Sanguine. She gives off an other-worldly aura; characters who have a **passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15** or higher catch a momentary glimpse of The Red Knight's deific form before her disguise corrects. If The Red Knight is asked about her true form, she happily admits to being more than she appears.

The Red Knight does not play coy about her intentions: cooperation is key. To explain her point, she places her board before the characters and sets two wooden figurines on opposite ends of the checkerboard. The wooden figures move on their own volition as she explains her plans to the party:

- The Bronze Bishop controls the Cage. The Red Knight is uncertain what he is, but he commands a powerful magic that has created a demiplane. His victims are not random; they are all powerful individuals.
- The castle's magic prevents its victims from escaping, slowly grinding down their resolve.
- Many followers of The Red Knight have gone missing inside the Cage.
- The Red Knight's clerics have informed her, via the *sending* spell, that the Cage contains an incredible game floor.
- The Red Knight has been weakening ever since the Cage appeared. She believes that The Bronze Bishop is attempting to seize her domain.
- The Red Knight needs the characters' help to enter the Cage. She plans to do this with a set of magical rings that she has crafted.

THE COUNTER GAMBIT

The *Counter Gambit Rings* (see sidebar) are signet rings (one for each character) that carry the essence of The Red Knight. The Red Knight plans to enter the castle with the party through these rings.

Caïssa Sanguine holds up her hands. They shift grotesquely, her bones and flesh morphing and moving, until a group of red rings rises through the skin of her knuckles, like bubbles floating to the surface.

COUNTER GAMBIT RING

Wondrous item, legendary

This red signet ring made of bone feels warm to the touch and bears the holy symbol of The Red Knight. The ring provides you with a direct link to the goddess, who can choose to see and use her senses through the ring. As an action, you can activate one of the following blessings:

- ***Knight's Check.*** For the next minute, if magic is used to alter the results of a game, the ring pulses with a mild heat.
- ***Armageddon Game.*** You can use the cleric's Divine Intervention feature, imploring The Red Knight's aid. You succeed on a roll of 15 or lower on the percentile dice. If you are a cleric of the Red Knight, you succeed on a roll of 45 or lower.
- ***Knight's Call.*** You can speak to The Red Knight, as if you had cast the *commune* spell.



SAMARA LEE

The ring can only be worn by someone who gains the permission of The Red Knight. Anyone who attempts to wear the ring without permission suffers 10d10 radiant damage and is cursed. While cursed, the target must make a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** at the start of each of their turns. If they fail, they are incapacitated until the start of their next turn. The curse persists until a *greater restoration* spell is cast on the creature.

WAR DOMAIN TRANSFORMATIONS

The Red Knight's personality is affected by the characters' decisions. If characters proceed through the adventure violently, The Red Knight becomes more violent and the *Counter Gambit Rings* gain the following additional properties:

Event	Added Feature
The Bellicose Band is killed.	You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls, but melee attack rolls against you have advantage and you take a -6 penalty to initiative rolls.
Uro Bach is killed.	You have a +3 bonus to AC, but have disadvantage on **Dexterity (Stealth) checks**.
If Uro Bach **and** The Bellicose Band are killed.	The rings become cursed items. You refuse to be parted from the ring and must fight to the death rather than give it up. You also gain the following Flaw: *I seek to bend others to my will through force.*

If the characters refuse to put the rings on, The Red Knight appeals to the characters' morality. Once the characters receive the rings, Bael's impatience reaches a head and he summons them to The Crimson Cage. Read the following text once the characters receive their rings:

> A clinging bronze dust fills your lungs and your senses are clouded by decay. When the dust clears, you are no longer in the ruins of a temple, but instead in a darkened area with musical instruments and costumes.

DEVELOPMENT

The party has been thrust into The Crimson Cage. Their actions from this moment forward decide how the final confrontation occurs.

CHAPTER 2 – THE CROWD IS DEAD & THE INTERMEZZO VAULT

Duke Bael has transported the characters to one of many side rooms that filter heroes through puzzles before he kills them or coerces them into servitude.

> **FEATURES OF THE CRIMSON CAGE**
> Exiting the Cage is difficult. *Scrying* is blocked, *sending* spells have a 5% chance of failing, and teleportation spells are negated. Features like Divine Intervention and spells such as *wish* are up to DM's discretion, but The Crimson Cage should be played as impossible to escape without defeating Bael.

The first puzzle has the characters negotiate and work with another adventuring group.

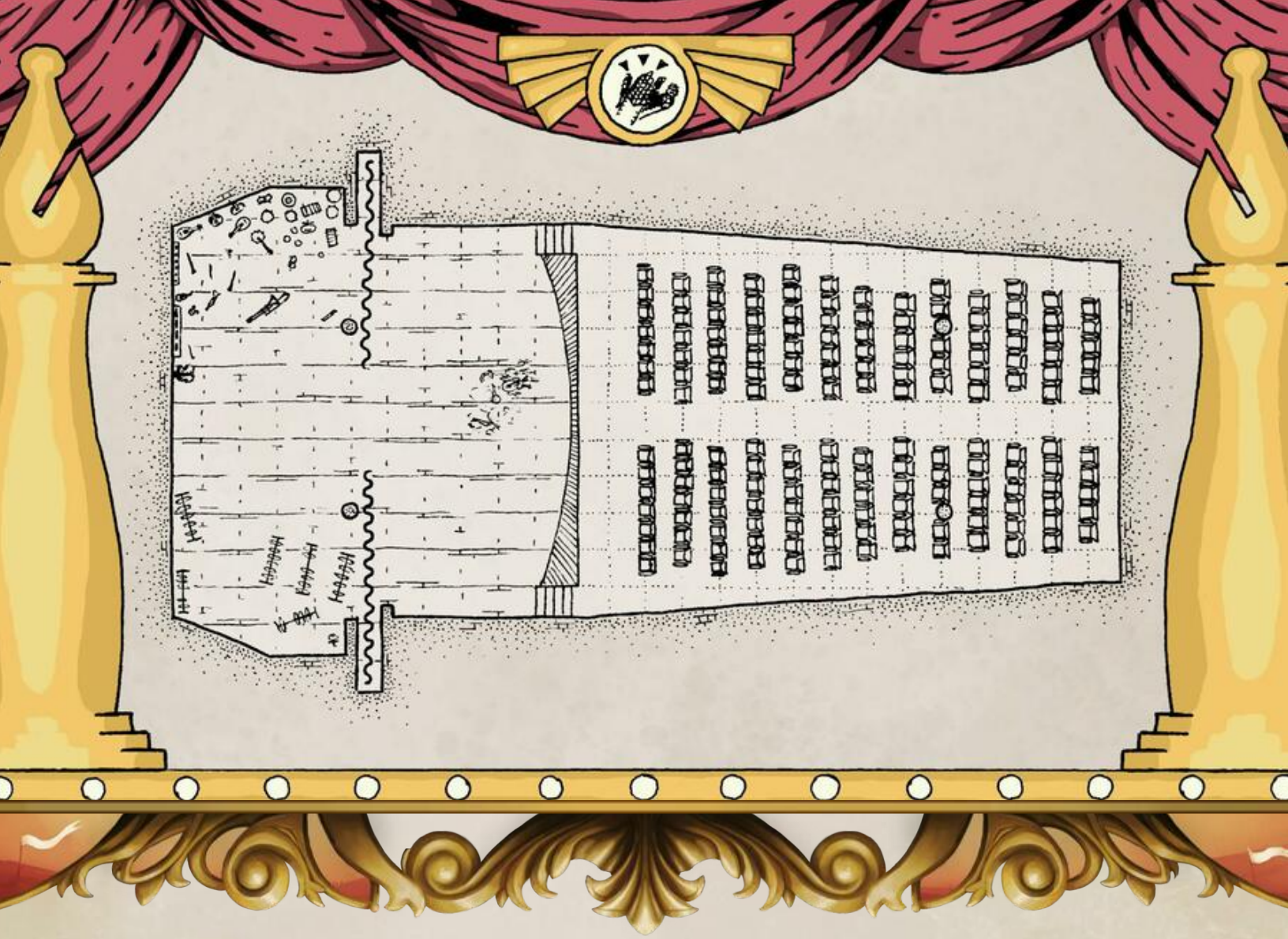
The second puzzle tests their ability to use subterfuge while dealing with a lonely fiend who runs the winnings' vault.

The Red Knight's presence undermines The Crimson Cage's existence, visibly destroying the demiplane from within. Roll a d4 every time a character succeeds a skill check or uses a blessing of their ring:

1d4	Effect
1	The smell of sulfur fills the room.
2	Torn playing cards fall from the ceiling.
3	Wallpaper peels, revealing Infernal script.
4	Bronze dust is kicked up.

THE BELLICOSE BAND

The characters have arrived in a backstage area, separated by a large bronze curtain. Characters who have a **passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14** or higher hear a voice from beyond the curtain: *"I'm going to eat my own harp if we don't get out of this room."* When they move beyond the curtain, read the following:



ALEX NIEDERBERGER

A strange sight greets you when you push through the bronze velvet curtains: a trio of eclectically dressed drow stand on stage arguing around a pile of destroyed instruments. In the auditorium, an audience of fifteen skeletons are propped in ludicrous poses. Among them is a suit of armor that is clapping incessantly.

When the performers spot the party, they draw their weapons in self defence. The Bellicose Band comprises Edda Fenri (he/him, **drow favored consort** (MToF), neutral) and his companions, Vixto and Vixta (she/her and he/him, **drow shadowblades** (MToF), chaotic good). They are not weak, but it should be clear that they are not evil. They are clearly frightened and appear malnourished. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that the drow are entertainers, and not mercenaries.

If the characters attack, Edda sighs: *"Tragic, this could be our last dance."* The Bellicose Band acts on initiative count 19, each taking the Dodge action, unless it is clear the party will not relent. A character can stop combat by using their action to negotiate.

If the characters kill the band, the skeleton audience forms into two **bone devils** who slink away with the corpses. The floor of the room disintegrates into bronze dust, the characters fall to the next room, and The Red Knight's *Counter Gambit Rings* undergo the first phase of the war domain transformation (see previous page).

If the party instead negotiates, they learn the following pieces of information:

- The performers are part of a travelling group called The Bellicose Band. It's a stage name and not indicative of their actual temperaments.
- The suit of **animated armor** is named Clapper (they/them, unaligned). They are the band's biggest fan.

- They were invited to perform for The Bronze Bishop, but have been trapped ever since.
- There are rooms filled with tarnished iconography of a knight dressed in red.
- They're in search of a "casino".
- Most rooms they entered have required combat to the death to escape.
- They have been trapped in this room for two weeks. They were given instructions in Infernal to: "... resurrect the audience."
- *Resurrection* spells fail.
- Their instruments break when they attempt to play them.

ROLEPLAYING THE BELLICOSE BAND

Edda Fenri is a vain lutist, but a clever fighter. Edda's hubris has made him the perfect target for The Crimson Cage's promises of puzzles and loot. The twins Vixtco and Vixtca are the shyer of the trio, but very protective of their boisterous—yet sometimes self-centered—leader. Their clapping suit of armor is also very dear to them.

With The Knight's Check property of the *Counter Gambit Ring*, a character can judge that magic has prevented the puzzle from being solved.

The characters must perform to entertain the skeleton audience. One character at a time can attempt a **DC 19 Charisma (Performance) check**. On a failure, five of the skeletons clap in approval; on a success, all fifteen skeletons applaud. If all characters perform in tandem, they succeed automatically.

MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PUZZLE

The party does not need to use instruments; vocals or jokes are sufficient. Characters can also attempt magical solutions, such as casting *animate objects* or *mending* to prevent an instrument from breaking as another character plays it.

When the characters succeed, the skeletons give a standing ovation, but then collapse, reassembling into two **bone devils** and an **adult red dracolich**, who attack.

The Bellicose Band aids in the fight. Once the creatures are defeated, the floor of the room disintegrates into bronze dust and the characters fall, separated from their new allies.

URO BACH'S VAULT MAZE

You fall, landing amidst a filthy barroom lit by green torchlight and cluttered with junk. In the corner are a few colorful machines. At the bar sits a gnome woman rolling dice and fondly talking to a patch of mold.

The bar is tended by Uro Bach (she/her, **rakshasa**, lawful neutral), in disguise as a gnome. She plays dice with a patch of mold growing on the bartop counter, an **alkilith** (MToF). If asked what she's doing in The Crimson Cage, she responds despondently: *"Trying to make a living."*

Broken Slots

The machines are free to play, but unwinnable. The Red Knight does not aid the party here; she is disgusted by the lack of strategy. When a character plays the slot machine, they roll three d4's. If they roll the same number three times, the machine appears to display three of a kind, before the last spinner ticks out of place by The Bronze Bishop's design.

Bar Drinks

The bar is stocked with bottles of liquor with brands written in Infernal. Everything costs two gold pieces and tastes of rust and sulfur. If the characters complain about the selection to Uro Bach, she is apologetic. She too is frustrated by the lack of goods to sell.

ROLEPLAYING URO BACH

Uro Bach is a fiend who loves deals and diplomacy. Unfortunately, she gets very little of either in The Crimson Cage, as her role here is to serve as a lesser servant to Bael in his form as The Bronze Bishop. Uro Bach hopes the party will be the ones to set her free, but has watched so many mortals fail that she is not sure that it is possible.

Running the Maze

Uro Bach's fear of Bael motivates her to introduce the party to The Intermezzo Vault. Leading off from the bar is a maze, the walls of which are lined with niches that contain monetary offerings to The Bronze Bishop. There are also religious trinkets of The Red Knight in amongst the hoard. Patrolling the maze are three **cadaver collectors** (MToF) and one **iron golem**. Uro Bach explains that to escape her room, the party must fetch a deck of cards from the center of the maze.

The walls of the maze are 12 feet high. Characters who fly above the shelves are met with an infinite smog of bronze dust that heavily obscures the area and prevents them from seeing the maze in its entirety.

Each niche contains 4d100 platinum pieces. If a character takes any of this platinum, they must succeed at a **DC 19 Wisdom saving throw** or be marked by the patrolling constructs. While marked, a character takes an additional 1d6 damage whenever one of the constructs hits them with a weapon attack.

The walls of the maze constantly shift. To find the deck, characters must make four **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) checks**. Each time the characters succeed they manage to avoid an encounter with a construct. On a failure, roll a d4. On a roll of 4 the characters encounter the **iron golem**, otherwise they encounter a **cadaver collector** (MToF). Characters who are progressing stealthily make these checks with advantage. If any character is marked by the patrolling constructs, they make these checks with disadvantage.

After the characters have rolled their fourth **Wisdom (Survival) check**, and dealt with any encounters, they find the center of the maze, where they encounter The Roulette Wheel Puzzle.

You arrive in an area dominated by a magnificent wheel lying on its side atop a bronze felted table; sections of the wheel denote numbers from one to twenty. A cartoonish demon chases a halfling alongside the numbers. There is an indentation, approximately coin-sized, next to the wheel and a larger 'prize' slot.

Roulette Wheel

To place a bet, a character must insert 100 gold pieces into the indentation and claim a number from 1 to 20. When the game begins, roll a d20 to see which number the roulette ball lands on.

Flaw and Solving the Puzzle

Even if a claimed number is rolled, at the last second the wheel "flicks" the ball to an unclaimed number. In order to win, characters must claim every number on the wheel. When this happens, the roulette wheel spawns a miniature barlgura demon that smashes the ball in a fit of rage. The prize slot then deposits a *deck of many companions* (see below) and a set of *Nolzur's Marvelous Pigments*.

Deck of Many Companions

Wondrous item, legendary

This ivory box contains a deck of six cards made of crimson metal, each bearing the image of a different adventurer. As an action you can pull one card at random from the deck to summon the spirit of an adventurer in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of you. The spirit uses the stat block of the creature specified in the table below and is under your control. The spirit disappears when reduced to 0 hit points. Once a card has been pulled it does not return to the deck. At dawn the deck recovers 1d4 cards at random.

1d6	Spirit
1	Human **Champion** (VGtM)
2	Half-Orc **Blackguard** (VGtM)
3	Elf **Gladiator**
4	Tiefling **War Priest** (VGtM)
5	Dwarf **Assassin**
6	Halfling **Abjurer** (VGtM)

If the characters choose to fight Uro Bach, rather than complete the maze, The Red Knight's *counter gambit rings* undergo the second phase of the war domain transformation and the characters are immediately brought before Bael.

If the deck is retrieved, Uro Bach allows the characters to rest at the bar, explaining: *"You'll know how to play them. The boss does love a good game. He's just not so keen to lose."*

DEVELOPMENT

Bael, who has just witnessed the party either lay waste to his rooms or cleverly solve them, intercepts the characters after they either finish off Uro Bach or complete a rest in the bar. As with the previous area, the characters fall through a decaying floor.

CHAPTER 3 – BLITZ ARMAGEDDON

THE BRONZE BISHOP

You crash into a room covered in bronze dust. Strange machines lay in wreckage amidst a floor of glowing levers, tiles, dragonchess pieces, and game tokens. The room feels like it goes on for an eternity. In the center of the chaos, a staircase leads to an altar adorned with a gaudy throne where a humanoid figure sits in bronze finery and a towering headpiece. He clutches the armrests with enough force to crack them.

ROLEPLAYING BAEL

The archdevil Bael is known for his tactical genius and fear of losing. Haughty and patronizing, Bael presents the party with a gamble to escape The Crimson Cage if they obtained *the deck of many companions* (see previous page). Bael's Bronze Bishop disguise falters when he is angered or when he is irked by a character's question. DM's are also encouraged to use Bael's throne, **Usurpation** (see adventure appendix), during the Bael's Gamble section of the final confrontation to illustrate his petulance.

Running the Final Confrontation

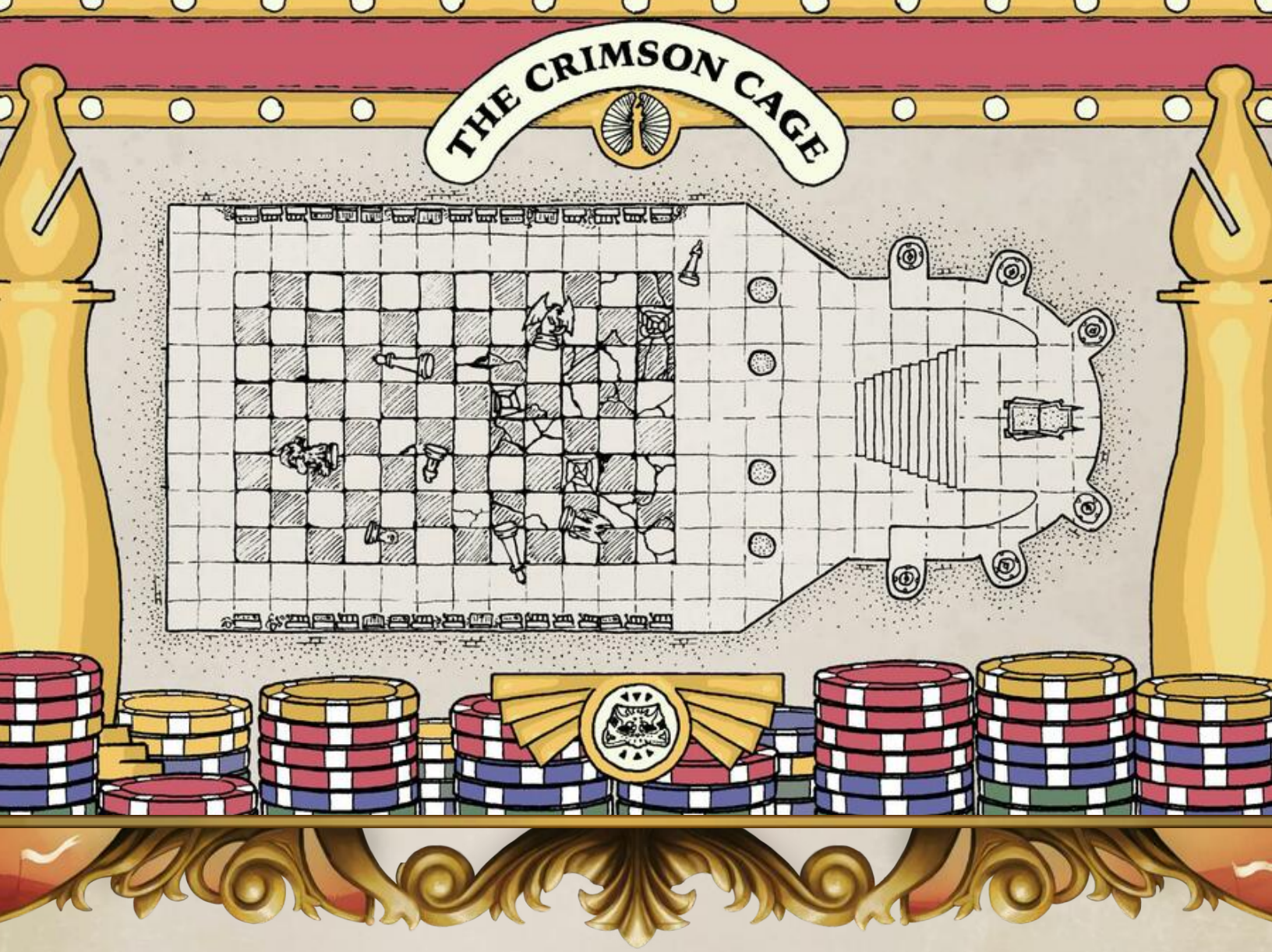
- If the characters activated only one war domain transformation of their *counter gambit rings* and they possess the *deck of many companions*, they can attempt to persuade Bael into a game (see Bael's Gamble) with a successful **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check**.
- If characters activated two of the war domain transformations and do not possess the *deck of many companions*, then Bael immediately engages them in combat (see Bael's Combat).
- If characters have not activated any war domain transformations, they are presented with **Bael's Gamble**.

Bael's Gamble

The Bronze Bishop proposes a deal. He will allow the party to draw three cards from their *deck of many companions*, and he will draw three cards from his own deck of monsters. If the party's adventurers beat his monsters in combat, he will allow them to leave The Crimson Cage. If they do not agree to his bargain, he engages them in combat.



DAVID MARKIWSKY



ALEX NIEDERBERGER

If the party has not activated any war domain transformations, The Red Knight's power allows the party to choose their three spirits from the deck. The Bishop chooses his cards regardless; a **cambion**, a **barlgura**, and a **glabrezu**.

Characters roll initiative for their spirits and must command their warriors in a game of warfare against Bael's monsters.

BACKSEAT COMBAT

Characters can cast spells during the combat, or contribute in additional ways besides commanding their spirits. However, Bael responds with his own tricks. Bael's usage of illusion and enchantment magic raises the stakes of the gamble.

If the party wins by defeating all three monsters, Bael throws off his disguise as The Bronze Bishop and engages them in combat. The ties holding him in The Material Plane begin to break, he dishonors his bargain, and he is banished back to the Nine Hells after three rounds of combat.

Bael's Combat

Room Layout. The room appears to be an infinite casino, but is actually only 180 feet by 90 feet. In the center of the room sits Bael's throne, elevated 20 feet. The ceiling is 30 feet high.

Bael has the following changes to his stat block while in his casino room:

- He has a flying speed of 40 feet.
- His armor class is 22.
- He can use one legendary action to cast the *slow* spell or the *haste* spell.

- As a bonus action, Bael can command his throne, **Usurpation** (see adventure appendix), to use one of its actions.
- When Bael takes damage, he can choose to have his throne, Usurpation, take the damage instead.
- Bael is immune to any spell that would send him to a different plane of existence as long as Usurpation has more than 0 hit points.

Three slot machines (**hell fire engines**, MToF) come to the aid of Bael during combat.

If Edda Fenri was killed in Chapter Two, he appears under Bael's control as a **death knight**. Edda wails for his lost companions.

If the party activated only one war domain transformation of their *counter gambit rings*, Bael's slot machines must make a **DC 18 Wisdom saving throw** at the start of each of their turns or spend their action spinning in circles.

CONCLUSION

Victory. If the characters survive, The Red Knight reclaims The Crimson Cage. The Cage becomes a game hall if characters did not activate any war domain transformations of their *counter gambit rings*. Otherwise, The Red Knight turns The Crimson Cage into a harsh military barracks that reflects the brutality used to win it back.

> You feel the room begin to descend. The walls of the infinite casino crumble, and through the wreckage you find an escape. The oppressive bronze dust is no more, and for a brief moment you think you see Caïssa Sanguine in the distance. Her clothes are no longer unassuming, as she wears magnificent crimson armor and rides atop a red horse. She is there for but a moment, and then she is gone.

If the characters befriended The Bellicose Band they have the potential to meet them in other adventures. Edda Fenri has ties to high drow society and would love to drag the party into Underdark shenanigans.

If Uro Bach is alive by the end of the adventure, she feels indebted to the characters and gives each of them a casino token from The Crimson Cage. Characters can present a casino token to gain a +5 bonus to **Charisma (Intimidation) checks** made against fiends; the coin shows that the holder has survived Bael's dominion.

The Red Knight allows the characters to keep their *counter gambit rings*.

Defeat. If the party perishes, The Red Knight as her last act 'breaks' The Crimson Cage, downing the floating demiplane and trapping Bael—and herself—inside. Now, The Red Knight must wait for a new group of heroes to brave the dungeon.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There is nothing more horrifying than the idea that every trick or play you make is meaningless. It's why casinos terrify me. The Red Knight is a war goddess, but more importantly she is meant to embody the power of strategy and choice. I considered the one place that could stand in opposition to that ideology and wrote Knight to Crimson Cage out of my love for those tenets and fear of what could destroy them.

Thanks to Alex (Bones), HR, Josh, Juliet, Marcus, and all of the University of Denver's Dungeons and Dragons club (DUDAD). Special thanks to Ariel for being a shoulder to lean on, despite the oceans and time zones between us. Love to the Dungeon Rats (my players) who deal with my weird NPCs and inconsistent poker face. Gratitude to Joanne; may you put this book on the coffee table you don't own. And finally, thanks to the entire *Uncaged* team; I had such an incredible adventure with you all.

AUTHOR BIO

Isla Lader is a fiction writer who bounces between living in Colorado and Florida. When she isn't playing TTRPGs she is performing comedy improv, writing short stories, making themed playlists, or ranting about *Koschei the Deathless* and *The Golem of Prague*. She can be contacted at **bookendjams@gmail.com** and found **@bookendjams** on Twitter.

Usurpation

Large Construct, Unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (13d10 + 65)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	10 (0)	10 (0)

Saving Throws Con +8
Damage Immunities fire, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 5
Languages understands Infernal but can't speak it
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Immutable Form. Usurpation is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Contractually Binding. Usurpation blocks teleportation spells in The Crimson Cage. As long as Usurpation has more than 0 hit points, Bael cannot be affected by spells that would send him back to The Nine Hells.

From the Master's Flesh. Usurpation is an extension of Bael's body and will. When Usurpation takes damage, Bael can choose to take the damage instead and vice versa.

Actions

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Cash Out (3/day). Usurpation conjures a wave of casino tokens that crashes down on an area within 120 feet. The area can be up to 30 feet long, up to 10 feet wide, and up to 10 feet tall. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 4d8 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone.

Spellcasting. Usurpation casts one of the following spells, using Bael's spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18):
At will: *thunderclap*
3/day each: *bones of the earth*



GWEN BASSETT



MAARTJE HEERE

VENGEANCE REBORN

by Jesse Heinig

Goddess: Kiaransalee | Levels: 17-20
Content Warnings: Chronic Pain, Undeath, Animal Death

SYNOPSIS

Having procured *Evergold*, the fountain of youth and beauty, the drow goddess Kiaransalee plans to combine it with another powerful artifact. She means to perform magic that could alter her purview—but to what end? The heroes must venture to Kiaransalee's home in the Abyss to discover her plans. But don't let the goddess of revenge catch you foiling her plot.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Kiaransalee's plans, though secret, have not gone wholly unnoticed—stealing *Evergold* has drawn the attention of the goddesses Sune and Hanali Celanil. If a character follows either of these goddesses, they receive a vision spurring them to action. In this vision, the deity shares the information below. Otherwise, Tanyth Varo (they/them, high elf **priest**, chaotic good) approaches the party. Tanyth is a middle-aged, androgynous cleric of Hanali Celanil with light brown skin. They bear the ethereal aura that comes with aging gracefully into compassionate wisdom—but they also suffer from chronic pain, which makes adventures like this impossible for them. Tanyth explains the situation:

- Kiaransalee has stolen *Evergold*, which must return to Arvandor.
- Priests have already used *commune* and *divination* spells to learn Kiaransalee's plans, to no effect.
- Returning *Evergold* means traveling to the Abyss, infiltrating Kiaransalee's city of Elegy, and figuring out how to break the spell that translocated the fountain.
- Elegy is home to undead, fiends, and mortals—all servants of Kiaransalee. Undead outnumber and outrank the other followers.
- The plane itself works against the heroes (see "Planar Problems" on the next page).
- In Elegy, Kiaransalee is at full power. Challenging her in combat is futile.
- Time is of the essence. While in Elegy, there will be no time for lengthy rests. Kiaransalee could carry out her plans at any moment!

To foil Kiaransalee's plans, the heroes must reach the Abyss, sneak into Elegy, and find a way to return *Evergold* to Arvandor. The churches of Sune and Hanali Celanil offer material rewards if the heroes need further encouragement. If the heroes lack sufficient magic items, the temple provides them with five *potions of superior healing*. They give a *+1 weapon* to anyone who does not have one.

THE PAIN OF THE REVENANCER

Tanyth Varo explains that they suffer from bouts of incurable pain. Kiaransalee also suffers from chronic pain, though the heroes are unlikely to learn about this before reaching her palace.

Use Tanyth to color the interactions of this adventure, underscoring that while Kiaransalee is a victim, she has also chosen to do evil. Her pain did not make her evil, any more than Tanyth's condition affects their ability to be a powerful and influential priestess and force for good. These interactions can provide context that helps the heroes understand Kiaransalee's motivations.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Kiaransalee wishes to end the terrible pain she has suffered since Lolth slew her with Abyssal poison. She plans to drip the *Hallowed Tear of the Martyred Redeemer* into *Evergold*, then bathe in its waters to cleanse her system of poison. *Evergold* is currently locked in her palace, held there by *planar anchors*. Unbeknownst to the heroes, Kiaransalee's plan won't damage *Evergold* or destroy its power.



MAARTJE HEERE

CHAPTER 1 — ELEGY, THE CITY OF REVENANCE

Kiaransalee's home is a reflection of her mortal days remade into a sprawling metropolis of decaying splendor in the Abyss. Beyond its walls of marble, granite, and basalt, Elegy is a dangerous extension of the plane. It is full of undead, petitioner spirits, and occasional mortal worshippers and fiends. Elegy has eternal night—there is no sun. Outsiders might hope to lose themselves in the crowd, but their heartbeats give them away.

PLANAR PROBLEMS

Kiaransalee's domain presents several magical limitations:

- All healing magic has minimal functionality. Whenever a character uses a healing spell, it restores hit points equal to the minimum number on each die. Nonmagical healing, such as the fighter's Second Wind ability, is unaffected.
- Kiaransalee knows the destination of any teleportation spells used in Elegy, though she doesn't know the caster. Usually, she ignores these spells—the undead use such powers regularly. If Kiaransalee learns the heroes have invaded her city, she pays closer attention.
- The spells *detect evil and good*, *protection from evil and good*, and *magic circle* have no effect.
- Divination spells cannot target Kiaransalee directly. If a character casts a spell to predict her actions, it fails.

ENTERING THE CITY

The walls of Elegy are 40 feet high and patrolled by hordes of undead. Magical wards—created by the *glyph of warding* spell cast at 9th level—are hidden at strategic points. Starting a fight brings more undead than the party can handle—use as many **ghosts**, **mummies**, **vampires**, and **wraiths** as needed to overwhelm the heroes. The heroes can enter the city using skill challenges or magic. The following sections provide ways to enter.

A Little Bribery

Undead are common outside the city walls, going about their own business. If the heroes ask too many questions it draws unwanted attention from the undead. Characters who converse with a local outside the city must make a **DC 20 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check**. After three unsuccessful attempts, a local patrol of one **marilith**, one **vampire**, and 1d4 + 1 **wraiths** confronts them. After this encounter, the locals refuse to talk to the heroes, cutting off this avenue of entry.

On a success, the heroes learn of Zanzuro (she/her, elf **vampire**, neutral evil). Zanzuro has an ashen complexion, is painfully thin, and is just over five feet tall. She carries a *+2 rapier* and wears a *ring of protection* and a *cloak of invisibility*. To the locals, she's known to deal with mortals

who visit the city. Unbeknownst to all others, she has grown tired of her vampiric state. If the heroes convince Zanzuro to trust them, she agrees to help them enter the city in return for a favor: she asks the heroes to help cure her vampiric curse. Convincing Zanzuro requires **three contested ability checks**, pitting her Insight of +14 against their relevant Charisma skills.

Otherwise, she demands proof that they'll keep their word. She accepts one of their magic items as collateral or demands a small amount of blood from one of the party members. With Zanzuro as an escort, nobody questions the party's presence as long as they don't cause trouble.

A Little Stealth

Catacombs run under the city's wall and into the heart of Elegy. It is easy to find an entrance to the catacombs—they litter the grounds outside the city. However, the heroes must navigate the catacombs carefully to avoid detection. The heroes must make a series of **DC 18 group Dexterity (Stealth) checks**. After the third successful check, they reach the inside of the city.

Each time the party fails a check, they run into a large group of undead while crossing through a burial chamber. Roll a d4 and consult the Catacomb Encounters Table to determine what they encounter. Fighting the undead doesn't hinder the party's progress through the catacombs.

1d4	Catacomb Encounters
1	3d8 + 3 **hezrou**
2	1d4 + 1 **vampires**
3	6d10 **ghouls** and 2d6 **ghasts**
4	3d6 **ghosts** with a 50% chance of 2d6 **banshees**

A Little Magic

The heroes can attempt to make their way over the walls or through a crumbling hole with several spells and abilities. In general, as long as they are careful not to alert anyone, these tactics are successful. If the heroess are careless, they may be noticed. As previously noted, this will quickly draw the attention of large numbers of **ghosts**, **mummies**, **vampires**, and **wraiths** until the heroes retreat.

Navigating the Streets

Once inside the walls, the heroes must navigate the winding streets of Elegy without drawing undue attention or falling into the traps of the undead city. If the heroes bribed or enticed one of the locals to aid them, their erstwhile ally suggests one of these possibilities.

> The city of Elegy is at once majestic and crumbling. It is replete with temples, libraries, crypts, cells, mausoleums, music halls, observatories, even the occasional administrative building—but has few accommodations for the living. The twisted spires of Kiaransalee's Risen Palace loom over it all—your destination, though hopefully not their final one.

Finding the Way

The party can navigate the winding, narrow streets by making a map. A character charts the streets from a high point with a successful **DC 16 Intelligence check with cartographer's tools**.

Failing the check results in the party becoming lost and losing an hour in the maze of streets. Roll a d20 and consult the Street Encounters Table to determine what, if anything, they encounter during this time. Once the encounter is complete, the heroes repeat the check to find the palace.

1d4	Street Encounters
1	No encounter
2	2d6 **wraiths**
3	2 **vampires**
4	1 **nalfeshnee**

Armed with a map, the party can cross the city quickly, using ruined buildings for cover, as they duck between crumbling spots to avoid wandering undead. However, large parts of the city itself are undead. Crossing through such sections is unavoidable when using the city streets, even with a map. Read the following boxed text when the heroes encounter a section of **undead city** (see adventure appendix).

> The crumbling city edifices seem to lean toward you. Gravestones stick out of the soil like fingers, staircases in ruined shells rise like spines, andhouses with shuttered windows resemble skulls. As you move through the streets, the very cobblestones shift slightly. The cracking of stone signals that the buildings are moving, ever so slightly, with a deliberate malevolence fueled by hunger.

A Street Paved with Lies

Undead bureaucrats challenge heroes who pretend to be dignitaries to bluff their way through the city. A **lich** detains the heroes and demands to see their credentials. Mortals are uncommon in the city, so providing credible answers is difficult. A hero must succeed on a **DC 30 Charisma (Deception) check** to convince the interrogator. If the heroes blow their cover during this interrogation—by contradicting themselves or displaying holy symbols of good deities—endless waves of undead descend upon them until they flee the city.

Who Barters the Barterers?

The party can pass themselves off as dealers of curios. Intelligent undead in the city are eager to see what they are offering or may try to pawn off minor magical trinkets on them for absurd prices. The heroes must put on a convincing show of bartering. Accepting the first offer raises suspicion—nobody expects a skilled, plane-traveling merchant to buy and sell at face value! This is a roleplaying challenge. The heroes must engage with the locals and provide enough haggling and knowledge to seem legitimate—though they must also find a way to continue their journey to the Risen Palace without excessive delays.

Development

At the heart of the city is the Risen Palace. Entering the palace is its own set of challenges—the heroes must discover *Evergold* and Kiaransalee's plans before they encounter the goddess face-to-face.

Chapter 2 – Going Under

The party must find a way into the Risen Palace, discover Kiaransalee's plans, and then decide what to do about them.

The Risen Palace is a glorious piece of architecture, rising hundreds of feet into the festering Abyssal skies. Its twisting, spiraling columns are improbably thin; its broad walls bow outward like giant inverted ribs. The bone-white rooms are adorned with fountains of blood, hanging mosses that resemble wet black hair, and skull-shaped archways arrayed with clasped and crisscrossing hand-shapes.

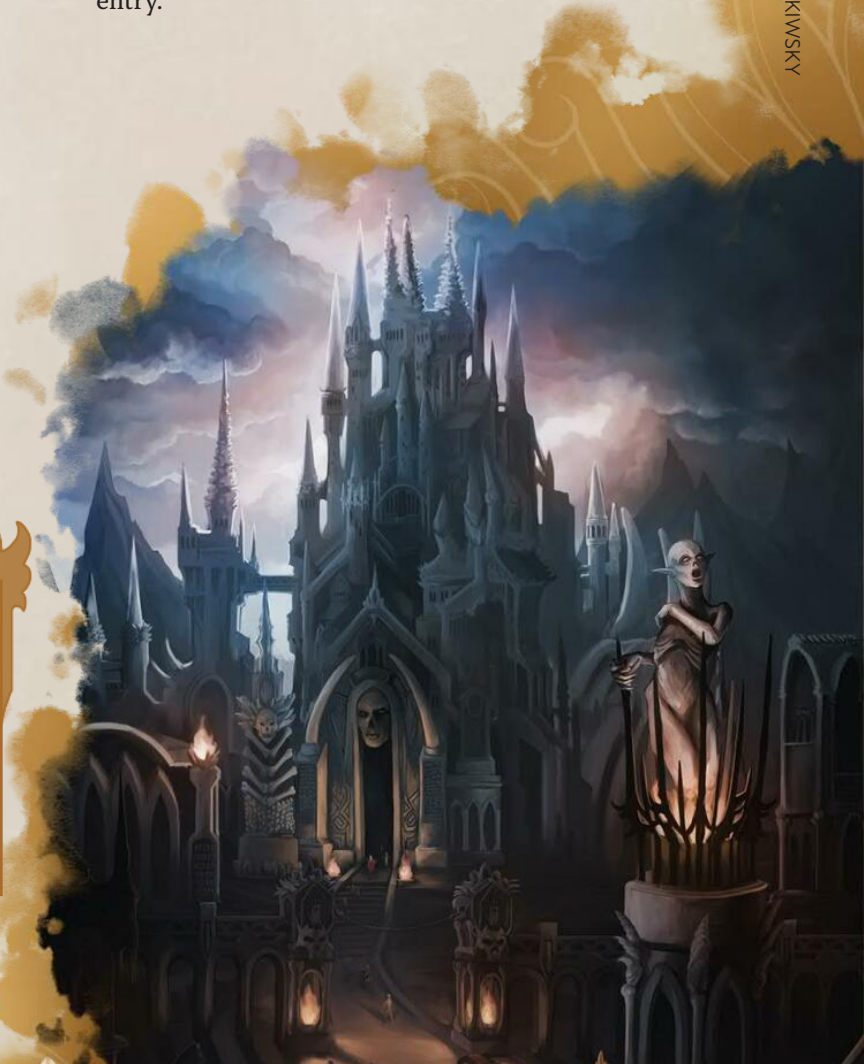
Petitioners at the Door

Entry to the palace is simple for petitioners. A short line of drow meanders through the main door, checked by four **drow necrolytes** (see adventure appendix) who are guarding it. Many guards patrol the palace grounds. If the heroes start a fight here, they can expect the entire city to fall upon them until they flee or die.

By Force or Finesse

The palace guards can discern locals from intruders at a glance and immediately notice the heroes are not deceased devotees of Kiaransalee. To enter the palace, the heroes must succeed on a **DC 25 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check** to convince the guards to allow them entry. The heroes should spin a convincing yarn—passing themselves off as visitors from an allied religion, or powerful priests who have come to aid Kiaransalee in the final stages of her plans.

On a failed check, the guards rebuff the heroes and demand they leave immediately. The alternatives are to either fight past the guards and enter a palace on high alert or turn away and try to find an alternative means of entry.



DAVID MARKIWSKY

Over the Ramparts We Go

The party can enter the palace illicitly—by climbing a tower, crossing a garden, and slipping in through a window. To do this requires the following **three successful group skill checks: Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), and Dexterity (Stealth)**. The DC for each check is 22. On a failure, the party encounters two **drow necrolytes**, who attempt to eject them from the palace—by force, if necessary. Fighting the necrolytes raises the alarm in the palace, meaning other guards will be on high alert. Once this happens, the DC for Stealth checks to sneak in increases by 5. At the end of every round, roll 1d6: on a 5-6, two more **drow necrolytes** on patrol spot the players and engage them. This alert state continues until the heroes leave for at least an hour.

The Bloody Bath

Kiaransalee is preparing for her bathing ritual, leaving *Evergold* unguarded. If the heroes find *Evergold*, they may return it and leave Elegy in a hurry. However, they might want to learn more about Kiaransalee's plans first. Staying in the palace for too long alerts the guards, so they must carefully balance the urgency of their mission with the need to gather intelligence. If the heroes try to linger in the palace for more than two hours, escalate the tension by having them encounter undead palace staff going about their business—no part of the palace is uninhabited and there is nowhere safe to stay out of the way.

Wandering the Premises

Kiaransalee's chambers are extensive. The following are areas the party might discover:

Library. A massive reference archive devoted to a single topic, such as animating the dead or compound poisons. A hero who searches a library and succeeds on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana, History, or alchemist's supplies) check** learns that Kiaransalee has been studying the interactions of *Evergold* with alchemical formulae. She has been specifically looking for its efficacy in neutralizing poison.

Wardrobe. A walk-in closet filled with hanging cloaks, robes, gowns, corsets, boots, and sandals. A hero who searches the wardrobe has a 50% chance of discovering a random magical piece of apparel from the Random Magical Apparel Table.

RANDOM MAGICAL APPAREL TABLE

1d8	Random Magical Apparel
1	*boots of elvenkind*
2	*cloak of the bat*
3	*cloak of elvenkind*
4	*cloak of protection*
5	*headband of intellect*
6	*robe of eyes*
7	*robe of stars*
8	*slippers of spider climbing*

Museum. A long hall filled with works of art—paintings, statues, and glass cases with preserved specimens. A hero who studies the art and makes a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (History) check** identifies that one painting depicts Lolth poisoning Kiaransalee. In this painting, Lolth is in the form of a giant spider with dripping mandibles.

Pet Cemetery. A room full of soil, taxidermied animals, and undead creatures buried in graves marked only with pairs of crossed sticks. When the heroes enter the room, the ground starts to shake as the bodies of four buried pets rise from the dead. The pets use the statistics of a **behir**, a **bulette**, a **manticore**, and a **remorhaz**, but the creatures have the undead type and their attacks do an extra 1d6 necrotic damage. (As neutral evil mindless undead, they attack living creatures immediately.)

Alchemical Lab. Alchemical equipment fills this chamber. A hero that makes a successful **DC 18 Intelligence check with alchemical supplies or poisoner's tools** determines that Kiaransalee has been studying how to remove the poison that ravages her system. The notes date back for millennia, but recent notes point to using *Hallowed Tear of the Martyred Redeemer* in conjunction with *Evergold* as a possible antidote.

To Bathe or Not to Bathe

This massive chamber contains a bathing pool, has vaulted ceilings, and is suffused with an unearthly glow. *Evergold* is an 80-foot diameter fountain with ornate pillars. It occupies the center of the pool and takes up the majority of the space. **Kiaransalee** (see adventure appendix) is in her bathing gown and carries the *Hallowed Tear of the Martyred Redeemer*. She is attended by one **lich** and two **drow necrolytes** as she prepares for her bath. The goddess and her attendants are preoccupied with their preparations; they don't immediately notice the heroes entering.

Evergold is held in place by four *planar anchors* that look like a black swatch of shimmering cloth tied around the pillars of the pool. The *planar anchors* are magical; they have AC 11 and 90 hit points. The *dispel magic* and *antimagic* field spells suppress a planar anchor, treating it as a 9th-level spell. As *Evergold* is a divine artifact, it is immune to most minor damage; however, careless use of spells higher than 4th-level will damage the fountain—or even *destroy* it—if *Evergold* takes over 150 points of damage. Suppressing all *planar anchors* causes *Evergold* to shimmer and vanish as it travels back to Arvandor.

Kiaransalee carries the *Hallowed Tear of the Martyred Redeemer* inside a vial. Stealing it from her requires a successful **DC 30 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** and a distraction. The vial is a magic item, with AC 16 and 3 hit points. Shattering the vial causes the Tear to leak from it. If it doesn't land in *Evergold*, its magic is lost.

Kiaransalee reacts differently depending on when she learns of the heroes' presence:

- **If the heroes destroy the planar anchors or the *Hallowed Tear* before she has enacted her plan**, Kiaransalee is immediately hostile, as are her attendants.
- Kiaransalee completes her ritual bath in six rounds. **If the heroes interfere during that time**, she orders her minions to stop them. If she concludes the ritual successfully, she laughs in triumph and, unless the heroes keep fighting, orders her minions to cease attacking them.
- **If the heroes disrupt the *planar anchors* once her plan is complete**, Kiaransalee is annoyed but not inclined to kill them outright. She revels in her newfound pain-free existence and dismisses the magic of the *planar anchors* with a casual wave of her hand, catapulting *Evergold* back to Arvandor, then orders the party to leave. If the heroes don't leave immediately, one of Kiaransalee's minions casts *plane shift* to teleport them away.
- **If the heroes engage her in diplomacy**, Kiaransalee is extremely wary—a heavily-armed group of mortals has broken into her home. However, if the heroes convince Kiaransalee they are not here to stop her, she chooses not to waste time on them. She directs her attendants to watch the party while she concludes her work. Once she completes her plan, she addresses the heroes. If they do not wish to incur the wrath of the goddess of vengeance, they should leave. She dismisses *Evergold* and the heroes.
- **If the heroes hide**, Kiaransalee's minions discover them unless they take extreme measures, such as a *wish* or *magnificent mansion* spell. Her **lich** attendant uses spells like *see invisibility* and *detect thoughts* to sense the presence of outsiders and is quick to raise the alarm. If the heroes hope to watch the scene play out, the lich can force a confrontation.

CONCLUSION

There are four likely outcomes to the heroes' mission:

The heroes die in Elegy. Having fallen in Kiaransalee's domain, they are now undead under her command. Rescuing them is possible, but even *true resurrection* isn't powerful enough to reclaim a soul captured in Elegy. A rescue mission would need someone to return to Elegy, find the dead, bring them home, and then resurrect them.

The heroes thwart Kiaransalee's plan. Kiaransalee is furious, and as the goddess of revenge, she sets her sights on making the heroes' lives long, miserable, and painful.

Kiaransalee completes her plan, but *Evergold* is damaged. Kiaransalee leaves the heroes alone, but the gods of the Seldarine are unhappy about the damage to the pool. The heroes receive a token reward (see "Rewards").

Kiaransalee completes her plan, and *Evergold* is returned undamaged. Kiaransalee leaves the heroes alone. Over the following centuries, her attitudes gradually shift. She breaks away from the cycle of violence with Lolth and expands her purview to knowledge, history, and stewardship of the dead—potentially signaling a change in alignment and rise in prominence. The Seldarine are ecstatic at the outcome and reward the heroes handsomely (see "Rewards").

REWARDS

Successfully returning *Evergold*—assuming it's not damaged or destroyed—nets the heroes a handsome reward. They are invited to Arvandor for one day to bathe in its waters, attended by the nymphs of the pool. This spa day treatment grants the benefit of a *tome of leadership and influence* to each character. In addition, the temple gives the heroes a pearl-socketed *ring of water elemental command*, a *luck blade*, and a *rod of lordly might*. They also receive gems and jewelry with a total worth of 25,000 gp. These include: a full-body gown laced with silver and studded with moonstones; a pair of teardrop-shaped calcite earrings; softly-glowing dance slippers made from moonbeams and gossamer; and a girdle woven from ice spider silk chased with tiny rubies.

Any heroes who died or turned undead, but whose bodies were returned, are resurrected by the temple.

Destroying or damaging *Evergold* leaves the priesthoods of Sune and Hanali Celanil distraught, but they understand that this was a nigh-impossible task. Each of the heroes receives pearls, moonstones, and jewelry worth a total of 2,500 gp.

If the heroes stole the *Hallowed Tear*, one of them can use it on themselves. Ingesting the *Hallowed Tear* causes a creature's Constitution score to increase by 1, and the creature gains immunity to all poison.

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

KIARANSALEE (ON HER HOME PLANE)

As a deity on her home plane, Kiaransalee does not use a typical stat block. She has the following characteristics:

- She has an initiative score of 50.
- She only fails an attack roll or saving throw with a natural 1 on a d20.
- She is immune to the effects of any divination spell. No divination magic can predict her actions.
- As a bonus action, she may *teleport* anywhere within Elegy or *plane shift* to any plane where she has worshippers.
- As an action, she may make a melee attack to necrotize a target. On a hit, the target must make a **DC 24 Constitution saving throw**. On a failure, the target dies and immediately rises as a **revenant** under Kiaransalee's control. On a success, the target takes 10d10 necrotic damage, which ignores resistance and immunity and can't be reduced in any way.
- As an action, she may cast any necromancy spell as if using a 9th-level spell slot.
- As an action, she may cast *dispel magic* as if using a 9th-level spell slot. As a reaction when someone else casts a spell, she may cast *counterspell* as if using a 9th-level spell slot. (She is likely to use this to counter a wish spell if the heroes use one.)
- As an action, she may cast *command*, *tongues*, or *geas*, as if using a 9th-level spell slot.
- She may take a legendary action after each hero's turn, which allows her to perform an additional action from the list above. She has no limit to her number of legendary actions per turn.
- She has an Armor Class of 26 and 700 hit points. She is immune to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage, and to all necrotic and cold damage. She is immune to exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, frightened, unconscious, and charmed conditions. She is resistant to fire, lightning, and thunder damage.

It is unlikely that mortals can threaten her sufficiently in her home. If she suspects she is in danger, she casts *plane shift* to escape the confrontation and recuperates using the many magic items she has stashed. She then sends the full force of her minions to finish her attackers.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the *Uncaged* team for taking a chance on this piece, James Wyatt for the inspiration in *City of the Spider Queen*, and my supportive spouse for encouragement.

AUTHOR BIO

Jesse is an old-time designer going way back to the ancient days of Arduin. Along the way, he's worked on a wide range of games, but this is his first time working with the hip, trendy designers of the *Uncaged Anthology* series.



Drow Necrolyte

Medium Humanoid (Elf), Neutral Evil or Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 18 (elven chain and shield)
Hit Points 111 (18d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Perception +10, Religion +10, Stealth +9
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Abyssal, Elvish, Undercommon
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Fey Ancestry. The drow necrolyte has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The drow necrolyte deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the drow necrolyte doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the drow necrolyte has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

+1 Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

+1 Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature uses an action to shake it awake.

Spellcasting. The drow necrolyte casts one of the following spells, requiring no material spell components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15):

At will: *dancing lights*
1/day each: *darkness, faerie fire*
2/day each: *contagion, inflict wounds* (5th level)

Bonus Actions

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the drow necrolyte can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Undead City

Gargantuan Undead, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 180 (16d10 + 80)
Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	18 (+5)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +10
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Damage Vulnerability radiant
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Abyssal
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

All-Encompassing. The undead city consists of buildings, grounds, and monuments: rotting wooden buildings fronted by jagged gravestones that rise like broken teeth; decrepit shrines with water dripping from moss-laden ceilings, the altar caked in dried blood; fallow fields with skeletal scarecrows, twisted stalks of undead crops and mounds filled with ravenous beetles. The undead city may freely enter spaces with other creatures, and they may enter its space. The undead city may attack a creature in its space, and a creature in its space can attack it.

Diseased Ruins. A creature that hits the undead city with a nonmagical attack must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target is diseased with cenotaphic wasting. Symptoms manifest immediately (see sidebar).

Immutable Form. The undead city is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The undead city has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The undead city's attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The undead city makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. In addition, a creature hit by this attack must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts cenotaphic wasting (see sidebar).

Entomb (Recharge 5-6). The undead city attempts to envelop a creature in the earth and bury it. The target must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the target takes 23 (4d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and becomes prone and grappled. Until this grapple ends, the target is also restrained. The creature takes 23 (4d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage at the start of its turn while grappled by an undead city. Successfully escaping the grapple allows the target to claw its way out of the ground. While entombed, the target is buried and is not visible, but cannot be targeted by the undead city's slam attacks.

Bonus Actions

Shift. The undead city causes three of its landscape features (gravestones, trees, lamp posts, rotting buildings) to move 5 feet. If a feature is moved into a space occupied by a creature, that creature must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, that creature is knocked prone and takes 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

CENOTAPHIC WASTING
The target gains one level of exhaustion and can't remove the exhaustion while the disease persists. The target gains vulnerability to necrotic damage. At the end of a long rest, the target repeats the **DC 16 Constitution saving throw** to overcome the disease. If this saving throw fails, the target suffers 2d10 necrotic damage. A target who dies while infected with cenotaphic wasting becomes a free-willed **ghast**.



NALA J. WU

A WORLD UNBROKEN, A WOMAN UNCHAINED

by Amber Litke and Sadie Lowry

Goddess: Mystra | **Level: 18**

SYNOPSIS

Mystra has paid the price for mortal greed with blood, sacrifice, and her life. As a jealous god collects her shattered pieces to steal her power, the characters race to restore the Mother of All Magic—and witness her break the shackles that bound her for centuries.

The adventure flows as follows:

- The characters investigate Mhiilamniir, discovering that Mystra was shattered into seven shards and the Weave unraveled. They have one shard, Talos has another, and five are scattered throughout Netheril.
- The characters and the Seven Sisters race Talos to claim the shards.
- The characters face Talos in Karse's ruins, reform Mystra, and restore the Weave.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Chaotic Magic. Spellcasters' magic erupts unpredictably and dangerously whenever they cast. An expert asks the characters to investigate a possible cause: surges of abnormal magic in Mhiilamniir.

Mystra's Call. The characters receive a vision: a great city falling, an iridescent weave in the sky fraying to nothing, and a magicless, ruined world. Mystra whispers in their dreams: "Mhiilamniir. Or it's all ruined anew."

Arcane Treasure. An injured treasure hunter stumbles upon the characters, claiming a thief stole an unusual magic artifact she found and fled toward Mhiilamniir.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Mystra ascended to godhood after the fall of Netheril, a cataclysm wrought by Netherese mages. In their arrogance, they tried to thieve divine magic from the heavens, shattering the Weave—the fabric of magic woven throughout the world—in the process.

Mystryl sacrificed herself to save the Weave. Her successor Mystra became goddess of magic, enforcing the Weave, limiting magic, and prioritizing law and fairness.

Many gods—particularly Bane, Cyric, and Talos—were jealous of Mystra's arcane power. Cyric murdered her in 1385 DR, causing the Spellplague from 1385–1395 and again destroying the Weave. Aided by Elminster, she returned to divinity in 1487 DR.

ONE MYSTRA

This adventure diverts from canon to tell a story about mortal ambition. In fifth edition, there are two Mystras: Mystra (who became goddess after Mystryl's sacrifice) and Midnight (who took Mystra's name and position following Mystra's death). This adventure assumes they are one, a woman who has watched mortalkind destroy itself—and her—for ambition over, and over, and over.

CHAPTER 1 — VERBAL: SPEAKING INTO BEING

Before the start of the adventure, Talos, Mystra's long-time foe, attempted again to seize her power. An entity of chaos and destruction, he sought to wield Mystra's power in his unbound hands. In trying to kill her, he accidentally shattered her into seven shards that fell to the world below, where she remains alive, albeit weakened. Throughout act 1, the party finds the first shard, learns of Talos' treachery, and witnesses Netheril's fall.

BROKEN WEAVE SURGES

With the Weave shattered, spellcasting is dangerous. To portray magic's calamitous instability, DMs are encouraged to draw inspiration from the sorcerer's Wild Magic Surge Table (PHB) and use perilous, rather than lighthearted, effects to convey the gravity of the Weave's state.

MHIILAMNIIR

Cradled within the High Forest, Mhiilamniir was sacred to Seldarine priests before demons desecrated it. The green dragon Chloracidara claimed the desiccated city for centuries—then fell with it when Mhiilamniir was ravaged by chaotic magic seething from the broken Weave.

Mhiilamniir's detritus speaks to a city annihilated by arcane instability. When the characters arrive, read the following:

> Mhiilamniir burns with an unnatural storm. Arcane lightning and comets of raw magic streak across the firmament. Twice-ravaged ruins crumble anew: once-grand elven structures shatter, stonework scarred by destructive arcane power and whole sections suspended in magic-saturated air.

Corpses. Two magic-charred corpses lie in a street. Magic lashes off them, too powerful for their drained forms to contain. A creature within 5 feet of the bodies must succeed on a **DC 25 Intelligence saving throw** or expend one of its highest available level spell slots. A creature that can't expend a spell slot instead has 4 of its Hit Dice spent with no benefits. These Hit Dice are regained like normal Hit Dice. Scavenged goods can be found on the bodies: a *potion of mind reading* and a *spell scroll* of *programmed illusion*.

Temple. A once-gorgeous cathedral lies ruined, stained glass windows shattered, holy waters bubbling with errant magic. A stone carving of the Seldarine cracked in the arcane eruption—once more, gods crumble to ambition.

Chloracidara. Chloracidara is a skeletal husk, curled atop burnt metal. A character who succeeds on a **DC 16 Wisdom (Medicine) check** discovers warm bones and unweathered claws—she died within the last hour from exposure to monumental magical energy.

After exploring Chloracidara's remains, the characters hear spellcasting and arguing.

SQUABBLING MAGES

The characters find three **archmages** (each with AC 18 and 150 hit points) fighting over a crystalline shard: Matchless (they/them, tiefling, true neutral), Jhudiira (she/her, drow, chaotic neutral), and Falynor (he/him, half-elf, neutral evil).

Environment

Ruined Arena. The archmages surround the shard at the center of a 60-by-60 foot area of stone rubble. The debris can be used as half cover.

Tactics

Diplomacy. The archmages can be convinced to withdraw, but only after a character succeeds on a **DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check** for each mage to talk them down. If even one refuses to leave, the others remain to prevent a rival from securing the shard.

Free For All. The rival archmages gladly catch each other in damaging area of effect spells.

Matchless. Matchless cleverly controls enemies. They *counterspell* healing spells, use *banishment* on slippery melee attackers, and cast *wall of force* to sequester weakened foes. Matchless lets their opponents tire themselves out—then picks them off.

Jhudiira. Jhudiira constantly moves, using *fly* and *misty step* to duck in and out of reach while harassing enemies with *shocking grasp* and *fire bolt*. She wards off foes with *mirror image* and *globe of invulnerability*.



DW DAGON

Falynor. Unreasonably destructive, Falynor wreaks havoc with *lightning bolt* and *cone of cold*. If he sees a gravely wounded foe, he won't hesitate to cast *magic missile* with a high-level spell slot to eliminate them.

Once the mages fall to one-fourth of their hit point maximum, they *teleport* to escape at the start of their next turn.

THE SHARD OF MYSTRA

The characters claim the first shard, which needs a powerful verbal component to awaken. Mystra's voice emanates from the shard: *"The first component is the power of words. Speak me into being."*

Characters who succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check** know this is Mystra—the unstable magic is the broken Weave, and in many ways, Mystra is the Weave. A character with proficiency in the Religion skill has advantage on this check, and Arcana Domain clerics and followers of Mystra automatically succeed on it. The characters must speak Mystra into the shard using one of her names or a description of her. Many answers work; some example phrases are as follows:

- Mother of All Magic
- Our Lady of Spells
- Goddess of Magic
- The Lady of Mysteries

Adjectives also suffice: powerful, proud, arcane, kind, lawful.



SAGA MACKENZIE

Once the shard awakens, read the following:

> Your vision cracks to the past—ornate floating cities and unparalleled arcane minds. A vast empire unbound. Netheril.
>
> Magic rends it, unfettered magic no longer funneled through mortal hands in a way they can control. Mages burn alive in their own flames. Blue fire consumes regions; others fall to wild magic. Landscapes twist surreally. Netheril falls, a meteoric cataclysm of floating cities impacting the earth.
>
> The shard pulses with Mystra's weary voice. "History repeats... greed consumes, history always repeats. I am Mystra—and I need you. Or we fall again."

After the vision, the character holding the shard receives a boon from Mystra (see the Mystra's Boons Table).

As the shard's light fades, three women emerge from the ruins.

CHAPTER 2 — SOMATIC: POWER OF ACTION

Aided by Mystra's daughters, the characters seek the remaining shards. They traverse Netheril's legacy and encounter trials that embody magic, Mystra, and the divide between chaos and order. Finally, Talos upends the structure of magic itself.

THE SEVEN SISTERS

Mystra's surviving children are Storm, Alustriel, and Laeral Silverhand. They sensed tragedy befall their mother and, afraid for her, came to investigate. They can explain the following information:

The Sisters. The Seven Sisters, now three, are Mystra's immortal daughters. Storm is a Harper of Shadowdale. Alustriel founded the Silver Marches and, alongside Laeral, protected the Weave. Laeral, the Lady of Waterdeep, maintains stability along the Sword Coast.

Talos. The Storm Lord Talos shattered Mystra. They feel his power rising dangerously, chaotic in ways Mystra never was.

Remaining Shards. They sense seven shards of Mystra. Five are in Runlatha, Spiel, Orofin, Nhalloth, and Thultanthar. They believe Talos has the seventh; the party must collect Mystra's shards before him. The sisters gather up to three shards if asked. The party must collect at least two.

> **ROLEPLAYING MYSTRA**
>
> Mystra can communicate through her shard. Ascended from chaos, she prioritizes the laws of magic and order. Bitterness, exhaustion, anger, and cynicism fester in her after centuries of torment from power-hungry villains.
>
> Mystra softens with time, revealing a kind and fair goddess proud of her domain. She appreciates those who show her selfless kindness and respect. Characters she bonds with discover her love and wonder for spellwork—deep down, she is the Lady Magic.

Shard Locations

The shards are scattered throughout Faerûn in locations touched by Netheril (see map).

> **TRAVELING**
>
> On foot, the shards are weeks of traveling apart. For parties without teleportation or similar methods of travel, that travel time can be used or skipped at the DM's discretion. For travel, use encounters that convey the Weave's devastation or confront Talos' minions to maintain the themes and stakes.

Runlatha. Located in the High Ice north of Anauroch.
Spiel. Located in the Border Forest.
Orofin. Located in the Anauroch desert.
Nhalloth. Half-submerged in the Sea of Fallen Stars.
Thultanthar. Crashed onto Myth Drannor in Cormanthor.

For more information and history, see the encounter introductions.

Mystra's Boons

Characters gain boons from Mystra by carrying her shards (rolled or chosen from the table on the next page). Only shards the characters personally retrieve grant them a boon. A character can only have one boon at a time. Choose appropriate boons for characters without a spellcasting trait.



CECILIA NESTI

MYSTRA'S BOONS TABLE

1d6	Boon
1	Damage you deal with spells or magical items bypasses the damage resistances of any creature.
2	You can't be affected or detected by spells of 4th level or lower.
3	Any spell of 1st through 3rd level that has a casting time of 1 action has a casting time of 1 bonus action for you.
4	Choose one 1st-level spell. You can now cast that spell at its lowest level without expending a spell slot.
5	Your spell save DC and spell attack bonus each increase by 3.
6	You gain a 9th-level spell slot.

SEEKING THE SHARDS

The shards are under the effect of Mystra's Magic Immunity and thus can't be detected or affected by spells. Mystra, weakened and separated, can't change this.

TALOS' PRESENCE

The encounter in Nhalloth proves Talos and his minions hunt the shards. His presence can be added to other encounters in smaller ways (raging storms, swells of chaotic power, other minions) or with the arrival of Talos himself. To raise the stakes or penalize dallying, have Talos take a shard—either departing as they arrive or having left the location storm-ravaged and in ruins.

Arcane Incarnation - Runlatha

The broken Weave shattered the High Ice, uncovering the fallen Netherese city Runlatha. The shard's chaotic magic and Netheril's esoteric secrets have together become two arcane elementals that violently haunt the shard.

The arcane elementals use the **nightwalker** (MToF) statistics with these changes:

- Their creature type is elemental.
- They have immunity to force damage instead of necrotic damage.
- Their features and actions deal force damage.

The elementals inhabit a chamber that is 50 feet by 100 feet. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the elementals can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the elementals must use the effects in order:

- Ancient Netherese defenses make spell attack rolls with a +10 bonus to hit against three creatures in the chamber. On a hit, the target takes 19 (3d12) force damage and has disadvantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.
- The Weave devours magical power. Each creature must succeed on a **DC 18 Intelligence saving throw** or expend one of its highest available level spell slots. A creature that can't expend a spell slot instead has 4 of its Hit Dice spent with no benefits. These Hit Dice are regained like normal Hit Dice.
- The elementals' energy erupts. Each creature must succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom saving throw** or be subjected to the *confusion* spell until the end of its next turn.

Once the elementals are defeated, the shard is safely retrievable.

When the party has completed this encounter, Mystra speaks:

> "Look at the devastation unbound magic causes! They don't understand—laws protect them!"

Test of Magic - Spiel

Spiel was a Netherese enclave that crashed in the Border Forest. The shard floats in Spiel's center, protected by a sphere of writhing magic.

To obtain it, the characters must overcome an arcane challenge. The shard casts five increasingly powerful spells sequentially: *cone of cold* (5th), *chain lightning* (6th), *whirlwind* (7th), *sunburst* (8th), and *meteor swarm* (9th).

In this contest of willpower, the characters can counteract each spell it casts with their spells and features. For example, they can cast fire spells to burn away the *cone of cold*, ground themselves to negate *whirlwind*, summon *darkness* around the *sunburst*, and use items or features to deflect the spells. At the DM's discretion, their combined ideas halve, quarter, or negate the damage. Use **DC 18 spellcasting ability checks** to show their will overpowering the shard's—or waive rolls for particularly clever ideas. The shard's spells count as creatures for the purpose of being targeted by features and spells. (They can't, however, be *counterspelled*—where's the fun in that?)

Once the shard expends its overflowing magic by casting all five spells, it falls, now retrievable.

When the party has completed this encounter, Mystra speaks:

> "You possess devastating willpower over this world's natural forces. What will you wreak...?"

Lady of Rebellion - Orofin

Within the "Netherese" city of Orofin in Anauroch, Reina (she/her, human **commoner**, neutral good) discovered a shard. The leader of an impoverished community, Reina sees the shard's power as her way to seize them a better life from wealthy nobles who worship the ways of old Netheril and its highborn castes.

She won't willingly relinquish the shard unless the characters help secure an alternate solution to her community's plight, such as undercutting the nobles' authority or establishing a flow of resources. The shard *counterspells* enchantment spells used on Reina. Taking the shard by force earns Mystra's ire; the goddess doesn't bestow a boon for this shard and withholds rewards when she's restored.

When the party has completed this encounter, Mystra speaks:

> "...Some use power for good. They shouldn't be forgotten."

Stormsworn Champion - Nhalloth

The Netherese enclave Nhalloth sunk beneath the Sea of Fallen Stars and resurfaced after the Spellplague.

The characters find the shard in the submerged heart of Nhalloth, but have been beaten there—by a paladin of Talos. Zelim (he/him, aasimar, chaotic evil) uses the **death knight** statistics with these changes:

- His creature type is humanoid.
- He has immunity to thunder and lightning damage instead of necrotic and poison damage.
- His known languages are Celestial and Common.
- His longsword deals lightning instead of necrotic damage.
- His Hellfire Orb deals thunder and lightning damage.

In this 40-foot-diameter circular chamber, Zelim fights alongside two storming elementals (use the **marid** and **djinni** stat blocks).

Once Zelim is defeated, the shard is retrievable.

When the party has completed this encounter, Mystra speaks:

> "Damnable man! Following Talos into chaos they call 'freedom,' no matter what they destroy in the process!"

The Price of Ambition - Thultanthar

Brammus (he/him, human, neutral evil) was an **archmage** under Thultanthar's Lord Shadow. When Thultanthar returned from the Shadowfell and its princes sought to create a new Netheril, Brammus served them dutifully—even unto acts of great evil. He experimented on humans, binding them with shadow magic, transforming them into human shades.

Everyone died when Thultanthar fell upon Myth Drannor—except Brammus. Trapped in ruins, he survived, left with his twisted research notes and Netheril's hollow legacy. He sealed himself further so none could replicate the horrors Netheril wrought upon the world.

The party must convince him with a **DC 25 Intelligence (Persuasion) check** to relinquish the shard and redeem himself, or take the shard by force.

When the party has completed this encounter, Mystra speaks:

> "The narcissism of those who wreak devastation to see the world in their image... Netheril thought its reach infinite, and Talos sunders the world to feed his unending storm."

Talos' Sacrilege

When the party acquires the final shard they intend to collect, the Seven Sisters rejoin them at their current location. Talos has the last shard. In the vestiges of Karse, Talos defies Mystra's laws and casts a 10th-level spell. Read the following:

> A thunderous crack splits the air. A shockwave rocks the land, ripping up trees, obliterating structures, dragging you hundreds of yards over the ground. A dull roar rises, the world groans in pain—the devastation leaves only wreckage and despair in its wake.
>
> "He's done it," Alustriel snarls, panting. "Talos broke the laws of magic."



NALA J. WU

CHAPTER 3 — MATERIAL: MANIFESTATION

Talos cast a 10th-level spell, *Destroyer's storm*, unleashing a calamitous tempest. The characters must stop him, reform Mystra, and help her rise as the Mother of All Magic.

KARSE

Karse is a city in the High Forest founded after Karsus' Folly, the cataclysm that ended the Netherese Empire. It is where Karsus, the mage who tried to wrest divinity from Mystryl and destroyed the Weave, fell upon death.

Talos is at Karse's center, guzzling the chaos magic's epicenter, surrounded by ruins of mortal ambition.

TALOS

Talos the Destroyer, stands amidst his wreckage flanked by the living Destroyer's storm. Read the following:

> A towering, deific figure stands at the epicenter of a cataclysmic storm—as much a part of it as he is distinct. With divinely wrought plate, a whirling beard, and blinding light within an eye socket covered by a dark patch, Talos throws back his head and laughs in triumph.
>
> "Fallen to her own domain! Mystra, Mystra... at last. Watch me use your power as it is meant to be used."

The fight for Mystra's power begins.

Environment

Crumbling Arena. The battlefield is an arena 100 feet by 120 feet in size. Rubble can be used as three-fourths cover. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties) after the first round of combat, Talos' profane magic devastates the area, shrinking the battlefield 15 feet by 15 feet each round until it is 30 feet by 40 feet in size. The first time this occurs, cover is reduced to half cover; the third time, all cover is destroyed. A creature occupying a space that is destroyed takes damage equal to half its hit point maximum and is immediately shunted into the nearest unoccupied space.

Stage One

The characters fight **Talos** (see adventure appendix) and his 10th-level spell, the **living Destroyer's storm** (see adventure appendix).

Tactics. Talos and his spell seek devastation. The living spell uses Destruction Imminent when available, catches multiple creatures in its Lightning Strike, and moves even if it provokes opportunity attacks. Talos uses legendary actions to cast spells that maneuver foes into area-of-effect damage or to use Deafening Step to chase down key targets.

Seven Sisters. The sisters combine their magic to slow Talos' destruction rather than participate in combat. On initiative count 10 (losing initiative ties), the Seven Sisters aid the characters, granting an effect for that round:

- The characters regain 25 hit points.
- The characters' attacks deal an extra 2d10 damage.
- The characters gain a flying speed of 30 feet.

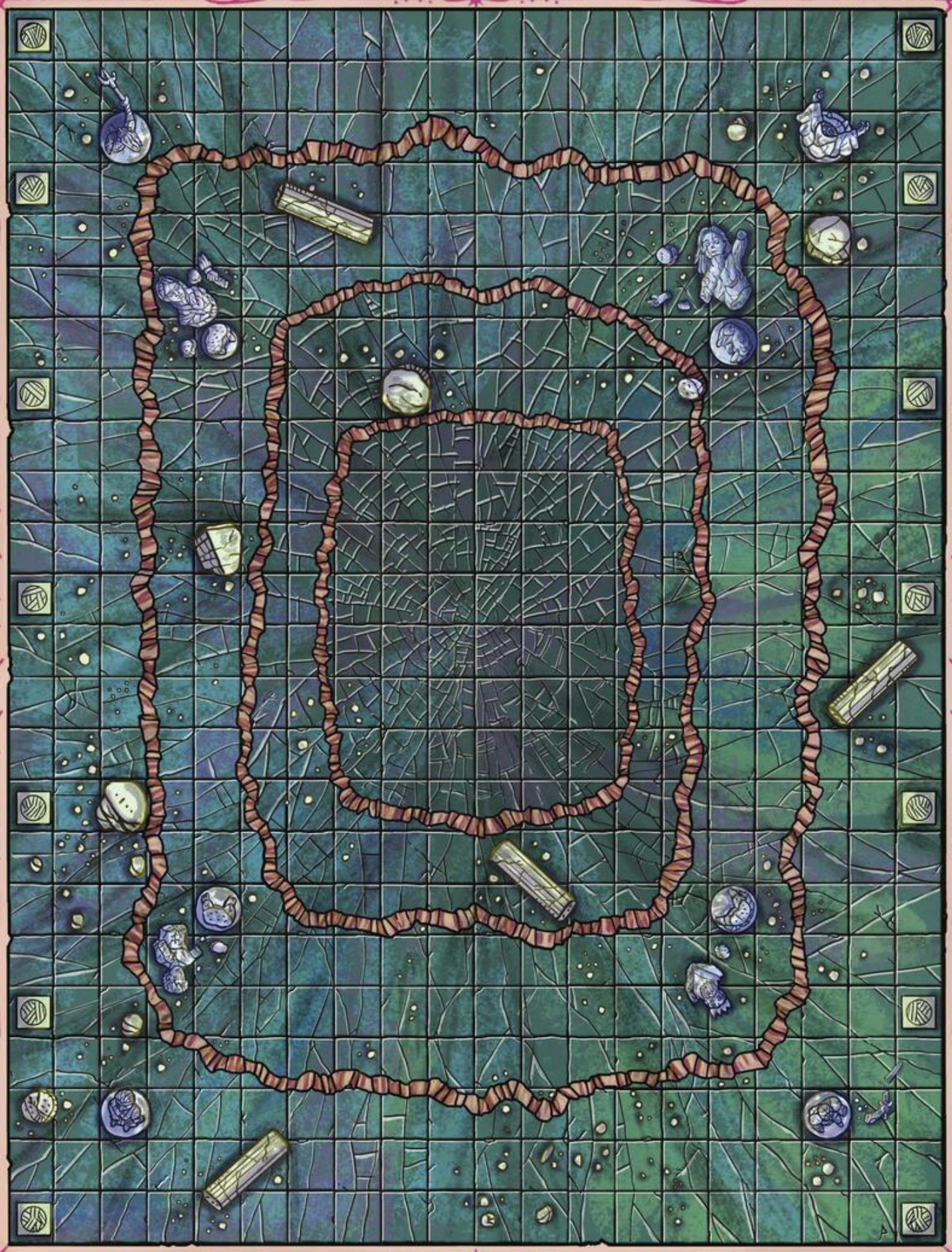
Mystra Reformed

Once Talos' mythic trait Stormblood activates, he drops the shard and Mystra reforms. He starts draining her, entering his mythic phase.

> Light unfurls into a goddess, resplendent and abundant. Thick black hair falls in wild waves around her dress, her eyes radiating white-gold light. "Talos!" she roars. "If unchained power is what you wish, you shall have it! I break my shackles, and strike you down with **everything I have**!"
>
> "Good!" the god bellows, consuming her transcendent blasts. "I'll take it all, Mystra! Only one of us can control this kind of power!"

Stage Two

Mystra (see adventure appendix) joins the fight, freed from laws of magic—she has retaken the mantle of Mother of All Magic and refuses to fall again to anyone's ambition. While a stat block is recommended, narrate her unmatched arcane prowess and incomprehensible magic.



FERNANDO SALVATERRA

Tactics. While his mythic trait is active, Talos uses Siphoned Magic to weaken his foes; when most of his opponents are grouped together, he uses Destroyer's Wrath to annihilate them. Mystra *counterspells* or disrupts (with Consume Magic) Talos' spells and assists the characters.

When Talos is defeated, read the following:

> "No—no!" Talos' life drains from his eyes. "No! I am entropy! I am uncontrollable! I am—"
>
> "Chained," Mystra says, voice cold. She stretches out a hand; shackles of light bind him. "And finished with your tantrum. I hope you enjoyed spurning my laws, Talos—it is time for you to answer to them."

CONCLUSION

With Talos defeated, Mystra restores the Weave, thanks the characters, and takes Talos to face his reckoning. The Seven Sisters return to their duties, satisfied that Mystra lives in all her glorious might.

REWARDS

If the characters kept Mystra's favor, she grants them a sliver of her power—boons reminiscent of those given by her shards. Mystra bestows upon each character one of the following Epic Boons (DMG): High Magic, Irresistible Offense, Magic Resistance, Quick Casting, Spell Mastery, or an Ability Score Improvement for Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. Having seen their actions, Mystra is willing to trust power to wise hands.

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We give our full heart to our weekly D&D group—with your passion, kindness, excitement, and joy, you inspire us to continue making stories. Thank you for playtesting the longest fight we've ever run, and keeping good spirits while doing it!

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AUTHOR BIOS

Sadie Lowry (**@incandescaent**) is an ENnie-nominated TTRPG designer and editor, with notable credits including MCDM's digital magazine *ARCADIA*, MCDM's *Kingdoms & Warfare*, and mithral best-seller *Eyes Unclouded*.

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Together, they are natural storytellers. After a lifetime of crafting narratives (and several degrees in game design, English, and editing), they have combined their powers for good to publish character-driven, lore-heavy, inspiring TTRPG content, where their stories of hope, heroics, and triumph over the dark will continue in the years to come.

Living Destroyer's Storm

Gargantuan Construct, Unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 273 (14d20 + 117)
Speed 25 ft., fly 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	28 (+9)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Wis +7
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities force, lightning, poison, thunder
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 24 (62,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Magic Resistance. The living spell has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Unfettered. The living spell can move through any barrier, even a wall of magical force.

Unusual Nature. The living spell doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The living spell makes two Magical Strike attacks.

Magical Strike. *Melee Spell Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (2d12 + 9) lightning damage.

Destruction Imminent (Recharge 6). Each creature within 120 feet of the living spell must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) lightning damage, or half as much damage on a successful one. If a target's saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is also stunned until the end of its next turn.

Legendary Actions

The living spell can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The living spell regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The living spell moves up to its speed.

Lightning Strike (Costs 2 Actions). The living spell causes a bolt of lightning to strike a point on the ground anywhere it can see. Each creature within 5 feet of that point must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Mystra

Large Celestial, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)
Hit Points 475 (50d10 + 200)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+4)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	30 (+10)	22 (+6)	25 (+7)

Skills Arcana +18, History +18, Insight +14, Religion +18
Damage Resistances radiant, necrotic
Damage Immunities force; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages All, telepathy 150 ft.
Challenge 28 (120,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +8

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Mystra fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Immunity. Mystra can't be affected or detected by spells or magical effects unless she wishes to be.

Master of Magic. Mystra has advantage on Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration.

Actions

Multiattack. Mystra makes four attacks with Arcane Blast.

Arcane Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +18 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (1d10 + 10) force damage.

Magic Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (5d12 + 4) force damage.

Arcane Cataclysm (Recharges after a Long Rest). Mystra conjures orbs of magical energy that plum met to the ground at three different points she can see within 1 mile of her. Each creature in a 40-foot-radius sphere centered on each point must make a DC 26 Dexterity saving throw, taking 71 (11d12) force damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature in the area of more than one arcane burst is affected only once. The area of each arcane burst then acts as an *antimagic field* for 1 hour. Mystra and spells she casts are unaffected by these fields.

Spellcasting. Mystra's spellcasting abaility is Intelligence (spell save DC 26, +18 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bigby's hand, counterspell, detect magic, detect thoughts, dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt, shield*
3/day each: *arcane gate, chain lightning, dream, hold monster, scrying, true seeing*
1/day each: *foresight, gate, teleport, time stop*

Change Shape. Mystra magically polymorphs into a humanoid, beast, or giant that has a challenge rating no higher than her own, or back into her true form. She reverts to her true form if she dies. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (Mystra's choice).

In a new form, Mystra retains her alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Legendary Resistance, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Her statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

Legendary Actions

Mystra can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Mystra regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Attack. Mystra makes two attacks with her Arcane Blast or one attack with her magic staff.

Consume Magic (Costs 2 Actions). Mystra targets a creature within 120 feet of her who is concentrating on a spell. The target must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or its concentration is broken on the spell, and Mystra gains 5 temporary hit points per level of that spell.

Infinite Knowledge (Costs 3 Actions). Mystra whispers an arcane secret into the mind of a creature she can see within 60 feet of her. The target must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or expend one of its spell slots of 3rd level or lower and deal 26 (4d12) force damage to each creature within 30 feet of it. A creature that fails the saving throw but can't expend a spell slot is instead stunned until the end of its next turn.

Talos, the Destroyer

Large Celestial, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)
Hit Points 425 (34d10 + 238)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	18 (+4)	25 (+7)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +17, Con +15, Wis +14, Cha +17
Skills Athletics +17, Intimidation +17, Perception +14, Religion +13
Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic, radiant
Damage Immunities lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages All
Challenge 28 (120,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +8

Deadly Critical. Talos scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 and rolls the damage dice three times, instead of twice.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Talos fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Talos has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Talos' weapon attacks are magical.

Tempestuous Aura. A magical storm surrounds Talos in a 15 foot radius. At the start of each of his turns, any other creature in the aura takes 9 (2d8) lightning damage.

Stormblood (Mythic Trait; Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). When Talos is reduced to 0 hit points, he doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, he regains 425 hit points and takes on an incorporeal, storm-like form. Until the end of his next turn, Talos is immune to all damage.

Actions

Multiattack. Talos makes four attacks: one with his thunderous gauntlet and two with his fulminous javelin.

Thunderous Gauntlet. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d8 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) thunder damage.

Fulminous Javelin. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) lightning damage.

Deafening Step. Talos magically teleports, along with any equipment he is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space he can see. Each creature within 10 feet of the space he left must make a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Spellcasting. Talos' spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *control winds, detect thoughts, gust of wind, lightning bolt, thunderwave, wind wall*
3/day each: *chain lightning, control weather, storm sphere, whirlwind*
1/day each: *plane shift, storm of vengeance*

Legendary Actions

Talos can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Talos regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Attack. Talos makes one attack with his thunderous gauntlet or fulminous javelin.

Deafening Step (Costs 2 Actions). Talos uses his Deafening Step action.

Stormstar's Power (Costs 2 Actions). Talos casts a spell.

Mythic Actions

If Talos' mythic trait is active, he can use the options below as legendary actions for 1 hour after using Stormblood.

Siphoned Magic. Talos empowers his next attack to deal an additional 11 (2d10) force damage to the target and each creature within 5 feet of the target.

Destroyer's Wrath (Costs 3 Actions). Talos calls down unequaled, cataclysmic power in a 50-foot radius sphere centered at a point he can see within 120 feet of him. Each creature in that area must make a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) lightning damage plus 22 (4d10) force damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this power is disintegrated by the raw magical force.



LORE EVANS



MARGARITA BOURKOVA

THROUGH A MOTHER'S EYES

by Karren Loomer

Goddess: The Great Mother | **Levels:** 17-20
Content Warnings: Eyes, Teeth

SYNOPSIS

The Great Mother, goddess of the beholders, desires more children to reach godhood and orchestrates events to raise one in a unique fashion: have them kidnapped by adventurers. Threatening a flood of beholders across the land, she entices a group to journey into the Abyss, the Realm of a Million Eyes, to steal a beholder child from within her grasp.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Prizxmuhm, a beholder priestess receives a vision: total destruction of cities unless a child is stolen from her goddess's lair. One way or another, the adventurers find their way to her:

- Prizxmuhm sends a direct invitation to the party through one of her minions.
- A group of lords, tired of being blackmailed by the priestess—who is also a thieves' guild leader—band together to hire the adventurers to take her out. Prizxmuhm hears of this and offers a better reward if they're willing to listen to her request.
- The Great Mother's vision is shared with a party member, revealing impending disaster and leading them to Prizxmuhm.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Great Mother does not strive for perfection, for she already is perfect. She believes she knows everything and spends her time contemplating the multiverse while trying to raise children in her image. There are infinite ways to raise a child, but only one has reached godhood so far. She desires more. Her latest attempt is to have a blessed Child stolen away and raised by imperfect beings.

Knowing everything also means she knows every secret the adventurers have. She uses this knowledge to encourage the party to accept this adventure, or to cause chaos when she changes her mind.

She is her lair, the Realm of a Million Eyes, and cannot be conventionally defeated. Instead, the goal is to escape it, Child in tow.

Beholder Knowledge

Beholders are usually solitary, paranoid beings who'd sooner kill a fellow beholder than ally with it. Not all beholders share this trait, however—some can (begrudgingly) work together and even form communities, albeit ones alien to social creatures. Some raise hives of subservient beholders, charm minions, or even take apprentices, as many minds can gain more knowledge for the whole and knowledge is the most important thing to a beholder—a trait taken after the goddess herself.

Beholders reproduce in various ways, commonly by dreaming up a new beholder. The Great Mother instead spawns eggs within her domain, creating infinite varieties of unique beholders later to be sent off to other planes and worlds. While born with many racial memories passed down, they still have a tinge of innocence to them and grow up in a realm surrounded by their kind. They often fight, but are much more used to cooperation to survive.

Beholders' physical appearances can vary drastically, from fleshy skin to scales and chiton to feathery plumes and leathery hide. Mouths can have mutated beaks or rows of molar teeth. As long as they are floating orbs with a central eye and ten eyestalks, there are no limits.

MAJOR NPCS

The Great Mother, Goddess of Beholders

An eldritch entity of chaos, knowledge, fertility, and tyranny, she knows everything in existence and spends eternity raising infinite children in infinite different ways. She seeks to fill all worlds with her progeny and, though it has only happened once, have them achieve godhood. Her form is beyond mortal comprehension, simultaneously adrift in the space between worlds, and occupying the Abyss as the Realm of a Million Eyes. It is both her lair and her body.

Prizxmuhm, Priestess of the Great Mother

Occasionally, beholders worship their goddess formally and, rarer still, gain her blessing. Prizxmuhm is among the rarest, capable of casting powerful cleric spells. She is parent to a small hive of tiny beholders and leads several thieves' guilds from the shadows. She enjoys figuring out how best to manipulate non-beholders, and has untold numbers of minions. She's otherwise lazy, preferring to make others work for her.

Momloxerxa, Hive Mother

Momloxerxa is the head of The Family, a group of reluctantly banded together beholders within the Abyss. She believes herself the kindest beholder in existence, charming everyone into servitude and deploring conflict and hypocritically at war with...

Thavhixad, Elder Orb

Thavhixad is the head of the Platonic Comrades, consisting of themself and two apprentice beholders learning wizardry. They sacrificed their central eyes and traded their eyestalk powers to cast wizard spells and use undead beholders (mostly failed apprentices) as minions. Thavhixad has mastered many powerful spells including their favourite: *meteor swarm*.

The Child

They've yet to decide on a name for themself, nor discover what they want. Innocent and easily convinced, they are still a beholder with all the paranoia and selfishness that entails. They're unsure what path to take in life and are, unusually, lonely. The blessing granted to them by The Great Mother negates the natural aggressiveness other beholders might feel towards them.

CHAPTER 1 – VISIONS OF DESTRUCTION

The beholder priestess greets you, adorned in fine silks and jewelry contrasting the menacing visage of the eldritch creature. She floats above a throne of glittering jewels, piles of gold, and treasures from across the lands while tiny versions of herself hover busily across the room, attending to other objects of wealth and symbols of worship to the Beholder Goddess. One of the minions offers you fine drinks. You are guests in this beholder's lair.



CECILIA NESTI

Prizxmuhm does everything in her power to convince the adventurers to help, sharing visions received from The Great Mother herself: destroyed cities, the land flooded with beholders, avatars of the goddess leading the carnage—unless a specific child is taken from the Great Mother's lair and brought to Prizxmuhm.

Prizxmuhm is prepared to mitigate any confrontation, and with her many minions and magical protections in place, it's clear that rushing into combat rather than negotiations will not end well for the adventurers.

The conversation is interrupted by a tremor in the earth. Minions burst in the door alerting everyone—The Great Mother's avatar has appeared!

The world aboveground is filled with screams as a huge beholder plows through the streets, knocking over buildings and devouring anyone foolish enough to remain in her way, while gibbering in an unknown language. The monster shines with alien divinity, her flesh embedded with ancient treasures, assorted weaponry, and intact skeletons of all manner of beings. Out from behind her swarm an entourage of beholderkin.

AVATAR COMBAT

Intuiting the goddess's ramblings requires a successful **DC 20 Intelligence check**, made with advantage if the adventurer knows Deep Speech. Success grants the adventurer a +3 bonus to future attempts at deciphering her language and identifies the following words: "test", "transcendence", and "godhood".

Strategy

The **Avatar of The Great Mother** is joined by one **death kiss** (VGtM) for each adventurer. They prioritize grappling the adventurers so the Avatar can successfully target them with eye rays. The Avatar focuses its antimagic eye on magic users, and only targets an adventurer with *plane shift* if she nears death, sending them to the Realm of a Million Eyes entrance.

Should characters attempt to escape, she hunts them down eventually. She always knows where they are.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the Avatar is defeated, a portal to the Abyss opens and the Goddess telepathically invites each adventurer to her realm, using their most personal languages, to find and take her blessed Child. Should an adventurer refuse, she threatens to destroy something precious to them should they refuse. Each adventurer takes 2d8 psychic damage.

If the party chooses not to enter the portal, they are subject to a second, incomprehensible telepathic message in an alien language; suffer 2d8 psychic damage; and are each repeatedly targeted by *plane shift* using the Avatar's spell save DC until they fail their saving throw.

CHAPTER 2 – THE WALLS HAVE EYES

The world shifts; a pungent acidic odor fills the air, and dim light emanates from orbs lining the walls. On second glance, they aren't orbs at all, but eyes. What first appeared to be rocky walls begin to quiver and shift, as if made of living flesh. The entire world is flesh and eyes, filled with beholderkin floating about, each more disturbing than the last. When the planar magic fades, no ground exists to meet your feet, sending you plummeting. Welcome to the Realm of a Million Eyes.

REALM MECHANICS

Along the walls in this realm are five-foot-diameter beholder eyes; each constantly emits their own effect, bypassing invisibility. The save DC is 20. The eyes can emit any magical effect, but the list of eye rays in the Avatar of the Great Mother stat block can be used as a 1d10 table as well.

Succeeding on a **DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that each eye can be closed by hitting it with an opposing effect, while a **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the effect emitted by each eye. For example, an eye casting *disintegrate* can be closed by healing magic, but an eye casting *cone of cold* can be closed with fire. This is open to creativity. Failing the Intelligence (Arcana) check still reveals that the eyes can be closed, but not how.


SAGA MACKENZIE

Beholderkin float everywhere, uninterested in the party. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that they congregate near certain eyes in the walls. These eyes have beneficial effects, such as healing. Consider making the beholderkin territorial for additional combat.

The ground, made of slimy flesh, is rough terrain and filled with obstacles of giant teeth and gaping maws. Beyond the entrance shaft, the chaotic nature of the realm affects dimensional magic. Spells such as *plane shift*, teleportation effects, or anything creating or containing extradimensional space like *bags of holding*, function incorrectly or simply don't function at all.

NAVIGATING THE REALM

The party falls down a seemingly bottomless shaft lined with eyes. Adventurers must succeed a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to grip the walls. Those who fail to arrest their fall pass consecutively through the gaze of three eyes, taking 8d8 cold damage, healing 8d8 hit points, and must succeed on a **DC 20 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid the effects of a petrification ray. They land in the gaze of an eye emitting *reverse gravity*, avoiding fall damage. This gravity field is filled with floating statues of all manner of creatures, as well as any adventurers planeshifted here by the Avatar during the previous encounter. Those who grab onto the walls successfully may climb down to the gravity field safely.

The gravity field can be disabled by shutting its eye with kinetic force, granting those trapped within it one more chance to grip the walls or be sent plummeting further down.

120 feet below the gravity field is a horizontal tunnel. Every 10 feet there's an eye in the wall that cannot be avoided simply by climbing around it, with the following consecutive effects: *disintegrate*, *wall of fire*, *Otto's irresistible dance*, *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting*, *dispel magic* (9th level), *cone of cold*, *cure wounds*, *fear*, *clone*, *power word kill*, and *raise dead*.

Beyond the tunnel, the shaft continues dropping, its walls becoming slimy and unclimbable. Any character descending beyond the tunnel falls indefinitely, subject to all manner of magic effects.

Inside the tunnel there is a clearing of hard, leathery ground with no eyes in the walls. The Great Mother telepathically communicates with the adventurers, commenting on the chaotic nature of her body and how dimensional magic, such as *plane shift*, cease to function correctly beyond this point. Each adventurer takes 2d8 psychic damage.

Further along the tunnel lies a maze of tunnels going in every direction, each of varying sizes. The terrain gets progressively more disgusting and filled with pulsating walls, teeth, and more massive eyes emitting their own effects. These tunnels are also filled with beholders guarding their lairs or fighting amongst each other. They aren't keen on interacting with the adventurers unless approached. Navigating the maze can be done any number of ways, from successive **Wisdom (Survival) checks** to magic to asking for directions. If the party wanders too long, The Great Mother directs them telepathically, dealing 2d8 psychic damage.

Eventually, they reach a large open area.

WARRING BEHOLDERS

Just ahead, the fleshy cavern narrows into a small tunnel lined with glowing eggs, signaling that perhaps the chamber with the Child within is near. But between them and you lies a raging war. Uncharacteristic for beholders, the fight before you is not a free-for-all skirmish but an organized battle between two factions. One side is led by an enormous beholder whose eyes are recessed instead of on stalks, giving orders in a loving voice to her minions of beholders and beholderkin. They face off against an army of zombie beholders and death tyrants commanded by a trio of blind beholders. One looks particularly old with a central eye scarred and dull. They bark orders at the two on their side, whose central eyes are both freshly slashed. These three fling spells from their eyestalks rather than beams.

The loving **beholder** is Momloxerxa, leading her hive. She is a beholder with 280 total hit points, and is able to choose which eye rays she uses on her turn. In combat she prioritises charming her foes into submission.

The scarred blind beholder is Thavhixad, leading the Platonic Comrades. He and his apprentices are **beholder mages** and use the **beholder** stat block but borrow the spellcasting feature from the **archmage** instead of using eye rays. Thavhixad knows *meteor swarm* instead of *time stop* and *telepathy* instead of *mind blank*.

Beholder Battlefield Mechanics

The battlefield is 80 feet by 100 feet, with Momloxerxa positioned near the adventurers' entrance and Thavhixad near the exit to the egg chamber 80 feet away on the opposite side of the room. Scattered throughout the field are six **beholders** and three **death kiss**, fighting five **beholder zombies**, three **death tyrants**, and two **beholder mages**.

At the end of every turn within the battlefield, roll on the following table:

BATTLEFIELD EFFECTS TABLE

1d4	Effect
1	**Eye Ray:** Roll a random eye ray from the beholder stat; this eye ray targets one of the characters within range of it.
2	**Antimagic:** Characters within range of the effect becomes trapped in an *antimagic field* until the end of their next turn.
3	**Negative Energy:** Characters within range of the effect becomes trapped in an *antimagic field* until the end of their next turn. Any creature in a negative energy field cannot regain hit points and becomes a **zombie** at the start of its next turn if it dies, provided its body hasn't been completely destroyed.
4	**No effect**

The Factions

As soon as she notices the adventurers, Momloxerxa introduces herself as the Kindest Beholder to ever exist, hive mother of a group she named the Family, and second only to the Great Mother herself. She asks the party to become her minions and help put a stop to Thavhixad, her nemesis. She uses her charm ray to attempt to force their servitude.

Meanwhile, Thavhixad telepathically communicates with a party member, praising them condescendingly and asking them to join the Platonic Comrades. They boast that they could use *meteor swarm* to end the war.

The reason for their war is a disagreement over treating minions: Thavixad wants to unite the normally solitary beholders to pool their knowledge through strict hierarchy. Momloxerxa treats her minions like children who don't need to think, just obey.

Taking Momloxerxa's side, everyone becoming charmed by her, or trying to cross the battlefield drives Thavixad to cast *meteor swarm*. Momloxerxa protects herself with a shield of minions, taking no damage.

Siding with Momloxerxa triggers a fight with Thavixad on the battlefield after he casts *meteor swarm*. Siding with Thavixad triggers a fight with Momloxerxa on the battlefield. The war ends if either leader perishes.

Stalling or attempting to solve their disagreement can buy time to cross. Should the party escape into the egg chamber, no beholder follows.

Development

The Great Mother comments telepathically on her failed children: Momloxerxa for claiming to be like her while raising all her children as mindless servants, Thavixad for believing they had gained enough knowledge to lead without ever leaving the realm, and Prizxmuhm for growing too comfortable while simply ruling a few nations from the shadows. Her new child will be different. The party takes 2d8 psychic damage.

The final grand chamber awaits, the Child waiting within.

Chapter 3 – Eyes on the Prize

Beyond the beholder battlefield lies the depths of the Realm of a Million Eyes, filled with eggs—both hatched and not—as far as the eyes can see. Small beholders roam about, fighting each other and playing with their eyestalk powers. Outside this realm, it's rare to see actual beholder children freshly hatched, yet here they are endless. What a sight to behold!

Egg Chamber

The children react to the party with disgust, curiosity, and fear, as they have never met anyone who isn't beholderkin before.

If a child is harmed, wall eyes turn their gaze to the perpetrator as if hit by each eye ray on the Avatar of the Great Mother.

The first half of the puzzle is to find the specific child blessed by The Great Mother. The giant eyes embedded in the walls and floor are all gazing at one specific cracked open egg, where a baby beholder floats within. The other children give the adventurers hints in the form of riddles.

SAMPLE RIDDLES:
"Why do lonely eyes float? They're all open!"

"Big Mom has a favourite egg. She only gives them eye-ttention."

"Special orbs don't get hurt. You things aren't round enough, you can't touch the special friend."

"Why don't the big eyes blast you? I'll blast you! You'll get blasted if you try to find mom's favourite egg!"

The adventurers must then reach the Child. Hundreds of eyes watch it—to enter their gaze is to be afflicted by as many spells. The eyes die, suffer excruciating pain, are revived, destroyed again, reborn in rapid growth, erased from existence, and recreated over and over again. To prevent or end this effect, the Child must be hidden from the eyes' view. If the eyes cannot see the Child, their effects are immediately negated.

THE BLESSED CHILD

The Child won't resist any attempts to persuade or remove it.

The Child is indecisive and lonely. Their Mother's eyes follow them wherever they go, and only they are immune to her gaze effects. If treated with kindness, the Child may become attached to the adventurers. If treated like an object, the child begins a path to cruelty.

Escape!

The fleshy ground trembles beneath just as you take the Child in hand. Gaps form, revealing rows of jagged teeth as parts of the realm open up into giant maws, each howling a constant drone of The Great Mother's personal incomprehensible language.

If the party has not deciphered her language previously, they may make another **DC 20 Intelligence check**. A success lets them glean a coherent sentence:

"OPINIONS REWRITTEN, PRIVILEGES REVOKED."

Trying to speak in her personal tongue will stun her for a round as she is incredibly surprised to learn someone else can speak it, challenging the notion that she knows everything. Her eyes blink and mouths close temporarily. Dimensional magic briefly functions while the Great Mother is stunned.

On a failure the adventurers are still left with a sense that whatever The Great Mother had planned by allowing entrance to her realm, she has now changed her mind. The realm itself twists and unravels, the chaos reaching closer every second, trapping anything in its grasp for an eternity within the Great Mother.



MARGARITA BOURKOVA

To run the escape, begin with all adventurers rolling initiative. Each participant in the chase can take only one action and move on their turn. If an adventurer is holding the Child, the Child does not need its own initiative roll. The Child has a fly speed of 10 feet when not carried.

During the chase, participants can freely use the Dash action a number of times equal to 3 + its Constitution modifier. Each additional Dash action they take requires the creature to succeed a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** at the end of their turn, or gain one level of exhaustion. If a creature's exhaustion reaches level 5, they drops out of the chase as their speed becomes 0.

The Great Mother takes her turn at the end of the round. The unwinding chaos grows an additional 30 feet in pursuit of the adventurers, devouring anyone it reaches. If the gap between the unwinding chaos and the characters grows too wide, the chaos may also take the Dash action. Anyone holding the Child is attacked by one of the Avatar's eye rays at random.

At the end of each adventurer's turn, roll on the complication table.

COMPLICATION TABLE

1d20	Complication
1	A mouth opens beneath the character's feet, attacking with the Avatar's bite attack.
2-4	The slime becomes particularly thick. The character must succeed on a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to bypass. On a failed check, the character powers through but gains 1 level of exhaustion.
5-7	A wall eye turns its gaze towards the character, who is then hit by a random eye ray from the Avatar.
8-9	An enemy **beholder** joins the chase, appearing adjacent to the character. Roll its initiative.
10	An enemy **death tyrant** joins the chase, appearing adjacent to the character. Roll its initiative.
11-20	No complication

The chase extends for 300 feet as the adventurers travel back the way they came, reaching the shaft at the end.

DEVELOPMENT

Upon reaching the shaft and its threshold of dimensional chaos, adventurers may safely *plane shift* out, using their own magic or by the Child discovering *plane shift* as an eyestalk ability.

CONCLUSION

There are four potential endings for this adventure based on what is done with the Child.

Ending A: Prizxmuhm

Leaving the Child in the beholder priestess's care leads to her fawning after the Child as if they were one of her minions. She grants the party a reward, but her attitude towards the Child is two-faced and the only thing keeping her from killing them is the Great Mother's blessing.

Ending B: Adopt

The Child may join the party on future adventures, gaining knowledge in a unique upbringing. Prizxmuhm only reluctantly allows this to happen, offering some advice and warnings. She grants the party their reward but later grows irritated with this decision and begins stalking the party to retake what she believes is rightfully hers.

The Great Mother, changing her mind again after the party escapes, keeps an eye on the the adventurers, spontaneously granting them aid when she feels it's appropriate.

Ending C: Release

If the adventurers leave the Child to adventure on its own or with others beyond the scope of this adventure, Prizxmuhm begrudgingly rewards the party and plots to find the Child when their backs are turned to keep them for herself. Depending on whose care the Child is left in, the party may receive a boon from the Great Mother for an intriguing upbringing.

Ending D: Failure

Not returning with the Child leads to Prizxmuhm being struck down by her goddess, her wealth ripe for the taking.

REWARDS

Ending A: 25,000 gp worth of stolen treasures and a roll on Magic Item Table I for each player.

Ending B: Same as A, with the addition of The Great Mother's Everwatching Whims, Boon of High Magic, God's Eye, Blessing of Knowledge, and The Child.

Ending C: Same as A, with the addition of Boon of High Magic, God's Eye, and Blessing of Knowledge.

Ending D: 100,000 gp worth of stolen treasure, two rolls on Magic Item Table I per player, and the party gains access to a multinational thieves' guild with a power vacuum. Each character becomes cursed with paranoia—they always feel as if someone is watching them.

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

BOONS

The Great Mother's Everwatching Whims

At random, based on her whims, she will give divine intervention to aid members of the party or the Child. These whims are chaotic in nature and the intervention just as random, such as sending a wave of beholderkin as petty revenge, blasting someone with one of her eyes for some unknown transgression, or even summoning her Avatar as a welcoming party. She's done it before.

God's Eye

Gain the ability to fire off a random ray from the Avatar of the Great Mother's Eye Rays from your eyes as a standard action. Choose targets after rolling.

Blessing of Knowledge

Gain the ability to speak, read, and write in all past and future languages except that of the Great Mother. Gain a permanent +2 bonus to Intelligence up to a max of 22.

The Child

Slowly develops based on how they're treated, albeit with the quirk of being a paranoid creature by nature. Slowly gains new eyestalk abilities, up to nine more. Their starting eyestalk ability is *plane shift*.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I've always been a fan of beholders, but with their constant changes and updates in lore and flavour with every new edition of D&D some aspects of them got lost. This adventure was a chance to bring back their goddess and some of the weirder aspects to this eldritch species, while taking some creative liberties and giving her more of an elder god personality as opposed to a primal force of beholder creation. I hope you enjoyed it!

AUTHOR BIO

Karren Loomer is a freelance artist and writer striving to create entertaining experiences to help pass the time in a difficult world.

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Avatar of the Great Mother

Huge Aberration, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 25 (Natural Armour)
Hit Points 333
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	26 (+8)	30 (+10)	30 (+10)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Int +19, Wis +19, Cha +11
Skills Arcana +20, Perception +15, History +20
Damage Immunities nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities prone, charmed, frightened, stunned
Damage Resistances bludgeoning
Senses darkvision 240 ft., passive Perception 25
Languages All
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +9

Alien Mind. If a creature tries to read the Avatar of the Great Mother's thoughts or deals psychic damage to it, that creature must succeed on a DC 23 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned for 1 minute. The stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Antimagic Cone. The Avatar's central eye creates an area of antimagic, as in the *antimagic field* spell, in a 280-foot cone. At the start of each of its turns, the avatar decides which way the cone faces and whether the cone is active. The area works against the avatar's own eye rays.

Eldritch Presence. Targets who can see the Avatar are affected by one of the following at random once initiative is rolled. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

1. ***Fear.*** The target must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, target becomes Frightened. While frightened by this ability, a creature must take the Dash action and move away from The Avatar by the safest available route on each of its turns, unless there is nowhere to move.
2. ***Chills.*** Target must make a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw. At the start of each of their turns the target takes 4d8 psychic damage.
3. ***Hopelessness.*** The target must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the target is overwhelmed with despair. During this time, it can't attack or target any creature with harmful abilities, spells, or other magical effects.
4. ***Repulsion.*** The target must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target finds The Avatar too repulsive to approach, and cannot move towards it.

Legendary Resistance (4/Day). If the Avatar fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The Avatar of the Great Mother makes a bite attack and shoots three eye rays.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4d8 piercing damage and the target is swallowed if it is a Medium or smaller creature. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the Avatar, and takes (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the Avatar's turns.

The Avatar's stomach can hold up to one creature. If the Avatar takes 35 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the Avatar must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the swallowed creature, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the Avatar. If the Avatar dies, it vanishes, leaving the creature falling from whatever height the Avatar was at, landing prone.

Eye Rays. The avatar shoots three of the following magical eye rays at random, choosing one to three targets it can see within 120 feet or herself. The avatar cannot use the same eye ray twice in one turn:

1. **Abberationification Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be transformed into a beholder or beholder-kin, as if under the effect of *true polymorph*.
2. **Paralyzing Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

continued

3. **Dancing Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or begin a comic dance in place. Creatures that can't be charmed are immune to this effect. A dancing creature must use all its movement to dance without leaving its space and has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws and attack rolls. While the target is affected, other creatures have advantage on attack rolls against it. As an action, a dancing creature can make a Wisdom saving throw to regain control of itself. On a successful save, the spell ends.
4. **Cursing Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target is cursed: Choose one ability score at random. While cursed, the target has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws made with that ability score. This effect can stack, affecting a new ability score each time. A *remove curse* spell ends this effect.
5. **Wilting Ray.** The targeted creature must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 12d8 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. All the moisture is drawn out of the target, splashing out around them. This ray has no effect on constructs and undead.
6. **Telekinetic Ray.** If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or the Avatar moves it up to 30 feet in any direction. It is restrained by the ray's telekinetic grip until the start of the Avatar's next turn or until the Avatar is incapacitated. If the target is an object weighing 300 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, it is moved up to 30 feet in any direction. The Avatar can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a door or a container.
7. **Revitalizing Ray.** The targeted creature regains 8d8 hit points.
8. **Petrification Ray.** The targeted creature must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.
9. **Hopelessness Ray.** If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or the target is overwhelmed with despair. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. While affected, it can't attack or target any creature with harmful abilities, spells, or other magical effects.
10. **Insight Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or take 12d10 psychic damage. The target dies instantly if the ray reduces it to 0 hit points, their head bursting from obtaining too much knowledge all at once.

Spellcasting. The Avatar of the Great Mother can innately cast the following spells without requiring concentration. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20)

1/day each: *Evard's black tentacles, holy aura, reality break, reverse gravity, weird*
3/day each: *summon aberration (Beholderkin)*
6/day each: *plane shift*

Bonus Actions

Teleport. As a bonus action, the Avatar can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Legendary Actions

The avatar can take three legendary actions, using the options below. It can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Avatar regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Eye Rays. The Avatar shoots one magical eye ray at random.

Spellcasting. The Avatar casts a spell from her list of spells.


KENDAL GATES

MAMA BEAR TAKES A HOLIDAY

by Jessica Marcrum

Goddess: Luthic | **Levels:** 18-20

Content Warnings: Claustrophobia, Illness, Gore, Misogyny, Potential Fantasy Racism

SYNOPSIS

What happens when a goddess gets fed up and quits? Plague, blood rain, and war to start. The characters take a multiplanar journey to find the missing orc goddess, Luthic, and convince her to return for the good of her people.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Characters can be involved in this adventure in the following ways:

1. Orcish characters—and half-orc characters with ties to their community—are summoned home by their people in desperation to solve their problem.
2. Orcish clerics contact the characters and request their aid in stopping the blood rain and serving as role models for young orcs who no longer wish to fight.
3. Characters who own property, or are friends of nobility, near orc lands are asked to investigate the plagues and blood rain disrupting trade.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Great Mother, Mother Bear, and Blood Moon Witch—Luthic—is the orc goddess of life, fertility, and witchcraft. Long dismissed as little more than wife of the great orc god Gruumsh, her worshippers are few but devoted.

Known as the claws of Luthic, her priestesses remember that Luthic inspires young orcs to war with dreams of the red moon: she awakens them with the taste of blood on their tongues and empowers them with battle strategies other than brute force. Luthic is present at the birth and death of every orc, welcoming them into this world and the next. Although no deity is more protective of the orcs than Luthic, most male orcs deride her as little more than a wife and mother of stronger gods. Her worshippers are mocked for choosing a "lesser" deity.

Recent Events. The skies rain blood over orcish lands. Crops are stricken, trade is disrupted, and any caught in the rain die in pain. In addition, a wasting sickness ravages orc territory—primarily affecting males. Orc tribes lash out at one another and their allies. Older orcs rush to war over minuscule slights. Young orcs are no longer inspired to become warriors; they fight their fellow tribesfolk instead. The claws of Luthic have prayed in vain for a month, their powers weakening by the day. Luthic is missing.

In actuality, Luthic is with her long-time lover Grumbar, the god of Elemental Earth, on his home plane in Elemental Chaos. Fed up with her millennia of mistreatment, she went to where she is cared for as both a goddess and a woman and has no intention of returning.

CHAPTER 1 – BLOOD, PLAGUE, AND FEARS

Characters resolve the adventure hook, learn of recent events, and discover they must travel to Nishrek to seek out Luthic.

BLOOD RAIN

Blood rains heavily and constantly. For each hour of travel through the rain, characters must make a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**. On a failed save, the character takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage and suffers one level of exhaustion. On a success, they take half damage and suffer no exhaustion. Cloth umbrellas reduce the damage by half; leather tents negate it.

CLAWS AND EYES

The characters receive a subdued welcome from the orc tribe. The air is fraught with concern as tents overflow with the quarantined sick. The earth squelches underfoot with blood that perpetually falls from the skies. Sounds of fighting and screams of agony reverberate throughout the area.

A REQUEST FOR AID

"Stay out of the rain!" a cry rings out. "Hurry, hurry, inside where it's safe!" A tall orcish woman with greying hair and a scarred face beckons from inside the tent. "You must be even stronger than they say to have survived the downpour."

The woman introduces herself as Mother Nynev (she/her, **orc claw of Luthic** (VGtM), chaotic neutral). If characters are orcs or half-orcs, she apologizes for not being able to afford them a more heroic welcome. Friends and loved ones greet characters returning home. At the DM's discretion, most of them are afflicted by the current pestilence or violent urges plaguing the tribes. After orcish characters have a moment with their loved ones—or immediately for non-orcish characters—Mother Nynev impresses the urgency of the situation upon them.

ROLEPLAYING MOTHER NYNEV

Mother Nynev is a middle-aged, battle-scarred warrior utterly devoted to her wife, Sulitha, and her goddess. A competent fighter and nurturing healer, she readily removes any threat to her people. This problem is simply too big for her.

Wants: Healing for the tribes.
Needs: To appear in control.
Fears: That Luthic is dead.

Mother Nynev is happy to answer questions, but tries her best to downplay her loss of magic. Characters who succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check** discern that she fears Luthic is hurt. If asked, she refers to the "tempestuous" relationship between Luthic and her husband—she is worried Gruumsh has done something drastic.



KENDAL GATES

Unfortunately, Mother Nynev does not have long with the characters before she is rudely interrupted.

"Step aside and stop your prattling, woman!" A craggy older orc with one eye and a blood-stained face shoves Mother Nynev roughly aside and leans heavily on his spear. "They're not here to talk to witches who've lost their magic! They're heroes! And heroes have no time for the likes of you."

Mother Nynev's eyes blaze fiercely for a moment before she lets out a deep sigh. "My apologies," she says curtly. "I must see to the dying."

Mother Nynev departs further into the tent. The man introduces himself as Red Throkk (he/him, **orc eye of Gruumsh**, chaotic evil), and quickly gets down to business. He believes everything affecting the orc tribes, perhaps everything that has ever affected the orc tribes—apart from goblins and elves, of course—is Luthic's fault. If asked about his comments toward Mother Nynev, he sneers that the "*claws have lost their scratch of late.*" He notes their healing magic has been useless against even the most mundane injuries, let alone the plague.

ROLEPLAYING RED THROKK

Red Throkk is magnetic, muscly, and full of energy. He practically bounces as he speaks, belying his age. He is utterly devoted to Gruumsh and the patriarchy his worship provides.

Wants: The orcs to "act like orcs" again.
Needs: To be the most important person in any room.
Fears: That Gruumsh has lost control of his woman.

Red Throkk gives little time for conversation, barreling into the problem at hand and how the characters can assist. If asked, he regrets he can't handle this himself—he is needed to guide the young, "weak" orcs and "*protect them from coddling women*." A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals he is sad because his people are dying "inglorious, unworthy deaths"—not because they are dying en masse. He is angry at Luthic personally.

MOVING FORWARD

Healing magic has no effect on the sick. Any character who attempts to cast a healing spell, or anyone who examines the sick and succeeds on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check**, discerns the plague is magical and can't be cured through ordinary methods. The plague is divine-sent and can only be divine-revoked, though a *wish* spell can cure one afflicted person at a time. Characters who succeed on a **DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) check** recall the plague and blood rain are punishments previously dispensed by an enraged Luthic. Otherwise, Mother Nynev or Red Throkk supply this information. Characters with an orcish background make this check with advantage.

Attempts to commune with Luthic fail. She does not want to be found. Other orc gods, if contacted, are unaware she is missing.

DEVELOPMENT

Mother Nynev and Red Throkk encourage the characters to travel to Nishrek, Luthic's home plane, to determine the problem. They offer ample rewards from the orcs' war chests if successful, and the priests emphasize that any who help gods are sure to receive a boon.

Before parting, Mother Nynev advises the party to seek Luthic in her cave below the surface; Red Throkk advises them to be strong and impress Gruumsh.

If none of the characters have *plane shift*, the priests unite their clerics to cast it on their behalf.

CHAPTER 2 – NAVIGATING NISHREK

The characters travel to the cube-shaped plane of Nishrek and discover Luthic's lair—abandoned.

THE INFINITE BATTLEFIELD

The characters land in Nishrek. The sounds of slaughter and steel on steel ring out, echoing throughout the plains. A thick river of blood streaks through the war-torn fields. The spirits of countless orcs clash in battle only to rise when they fall, in an unceasing war for the glory of Gruumsh. Overhead, a massive dragon soars on rusted wings, blasting the combatants with corrosive breath.

PLANAR RULES

Gravity: Characters experience the pull of gravity but not necessarily perpendicular to any surface. For example, a character could walk on the ground, up a wall, then onto the ceiling. A narrow hallway could become a chute.

Magic & Energy: The air brims with life and heat. Spells involving light, fire, growth, and healing are doubly effective.

Characters emerge amid a chaotic battlefield. Despite the clamor, anyone succeeding on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** spots a tunnel carved out of sheer rock, approximately 10 feet in diameter. Characters who arrived with the help of Mother Nynev make the check with advantage.

> Over the dizzying roar of battle, the massive dragon beats its patinated wings and alters course. "A challenger is near! And alive, this time!" the dragon shouts joyfully, spewing caustic breath.

Characters who face the dragon proceed to "Dragon Attack".

Characters who make a run for the tunnel proceed to "Tunnel of Love".

Dragon Attack

The souls of hundreds of **orc war chiefs** fill the battlefield. Raining chaos from on high is Vertigris the Decayed (any pronouns, **rust dragon**, lawful evil). The dead chiefs fight endlessly. Fighting Vertigris is a direct way to gain Gruumsh's favor.

The War Chiefs. The orc chiefs attack each other, letting their weapons decay to smithereens, then tearing each other apart with their hands. Mechanically, they represent the chaos of the landscape and are fighting "in the background." However, characters can utilize them as allies via *command* or a similar spell. There are infinite orc war chiefs. Once killed, they rejoin the battle after two rounds, their hit points fully restored.

RUST DRAGON

Rust dragons use the same stats as **ancient copper dragons** with the following changes:

- The dragon is chaotic evil.
- **Replace Change Shape with Corrode Metal:** Any weapon made of metal that hits the rust dragon corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative –3 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to –9 for magical weapons, or -5 for nonmagical weapons, the weapon is destroyed. Ammunition made of metal that hits the rust dragon is destroyed after dealing damage.
- **Replace Acid Breath with Corrosive Breath:** The Rust Dragon exhales corrosive acid in a 90-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature wearing or carrying magical or mundane metal in that area must succeed on a **DC 22 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid the metal corroding. On a failed save, if the object is either armor or a shield, it takes a permanent and cumulative –3 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 or a shield that drops to a +0 AC bonus is destroyed. If the object touched is a metal weapon, it rusts as described in the Corrode Metal trait. All metal in the area not being worn or carried is immediately destroyed.

Vertigris is happy to face "a real challenge" and eager to eat magical armaments. Their goal is to prolong the fight and savor the taste of metal, but they are not willing to die for this. He flees when reduced to 70 hit points. Alternatively, characters can convince Vertigris to pretend to fight them to impress Gruumsh. To achieve this, they must each offer Vertigris metal items to eat worth 500 gp and succeed on a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. Vertigris has little care for Gruumsh; any character who makes her laugh makes the check with advantage.

After defeating—or "defeating"—Vertigris, a deep voice bellows, drowning out the din of battle.

"Valiant warriors!" The fighting orcs briefly kneel in the viscera before continuing their slaughter with renewed vigor. "Frightened and diseased orcs are useless to us. Awaken our wife from whatever lethargy beguiles her. We would sooner wipe our people out entirely than see them die as weaklings. Go. You bear our mark." There is a roar of thunder, then only the sounds of continued battle.

All characters not of elven or goblin descent gain the *Mark of Gruumsh* (see adventure appendix).

The ground shakes beneath the characters' feet as dirt whirls around them. The sounds of clanging swords and battle cries ring out—then sudden silence. Gruumsh has moved the earth around them, transporting them directly to Luthic's den.

Proceed to "Great Mother's Lair".

Tunnel of Love

The cacophony of battle echoes in the distance as the characters make their way into the tunnel. The narrow passage quickly leads to dark, warm caverns where the fighting above is merely a dull thrum. The tunnels are made of rock, earth, and iron. Sharp claw marks line the passageway. Along the walls, well-tended carvings depict orcish lovers of all genders cavorting together, tending animals, growing crops, and raising children.

Animal carvings mark the tunnels out of the caverns. The correct path forward is denoted by a depiction of one of Luthic's favored animals. Reaching the Great Mother's lair requires a successful **DC 25 Intelligence (Religion) check**. Any orcs, half-orcs, or characters proficient in Religion make these checks with advantage. On a failed check, the characters take a wrong passage and run into the associated encounter below. After each wrong passageway, the characters can repeat the navigation check, but the DC is reduced by 5. If the characters fail the navigation check three times, they stumble upon Luthic's lair after their final encounter.



GRETCHEN MEINZEN

The correct choice is shown in capitals.

- An Aurochs and a DIRE BOAR. Following the aurochs leads to the site of a recent battlefield with reversed gravity. Strewn with blood, five (1d10) shambling corpses (**shambling mounds** with their type changed to undead) retrieve their lost limbs (11 (2d10) **crawling claws**).
- A BISON and a War Horse. Following the horse leads to a dead-end where four (1d8) **chasmes** feast upon a sleeping orc warrior's soul.
- A CAVE BEAR and a Dire Wolf. Following the wolf leads to a chamber where two **arcanaloths** debate proper contract negotiations.

At last, the tunnel opens into a massive den full of skins and trophies. A warm hearth crackles in front of an enormous claw-bedecked stone throne.

Great Mother's Lair

As the characters arrive, they face a group of worshippers going about their day. In addition to the souls of several **claws of Luthic**, there are **night hags** tending to **cave bears**, **earth elementals** playing with **dire boars**, and **xorn** snoozing alongside the spirits of orc children and **orc** warriors. All genders are present among the worshippers, but cis men are the minority.

> A priestess unsheathes her claws as anxious energy jolts through the crowd. "Our mistress is not here. We will not let you bring her back simply because her fool of a husband finally noticed she's missing."

The lair is well-defended and fully stocked. The inhabitants—apart from having concerns regarding the characters' sudden appearance—are peaceful. They distrust any who come on behalf of Gruumsh and refuse to answer questions that could help him.

They can provide the following information:

- Luthic is the glue that binds the orcish people: she is present at their birth and their death; she is the spark that lights their battle fervor.
- Luthic is fed up and has no interest in returning.
- Worshippers in Nishrek maintain complete control of their powers. The claws on the Material Plane losing connection to Luthic was an unexpected side effect. Presumably, their power will return after their death—when they find their way to her lair.

They are reluctant to share the following:

- Luthic is with her lover, Grumbar, on his home plane, Root Hold, in the Elemental Chaos.
- Grumbar is the god of Elemental Earth; Luthic derives some of her power from him.
- They have a *teleportation circle* to Root Hold.

Note: These characters include families and children. They are very reluctant to fight, despite their appearances. The characters would easily win combat here, but they should feel bad about doing so.

The characters convince Luthic's worshippers they mean Luthic no harm and learn the additional information with a successful **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. Characters of marginalized genders as well as orc and half-orc characters make this check with advantage. Anyone bearing the *Mark of Gruumsh* makes it with disadvantage.

Alternatively, characters find the *teleportation circle* with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity (Stealth) check** followed by a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check**. Characters who succeed on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check** recall that Luthic derives some strength from her lover Grumbar and extrapolate that this portal goes to his realm.

Development

Journey to Root Hold!

Chapter 3 – A Goddess at Rest

Characters journey through Root Hold and find Luthic with her lover.

Just Keep Burrowing

The characters arrive in a long tunnel en route to Grumbar's throne room. The pathway is lined with star sapphires; the rumbling of shifting tunnels echoes all around.

Planar Rules

Terrain. Root Hold consists of endless tunnels and underground halls. Outside of tunnels and caverns, there is no breathable air. The terrain constantly changes, making back-tracking impossible.

Gravity. Sentient creatures determine for themselves the direction and weight of gravity. Objects float.

Magic & Energy. Air and fire spells are half as effective while earth spells are twice as powerful.

These encounters can be added to increase the difficulty of the path to the throne room. The possibility of running out of air is always a threat (refer to Rules for Suffocating, PHB Chapter 8). Potential encounters include the following:

- A family of four **xorn** munching on gemstones
- A sleeping **zaratan** (MToF)
- **Ogrémoch** (see adventure appendix) preening in front of his minions
- A coven of lost **night hags** looking for Luthic

Eventually, the tunnel gives way to a cavernous opening.

An enormous hall made of onyx, ruby quartz, and glimmering star sapphire beckons. Sitting on the throne is a hulking muscular man carved of rock with dancing gemstone eyes. He laughs as he braids the hair of the goddess lounging on his lap: Luthic, the Blood Moon Witch. Her body, though hardened from battle, is relaxed into his; her face radiates sheer joy.

The souls of Luthic's worshippers, and the living embodiments of Grumbar's, surround them. A coven of three **night hags**, two **dao**, two **claws of Luthic**, four **earth elementals**, and two female **orogs** all fawn upon the happy couple.

Mama Bear and Her Rock

Luthic has no desire to return to work. She is tired of being underappreciated by her husband and his worshippers. She views this as less of teaching a lesson than of epically quitting her job.

ROLEPLAYING LUTHIC

Luthic is a powerful, ageless being who has been treated like a servant by her husband, worshippers, and pantheon since time began. She is intelligent and pragmatic, and cares deeply about her people. Mercurial as the blood moon, she is steadfast in her love and merciless in her rage.

Wants: To have her worth acknowledged.
Needs: To protect her people.
Fears: Being remembered only for her connections to powerful men.

The characters convince Luthic to return to her duties by offering compelling reasons and succeeding on a group D**C 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. Characters bearing the *Mark of Gruumsh*—and characters who name dissatisfying reasons for her return—make this check with disadvantage. Characters can speak multiple times, but each character must speak at least once. Luthic doesn't have to return home, but it is essential for life on the Material Plane that she calls off the rain and ends the plague.

Reasons that will convince Luthic include the following:

- Her worshippers are suffering.
- Clerics have attempted to stop the problem unsuccessfully.
- Gruumsh will wipe out all orcs rather than help them.
- Children are being affected.

Reasons such as the ones below will anger Luthic:

- Gruumsh demands it.
- Suck it up, buttercup, it's your job.

Action-driven or foolish characters may battle Luthic in an attempt to drag her home. Luthic is thrilled to have a good fight and bids Grumbar stand down. This fight is hers alone. She's happy, however, to utilize their worshippers as minions.

Tactics: The hall is circular and over 600 feet in diameter. Luthic begins combat by using her Blood Rain ability. If reduced to 100 hit points in her Mama Bear form, she concedes defeat and agrees to return home. If the fight lasts longer than eight rounds, she applauds the characters' valor. She consents to return to her job as a favor to the characters, but fighting them has grown dull.

DEVELOPMENT

Characters who convinced Luthic to return through rhetoric or fought until she got bored go to Conclusion A: Mama's Home.

Those who defeated her in battle go to Conclusion B: Blood Witch Defeated.

Those who convinced her using bad reasons go to Conclusion C: A Goddess Chastised.

Those who failed to convince her to return or died in the attempt go to Conclusion D: A New Pantheon.

CONCLUSION

The characters arrive on the blood-soaked ground. Depending on how Luthic was convinced to call off the plague, the conclusion varies.

A. Mama's Home

The blood rains stop, and the diseased are miraculously cured. Luthic's name is praised and feared throughout the realms. No one will take her for granted again. Characters gain the following rewards: the *mark of Luthic's Chosen*, a *blood fury tattoo* apiece, a *ring of earth elemental command*, and a cave bear cub (uses **black bear** statistics).

B. Blood Witch Defeated

The blood rains stop, and the diseased are cured... for now. Orcs add "Faithless Witch" to Luthic's list of titles, her name becoming synonymous with abandonment instead of safety. Characters gain an Epic Boon of their choice from Gruumsh and a *blood fury tattoo* apiece. The orc warriors give them a *defender longsword* and a pair of *gloves of soul catching*.

C. A Goddess Chastised

The blood rain stops, and half of the diseased are cured—the other half continue to malinger. Luthic is disgraced. Her worshippers are ridiculed for following a disgraced servant. Never one to act rashly, Luthic plots her revenge against her husband and the characters. The characters gain the following rewards: an *Empowered Mark of Gruumsh*, *a blood fury tattoo* apiece, and a *vorpal sword*.

D. A New Pantheon

The blood rain and plague continue unabated. Unable or unwilling to stop them, the orcish pantheon tears itself apart. Luthic mourns the loss of her people but steps into the power vacuum with Grumbar at her side. Their plan—to create earth genasi-orc hybrids who revere all genders equally, putting thought into their battles. It's a shame there's no place for the characters in this new world. If they survived, Luthic and Grumbar plan to rectify that shortly.

REWARDS

Mark of Gruumsh

This ethereal bleeding eye sits in the center of the bearer's forehead. Characters with the mark gain +2 to AC and resistance to necrotic damage. They can also innately cast *lightning bolt* using Charisma once per day without spending a spell slot.

Empowered Mark of Gruumsh

This ethereal bleeding eye sits in the center of the bearer's forehead. The bearer gains +2 to AC and immunity to necrotic attacks. As a bonus action, they can innately cast *lightning bolt* using Charisma once per day without spending a spell slot.

Luthic's Chosen

Ethereal blood-drenched claws extend from the bearer's hand. The bearer can use their claws to make Unarmed Strikes. The attack uses the bearer's Strength score for attack and damage rolls. The attack deals 2d8 magical slashing damage plus 2d8 poison damage. As a bonus action, the bearer can innately cast *heal* using Wisdom once per day without spending a spell slot.

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As a (very) tall woman, I've always felt drawn to orcs, goliaths, and firbolgs. I love Luthic and utterly hate how she is treated by the rest of her pantheon and their worshippers. I was loosely inspired by the Slavic folktale "How the Sun Was Brought Back to the Sky," the myth of Amaterasu and the cave, and the late 90's classic "How Stella Got Her Groove Back." This adventure is dedicated to every overworked person who has had to put up with misogynist nonsense and felt like screaming until it rained blood.

Thank you to the admin team for bringing me on board and to my wonderful playtesters! *Uncaged* gave me my start in ttrpg writing and I'm honored to continue the journey with *Uncaged: Goddesses*.

AUTHOR BIO

Jessica Marcrum, also known as angrynerdgirl, is a social worker and silver ENnie winner who dreams of crushing the patriarchy and recycling the rich. She has created numerous games and supplements including the *Book of Seasons* and *Nekomancy*, as well as contributed to publications for Cubicle 7, OnyxPath, and MetalWeave Games. Jessica can be contacted on Twitter **@Miss_Jess03**, on Twitch at **angrynerdgirl**, through Magpie's Curated Play Program where she works as a GM, and via her website at **https://www.jessicamarcrumwrites.com/**.

Luthic

Large Humanoid (Orc Deity), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)
Hit Points 542 (35d10 + 350)
Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover), burrow 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	22 (+6)	30 (+10)	18 (+4)	30 (+10)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +15, Con +19, Wis +19, Cha +14
Skills Animal Handling +19, Athletics +19, Intimidation +14, Nature +13, Perception +19
Damage Immunities acid, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, radiant
Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 30 ft., truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 29
Languages All
Challenge 30 (155,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +9

Disincorporation. Luthic can only be truly killed by another god in her throne room. Upon dying under any other circumstance, her body is destroyed and reemerges in her throne room, fully healed.

Legendary Resistance (5/day). If Luthic fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Limited Magic Immunity. Unless she wishes to be affected, Luthic is immune to spells of 6th level or lower. She has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Luthic's weapon attacks are magical.

Mama Bear (Mythic Trait; Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If Luthic is reduced to 0 hit points, she does not fall unconscious or die. Instead, shapeshifts into a fearsome cave bear and regains 200 hit points.

Power of Love. Whenever Luthic has at least 1 hit point and is touching the earth, she regains 30 hit points at the start of her turn and cannot be knocked prone.

Tunneler. Luthic can burrow through solid rock at half her burrow speed.

Unusual Nature. Luthic doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. Luthic makes three claw attacks or makes one claw attack and uses Blood Rain or Demand Worship on her turn.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (2d10 + 10) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Blood Rain. Luthic covers a 120-foot area with blood from the sky, making the area heavily obscured. Each creature that starts its turn in the cloud or enters the cloud must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the creature takes 22 (4d10) necrotic damage and is poisoned for one minute. Those who succeed take half damage and are not poisoned.

Demand Worship. Luthic commands the injured to fight on her behalf or grovel at her feet. Anyone within 120 feet of her who has fewer than their maximum hit points must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by Luthic. Characters who have fewer than half their hit points make this save at disadvantage. The charmed target obeys Luthic's spoken commands. If the target suffers any harm from Luthic or one of her allies, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. The charm ends after 24 hours or until Luthic dismisses it as an action.

Spellcasting. Luthic casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 27):

At will: *blight, earth bind, harm, heal*
3/day each: *divine word, earthquake, geas, holy aura, mass heal, regenerate*
1/day each: *foresight, gate, power word kill, storm of vengeance*

Bonus Actions

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Luthic can move up to her speed towards a hostile creature she can see.

continued

Reactions

Parry. Luthic adds 10 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Luthic must see the attacker.

Unyielding. When Luthic is subjected to an effect that would move her, knock her prone, or both, she can use her reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.

Legendary Actions

Luthic can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Luthic regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Attack. Luthic makes one claw attack.

Command Frenzy. Luthic chooses up to three friendly creatures she can see within 120 feet of her. If a chosen creature can see or hear Luthic, it can immediately use its reaction to make one weapon attack, with advantage on the attack roll. Foes struck by this attack must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by Luthic as per Demand Worship.

Tunnel. Luthic burrows up to her movement through the ground, triggering an earth tremor. All other creatures within a 60-foot radius of her must succeed on a DC 26 saving throw or be knocked prone.

Weaken (Costs 2 Actions). Luthic chooses a point she can see within 100 feet of her. A 10-foot radius fountain of blood breaks forth from the earth, raining blood 60 feet into the air until the end of Luthic's next turn. Creatures caught in the area are vulnerable to necrotic and poison damage until the start of Luthic's next turn.

Mythic Actions

If Luthic's mythic trait is active, she can use the additional actions below as Legendary Actions for one hour after using Mama Bear.

Charge. Luthic moves up to her speed and attacks a creature with a claw attack. The creature must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the creature is prone, Luthic can make an additional Claw attack.

Cleave. Luthic attacks a creature with her massive claws. The attack deals an additional 15 (1d10 + 10) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage to a creature within 5 feet of the first target.

Lair Actions

While in Grumbar's lair, Luthic has limited control over the terrain. Nevertheless, their love strengthens her powers here. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Luthic uses her lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- A 10-foot radius area of rocky or earthy ground within 60 feet of Luthic turns to blood. Any creature on the ground in the area must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or sink 5 feet into the mud and be restrained. A creature can use their action to make a DC 18 Strength check, ending the effect on itself or another creature within reach on a success.
- A violent tremor shakes the lair in a 120-foot radius around Luthic. Each creature other than Luthic on the ground in the area must succeed on a DC 18 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone.
- Crystalline spikes grow from the ground in a 20-foot radius area within 60 feet of Luthic. The area becomes difficult terrain. A creature that moves through the affected area takes 3 (1d6) piercing damage for every 5 feet it moves. Creatures that are knocked prone in the area also take this damage.

Ogrémoch

Gargantuan Elemental, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 526 (27d20 + 243)
Speed 50 ft., burrow 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	11 (+0)	28 (+9)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +15, Wis +8
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone
Senses blindsight 120 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Terran
Challenge 20 (24,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Empowered Attacks. Ogrémoch's slam attacks are treated as magical and adamantine for the purpose of bypassing resistance and immunity to nonmagical weapons.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Ogrémoch fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Ogrémoch has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Siege Monster. Ogrémoch deals double damage to objects and structures with his melee and ranged weapon attacks.

Actions

Multiattack. Ogrémoch makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Boulder. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 500 ft., one target. *Hit:* 46 (7d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Spellcasting. Ogrémoch's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *meld into stone, move earth, wall of stone*

Summon Elementals (1/day). Ogrémoch summons up to three earth elementals and loses 30 hit points for each elemental he summons. Summoned elementals have maximum hit points, appear within 100 feet of Ogrémoch, and disappear if Ogrémoch is reduced to 0 hit points.

Legendary Actions

Ogrémoch can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ogrémoch regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Illuminating Crystals. Ogrémoch's crystalline protrusions flare. Each creature within 30 feet of Ogrémoch becomes outlined in orange light, shedding dim light in a 10-foot radius. Any attack roll against an affected creature has advantage if the attacker can see it, and the affected creature can't benefit from being invisible.

Stomp (Costs 2 Actions). Ogrémoch stomps the ground, creating an earth tremor that extends in a 30-foot radius. Other creatures standing on the ground in that radius must succeed on a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

Create Gargoyle (Costs 3 Actions). Ogrémoch's hit points are reduced by 50 as he breaks off a chunk of his body and places it on the ground in an unoccupied space within 15 feet of him. The chunk of rock instantly transforms into a gargoyle and acts on the same initiative count as Ogrémoch. Ogrémoch can't use this action if he has 50 hit points or fewer. The gargoyle obeys Ogrémoch's commands and fights until destroyed.


KARI KAWACHI

I KNOW HER NAME

by Michael Reid

Goddess: The Raven Queen | **Levels:** 17-20

Content Warnings: Colonialism, Racism, Abduction, Imprisonment

SYNOPSIS

Growing up in an ancient culture of nomadic elves, Jaishura only ever worried about being the quickest hunter, the sharpest forager, and the best storyteller. But when her parents must move to a city, enrolling her in a school run by those who know little of her people, she's faced with greater challenges than she'd ever imagined. And that's only the beginning.

Though she doesn't realize it, Jaishura is the mortal avatar of the Raven Queen, and her mind is the battlefield of the Lady of Shadows and the Demon Lord, Orcus. The demon will use Jaishura's self-doubt to corrupt her memories and identity until he finds the Raven Queen's true name and conquers the Fortress of Memories. That is, unless "Jai" can rescue her "other self" and defend her own Fortress of Memories—with a little help.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The Raven Queen, their gods, or a patron may have drawn the adventurers to the dream, having sensed evil encroaching on the Fortress of Memories and the need for heroes to stop it.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

- Jaishura's people, the Ulari, have an ancient pact with the Raven Queen, long-forgotten by all but the Queen herself.
- Her true name, the one remnant of her mortal life, is passed down in the subconscious minds of her mortal avatars among the Ulari.
- The Raven Queen's true name can only be revealed if her avatar loses her own sense of self, overtaken by the memories and perceptions of others.
- Jaishura's parents recently took her away from her traditional hunter-gatherer life due to the loss of their ancestral lands.
- Jaishura's traditional ways and Ulari reverence for the Raven Queen are scorned by her classmates and teachers, though she and her family are determined to maintain them.
- The Raven Queen is revered as a "mirror to face and accept one's inner shadow," which Jaishura must do to repel Orcus.
- Orcus has taken on the form of an imaginary friend, Kolbo, a humanoid walrus, in Jaishura's dream world, in order to undermine her confidence in the name of "keeping her safe." Under the cloak of Jaishura's dream, his presence is undetectable.

ABOUT THE ADVENTURE

The adventure takes place inside a dreamscape connected to Jaishura's subconscious mind, a demiplanar bridge between the Material Plane and the Fortress of Memories within the Shadowfell.

The dreamscape is an extension of Jaishura, and so causing it harm will also harm her.

- The dreamscape has 10,000 hit points.
- Each spell cast automatically deals psychic damage to the dreamscape equal to 10 times the spell level plus any damage the spell causes, unless otherwise specified.

- The dreamscape has vulnerability to psychic damage, and spells with enchantment or plane-shifting effects deal automatic 1,000 damage to it. Plane-shifting always fails in the dreamscape.
- If the plane is destroyed, so are Jaishura and anyone on it. The first use of magic doesn't do damage, but everything briefly becomes unstable.

Note: DMs are encouraged to weave the backstories of the adventurers into the narrative when possible, with the Raven Queen's presence manifesting elements of their memories into interactions and settings if possible.



KARI KAWACHI

CHAPTER 1 – INSIDE A DREAM

In a small, neglected borough of a sprawling city, the once-nomadic Ulari elves have made a new home, their ancestral lands having been invaded by competing colonial powers. Though the arrival of these exiles has been contentious, there has been no open hostility. Yet the quiet of this night is broken, as the tenements buckle and the moon is covered over by a massive flock of ravens. It all seems to center on one run-down building.

Rushing through the escaping crowd, spurred on by cries for help coming from inside, you see two people in a panic calling out the name "Jaishura." A teenage girl is being drawn inside a dark portal as her parents reach for her. Cries of panicked ravens fill the air.

Suddenly you find yourself on a wide-open plain. The skies are blue, the sun is bright, and dinosaurs roam the horizon. Flumphs float by. Orca whales leap from a massive lake, trying to catch ravens flying overhead.

"We're going, and that's final!" says a defiant young voice.

Within her dream, the adventurers are confronted with a vision of Jaishura, geared up for adventure, arguing with two strange figures around a campfire: imaginary friends Leebop, a humanoid flumph (he/him), and Kolbo, a humanoid walrus (he/him). Jaishura appears younger than when she was seen on the Material Plane.

Jai intends to rescue a girl, Shura, who was kidnapped by "something evil" that has invaded the land. Leebop, though a slow-talking sort, is eager to go. Kolbo is against it, nervously and paternally insisting that she's not experienced enough to be an adventurer, reminding her that her teachers and classmates will only view her as more of a *"backwards, wild girl."*

She explains that all she needs are the ways of the Ulari elves: *"strength together, courage alone, light through shadow."*

Before Jai spots them, a flock of ravens approaches the adventurers, asking for their aid. They speak in myriad voices, some of which are those of friends, family, and other significant figures in the adventurers' lives, even those long since dead. Convey the information found in "What the Ravens Know". If any are reluctant to help, the ravens promise *"a true wealth of knowledge"* in return for aiding the girl.

Once spotted, Jaishura introduces herself as Jai. Jai will accept help, encouraged by Leebop, but insists she remains in charge of the rescue. See "Roleplaying Jai" and "Roleplaying Leebop and Kolbo".

Jai asks a nearby raven for directions to Shura's location, and it leads the way. Before they're far from camp, a group of dinosaurs appear. Jai introduces them as some of her earliest childhood friends: Rex, Chomp, Cap, and Ank.

They complain of a gray oozing slime, spreading over everything, which has sickened some of their friends since Shura was captured; they show that it has spread slowly through the land. It has touched all of them and they feel ill. (Unknown to them, this is Orcus's corrupting influence.) Before they have a chance to say more, they become pale and zombie-like, going berserk and blaming Jai for this blight and for Shura's capture, accusing her of abandoning them and their home.

Jai asks the party to subdue, but not kill them; doing so will sour her on the party. There are two **tyrannosaurus rex**, a **triceratops**, and an **anklyosaurus**. Magic that dispels possessions may separate and dissipate the putrid substance possessing the dinosaurs, leaving them exhausted, harmless, and back to their senses. Spells and abilities that sense magic reveal necromantic and powerful demonic energy within the gray slime.

ROLEPLAYING JAI

- Inquisitive and adventurous, Jai loves reading about faraway animals.
- As the avatar of the Raven Queen, Jai intuitively knows deep secrets about those she meets, without even realizing that they're secrets; she may hint at knowledge the party already seeks.
- Jai is strong-willed, and if crossed takes on a harsh, regal tone, but her recent time in the city has made her wary of others' intentions and sensitive to judgment.
- She views the dreamscape as her homeland, and doesn't question its strangeness.
- She is intensely interested in hearing the stories of those she meets, and notes that she'll have to "write that down later" each time she hears one.
- Sharing stories, especially personal ones, gains her trust.

What the Ravens Know

- Jaishura is a "part of" the Raven Queen, and vice versa.
- The Raven Queen's true name is hidden deep within Jaishura's mind; if anyone else learns the name, they could dissipate the Raven Queen and conquer the Fortress of Memories.
- The name can only be found if Jaishura loses control of her own name and identity, and something is clearly trying to cause that to happen.
- This world is Jaishura's dream, and most things found within it are part of her.
- Enchantment spells may be deadly to her here, as are plane-shifting spells.
- If the dream world is destroyed with the party in it, they will be destroyed too; helping Jai rescue Shura is the only way out of the dream.

ROLEPLAYING LEEBOP AND KOLBO

- Leebop and Kolbo are the proverbial "angel and devil on her shoulder" for Jai.
- Leebop makes comically enthusiastic and adventurous (yet extremely impractical) suggestions as challenges are faced.
- Kolbo is frequently nervous and over-cautious in his advice, urging Jai to turn back.

DEVELOPMENT

Her dinosaur friends subdued, Jai consults one of the many ravens for directions to where Shura is being held. The ravens lead the party down a winding forest trail to a cave. In the fields and forest behind, the gray slime can be seen steadily spreading.

CHAPTER 2 – BELOW THE SURFACE

The Gate. The cave mouth is protected by a locked iron gate, requiring a **DC 19 Dexterity check with thieves' tools** to unlock it, or a **DC 23 Strength check** to break the gate down. A convoluted passageway leads to an underground lake. The party can see that the gray slime engulfing the dreamscape is following them inside.

TROUBLED WATERS

The lake is filled with two ravenous **aboleths**. There are two boats; one is a gray slow boat of Ulari design, flat and similar to a pontoon, while the other is a slim white metal construction with a sharp prow, in an elvish military style.

Between them there is a stone carved with the Ulari proverb:

"TOGETHER WE ARE LIGHT."

The Ulari boat appears flimsy, with loose ropes; it seems able to only support the weight of one medium humanoid. The military boat can hold half the party, single file. The Ulari boat, however, becomes stronger the more people are aboard, as long as everyone holds the ropes tight.

Jai prefers the Ulari slow boat, but Kolbo insists that the military vessel is faster and safer. She asks the adventurers' opinions and may be persuaded one way or the other with a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. The characters can make this skill check with or without advantage depending on their previous interactions with Jai.

If the party chooses the Ulari boat, they may attempt to cross the water with only one **DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) check**, with advantage. If the party uses the military boat, they must make two trips, making two **DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) checks** each. Slaying the aboleths deals an additional 10d10 psychic damage to the dreamscape.

THROUGH THE DARK

Passing through a tunnel, the boat reaches a landing connected to a narrow stone walkway, 300 feet long. Upon it is written another Ulari proverb:

"TO FIND A WAY, YOU MUST MOVE INTO THE LIGHT. TO REACH THE LIGHT, YOU MUST FACE THE DARKNESS."

The walkway is well lit with overhead lanterns, while the water on either side of the landing is impenetrably dark and flanked by stone walls carved with intricate images of the Raven Queen's attempt to gain divinity before being betrayed by the nagpa and warped into her present state; this can be identified with a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (History)** or **Intelligence (Religion) check**. To pass through this area, the party must swim through the water. If they attempt to traverse the passageway, they must travel single-file and face several traps.

Kolbo is eager to traverse the walkway and scolds the party for allowing Jai to face this dangerous quest; if the party swims to safety, he takes the walkway and set off all the traps on himself, surviving but quite injured. Otherwise, he follows behind.

The first trap is a tripwire requiring a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** to spot it. If triggered, a bas relief of a nagpa up ahead casts *lightning bolt* along the floor, requiring a successful **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** (Jai and Leebop can be spared by being held aloft). This trap is harmlessly disabled with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools**.

The second trap is a locking pit triggered by stepping on a false stone. A successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** is required to spot it. A **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** is required if it is triggered. On a failure, the victim drops into a 50-foot pit filled with spikes and dealing 22 (4d10) piercing damage. The trap then locks shut, requiring a successful **DC 20 Strength check** to reopen.



H. "INK" KUGLER

Images of nagpas on the walls begin to crow at Jai, telling her that she will never be strong enough, that she needs to be like everyone else if she hopes to "be somebody," that she's powerless in the face of change, that she'll "fail just like she did before." The adventurers may hear similar mockery about their own past failures.

The final trap is a pressure plate that triggers crushing spikes from above. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** is required to spot the plate. If triggered, the ceiling begins to slam down behind the party, crushing 30 feet per round. The party must run if they are to avoid it, and must make a successful **DC 19 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid slipping into the dark water below.

If the party travels through the underwater passage, there are no dangers, except the length of swimming without air: the underwater passage takes 5 minutes to traverse.

DEVELOPMENT

The waterway and path both lead to an antechamber with a large wooden door. If touched, it opens automatically, leading to an arena.

CHAPTER 3 – THE BATTLE WITHIN

The final chamber is a massive cavern arena. A crowd of shadows, ghouls, and demons fill the stands, all covered in the same encroaching gray slime, and in the Emperor's seat a **Drow Matron Mother** (MToF) sits, smiling at the party's entrance. Near her throne is a small cage, and the form of a young, pale girl, similar to Jai, sits slumped inside it. Caged ravens hang from the cavernous ceiling. Jai and Kolbo suddenly teleport to the throne.

COMBAT

The Drow Matron sends either a **beholder zombie**, a **bone naga**, or three **ogre zombies**. If the party handles one of these easily, more than one monster may be used.

- The caged ravens cry out that the Matron is an illusion, and that Jai can stop the attacks if she chooses so.
- The party may try to convince Jai to do this; if they have treated her disrespectfully, a successful **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check** is needed. If they shared a personal story with her, the DC is 18. If they made specific efforts to gain her trust, the DC is 15.
- If characters don't attempt to engage with Jai, DMs may choose to have the monsters target Leebop; this prompts her to ask for the party to protect him, and if they attempt this and succeed, she ends the combat early.

Shadow Work

If the combat is ended early, the Drow Matron Mother vanishes and Jai attempts to free Shura from the cage. Kolbo tries to stop her, but fails.

When the cage opens a massive flock of ravens fly from it, along with the opening cages of the ravens overhead.

When the flock disperses, a magnificent, tall, Ulari elf woman in raven-feather garb appears on the throne; the demons and ghouls have all vanished from the arena. Protecting Jai, and speaking in unison with her, she tosses Kolbo to the party in the arena.

ROLEPLAYING THE DROW MATRON MOTHER

- The Drow Matron tries to convince Jai that the adventurers are no more concerned for her than are her teachers and classmates in the city.
- She insists that if Jai wants to fight back, she needs power like her own, claiming that "the powerful don't fight, they conquer!"
- The Matron insists that if Jai only says the word, she will give her the power she needs.
- She sends monsters to fight the heroes.
- Kolbo urges her to accept the Matron's offer for her own safety, insisting that the party bringing her to this dark place was only to get themselves home. Leebop insists that she "is a fighter for her people, not a conqueror."

ROLEPLAYING THE RAVEN QUEEN

- The Raven Queen's form is mutable, occasionally taking on the appearance of other commanding presences the adventurers know or fear; she is regal, proud, and sure, but the longer anyone looks at her, the more her features seem to change.
- Her only consistent, recurring features are similar to those of Jai.
- She is grateful for the party's aid to her avatar.
- While she will happily repay the party for their help, the Raven Queen has one last favor to ask: destroy the invader, Orcus, now that she can cast her full protection over Jaishura's dream.

"You have done well. I am indebted to you. But there is one task remaining; I've cast my protection here. Any damage you do now will not affect this plane or Jaishura, so use your full power. Destroy him. Destroy this filth that would harm her!"

Kolbo hideously morphs into **Orcus** (MToF) and cursing the Raven Queen and the party. He wastes no time in attacking, making good use of his *Wand of Orcus*.

"If I cannot cease the endless prattling of life, and these memories upon which you build it, then I will at least destroy this wretched creature—and all of you with her!"

DEVELOPMENT

If Jai is not convinced to call the monsters off, combat is to the death, and when it ends, Jai fuses with the Drow Matron Mother and attacks. The party's only hope of survival is to escape the dream, but Jaishura, the Raven Queen, and the Fortress of Memories all fall to Orcus's gray, corrupting influence.

If Orcus is defeated, the Raven Queen thanks the party for helping her "pull herself together" and offers them a "wealth of knowledge"—truthful answers to any single question each of them wish to ask, no matter how deep the mystery behind it.

CONCLUSION

In a best case scenario, Jaishura awakens, ready to fight for who she is. The party may use the knowledge the Raven Queen rewards them with to solve mysteries ancient or personal, the beginnings of new quests.

If Jai is convinced to accept the role of a conqueror, the dream collapses, the party may not survive, and all will be lost. The fall of the Fortress of Memories will cause a loss of historical memory for many, and darkness and undeath will flow from the damage to the Shadowfell into the Material Plane.

If the characters ever question Jaishura as to the Raven Queen's true name, she does not answer, and her mind cannot be read, for all of the Raven Queen's power now works to protect and strengthen Jaishura in the ways she decides are most important. The name was given to Jaishura to keep, and now that she realizes what it is, she will continue to keep its secret.

REWARDS

A question from each adventurer answered truthfully and accurately by the Raven Queen, revealing any secret of the multiverse, along with an invitation to visit the Fortress of Memories. If Orcus is defeated, he leaves behind the *Wand of Orcus*.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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AUTHOR BIO

Michael Reid is a freelance writer and editor who drinks too much coffee and doesn't play tabletop games often enough. He's been playing, running, and writing D&D modules since 2015. The highlight of his DMing career was the time when players literally threw money at him.



LORE EVANS AND GWEN BASSETT



SONYA HENAR

WHEN LUCK RUNS OUT

by Jackie Yang

Goddess: Beshaba | **Levels:** 18-20

SYNOPSIS

Nothing's worse than a sibling rivalry—especially one between gods. So when a group of heroes on vacation are pulled into Beshaba's struggle with Tymora, their weekend (and the world) is suddenly in danger. The party must delve into an ancient temple to confront the Maid of Misfortune herself, while also discovering that there really are two sides to every story.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The party is celebrating their victory after completing a dangerous mission.
- The party hears rumors of a grand casino somewhere out on the seas.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This adventure is intended for a group of 3–5 players 18th–20th level. In this tale, Beshaba and Tymora once had equal power over good fortune, and were worshipped together on the isle of Forsa. However, the sisters had a falling-out and Beshaba was imprisoned by their followers under the island. Centuries later, Beshaba is on the verge of breaking free, and wants nothing more than revenge against her sister...

CHAPTER 1 – THE ISLE OF FORTUNE

Our adventure begins one sunny afternoon as the characters arrive at the docks on the island of Forsa.

> You are immediately met with the gorgeous glimmer of white sands and sun-drenched waves. A throng of tourists, sailors, and dock-workers mill about the busy pier, and a salt breeze rustles your hair. You catch fragments of excited conversation from your fellow travellers—and see, stretching up over the island, a massive temple of ivory and filigree—the Marble Shores Casino.

A tour guide—Brozd Ironheart (she/her, dwarf **commoner**, neutral good), a stony-faced dwarf with a beard full of flowers and a pineapple-patterned t-shirt—flags down the party and welcomes them with a rehearsed speech.

> "— casino is open twenty-four hours a day. Even if you don't want to gamble, it's a big part of Forsa's history. Before our great founder Mister Thistlemane built this resort, it was the only structure on the island. It's believed to have once been a temple to the goddess Tymora—so if you're a betting bunch, know that luck is on your side."
>
> "There's also plenty to do in the town of Thistle's Point. Why not buy some woven hats or seaweed-on-a-stick? Maybe stay the night at the Turnbuckle Inn. From there, it's a short walk to the beach, where we're hosting our annual sandcastle-building competition. Enjoy the cool waves and sandy shores, and thank you again for visiting Forsa: where fortune awaits."

THE MARBLE SHORES CASINO

Lavished with banners, mage-lights, and streamers, this casino is alive with the sound of shuffling cards, rolling dice, spinning wheels, and laughter. Hundreds of patrons crowd the white-tiled floors, picking off trays of complimentary drink and food.

Characters make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** as they enter the casino. They see a fancy gnomish man—Wilbur Thistlemane (he/him, gnome **noble**, true neutral)—being carried on a gilded sedan chair above the crowd. They also notice a beautiful mosaic under the domed ceiling. It depicts a matronly figure flanked by two younger women. Through **DC 10 Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) checks**, characters recognize Tyche and her twin daughters, Tymora and Beshaba. Players who beat the DC by 7 or more note it is strange to see these three depicted together, as Beshaba famously hated her family.

THE TWO SISTERS

Tymora is the golden-haired goddess of good fortune, and Beshaba the silver-haired goddess of bad luck. Legends say that long ago, when Tyche was killed by an ancient curse, Tymora and Beshaba sprang from her fallen form and immediately started fighting—a battle that continues today.

The DM can include any number of casino activities.

Sample Games

Gambler's Bid. Characters add 10 gp into a pot, then roll 3d6 and keep their total a secret. The DM rolls 1d6, then announces the result. Characters can outbid each other to add that number to their total. Whoever wins the bid also adds that amount of gold into the pot. After five d6s are rolled, whoever has the highest total wins the pot. However, if a character's total exceeds 30, they are disqualified.

Enchanted Armaments. Five animated weapons battle in a ring. Characters can bet at least 100 gp on a weapon of their choosing. Each round, players roll one d20 for each weapon and the one with the lowest roll is defeated. If the weapon a character bet on wins third place, they win back half their gold. For second place, they win 1.5 times their bet. For first place, they win 5 times their bet.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

After a few hours, characters notice dark clouds gathering outside. Then, rain begins to fall. Soon, the entire sky is filled with lightning and thunder. Unbeknownst to the characters, Beshaba has begun to emerge—and her presence distorts the very force of luck itself.

BESHABA'S FIRST CURSE

From this point on, whenever a character fails a check or saving throw, the DM can ask them to roll a d20. On a roll of 1–9, the character suffers *Bad Luck*—an additional consequence of that failure. This can range from a character getting hurt on a bad stealth check, to an off-target spell hitting an ally instead.

Suddenly, an earthquake rocks the casino. The party must make a **DC 15 Strength saving throw** or be knocked prone. A jagged crack splits the stone floor, running up the ceiling between the section of the mural depicting Beshaba, and the section depicting Tymora and Tyche. Tymora and Tyche's sections rumble, and the ceiling starts to crash down.

The party has three rounds to escape before the casino caves in. They can make **Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks**—or use arcane means—to reach the exit 100 feet away. They also notice five patrons trapped under the debris, and can make Strength checks or use magic to free them.

Once the ceiling collapses, a mob surrounds Wilbur outside. They accuse him of endangering them with his shoddy casino. In response, he promises to give everyone (partial) refunds, and get to the bottom of things. He calls out toward the party.

"You all! You seem like a competent bunch. How would you like to help these good folk, and make a bit of coin? How does... 8,000 gold each sound?"

He approaches the party and shoos the crowd away. He addresses the characters in a whisper.

> "Listen, I'm not asking for much—just for a group of famous heroes to do a quick search and assure everyone all is well. It shouldn't even take long. What do you say?"

If the party agrees, they can enter the ruined casino and make **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) checks**. On a success, they notice the crack in the stone runs down from the ceiling, across the casino floor, and into a back hallway.

It leads through a closed door marked "STORAGE". This door can be unlocked with a **DC 18 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check**, or by asking Wilbur for the keys.

Inside is a cluttered storage room. At its center is the origin of the crack—a stone card table stacked high with crates. If the party clears the table, they find an image engraved on its surface. It depicts a coin facing heads-up. If the players flip a coin heads-up onto that carving, the entire table sinks into the ground, revealing a dusty, spiral staircase leading into darkness.

DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 2 begins when the party delves into the temple proper. If they ignore Wilbur's offer, inflict them with worsening luck over time. Aspects of their vacation start going wrong—accidentally spilling drinks escalates into wagon-crashes and misplaced magic items. The party soon realizes that ships cast out to sea get lost, and teleportation spells fail in strange ways. Allies' entry into Forsa is blocked. Emphasize that seemingly, misfortune keeps them here.

SONYA HENAR



CHAPTER 2 – THE WHEEL

The party descends into an ancient chamber filled with faded murals. Some are heavily damaged, but those untouched depict Tyche and Tymora surrounded by golden stars, similar to the mural on the casino ceiling. The fragmented portions of the murals depict a female figure with silver hair, features marred by damage, but wreathed in golden light.

The room ends in a single stone door marked by a handprint. Under the palm is written, in Celestial:

"LET THE HANDS OF FATE GUIDE YOU."

If a character presses their palm to the door, have them roll a d6 to determine which chamber in "The First Ring" they begin in.

THE FIRST RING

The Temple of Luck is made up of two concentric rings surrounding the Inner Sanctum. The First Ring consists of six chambers. Whenever the party moves to a new chamber, one player must roll a d6 to determine which trial everyone faces.

FEATURES OF THE FIRST RING

Each chamber is made of stone, about 100 feet in diameter, and lit by burning braziers. The ceilings are high and vaulted, about 60 feet tall. Chamber doors do not shut until the encounter begins. Cleared chambers do not reset. To reach the Second Ring, characters must complete three trials to earn *glowstones* and unlock the door in Chamber 6.

An Ill Omen

After the party collects their second *glowstone*, the ground shakes again. A strange pressure washes over the party, afflicting them with the next curse.

BESHABA'S SECOND CURSE

The party's fortunes have turned against them. Each time a character makes an ability check or saving throw using a skill they are proficient in, their player must roll a d12 instead of a d20.

1. Wraith Roulette

The floor of this chamber is a giant roulette wheel consisting of thirty black and white wedges. Once characters step onto the wheel, it starts to spin and the trial begins.

Six **ghosts** suddenly appear, then immediately disappear onto the Ethereal Plane. Roll initiative! At the end of each character's turn, have their player roll a d12. On an even number, the character ends their turn on a white wedge and enters the Ethereal Plane. On an odd number, the character ends their turn on a black wedge and returns to the Material Plane.

When the last ghost is destroyed, it drops a *glowstone* and the wheel stops spinning.

2. Heads and Dragon's Tails

This enormous chamber is filled knee-deep with copper coins. At the center of the room, curled up and asleep, is an **adult copper dragon**. On the far wall is the mosaic of a dragon; where its left eye should be is a coin-shaped opening.

Nearly every copper piece in the room has two tails faces. Characters must find the only coin with a heads face and place it into the mosaic's eye. Finding the coin requires a **DC 30 Intelligence (Investigation) check**—dropping by 3 after every round. The ground is also difficult terrain. Stealthing gives disadvantage on the Investigation check, which takes a full action to complete.

The encounter begins with the first Investigation check. If the party wakes the dragon (passive Perception 24), it initiates combat and stops only when defeated, or once the coin is placed in the mosaic. Once the coin is placed, the dragon disappears in a burst of copper, leaving behind a *glowstone*.

3. Catch the Rainbow

This dark chamber is illuminated by yellow fireflies. At its center is a brazier filled with crackling lightning. A rainbow is carved onto the far wall, and at one of its ends are seven glass jars, one for each arc.

The fireflies' color is determined by the spell damage inside the brazier: red for fire, orange for poison, yellow for lightning, green for acid, blue for cold, and purple for psychic. Casting a spell with that damage type into the brazier changes the color of the uncaptured fireflies. If players need a hint, have the character make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check**. On a success, they notice that the base of the brazier is engraved with runes that capture magic. The lightning inside the brazier is a type of contained spell effect.

Characters must make a **DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to catch a firefly and place it in a jar. Once a firefly is placed under an arc, the arc lights in the corresponding color. When the rainbow is completed, a *glowstone* appears on the other side.

4. A Helping Hand

A rectangular room lit by bronze braziers and lined with linen cots, this room was clearly once an infirmary. With sucessful **Intelligence (Investigation) checks**, characters can also find:

- DC 10: (x3) *potions of healing*
- DC 16: (x4) *potions of greater healing*
- DC 22: (x1) *potion of heroism*, (x1) *ring of spell turning*

5. In the Cards

The far wall of this chamber is a 4x4 grid of tiles shaped like playing cards (see the Card Placement Table). If characters use an action to push a card, it flips over—triggering the encounter.

Once a card is flipped, it cannot be moved until a second card is turned. If the second card does not match the first, they both flip back over. If the cards match, they fix into place and summon whatever they depict. All creatures are hostile to the party. All spell effects have a DC of 18, are cast at 5th level, and encompass the entire room.

The encounter ends when the party summons a *glowstone*.

6. The Way Out

On the far wall of this hexagonal chamber are three circular divots just large enough for a *glowstone*. Once three are placed into the door, the path to the Second Ring opens.

This chamber is also filled with murals. Some depict Beshaba inflicting mortals with failing crops and horrible illness. However, many of these murals are also damaged. On a **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, characters can make out fragments of a golden-haired woman cursing morals with back luck.

The Second Ring

The Second Ring opens up into a long, curved hall that once served as an ancient dormitory. Inside are twelve bunks, neatly made and dusty. Each bed has a chest beside it that contains silvery-blue priests' robes tailored to various sizes. In some of the chests is a single amulet that depicts a coin with a woman on either face—one cast in silver, and one cast in gold.

The High Preistess's Chambers

At the end of the hall is a locked door, requiring a **DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to open. Through it lies an ornate bedroom with a study off to the side.

The study contains a wooden desk, a rich old carpet, and hundreds of books and scrolls. Reading through them, characters notice they always reference Beshaba and Tymora together as "the twin goddesses of fortune." Good or bad luck is never specifically ascribed to either.

Inside the wooden desk is a large copper key—which unlocks the entrance to the Inner Sanctum.

The Way Forward

> The floor shakes violently as you enter this chamber and you just barely manage to stay upright. You do look up, though, and suddenly realize you are not alone.

CARD PLACEMENT TABLE

	1	2	3	4
1	One **fire giant dreadnought** (VGtM)	*Darkness*	*Fireball*	Two **treants**
2	*Ice storm*	Three **living lightning bolts** (see adventure appendix)	One **fire giant dreadnought** (VGtM)	Two **treants**
3	Three **living lightning bolts** (see adventure appendix)	*Glowstone*	One **ironscale hydra** (see adventure appendix)	*Glowstone*
4	*Fireball*	One **ironscale hydra** (see adventure appendix)	*Ice storm*	*Darkness*

This chamber contains the massive stone door to the Inner Sanctum, emanating a blinding, golden light. Before it, however, stands a ring of thirteen glowing ghosts. The one in the most ornate robes, an elderly elven woman, steps warily forward.

> "It has been a thousand years since any but ourselves set foot in this temple. Yet now, of all times, we receive visitors. Tell me quickly—are you able to help?"

The ghost's name is Calla Varanthil (she/her, **gallows speaker** (see adventure appendix), neutral good), the last High Priestess of Forsa. She says, urgently, that long ago, Beshaba and Tymora were worshipped here together as the goddesses of luck—good and bad. As time went on, however, Beshaba developed an affinity for misfortune and her curses grew so frequent that mortals everywhere suffered. The clergy asked Beshaba to stop, but she ignored their prayers. Tymora, however, told the clergy that Beshaba was lost and should be sealed away. With no other recourse, the priests did so successfully, but not before the goddess managed one final curse to reduce them to ghosts and trap them on Forsa.

Varanthil gestures at the murals in this chamber. While old, they appear newer than the rest and depict Beshaba surrounded in darkness, the light of Tymora staving her off. A single keyhole sits at the center of this image.

Varanthil believes they can seal Beshaba again; however, their power has waned considerably as ghosts, and the goddess would have to be weakened first.

DEVELOPMENT

The Acolytes ask for the party's help. Even if they disagree, Varanthil states they have to confront Beshaba anyway to remove their curses. Once they retrieve the key to the Inner Sanctum and unlock it, Chapter 3 begins.



HERMAN LAU

CHAPTER 3 – TWO SIDES TO EVERY COIN

WHAT LIES BELOW

> As the door sinks into the ground, you see before you a long corridor awash in blinding, golden light. Another tremor shakes the floor, and a forceful, crackling presence pours through an archway at its end. Varanthil turns to you all. "Are you ready?"

The Acolytes follow the party into the Inner Sanctum: a 300-foot-diameter chamber, with a mural on the ceiling mirroring the casino's above, and an enormous pillar of jagged crystal below it. Light pours from fissures in the crystal. Just as the party enters, an earthquake rocks the room and the entire pillar explodes in a blast of golden light.

The ghosts are dispersed, Beshaba emerges, and characters suffer her last curse.

BESHABA'S THIRD CURSE
From this point on, anytime a player rolls a 20, there is a 50% chance that it turns into a 1.

THE GODDESS AWAKENS

As the light fades, there stands the goddess Beshaba. She is well over 15 feet tall, with long, white hair and a crown of antlers made of tarnished brass. Smoke coils off her body as she stands, eyes crackling, robes swirling out around her.

You watch her consider you for just a second, then her expression turns sour. "Mortals," she sneers. "Always mortals." Her eyes briefly glance upward as she snarls, "You never want to face me yourself!"

Beshaba's head snaps back to the party and she flicks out her hand, summoning a crackling flail and initiating combat. It is obvious that she does not recognize the party, and instead simply wishes to lash out at someone.

Under Beshaba's curses, the party will likely be out of their depth. However, after the first round of combat, Varanthil speaks in their minds, begging them to hold Beshaba off a little longer.

Characters are encouraged to find a non-combat method of stalling the goddess. They can make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** to notice Beshaba's gaze straying to the visage of Tyche and Tymora on the ceiling, and realize they could likely distract her into talking about her family. Beshaba is more than happy to reveal *her* side of the story.

LONG AGO...

Beshaba and Tymora were tasked by their mother to keep the balance of fortune. Tymora interpreted this as blessing only those she found worthy, while Beshaba believed that bad luck had to follow good.

As a result, Tymora's following quickly grew. Beshaba felt forced to keep the balance by spreading more misfortune in return, causing mortals to shun her. She begged her sister to change, but Tymora was unwilling. Beshaba then decided to force Tymora to listen by drowning the world in misfortune.

Before Beshaba could sway Tymora, however, Tymora convinced their clergy to seal her away. In her last moments, Beshaba swore she would return to fight her sister, and killed their priests—binding them to the temple.

By the time Beshaba finishes her story, or if the party can survive three rounds, the Acolytes recover. The High Priestess counters:

"Beshaba might have been upholding the balance at first, but by the end, she was willing to sacrifice the world just to prove a point. What makes you think this won't happen again? She's clearly too spiteful to be released."

Beshaba argues that she only wants revenge against the Acolytes and her sister, and will go back to blessing mortals soon. She proves this by promising to lift her curses on the party if they help her. Varanthil states that if Beshaba is weakened, her curses will lift regardless.

CONCLUSION

Siding with Beshaba. The goddess lifts her curse and thanks the party, stating that they've earned her favor and then vanishes in a flash. The High Priestess rounds on them, warning that a war between gods has begun. For now, though, the tremors subside and the ghosts fade away.

Siding with the Acolytes. Beshaba rages against the party and resumes combat. The Acolytes begin the ritual to seal Beshaba, and with each round of combat a curse lifts (from first to third). Before her defeat, Beshaba warns the party that a god can never really be killed. The Acolytes then thank the characters and begin to fade away. Just before they disappear, the High Priestess grants them a blessing.

Forsa's Blessing. Once each, players can replace the result of a single roll with a 20 on the die.

Afterwards, characters can return to the surface. The storm has subsided and reconstruction of the casino has begun.

REWARDS

Wilbur rewards the party with 8,000 gp each, and the party can get back to their promised vacation.

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would be nowhere without the antics of my long-standing players: Lia, Taylor, Alina, Zach, Ben, Thomas, and Jess. Thank you forever for always saying "yes" when I drag you across the city to tell a story with me.

AUTHOR BIO

Jackie is an aspiring writer and TTRPG enthusiast based out of New York City. She's been running D&D campaigns for the last 3 years and dabbling in homebrew for much longer than that. She has previously contributed to *Rock & Roll: Adventures for the World's Greatest Roleplaying Game*, and the *Splinterverse Feywild Companion for 5e*.

Beshaba, the Maid of Misfortune

Gargantuan Celestial, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 25 (Natural)
Hit Points 710 (43d20 + 258)
Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	25 (+7)	23 (+6)	30 (+10)	28 (+9)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Dexterity +16, Wisdom +19, Charisma +17
Skills Insight +19, Intimidation +19, Persuasion +26, Religion +19
Damage Resistances fire, acid, cold, lightning
Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Senses darkvision 240 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 28
Languages Common, Elvish, Halfling, Celestial, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 30 (155,000XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +9

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Beshaba fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Discorporation. When Beshaba drops to 0 hit points or dies, her body is destroyed but her essence travels back to the Outer Planes and she is unable to take a physical form for a little over a year—thirteen months.

Divine Fortune. When Beshaba has half her hit points or more, once per round she can reroll an attack, saving throw, or ability check and take the higher result. When she has less than half her hit points, once per round she can force a creature to reroll an attack, saving throw, or ability check.

Magic Resistance. Beshaba has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Beshaba's weapon attacks are magical.

continued

Actions

Multiattack. Beshaba makes three attacks with her barbed flail.

Flail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* (3d8 + 7) slashing damage plus (2d6) radiant damage. If Beshaba scores a critical hit, the target is also wounded by the weapon's barbs. They take additional damage equal to half the amount dealt, rounded down, at the start of their next turn.

Spellcasting. Beshaba's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks). For the purposes of cantrips, she counts as an 18th-level spellcaster. She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bless, bane, color spray, cure wounds, sacred flame, word of radiance*
3/day each: *bestow curse, dispel magic, divine word, dominate person, heal, harm*
1/day each: *crown of stars, maddening darkness, sunburst, power word pain*

Teleport. Beshaba magically teleports, along with any equipment she is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space she can see.

Legendary Actions

Beshaba can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Beshaba regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Minor Spellcasting. Beshaba casts one of her at-will spells.

Major Spellcasting (Costs 2 Actions). Beshaba casts one of her 3/day or 1/day spells.

A Goddess's Will (Costs 2 Actions). As an action, Beshaba can target up to six creatures within 30 feet of her that she can see. Each creature must make a DC 19 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the DM rolls a d20 and can substitute any of the affected creature's rolls with that number. This effect lasts for each creature either until used once, or until Beshaba uses this ability again.

Alter Fate (Costs 3 Actions). As a reaction to a player rolling a Natural 1 or 20, Beshaba can force the opposite result instead.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Beshaba takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; Beshaba can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A tremor shakes the Heart of the Temple in a 60-foot radius surrounding Beshaba. Each creature other than her in that area must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- Shards of broken crystal and blackened coins whirl around three creatures of Beshaba's choice that she can see within 120 feet of her. Those creatures must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take (6d6) piercing damage, halved on a successful save.
- A flood of celestial magic washes across the room, affecting any number of enemies of Beshaba's choice. This wave negates any spells or temporary abilities that would allow a character to add additional dice to their rolls, or that would grant them additional hit points (such as *bless*, *heroism*, or Bardic Inspiration). Class abilities, features, and items are not affected.

Gallows Speaker

Medium Undead

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 85 (19d8)
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4
Skills Perception +7
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages any languages its component spirits knew in life
Challenge 6 (2,300 xp) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Divination Senses. The gallows speaker can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The gallows speaker can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Unusual Nature. The gallows speaker doesn't require air, food, drink or sleep.

Actions

Foretelling Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage and the target must roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from the next attack roll or saving throw it makes before the start of the gallows speaker's next turn.

Suffering Echoes. The gallows speaker targets a creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The taret must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 19 (3d12) psychic damage, and waves of painful memories leap from the target to up to three other creatures of the gallows speaker's choice that are within 30 feet of the target, each of which takes 13 (3d8) psychic damage.

Ironscale Hydra

Gargantuan Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 181 (11d20 + 66)
Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +8
Damage Immunities acid
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages —
Challenge 12 (8,400 xp) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Acidic Blood. When the hydra takes piercing or slashing damage, each creature within 5 feet of the hydra takes 9 (2d8) acid damage.

Hold Breath. The hydra can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Multiple Heads. The hydra has 5 heads. While it has more than one head, the hydra has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

Whenever the hydra takes 35 or more damage in a single turn, one of its heads dies. If all its heads die, the hydra dies. At the end of its turn, it grows two heads for each of its heads that died since its last turn. The hydra regains 10 hit points for each head regrown in this way.

Reactive Heads. For each head the hydra has beyond one, it gets an extra reaction that can be used only for opportunity attacks.

Wakeful. While the hydra sleeps, at least one of its heads is awake.

Actions

Multiattack. The hydra makes as many bite attacks as it has heads.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage.

Living Lightning Bolt

Large Construct, Unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 57 (6d10 + 24)
Speed 25 ft., fly 25 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities lightning
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 xp) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Amorphous. The living spell can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Magic Resistance. The living spell has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The living spell makes 2 magical strike attacks.

Magical Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (5d6 + 4) lightning damage.

Spell Mimicry (Recharge 5-6). The living spell unleashes a stroke of lightning in a line 100 feet long and 5 feet wide. Each creature in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 29 (8d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



ALAIRE RACICOT

NO SANCTUARY EXCEPT OURSELVES

by Grady Wang

Goddess: Leira | **Levels:** 17-20

Content Warnings: Grief, Loss, War

SYNOPSIS

Leira, goddess of illusion and deception, hides a secret: she's actually a loosely connected group of mortal women sharing a divine spark. When one dies, a chosen successor inherits her portion of divinity. Leira's rivals have unknowingly blocked their method of ascension, and she needs adventurers to drive them away.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A Leira is dying, causing regional disruptions. Creatures casting illusion spells must roll a d10. On a roll of 1, the spell fails; on a 2-3, an aspect of the illusion is distorted or inaccurate; on a 4 or higher, the spell produces its intended effect. Opaque mist that can't be magically dispelled drifts across the countryside. Characters notice these effects and investigate. Local spellcasters, performers, or clerics can also demonstrate these disruptions.
- The party notices wisps of mist manifesting around their feet for days as Leira observes them and may decide to investigate. A cleric of Oghma recognizes Leira's presence and offers rewards (see "Divine Rivals" in Chapter 2) if they report what Leira wants.
- Leira approaches the party directly, causing them to wake surrounded by mist.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The first Leiras were women whose civilization fell to invaders. Determined to preserve their identities, they banded together to invent oral traditions that subverted their conquerors' attempts to eliminate their culture. They used deception to safeguard lives and to describe the world they desired. Their stories brought the dead back to life, even if only as a fleeting illusion.

Their will to survive and thrive built a faith so strong it manifested a spark of divinity. Having seen others abuse unlimited power, these women chose to share the spark's power. They remained mortal—time checking their newfound power—and they remained many, each pursuing her own purpose while staying true to their sisterhood.

When a Leira dies, her successor must journey through the Astral Plane and enter Leira's domain to ascend. Dead Leiras become immense skeletons in the Astral Plane, called god isles, which shelter and educate prospective Leiras.

Leira's rival gods—Oghma, Cyric, and Tharizdun—discovered these isles and sent followers to investigate. Oghma opposes lies. Cyric wants to slay Leira and steal her power. Tharizdun opposes mortals prying into divine affairs.

ROLEPLAYING LEIRA

Emphasize that Leiras deceive out of necessity. They're refugees, dissidents, and oppressed minorities who keep secrets to protect people.

Plots within plots. Leira plans extensively but shares only what each character needs to know, barely hinting at her grander plots.

The best lies are almost true. Near-truths are more believable than outright lies. Leira favors omitting information or presenting facts out of context.

Every plan has a contingency. If not, she'll pretend one exists.

CHAPTER 1 – THE LIES WE TELL OURSELVES

Whichever hook grabs the party, this chapter begins with contacting Leira. Read or paraphrase the following:

> Mists gather around you, cool and damp like a cave. A robed woman, face shrouded under a hood, floats into view. Mist swirls off her, forming dozens of billowing capes. Each translucent cloth is a foggy and ephemeral window, revealing different landscapes from snowy mountains to dense jungles to floating cities.

LEIRA'S OFFER

Leira claims to be desperate, contacting mortal adventurers as a last resort. Three rival gods have armies trying to invade her divine domain. She offers the following temporary boons, which become permanent if the mission succeeds:

- You can innately cast the following spells at 9th level, requiring no material components: *project image* (1/day), *major image* (1/day), *mirror image* (2/day), *misty step* (3/day).
- If an attack targeting you would reduce you to 0 hit points, you can use your reaction to cast one of spells granted by Leira's boon to cause the attack to miss instead.
- Three times a day when making a **Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check**, you can roll an additional d20 and add the number rolled as a bonus to your check.

She offers a gesture of sincerity that's also a test. Four smoky pedestals appear with a *blindveil* (see adventure appendix) atop each.

LEIRA'S TEST

Though Leira presents the *blindveils'* secrets as gifts, she hopes the characters refuse them and demonstrate they understand that a secret, once shared, is never safe. When describing each pedestal's secret, she gives reasons to keep it secret.

Leira shows her face if secret two or three is revealed.

A Friend's Secret. *Blindveil* one gives a noteworthy secret belonging to a party's ally, member, or patron. Leira suggests the character has a good reason for keeping it.



ALAIRE RACICOT

A God's Origin. *Blindveil* two shows Leira's origins. An orc woman on the Astral Plane follows misty footsteps across a mile-long skeleton. The skeleton is a Leira slain by Cyric and the orc is this Leira, her successor. The vision doesn't reveal there are multiple living Leiras. Leira asks if the characters trust her enough to leave this mystery alone.

A Mortal's Worthiness. *Blindveil* three holds Leira's past. She was an orc named Vashic Steel Claw living near Moonsea. The Zhentarim conquered her tribe. To save the remaining tribespeople, she convinced them to surrender and carry on their traditions in secret until they could rebel or escape. Leira says it's a sad personal memory with no bearing on their mission.

A Foe's Plans. *Blindveil* four reveals a noteworthy secret of the campaign's big bad or Tharizdun creating hordes of astral dreadnoughts to keep mortals away from divine domains. Leira says looking at this secret might bring other gods' wrath upon her.

Outcomes

0-1 Secrets Experienced. Leira reveals there are many Leiras and they need help clearing the god isles so future Leiras can ascend.

2+ Secrets Experienced. Leira only reveals there have been previous Leiras, each passing divinity to a successor when slain.

The Mission

A champion leads each god's army (see the Champion Table below).

Leira defines success as:

- Killing Malicio
- Dealing with Bree and Soledad by deceiving them that the god isles are fake, persuading them to leave, or killing them.

Leira explains that the bodies of dead gods, called god isles, float on the Astral Plane. A newer isle still crackles with divine energy, creating memory storms that cause creatures caught in them to relive key moments from the god's life. Her rivals are investigating her predecessors' memories to learn her weaknesses.

CHAMPION TABLE

God	Champion	Stat Block	Personality
Tharizdun	Malicio Holiscient (he/him, chaotic evil, high elf)	**Drow Matron Mother** (MToF) without Sunlight Sensitivity and replacing Lolth with Tharizdun	***Bond.*** I sold Tharizdun my soul for power and can't admit to myself I regret it. ***Ideal.*** I'd do anything for more power. ***Flaw.*** I hate anyone who doesn't worship Tharizdun because they're free.
Cyric	Bree Badapple (she/her, chaotic evil, stout halfling)	**Death Knight** with size Small	***Bond.*** I worship Cyric as a role model. ***Ideal.*** I love stabbing things. ***Flaw.*** I stab things I shouldn't.
Oghma	Soledad (she/her, neutral good, Nexalan human)	**Cartographer of Oghma** (see adventure appendix)	***Bond.*** I want to explore new lands. ***Ideal.*** I must share what I learn. ***Flaw.*** I'm so focused on my mission I sometimes miss the plight of those I can help.

DM TIP
While these aren't the only options, players may need additional guidance to navigate Chapter 2. Leira can advise:

- Tharizdun's forces are zealots who won't stop until dead.
- Cyric's ego means he'll retreat if he believes the isles are deceptions.
- Oghma is a neutral god with many good-aligned followers who may accept a truce if convinced that Leira's lies preserve knowledge (appeals to Oghma) or save lives (appeals to Soledad) by protecting information that some want destroyed.

If the party accepts the mission, Leira grants her promised boons, which only work in the Astral Plane until made permanent. If the party asks to make preparations, she grants one day. She freely answers questions about encounters in Chapter 2.

When the party's ready, Leira casts *plane shift* to send them to the Astral Plane.



H. "INK" KUGLER

CHAPTER 2 – THE LIES WE TELL OTHERS

The party appears on the surface of the first god isle.

GOD ISLES

There are six sequential god isles followed by a misty portal to Leira's domain, each 500 feet apart. An **astral dreadnought** (MToF) waits by the portal. If the party reaches the last isle, Malicio teleports to the party's location and summons the dreadnought to attack, starting Chapter 3.

Generate each isle using sections from the provided map.

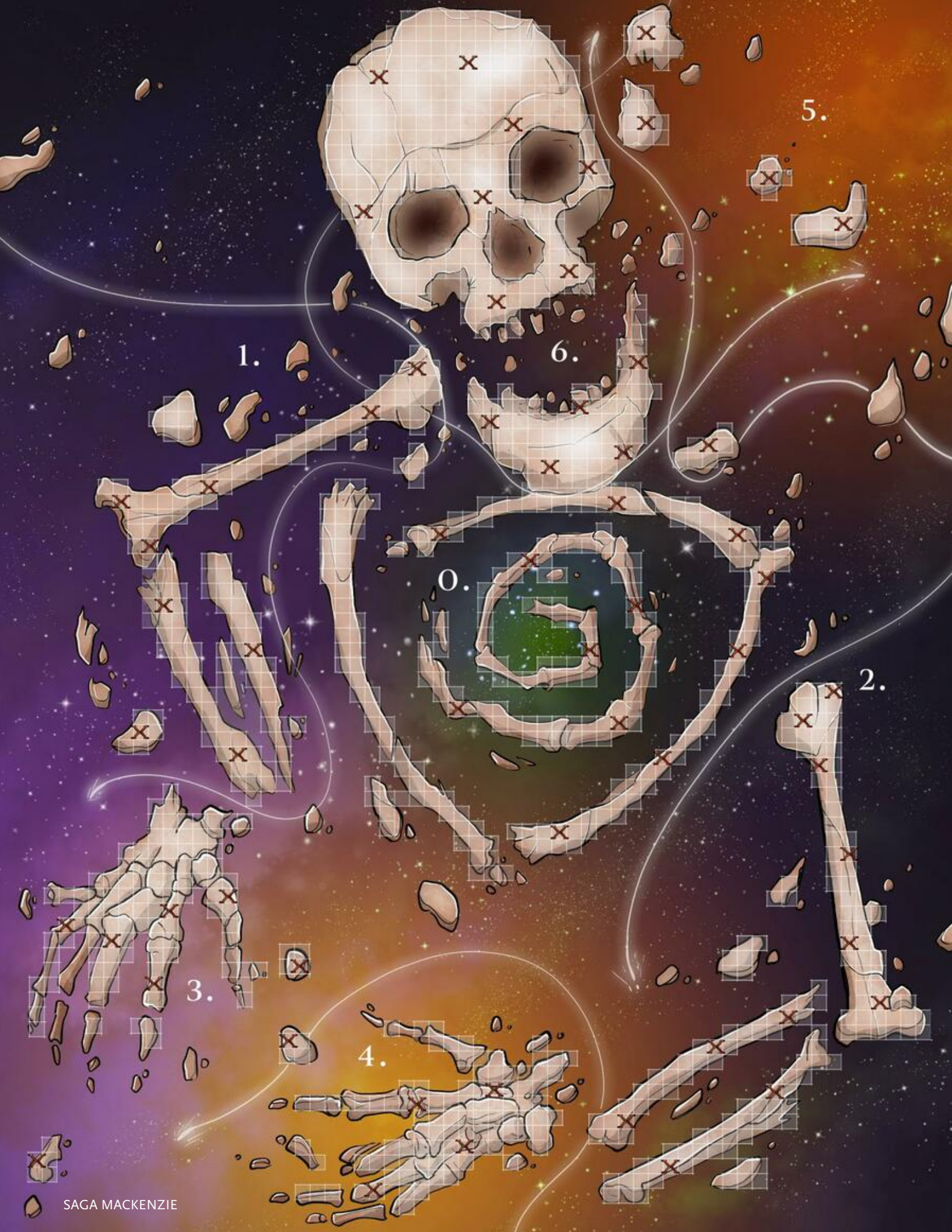
Always include section 0. Roll a d6 to determine how many more sections to add. Roll that many times on the following table (don't reroll repeats) to determine additional sections:

1d6 (Map Section)	Skeletal Remains
1	Left arm
2	Right arm
3	Left hand
4	Right hand
5	Orbiting debris
6	Skull

Each X on the map marks an encounter location. At least one memory storm and each god's followers must be on each isle, so populate four Xs with one of each. Place Bree and Soledad with their god's group if they haven't appeared yet.

DM TIP
Have the party encounter Bree, Soledad, or both before encountering a memory storm or Tharizdun's followers. Memory storms comprise the story and function best when a champion accompanies the party and learns from the experience. Tharizdun's followers exist only to end Chapter 2.

Bree and Soledad are powerful characters backed by armies. They don't fear the characters and try to recruit them.


5.
1.
6.
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2.
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4.

Choose from or roll on the following tables to determine the encounters at remaining Xs:

1d100	Encounter
1-10	None
11-25	Tharizdun's followers
26-40	Cyric's followers
41-55	Oghma's followers
56-65	Berbalangs
66-90	Memory storm
91-00	Battle between followers

Use the following tables to populate a god's group of followers or a battle's combatants:

THARIZDUN'S FOLLOWERS TABLE

1d6	Creatures
1	1 **marilith**, 2 **vrocks**
2	1 **star spawn hulk** (MToF), 2 **star spawn manglers** (MToF)
3	1 **incubus**, 2 **mezzoloths**
4	1 **tanarukk** (VGtM), 2 **barlguras**
5	3 **sea hags** (coven variant), 1 **hezrou**
6	1 **star spawn larva mage** (MToF), 4 **star spawn grue** (MToF)

CYRIC'S FOLLOWERS TABLE

1d6	Creatures
1	1 **necromancer**, 2 **minotaur skeletons**
2	2 **assassins**
3	1 **blackguard** (VGtM), 2 **conjurers** (VGtM)
4	1 **skull lord**
5	1 **boneclaw** (MToF), 1 **swashbuckler** (boneclaw master) (VGtM)
6	1 **wight**, 2 **ogre zombies**

OGHMA'S FOLLOWERS TABLE

1d6	Creatures
1	1 **diviner** (VGtM), 1 **champion** (VGtM)
2	1 **abjurer** (VGtM), 1 **war priest** (VGtM)
3	1 **archmage**, 2 **knights**
4	1 **deva**, 1 **mage**
5	1 **storm giant**
6	1 **evoker** (VGtM), 1 **air elemental**, 1 **water elemental**

BATTLES TABLE

1d4	Combatants
1	Tharizdun vs. Cyric
2	Tharizdun vs. Oghma
3	Cyric vs. Oghma
4	Tharizdun vs. Cyric vs. Oghma

Each square on the map is 10 feet. The isle's crackling energy and mists allow characters to see creatures within 300 feet but not their details until within 100 feet. All NPC groups can contact others following the same god to summon help or share their experiences.

DIVINE RIVALS

The party can betray Leira by giving her secrets away and helping a champion uncover more secrets. Betrayal causes the party to lose Leira's boons but claim rewards from Cyric or Oghma instead. Just negotiating an alliance with a champion to fight the followers of the other gods doesn't betray Leira.

Cyric's and Oghma's forces start with a fragile truce but attack each other if they think the other side is gaining an advantage.

Tharizdun

Tharizdun's followers are hostile to everyone else. Once the party wins two encounters against Tharizdun's followers, roll a d10 after each subsequent victorious encounter. Malicio attacks the party if the result is equal to or less than the party's number of victories (1-3 after three, 1-4 after four, etc.). Malicio summons the **astral dreadnought** (MToF) when he drops below 25% of his maximum hit points, starting Chapter 3.

Cyric

Cyric's followers start with a neutral attitude toward the party. They become hostile if the party attacks them, forms an alliance with Oghma, or shows too much mercy.

Betrayal. Bree offers to assassinate one creature with a good or neutral alignment if the party betrays Leira and stays loyal to Cyric through the adventure.

Alliance. Bree agrees to an alliance if the party betrays Leira. Otherwise, they must succeed on three **DC 22 Charisma (Persuasion, Deception, or Intimidation) checks** against her. Lower the DC by 2 for each encounter in which the party helps Cyric's followers and raise the DC by 2 for each encounter the party hurts them.

Oghma

Oghma's followers start with a neutral attitude, even if the party accepted Oghma's adventure hook. They become hostile if the party gets caught lying by them, attacks them, or allies with Cyric's followers.

Betrayal. Soledad offers Oghma's knowledge to answer three questions if the party betrays Leira; if Oghma can't answer, they get another question.

Alliance. If the party helps Oghma's followers or behaves benevolently around them during two encounters, Soledad teleports to them to talk. The party forms an alliance by succeeding on a **DC 22** (**DC 16** if they accepted Oghma's adventure hook) **Charisma (Persuasion, Intimidation, or Deception) check**, or if they aid Oghma's followers in a third encounter.

Berbalangs

1d4 **berbalangs** (MToF) are here to trade secrets. Cyric's or Oghma's followers may be present debating what to trade or discussing acquired information. Roll a d2 to determine if these berbalangs know information about Leira. If yes, the party can eliminate everyone present who knows that information (or modify their memories) to improve their standing with Leira—subtract 1 from the number of secrets they looked at in Chapter 1.

Memory Storms

Memory storms drift with a speed of 40 feet toward the nearest creature. Anyone (excluding astral dreadnoughts) it touches enters a magical recreation of the events that earned that Leira godhood. One character becomes Leira while others become allies or bystanders. Everyone retains their stats but gains the knowledge of the character they become. Characters that survive the memory exit the storm and become immune to that isle's storms.

Emphasize Leira's motivations while providing opportunities to deceive, convince, or kill rival NPCs. If Soledad is present, experiences of oppression are eye-opening for her.

Each storm's events are based on Leira's identity.

LEIRA'S IDENTITY TABLE (REROLL REPEATS)

1d6	Identity
1	Goruda Talgart
2	Maethe Phastryl
3	Rava Urrakinshatiir
4	Hope
5	Coralee Merodel
6	Too

Goruda Talgart

Goruda was a shield dwarf from Iltkazar. When duergar pillaged neighboring kingdoms, Iltkazar survived by hiding its location and forbidding citizens from leaving. Goruda smuggled in refugees and forged identities for them.

Goruda's memory is of guards raiding a safehouse containing 15 refugees and three allies. Characters become Goruda, allies at the safehouse, and refugees. Five guards (**duergar despot**, MToF) are ten minutes away. They must keep refugees calm and safe using mechanical toys, forgery kits, disguise kits, locks, and household supplies, as well as a bookcase hiding a secret entrance to the attic.

Exit the memory by convincing the guards to leave, killing the guards, or surrendering the refugees. Characters taken outside the safehouse by guards die.

Maethe Phastryl

Maethe was a human captain whose airship docked at a floating Netherese city when magic failed, causing the cities to fall. She reconfigured her ship's sails to glide. She prioritized saving scholars for their knowledge, abandoning others.

Maethe's memory is the city falling, lasting ten rounds in initiative order. Characters become Maethe, her four crewmembers, dock workers, and prospective passengers. Magic has no effect in this situation. They must reconfigure the sails with three successful skill checks: **DC 25 Intelligence (History), Wisdom (Survival), and Strength (Athletics) checks** in that order, or make parachutes from them. A character who succeeds on a **DC 14 Intelligence (History) check** can make one working parachute. They can repeat this check for a maximum of ten parachutes, while defending the ramp to decide who boards (20 passenger limit, over 100 people wanting to board). The ship door prevents entry when closed and locked. Launching the ship requires manually releasing its clamps with a successful **DC 26 Strength (Athletics) check** by someone not on board or detonating explosive cargo to destroy the dock.

Exit the memory by escaping the city. Anyone left behind dies.

Rava Urrakinshatiir

Rava was a dragonborn actor in a clan that valued martial prowess. She and a military officer fell in love. Being of different castes, their romance was punishable by death. They ended their trysts, but the officer always attended her performances. Rava became famous and wrote plays about forbidden romances to challenge society's opinions, causing controversy and debate.

Rava's memory is her last performance in the capital, an autobiographical play that brought the audience to a tearful standing ovation. Characters become Rava, fellow performers, audience members, and her lover. Rava has told her fellow performers she plans to confess she lived the play's events. She and anyone helping her may be arrested and executed for violating caste rules. They must decide how to proceed, then play out the consequences.

Characters can use audience reactions to sway government officials present, or bribe or threaten them to exonerate Rava. Rava's lover can join her on stage to face consequences together. They can start a riot to escape arrest. If Rava confesses and no one intervenes, the government exiles her instead of executing her, due to her popularity.

Exit the memory by playing out the consequences or convincing Rava not to confess. If Rava doesn't confess, characters suffer one level of exhaustion.

Hope

Hope is a tiefling in a city where authorities harass tieflings, ignore crimes committed against them, and force them into dilapidated neighborhoods.

Hope's memory is the aftermath of an earthquake. Characters become Hope and other tieflings debating how to get aid. The other tieflings discuss stealing, rebelling, or helping other neighborhoods to disprove unfavourable stereotypes of tieflings while Hope enters a crevice leading to old ruins containing a damaged diary from the city's greatest hero. Hope can falsify the book to show the hero saved the city by becoming the first tiefling, making life better for tieflings.

Exit the memory by agreeing on a course of action.

Coralee Merodel

Coralee is a sea elf princess whose nation was conquered by sahuagin. She surrendered to serve a sahuagin high priestess, sneaking through the capital each night to locate artifacts to smuggle to freedom fighters so the diaspora remembers and preserves their history.

Coralee's memory is stealing the kingdom's constitution from the palace vault. Characters become Coralee and fellow prisoners. Their gear disappears, returning when they exit the memory. The vault door requires a successful **DC 25 Dexterity check with thieves' tools** (can be assembled from items in the kitchen and seamstress quarters), and eight minutes to open. Alternatively, underwater mines from the armory can blow the door open, or the **sahuagin baron** in the throne room has the key. Groups of either three **sahuagin blademasters**, two **sahuagin champions**, or a **sahuagin priestess** with two **giant sharks** patrol every five minutes. Reward creative problem-solving, especially those relying on deception and illusions, as characters leverage their lowly status to navigate the palace and retrieve the tools they need.

Exit the memory by breaking into the vault or giving up. If they give up, all characters suffer one level of exhaustion.

Too

Too is a tortle during the Spellplague. She received a spellscar that creates memories. She can use an action to touch a creature to charm it and tell it a happy story of an adventure they had together. The story becomes part of the creature's memories, as well as hers. This ability also restores a plaguechanged creature's identity and self-determination.

Too's memory is a mission to save plaguechanged. Characters become Too and her bodyguards. They encounter three plaguechanged (use the **star spawn seer** (MToF), **nothic**, and **green slaad** stats).

Exit the memory by saving or killing all plaguechanged. All characters suffer one level of exhaustion for each plaguechanged killed.

Chapter 3 — The Lies We Make True

This chapter begins when Malicio summons the **astral dreadnought** (see "Tharizdun" and "God Isles" in Chapter 2). Tharizdun heals Malicio for half his hit points, resurrecting him if dead.

The dreadnought fights everyone except Tharizdun's followers and prioritizes killing Bree, Soledad, and the party. Killing Malicio makes the dreadnought hostile to Tharizdun's followers. Tharizdun's followers fight everyone else except the dreadnought. Cyric's and Oghma's followers fight everyone else (except the party if they formed an alliance).

While the dreadnought is touching an isle, any creature within 100 feet of that isle that doesn't worship Tharizdun must make a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** at the start of each turn. On a failure, the creature takes 11 (2d10) psychic damage and is subject to one random condition until the start of its next turn:

CONDITIONS

1d12	Condition
1	Blinded
2	Charmed by dreadnought
3	Deafened
4	Gain 1 level of exhaustion
5	Frightened by dreadnought
6	Incapacitated
7	Invisible
8	Paralyzed
9	Petrified
10	Poisoned
11	Prone
12	Stunned

The chapter ends when the dreadnought is dead and each god's champion is dead or agrees to leave. The followers of a god flee if their champion dies. If the party convinces Soledad of Leira's righteousness, her followers leave but she stays with the party for the conclusion.

CONCLUSION

Chapter 1's Leira arrives and shares information based on how many Chapter 1 secrets the characters saw, accounting for modifiers from berbalang encounters:

4 Secrets or Betrayed Leira. Leira claims the god isles were an elaborate illusion. She lured the dreadnought here to give Tharizdun's followers a false sense of complacency. She coldly thanks them for selling her deception.

1-3 Secrets. Leira reveals this chain of isles is just one of many and not significant. She asks why she'd even allow god isles near her domain's entrance.

0 Secrets. Leira shares the truth of her history and admits this is a real path for new Leiras. The other gods believe she always deceives, so sending adventurers to defend the real path was the best way to make them believe it was fake.

If Soledad is present, Leira welcomes an alliance with Oghma. They can work together to create a future where no one needs to deceive any more.

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

ITEMS

Blindveil

Wondrous item, legendary, requires attunement

This blindfold glimmers with starlight and trails mist under it like a veil. The glimmers hint at scenes in a person's life.

As an action while holding the blindfold, you may store up to five memories or facts within the blindfold. The stored information remains until replaced, even if you forget the information or end attunement to the item.

Any creature wearing the blindfold (does not need to be attuned to the blindfold) experiences the information stored in it as though reliving it and is unable to perceive its surroundings while wearing it.

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AUTHOR BIO

Grady Wang is co-founder of The Gallant Goblin, a company that publishes TTRPG content including supplements, product reviews, and actual plays. He lives in Texas with his partner, Theo Thourson (also appearing in this anthology!). Notable DMs Guild products by Grady include bestsellers like *The Gray Merchant of Asphodel*, *Kill Bhaal*, and *Fight Your Minis*, and he's also contributed to the *Odyssey Anthology* and *Not Another Monster Quest Vols. 1-4*.

Cartographer of Oghma (Soledad)

Medium Humanoid (Human), Neutral Good

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 397 (53d8 + 159)
Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	10 (0)	16 (+3)	24 (+7)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +13, Dex +6, Wis +9
Skills Nature +13, Survival +9
Damage Resistances psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish, Giant, Goblin, Nexalan, Orc, Undercommon
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Hoverer. Soledad is always able to hover due to the divine magic that powers her maps.

Mapmaker. Stone tablet maps depicting the surrounding topography swirl in the air around Soledad. She can have up to eight maps simultaneously, reconstituting one map from shattered rocks at the start of her turn if she has fewer than eight around her. Whenever she would take damage, she can choose to let the maps defend her in the following situations:

- Destroy one map to prevent a quarter of the damage from an area attack, up to four maps.
- Destroy one map to prevent damage from a targeted ranged attack.
- Destroy one map to prevent half of the damage from a melee attack, up to two maps.

Mapchanger. If Soledad uses Cartographer's Intervention to make the same change to terrain three rounds in a row, that change to terrain becomes permanent. Soledad can only have one permanent instance of The Hills Have Eyes and Here Be Dragons.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Soledad fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Soledad performs two Cartographer's Intervention actions.

Cartographer's Intervention. Soledad uses her engraving tools to change one of her maps, which changes the real-world terrain to match her maps until the start of her next turn, using one of the following options; she can use each one no more than once per round:

1. **A River Runs Through It.** Soledad creates a river, which can carve through terrain or float in the air. She chooses the direction the river flows as well as its length, width, depth, and shape, with maximum dimensions of 80 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 30 feet deep. When the river appears, each creature within its area must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. The river moves each creature within its area 15 feet in the direction it's flowing on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties).
2. **Ain't No Mountain High Enough.** Soledad chooses a point on the ground within 180 feet and transforms terrain in a 20 foot radius centered on the point. The terrain becomes jagged, and Soledad chooses if it rises or sinks 30 feet. Each creature in the area must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 6 (1d12) piercing damage and is knocked prone.
3. **Tangled.** Soledad chooses a point within 120 feet and creates a 30-foot cube of thick growth of plants of her choice. The cube is difficult terrain. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in the cube must make a DC 21 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes restrained until the start of its next turn and must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. The restrained creature takes 11 (2d10) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
4. **The Hills Have Eyes.** The terrain morphs in a 30-foot radius centered on Soledad, appearing to grow eyes. When a creature hostile to Soledad enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn

continued



there, it must make a DC 21 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, it takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage and becomes frightened of Soledad due to feeling like the eyes pierce their soul and see their secrets; on a successful save, the creature takes half damage.

5. **Here Be Dragons.** An illusion of a **young red dragon** appears at a point within 120 feet. A creature attacked by the dragon must make a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, it realizes the dragon is an illusion and is immune to the dragon's damage. On a failure, modify the dragon's attacks to deal psychic damage. The dragon shares Soledad's initiative but acts independently.
6. **The Floor is Lava.** Soledad chooses a point within 180 feet and transforms terrain in a 30 foot radius centered on the point. Fissures form across the area, spewing lava at regular intervals. Any creature that enters the area or ends its turn there must make a DC 21 Intelligence saving throw to see if they can figure out the pattern of eruptions. On a failure, it takes 66 (12d10) fire damage.
7. **Move Heaven and Earth.** Soledad targets a creature or object of Huge size or smaller within 120 feet that she can see and teleports it up to 120 feet to a location of her choice. If the target is unwilling, it must succeed on a DC 21 Charisma saving throw or be teleported.

Piercing Observation. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (6d8 + 2) radiant damage as golden beams shoot from Soledad's eyes. She learns which of the target's abilities has the lowest saving throw bonus and its damage resistances and immunities. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

Oghma's Champion. Soledad calls upon Oghma's power to gain one of the following abilities for the next minute. Only one such ability can be active at the same time:

1. Have truesight out to a range of 120 feet.
2. Gain the effects of being the target of the *tongues* or *comprehend languages* spells.
3. Gain the effects of casting the *detect thoughts* spell.

Reactions

Promised Land. When one of Soledad's allies within 30 feet of her would take damage from an attack, she can prevent the damage transmuting 1 map into a temporary barrier around the ally, destroying the map.

Legendary Actions

Soledad can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Soledad regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Intervene. Soledad uses her Cartographer's Intervention.

Move. Soledad moves up to her fly (hover) speed.

Share Knowledge (Costs 3 Actions). Soledad chooses one creature and announces a weakness she's noticed, giving all creatures who hear her advantage on attacks against that creature until the end of their next turn.


AMELIA NG

SYMPATHY FOR THE GODDESS

by Lee Morgan

Goddess: Queen of Air and Darkness | **Levels:** 17-20
Content Warnings: Insects, Body Horror, Existentialism, The Subjectivity of the Self, Ontological Reality

SYNOPSIS

The Dark Hunt has once again come to the Material Plane. Evil spirits and fey creatures emerge from the dark woods to capture art, artifacts, and even people to present to the Queen of Air and Darkness to garner her disdainful attention. But Titania, the queen of the Seelie Court, plots to stop her wayward sister with a daring adventure into the shrouded underbelly of the Feywild. Part heist, part psychological attrition, the characters must brave the party games and endless cocktails under the watchful gaze of the dark queen to steal the legendary Black Diamond, and maybe a few gift bags along the way.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The Dark Hunt may attempt to steal an item the party is already searching for, an artifact they already have, or even a party member themselves for the whimsical menagerie of the Queen of Air and Darkness.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Queen of Air and Darkness was the equal to her sister, Titania, in every way. She came upon the Black Diamond by accident, receiving a gift that was meant for her sister. As such, Titania was just as likely to become Queen of Air and Darkness as her sister.

The Queen had always been a free spirit, and hated the staid worship of the eladrin and other courtiers that amused Titania. Centuries of "yes, of course" and "as you wish," but never actually being heard. An immortal lifetime of having every movement scrutinized by besotted satyrs and whispering nereids.

She used the power of the Black Diamond to free herself from the thousands of eyes that watched her and create a realm with no endless parades or meaningless pageantry. Yet in her quest to escape the blasé idolship of the fey, she sacrificed much: the Black Diamond took her smell, taste, physical form, and even her own name. As she used its power to make the Unseelie a home and create her own fey court, in her power and omniscience, she became aloof and guarded. She began to show the same coldness of the fey courtiers that had once chilled her. In her search to become something more, she also became something less. Now, she attempts to fill the hole with excess: constant feasting, drinking, parties, and sending out the Dark Hunt to gather all manner of curiosities to satisfy her fleeting whims.

FERAM CREATURES
Creatures with the feram tag have the fey subtype; evil alignment; resistance to acid, cold, fire, and lightning damage; can cast *dimension door* innately 1/day; and have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

CHAPTER 1 – A MOMENT OF DOUBT AND PAIN

The party is attacked by agents of the Dark Hunt, whose whooping laughter and maniacal singing prohibit them from catching the party off-guard.

Six **redcaps** (VGtM), each riding **feram hell hounds**, charge the characters. The redcaps' sickles are attached to long poles, giving them a reach of 10 feet. They are led by a **spirit naga** entwined on top of a **feram behir**. The enemies attack the party in an open area, attacking from all sides.

Every two rounds on its initiative, the naga uses a bonus action to mutate two living redcaps within 120 feet into misshapen bulbous monsters. The redcap in this form deals an extra 2d8 damage with its sickle, gains 10 feet of reach, and gains the Evil Eye (DC 18) and Curse of the Evil Eye abilities of the **fomorian**. On its turn, the redcap can use Evil Eye and make two sickle attacks. All conditions affecting the redcap end and it becomes a **shambling mound**. The creatures retain their current hit points through the transformation.

If the redcap is riding a hellhound, all conditions affecting the hellhound end and it becomes a shambling mound. The creatures' retain their current hit points through the transformation.

After combat ends, an erudite **ettin** wearing shimmering red and yellow emerges from a portal. They hold a quill and a scroll that reaches the ground and extends back into the portal through which they came. One of the ettin's heads emphatically implores the characters for help averting cosmic disaster; the other is detail oriented, reading the following information from their extensive notes:

- Titania, queen of the good-natured Seelie fey, is at odds with the Summer Lords, a hardline faction of eladrin, over how to deal with the annual Dark Hunt.
- The Summer Lords want to go to war, throwing all the Feywild into chaos.
- Titania looks for a more peaceful arrangement.
- Titania suggests "Doing what always stops my sweet sister's games: taking away her favorite toy." The toy being the fabled Black Diamond.
- A system of portals can get the party into Unseelie Wyld and back out.
- Only 12 hours remain before the Summer Lords attack.
- No mortal magic can separate the Queen from her Diamond.
- To counteract above, Titania is supplying a legendary item: the *dazzler* (see below).

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters accept, the ettin gives the party a *dazzler*: a single-charge jack-in-the-box that, when activated, unattunes every object within 120 feet of it and stuns every fey creature within 60 feet for 2 rounds. Using the *dazzler* lowers DC to steal the diamond by 20.

The ettin then opens a portal. Stepping through teleports the characters to the Unseelie party, already in full swing.

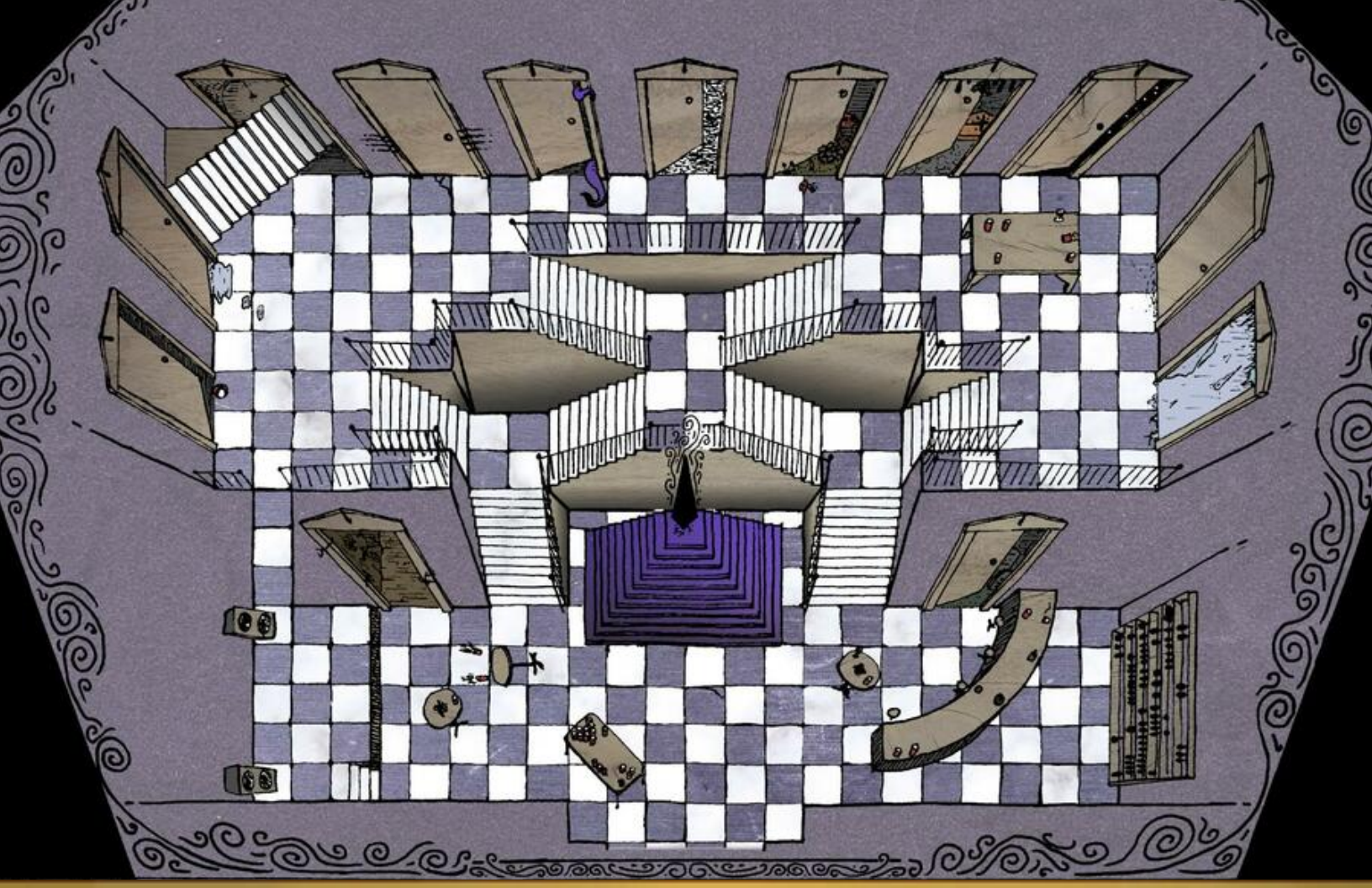
CHAPTER 2 – PLEASED TO MEET YOU

The party emerges onto a well-lit, residential road. The night is warm, but not uncomfortable. Most of the houses are converted capes, but the street is dominated by a large manse with blacked-out windows. A blighted **treant** lopes towards the front door and a mothman stands alone on the front lawn, mesmerized by the streetlight above.

The mansion sits on a well-manicured two acres. Exploring the dark grounds, a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a newly dug, shallow grave. Inside is a **revenant** wearing a **cloaker**, perturbed at the disturbance. It does not attack unless aggravated.

At the door is a humanoid praying mantis with butterfly wings (**feram erinyes**). She immediately recognizes the characters as mortals, welcomes them, and says everyone is eager to see them fail to steal the Black Diamond. She asks for the password to enter, waiting until the characters have offered three guesses before laughing, admitting there is no password, and allowing them to enter. The inside is crowded to bursting with all manner of fey, fiends, cryptids, sapient plants, and monstrosities.

Just inside the door, two **pixies** are demolishing a **cloud giant** in a game of beer pong using a screaming, shrunken paladin as a ball. The main hall is dominated by a pyramidal throne, above which floats the Black Diamond, wreathed in shadowy tendrils and radiating violet power. The hall also has a collection of tables, some with ever-appearing platters of food, others with half-finished board games. To the side, an empty stage is flanked by two anachronistic loudspeakers.



ALEX NIEDERBERGER

Upon entering, the characters hear a soft whisper in their ears: the Queen welcomes them to her party. She explains she has full knowledge of them, their quest, and the Summer Lord's attack, and invites them to enjoy themselves and the festivities. The Queen can be engaged in light conversation, but finds extensive questions about the Black Diamond tiresome. Throughout the adventure, the Queen telepathically whispers to the characters, voicing her contempt for the party's progress.

The party learns that almost every attendant at the party knows why they are there. Most expect them to fail, hopefully in a spectacular fashion. Others secretly hope for success, but would never cross their Queen.

Characters with a **passive Perception of 15 or higher**, or any elf or half-elf characters, notice a radiant elf reclining in a sumptuous chaise. The elf is the Seldarine god Erevan. While the Seldarine are often at odds with the evil fey of the Unseelie Court, Erevan cannot deny that the Gloaming Court serves a better drink than any other realm. If asked, Erevan does not know how to get the Queen to release the diamond. If confronted with any violence, Erevan peaces out. Erevan acts as the party's inside man, and can help them if they get stuck at any point in the adventure. However, as a trickster god, he's never clear and often lies first to make the characters do something foolish before offering real advice.

Erevan offers two hints: one, Akadi, Queen of Air, whom he calls Aerdrie Faenya, and the Queen were fond of each other back in the primordial age, and two, the only fey that can remember the early days of the Unseelie Court is the frost elf, Ice, the Queen's main enforcer.

Chapter 2 is divided into multiple nonlinear sections. The party can do or skip each section in any order, though their choices may affect subsequent sections.

INSTRUMENT TABLE

1d8	Clue	Location
1	"I remember I was practicing in the dark by some casks."	The instrument is by the bar.
2	"I was doing a gig. The lights were really bright. I think I left it there. When I got back my coat had a bunch of holes in it."	Mothman on front lawn. **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** if the players cannot deduce themselves.
3	"A werewolf took it."	Three successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) checks** to hunt down the werewolf in the midst of the party.
4	The musician tells a long rambling story about a riff off against an archdemon for a magical ring. The story goes on and on, lasting an entire short rest. The story ends with the musician saying they received a magical, golden instrument from Asmodeous and hid it under the stage for safekeeping.	Realizing their error, the musician retrieves the instrument.
5	"It got tangled in someone's hair."	Successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Nature) check** to discern it involves a **korred** (VGtM). Successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** leads to the korred. The korred puts up a fight, not producing the instrument from a pocket dimension until reduced to 25% of their hit points.
6	"I remember my socks were wet."	If the characters go to the second floor, water is leaking from under the left door, a green slime pools in the center, and spiders enter from the right. The left door leads to a deserted island and a **merrow** playing the instrument to an audience of three **chuuls**.
7	The musician cowardly points to where the instrument is.	It is guarded by an angry, knife-wielding goose.
8	"I've looked for it everywhere. Retraced my steps over the last three hundred years. Still can't find it."	Succeeding on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** shows the instrument strapped to their back. They are embarrassed.

TRAPS FOR TROUBADOURS

No music is playing at the party. The bandmates are milling around the empty stage; they are missing their instruments, and can't remember if they misplaced them this century or the last. Roll on the Instrument Table four times (drums, two guitars, bass guitar) for hints and locations, rerolling duplicate numbers.

The characters can use any magic (like *locate object* or *fabricate*) to help.

Starting the music back up elevates the mood in the house, granting the characters advantage on all Charisma-based checks. The Queen mentions it has been a while since she heard music. The DC to steal the Black Diamond is reduced by 10.

HELD A GENERAL'S RANK

Ask anyone at the party about Ice and they point up the stairs at an iced-over door. Inside is an overly stuffed office with **Ice**: a large, bearded elf (see adventure appendix) wearing frosted armor, hunched over a crowded desk. He asks the characters if they are there to deliver more invoices for the Dark Hunt. If Akadi is with the players, he greets her politely.

In theory, he supports getting rid of the Black Diamond. He muses on the early days of the Unseelie Court, and how much fun it was, but bemoans that the Queen does not take risks or have exciting goals anymore. The Dark Hunt was fun the first few times, but its violence has become boring and gratuitous to the older Unseelie, who see no need to flaunt their power every year.



MAARTJE HEERE

The Unseelie followed the Queen because she always treated them as more than just a shadow of the Seelie, more than just the reflection of the fey. Additionally, she gave them their own realm to prove it. She lost her name and form to do it, but she doesn't need to give up anything more. The fey are not soldiers, they are fairies who need love, attention, and connection to others. They don't need armies and weapons, nor a god to worship.

Still, he is bound to his Queen and, if Akadi is not with the party, will need heavy convincing (**Charisma check** starts above **DC 30**, but can be decreased through compelling arguments) to directly oppose his Queen. After three failed Charisma-based checks, he gets bored with the schemes of mortals, opting instead to try and kill them.

WHAT'S PUZZLING YOU IS THE NATURE OF MY GAME

Erevan suggests summoning Aerdrie to the party, which he says requires calling upon four winds from the four directions with the four elements.

As a trickster god, he refuses to give clear information. Erevan finds nothing more amusing than watching mortals suffer through his trials, and delights in being as unhelpful as possible. Meeting his jokes or barbs with their own gains the players hints. Succeeding on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Religion or Nature) check** garners additional hints or even the whole solution.

Solution. Four characters present each element while standing at cardinal directions to each other. Earth is north, water is west, fire is south, air is east.

The party can find materials or use appropriate magical abilities to represent the elements. Other fey notice the characters attempting a summoning, and find it diverting. Some may offer tips, but these may just be red herrings. Every failure conjures 1d6 **steam mephits**; every second an **air elemental**; every third failure a **yochlol**.

On a success, the air whips around the party and coalesces into a windswept woman (use **djinni** stat block). She greets Erevan like an old friend (Erevan calls her by the elvish Aerdrie) and introduces herself as Akadi, Queen of Air. Seeing the Queen above, she rolls her eyes, remarking that the Queen is right where she left her, brooding over her diamond. Akadi appears at first callous and flighty, but has a warmth that she shows only to her friends.

Akadi can answer a few questions about the Queen. She remarks that she used to love loud music. They would go to a basement club in Pandemonium where you could feel the music in your bones. She also says they used to travel frequently. Akadi agrees with Ice regarding the Queen's dependency on the Black Diamond, adding that perhaps the Queen's thirst for power stems from a childhood jealousy of her sister's comfort with court life and a wish to surpass Titania.

If asked for her help in stealing the diamond, Akadi needs some convincing, hesitant to betray the Queen, even after many years apart. Characters must succeed on a **DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check**. Characters who argue that stealing the diamond is the best thing for the Queen reduce the DC of this check to **DC 15**.

If convinced, and after the characters have prepared themselves, Akadi conjures a vortex of obscuring winds, lowering the DC to steal diamond by 10 (proceed to "Kings and Queens").

A MAN OF WEALTH AND TASTE

If the characters approach the staircase, a **redcap** intercepts, telling them to meet him on the second floor, third door on the left. The prescribed room appears like the inside of a massive tree, with a carved wood floor and barkwood walls that stretch into inky blackness. Woman-faced birds fly in and out of circular windows carved into the tree. In the center, an exceptionally handsome man sits at an ornately carved desk. A large, black centipede

is draped around his shoulders. He is flanked by two winged fiends (use **feram incubus/succubus**). The centipede is **Bazil** (see adventure appendix). The man is a **vampire** servant of Bazil's, masquerading for the fey lord's amusement.

The vampire introduces himself as the Voice from the Kapok Tree, but says that friends call him Bazil. It's a well-rehearsed ruse that the party can detect with successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) checks**. He presents himself as a dealmaker; he's aware of the party's plan to steal the diamond, and asks that they do nothing. He's a few months away from a successful coup supported by Unseelie who think the court has grown static over the centuries. The Queen, whose presence can be felt in the room and the coup brought to her attention, is well aware and finds Bazil's disloyalty amusing, but is overconfident in the boiling betrayal's failure. It is clear that the opinions of others have little effect on the Queen.

Bazil says that the Unseelie deserve better than a girl with no ambitions; under his leadership he would spread the fey beyond the Feywild to galavant through a million other realms. The only thing that could interfere is Titania's attention. Bazil's opening offer is to end the Dark Hunt, and he is willing to bargain for more wishes or power. If they agree, Bazil teleports the characters back to the Material Plane, where they can enjoy their treasures and a lifetime of guilt.

If the party refuses, but does not have either Akadi or Ice as allies, Bazil doubts their success, and lets them leave. The vampire thanks them for their time and shows them the door.

If the party has a powerful ally with them, the centipede speaks. Its booming voice dismisses the vampire for its failure. The vampire apologizes to his lord, places the centipede on the desk, and is violently sucked into a portal. The centipede reveals himself as the real Bazil and starts combat with *conjure fey*. Bazil primarily fights by summoning other fey and buffing them.

If the party survives, the Queen remarks that perhaps she has been inattentive of late.

DEVELOPMENT

At any point the party can make their attempt on the Diamond, or interact with the Queen.

CHAPTER 3 – WATCHED WITH GLEE

Depending on the characters' choices and varying success, there are multiple possible endings for the adventure. Every fey at the party is anxious to see what the party attempts.

KINGS AND QUEENS

An adventurer can make a **DC 50 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to steal the Black Diamond (on a failure, proceed to "Lay Your Soul to Waste"). On a success, the character takes the diamond. Anyone who touches the diamond loses their name; no one in the universe remembers what they were called. Most of the fey in the house will be too shocked (or stunned by the *dazzler*) at the audacity to do anything and clap for the performance.

If Bazil is not defeated, he, his summoned fey, and the **vampire** emerge from his door and attack. Bazil attempts to take the diamond for himself. If the party has not encountered Bazil before, make it clear from his outburst that he's a megalomaniac and views both the eladrin and the characters as beneath him, and the fey as tools. If he reaches the diamond, he becomes attached and incapacitated for 2 rounds. A **contested Strength check** can dislodge him. If he stays attached for 2 consecutive



AMELIA NG

rounds, he and all his allies are fully healed, he summons four **feram shadow demons**, and the attacks of him and his allies deal an additional 2d6 necrotic damage.

Just outside the front door, characters are confronted by the fey bouncer (**feram erinyes**). It's 60 feet from the front door to the getaway portal, now guarded by **Ice** (see adventure appendix) and 1d6 **feram bulezau** (MToF) and 1d6 **yeth hounds** (VGtM). If previously convinced to ally, Ice lets them through. The party can either avoid Ice or attempt to defeat him.

The portal transports the characters to Titania's court. She thanks the party for ensuring peace in the Feywild, and sends them off with requisite gold and magic items.

In the future, the Dark Hunt never returns to the mortal realm, as Titania predicted. The wall between the Seelie and Unseelie only hardens; no information makes it through. The adventurers hear nothing more about the Shadow Court.

WHO KILLED THE QUEEN? IT WAS YOU AND ME

If time runs out before the Black Diamond is given to Titania, the Summer Lords attack. 1d10 **summer eladrin** (MToF) teleport in and 7 **summer eladrin**, crashing through a wall, riding a **purple worm**. The Seelie ignore the characters unless they retaliate, Ice attempts to protect the diamond (if on the party's side, he attacks the eladrin), and Akadi (if summoned) fights with the party. If Bazil is not defeated, he attacks as in the "Kings and Queens" section. All other people in the house will teleport out.

If the eladrin win and the characters are still alive, Ice is dead, and the Queen is gone. As the dust settles, they are met with an empty house. The eladrin take the diamond. In the future, the Dark Hunt continues, now more deadly and wantonly destructive.

SAW IT WAS TIME FOR A CHANGE

If the party approaches the Queen as a united front with Ice, Akadi, music playing, and Bazil defeated, the Queen willingly gives up the Black Diamond. She realizes that she has never really wanted the unlimited power, and that she has people who care for her as she is. If Bazil is not defeated, he attacks as in the "King and Queens" section.

The diamond still has the Queen's name, and her perceivable form. This opens up a follow-up adventure in which the party attempts to regain the Queen's name from whatever shadow realm the Black Diamond came from.

The characters can take the diamond to Titania. If they relay the changes in the Queen of Air and Darkness, Titania smiles. A true and wide smile. The dark weight of the diamond lifted, the Queen ends the annual Dark Hunt. She begins work on more interesting activities, like a race across the cosmos or a most-curses-cast-on-a-single-gnome competition.

The party walks away with the ability to cast *find familiar* at will, choosing a Seelie or Unseelie fey of CR 1 or lower. Each can also cast *summon fey* once per day.

LAY YOUR SOUL TO WASTE

If the party attempts to steal the diamond with no preparation, the Queen is unwilling to give it up. If still attuned, the Queen uses the diamond to immediately kill all characters. Otherwise, Ice and the bouncer are called to fight.

CALL ME LUCIFER

If the party strikes a deal with Bazil, they know nothing of the goings on of the Unseelie Court, only that the Dark Hunt never again reappears on the Material Plane. The characters walk away with any items gained from their deal with Bazil.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Donate to your local union's strike fund.

AUTHOR BIO

Lee Morgan has never played Dungeons & Dragons but has found a perverse enjoyment reading the rulebooks.

Bazil

Small Fiend (Demon, Fey), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 266 (28d6 + 168)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	29 (+9)	23 (+6)	26 (+8)	24 (+7)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +14, Int +15, Wis +14, Cha +14
Skills Arcana +15, Deception +15, History +15, Persuasion +15
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning
Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 60 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages All, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 23 (50,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Blind. Bazil is immune to all Gaze effects. He cannot use tremorsense while in the air.

Fey Prince. Fey and elven creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws against Bazil. Bazil has a +7 bonus to all saving throws against spells or effects from fey and elven creatures.

Immutable Form. Bazil is immune to any spell or effect that would alter his form.

Legendary Resistance (2/day). If Bazil fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Bazil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Bazil's attacks are magical.

Master of Portals. Conjuration spells cast by Bazil do not require concentration. Each creature conjured by Bazil has the fey and fiend subtypes, resistance to acid, cold, fire, and lightning damage, and a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

Actions

Multiattack. Bazil makes three pincer attacks when he takes the Attack action.

Pincer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d6 + 9) piercing damage.

Corrupt Creature. Bazil targets up to three creatures within 60 feet of him. Each creature must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw. On a successful save, a creature becomes immune to Corrupt Creature for 24 hours. On a failed save, the target is poisoned and suffers 1 level of exhaustion. While poisoned in this way, the target must repeat the saving throw at the start of each of its turns. Three successful saves ends the poisoned condition. Three failed saves causes the target's body to transform, gaining the fey and fiend subtypes and becoming friendly to Bazil, obeying his commands. The transformation can only be undone by a *wish* or *true resurrection* spell, or similarly powerful magic.

Pillage Feywild (Recharge 5-6). Three fey creatures of CR 3 or less appear in unoccupied spaces that Bazil can see. The conjured creatures are friendly to Bazil and act on their own initiative.

Spellcasting. Bazil casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 23). Bazil always chooses the highest challenge creature when conjuring.

At will: *dimension door, heat metal, plant growth, thaumaturgy*
3/day each: *banishment, conjure woodland beings*, summon lesser demons**
2/day each: *animate objects, arcane gate, blur, conjure fey*, contagion, prismatic spray, regenerate, slow, summon greater demon**
1/day each: *animal shapes, conjure celestial*, conjure elemental, disintegrate, giant insect, glibness*

* Conjuration spell of 1st level or higher.

Bonus Actions

Baleful Transformation (Recharges After Bazil Casts a Conjuration Spell of 1st Level or Higher). As a bonus action, Bazil teleports to an unoccupied location within 60 feet, or swaps places with a willing creature within 60 feet.

continued

Legendary Actions

Bazil can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Bazil regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cast a Spell. Bazil uses his Spellcasting.

Power of the Kapok (Costs 2 Actions). An allied fey creature that Bazil can see is destroyed and a **treant** summoned in its place. The conjured creature is friendly to Bazil and acts on the initiative of the destroyed creature.

Virile Corruption (Costs 3 Actions). Each creature within 10 feet of Bazil must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) force damage and 10 (3d6) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. A creature that fails this saving throw by 10 or more is affected as if by Corrupt Creature.

Ice, The Dark Hunter

Medium Humanoid (Fey, Elf), Neutral Good

Armor Class 20 (natural armor, breastplate)
Hit Points 225 (30d8 + 90)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +9, Cha +10
Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +8, Perception +8, Stealth +11
Damage Resistances lightning, necrotic, radiant, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan, Undercommon
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Fey Ancestry. Ice has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put Ice to sleep.

War Magic. When Ice uses his action to cast a spell, he can make one weapon attack as a bonus action.

Actions

Multiattack. Ice makes three scimitar attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 18 (4d8) cold damage. In addition, the target has disadvantage on the next saving throw it makes against a spell Ice casts before the end of Ice's next turn.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be chilled for 1 hour. The target is affected as if by the *slow* spell while chilled in this way. If the target fails its saving throw by 5 or more, the target is also stunned while chilled in this way. A creature within reach can use an action and make a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check to break the stunned creature from its frost encasement, freeing it on a success.

Spellcasting. Ice casts one of the following spells, using Intelligence as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18; +10 to hit):

At will: *mage hand, message, misty step, invisibility, dancing lights*
3/day each: *gust of wind, mage armor, shatter, shield*
2/day each: *counterspell, darkness, dimension door, haste, slow*
1/day each: *chain lightning, cone of cold*



FLO YOUNG

SHE WHO RAN THE WORLD

by Nina Nicole

Goddess: Tiamat | **Levels:** 18-20

Content Warnings: Betrayal, Blood, Gaslighting, Gore, Imprisonment, Mind Control, Misogyny, Sexism

SYNOPSIS

Tiamat lures the adventurers to Avernus—the first layer of the Nine Hells—in an attempt to enlist their help in her revenge plot. Powerful mortals are just what she needs to make Asmodeus and Bel pay for their sins against her. Why should the men in her life get to do as they please while she and her ambitions rot? Using her essence in the form of five humans, Tiamat guides the party through a dungeon of her own design, meant to tell the tale of her betrayal, then implores them to steal the *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus* from Bel's possession so that she can destroy it. Revenge is what fuels Tiamat now; she'd do anything to taste it. Will the adventurers aid the Queen of Chaos, or burn her?

This adventure is best played in two sessions; the final battle benefits from extra time, but it's not required.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Bel, Warlord of Avernus — Asmodeus lent Bel his Ruby Rod to help keep the warring Avernus in check. Bel's a massive pit fiend with crimson skin; he thinks very little of women.

Tiamat, Nemesis of the Gods — Tiamat appears in her gargantuan dragon form.

The Five Heads — Physical manifestations of Tiamat's essence that represent each of her heads. They appear as unique human women who look like a functioning adventuring party but are non-combatants. Include a subtle reference to their respective colors when describing them, even if it's just an article of clothing. They're not aware of their own connection to Tiamat and unknowingly act according to her will. Each of them can speak and read Draconic. To maintain the mystery, give them real names; they'll be referred to by their colors throughout the module.

- **Red** — Tiamat's passion.
- **Green** — Tiamat's envy.
- **White** — Tiamat's rage.
- **Black** — Tiamat's trust.
- **Blue** — Tiamat's sorrow.

Expect players to be suspicious of Tiamat's essences. Casting spells such as *true sight* or *detect magic* does not reveal anything peculiar about them because Tiamat wills it so. The party will have to piece the connection together in other ways. Each essence can venture through the dungeon with the party. It's also possible they'll teleport away shortly after their respective room is cleared—it's up to you and the players.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A portal to the Nine Hells suddenly opens up before the party during a quiet moment and reveals the horrible chaos that is Avernus. Red catches their attention and reaches out for their help, screaming desperately as she runs toward the open portal from the other side. While she's grateful for their aid, she has an urgent plea: help her friends secure the rod.

The party could be in the right place at the right time, or Red could seek them out after hearing about their epic exploits through the grapevine.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Tiamat previously roamed Avernus as its most powerful keeper. Asmodeus and Bel plotted against Tiamat. They didn't want her getting too "above herself," so they demoted her, forcing her to be the eternal gatekeeper of the entrance to Dis—the second layer. Ultimately, this confined her to Avernus. What was once her stomping ground became her prison—and she's pissed.

CHAPTER 1 – ABSCOND TO AVERNUS

The adventurers travel to Avernus, where chaos reigns in the form of endless war and catastrophe.

WHAT RED KNOWS

If the characters request more information from Red, she takes a moment to tell them everything she knows. She's genuine and truthful when she recalls the following details:

- The *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus* (see adventure appendix) is rumored to be in Bel's possession. Red and her four friends (Green, White, Black, and Blue) planned to take the rod from him and flee Avernus.
- Her friends were unable to escape; they're still trying to secure the rod and sent her to fetch help. Red knows their last location.
- The Ruby Rod is evil incarnate. She's adamant that it must be taken and destroyed no matter the cost.
- She received this intel about the Ruby Rod in a vision. She's suffered these burdensome visions since she was a child.

If the party doesn't want to help her out of the goodness of their hearts, she relays that she can pay them handsomely for their cooperation. Money is no issue to her, and if needed, she openly negotiates large sums of gold.

Red accompanies the characters if they heal her; she looks rough but she wants to help however she can. If the characters tell her to stay behind, she dissipates once they're gone—the essence returning to Tiamat.

GETTING TO AVERNUS

If no one in the party has access to the *plane shift* spell, Red offers to transport them using a rough gem with a faint, pulsing glow inside. It has enough juice left for a one-way ticket to Avernus. She assures them that her friends will be able to get them back to the Material Plane safely with their matching gems.

AVERNUS AWAITS

A cacophony of horrid shrieks and ravenous growls echoes endlessly through the vast, tyrannous wasteland of Avernus. The sky is a putrid orange, littered with falling, flaming rocks. The air smells of sulfur and rot. Stalagmites jut out from the ground, lava seeping from their crevices. Tucked amidst them is a stone door with a mural depicting a snake-tongued man grinning perniciously from ear to ear as he sinks a dagger into a woman's back. Sanguine liquid oozes from her wound, dripping slowly down the length of the stone.

The adventurers find themselves in front of a large stone door that leads underground; the blood dripping from the woman's wound is real. The other essences of Tiamat are beyond the door.

Use the following optional Encounter Table for flavor—before and/or after the dungeon. Encounters 4–6 yield physical rewards; see the "Rewards" section for details.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1d6	Encounters
1	A lava sinkhole opens beneath the party. Each character that starts their turn in the sinkhole must make a **DC 18 Dexterity saving throw** or take 55 (10d10) fire damage.
2	1d4 fireballs crash into the party. All characters must make a **DC 20 Dexterity saving throw**. On a failure, they take 17 (5d6) fire damage per fireball.
3	A large flock of **imps** swarms over the party. The imps do not stay for a fight, but rather lash out with their tails as they fly through. All characters take 33 (6d4 + 18) piercing damage, and must make **DC 16 Constitution saving throws**, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
4	The party stumbles across two **imps** named Stimpy and Gorblax who are bickering loudly. They are hostile to each other but not to the characters. The source of their argument can be discerned by making a **DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check**. If the party helps the imps resolve their argument without violence, they receive an *immovable rod* for their efforts.
5	The party comes across 1d4 **pit fiend** corpses. Anyone looking at the corpses can tell that they were recently killed. Have any character who wishes to inspect the corpses make a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. On a success, they find a *+2 dagger* made of dragon bone stuck in the back of one of the dead pit fiends.
6	The party discovers massive, rotting bits of **balor** carcass. Succeeding on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a shard of obsidian that is perpetually warm to the touch.

Optional encounters or not, anyone who listens at the door makes a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check**. On a success they hear a shrill, terrified scream coming from within. The scream is audible above the torturous din of sounds around them. The door is unlocked and can be pushed open with some effort. If no one listens at the door, the first character who enters through it hears the screaming.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the party begins their descent into the dungeon, the adventure continues.

CHAPTER 2 — DUNGEON OF DASTARDS

The Dungeon of Dastards contains puzzles, created by Tiamat herself, designed to indirectly tell the tale of her betrayal. The path through the dungeon leads to Tiamat's lair, where she lies in wait.

DUNGEON NOTES

If any of her essences teleport away using their gems, they return to Tiamat. Each room in the dungeon is circular (40 feet in diameter) and made of stone. The dungeon itself goes in a straight line with a stone door leading into and out of each room. There are long, dimly lit hallways in between each room.

ROOM ONE

This room represents Tiamat's time ruling Avernus before she was betrayed. Maintaining order was a heavy weight on her shoulders.

Weight of the World — Puzzle

The stone floor is sporadically cracked, but not enough for it to look unstable. In the center of the room are crumbled pieces of a statue. Near the pieces, Green (she/her) and White (she/her) lay on the ground, covered in burns, unconscious but stable. When the statue is whole, it depicts the woman from the dungeon's front door holding a boulder upon her back. Only her head remains fully intact, her face contorted in silent anguish. To reassemble the statue:

- Each player rolls a d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20 in order, adding the results together until they equal or exceed 30 in total. Players are not required to use every die.
- Succeeding on a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check** helps a character better understand the shape of the statue and allows them to reroll one die of their choosing.
- Once they've rolled a total of 30+, players must physically stack the dice used into a tower in ascending order beginning with the lowest number rolled. They may discard any dice that weren't used.

- To solve the puzzle, all totals must equal 30 or more and all dice towers must be simultaneously standing.
- If a tower falls or a player is unable to reach 30, flames lick up from the cracks in the stony earth, dealing 10 (3d6) fire damage to every character in the room.
- Players can keep rolling and stacking until the puzzle is solved. They take damage for each failure.
- In the event that the entire party goes unconscious, they wake up to Green and White stabilizing them one by one.

STACKING DICE
If physically stacking dice is unavailable for any reason, ignore the dice tower portion. Players unable to stack dice can solely focus on getting their 30+ totals.

Once the characters successfully solve the puzzle, tears of blood drip from the woman's lifeless eyes as the stone melds back together. The door to the next room unlocks.

When conscious, Green and White relay that their group ducked into this dungeon for cover. Black (she/her) and Blue (she/her) ran ahead while Green and White chose to wait for Red. In a moment of boredom, they touched the statue, which triggered a trap that destroyed it and locked them in this room, walled off from their friends. In a failed attempt to put it back together, flames emerged from cracks in the ground, engulfing them until they could no longer stand.

The stone door that leads to the next room shows the woman from the statue standing alone before a fiery mountain, weapons drawn, fireballs raining from the sky. Blood drips from a wound on her back.

ROOM TWO

Black is trapped in this empty room, slumped against a wall. The words, "You used me," in Draconic are carved into the walls over and over. This room represents the moment Tiamat was betrayed by Asmodeus and Bel, despite all she'd done for Avernus.

The party does not get a chance to explore the room. Shortly after entering, darkness settles over their consciousnesses. The last thing they see is the erratic writing on the walls. *Counterspell* or any resistance or immunity to sleep or being charmed does nothing here; Tiamat herself dips into their memories.

When the characters completely succumb, Tiamat, without revealing herself, speaks a rumbling, rasping whisper into each of their unconscious minds.

> "I am retribution... Do you howl in pain at the thought of it? Would you change it, if you could?"

Bygone Betrayals — Puzzle

Address each character one by one as Tiamat forces them to relive a painful betrayal, whatever that may mean for the character. Some characters may have established backstories; allow them to take control of the narrative and describe their moment of betrayal—creating their own prison. Alternatively, the DM may have a player roll on the Betrayal Table. Either way the course of events plays out as follows:

- When a character is done recounting the betrayal, they must make a **DC 22 Wisdom, Intelligence, or Strength saving throw**—the choice is up to them. On a success, a character's resolve solidifies and they realize that the vision isn't real. They can now change how things play out in this memory as they see fit—or not. It is entirely up to the character, but it is important to allow them to change the narrative if they wish. After the memory ends, they wake up. Failing the saving throw causes the character to remain stuck in a loop of their betrayal and take 11 (2d10) psychic damage per failure of the saving throw. To free them from the loop, another character must wake them, which is easily done.
- If any other essences are accompanying the party, they automatically fail their checks and must be roused by the characters. Roll on the Betrayal Table to determine what they saw in their respective visions, except for Black.
- If the entire party fails their respective checks, they all wake up simultaneously with a lingering feeling of disappointment and take 11 (2d10) psychic damage, but they're able to move onward.

BETRAYAL TABLE

1d6	Encounters
1	Double-crossed by childhood friend
2	Nearly killed by friend/partner
3	Milked for money or connections
4	Used as a scapegoat by a superior
5	Lied to by a parent figure
6	A trusted acquaintance stole from you

If a character wakes Black, she explains that she wasn't able to snap herself out of it. She hopes her friend, Blue, woke herself and is in the next room. Black looks battered from battle and visibly shaken from the visions. She is barely able to hold herself together as she recounts her experience to the party.

> "I saw the man I looked up to, trusted... I supported him, was with him every step of the way... But he discarded me as soon as I was useless to him, kept all the accolades for himself... Never again..."

If the characters press Black on her experience, summarize Tiamat's betrayal in more detail without directly naming those involved.

The door to the next room shows the woman within a cage, enraged as she grasps the bars, flames bursting forth from her gaping mouth.

ROOM THREE

This room represents Tiamat being confined to Avernus, forgotten and trapped despite all her ambitions and achievements.

> Five immense dragon heads made of stone are mounted upon the charred walls of this circular room. Their gaping maws all point to the center, where an iron cage sits. Within is a woman, curled in on herself, sobbing. The tattered sound of her cries echo, her sorrow stands out against the enraged expressions of the stoic dragons.

Caged Bird — Puzzle

The cage itself is 5 feet wide and 10 feet tall, has a rounded top like a birdcage, and the bars are made of thick iron. Blue is awake in the cage. If asked, all she remembers is entering the room, blacking out, and waking up inside the cage. She's tried everything and can't get out. Examining the cage reveals that:

- From inside, the cage won't budge.
- From outside, someone else can simply turn the knob and open it.
- There's no lock on either side of the door; spells like *knock* have no effect.

There is an undetectable trap that players might inadvertently trigger:

- If anyone ignores Blue and approaches the exit door, the dragon heads release breath weapons.



FLO YOUNG

- If the breath weapons are triggered, characters must make a **DC 18 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 21 (6d6) acid, 21 (6d6) fire, and 21 (6d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Characters must also make a **DC 18 Constitution saving throw**, taking 21 (6d6) poison and 21 (6d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- If the whole party is downed by the trap, they awaken in the same room at 1 hit point. Blue is unconscious but stable inside the cage.

Blue will not teleport away once freed—she intends to see this through to the end with or without the characters' help. If any other essences are present, they follow her.

The final stone door depicts a large snake and a pit fiend wearing ugly smirks. The face of the mysterious woman looms behind them, a wild grin across her face. An inscription above her reads:

"PASS THROUGH THESE DOORS
TO FIND SHE WHO ABHORS
ALL WHICH KEEPS HER CHAINED
BOUND AND BLAMED
RAGE UNTAMED
SHE CONSUMES BETRAYAL WITH FLAME."

Succeeding on a **DC 21 Intelligence (Religion) check** allows a character to recall some small details about Tiamat's betrayal.

DEVELOPMENT

The party has made it through the dungeon. The time has come to meet Tiamat and discover the truth.

CHAPTER 3 – BALEFUL BETRAYAL

Tiamat reveals her plan and asks the characters for their assistance. Depending on their response, they go head-to-head with either Bel or Tiamat.



H. "INK" KUGLER

THE QUEEN'S PRISON

A queen's chamber is in shambles. Shadows hide the domed ceilings above. Mountainous piles of unthinkable treasure intermingle with bones that litter the floor. What were once beautiful pillars are now nothing but crumbling stacks of rubble. The haunting, crashing howl of a dragon rips through the massive room from afar, debris tumbles, and the ground shakes. Leisurely, a vast, scaled figure begins to unfold. One by one, the heads of ancient dragons come to attention, extending their necks—first red, then black, green, white, and blue—but they are all of one body. Low, rumbling laughter makes the chamber shudder. Tiamat stands in all of her tremendous glory, extending her wings to shake off lingering dust.

Once the party enters, they see Tiamat, an eerily calm, but seething force of nature. Various adult chromatic dragons are perched far beyond reach, looking down with watchful eyes. If the party let any essences teleport away, they'll see them lounging in the lair. Once Tiamat reveals herself, any essences accompanying the characters will walk ahead of the party without a word. Tiamat inhales deeply and the essences are absorbed back into her, their bodies becoming smoke that matches their respective colors.

Tiamat's Request

Tiamat explains that she was the woman depicted throughout the dungeon. She craves revenge against Asmodeus and Bel above all else. They squandered her, leaving her to rot while they took all the glory. It's true that Bel is in possession of the *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus*, but the rest was a ruse to lure the party to her lair. She can't leave; it was the only way. She also shares:

- Creating the Ruby Rod would not have been possible without her acidic saliva.
- Tiamat wants the characters to take the rod from Bel. If he perishes along the way, that's even better. He's horrible, after all.
- Once the party has the rod, they're to bring it back for Tiamat to destroy. Destroying the rod doesn't release her.
- Tiamat is inherently evil, but her desire for retribution is unfeigned. This is no trick. She genuinely needs the characters' help to pull this off, seeing as she's trapped.

- For their cooperation, she offers an orb of incredible power, an epic boon for each of them, and an owed favor from Tiamat herself (see the "Rewards" section for details).

If the characters agree to help Tiamat, she heals them as if they'd taken a **long rest** and points them towards the least dangerous path to Bel's court. They'll have to travel on foot to avoid detection. Exiting the lair brings the party to the very spot they started, outside the dungeon. The stone door vanishes.

If the characters refuse to help Tiamat, they face her wrath. Infuriated at their gall, she attacks without mercy.

RUIN AND RAVAGE

You may roll on the Environmental Encounters Table while the party makes their way to Bel's court.

When they arrive, characters see **Bel** (see adventure appendix) sitting upon a throne of basalt, legs lazily spread wide. The *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus* lays across his lap. Two **horned devils** hover at either side of his throne. The court itself is an open space, surrounded by and speckled with stalagmites that offer half cover. Bel's court is 40 feet wide and 80 feet long. He's situated in the middle.

As a warlord, Bel is aggressive and revels in torment. *If combat ensues, he's able to use the Ruby Rod as if it were his own.*

BEL AND MISOGYNY

During the battle, Bel belittles femme characters. This is to make it apparent that Tiamat was telling the truth about his horrid nature, but isn't required. If any players are uncomfortable with this sexist behavior, Bel insults everyone's incompetence equally.

CONCLUSIONS

If the party is successful in defeating Bel, and securing the rod, an **ancient black dragon** swoops down to offer them a ride. It attacks if they attempt to escape with the rod. As the characters approach from the skies, they see a massive, crumbling castle, surrounded by lava and rubble. They're brought back to Tiamat's lair, this time through the front entrance. Upon delivery of the rod, Tiamat engulfs it with all five of her breath weapons—incinerating it into dust. She's eternally grateful, delivers on her promises, and sends the party home.

> "You have done me a great service, mortals. I, Tiamat, the Avaricious, am in your debt. Which is not something to be taken lightly, even if I am bound here. Never underestimate a caged woman's wrath."

If the party escapes with the Ruby Rod, or if they slay Tiamat, an armada of her chromatic dragons hunt them to the ends of the realm and won't stop until they're dead or the rod is returned to Tiamat.

REWARDS

For helping Tiamat taste the revenge she was ravenous for, she allows the characters a taste of her immense power by granting them:

- An *Orb of Dragonkind.*
- One of the following epic boons: The Fire Soul, The Stormborn, Fortitude, Immortality, Resilience, High Magic, Magic Resistance, Recovery, or Planar Travel (see Chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on each boon).
- **Optional:** Characters receive a dragon egg.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This adventure is for the women whose efforts have been all but erased from history thanks to the mediocre men who stole their thunder along the way. Reclaim your power. Channel your inner Tiamat! Also, thank you to the entire *Uncaged: Goddesses* team. I'm still flabbergasted that I was able to work on this amazing project with you all!

AUTHOR BIO

Nina Nicole is a Chicago-based writer and editor with a penchant for fantasy and a passion for tabletop. When Nina manages to nab some time off, she reads manga, tries to remember to water her plants, plays and runs (probably too many) TTRPGs, and pleads with her 6-month-old cat to stop biting her ankles. If you'd like to keep up with her work or her ramblings, follow **@WriterlyNina** on Twitter.

Bel

Large Fiend (Devil), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 364 (27d10 + 216)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	14 (+2)	26 (+8)	25 (+7)	19 (+4)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +16, Wis +12
Skills Arcana +14, Deception +15, Insight +11, Persuasion +15
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +8

Fear Aura. Any creature hostile to Bel that starts its turn within 20 feet of him must make a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw, unless Bel is incapacitated. Unless the save succeeds, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Bel's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Bel fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Bel has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Bel's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. Bel makes three attacks: two with his greatsword and one with his tail.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d6 + 9) slashing damage plus 21 (6d6) fire damage. If the target is a flammable object that is not being held or worn, it catches fire.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. Bel's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 23). Bel can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *detect magic, fireball*
3/day each: *dispel magic, hold monster, mirror image, mislead, raise dead, teleport, wall of fire*
1/day each: *imprisonment, meteor swarm*

Legendary Actions

Bel can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Bel regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Fireball. Bel casts *fireball*.

Tactical Edge (Costs 2 Actions). Roll a d6 for Bel. The number rolled on the die is subtracted from the next attack roll made against Bel or an ally of his choice within the next minute.

Summon Ice Devil (Costs 3 Actions). Bel magically summons an ice devil with an ice spear (as described in the ice devil's entry in the Monster Manual). The ice devil appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of Bel, acts as Bel's ally, and can summon other devils if it has such power. The ice devil remains until Bel dies or until he dismisses it as an action.

continued

Ruby Rod of Asmodeus

Wonderous item, artifact (requires attunement)

This is Asmodeus' original Ruby Rod, given to him by Primus. It was crafted with the shard of evil, a large ruby soaked in the blood of a thousand mortals which rests in the clutches of a skeletal hand, Tiamat's drool for its acidic qualities, and the tears from 777 angels. It grants him and his underlings the right to enter into contracts with mortals for their souls but unleashes an inescapable punishment upon any devil that breaches such a contract.

Before you can become attuned to the Ruby Rod, you must kill a creature of your alignment. If you're not Asmodeus or an Archdevil or Warlord of the Nine Hells, each time you become attuned to the rod, there's a 10 percent chance that you attract a god that sends an avatar to wrest it from you. The avatar has the same alignment as its creator. For good and neutral aligned gods, the avatar uses the statistics of an empyrean, for evil aligned gods, it uses those of a balor. Once it obtains the Ruby Rod, the avatar vanishes.

Melee Weapon Attack: +17 to hit, reach 5 ft.*, one target. Hit:* 51 (8d8 + 15) bludgeoning damage.

Soul Bartering. You can grant any humanoid one wish (using the *wish* spell) in its lifetime on the condition that they are bound to Asmodeus after death. You can make minor changes to the wishes and suffer no harmful effects from this action.

Magical Damage. Any damage dealt by the Ruby Rod is magical.

Drain Life. When you hit a creature with a melee attack using the rod, you can force the target to make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes an extra 4d6 necrotic damage, and you regain a number of hit points equal to half the necrotic damage.

Spells. The rod has 5 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to cast one of the following spells: *antimagic field* (3 charges), *fire storm* (2 charges), *harm* (2 charges), *circle of death* (2 charges), *insect plague* (2 charges), *blight* (2 charges), *banishment* (2 charges), *imprisonment* (3 charges), *meteor swarm* (5 charges), *summon fiend* (2 charges), or *weird* (3 charges). The rod regains all expended charges at dusk each day.

Fiendish Ruler. You can use an action to present the rod and command each creature of your choice that you can see within 120 ft. of you. Each target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by you for 8 hours. While charmed in this way, the creature regards you as its trusted leader. If harmed by you or your companions, or commanded to do something contrary to its nature, a target ceases to be charmed in this way. The rod can't be used like this again until the next dusk.

Tiamat

Gargantuan Fiend (Deity), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 25 (natural armor)
Hit Points 615 (30d20 + 300)
Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	10 (+0)	30 (+10)	26 (+8)	26 (+8)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +19, Dex +9, Wis +17
Skills Arcana +17, Perception +26, Religion +17
Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, poisoned, stunned
Senses darkvision 240 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 36
Languages Common, Draconic, Infernal
Challenge 30 (155,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +9

Discorporation. When Tiamat drops to 0 hit points or dies, her body is destroyed but her essence travels back to her domain in the Nine Hells, and she is unable to take physical form for a time.

Innate Spellcasting (3/Day). Tiamat can innately cast *divine word* (spell save DC 26). Her spellcasting ability is Charisma.

Legendary Resistance (5/Day). If Tiamat fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Limited Magic Immunity. Unless she wishes to be affected, Tiamat is immune to spells of 6th level or lower. She has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Tiamat's weapon attacks are magical.

Multiple Heads. Tiamat can take one reaction per turn, rather than only one per round. She also has advantage on saving throws against being knocked unconscious. If she fails a saving throw against an effect that would stun a creature, one of her unspent legendary actions is spent.

Regeneration. If Tiamat has at least 1 hit point, she regains 30 hit points at the start of her turn.

Actions

Multiattack. Tiamat can use her Frightful Presence. She then makes three attacks: two with her claws and one with her tail.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d6 + 10) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 25 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Tiamat's choice that is within 240 feet of Tiamat and aware of her must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Tiamat's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Legendary Actions

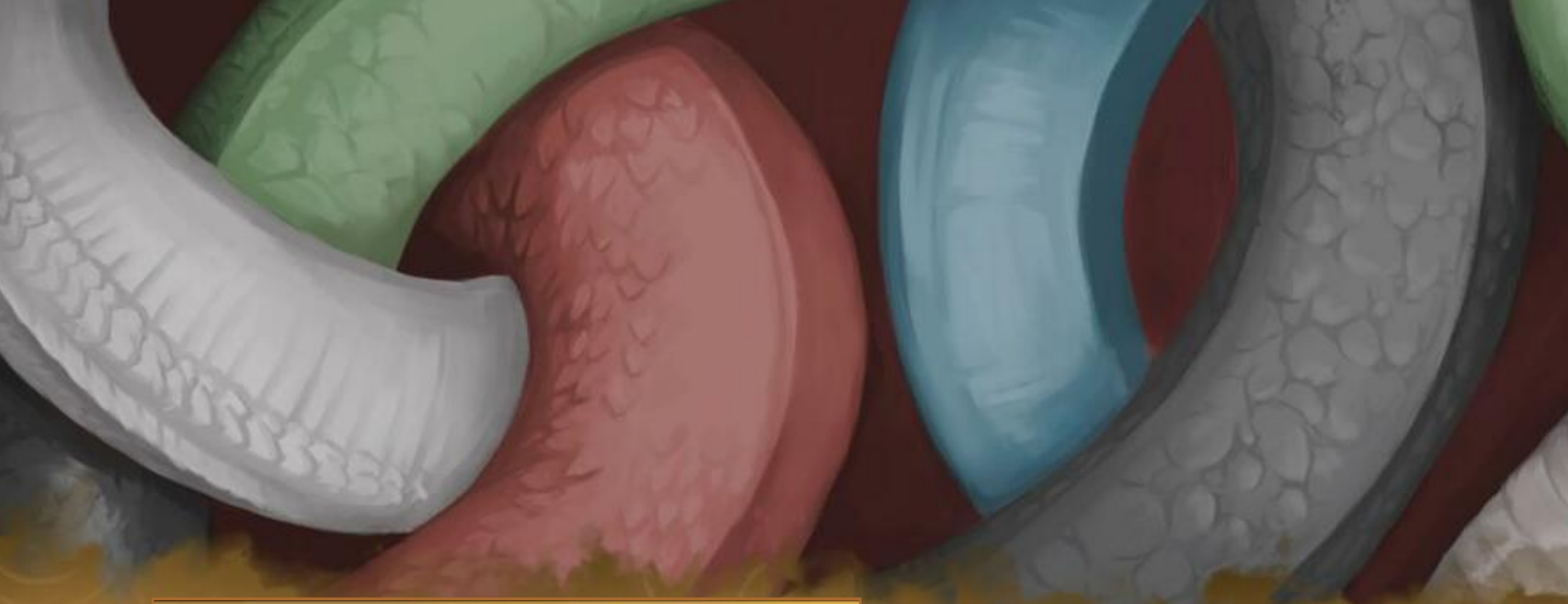
Tiamat can take 5 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Tiamat regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Tiamat's legendary action options are associated with her five dragon heads (a bite and a breath weapon for each). Once Tiamat chooses a legendary action option for one of her heads, she can't choose another one associated with that head until the start of her next turn.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (4d10 + 10) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) acid damage (black dragon head), lightning damage (blue dragon head), poison damage (green dragon head), fire damage (red dragon head), or cold damage (white dragon head).

Black Dragon Head: Acid Breath (Costs 2 Actions). Tiamat breathes acid in a 120-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 67 (15d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

continued



Blue Dragon Head: Lightning Breath (Costs 2 Actions). Tiamat breathes lightning in a 120-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 88 (16d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Green Dragon Head: Poison Breath (Costs 2 Actions). Tiamat breathes poisonous gas in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 27 Constitution saving throw, taking 77 (22d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Red Dragon Head: Fire Breath (Costs 2 Actions). Tiamat breathes fire in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 91 (26d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

White Dragon Head: Cold Breath (Costs 2 Actions). Tiamat breathes an icy blast in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 72 (16d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.


MIKE PAPE

THE GOLDEN LADY AND A KING OF DRAGONS

by Margaret Mae

Goddess: Waukeen | **Levels:** 17-20

Content Warnings: Depiction of Imprisonment, Graphic Violence, Mind Control, Abusive Work Culture

SYNOPSIS

The Golden Lady is missing.

Odyssey Enterprises, an imperial trading company that has risen to power on the backs of its workers, has claimed Waukeen, the Golden Lady and goddess of trade, as their patron. Her voice has been quiet for the past year, but some believe she waits to overthrow one who would rule trade in her stead.

Reclusive founder Jorgen Reeve, the affluent "Lord of Coin" and "King of Dragons," has promised a grand new venture to be announced at his annual gala... tonight. Sources say a clandestine ritual is at work and the silence of a goddess bodes ill. The party must reach the secret sanctum, stop the ritual, and change the course of history.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Whichever character has most recently earned, spent, or stolen the most coin OR who has an affiliation with Lliira or Waukeen has a dream encounter with Waukeen, where she gives visions of the quest ahead. If more than one character qualifies, they each get pieces of the quest.

- "I have an offer for you, if you're interested..." Waukeen steps out of a tapestry and pulls it aside to show the characters a door behind the gala stage.
- "He claws after my power—power he does not understand." Jorgen grins as flesh rots from his face. The coin in the head of his sceptre pulses with cold light.
- "Greed runs rampant at the heart." A domed sanctum encircled by a deep, glowing-red trench. A smell of musty decay.
- "Break the enchantment and release me. Time is running out." An arcane circle with six sigils glowing gold, then one by one turning red.

Alternatively, Sirit (they/them, half-elf **assassin**, neutral), private security to a dignitary attending Odyssey's gala, hires the party. They share that Jorgen Reeve himself has been in hiding for the last year, appearing in public only by magic. They suspect there's something going on beyond a hidden door behind the gala stage. Infiltrating Odyssey headquarters would violate Sirit's contract, but there's 10,000 gold dragons (pieces) in it for freelancers who can thwart Reeve's efforts without raising suspicion.

"Waukeen help us, if she remains still—this 'Lord of Coin', 'King of Dragons' mogul, thinks he can run the world. Who knows what he's done... or doing. I don't like this at all."

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This module includes three phases—Infiltration, which prioritizes social encounters, Jorgen's Labyrinth, a customizable number of puzzling encounters, and The Sanctum, a combat encounter on a ticking clock.

Waukeen is trapped but works all the power she can to help her champions free her. The party may do this by:

- Breaking the *imprisonment* spell Jorgen holds over Waukeen's mortal form.
- Destroying the coin in Jorgen's *sceptre of imprisonment*.
- Halting the ritual Jorgen is completing to take Waukeen's power and ascend to godhood.

Waukeen guides and assists the characters, despite the imprisonment that would silence a less powerful being. Once characters agree to take on the mission, they each discover that they possess a piece of *Waukeen's Favor*. Use her divine eye as an opportunity to guide players, especially as they draw closer to freeing her, with *Waukeen's Favor* as needed.

CHAPTER 1 — INFILTRATION

Odyssey's campus is buzzing with event staff, security personnel, and dignitaries. Attendees (see the Crowds Table) may approach suspicious characters.

THE DOOR

The party must find the door hidden by a tapestry of Waukeen behind the gala stage, the same one from Waukeen's vision and described by Sirit.

Security personnel are stationed at every door, changing regularly every 30 minutes. It's commonly known that detention here means business. Should they be caught, security throws characters into detention cells, which are orb-shaped *prismatic wall* enclosures in the Detention Trench.

The party must collectively succeed on a **DC 20 Charisma (Stealth) check** or similar to access the door without detection, and may roll with advantage with the help of an attendee.

Once the characters reach the door, whoever opens it must make a **DC 18 Charisma saving throw** or be affected by the Hopelessness effect of *symbol*. Succeeding on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that Jorgen inscribed the lintel with the *symbol* spell with the classified password "axela." Once the party enters the labyrinth beyond, the door seals behind them.

A SPEECH

Jorgen (he/him, neutral evil) appears at the gala via the *project image* spell to give a welcome speech. The illusion is identical to his appearance from a year ago: a hale and hearty white male human of middling height, finely but not ostentatiously dressed, with a bald head and slightly bulging eyes. A **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals an unused *teleportation circle* below him.



MIKE PAPE

All around you, people are hurrying, eating hors d'oeuvres, and cavorting in a grand gala ballroom. Tapestries and sculptures show their patron goddess Waukeen walking through marketplaces, one even shows her with her beloved Lliira. Clinking glasses, hurrying waiters, and innocuous music fill the hall as more and more guests arrive.

A cheery Jorgen Reeve appears onstage, and leans on the gleaming coin in his sceptre.

"My esteemed guests, it's been a long year, and I have much to share with you about what to expect in the days to come. Enjoy the evening's festivities; I can't wait to show you what's in store."

As Jorgen speaks, the characters and no one else see Waukeen's image shift—she looks for them in the crowd. If the characters please her or subtly ask her questions, she winks and tilts her head indicating yes, no, or directions.

CROWDS TABLE

1d8	Gala Attendees
1	A catering manager with no time for excuses.
2	A tour guide reciting the flattering "King of Dragons" script who just wants a break.
3	Hired muscle who respects toughness and rarely talks.
4	An overwhelmed intern who is both helpful and gullible.
5	A visiting ruler who is suspicious of Jorgen and will help the party in exchange for collecting intelligence on him.
6	A visiting dignitary who will help the party for a price, ideally rare or magical items.
7	A friendly attendee who trusts the party and can help them by distracting security.
8	A paranoid attendee who makes a scene and attracts unwanted attention to the party.

DEVELOPMENT

The party enters the labyrinth.

CHAPTER 2 — JORGEN'S LABYRINTH

The door opens into a dark corridor with another door at the end.

THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH

The labyrinth is a ring-shaped pocket dimension surrounding the sanctum. Its chambers are used for experiments and rituals to enhance Jorgen's power and profit. The labyrinth always appears as a hallway leading to just one door; it accommodates Jorgen's whims by shifting to put whatever room he might want on the other side of that door. It presents rooms at random to the party, so choose how many rooms players should encounter.

The party must see the Temple of Waukeen, the Wizard's Tower, and the Detention Level in the Scrying Cell encounter. All other rooms are optional. Doors seal behind the characters as a security measure. The last room the party encounters opens out onto the ledge of the Detention Trench with a view of the sanctum.

Scrying Cell

This bare room has a radius of 15 feet, with a chair in the center. It springs to life with a permanent *arcane mirage* spell once a character is fully inside it. This spell changes scenes every 30 seconds, scrying on another location of interest to Jorgen from the list below. Characters cannot affect the illusion.

Temple of Waukeen. Three priests argue in a temple room overlooking a sunny, empty marketplace:

- "...she's just adopted mortal form again, you know how she walks among us! It is not ours to doubt but to wait for her return."
- "No, she would never abandon us all for so long. This cannot be of her choosing."
- "Her whispers are still with us, for those who would listen! *Augury* and *commune* have reached her. Lliira's emissaries have not lost heart."

Wizard's Tower. A snoring **nothic** surrounded by scrawled schematics on altering spells and ascension to godhood. A rubbing of the coin in Jorgen's sceptre. A diagram of sigils in the pattern from Waukeen's vision.

Detention Level. Red glowing orbs in a trench, the walls of the sanctum visible just overhead. Bones litter the floor, and a **cloaker** swoops by.

Factory Floor. Conveyor belts chug by as far as the eye can see, exhausted workers slump over them. Armed guards stand under banners that read "An efficient workplace is a happy workplace!" and "No need for unions here, at Odyssey Enterprises we're a family!"

Gala. A familiar, jarringly opulent scene.

WAUKEEN'S FAVOR

Each scene has a conspicuous gold coin, which requires a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice. Touching it deactivates the illusion and unlocks the door, which opens onto a different hallway.

Waukeen's Favor can help by rolling toward the gold coin in each scene.

Animate Assistants

Gravity shifts harmlessly as you enter a dimly lit room through a trapdoor. The walls are lined with shelves of curious items.

Any audible conversation slowly awakens the broken Animated Assistants and Bard-in-a-Jar devices in this 10 by 50 foot rectangular room. The devices form an animated pile which uses the statistics of a **gibbering mouther** on top of the trapdoor. The junk includes versions of Jorgen's sceptre that failed as he attempted to cast *imprisonment* on Waukeen, and a copy of Jorgen's sigil layout for the sanctum.

The chipper voices get louder and stranger—a pile of them forms on top of the trapdoor and chatters inanely, desperate to help you. To get close to you. Every part of it wants a different piece of you.

To escape, the characters need to get past the animated pile and back through the trapdoor.

Waukeen's Favor can help by jingling against other coins, a sound the monster mimics and distracts it for a round, causing it to take no actions.

Helm's Vantage

Characters smell sea air as they enter a 60-foot-cube room with a ship's helm at the center on a 5-foot-square pedestal. Beside it is a panel with a list of cargo ships. Jorgen uses this room to track shipments across the world. The pedestal activates when a character touches the helm.

The floor clicks and the pedestal rushes upward as the room floods with sea water. Small ships appear, and from the helm's vantage you can see them moving along shipping patterns...

The water rises 10 feet each round until it reaches 30 feet deep. The helm rises on a slick steel pipe 10 feet each round to a height of 40 feet.

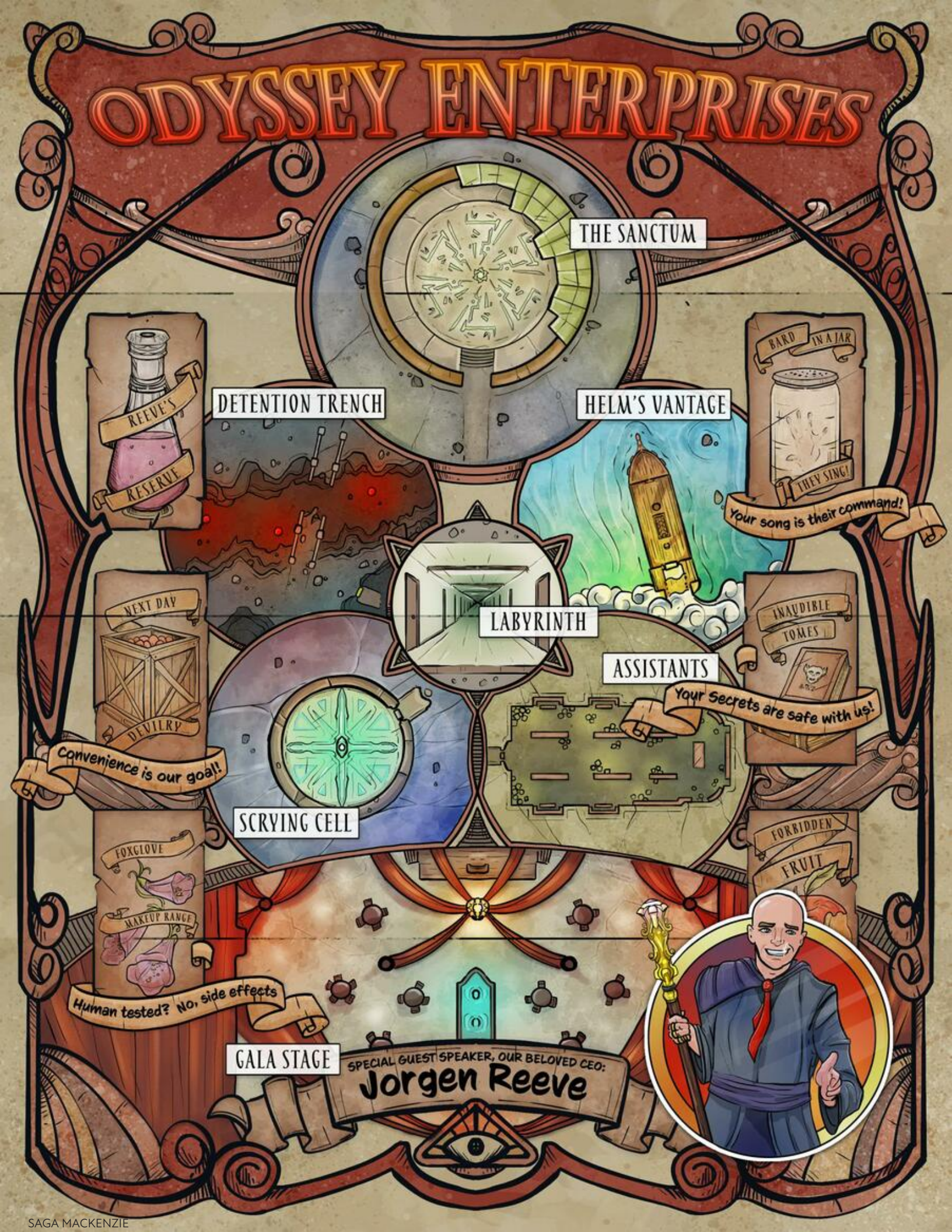
The only way out of this room is a 20-foot rope ladder that drops to just reach the helm.

Waukeen's Favor can help by shining a reflection in a character's face, then drawing their attention upward toward the ladder.

Jorgen's Study

The characters enter Jorgen's private quarters, a 50-foot-square room with a 20-foot-high ceiling.

You enter opulent living quarters and study. A life-size portrait of Jorgen hangs beside a mirror, and a large desk is littered with papers and schematics.



SAGA MACKENZIE

A permanent *guards and wards* spell activates when the characters touch something.

- *Magic mouths* in the room repeat, "Foreign agent detected, security lockdown in one minute."
- The only door disappears.
- *Suggestion* with a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** affects the 5 feet directly behind the desk, with the instruction, "Wait here for help."

A **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a copy of the sigil pattern and Jorgen's notes on modifying *imprisonment* using his sceptre. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals Jorgen's security passphrase, "axela."

The spell activates because Jorgen is not present. In order to escape, the characters must either:

- Dispel the effects of *guards and wards*.
- Emulate Jorgen's voice or appearance in the mirror, which requires a **DC 20 Charisma (Performance) check** or a magical ability.
- Speak Jorgen's password.

Waukeen's Favor can help by rolling to the portrait, bumping into it, and then hitting the mirror.

The Vault

The players enter a treasure vault, a 60-foot cube.

> Mounds of treasure gleam like an ocean of gold. A large set of scales sits just inside the door.

There are 5-foot pressure plates on both sides of the door that function as a scale. They audibly click when a character steps on one of them. Characters must succeed on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to discover them without stepping on them. Use Treasure Hoard: Challenge 11-16 Table and Magic Item Table I (found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) to generate the Vault's treasure, rolling once on each table for each character.

The doors only reopen if each character weighs the same amount they did when they entered.

Waukeen's Favor can help by pinging against the metal of the pressure plate, causing the scales to sway.

The Detention Trench

> You emerge, and for the first time, you don't enter a hallway. Above you is pitch black, before you is a deep trench lit only by glowing red orbs at the bottom. Crumbled traces of a bridge on either side remain, but nothing else. The trench encircles the sanctum from the visions Waukeen gave you.

The trench is 500 feet wide, 800 feet deep, and not magical. Five **cloakers** live in the trench and a **behir** lives at the bottom of it. If any characters have been sent to the Detention Level, this is where they may rejoin the party. Jorgen completely destroyed the bridge to isolate himself for his final preparations. As the party closes in on the sanctum, Waukeen's voice whispers in their minds.

> "Just a little farther, time is almost up. Break the enchantment, or hurt him enough to release me—and earn the favor of a goddess. Fair trade?"

The characters hear Jorgen's laughter in the distance as Waukeen continues.

> "Divinities cannot predict the future when godhood is assailed. But I'll be with you. And here, as a gauge of that bargain... "

Characters feel a warm tingling as Waukeen grants them each one use of Legendary Resistance.

DEVELOPMENT

The party enters the sanctum.



CHAPTER 3 – THE SANCTUM

The sanctum has a radius of 60 feet and a domed 120-foot-high ceiling. A *teleportation circle* matching the one at the gala stage sits on the opposite side from the only door. Heaps of gold and treasure line the edges, surrounding an arcane circle with a 30-foot radius divided into six sections. At the end of each section a glowing gold sigil floats in the air. At the center, Jorgen clutches his sceptre, now set into the floor at the heart of the arcane circle, and stands above a shrouded body with a golden magical aura.

DAVID MARKIWSKY

Jorgen's rotting skin clings to bone and sinew, white knuckles knitted around his sceptre.

"Ah... unexpected guests! My gift to you—you'll be the first to see the new god of wealth. Before you die."

He hoists a crucible of smouldering liquid to his mouth and drinks, his flesh boiling everywhere it touches.

"IT BEGINS."

THWARTING JORGEN'S THEFT

Jorgen is a lich attempting to steal Waukeen's divinity. He expects to become a perfect god, but becomes a powerful version of himself—a disgusting avaricious monster—first. The arcane circle on the floor is a ticking clock of his progress.

To run this encounter:

- Roll initiative for Jorgen as normal.
- Waukeen acts at initiative count 25 and uses the Waukeen's Boons Table.
- The ritual acts at initiative count 20, affecting the whole room.
- The Sigils act at initiative count 10, only affecting Jorgen.

The ritual is interrupted and Waukeen is immediately freed if the characters either:

- Destroy the coin mounted on Jorgen's *Sceptre of Imprisonment*, which has 150 hit points and is immune to spells below fifth level. Characters may make three successful **DC 20 Strength checks** to destroy it manually.
- Reduce Jorgen to 50 hit points, severing his connection to the sceptre.

WAUKEEN'S ACTIONS WHILE IMPRISONED

Waukeen grants one of the following boons on her turn each round until she is freed. All boons are granted for the duration of combat without concentration and are bestowed with Waukeen's signature divine golden shimmer. The characters are aware that Waukeen is the one empowering them.

WAUKEEN'S BOONS TABLE

1d6	Boon
1	Waukeen casts *bless* on the characters.
2	Three useful items buried in the treasure piles glow. If the items require attunement, the characters automatically attune to them when they pick up the item. These items can include a *holy avenger*, a *sun blade*, and a *flying carpet*.
3	The characters can cast *shield* without the use of a spell slot.
4	Waukeen casts *heal* on each of the characters.
5	Waukeen grants advantage on any attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks made by the characters.
6	Waukeen casts *holy weapon* on all of the characters' weapons.



CECILIA NESTI

If the characters interrupt the ritual successfully:

> The shroud over the woman's body falls to reveal... nothing.
>
> The ground rumbles with the word, "Finally".
>
> Light from all gold surfaces in the room unites to form a shimmering 30-foot-tall apparition of the goddess herself. "You thought you could have all this... without paying for it? And you call yourself a merchant."

WAUKEEN'S ACTIONS ONCE FREED

Once freed, Waukeen takes the following actions in order on each successive turn.

- Melts Jorgen's treasure into rivers of coin that destroy his sigils, creating difficult terrain across the map and five 5-foot-square areas of lava. "Coin only does good if you spread it around."
- Conjures chains made of his treasure and pins him to the ground, restraining him. "Bear the chains of your choosing."
- Destroys the building, casting *earth tremor* centered on herself, blowing apart the pocket dimension that surrounds it and the walls of the gala hall to expose him to his investors. "Show the world the monster you are."
- Reaches into his chest, fingers thrust through his decaying flesh and wrapping around his spine where his wings meet, grappling him and killing him in the next round. "What are you but a middleman? One who's forgotten his place."

THE RITUAL

During its turn, the ritual makes the sceptre pulse with cold light as seen in Waukeen's vision and the following effects take place in order. The DC for any save against a Ritual Power is 18.

RITUAL POWERS TABLE

Order	Power
1	A *prismatic spray* aimed toward the door erupts from the sceptre.
2	*Pyrotechnics* cast as fireworks explode, centered on each sigil and the sceptre.
3	*Erupting earth* affects all areas outside the arcane circle.
4	*Arms of Hadar* emerge from each sigil and the sceptre.
5	A *circle of power* emanates from Waukeen's body, affecting only the characters.
6	*Reverse gravity* and *featherfall* simultaneously affect all creatures and items.

THE SIGILS

On its turn, a floating gold sigil turns red and has the following effect, going in order:

SIGIL POWERS TABLE

Order	Power
1	The transformation begins, rot-encrusted claws and scales burst through Jorgen's decaying flesh. Jorgen Reeve now has the immunities, resistances, and additional hit points of his Corrupted Dragon form.
2	Jorgen fully transforms into his Corrupted Dragon form. He can choose to create either three **ropers** to drive characters into his attack range or a **pit fiend** to divert attacks from himself.
3	Jorgen attempts to consume the life of those around him. All non-undead creatures must make a **DC 18 Charisma saving throw**, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. All lost hit points heal Jorgen for the same amount.
4	*Hunger of Hadar* takes effect on a point 100 feet above the sceptre, nested in the domed ceiling.
5	A *destructive wave* takes effect, centered on the sceptre.
6	The transformation completes. The body on the dais disappears.

Jorgen Reeve, Lich (he/him, lich, neutral evil) uses the statistics of a **lich** with 250 hit points. The sanctum is his lair.

Jorgen, Corrupted Dragon (he/him, dragon, neutral evil, see adventure appendix) uses the statistics of a **dracolich** applied to an ancient gold dragon, with the following modifications:

- 500 hit points plus the remaining hit points of Jorgen Reeve, Lich.
- **Breath Weapon: Forge's Fire** - If a character fails their Dexterity saving throw by more than 5, any metal on their person drips with molten gold and has the effect of *heat metal*. This effect ends at the end of Jorgen's turn.
- **Additional Lair Action: Smelt** - Molten gold seeps through the floor. Characters on the floor must make a **DC 20 Dexterity saving throw** or experience the effects of *slow* until the end of their next turn.
- **Additional Legendary Action: Disloyalty** - A target within 30 feet must succeed on a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** or be convinced that their allies will betray and rob them until the end of their next turn.
- **Additional Reaction: Invoke Devotion** - When a creature targets it with an attack, the dragon chooses an ally within 20 feet to take its place as the target.

CONCLUSION

Should Waukeen be freed, she holds Jorgen aloft and destroys him, for all his followers and guests to see.

Waukeen tightens her grip on Jorgen's spine. "If money is all that you love..."

Jorgen thrashes violently and bursts into a shower of coins. Gold clatters on stone and echoes with the miser's final scream.

Turning to you, she takes a knee to look into your eyes.

"Thank you for your assistance... you have my thanks. And..." she gestures to the pile of coins, "...my gratitude."

She rises and turns to the crowd.

"Trade. Exchange. Barter. Share. This domain was mine before gold and it will be mine after. Should you choose it, you will find my blessing."

"Until then..." her eyes fall on a depiction of herself with Liira, "...I am needed."

WHAT IF JORGEN WINS?

Jorgen becomes a neutral evil god of greed and flies screaming into the night, terrifying attendees.

Characters hear a faint jingle from *Waukeen's Favor*. The coin glimmers and rolls weakly toward the image of Liira in the gala hall. Only the characters see the image of Liira turn to the coin in surprise, and then to them, in tears. A voice in their heads speaks.

"She... she lives. I know not how or where, but she lives. That monster stole her godhood, and her light is faint but... but somewhere, she lives."

"Greed will NOT rule her domain. Will you be her champions, and mine, and bring my beloved home?"

REWARDS

Should the party succeed in freeing Waukeen, they gain the following rewards:

- *Waukeen's Favor*
- The pile of gold coins which used to be Jorgen's body, equal to 5,000 gold pieces per character.
- A coin purse that, when used to pay a merchant, tradesperson, thief, or scout at least what they're worth in an amicable arrangement, grants the bearer of the purse advantage on checks made using the outcome or purchase within the next week.

ADVENTURE APPENDIX

ITEMS

Waukeen's Favor

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This gold coin has a forward-facing image of Waukeen on one side and an image of a common marketplace on the other. The edge of the coin is imprinted with the words, "Trade. Exchange. Barter. Share."

While attuned, the coin increases a character's Charisma, Constitution, or Wisdom score by 1 to a maximum of 20. The coin allows any character to cast *commune* (with Waukeen) once per long rest without the use of a spell slot. Flipping the coin allows any character to cast *augury* once per long rest without the use of a spell slot: face up for Weal, face down for Woe, and landing on its edge for an indeterminate response.

At the goddess's discretion, the face on the coin may indicate her feelings. The coin may also slip away and roll in a direction of her choosing. Should the holder please the goddess in some way, they may hear their purse jingle and find they have a needed spell component they didn't have before. If Waukeen is freed, the coin allows any spellcaster to cast bless or bane once per day without concentration or use of a spell slot.

Sceptre of Imprisonment

Wondrous item, legendary

This shoulder-height staff was simple once, but has been inlaid at the top with veins of white gold. The head of the sceptre displays a large pale coin bearing Waukeen's face on one side. Once another piece of *Waukeen's Favor*, this coin is the material component of the imprisonment that now holds her, and is instrumental in leeching divine power from the goddess and keeping her trapped in mortal form.

The face no longer smiles kindly, instead showing one filled with sad resignation. While it was once a warm, willing source communion with her, it has been corrupted and now gives off a sense of cold, cruel control.

The sceptre is Jorgen Reeve's phylactery and continues to be so after his transformation into a Corrupted Dragon. It has 150 hit points and is immune to spells below 5th level. Characters may make three successful **DC 20 Strength checks** to destroy it manually.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The rich and powerful take what they want.

This adventure is dedicated to anyone who'd like to steal it back.

A HUGE thank you to the playtesters, reviewers, artists, editors, admins, and the entire *Uncaged* community. Thank you, all of you.

We make still by the law in which we're made.

AUTHOR BIO

Margaret Mae is a Brooklyn transplant now thriving in Chicagoland who loves DIY, weightlifting, martial arts, the Oxford comma, and deeply terrible puns. She uses her innate spellcasting abilities to encourage others, try new things, and to support inclusive, welcoming spaces for marginalized people.

Jorgen, Corrupted Dragon

Huge Undead, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)
Hit Points 500 + Jorgen's remaining hit points in lich form
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	14 (+2)	29 (+9)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +16, Wis +10, Cha +16
Skills Insight +10, Perception +17, Persuasion +16, Stealth +9
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Damage Resistances necrotic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 27
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 24 (36,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Legendary Resistance (5/Day). If Jorgen fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Jorgen has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Unusual Nature. Jorgen does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. Jorgen can use his Frightful Presence. He then makes three attacks: one with his bite and two with his claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (2d10 + 10) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d6 + 10) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (2d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Jorgen's choice that is within 120 feet of Jorgen and aware of him must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Jorgen's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Forge's Fire (Recharge 5-6). Jorgen exhales fire in a 60-foot cone. Each creature must succeed on a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw, taking 71 (13d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Additionally, if a character fails their Dexterity saving throw by more than 5, any metal on their person drips with molten gold and has the effect of *heat metal*. This effect ends at the end of Jorgen's turn.

Weakening Breath. Jorgen exhales gas in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 24 Strength saving throw or have disadvantage on Strength-based attacks, ability checks, and saving throws for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Reactions

Invoke Devotion. When a creature targets him with an attack, Jorgen chooses an ally within 20 feet to take its place as the target.

Legendary Actions

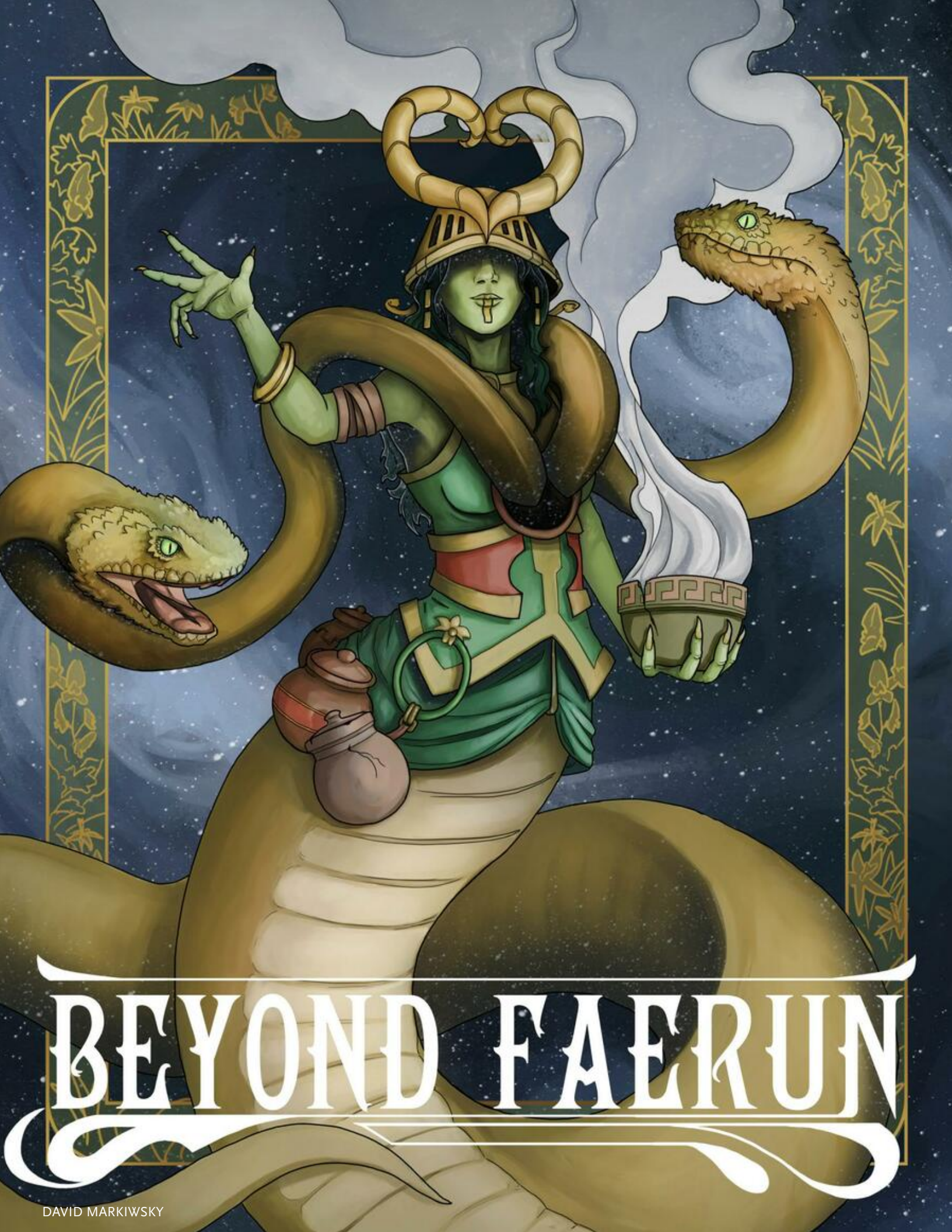
Jorgen can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Jorgen regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Detect. Jorgen makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. Jorgen makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Jorgen beats his wings. Each creature within 15 feet of Jorgen must succeed on a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (2d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. Jorgen can then fly up to half his speed.

Disloyalty. A target within 30 feet of Jorgen must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or are convinced that their allies will betray and rob them until the end of their next turn.


BEYOND FAERUN
DAVID MARKIWSKY



REID ASTER

DANCING WITH THE FURY

by Dylan Ramsey

Goddess: The Fury | **Setting:** Eberron | **Levels:** 17-20

Content Warnings: Airship Crashes, Death, Genocide, Manipulation, Suicide

SYNOPSIS

After experiencing a vision from the Fury, our heroes awaken to find their airship plummeting out of the sky as people across Eberron lose their will to live. They must embrace their passions to stop the lich behind this disaster, but she is driven by passions of her own, namely, REVENGE.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The only requirement is that the characters be on an airship, as the main hook drops in Chapter 1. Ways to get them there include:

- For past heroics, the characters are awarded the airship *Fury's Wail* by a man named Emerago. Emerago is secretly Erandis Vol's father, the Emerald Claw.
- The characters receive a summons from the Undying Court of Aerenal that includes tickets for the airship *Fury's Wail*. The Court rarely calls upon anyone, so the "dire portents" they wish to speak about must be serious.
- Upon resurrection, a character babbles the following in Celestial: "The world you love shall wither and fail, unless you ride the *Fury's Wail*." This message from beyond gains new meaning when the characters hear about the airship, and those they care about begin experiencing early-stage planar ennui.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Divine magic is an undeniable fact in Eberron, even if the existence of gods remains a matter of faith. Most agree that, if gods are real, they act through mortal champions.

Legend holds that the Fury was born to two deities, one caring (Arawai), one destructive (The Devourer). A creature of unchecked passions, the Fury took revenge on her father, scattering his essence to the wind and waves, where it manifests as natural disasters. A dragon known as the Emerald Claw sought to emulate this story by producing a child—Erandis Vol—and molding her into an instrument of revenge, hoping to pave his way to godhood.

Now a centuries-old lich, Erandis Vol doesn't know the role her father played in the tragedy of her life (acting as the informant who led the dragons and elves to wipe out everything she loved), but she does know that revenge is all she has left. She'll make them pay, even if others are caught in the crossfire.

CHAPTER 1 – THE CRASH

THE VISION

As the characters rest aboard the *Fury's Wail*, they experience a shared vision. In it, they take part in a masked revel. What masks do they wear? What desires do they satisfy, freed from all restrictions? Red candles—common symbols of revenge—burn around them, each

carved with a rival's name. The characters lounge in the coils of this revel's mistress: the Fury. She appears as a half-elven woman with wild eyes, windswept hair, draconic wings, and the lower half of a green serpent.

She tells the characters to remember this feeling—they will need it. Suddenly, there are flashes of other scenes, the Fury intoning, "FIND HER" each time the scene changes:

- A bronze-skinned elven woman tattooed with flower-wreathed skulls makes love to a man covered in green scales (could be interpreted as the Fury's parents... or as Erandis Vol's).
- A city of ziggurats and mausoleums burns at the foot of a stone spire rising from the jungle, dragons circling in the smoke-filled sky (Shae Deseir's destruction centuries ago on Aerenal).
- The Fury screams as her body is puppeteered by a disembodied emerald claw (represents Erandis Vol, who is so similar to the Fury, being manipulated by her father).

FREE FALLING

The characters snap back to reality to find the airship they're aboard plummeting out of the sky! Roll initiative and let the players know they have 10 rounds (1 minute) before the airship crashes.

Each character immediately gains a level of exhaustion as a wave of supernatural ennui washes over them. A character who succeeds on a **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion) check** identifies this as being caused by a planar conjunction with Dolurrh, the Realm of the Dead, though it's much stronger than is typical for such an event.

A character can attempt to remove this exhaustion by embracing their passions—either by acting in the heat of the moment (such as admitting their true feelings to someone or pulling off a dangerous stunt), or by remembering something to live for (such as family back home or a dream of opening a business). Doing so gives the player a choice: they can automatically remove one level of exhaustion, or make a **DC 15 Charisma saving throw**. On a failure, the exhaustion remains. On a success, roll on the Blessings of the Fury Table (the effects of which the player can choose to use later).

BLESSINGS OF THE FURY TABLE

1d6	Result
1	You may spend 1d4 Hit Dice to regain expended uses of a single class feature resource of your choice, such as Bardic Inspiration, Ki Points, or Superiority Dice.
2	You may spend Hit Dice to regain an expended spell slot. The number of Hit Dice spent determines the level of the spell slot (for example, 9 Hit Dice to regain a 9th-level spell slot). If you have no spell slots, reroll this result.
3	You may spend one or more Hit Dice to heal, as if you had taken a short rest.
4	You may spend one Hit Die to gain advantage on a roll of your choice. If this roll still fails, you take damage equal to your Hit Dice value.
5	You may spend one Hit Die to cause an enemy to have disadvantage on a roll of your choice. If this roll still succeeds, that enemy is healed an amount equal to your Hit Dice value.
6	You may spend 5 Hit Dice to take an additional action on your turn, as if you had used the fighter's Action Surge feature.

Make navigating the airship dangerous during this scene, as high winds whip across the deck, cargo topples, and magical systems malfunction, calling for ability checks or saving throws as necessary.

The crew of the *Fury's Wail* is overcome by ennui, but the characters can reinvigorate them by reminding them of their passions. The crew (each member's pronouns are up to the DM) includes those listed in the Crew of the Fury's Wail Table.

For each reinvigorated crewmember, the DC of any ability check to fix the airship is reduced by 1. A character with any type of vehicle proficiency may add their proficiency bonus to these checks. Some options for fixing the ship include:

Repair the Ship's Systems. A character can attempt a **DC 25 ability check** of their choice (pending DM approval) to try and repair a system. On a failed check, no one can attempt to repair that same system for one round. This includes:

CREW OF THE FURY'S WAIL TABLE

Crewmember	Details	Passion
Captain Selgen d'Lyrandar (chaotic neutral)	Half-elf in captain's coat; holy symbol of the Fury; has conspiracy board in cabin linking characters to secret societies, cryptids, and someone named "Emerago"	Proving one of their conspiracies true
Spoon (neutral good)	Warforged in greasy apron and chef's hat; meal half-prepared in kitchen; note in apron pocket says "Make them smile"	People enjoying the meals they prepare
Ket Duran (neutral evil)	Buff human with bandana; folded picture of Mint with lipstick mark in their pocket; in cabin, has red candle of revenge with Borgo Hack's name carved into it	Seeking revenge on Borgo
Borgo Hack (neutral)	Bald dwarf with gemstone earrings; wears gem-encrusted heart locket with picture of Mint inside; has shrubbery shaped like own head in cabin	Acquiring new valuables, preferably gems
Mint (neutral)	Shifter with flowers braided into hair; smells of herbs; cabin is full of potted plants	Acquiring and caring for plants
Dak Dollik Davandi (lawful evil)	Finely-dressed gnome; tickets in pocket for a performance of the face-swapping comedy of errors *Facade*; cabin filled with theater bills for *The Battle of the Five Ducks*, *Tira's Tears*, and other popular shows.	Watching theatrical performances

- Maintaining wind wards to prevent people from being blown off deck.
- Unblocking elemental veins to channel power throughout the ship.
- Realigning focus nodes to focus energy into the airship's elemental ring.
- Using the wheel of wind and water, which allows the pilot to steer the ship and communicate with the bound elemental.

Rebind the Elemental. A *glyphs of warding* spell and an *arcane lock* spell protect the engine room, where an **air elemental** is bound. Crewmembers can bypass these protections. Within, a character can attempt a **DC 25 ability check** of their choice (pending DM approval) to get the elemental back under control; some possibilities include repairing the magical bindings or convincing the elemental to remain bound. On a failed check, all creatures in the engine room take 10 (3d6) force damage. The characters must accrue 3 successes on these checks before 2 failures; otherwise, the elemental escapes. Left unattended, the elemental escapes on round 6.

A crash is averted if any of the following occurs:

- All crewmembers are reinvigorated.
- All systems are repaired.
- At least two systems are repaired and the elemental is rebound.

Other circumstances or a different combination of events could also avert a crash, at the DM's discretion.

If the airship crashes, everyone on board takes 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage.

DEVELOPMENT

After resolving the situation, the characters should have questions. What was the vision they experienced? What's causing this unnaturally strong planar conjunction? What did the Fury mean by "FIND HER"?

CHAPTER 2 — THE SEARCH

In this freeform section, the characters must figure out where to go to stop this planar conjunction before it destroys everything they love. Allow the characters to use the tools at their disposal, and nudge them in the right direction.

As this chapter progresses, call for more **Charisma saving throws** against exhaustion from planar ennui (continuing to allow characters to embrace their passions as described in Chapter 1). While the first is at DC 15, increase the DC as characters get closer to their goal (maximum of DC 20). This serves as a ticking clock to spur the characters forward. When exactly these saving throws occur is up to the DM; consider the actions being taken and the narrative pacing. Give the players room to breathe, but keep them on their toes.

If the characters visit nearby towns (their exact location is left to your discretion), they'll see that this disaster wasn't confined to their airship. All of Khorvaire is under threat! A perceptive character can use the relative strength of the ennui to try and track the epicenter. As a general rule of thumb, the effects of exhaustion are stronger, having had more time to progress, the closer one travels to the island nation of Aerenal (off Khorvaire's southeast coast).

If the characters rescued the airship crew, then these followers of the Fury can help decipher the party's shared vision from Chapter 1. Selgen also offers them a "family heirloom" known as the *Map of Heart's Desire*. The map will lead one to their greatest desire if they attune themselves to it (requires the use of an attunement slot), which could help with their search. If the characters' efforts were less successful, they discover the map in the wreckage of the *Fury's Wail* instead.



HERMAN LAU

A character who attunes to the map must succeed on a **DC 30 Wisdom saving throw** or be overwhelmed by their own emotions. On a failure, they feel compelled to satisfy all their desires, as if under the effects of a *geas* spell. On a success, allow the player to choose an effect from the Blessings of the Fury Table. Either way, they're drawn towards their greatest desire at the moment. Given the existential threat, it should point them towards stopping Erandis Vol.

SELGEN'S CONSPIRACIES

Captain Selgen believes the characters are key to understanding a web of conspiracy surrounding "Emerago," a man tied to Selgen's family. "Emerago" is influential and enigmatic, possibly manipulating events throughout the party's career from behind the scenes. Selgen's family has served the Emerald Claw (Emerago's true identity) for centuries, believing they'll be granted sole dominion over the wind and waves when the dragon becomes the god of natural disasters. Does Selgen know this? Or are they truly in the dark? If the characters choose to investigate "Emerago," provide clues hinting at his draconic nature, ties to House Vol, and quest to emulate the story of the Devourer and the Fury.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the characters reach Shae Deseir, proceed to Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3 – THE HEART

The party's investigation leads them to Shae Deseir on the tropical island of Aerenal, destroyed centuries ago by an alliance of dragons and elves, who put aside their feuding when they learned about the birth of the half-dragon Erandis Vol. The ruins still bear ancient scars—stone buildings melted like red candles; ash and dust filling the streets. A swirling maelstrom of souls fills the sky overhead, centered above the Spire of Revenge—a far older structure, said to have been the Fury's citadel when gods walked the earth. The spire is the heart of this planar conjunction.

FEATURES OF SHAE DESEIR

- The maelstrom of souls creates a strong wind (see pg. 110 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), making it difficult to fly more than 20 feet above the ground until a character is within 100 feet of the Spire of Revenge. This also affects the airship, unless characters can think of an ingenious workaround.
- Characters must succeed on a **DC 20 Charisma saving throw** to resist suffering exhaustion from planar ennui. The frequency of these saving throws is up to the DM, but should increase closer to the Spire of Revenge. Once the characters confront Erandis, have characters make a saving throw every third round.
- If characters are struggling against exhaustion, have one of the inhabitants carry a *potion of vitality*. How challenging it is to get is up to you.

SHAE DESEIR

These ruins are haunted by sorrowsworn, the cast-off emotions of those who refused to embrace their passions. Disturbances attract packs made up of **the angry**, **the hungry**, **the lonely**, and **the lost** (MToF), who attack trespassers to vent these unfulfilled desires.

Several other encounters await, which can be used in any order:

Deathless

Tana Tolaen (she/her, **war priest** (VGtM), lawful neutral; she has the Undead creature type and has *greater restoration* prepared as a 5th-level spell) is a deathless elf of Aerenal's Undying Court. The court usually wields near-divine power due to the love of their living descendents, but this wave of ennui has made the populace listless and apathetic. If this continues, the deathless will die.

Tana's understandably crotchety. She was many things in life—dragonslayer, rhymesmith, award-winning baker—and while she still has her passions to keep her going, she insists the old ways are best.

Tana can aid the party and share the following information:

- Long ago, the Undying Court put a conflict with the dragons on hold after an insider revealed that Shae Deseir's ruling House Vol had spawned a half-dragon whose power could threaten the world. The entire city was destroyed to wipe out every drop of Vol's bloodline.
- Divinations confirmed their success, but Tana fears one of Vol's old allies is behind this conjunction. It must be stopped, lest thousands of years of wisdom be lost with the Undying Court!

If Tana is threatened, two **sword wraith commanders** (MToF) appear to protect her.

Soulherder

A **nalfeshnee** named Grind-Them-Down (any pronouns, chaotic evil) herds wayward souls to Dolurrh. They're carrying a **ghost** belonging to a servant of House Vol who knows the identity of the insider who betrayed their family: the Emerald Claw! The ghost begs to be freed so they can reveal this information to the house's last survivor (Erandis).

Grind confronts any characters they notice, asking them to come along to the afterlife without trouble. The party must succeed on a **DC 20 group ability check** of their choice to convince the fiend they're not dead yet. If they resist or attempt to take Grind's ghostly captive by force, the nalfeshnee attacks.

Mother

The characters hit a pocket of residual emotion and glimpse a scene from Shae Deseir's destruction. Minara Vol (she/her, **archmage**, chaotic neutral) is preparing to use a *teleportation circle* spell to escape with the body of her teenaged half-dragon daughter, Erandis. The girl was murdered by allied dragons and elves—a twisted version of the "peace" Minara hoped Erandis's birth would foster between their two civilizations. Minara fears being discovered. If confronted by the characters, she appeals to their compassion, asking that a grieving mother be allowed to complete her ritual: "What lengths would you be willing to go to for those you love?"

Minara blames herself for this destruction and believes that the desperate act of sacrifice she is about to perform is the only way to give her daughter a better life.

Over the next five minutes, Minara performs the following ritual. Anyone who succeeds on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check** recognizes the ritual as an altered version of the lich creation ceremony:

- Dots Erandis's body with black onyx.
- Inscribes necromantic symbols on her and Erandis's foreheads using grave dust.
- Prays that "Eran, my sweet *covadish*" finds happiness and safety far from here (*covadish* is a fern native to Aerenal).
- Drinks a vial of poison.
- Struggles against convulsions to kiss Erandis before going limp, sacrificing her own soul to fuel her daughter's rebirth.
- Her *teleportation circle* glows and whisks them away.

The characters may try to convince Minara to go along with a different plan, however. For example, a character could use *wish* or Divine Intervention to alter the situation, or even offer up a replacement soul, such as their own, to fuel Erandis's rebirth. They could also act without Minara's consent, such as neutralizing the poison in her system before it kills her, which disrupts the ritual and angers the archmage. If Minara can be convinced to go along with a different plan, she tells the party that simply resurrecting Erandis won't work, as their foes will track her daughter down as long as she lives, for they intend to eradicate every drop of their family's bloodline—undeath will shield Erandis from that fate. The actions performed by the characters here could affect their final showdown with Erandis Vol in the present, though the exact effects of this are left up to the DM's discretion. Perhaps disrupting the ritual reduces Erandis's spell save DC, or a character's soul fueling her rebirth reduces the DC required to talk Erandis down.

Angering or attempting to completely stop Minara will cause her to strike out at the characters, ejecting them from the scene. When this happens, the characters must succeed on a **DC 17 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failure, a character suffers from the effects of a *confusion* spell for 1 minute. These energies also attract 1d4 **sorrowsworn** (MToF) of the DM's choice to the area.



REID ASTER

REVENGE

Erandis Vol (she/her, **Lady Illmarrow** (see adventure appendix), neutral evil) awaits atop the Spire of Revenge with a **nightwalker** (MToF) ally. She's hostile, suspecting intruders are agents of her enemies. She tells them that their "masters" cannot stop her long-overdue revenge—"the Fury herself stands with me!" In a way, Erandis is right... but she's with the characters too.

If the characters prevail, they'll have embraced their passions, plus the conjunction's end will flood the world with unbound emotion. If Erandis succeeds, she'll have enacted the bloodiest act of revenge in history. Either way, the Fury wins. The goddess secretly hopes the characters will help Erandis learn her father is the ultimate source of her suffering, redirecting her revenge against him, just as the Fury took revenge on her father.

A portal to Dolurrh crackles overhead, empowered by three runes inscribed on defaced dragon carvings looming over the battlefield. Each carving is a Gargantuan object with AC 20; 100 hit

points; and immunity to poison and psychic damage and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons. A character can disrupt a rune by destroying the carving it's inscribed on, or by succeeding on a **DC 20 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check**. If all three are disrupted, the conjunction ends. The characters immediately remove all levels of exhaustion, and can choose one effect from the Blessings of the Fury Table as they feel the goddess's power.

The characters can attempt to talk Erandis down by succeeding on three **DC 30 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) checks**. Each action listed below (and any others the DM deems appropriate) lowers the DC by 5:

- Help Erandis destroy Tana Tolaen.
- Reveal the Emerald Claw's betrayal.
- Share Minara Vol's final moments.
- End the conjunction.

Attempting diplomacy antagonizes Tana. If the characters succeed in talking Erandis down, the Emerald Claw (**ancient green dragon**; replace legendary actions with those of an **elder tempest** (MToF)) arrives to get his daughter's revenge back on track, trying to convince her that everything he's done has been for them—"We shall be gods together." Erandis doesn't take kindly to being used, however, and helps fight her vile father.

TACTICS

Erandis casts *time stop*. She flies up 40 feet, casts *blur* and *mirror image* on herself, and uses *forcecage* (cage-shaped) to split the party before casting *circle of death*. Erandis tries to stay out of reach, unleashing her most powerful abilities and trusting in the nightwalker's immunities and saving throws. The nightwalker paralyzes foes and keeps them within its Annihilating Aura. Be ruthless, but make sure the players are having fun.

CONCLUSION

There are several possibilities:

Vengeance Deferred

If the characters slay Erandis, the lich is stopped... for now. Chaos ensues as the conjunction ends and people's passions rush back in, igniting wildfires in their hearts. Will the Fury's influence be the key to lasting peace in the wake of the Last War, or the spark that starts new conflicts? Hailed as heroes, it'll be up to the characters to guide the world's passions towards good or ill.

The Fury Herself

If the Emerald Claw is defeated, his apotheosis appears to fail. Erandis feels power flow through her, however, for she has emulated the Fury's story now more truly than ever. She transforms to appear more like the goddess, then ascends to a higher plane. Perhaps Erandis always has been and always will be the Fury—a goddess waiting for her own story to play out. Gods laugh at linear time.

Best Served Cold

If the characters fail to stop Erandis, the conjunction eventually ends, leaving the dragons and elves devastated... and millions of bystanders dead. Revenge was all Erandis had left, but even without that driving passion, she cannot die. Her undead existence continues, forever unfulfilled.

REWARDS

The Undying Court (Vengeance Deferred) or the Fury (The Fury Herself) bestow an epic boon upon each character.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to Keith Baker and the entire team of talented writers and designers who created the Eberron campaign setting, which continues to be a source of excitement and inspiration for so many. All my love to Aya Golender for being a constant wellspring of support.

AUTHOR BIO

Dylan Ramsey is a lifelong Eberron fan and history nerd. The first book he bought with his own money was the 3.5 *Monster Manual*, and the first game was *Warcraft 3: The Frozen Throne*. If fantasy roleplaying wasn't an obsession before then, it has been ever since. He's run campaigns for such illustrious groups as the Chaos Crew, the Pizza Party, Brublind and the Armor Bros (feat. Mye-kuhl Jancer), and the Sixteen Rapiers and a Small Intestine, chronicling their many misadventures for future generations to enjoy.

Lady Illmarrow

Medium Undead, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 199 (21d8 + 105)
Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	27 (+8)	21 (+5)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +12, Int +15, Wis +12
Skills Arcana +15, History +15, Insight +12, Perception +12
Damage Resistances cold, lightning
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish
Challenge 22 (41,000 xp) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Illmarrow fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Illmarrow has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Rejuvination. Illmarrow's body turns to dust when she drops to 0 hit points, and her equipment is left behind. She gains a new body after 1d10 days, regaining all her hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within two hundred miles of the location at which she was destroyed.

Actions

Chill Touch (Cantrip). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +15 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) necrotic damage, and the target can't regain hit points until the start of Illmarrow's next turn. If the target is undead, it also has disadvantage on attack rolls against Illmarrow until the end of her next turn.

Paralyzing Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) cold damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Poison Breath (Recharge 5-6). Illmarrow exhales poisonous gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 35 (10d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the creature can't regain hit points. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned.

A humanoid reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies and rises at the start of Illmarrow's next turn as a zombie (see its entry in the *Monster Manual*). The zombie acts immediately after Illmarrow in the initiative count and is permanently under her command, following verbal orders.

Spellcasting. Illmarrow is a 20th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 23, +15 to hit with spell attacks). Illmarrow has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, fire bolt, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *magic missile, shield, sleep*
2nd level (3 slots): *blur, detect thoughts, mirror image*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, counterspell, fireball, fly, lightning bolt*
4th level (3 slots): *blight, confusion, polymorph*
5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill, cone of cold, hold monster, scrying*
6th level (2 slots): *chain lightning, circle of death, create undead*
7th level (2 slots): *finger of death, forcecage, prismatic spray*
8th level (1 slot): *incendiary cloud, maze*
9th level (1 slot): *power word kill, time stop*

continued



Legendary Actions

Illmarrow can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Illmarrow regains spent legendary action at the start of her turn.

Cantrip. Illmarrow casts a cantrip.

Paralyzing Claw. Illmarrow uses her Paralyzing Claw.

Frightening Presence (Costs 2 Actions). Illmarrow targets up to three creatures she can see within 30 feet of her. Each target must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the beginning of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Illmarrow's Frightening Presence for the next 24 hours.

Poison Breath (Costs 3 Actions). Illmarrow recharges her Poison Breath and uses it.



MORRIGHAN CORBEL

BLESSINGS OF NIGHT

by Steffie de Vaan

Goddess: Mother Night | **Setting:** Ravenloft | **Level:** 18
Content Warnings: Domestic Abuse, Revenge

SYNOPSIS

The characters arrive in the trade town of Setja in Barovia, and find it under attack by night creatures. They trace the attacks back to a lich named Jolan Rashek (she/her, elf **lich**, chaotic evil). Jolan was abused by her husband, the wizard Everhart "The Wise" Rashek (he/him, human **fiendish wizard**, lawful evil; see adventure appendix), generations ago, and prayed to Mother Night (she/her, neutral evil; see adventure appendix), for deliverance. Mother Night turned her into a lich so she could fix her own problems—except Everhart promptly took their daughter Alexa and fled to the Village of Barovia. Alexa returned to Setja later in her life, but Jolan never dared contact her or her descendants. Jolan remained alone and resentful of Everhart. Now, Everhart is back for their great-granddaughter's funeral, and Jolan is determined to kill him and anyone who stands in her way. The characters must choose sides if they want to save Setja—and possibly confront Mother Night herself.

Blessings of Night is an adventure for 4 characters of 18th level.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Blessings of Night offers several adventure hooks:

- **It's right.** Setja's outlying farms lie in ashes, their people taken as food or to become night creatures. The night army is blocking caravans traveling to and from Setja, effectively halting trade to Castle Ravenloft—which means the domain's Darklord will come to see what's wrong soon.
- **It's profitable.** Setja has an *animated shield* and *nine lives stealer longsword* in its treasury. It belonged to a Setjan folk hero, who returned to Barovia to kill Strahd. The hero failed, but Strahd sent the sword back as a reminder that he cannot be killed. Setja offers the items as rewards to any heroes who stop the night army. The characters hear of this through word of mouth.
- **It's ours.** Barovian characters hear of trouble in Setja and disruption on the northern trade route. This is a call to arms—whether they want to help the town before Strahd gets involved, or get in the Darklord's good graces.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Setja lies on Barovia's northern border and governs the trade route to Castle Ravenloft. Barovia is ruled by an ancient vampire, Strahd von Zarovich, who keeps Everhart out of Jolan's reach—getting to him would mean passing Strahd's castle and drawing his ire. Meanwhile, the people of Setja are scrambling to fix their problems before they provoke intervention from Strahd. Fortunately, Strahd is infamous for being engaged in his own obsessions, but time is running out and the last thing anyone in Barovia needs is the Darklord's personal attention. More can be found on Barovia in *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, and more on Strahd in *Curse of Strahd*.

Mother Night's Blessing. Mother Night is ancient and beyond morality—she aids women who desire vengeance by turning them into lycanthropes, night hags, or undead. Her blessing binds two hearts, that of her chosen and their foe, to her domain. She uses their dying light to fuel her stars, though she sometimes returns the physical heart as a magic item.

MOTHER NIGHT AND WOMEN
Mother Night does not view "womanhood" as a biological trait. You're a woman if you're a woman—this includes cis, trans, and genderfluid women. The best way to determine if a character falls under this umbrella is to ask the player.

VISIONS
The characters receive visions of Mother Night throughout the adventure. They will be in a box like this.

CHAPTER 1—WELCOME TO SETJA

The characters arrive at Setja late at night, to find it under attack by an army of night creatures.

Night has just fallen. The sound of battle breaks the stillness. A town, on the cusp of being a city, rises from the mist. A small army of werewolves, night hags, and vampires is attacking a caravan entering the town. The town's defenders, led by a tall woman in well-loved armor, come to the caravan's defense, but this is above their expertise.

Vision. The clouds part and a woman looks down from the sky. She is vast, carrying the stars as ornaments in her hair and cloak. She looks at a lich giving commands to the night creatures. Then the clouds close, obscuring both sky and lich.

This scene can be run as a combat encounter, or a series of skill challenges. Emphasize the chaos of the attack—the characters are one small pocket amidst the battle. Describe guards escorting citizens down cellar doors to underground shelters.

Combat Encounter

The characters are singled out by a **vampire warrior** and a coven of three **night hags** working together. The vampire harasses the characters physically, while the night hags use their Etherealness to perform hit-and-run attacks. The vampire flees when it is reduced to 25% of its hit point maximum or less; any surviving night hags follow.

Series of Skill Challenges

Let the characters decide how to solve these problems. Set the difficulty of any skill checks from **DC 20 (hard)** to **DC 25 (very hard)**, and handle success and failure as makes sense:

- An overturned caravan wagon traps a parent and young child under its canvas roof. The night creatures have not seen them yet.
- The night army sets fire to a wagon filled with sacks of barley, and the fire quickly jumps to other wagons.
- The night army forces a breach in the town wall, spilling forward to set fire to a nearby tavern (whose patrons instantly regret that they stayed to gawk).

TENDING THE WOUNDED

The night army retreats as the characters reach Setja. The guard leader, Captain Rian Darkor (she/her, dwarf **veteran**, lawful good) asks the characters to follow her. She talks to the characters as she surveys the wounded, the damage to the wall, and the state of the caravan. She tells them Setja has been under attack for six nights now. Their forays into the town itself have been limited—either by design or because the town's defenses are holding. She doesn't know *why* they're attacking. If characters ask Captain Darkor what happened six nights ago, she tells them that Baroness Emilia Rashek died and that her burial is tomorrow night—however, Captain Darkor isn't sure the events are connected.

Captain Darkor doesn't know that the night army *did* make demands—Jolan sent a letter demanding the immediate surrender of Everhart Rashek. Everhart never replied and his descendant mayor Lilian Rashek (she/her, half-elf **noble**, lawful neutral) buried the letter. Using Lilian's position, they have blocked any attempts to negotiate with the army, reasoning that Jolan will relent when Everhart leaves after the funeral.

DEVELOPMENT

Captain Darkor asks the characters to aid in Setja's defense, offering them the *animated shield* and *nine lives stealer longsword* as a reward after the night army is defeated. A successful **DC 25 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check** convinces her to hand over the items now. She asks them to find the night army camp and discover what they can about its leadership. She grumbles that it's nice *someone* is helping—although she won't elaborate, she asked Everhart for aid and he refused.

CHAPTER 2—THE NIGHT ARMY

The characters set out to find the night army. The use of an appropriate spell or feature, or a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check**, leads them to the night army camp.

The sun hasn't risen yet, but morning should come soon. The camp is filled with chaos; fights break out for sport or territory. Several of the creatures stalk off to hunt.

Vision. The last stars are fading in the sky. The sky woman cups two stars in her hands: one red, its light waxing and waning like the rhythm of a heartbeat, the other a dark void wrapped by an aureole.

Characters can sneak around the outskirts of the camp freely. They can sneak inside the camp with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity (Stealth) check**, an appropriate illusion spell, or a successful **DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Performance) check** using a disguise. Sneaking around the outskirts allows the characters to overhear conversations, while sneaking inside allows them to interact and ask questions.

Overhearing conversations in the camp, the characters learn that the night army was forced together by a woman named Rashek—and the night creatures are unhappy about it. They complain about Rashek forcing them into a siege, rather than letting them kill everyone. Rashek is planning another attack the following night.

A character that succeeds on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** knows that "Rashek the Wise" is an immortal wizard hailing from Setja. A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (History) check** reveals Setja was founded by a man named Everhart Rashek, and his family still holds power. Barovian characters have advantage on both checks. Characters who interact with creatures learn that Rashek "gave her heart to Mother Night in return for immortality." None of the night creatures know where Rashek is now.

BACK TO SETJA

The characters have the beginning of a timeline: the attacks started six nights ago, and the night army is planning an assault tomorrow night. If they don't already know, Captain Darkor tells the characters that Baroness Emilia Rashek died six nights ago and her burial is the following night. She also points them to a statue of Rashek the Wise in the town square: he is a tall man with noble features, wearing a robe and holding a smooth staff. The Rashek family maintains a manor in town, now owned by Baron Alexander Rashek. Lilian Rashek, Alexander's aunt, serves as Setja's mayor.

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters investigate Rashek the Wise, move to Chapter 3. If they fortify the town and wait for the night army to attack, go to Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3—THE RASHEK MANOR

The characters visit the sprawling Rashek Manor where the late Baroness Emilia Rashek lies in state.

Rashek Manor totals three floors and two side wings. The manor grounds are modest, but well-kept. The manor is dressed in mourning colors, black drapes drawn tight against the world. Servants dressed in livery bustle around.

Vision. The sky woman's dark hair and cloak envelop the manor, stifling but not unbidden. A small oculus window in the attic sparkles. She looks at your group, slowly taking an interest.

The characters can slip inside under the guise of visiting the wake. A character can make a **DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** to unlock a latched window from the outside.

The Ground Floor

Baroness Emilia lies in state in the parlor. A short, average-looking man wearing a black *robe of the archmagi* and carrying a black metal staff, stands at the center of the mourning family. He is Everhart "The Wise" Rashek, immortal wizard of Barovia. Everhart resides in the Village of Barovia, near Castle Ravenloft, where he advises the Darklord on matters of the arcane. He returned to Setja to attend Baroness Emilia's funeral. Despite doing his best to appear like a genteel old man, a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that Everhart's family is scared of him.

A character asking Everhart about his personal history makes a **DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check**—laying on the flattery grants advantage on this check. On a success, he reveals that he left Setja after his wife died. That was some two-hundred years ago—Everhart likes to remind everyone he's immortal. Their daughter, Alexa Rashek, later traveled back to their ancestral home. Everhart won't name his wife, claiming it's too painful—a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals he's lying, but no amount of prompting elicits more information from him. If asked, Everhart has no idea why the night army is attacking—he's lying, again.

Striking a rapport with a family member leads them to confess that Everhart is ruthless, power-hungry, and demands his descendants emulate the same traits—he disinherits any who don't surpass expectations. Everhart also brings money, connections to Castle Ravenloft, and the promise of power to any who obey him. Between carrot and stick, the family never dares to disobey.

The Downstairs

The downstairs holds the kitchen, servants' quarters, and food and wine cellars.

The Upper Floor

The upper hallway holds a portrait gallery of the Rashek family. Most prominently displayed is Baron Alexander Rashek with his family—he has a husband and four children. Following the hallway to the right yields a painting of Everhart and a little girl, a bronze plaque proclaiming them to be "Baron Everhart and Alexa Rashek." A character with a **passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher** notices that the painting has been altered—there is a large dark swath to the girl's other side. A character who succeeds on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** can make out the outline of a woman underneath the dark paint. If a character takes the bronze plaque off the wall, "Baron Everhart, Baroness Jolan, and Alexa Rashek" is engraved on the other side.

The Attic

The attic holds discarded family heirlooms, clothing trunks, and furniture. A character who looks for hidden doors, or has a **passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher**, notices that the attic is smaller than it should be. The back of the attic holds a secret room—the characters can bust the door with a successful **DC 15 Strength check**, or pick the lock with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools**. The room holds an oculus window and a small altar. On the altar lie an athame knife, a partially burnt candle, a copper water bowl, a silver bell, and a leather-bound tome.

The first page of the tome reads "Journal of Jolan Rashek." Flipping through various entries unfolds the tale of Jolan. She writes that her husband, Everhart, cavorted with devils and beat her. She received no aid from the other town founders, who insisted Everhart would never do such a thing or traded her safety for the prosperity Everhart's business brought. Jolan prayed



MORRIGHAN CORBEL

to Mother Night, and the Dread Power offered her the power to protect and avenge herself. Jolan gave her heart to Mother Night and received immortality. The diary picks up again later, revealing Everhart survived Jolan's attack, and fled with their daughter Alexa to the Village of Barovia. She tried to go after him, but Strahd warned her not to come near Castle Ravenloft. The diary ends with Jolan vowing revenge should Everhart ever return to Setja.

Two glued-together pages towards the back of the tome, noticeable by a character with a **passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher**, hold a miniature portrait of Jolan and Alexa. The characters recognize Alexa from her painting in the gallery. A successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** allows a character to recognize Jolan, still alive in the portrait, as the lich from the vision in Chapter 1.

A woman who touches an item from the altar draws the attention of Mother Night, who converses telepathically with the character. Mother Night is only invested in helping people get revenge and loses interest if that's not where the conversation is headed. If the character does seek revenge, Mother Night blesses them by turning them into a vampire (use the Player Characters as Vampires rules from the *Monster Manual*). Mother Night only blesses one of the characters—choose whose thirst for vengeance is most compelling if there are multiple supplicants. Seeking revenge against Jolan for attacking Setja is valid.

DEVELOPMENT

The characters uncovered the story of Jolan Rashek, leader of the night army, and her quarry Everhart Rashek. If they press Everhart, or bring this information to mayor Lilian, either admits Jolan sent a letter demanding Everhart's surrender. The night army, if the characters make their way back to the camp, has left in preparation for the assault. Whatever comes next, will happen during Baroness Emilia's burial.

CHAPTER 4—THE BURIAL

The burial of Baroness Emilia takes place just after dark—this, and the long wake, ensure the deceased is actually dead.

The sun sets, leaving the land to dreary fog and rain. The Rashek family attends the funeral, along with townsfolk and members of the guard. The town bells sound from the direction of the gate, and Captain Darkor looks up sharply. She nods at you to stay here, before leading her guards back to the gates.

Vision. Darkness sets quickly, forcing the last rays of sunlight behind mists and shadow. The sky woman is eager. Small stars flicker with excitement—fate unfolds tonight.

Jolan (she/her, elf **lich**, chaotic evil) attacks the funeral, knowing it's not as well defended as Rashek Manor. She has access to her lair actions, claiming all of Setja as her domain. She launched most of her night army against the town gates to draw any guards away, keeping a small force at her side. Everhart summons a host of devils to serve as a buffer between himself and Jolan. The congregation flees the battle, both night creatures and devils relishing in the destruction. The characters must choose which side to take.

Side with Everhart. Setja was fine until Jolan brought an army to town. If the characters side with Everhart to kill Jolan, they leave Everhart's devils to eliminate the night creatures and the wizard retreats—he didn't become an immortal by taking risks—mumbling something about his presence enraging Jolan further. If the characters win, the sky darkens until they find themselves on an endless black plane. Continue with Mother Night.

Side with Jolan. Everhart (he/him, human **fiendish wizard**, lawful evil; see adventure appendix) is a domestic abuser. He traipses around with devils and advises Strahd. If the characters side with Jolan to take out Everhart, he summons a **pit fiend** to protect him. The characters must choose who they want to fight, Everhart (who has access to his lair actions, here in his hometown) or the pit fiend (who uses the *Devil Summoning* variant rules from the *Monster Manual*). Jolan fights the other. Her battle mimics the characters': she succeeds if they succeed. If the characters win, the sky darkens until they find themselves on an endless black plane. Continue with Mother Night.

Side with Setja. The characters agree to protect Setja, and the town is in trouble. This scene can be run as a combat encounter, with characters facing two **erinyes**, or as a series of skill challenges, as the characters protect the town. Let the characters decide how to solve these problems and set the difficulty of any skill checks from **DC 20 (hard)** to **DC 25 (very hard)**, with checks for particularly outlandish solutions set to **DC 30 (nearly impossible)**:

- A cluster of townsfolk tries to reach an underground shelter. They must get there without leading the night army to the shelter, and find a way to open the rusted door.
- Setja's largest storage building is on fire.
- A pair of **horned devils** are using a lattice of red crystals to open a gate to the nine hells. One **pit fiend** has already emerged and more will follow.

The sky darkens as the battle between Jolan and Everhart ends. The characters find themselves on an endless black plane. Continue with Mother Night.



GRETCHEN MEINZEN

MOTHER NIGHT

Darkness expands in all directions. Up and down have no meaning. Stars spring into being as you watch. Drowning out their presence is a darkness older than the universe itself, coalescing into a raven-haired woman. Behind her stands a long line of women of all body types, skin ranging from alabaster to ebony, each wrapped in the same cloak.

The characters gain the benefits of a long rest. A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that the other women were also Mother Night. Any character who is a woman senses they could pray to Mother Night for a blessing. Before anyone can act, Mother Night speaks.

Mother Night blessed Jolan so she could take revenge, weighing two powers—Jolan's and Everhart's—and finding them balanced. The characters weren't part of that balance, and Mother Night demands to know what gives them the right to get involved. Persuading Mother Night requires a successful **DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. The DC for this check is lowered to 20 if the characters aided Jolan, or if they appeal to Mother Night's sense of vengeance. If the characters convince Mother Night, continue with "Take a Star". If they don't, she sends them back. If the characters defeat Mother Night in combat they win the *Cloak of Night*.

If the characters did not get involved, roll a die: Jolan wins on evens, Everhart on odds. Mother Night allows the victor to take the star heart of the vanquished.

Take a Star

Jolan's heart, which doubles as her soul repository, is a red star sparkling in Mother Night's domain. Everhart's heart is a dark star. The characters can take the star of their vanquished foe. Identifying the right star in the sky requires that they name three facts about the vanquished, or succeed at a **DC 30 Intelligence (Arcana) check**. If Jolan killed Everhart, she doesn't want his heart and passes the claim to the characters. If Everhart killed Jolan, he greedily takes her heart as his trophy.

CONCLUSION

The characters saved Setja, returned stability to Barovia, and faced Mother Night herself. They receive the town's thanks, and Captain Darkor makes sure they get the promised rewards.

If the characters killed Everhart. Mayor Lilian is displeased, but can't act against the characters without revealing her complicity. She gives them a *deck of many things* as reward—secretly hoping they'll draw ill fortune.

If the characters killed Jolan. Strahd von Zarovich is pleased that his enemy has been thwarted, but worried of the threat that the characters might pose to him. He sends a letter thanking them for keeping the northern route safe and declaring that he is certain they have *other places* to be. He encloses a *deck of many things* as a token of appreciation.

If the characters killed Mother Night. There must always be a Mother Night. See the *Cloak of Night* for more information.

REWARDS

In addition to the *animated shield*, the *nine lives stealer longsword*, the *deck of many things*, and possibly Everhart's black *robe of the archmagi* (which can only be attuned to by an evil character), the characters may have claimed one of the following:

Jolan's Star Heart

Wondrous item, very rare

This red-ruby heart allows you to use your action to summon a **lich** which is under your control. The lich remains for one hour or until you dismiss it as a free action. The heart cannot be used this way again until the next dusk. You can use a free action to crush the heart and destroy the lich.

Everhart's Star Heart

Wondrous item, very rare

This black-onyx heart allows you to use your action to summon a **fiendish wizard** (see adventure appendix) which is under your control. The wizard remains for one hour or until you dismiss it as a free action. The heart cannot be used this way again until the next dusk. You can use a free action to crush the heart and destroy the wizard.

Cloak of Night

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

You become Mother Night (or Father/Parent Night) by donning this cloak. If there is no Mother Night, Barovia's Darklord is free to leave Ravenloft and Barovia slowly ceases to exist.

The new Mother Night immediately gains these benefits and drawbacks:

- Your alignment becomes neutral on the good/evil axis.
- Enough experience points to reach character level 20.
- Legendary Resistance (3/Day).
- Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
- Three compulsions of your design with DM approval (as an example, Mother Night's compulsions were "women first," "serve vengeance," and "maintain balance").
- You can travel freely in the realms of Ravenloft, but never beyond.
- You gain 1 extra attunement slot to use for the *Cloak of Night*.
- You cannot remove or end your attunement to the *Cloak of Night* until someone defeats you, at which point the cloak becomes theirs.

AUTHOR BIO

Steffie de Vaan is a Dutch writer and developer of roleplaying games and short stories. She developed the *Legendlore* RPG and *V5: Fall of London*, and has written for many other games including *Ravenloft: Mist Hunters*, *Changeling the Lost*, *Exalted Essence*, and *Call of Cthulhu*. She published two acclaimed indie RPG books: *2 Women | 12 Games*, and *City of Blood*.

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Fiendish Wizard

Medium Humanoid, Typically Chaotic or Lawful Evil

The fiendish wizard long transcended any notion of morality, gaining extraordinary innate powers through their long lifetime of making fiendish bargains. A lawful evil fiendish wizard specializes in devils and speaks Infernal. A chaotic evil fiendish wizard specializes in demons and speaks Abyssal.

Armor Class 18 (*robe of the archmagi*)
Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +12, Wis +10
Skills Arcana +19, Deception +9, Insight +10, Perception +1o
Damage Resistances damage from spells
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Abyssal or Infernal, Common
Challenge 22 (41,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the fiendish wizard fails a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead.

Mage Sight. Magical darkness does not impede the fiendish wizard's senses.

Magic Resistance. The fiendish wizard has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Treasure. The fiendish wizard wears a black *robe of the archmagi*. The increase granted by this item to spell save DC and spell attack bonus are included above.

Actions

Freezing Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) cold damage. The target must succeed on a successful DC 22 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on themselves on a success.

Spellcasting. The fiendish wizard is a 20th–level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). The fiendish wizard has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, prestidigitation, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *magic missile, shield, Tasha's hideous laughter, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, ray of enfeeblement*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, fly, fireball*
4th level (3 slots): *Evard's black tentacles, dimension door*
5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill, wall of force*
6th level (2 slots): *disintegrate, globe of invulnerability*
7th level (2 slots): *finger of death, reverse gravity*
8th level (1 slot): *incendiary cloud, mind blank**
9th level (1 slot): *time stop*
* The fiendish wizard casts this on themself before combat.

Legendary Actions

The fiendish wizard can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The fiendish wizard regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

Cantrip. The fiendish wizard casts a cantrip.

Freezing Touch (Costs 2 Actions). The fiendish wizard uses their Freezing Touch.

Force Bolt (Costs 2 Actions). Each living creature within 20 feet of the fiendish wizard must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw against this magical effect, taking 21 (6d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

continued

Summon Fiend (Costs 3 Actions). The fiendish wizard summons a number of fiends depending on their alignment. A lawful evil fiendish wizard summons 2d4 **bearded devils**, 1d4 **barbed devils**, or one **erinyes** with no chance of failure. A chaotic evil fiendish wizard has a 50 percent chance to summon 1d8 **vrocks**, 1d4 **glabrezus**, or one **goristro**. The summoned fiends appear in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of the fiendish wizard, act as their ally, and cannot summon other fiends. They remain for 1 minute, until they or the fiendish wizard dies, or until the fiendish wizard dismisses them.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the fiendish wizard takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. They can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- The fiendish wizard rolls a d8 and regains a spell slot of that level or lower. If they have no spent spell slots of that level or lower, nothing happens.
- The fiendish wizard places a curse on one creature they can see within 30 feet. Whenever the fiendish wizard takes damage, the target must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the wizard takes half the damage (rounded down), and the target takes the remaining damage. This curse lasts until initiative count 20 on the next round or until the fiendish wizard or the target is no longer in the lair.
- Abyssal flame (chaotic evil) or hellfire (lawful evil) erupts from the ground in a 20-foot radius centered on a point the fiendish wizard can see within 120 feet of them. Each creature that starts its turn in the affected area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Mother Night

Gargantuan Celestial (Deity), Neutral Evil

Armor Class 25 (natural armor)
Hit Points 676 (33d20 + 330)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	16 (+3)	30 (+10)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +19, Int +14, Wis +14
Skills Arcana +14, History +14, Insight +14, Perception +14
Damage Resistances damage from spells
Damage Immunities fire, poison, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 120ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages All
Challenge 30 (155,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +9

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Mother Night fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Mother Night has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Frightful Presence. When a creature ends its turn within 120 feet of Mother Night, she can force it to make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, with disadvantage if Mother Night is within line of sight, ending the effect on themselves on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for them, the creature is immune to Mother Night's Frightful Presence until the next sunset.

Starshine. Any time Mother Night is targeted by a *magic missile* spell, a line of effect spell, or a spell that requires a ranged attack roll, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, Mother Night is unaffected, and the effect is reflected back at the caster, turning the caster into the target.

Treasure. Mother Night wears the *Cloak of Night* (see adventure appendix).

Actions

Multiattack. Mother Night makes five attacks: two with her hair, two with her claws, and one with her cloak. She can use obscure instead of her cloak attack.

Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (4d12 + 10) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, they are grappled (escape DC 20). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. Mother Night's hair can only restrain two targets at a time.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d8 + 10) necrotic damage.

Cloak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d6 + 10) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, they must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Obscure. Mother Night makes a cloak attack targeting a single creature she has grappled. If the attack hits, the target takes 24 (4d6 + 10) necrotic damage and is obscured by the cloak, and the grapple ends. While obscured, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks, and it takes 56 (16d6) necrotic damage at the start of each of Mother Night's turns. If Mother Night takes 60 damage or more on a single turn, she must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or release all obscured creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of Mother Night. If Mother Night dies, all obscured are released. Creatures who die obscured by Mother Night's cloak become stars in her firmament, and cannot be returned to life or undeath unless Mother Night releases them.

Legendary Actions

Mother Night can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Mother Night regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Attack. Mother Night makes one claw or cloak attack.

continued

Night Step. Mother Night magically teleports, along with any equipment she is wearing or carrying and any creatures she has grappled, up to 120 ft. to an unoccupied space she can see that is in darkness.

Starlight (Costs 2 Actions). Mother Night emits a burst of starlight. Each creature in a 15-foot radius must make a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 17 (2d6 + 10) fire damage and is blinded for 1d4 rounds. On a successful save the target takes half damage and is not blinded.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Mother Night takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. Mother Night can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- Mother Night manipulates fate, granting herself advantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- Stars assault each foreign creature in Mother Night's lair. Targets must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- Creatures who die in Mother Night's lair until initiative count 20 on the next round become stars in her firmament, and cannot be returned to life or undeath unless Mother Night releases them.



SEJUTI BALA

THE EXIGENCY OF AFFLICTION

by Anthony Beal

Goddess: Pharika | **Setting:** Theros | **Level:** 20

Content Warnings: Allusions to Suicide, Disease, Global Pandemic, Racial/Cultural Hatred

SYNOPSIS

A deadly plague ravages Theros unchecked. Known as Seeping Cerulean, it is fatal to all. Magic can neither cure it nor even slow its progress. As Theros reaches a critical point, Pharika, Goddess of Affliction, reaches out to the party to help find a cure, which must be found before all are doomed.

Their investigation takes the party from an abandoned laboratory, through a medical camp, and finally to the Ashlands, all while witnessing both the good and the ill that the plague has brought. Their journey brings them to a strange portal, the alien creature that is the source of the disease, and the knowledge that Pharika knows far more than she is letting on.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The Exigency of Affliction is a 20th-level adventure for 4–6 players. Pharika, Goddess of Affliction, reaches out to the player characters to put them on the hunt for a cure for Seeping Cerulean.

BACKGROUND

This adventure can be run as either a one-shot or as part of a larger campaign. If running it long term, consider seeding the spread of Seeping Cerulean before the adventure begins.

PHARIKA'S PLAN

Seeping Cerulean's source is the diseased elder aboleth, Ephikix. Pharika discovered the portal to its prison a decade ago, along with the disease it carries. Studying the disease with her most trusted priestess Sephita, both were troubled by the discovery of other worlds and afflictions. Theros was not ready for such a disease. Once a cure was found she laid out her plan.

Pharika released Seeping Cerulean on the people of Theros to terrify them and make them wary of other worlds. With this knowledge, she hoped the people of Theros would prepare for the future that she views as inevitable.

Rather than providing the cure, Pharika decided that setting heroes on a quest would help drive her message home. As champions of the Gods, the party would be celebrated in poems and songs, thus the story of the plague would live beyond those who survived it.

Seeping Cerulean

The plague has 5 stages, listed below. When a creature comes into contact with Seeping Cerulean, they must succeed on a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw** to avoid contracting the disease. Every 24 hours after initial infection, an infected creature must make another Constitution saving throw to determine if the disease progresses. On a failed save, the disease progresses to the next stage; on a successful save, the disease remains at the current stage for another day.

Here are the stages of disease progression starting with initial infection:

- ***Stage 1.*** The creature is infected with, and can transmit, Seeping Cerulean to others.
- ***Stage 2, DC 17 Constitution saving throw.*** The creature experiences a high fever and a pallid complexion. Characters at this stage have disadvantage on ability checks.
- ***Stage 3, DC 20 Constitution saving throw.*** The creature begins seeping cerulean fluid from open wounds and major sweat glands. Any healing effects that an infected creature receives are halved.
- ***Stage 4, DC 23 Constitution saving throw.*** The creature constantly seeps cerulean fluid from its body and no longer benefits from finishing a long rest.
- ***Stage 5, DC 26 Constitution saving throw.*** A creature that enters this stage dies, and remains contagious for 24 hours.

Healthy characters make the initial **Constitution saving throw** to avoid infection when interacting with an already infected creature, unprotected, in the following ways:

- They touch or are touched by an infected creature.
- They are within 5 feet of an infected creature that is hit by an attack.
- They touch any of the cerulean fluid left by an infected creature.
- They come within 10 feet of a Stage 4 infected creature.

Cerulean fluid remains infectious for 24 hours, at which point it hardens into a sponge-like material, and is safe to handle. Additionally, DMs should note:

- Seeping Cerulean ignores resistance and immunity to disease, including those gained from racial traits or class features.
- No magical ability, spell, or mundane cure can stop the disease.
- Only constructs, plants, and undead are immune to Seeping Cerulean.
- Nyxborn creatures can contract Seeping Cerulean, but it never progresses beyond Stage 1.

Wish & The Other Gods

The goddess Klothys governs destiny on Theros. Any attempt to use the *wish* spell to cure or eliminate Seeping Cerulean fails. Those affected by the plague have met their appointed ends and Klothys forbids anything that challenges this view.

The same can be said about seeking aid from the other gods. While sympathetic, Theros' deities are not omnipotent. Each is busy tending to their aspect of Theros during this crisis.

Major NPCs

Pharika, Goddess of Affliction
(she/her, deity, neutral evil)

Everything that has befallen Theros is of Pharika's design. Theros is unprepared for what she sees as the eventuality of a plague from another world. She wants Theros to recognize this threat. Simply delivering a cure risks changing nothing once the plague slips from memory. By having heroes quest for the cure, their story will be immortalized, ensuring the lessons live on forever. She wants the party to be complicit in this lie.

Sephita, Priestess of Pharika
*(she/her, **medusa** priestess, lawful evil)*

Sephita is a **medusa** and a devoted priestess of Pharika who has served for decades. Sephita was tasked with spreading the plague. Kind and sympathetic, she fully supports Pharika's plan, despite the carnage it has caused.

Ephikix the Diseased
(it/its, diseased elder aboleth (see adventure appendix), lawful evil)

Ephikix would be a pitiful creature were it not for the deadly cunning it sometimes shows. The diseased aboleth is the source of Seeping Cerulean. Pharika discovered a portal to its quarantine prison in the Far Realm, harvesting the disease from there to enact her plan.

Information Gathering

Each area of the adventure features information the party can uncover. Unless that information requires a successful skill check, the party discovers the information automatically.

Events

Below is a random table of specific events that highlight the negative effects of the plague on Theros. Choose or roll to determine which of these events occur. You should highlight at least one event in Chapter 1 and another in Chapter 2, though you can choose to use more.

EVENTS TABLE

1d4	Event
1	An exiled alchemist (**cult fanatic**) from Meletis has declared Theros doomed. His followers (1d10 + 5 **cultists**) are planning a mass suicide event to "hasten our oneness with the Gods." The families of the followers (1d12 + 6 **commoners**) are intermixed with them and are being forced to participate. Not all of his followers look as convinced as the alchemist that this is the right thing to do.
2	A group of starving refugees (1d12 + 6 **commoners**) approaches you on the road. They are starving and desperate, seeking to gain aid from you. Several of them obviously have the plague. They grow more volatile the closer they come to you.
3	A mob of humans (1d4 + 3 **veterans**; 1d6 + 5 **bandits**) hold a **satyr** hostage near a large pyre. Spewing hate speech about "beast people" causing the plague, they intend to "purify" the satyr. The mob cannot be reasoned with.
4	You pass through a village with bodies of the villagers scattered throughout, all victims of the plague. A survivor emerges, a young man who is deep in Stage 4 infection. He begs you to kill him to end his suffering.

CHAPTER 1 — THE PREDICAMENT

A figure looms in the sky above you, endless as the horizon. She is instantly recognizable as Pharika, Goddess of Affliction. Gazing down at you, her voice echoes with a rich timbre, "Champions, listen well, for there is not much time before Theros is doomed."

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The party knows there is a plague sweeping Theros, though not necessarily the size, scope, and danger of it. The information Pharika provides is marked as either true or false. It is impossible for the party to know when she is lying.

If this adventure is being run as a one-shot, Pharika transports the party close to their initial destination after she speaks to them. If this adventure is part of a longer campaign, the characters (and their story) may benefit from traveling to the area by foot.

Pharika narrates the following information about the plague to the party:

- The death toll so far is estimated at twenty percent of the humanoid population and one-third of all animal life. (Truth)
- Magic can neither cure nor stop the plague. (Truth)
- Pharika recognized the plague and found one of her abandoned laboratories broken into. (Lie, the plague originated from Ephikix, not the lab)
- Pharika believes a thief stole the formula for Seeping Cerulean as well as the formula for its cure. (Lie, all the diseases in the lab are minor colds, nothing dangerous)
- Pharika has been unable to divine the thief and needs the party to track them while she searches for other means of a possible cure. (Lie, Pharika already has a cure)

Pharika asks the party to tell no one of the theft. It might tip off the thief or their allies, as well as cause even more panic within the populace. The lab is on the edge of the Nessian Woods, east of Hunter's Crossing. They must look for a stand of golden trees and speak a command word to open the way.

LABORATORY GROVE

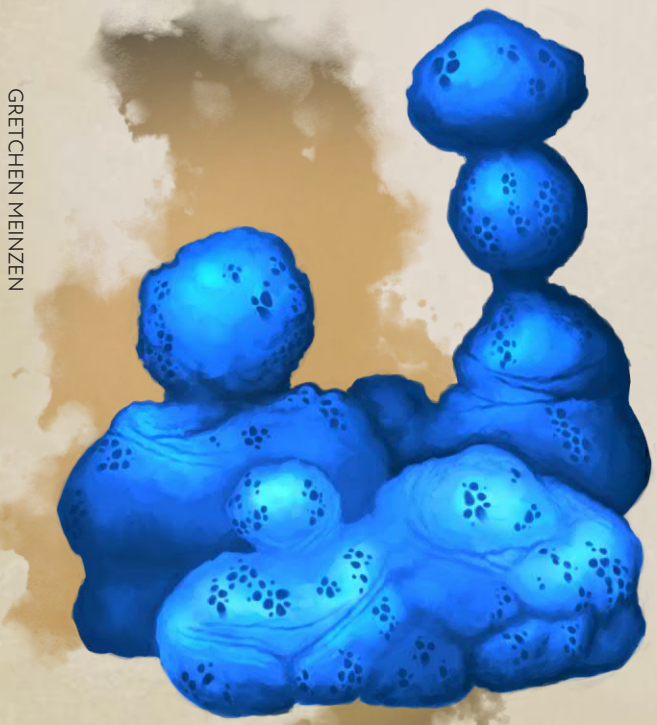
Upon arriving at the Nessian Woods, have the party make a **DC 22 Wisdom (Survival) check** to locate the stand of golden trees. On a success, they find the stand within a few hours. On a failed check, it takes an entire day to locate.

You come around a thicket, and see an awe-inspiring sight: a large, round stand of golden-hued trees bathing the surrounding forest in soft light.

Speaking the command word causes the trees to part, creating a path to the center. The interior is open to the sky and stretches out in a circle, 70 feet in diameter. Tables filled with alchemical equipment sit at the center of the clearing. The trees around the edge support dozens of unknown fruit—each the size of a pineapple—from their branches.

The laboratory is warded and divination magic does not work here. The following clues can be gathered from the laboratory:

- One of the branches is cut and its fruit is missing.
- A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check** notes the branch was cut approximately 60 days ago.
- A successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) check** allows a character to recall myths that tell how Pharika hid the formula for diseases inside fruit.
- If a character eats a fruit, they gain knowledge about one disease and its cure. Additionally, they must make a **DC 22 Constitution saving throw** to avoid taking 22 (5d8) poison damage and being poisoned for 8 hours. On a successful save, the character takes half damage and is not poisoned.



GRETCHEN MEINZEN

- The alchemical equipment on the table has been used recently, and constitutes a full set of alchemist's supplies.
- A character who succeeds on a **DC 24 Intelligence (Arcana) check**, or a **DC 18 Intelligence check using alchemist's supplies**, discerns that an alchemical process was used to turn the fruit into a liquid ink.
- With a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check**, or a **DC 16 Intelligence check using alchemist's supplies**, the process can be repeated with another fruit in the grove. The ink is magical, guiding the hand that writes with it to record the alchemical process for creating one disease or poison as well as its cure or antitoxin.
- Part of a map has been burned by something acidic, as if someone was trying to hide it. The section remaining shows the village of Tarama circled. Tarama is located to the northeast, along the main road.

DEVELOPMENT

The party completes the investigation of the laboratory grove and heads north to track the thief.

CHAPTER 2 — THE PLAGUE

TARAMA MEDICAL CAMP

The trail leads you towards the village of Tarama, which is several miles west of Tethmos. The acrid smell of putrefaction hits you more than a mile out, a grim marker for your destination.

A hastily constructed fortification of thick logs surrounds a medical camp on the outskirts of the abandoned village. Remnants of the local militia guard the camp. Behind the walls, long white tents sit on the eastern side while the western side is reserved for refugees. Corpses lay stacked like firewood and workers in full leather suits dig mass graves for the dead. More refugees huddle in tents 50 yards from the camp.

The camp has been established by a contingent of leonin healers, which is unusual behavior for the catlike race. Having heard of the hardships of the people of Tarama, the leonin helped build and establish this camp for the people of the village.

Tarama Clues

The following information is discoverable at the camp.

MEDICAL STAFF

The camp is led by a leonin healer named Rohola (he/him, leonin **priest**, lawful good). The following information can be gleaned by speaking with Rohola or one of his acolytes, as well as by examining patients:

- The party learns of the 5 stages of infection as well as the nature of the cerulean fluid.
- A successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check** to examine the cerulean fluid before it hardens reveals that it is viscous, shares qualities with mucus, and does not dissolve in water.
- The plague originated in the north and spread south.
- If a character spends at least 1 hour examining patients and succeeds on a **DC 30 Wisdom (Medicine) check**, they conclude the initial outbreak started 100 to 120 days before it arrived in Tarama. Reduce the DC of the check by 2 for each additional hour spent examining patients up to a maximum of 8 hours (to a minimum DC of 14).

REFUGEES

The refugees inside the walls of the camp are what remains of the people who lived in Tarama. The following information can be learned by speaking to the survivors:

- The plague arrived in Tarama approximately 60 days ago.
- A **medusa** passed through town traveling from the south after the first signs of the plague had come to Tarama. She only stopped long enough to purchase supplies. She mentioned that she was traveling toward the Ashlands.
- A Taraman refugee remembers the **medusa** wearing a talisman shaped like an amber eye. A character who succeeds on a **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check** discerns that the talisman was an *amulet of proof against detection and location*.

DEVELOPMENT

The party leaves Tarama to continue north.

CHAPTER 3 – THE GODDESS

ASHLANDS MEETING SPOT

As the party enters the borders of the Ashlands, they encounter something previously unheard of. A group of Skophos minotaurs seem to be teaching a group of Akroan peasants to fight. Both groups look tired and hungry but are getting along well, despite their history of war. The female **minotaur** leading them refuses to give her name, but if asked, she gives the party the following information.

- The minotaurs of Skophos have entered into an alliance with the peasantry of Akros. In exchange for supplies, they are teaching them how to fight, so that they can overthrow the rule of the Lektoi and the system that keeps them oppressed.
- A red-skinned medusa has lived in a cave near the city for over 10 years.
- The medusa is a hermit who travels to Skophos to trade. She always wears a holy symbol of Pharika.
- A successful **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces the minotaur to trust the party with the knowledge that nearly half the population of Skophos is dead.

She provides directions to the area where the hermit's cave is and allows them to leave without incident, as long as they agree to say nothing of what they saw.

THE CAVE

A crack in the side of the rock formation marks the entrance to the cave. Once inside, the interior is sparsely furnished. A red-skinned **medusa** (Sephita, she/her, priestess, lawful evil) stands near a huge, shimmering portal.

> The medusa snaps up at the sound of your approach but her body relaxes when she sees you. "Finally, you are here. I am Sephita, and we don't have much time. It is close to escape."

Sephita steps through the portal at the rear of the cave from which leaks the same cerulean fluid as plague victims.

THE FAR REALM

Stepping through the portal leads to the Far Realm. The characters arrive on a flat chunk of black obsidian; large tidal pools dot the craggy surface and the ground is slick with cerulean fluid. All around them, the weird, amoebic sea of the plane dances. Sephita is huddled in a far corner.

The surface is level except for a large stone tablet standing at the center. It reads, in Deep Speech, "Here is the prison of Ephikix, the diseased one. Let it howl in isolation until the multiverse turns to dust."

Ephikix will speak to the party, revealing that it is ravenous, and intends to descend upon Theros or force them to destroy it, so that it can reform elsewhere. Ephikix then attacks. It also attacks if the party tries to reenter the portal.

EPHIKIX'S LAIR

The obsidian that makes up the floor of the lair is only 5 feet thick on the surface. The tidal pools lead to a vast 100-foot-deep underwater chamber beneath the party's feet. Ephikix will attempt to draw them into this underwater pool.

COMBAT

Ephikix is a Mythic Encounter, as described in *Mythic Odysseys of Theros*. Once initiative is rolled, the portal back to Theros is inaccessible. It fights to the death, knowing it will be reborn afterward. Ephikix's prison plane counts as its lair.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside its lair, Ephikix can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Ephikix takes a lair action, using the lair actions of an **aboleth** with the following changes:

- The save DC for lair actions is increased to DC 24.
- The grasping tide action reaches out to all creatures within 25 feet and does not require the creature to be on the ground.
- The damage inflicted by the creature's rage is increased to 11 (2d10) psychic damage.

DEVELOPMENT

The party defeats Ephikix and returns from the prison plane.

CONCLUSION

When the party returns through the portal, Pharika is waiting for them. She offers them the cure for Seeping Cerulean before revealing her plan (see "Pharika's Plan").

> "Once a bone is broken and set, it cannot break in the same place again. I have broken Theros; it is your choice on how to set it back and strengthen it."

Pharika lays out two options for the party, telling them she cannot interfere, as it is their destiny to make this choice. The options are laid out on the next page, with a list of potential outcomes, all of which Pharika claims to have foreseen.



SEJUTI BALA

OUTCOMES

This decision is not easy. Players and their characters may have different reactions to this knowledge. Conflict between the characters could occur. Make sure all players are consenting participants if you allow fighting between their characters.

Maintain the Lie. Choosing this path, the party agrees to uphold Pharika's lie. Sephita, who believes in Pharika and her plan without question, plays the part of the "misguided pawn" of an alien outsider who spread death over the land and is executed for her "crimes." The following will happen in Theros:

- Faith in the gods grows because their champions delivered Theros from annihilation.
- Social and political change thrive in the wake of the plague.
- New thinking, alliances, and plans are set in place for mass plagues of the future.
- Due to Ephikix and Sephita's involvement, hatred and bigotry of all outsiders grows, especially in the major cities.
- The senseless murder of one-fifth of Theros' population, and one-third of its animal life, goes unanswered.
- If the truth later comes out, the consequences are chaotic, bloody, and severe.

Tell the Truth. Choosing this path, the party decides to expose Pharika's lie. Sephita is eventually hunted down and killed for her part in the plot. The following happens to Theros:

- The Gods, particularly Pharika, are blamed for the plague. There is no rise of racial or cultural bigotry.
- Worship of Pharika is outlawed in the polis and her temples are razed.
- The truth is out in the open, negating much of the chaos it would otherwise cause later.
- The gods and their servants are highly mistrusted and even vilified.
- In their anger at the gods, the people of Theros lose sight of any important lessons. Widespread social and political change does not occur.
- Because no stories, poems, or songs are written about the heroes' deeds, the events of the plague eventually fade from memory and no plans to deal with mass plagues are set out for the future.

REWARDS

If the party aids Pharika, they become celebrated heroes and can exert influence over the direction and development of Theros' future. However, they must live with the guilt of what they covered up hanging over them, as well as the knowledge of the ruin it would cause to Theros should the truth later come out.

If the party chooses to tell the truth, they are momentarily hailed for their dedication to the people. Eventually, their association with the gods will cause them to be vilified along with them. No stories will be told of their deeds and they will not have any influence on Theros' future.

AUTHOR'S NOTES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Pharika seems to me to be different from her Therosian siblings. Epic magic and splendor permeate Theros, but hers is a scientific mind, defying her world. What happens when magic and the gods are ineffectual? For Pharika, she absolutely believes she's done the right thing. She cares nothing for the massive loss of life, seeing it as necessary to save Theros.

This adventure is very bleak and unfortunately very real. Many of the scenarios laid out are based on Europe during the time of the Black Death. I want players of this to see the human element of an event of this scale. This adventure really ends with a moral and ethical question to the players. Can you justify the murder of thousands if it could possibly save millions? There is no easy answer. As a 20th-level adventure, I want players to realize that slaying the "bad guy" is not the end. At this level, their actions can and will shape an entire world. It is a heavy burden to bear, but a very heroic one.

Special thanks to Aleah, Alec, Amanda, Annie, Dave, George, Jeremy, Nikki, Peter and TJ for volunteering to playtest this adventure, and to my love, Jhada, for being my sounding board to this bleak chaos.

AUTHOR BIO

Anthony Beal lives in Northern Ohio. A hopeless romantic who enjoys a good slasher, when not writing he can usually be found reading a comic or singing a Taylor Swift song off-key. He can be reached **@ajbeal85** on Twitter.

Ephikix The Diseased

Gargantuan Aberration (Aboleth), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 26 (natural armor)
Hit Points 350 (20d20 + 140)
Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	28 (+9)	22 (+6)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Con +15, Int +17, Wis +14, Cha +18
Skills Arcana +17, Deception +18, History +17, Perception +14, Persuasion +18
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Damage Resistances fire, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, diseased, frightened, poisoned, prone, stunned
Senses blindsight 20 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 26 (90,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +8

Amphibious. Ephikix can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistance (4/day). When Ephikix fails a saving throw, it can choose instead to succeed.

Mucus Cloud. While underwater, Ephikix is surrounded by a thick cloud of cerulean fluid in a 15-foot diameter around it. A creature that enters this cloud must immediately make a DC 24 Strength saving throw. On a failed save the creature's speed is halved. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. The creature can also end the effect by leaving the water.

Additionally, any creature who enters the cloud that has not taken the cure for Seeping Cerulean must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is infected with Stage 3 Seeping Cerulean.

Probing Telepathy. If a creature Ephikix can see communicates telepathically with it, Ephikix knows the creature's greatest desire.

Cerulean Resilience (Mythic Trait; Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If Ephikix is reduced to 0 hit points, it doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, it gains 250 temporary hit points and all of its attacks deal an additional 6 (1d12) acid damage.

Actions

Multiattack. Ephikix makes three tentacle attacks and one tail attack.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage plus 6 (1d12) acid damage. Additionally, any creature hit by this attack that has not taken the cure for Seeping Cerulean must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is infected with Stage 3 Seeping Cerulean.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature on land, it must make a DC 24 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is knocked prone.

Acid Spit. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit; range 120 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d12) acid damage.

Enslave (3/day). Ephikix targets one creature it can see within 50 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed by Ephikix until it dies or until it is on a different plane of existence from the target. The charmed target is under Ephikix's control, can't take reactions, and Ephikix and the target can communicate telepathically with each other over any distance.

Whenever the charmed target takes damage, the target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends. Once every 24 hours, the target can repeat the saving throw if it is at least 1 mile away from Ephikix.

Legendary Actions

Ephikix can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ephikix regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. Ephikix makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tentacle. Ephikix makes one tentacle attack.

Psychic Drain (Costs 2 Actions). One creature charmed by Ephikix takes 16 (3d10) psychic damage and Ephikix regains hit points equal to the damage the creature takes.

continued

Mythic Actions

If Ephikix's mythic trait is active, it can use the options below as legendary actions as long as it has temporary hit points from Cerulean Resilience.

Tail. Ephikix makes one tail attack.

Psychic Storm (Costs 3 Actions). All creatures within 30 feet of Ephikix take 16 (3d10) psychic damage, and Ephikix regains hit points equal to the total damage taken.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside its lair, Ephikix can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Ephikix takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Ephikix casts *phantasmal force* (no components required) on any number of creatures it can see within 60 feet of it. While maintaining concentration on this effect, Ephikix can't take other lair actions. If a target succeeds on the saving throw or if the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Ephikix's phantasmal force lair action for the next 24 hours, although such a creature can choose to be affected.
- Pools of water within 90 feet of Ephikix surge outward in a grasping tide. Any creature within 25 feet of such a pool must succeed on a DC 24 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 20 feet into the water and knocked prone. Ephikix can't use this lair action again until it has used a different one.
- Water in Ephikix's lair magically becomes a conduit for the creature's rage. Ephikix can target any number of creatures it can see in such water within 90 feet of it. A target must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or take 11 (2d10) psychic damage. Ephikix can't use this lair action again until it has used a different one.



GWEN BASSETT

PREGENERATED TIER 4 CHARACTER SHEETS

When we were making this book, we knew that its biggest hurdle was going to be getting people to play Tier 4. According to Wizards of the Coast's own survey data, most campaigns fizzle out or end before they hit Tier 4 play, and many players have never played a Tier 4 game at all. However, we know that Tier 4 games are a ton of fun to play, and we want this book to help make them more accessible to everyone. That's where these characters come in!

In this appendix, you'll find four pregenerated Tier 4 player characters, all level 18, with instructions on how to level them up to 19 and 20. If your table is interested in more options, we have even more pregens available as a free digital PDF download for everyone who bought this book through DMs Guild.

Each of these pregens was designed to be fun, balanced, and as simple as we could realistically make level 18-20 characters, so any table can jump in and start playing the adventures in this book. Because Tier 4 characters can get complicated, we've formatted them as stat blocks for space and ease of navigation. Everything needed to play one of these characters is included in their stat blocks, but if anyone is interested in more details about any abilities or other aspects of a character's build, most of that information can be found in the *Player's Handbook*, with magic item descriptions found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, unless otherwise noted.

As with any pregenerated character, players are encouraged to make them their own. Character personalities and backstories are the most obvious candidates, but players and DMs can change these pregens' equipment, abilities, spells, races, and more to fit their table's needs.

We hope you find these pregens (both the four included here and the extra ones available as a free PDF download on DMs Guild) helpful and fun. Enjoy playing around in the epic world that is Tier 4!



SAMARA LEE

Halfling Battle Master Fighter 18

Small Humanoid (Stout Halfling), Chaotic Good

"Your parents have been missing for how many days? Well... shit."

Armor Class 22
Hit Points 166 (**Hit Dice** 18d10); *ring of regeneration* (equipment)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Proficiency Bonus +6
Saving Throws Str +11, Con +9; advantage on saving throws against being frightened and against poison; Indomitable fighter feature (reroll a failed save 3 times per long rest).
Skills Athletics +11, Insight +8, Intimidation +5, Persuasion +5; disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks while wearing plate armor.
Damage Resistance poison
Armor all armor, shields
Weapons simple weapons, martial weapons
Tools vehicles (land), dice, cobbler's tools
Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Halfling

Actions

Multiattack. You can attack three times, using any combination of the following:

+3 Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 + 8 bludgeoning damage or 1d8 + 8 bludgeoning damage if used with two hands. See Crusher feat for additional effects.

Javelin (thrown). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 + 5 piercing damage.

Battle Maneuvers. Battle Master feature. You can use one of the following maneuvers per attack: Disarming Attack, Distracting Strike, Goading Attack, Menacing Attack, Precision Attack, Trip Attack.

Bait and Switch. Battle Master feature. Spend at least 5 feet of movement to switch places with a willing creature within 5 feet. Until the start of your next turn, you or the other creature (your choice) gains a bonus to AC equal to the number rolled. (Note: this maneuver does not require an action to use, only movement.)

Bonus Actions

Grappling Strike. Battle Master feature. After hitting a target with a melee attack, you can try to grapple them. Add a superiority die to your Strength (Athletics) check.

Polearm Master. Feat. After taking the Attack action and attacking only with your quarterstaff, you can make another attack with the butt of the weapon as a bonus action. On a hit, you deal 1d4 + 8 bludgeoning damage.

Second Wind. Fighter feature. Once per short or long rest. Regain hit points equal to 1d10 + your fighter level.

Reactions

Polearm Master. Feat. While you are wielding your quarterstaff, enemies provoke an opportunity attack from you when they enter your reach.

Sentinel. Feat. Creatures provoke opportunity attacks when leaving your reach even if they disengage. When a creature without this feat, within 5 feet of you, attacks a target other than you, they provoke an opportunity attack. Your opportunity attacks reduce the target's speed to 0 for the rest of the turn.

Riposte. Battle Master feature. When a creature misses you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction and expend one superiority die to make a melee weapon attack against the creature. If you hit, you add the superiority die to the attack's damage roll.

BACKGROUND: MERCENARY VETERAN

You used to belong to the Flaming Fist mercenary company. Though you've since parted ways, some of your old gruff manners have stuck around, and your former connections still remain valuable and important to you.

Mercenary Life. You know the mercenary life as only someone who has experienced it can. You are able to identify mercenary companies by their emblems and you know a little about any such company, including the names and reputations of its commanders and leaders, and who has hired them recently. You can find the taverns and feasthalls where mercenaries abide in any area, as long as you speak the language. You can find mercenary work between adventures sufficient to maintain a comfortable lifestyle.

Personality Trait. I pretend I'm not, but I'm a big softie for romance, real or fictional.

Ideal. I used to fight for coin, but now I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Bond. When I was young, I met a great adventurer who inspired me. I still measure my deeds and actions against my childhood memory of them.

Flaw. I often suspect ulterior motives where there are none.

STOUT HALFLING TRAITS

Lucky. When you roll a 1 on an attack, ability check, or saving throw, you can reroll the die. You must use the new result, even if it is a 1.

Nimble. You can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than yours.

Brave. Advantage against being frightened (included in stat block).

Stout Resilience. Advantage against being poisoned and resistance to poison damage (included in stat block).

FEATS

Crusher. Once per turn, when you hit a creature with an attack that deals bludgeoning damage, you can move it 5 feet, to an unoccupied space, provided the target is no more than one size larger than you. When you score a critical hit that deals bludgeoning damage to a creature, attack rolls against that creature are made with advantage until the start of your next turn.

Sentinel. More opportunity attack conditions and effects (included in stat block).

Polearm Master. When using polearms, gain a bonus action attack and an extra opportunity attack condition (included in stat block).

Martial Adept. Gain extra superiority dice and maneuvers (included in stat block).

FIGHTER FEATURES

Fighting Style. You adopt a particular style of fighting as your specialty.

- ***Blind Fighting.*** You have blindsight with a range of 10 feet. Within that range, you can effectively see anything that isn't behind total cover, even if you're blinded or in darkness. Moreover, you can see an invisible creature within that range, unless the creature successfully hides from you.

Second Wind. Heal as a bonus action (included in stat block).

Action Surge. On your turn, you can take one additional action. You can use this feature twice per short or long rest, but only once on the same turn.

Extra Attack. Additional attacks (included in stat block).

Indomitable. You can reroll a saving throw that you fail. If you do so, you must use the new roll. You can use this feature three times between long rests.

BATTLE MASTER FEATURES

Combat Superiority. You learn maneuvers that are fueled by special dice called superiority dice. Each maneuver expends one superiority die, and you regain all superiority dice when you finish a short or long rest. You can only use one maneuver per attack.

- ***Superiority Dice.*** You have 7 superiority dice, which are d12s.
- **Maneuver save DC 19**
- ***Disarming Attack.*** When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can expend one superiority die to attempt to disarm the target, forcing it to drop one item of your choice that it's holding. You add the

superiority die to the attack's damage roll, and the target must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, it drops the object you choose. The object lands at its feet.

- ***Distracting Strike.*** When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can expend one superiority die to distract the creature, giving your allies an opening. You add the superiority die to the attack's damage roll. The next attack roll against the target by an attacker other than you has advantage if the attack is made before the start of your next turn.
- ***Goading Attack.*** When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can expend one superiority die to attempt to goad the target into attacking you. You add the superiority die to the attack's damage roll, and the target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target has disadvantage on all attack rolls against targets other than you until the end of your next turn.
- ***Menacing Attack.*** When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can expend one superiority die to attempt to frighten the target. You add the superiority die to the attack's damage roll, and the target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it is frightened of you until the end of your next turn.
- ***Precision Attack.*** When you make a weapon attack roll against a creature, you can expend one superiority die to add it to the roll. You can use this maneuver before or after making the attack roll, but before any effects of the attack are applied.
- ***Trip Attack.*** When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can expend one superiority die to attempt to knock the target down. You add the superiority die to the attack's damage roll, and if the target is Large or smaller, it must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, you knock the target prone.
- ***Bait and Switch.*** When you're within 5 feet of a creature on your turn, you can expend one superiority die and switch places with that creature, provided you spend at least 5 feet of movement and the creature is willing and isn't incapacitated. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks. Roll the superiority die. Until the start of your next turn, you or the other creature (your choice) gains a bonus to AC equal to the number rolled.
- ***Grappling Strike.*** Immediately after you hit a creature with a melee attack on your turn, you can expend one superiority die and then try to grapple the target as a bonus action (see the *Player's Handbook* for rules on grappling). Add the superiority die to your **Strength (Athletics) check**.
- ***Riposte.*** When a creature misses you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction and expend one superiority die to make a melee weapon attack against the creature. If you hit, you add the superiority die to the attack's damage roll.
- ***Ambush.*** When you make a **Dexterity (Stealth) check** or an initiative roll, you can expend one superiority die and add the die to the roll, provided you aren't incapacitated.
- ***Commanding Presence.*** When you make a **Charisma (Intimidation)**, a **Charisma (Performance)**, or a **Charisma (Persuasion) check**, you can expend one superiority die and add the superiority die to the ability check.

Student of War. Proficiency with one type of artisan's tools (included in stat block).

Know Your Enemy. If you spend at least 1 minute observing or interacting with another creature outside combat, the DM can tell you if the creature is your equal, superior, or inferior in regard to two of the following characteristics of your choice:

- Strength score
- Dexterity score
- Constitution score
- Armor Class
- Current hit points
- Total class levels, if any
- Fighter class levels, if any

Relentless. When you roll initiative and have no superiority dice remaining, you regain 1 superiority die.

EQUIPMENT

+3 *quarterstaff*, javelins (10), +3 *plate armor*, *iron horn of Valhalla* (summons 5d4 + 5 warriors to aid you for 1 hour), *ring of regeneration** (regain 1d6 hit points every 10 minutes and regrows lost limbs), *Ioun stone of protection** (included in stat block), an old uniform of the Flaming Fist (traveler's clothes in quality), an insignia of your rank, a dice set.

* Attuned.

Additionally, you have 2d10 x 10,000 gp and your choice of one of the following:

- *potion of supreme healing* (heals 10d4 + 20 HP)
- *potion of diminution* (gain the "reduce" effect of enlarge/reduce for 1d4 hours)
- *potion of flying* (gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed for 1 hour)
- *potion of invulnerability* (gain resistance to all damage for 1 minute)

LEVELING UP

Level 19. Gain the Fighting Initiate (Defense) feat: +1 to AC while wearing armor. Gain 9 more HP and 1 more hit die.

Level 20. When you take the Attack action, you attack four times. Gain 9 more HP and 1 more hit die.

Aasimar Grave Domain Cleric 18

Medium Humanoid (Protector Aasimar), Lawful Neutral; VGtM, XGtE

"My ancestors ensured long ago that my afterlife will not be a happy one – I hope I can return the favor."

Armor Class 20 (25 with *+3 shield*)
Hit Points 129 (**Hit Dice** 18d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)

Proficiency Bonus +6
Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +11, Cha +7; advantage on saving throws against spells (*scarab of protection,* equipment, see Reactions).
Skills History +6, Persuasion +7, Medicine +11, Religion +6
Damage Resistances necrotic, radiant
Armor light armor, medium armor, shields
Weapons simple weapons
Tools dragonchess set
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Celestial, Infernal

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d4 + 2 piercing damage.

Sacred Flame. Range 60 ft.; one target must make a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, they take 4d8 radiant damage.

Toll the Dead. Range 60 ft.; one target must make a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, they take 4d8 necrotic damage. If they are missing any hit points, they take 4d12 necrotic damage instead.

Word of Radiance. Range 5 ft.; each creature of your choice that you can see within range must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, they take 4d6 radiant damage.

Healing Hands. Aasimar trait. Once per long rest, touch a creature and cause it to regain hit points equal to your level.

Radiant Soul. Aasimar trait. Once per long rest, gain a flying speed of 30 feet. Additionally, once on each of your turns, deal extra radiant damage equal to your level to one target when you damage it with an attack or spell. This effect lasts 1 minute or until you end it as a bonus action.

Channel Divinity. Cleric feature. You can use this feature three times per short or long rest, plus one free use (from amulet of the devout equipment) each day. As an action, you can do one of the following:

1. **Turn Undead.** Each undead creature that can see or hear you within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw (using your cleric spell save DC). If they fail, they are turned for 1 minute or until they take any damage. Any undead at or below challenge rating 4 that fail are instantly destroyed.

   Turned creatures can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you or take reactions. They can use only the Dash action to move away from you, try to escape an effect that prevents them from moving, or use the Dodge action if there's nowhere to move.

2. **Path to the Grave.** Curse one creature you can see within 30 feet of you until the end of your next turn. The next time you or an ally hit the creature with an attack, the creature has vulnerability to all of that attack's damage, then the curse ends.

Divine Intervention. Cleric feature. Roll percentile dice. If your result is equal to or lower than your cleric level, your deity intervenes on your behalf. The DM chooses the nature of the intervention. If your deity intervenes, you can't use this feature again for 7 days. Otherwise, you can use it again after you finish a long rest.

Eyes of the Grave. Grave domain feature. 5 times per long rest. Until the end of your next turn, you know the location of any undead within 60 feet of you that isn't behind total cover and that isn't protected from divination magic.

continued

Spellcasting

Casting Ability Wisdom
Spell Save DC 22
Spell Attack Modifier +14

SPELLS PREPARED

Cantrips: *guidance, light*†, mending, sacred flame, spare the dying*‡, thaumaturgy, toll the dead, word of radiance*

1st Level (4 slots): *bane*, bless, false life*, healing word, protection from evil and good, sanctuary, silent image*§*

2nd Level (3 slots): *aid, enhance ability, gentle repose*, invisibility*§, ray of enfeeblement*, spiritual weapon*

3rd Level (3 slots): *bestow curse, dispel magic, protection from energy, revivify*, spirit guardians, tongues, vampiric touch**

4th Level (3 slots): *banishment, blight*, death ward*, stone shape*

5th Level (3 slots): *antilife shell*, commune, greater restoration, raise dead**

6th Level (1 slot): *heal, word of recall*

7th Level (1 slot): *divine word, etherealness*

8th Level (1 slot): *holy aura*

9th Level (1 slot): *mass heal, power word heal*

* These spells are always prepared and do not count against the total number of spells you can prepare.

† Use Charisma, not Wisdom, as your spellcasting ability for light.

‡ This spell has a range of 30 ft. and can be cast as a bonus action (Circle of Mortality grave domain feature).

§ Shadow Touched feat. You can cast each of these spells without expending a spell slot once per long rest.

Bonus Actions

Harness Divine Power. Cleric feature. Three times per long rest, expend a use of your Channel Divinity to regain one expended spell slot of level 3 or lower.

Quickened Spell. Metamagic Adept feat. Spend 2 sorcery points to cast, as a bonus action, a spell that normally takes 1 action to cast. (You have 2 sorcery points, which you regain after a long rest.)

Spellcasting. The spells *healing word*, *divine word*, *sanctuary*, *spare the dying*, and *spiritual weapon* are bonus actions.

Reactions

Scarab of Protection. Equipment. While the scarab is on your person, if you fail a saving throw against a necromancy spell or a harmful effect originating from an undead creature, you can expend 1 charge to turn the failed save into a successful one. The scarab has 12 charges and is destroyed when its last charge is expended.

Sentinel at Death's Door. Grave domain feature, 5 times per long rest. When you or an ally that you can see within 30 feet of you suffers a critical hit, you can turn that attack into a normal hit.

BACKGROUND: NOBLE

You were born into a corrupt noble family that you have since cut ties with, though you can still reap some benefits from your connections to your past.

Position of Privilege. Thanks to your noble birth, people are inclined to think the best of you. You are welcome in high society, and people assume you have the right to be wherever you are. The common folk make every effort to accommodate you and avoid your displeasure, and other people of high birth treat you as a member of the same social sphere. You can secure an audience with a local noble if you need to.

Personality Trait. I've been told I come off as a bit over-serious and macabre.

Ideal. I ensure that Death does not take those who have unfinished business in this life... and that it finds those who have overstayed their welcome.

Bond. My family once belonged to an organization that was steeped in foul necromantic magic. I've set out to redeem the wrongs of my past.

Flaw. I am deeply uncomfortable in large social gatherings.

PROTECTOR AASIMAR TRAITS

Light Bearer. You know the *light* cantrip. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it (included in stat block).

Healing Hands. As an action, you touch a creature and cause it to regain hit points equal to your level, once per long rest.

Radiant Soul. As an action, your eyes glimmer and two luminous, incorporeal wings sprout from your back, lasting 1 minute or until you end it as a bonus action. You gain a flying speed of 30 feet and, once on each of your turns, you can deal extra radiant damage equal to your level to one target when you damage it with an attack or a spell. Once you use this trait, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

FEATS

Metamagic Adept. You learn the extended spell and quickened spell Metamagics from the sorcerer class. You can use only one Metamagic option on a spell when you cast it. You gain 2 sorcery points to spend on Metamagic, and you regain all sorcery points when you finish a long rest.

- ***Extended Spell.*** When you cast a spell that has a duration of 1 minute or longer, you can spend 1 sorcery point to double its duration, to a maximum duration of 24 hours.
- ***Quickened Spell.*** When you cast a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, you can spend 2 sorcery points to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting (included in stat block).

Shadow Touched. Wisdom increased. You learn *invisibility* and *silent image* and can cast each of them without expending a spell slot once per long rest. You can also cast these spells using spell slots as normal (included in stat block).

Resilient. Increases Constitution and grants proficiency in Constitution saving throws (included in stat block).

CLERIC FEATURES

Ritual Casting. You can cast a cleric spell as a ritual if that spell has the ritual tag and you have the spell prepared.

Spellcasting Focus. You use a holy symbol as a spellcasting focus for your cleric spells.

Channel Divinity. You gain the ability to channel divine energy directly from your deity, choosing one of the following effects. You can Channel Divinity three times per short or long rest, plus one free use (from the amulet of the devout equipment) each day.

- ***Turn Undead.*** As an action, you present your holy symbol and speak a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead that can see or hear you within 30 feet of you must make a **Wisdom saving throw (using your cleric spell save DC)**. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage.

  A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

  Any undead at or below challenge rating 4 that fail their saving throw are instantly destroyed.
- ***Path to the Grave.*** As an action, you choose one creature you can see within 30 feet of you, cursing it until the end of your next turn. The next time you or an ally of yours hits the cursed creature with an attack, the creature has vulnerability to all of that attack's damage, and then the curse ends.
- ***Harness Divine Power.*** As a bonus action, you can expend a use of your Channel Divinity to regain one expended spell slot of level 3 or lower. You can use this feature three times per long rest.

Divine Intervention. You can call on your deity to intervene on your behalf when your need is great. Imploring your deity's aid requires you to use your action. Describe the assistance you seek, and roll percentile dice. If you roll a number equal to or lower than your cleric level, your deity intervenes. The DM chooses the nature of the intervention; the effect of any cleric spell or cleric domain spell would be appropriate. If your deity intervenes, you can't use this feature again for 7 days. Otherwise, you can use it again after you finish a long rest.

GRAVE DOMAIN FEATURES

Domain Spells. Each domain has a list of spells that you always have prepared, and they don't count against the number of spells you can prepare each day. Domain spells that don't appear on the cleric spell list are still cleric spells for you (included in stat block).

Circle of Mortality. When you would normally roll one or more dice to restore hit points with a spell to a creature at 0 hit points, you instead use the highest number possible for each die.

You also know the *spare the dying* cantrip, which doesn't count against the number of cleric cantrips you know. For you, it has a range of 30 feet, and you can cast it as a bonus action (included in stat block).

Eyes of the Grave. As an action, you can open your awareness to magically detect undead. Until the end of your next turn, you know the location of any undead within 60 feet of you that isn't behind total cover and that isn't protected from divination magic. This sense doesn't tell you anything about a creature's capabilities or identity. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Sentinel at Death's Door. As a reaction when you or an ally that you can see within 30 feet of you suffers a critical hit, you can turn that attack into a normal hit. Any effects triggered by a critical hit are canceled. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Potent Spellcasting. You add your Wisdom modifier to the damage you deal with any cleric cantrip.

Keeper of Souls. When an enemy you can see dies within 30 feet of you, you or one ally of your choice that is within 30 feet of you regains hit points equal to the enemy's number of Hit Dice. You can use this feature only if you aren't incapacitated. Once you use it, you can't do so again until the start of your next turn.

EQUIPMENT

Dagger, *+3 half plate armor*, *+3 shield* with holy symbol affixed to it, obsidian steed *figurine of wondrous power* (becomes a **nightmare** for up to 24 hours), *scarab of protection** (included in stat block under reactions), *+3 amulet of the devout** (TCoE), holy symbol, a set of fine clothes, a signet ring, a scroll of pedigree, dragonchess set.

Spell component pouch containing diamond dust worth 400 gp, assorted diamonds worth 1200 gp, 2 diamonds worth 500 gp each, a reliquary (scrap of dark blue and gray fabric from the first Mortarch) worth 1000 gp.

* Attuned.

Additionally, you have 2d10 x 10,000 gp and your choice of 1 of the following:

- *potion of supreme healing* (heals 10d4 + 20 HP)
- *potion of diminution* (gain the "reduce" effect of enlarge/reduce for 1d4 hours)
- *potion of flying* (gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed for 1 hour)
- *potion of invulnerability* (gain resistance to all damage for 1 minute)

LEVELING UP

Level 19. Increase your Charisma ability score by 2. Prepare *sunburst* in addition to your existing 8th level prepared spells, and gain one additional 6th level spell slot. Gain 7 more HP and 1 more hit die.

Level 20. Your Divine Intervention class feature always succeeds. Prepare *gate* in addition to your existing 9th level prepared spells, and gain one additional 7th level spell slot. Gain 7 more HP and 1 more hit die.

Human Arcane Trickster Rogue 18

Medium Humanoid (Human), True Neutral

"Look, man, all I'm saying is, everyone could stand to be a bit cooler about some stuff they may or may not have found in my pack."

Armor Class 19; Elusive rogue feature
Hit Points 111 (**Hit Dice** 18d8)
Speed 40 ft., fly 50 ft. (*broom of flying,* equipment)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Proficiency Bonus +7
Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +10, Wis +8; Evasion rogue feature (reduced damage from effects that cause you to make a Dexterity saving throw).
Skills Acrobatics +12, Arcana +10, Deception +9, History +10, Perception +15, Persuasion +16, Stealth +19; Reliable Talent rogue feature.
Armor light armor
Weapons simple weapons, hand crossbows, longswords, rapiers, shortswords
Tools thieves' tools +19
Senses passive Perception 30, passive Investigation 18, Blindsense rogue feature 10 ft.; can read lips
Languages Common, Draconic, Gnomish, Undercommon, Thieves' Cant

Sneak Attack. Rogue feature. Once per turn, deal an extra 9d6 damage to one creature you hit with an attack using a finesse or ranged weapon, as long as you have advantage on the attack roll or another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it.

Actions

+3 Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 8 piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 + 5 piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Cunning Action. Rogue feature. You can Dash, Disengage, or Hide as a bonus action.

Steady Aim. Rogue feature. You give yourself advantage on your next attack roll on the current turn. You can use this bonus action only if you haven't moved during this turn, and after you use the bonus action, your speed is 0 until the end of the current turn.

Versatile Trickster. Arcane Trickster feature. Choose one creature within 5 feet of the spectral hand created by the mage hand spell. You gain advantage on attack rolls against that creature until the end of the turn.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. Rogue feature. When an attacker that you can see hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to halve the attack's damage against you.

Spell Thief. Arcane Trickster feature. Once per long rest, immediately after a creature casts a spell that targets you or includes you in its area of effect, you can use your reaction to force the creature to make a saving throw using its spellcasting ability modifier. The DC equals your spell save DC. On a failed save, you negate the spell's effect against you, and you steal the knowledge of the spell if it is at least 1st level and of a level you can cast (it doesn't need to be a wizard spell). For the next 8 hours, you know the spell and can cast it using your spell slots. The creature can't cast that spell again until 8 hours have passed.

continued

Spellcasting

Casting Ability Intelligence
Spell Save DC 18
Spell Attack Modifier +10

SPELLS KNOWN
Cantrips: *booming blade, mage hand*, minor illusion, prestidigitation*

1st Level (4 slots): *disguise self, find familiar, hex†, silent image, Tasha's hideous laughter*

2nd Level (3 slots): *darkvision, invisibility, mirror image, misty step†, shadow blade*

3rd Level (3 slots): *enemies abound, fly, major image*

* See Mage Hand Legerdemain arcane trickster feature.

† Fey Touched feat. You can cast each of these spells without expending a spell slot once per long rest. They do not count against the total number of spells you can know.

BACKGROUND: SAGE

You studied with a prestigious group of scholars in Candlekeep for two years before deciding the rigorous focus on scholastic achievement wasn't for you. You made some cool friends and picked up a few spells while you were there, so it wasn't all bad.

Researcher. When you attempt to learn or recall a piece of lore, if you do not know that information, you often know where and from whom you can obtain it. Usually, this information comes from a library, scriptorium, university, or a sage or other learned person or creature. Your DM might rule that the knowledge you seek is secreted away in an almost inaccessible place, or that it simply cannot be found.

Personality Trait. I have an extreme sweet tooth. And salty tooth. Really, I just like food.

Ideal. I'm here for chill vibes and the occasional new life experience. A bit of peril really makes you appreciate the calm moments, you know?

Bond. I am fully ride-or-die for my friends and my pet rat.

Flaw. I instantly dislike intellectual types, academics, and rule-enforcers – I've already dealt with enough of all three for my lifetime.

FEATS

Fey Touched. Intelligence increases. You learn *misty step* and *hex*. You can cast each of these spells without expending a spell slot once per long rest. You can also cast these spells using spell slots as normal (all included in stat block).

Mobile. Your speed increases by 10 feet (included in stat block). When you use the Dash action, difficult terrain doesn't cost you extra movement on that turn. When you make a melee attack against a creature, you don't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature for the rest of the turn, whether you hit or not.

Observant. Wisdom increases. +5 bonus to **passive Wisdom (Perception)** and **passive Intelligence (Investigation) scores**. You can read lips (all included in stat block).

ROGUE FEATURES

Expertise. Extra skill bonuses (included in stat block).

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, you can deal an extra 9d6 damage to one creature you hit with an attack if you have advantage on the attack roll. The attack must use a finesse or a ranged weapon. You don't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and you don't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Thieves' Cant. During your rogue training you learned thieves' cant, a secret mix of dialect, jargon, and code that allows you to hide messages in seemingly normal conversation. Only another creature that knows thieves' cant understands such messages. It takes four times longer to convey such a message than it does to speak the same idea plainly.

In addition, you understand a set of secret signs and symbols used to convey short, simple messages, such as whether an area is dangerous or the territory of a thieves' guild, whether loot is nearby, or whether the people in an area are easy marks or will provide a safe house for thieves on the run.

Cunning Action. You can Dash, Disengage, or Hide as a bonus action on each of your turns in combat.

Steady Aim. As a bonus action, you give yourself advantage on your next attack roll on the current turn. You can use this bonus action only if you haven't moved during this turn, and after you use the bonus action, your speed is 0 until the end of the current turn.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that you can see hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to halve the attack's damage against you.

Evasion. When you are subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.

Reliable Talent. Whenever you make an ability check that lets you add your proficiency bonus, you can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Blindsense. If you are able to hear, you are aware of the location of any hidden or invisible creature within 10 feet of you.

Slippery Mind. Wisdom save proficiency (included in stat block).

Elusive. No attack roll has advantage against you while you aren't incapacitated.

ARCANE TRICKSTER FEATURES

Mage Hand Legerdemain. You can make your Mage Hand invisible, and you can perform the following additional tasks with it. You can perform one of these tasks without being noticed by a creature if you succeed on a **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** contested by the creature's **Wisdom (Perception) check**. In addition, you can use the bonus action granted by your Cunning Action to control the hand.

- You can stow one object the hand is holding in a container worn or carried by another creature.
- You can retrieve an object in a container worn or carried by another creature.
- You can use thieves' tools to pick locks and disarm traps at range.

Magical Ambush. If you are hidden from a creature when you cast a spell on it, the creature has disadvantage on any saving throw it makes against the spell this turn.

Versatile Trickster. As a bonus action on your turn, you can designate a creature within 5 feet of the spectral hand created by the spell. Doing so gives you advantage on attack rolls against that creature until the end of the turn.

Spell Thief. Immediately after a creature casts a spell that targets you or includes you in its area of effect, you can use your reaction to force the creature to make a saving throw with its spellcasting ability modifier. The DC equals your spell save DC. On a failed save, you negate the spell's effect against you, and you steal the knowledge of the spell if it is at least 1st level and of a level you can cast (it doesn't need to be a wizard spell). For the next 8 hours, you know the spell and can cast it using your spell slots. The creature can't cast that spell until the 8 hours have passed. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

EQUIPMENT

+3 rapier, shortbow, *+2 studded leather armor*, *cloak of invisibility** (as an action, become invisible for up to 2 hours), *broom of flying* (can carry up to 400 pounds and can travel alone), *Ioun stone of mastery** (included in stat block), a bottle of ink, a quill, a small knife, a letter from a dead colleague posing a question you have not yet been able to answer, a set of common clothes.

Spell component pouch containing charcoal, incense, and herbs worth 30 gp.

* Attuned.

Additionally, you have 2d10 x 10,000 gp and your choice of 1 of the following:

- *potion of supreme healing* (heals 10d4 + 20 HP)
- *potion of diminution* (gain the "reduce" effect of enlarge/reduce for 1d4 hours)
- *potion of flying* (gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed for 1 hour)
- *potion of invulnerability* (gain resistance to all damage for 1 minute)

LEVELING UP

Level 19. +2 to INT. Add *greater invisibility* to your spells known. Gain one 4th level spell slot. Your Sneak Attack gains an additional 1d6. Gain 6 more HP and 1 more hit die.

Level 20. Stroke of Luck (Once per short or long rest, you can turn a missed attack into a hit or turn the d20 roll on a failed ability check into a 20). Add *dimension door* to your spells known. Gain 6 more HP and 1 more hit die.

Goliath School of Divination Wizard 18

Medium Humanoid (Goliath), Neutral Good; VGtM

"I had a hunch you might forget a coat, so I packed a spare."

Armor Class 17
Hit Points 128 (**Hit Dice** 18d6)
Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (*carpet of flying* equipment)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Proficiency Bonus +6
Saving Throws Con +9, Int +11, Wis +7; advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects
Skills Athletics +6, Arcana +17, History +11, Insight +7, Investigation +11
Damage Resistances cold
Armor none
Weapons daggers, darts, slings, quarterstaffs, light crossbows
Tools none
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Giant, Elvish, Draconic

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., *one target. Hit:* 1d4 + 2 piercing damage.

Mind Sliver. Range 60 ft.; one target must make a DC 21 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, they take 4d6 psychic damage and subtract 1d4 from the next saving throw they make before the end of your next turn.

Staff of Fire. The staff has 10 charges. As an action, you cast one of the following spells from it (spell save DC 21): *burning hands* (1 charge), *fireball* (3 charges), or *wall of fire* (4 charges). It regains 1d6 + 4 charges daily at dawn. At 0 charges, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff is destroyed.

Bonus Actions

Telekinetic. Feat. One creature you can see within 30 feet of you must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC 21) or be telekinetically shoved 5 feet toward or away from you.

Spellcasting. The spell *misty step* is a bonus action.

Reactions

Stone's Endurance. Goliath trait, once per short or long rest. When you take damage, you can use your reaction to reduce it by 1d12 + your Constitution modifier.

Spellcasting. The spells *absorb elements*, *counterspell*, *feather fall*, and *shield* are reactions.

Spellcasting

Casting Ability Intelligence
Spell Save DC 21
Spell Attack Modifier +13

SPELLS KNOWN
Cantrips: *mage hand (range 60 ft.), mind sliver, minor illusion, prestidigitation, shape water*

1st Level (4 slots): ***absorb elements***, *alarm, false life,* ***feather fall***, *detect magic, magic missile,* ***protection from evil/good***, ***shield****

2nd Level (3 slots): ***augury***, *earthbind,* ***enhance ability****, ***misty step***

3rd Level (3 slots): ***clairvoyance***, ***counterspell***, ***dispel magic***, *fly, tiny servant*

4th Level (3 slots): *arcane eye,* ***banishment***, *charm monster,* ***greater invisibility***

5th Level (3 slots): *hold monster, Rary's telepathic bond,* ***wall of force***, ***wall of stone***

6th Level (1 slot): ***disintegrate***, ***globe of invulnerability***, *mass suggestion,* ***true seeing***

7th Level (1 slot): *forcecage,* ***Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion***, ***plane shift***, *teleport*

8th Level (1 slot): ***antimagic field***, *illusory dragon, maze,* ***power word stun***

9th Level (1 slot): ***foresight***, *time stop,* ***wish***

* Spell Mastery wizard feature. When you have these spells prepared, you can cast them at their respective lowest level without expending spell slots.

Bold = this spell is currently prepared.

BACKGROUND: CLOISTERED SCHOLAR

You were the first in your family to pursue higher learning and study at Candlekeep. Your family was a bit confused by your interests at first, but they have always been very proud of you.

Library Access. Though others must often endure extensive interviews and significant fees to gain access to even the most common archives in your library, you have free and easy access to the majority of the library, though it might also have repositories of lore that are too valuable, magical, or secret to permit anyone immediate access. You have a working knowledge of your cloister's personnel and bureaucracy, and you know how to navigate those connections with some ease. Additionally, you are likely to gain preferential treatment at other libraries across the Realms, as professional courtesy shown to a fellow scholar.

Personality Trait. When someone is upset, I'm first on the scene with hugs and cocoa.

Ideal. Every problem can be prevented with proper foresight and planning.

Bond. Without me, my friends will absolutely forget to drink enough water and/or die. I have to keep that from happening.

Flaw. I handle surprises poorly and am upset when things don't go according to plan.

GOLIATH TRAITS

Natural Athlete. Proficiency in the Athletics skill (included in stat block).

Stone's Endurance. When you take damage, you can use your reaction to roll a d12. Add your Constitution modifier to the number rolled, and reduce the damage by that total. After you use this trait, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Powerful Build. You count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity and the weight you can push, drag, or lift.

Mountain Born. You have resistance to cold damage (included in stat block). You're also acclimated to high altitude, including elevations above 20,000 feet.

FEATS

Telekinetic. The range on your *mage hand* cantrip becomes 60 ft. As a bonus action, you can try to telekinetically shove one creature you can see within 30 feet of you. When you do so, the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + Intelligence modifier) or be moved 5 feet toward or away from you. A creature can willingly fail this save.

Resilient. Increases Constitution and proficiency on Constitution saving throws (included in stat block).

Skill Expert. Increases Constitution and grants skill proficiency and expertise (included in stat block).

WIZARD FEATURES

Spellbook. You have a spellbook containing the spells you know.

Copying a Spell into the Book. When you find a wizard spell of 1st level or higher, you can add it to your spellbook. For each level of the spell, this process takes 2 hours and costs 50 gp. Once you have spent this time and money, you can prepare the spell just like your other spells.

Replacing the Book. You can copy a spell from your own spellbook into another book. This process takes only 1 hour and 10 gp for each level of the copied spell.

If you lose your spellbook, you can use the same procedure to transcribe the spells that you have prepared into a new spellbook.

Ritual Casting. You can cast a wizard spell as a ritual if that spell has the ritual tag and you have the spell in your spellbook. You don't need to have the spell prepared.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use an arcane focus as a spellcasting focus for your wizard spells.

Arcane Recovery. Once per day when you finish a short rest, you can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than half your wizard level (rounded up), and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher.

Spell Mastery. You can cast *shield* and *enhance ability* at their respective lowest level without expending a spell slot when you have them prepared. If you want to cast either spell at a higher level, you must expend a spell slot as normal.

SCHOOL OF DIVINATION FEATURES

Divination Savant. The gold and time you must spend to copy a Divination spell into your spellbook is halved.

Portent. When you finish a long rest, roll three d20s and record the numbers rolled. You can replace any attack roll, saving throw, or ability check made by you or a creature that you can see with one of these foretelling rolls. You must choose to do so before the roll, and you can replace a roll in this way only once per turn. Each foretelling roll can be used only once. When you finish a long rest, you lose any unused foretelling rolls.

Expert Divination. When you cast a divination spell of 2nd level or higher using a spell slot, you regain one expended spell slot. The slot you regain must be of a level lower than the spell you cast and can't be higher than 5th level.

The Third Eye. You can use your action to gain one of the following benefits, which lasts until you are incapacitated or you take a short or long rest. You can't use the feature again until you finish a short or long rest.

Darkvision. You gain darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

Ethereal Sight. You can see into the Ethereal Plane within 60 feet of you.

Greater Comprehension. You can read any language.

See Invisibility. You can see invisible creatures and objects within 10 feet of you that are within line of sight.

Greater Portent. Portent improvement (included in the Portent ability above).

EQUIPMENT

Dagger, *staff of fire**, *robe of the archmagi**, *carpet of flying* (5 ft. x 7 ft.), *rod of security* (teleports you and many other willing creatures to a safe extraplanar space temporarily), *Heward's handy haversack* (holds items in an extradimensional space), the scholar's robes of your cloister, a writing kit (small pouch with a quill, a bottle of ink, folded parchment, and a small penknife), a borrowed book on the subject of your current study.

Spell component pouch containing specially marked sticks worth 25 gp, a jeweled horn worth 100 gp, a glass eye worth 100 gp, 4 doses of an eye ointment worth 25 gp, ruby dust worth 1500 gp, a miniature portal carved from ivory worth 5 gp, a small piece of polished marble worth 5 gp, a tiny silver spoon worth 5 gp.

* Attuned.

Additionally, you have 2d10 x 10,000 gp and your choice of 1 of the following:

- *potion of supreme healing* (heals 10d4 + 20 HP)
- *potion of diminution* (gain the "reduce" effect of enlarge/reduce for 1d4 hours)
- *potion of flying* (gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed for 1 hour)
- *potion of invulnerability* (gain resistance to all damage for 1 minute)

LEVELING UP

Level 19. Gain +2 Wisdom. Learn *stone shape* and *haste*, prepare *haste* in addition to your existing 3rd level spells, and gain one additional 6th level spell slot. Gain 7 more HP and 1 more hit die.

Level 20. Signature Spells (*clairvoyance* and *tiny servant* are always prepared spells, don't count against the total number of spells you can prepare, and can each be cast once at 3rd level without expending a spell slot once per short or long rest). Learn *intellect fortress* and *skill empowerment*, prepare *skill empowerment* and *teleport* in addition to your existing 3rd and 7th level spells, and gain one additional 7th level spell slot. Gain 7 more HP and 1 more hit die.

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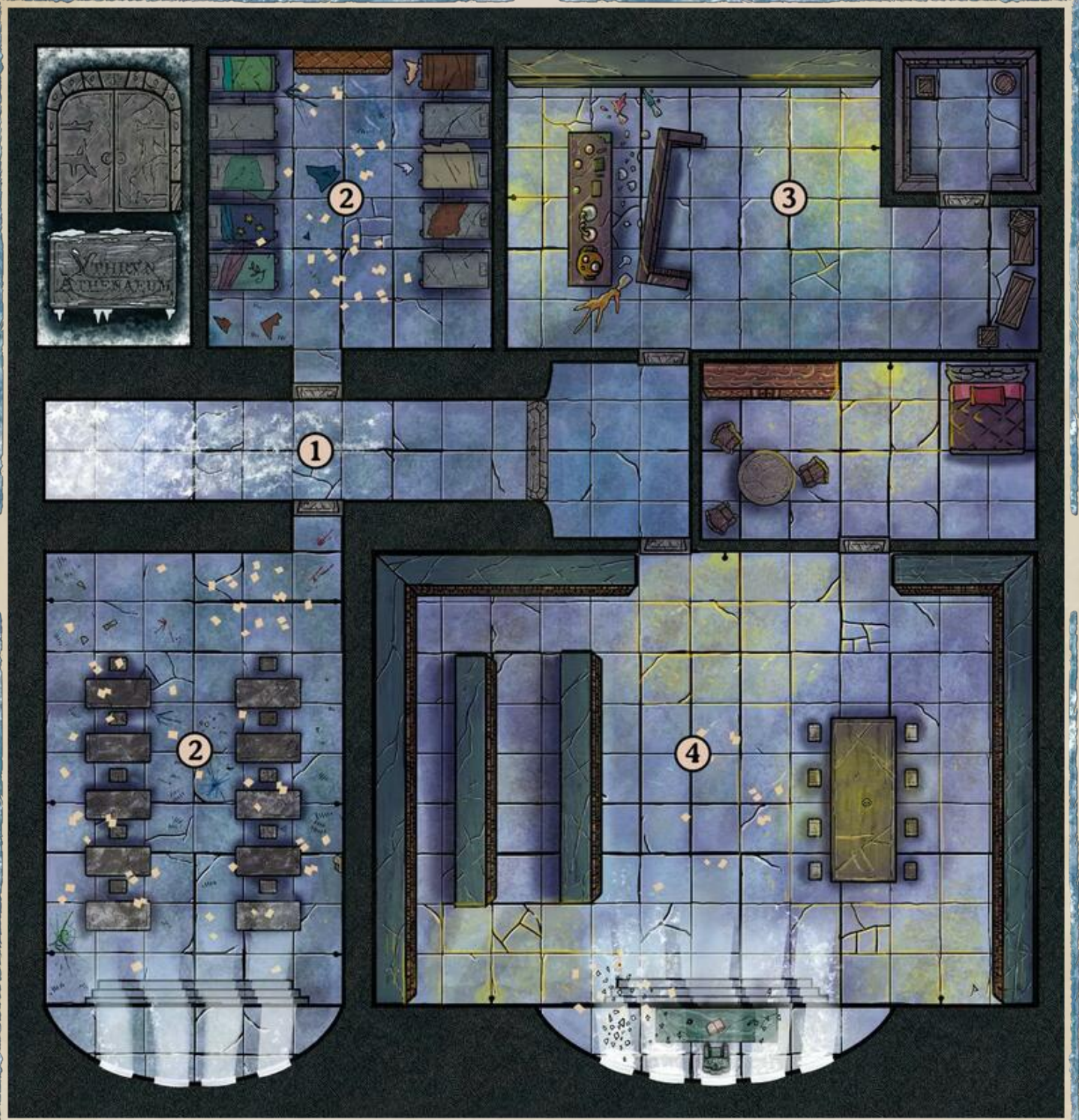
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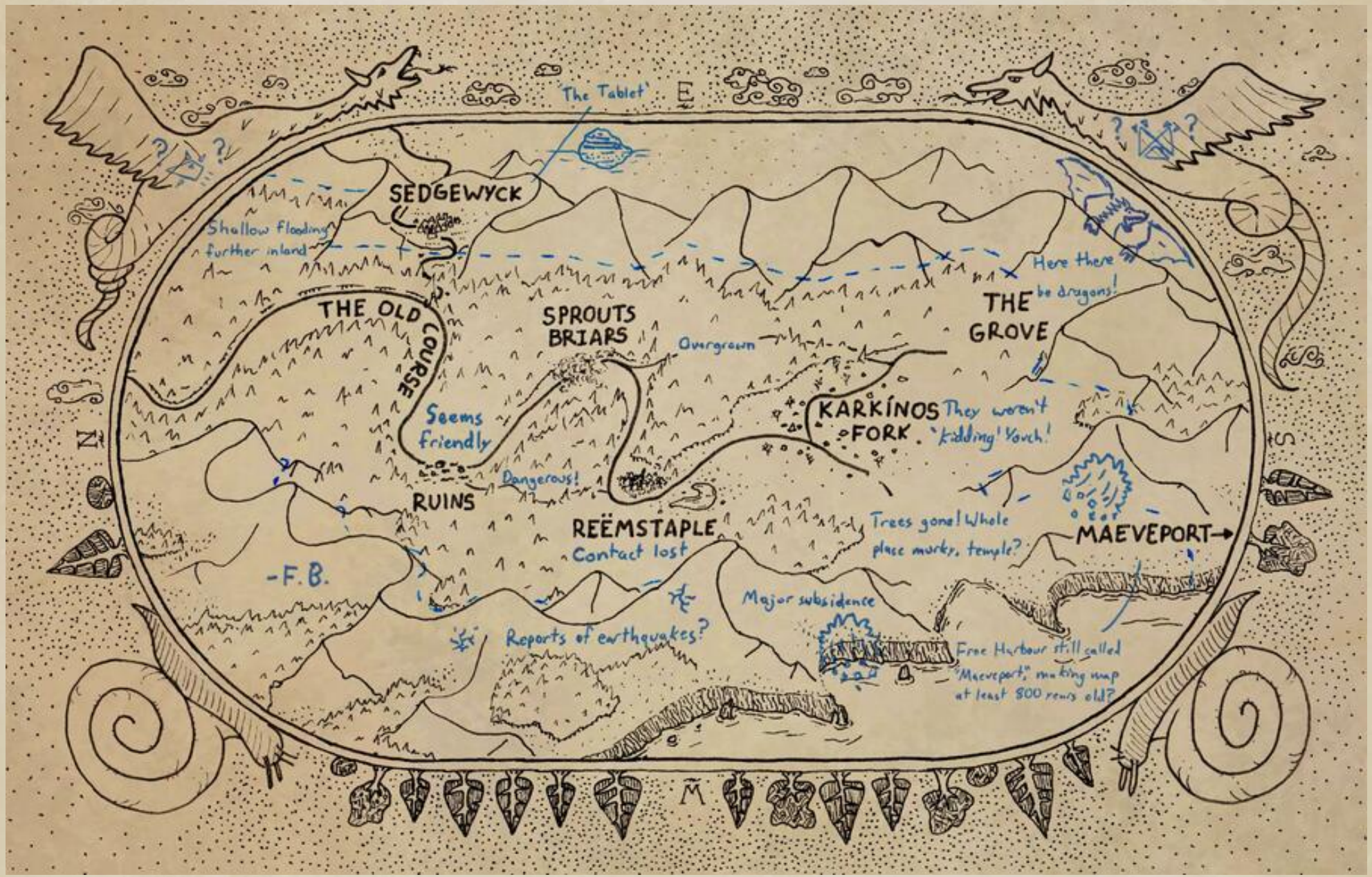
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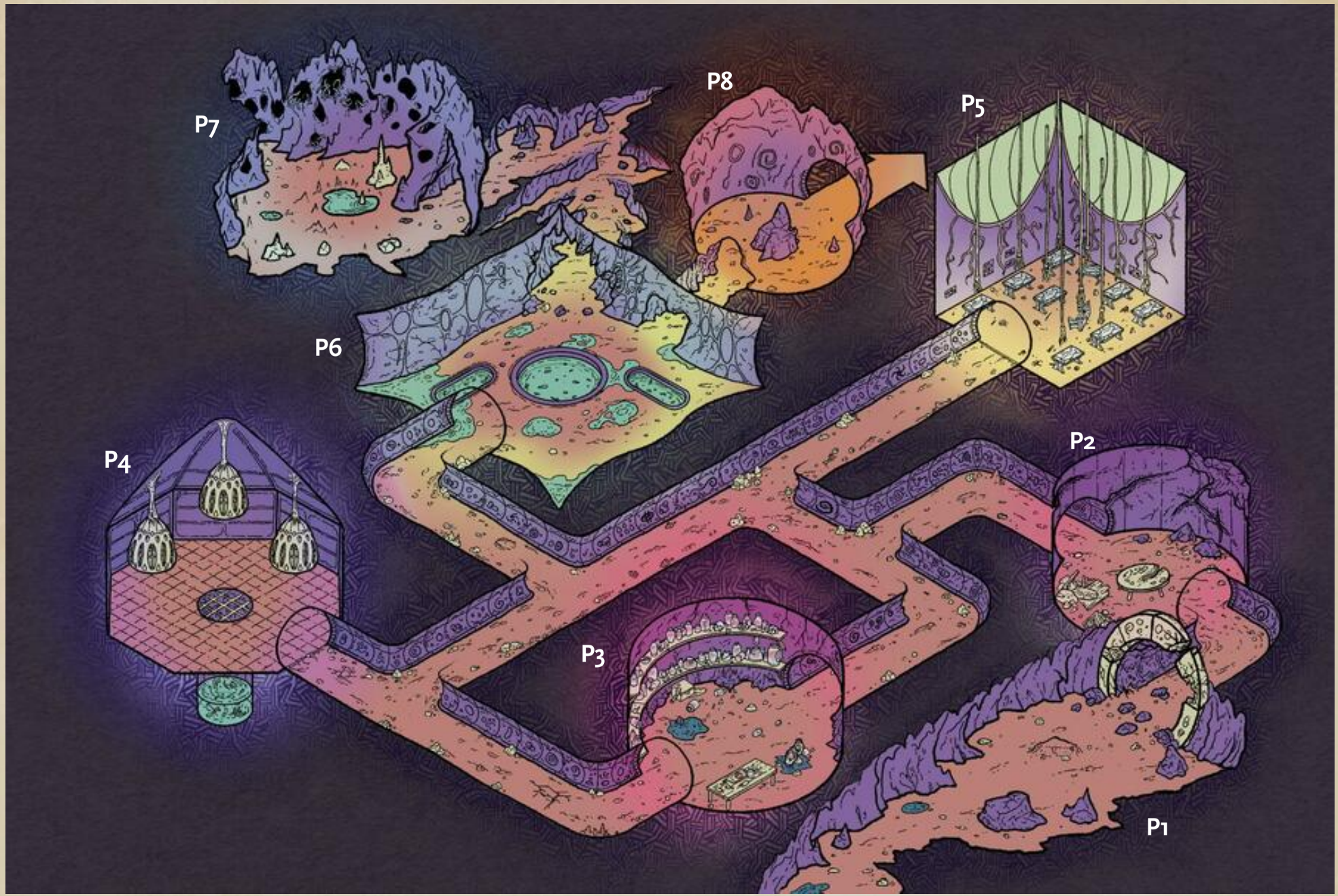
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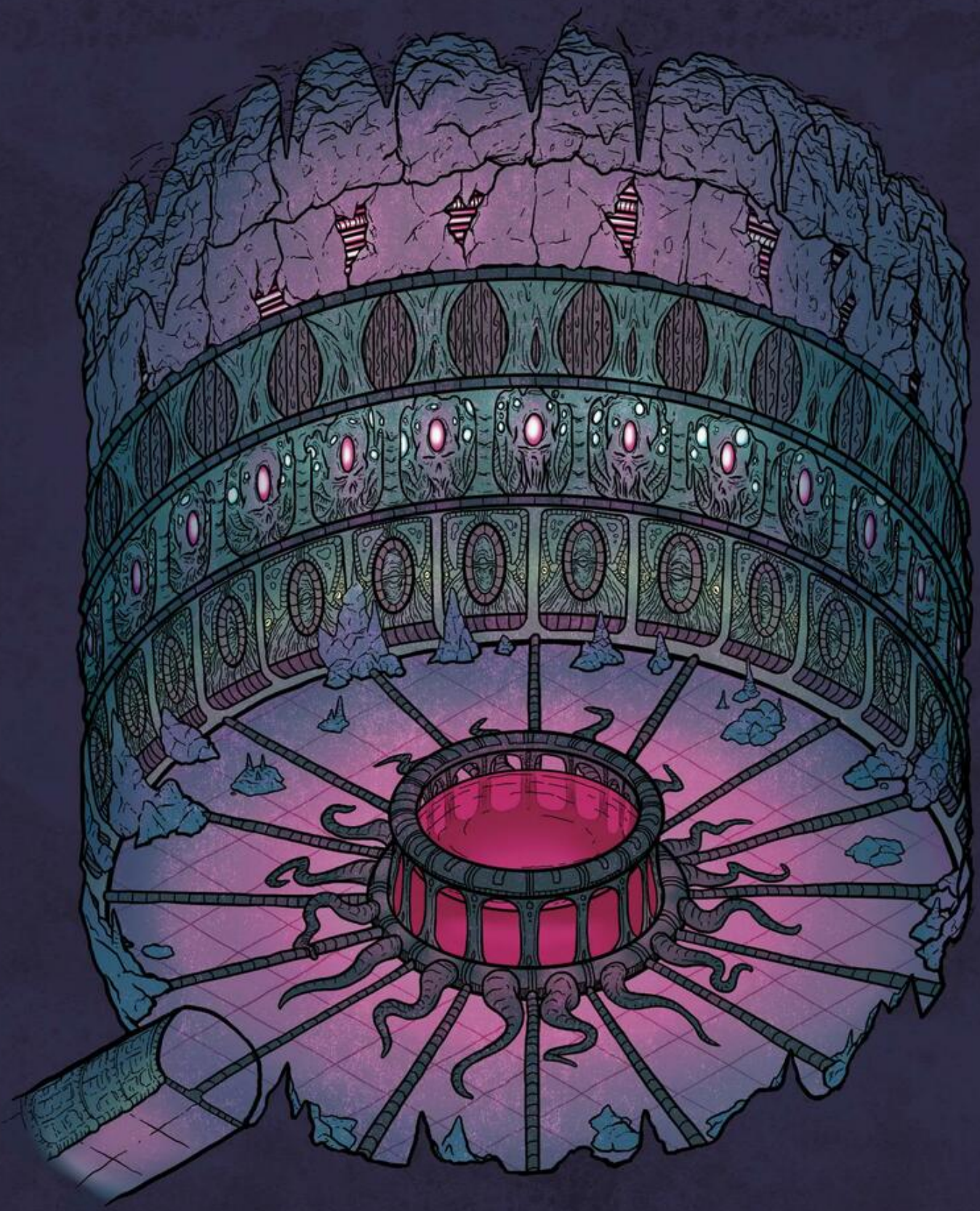
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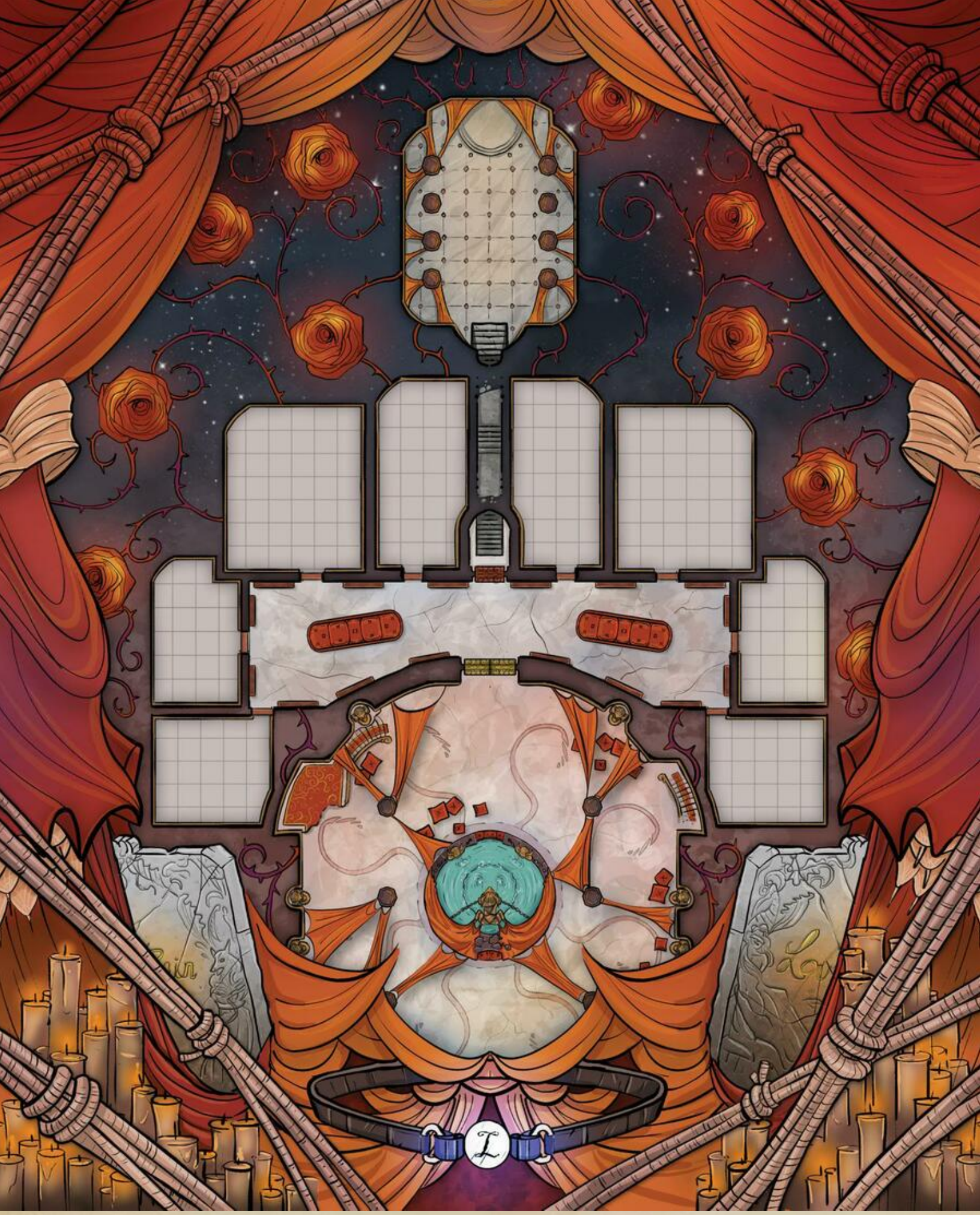
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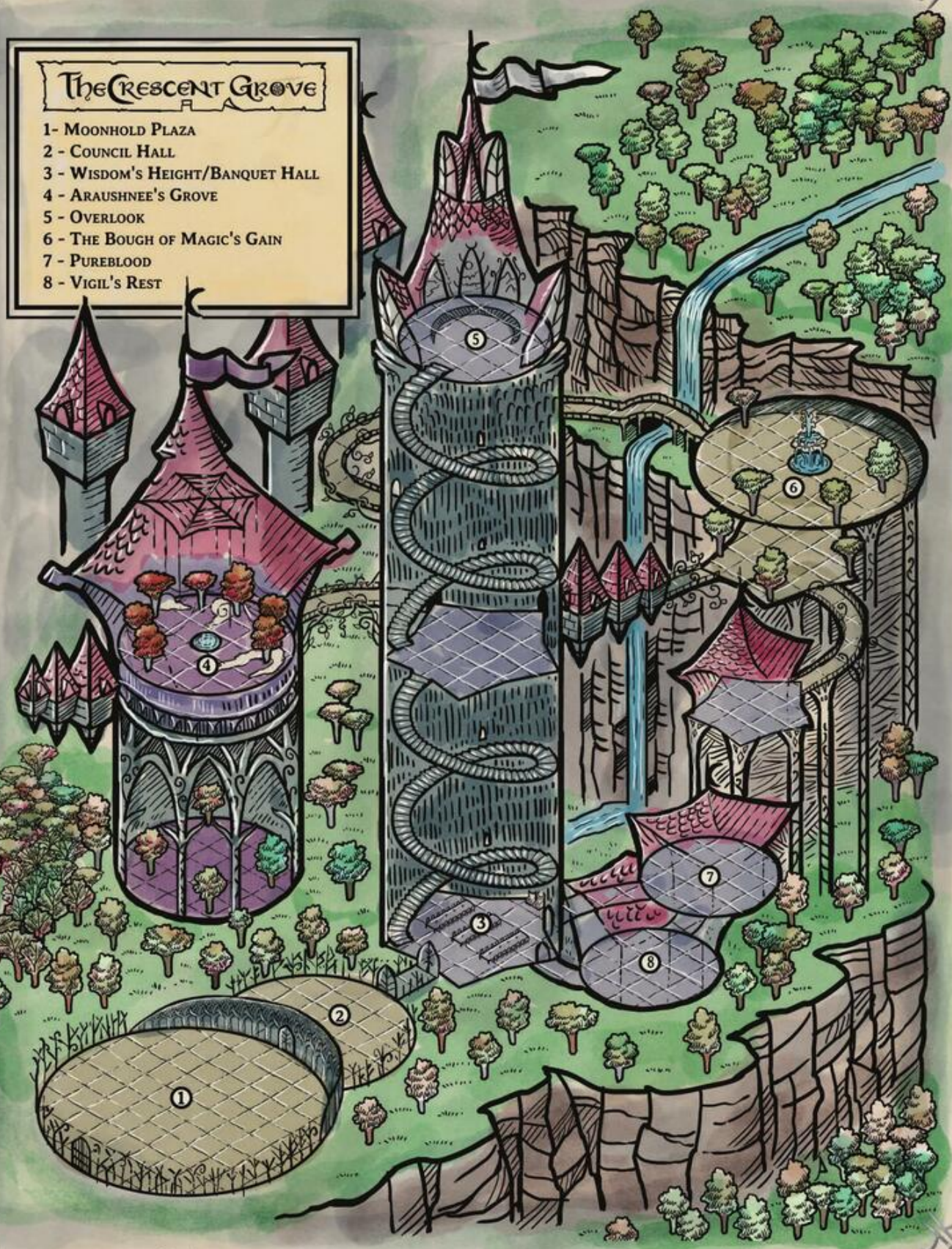

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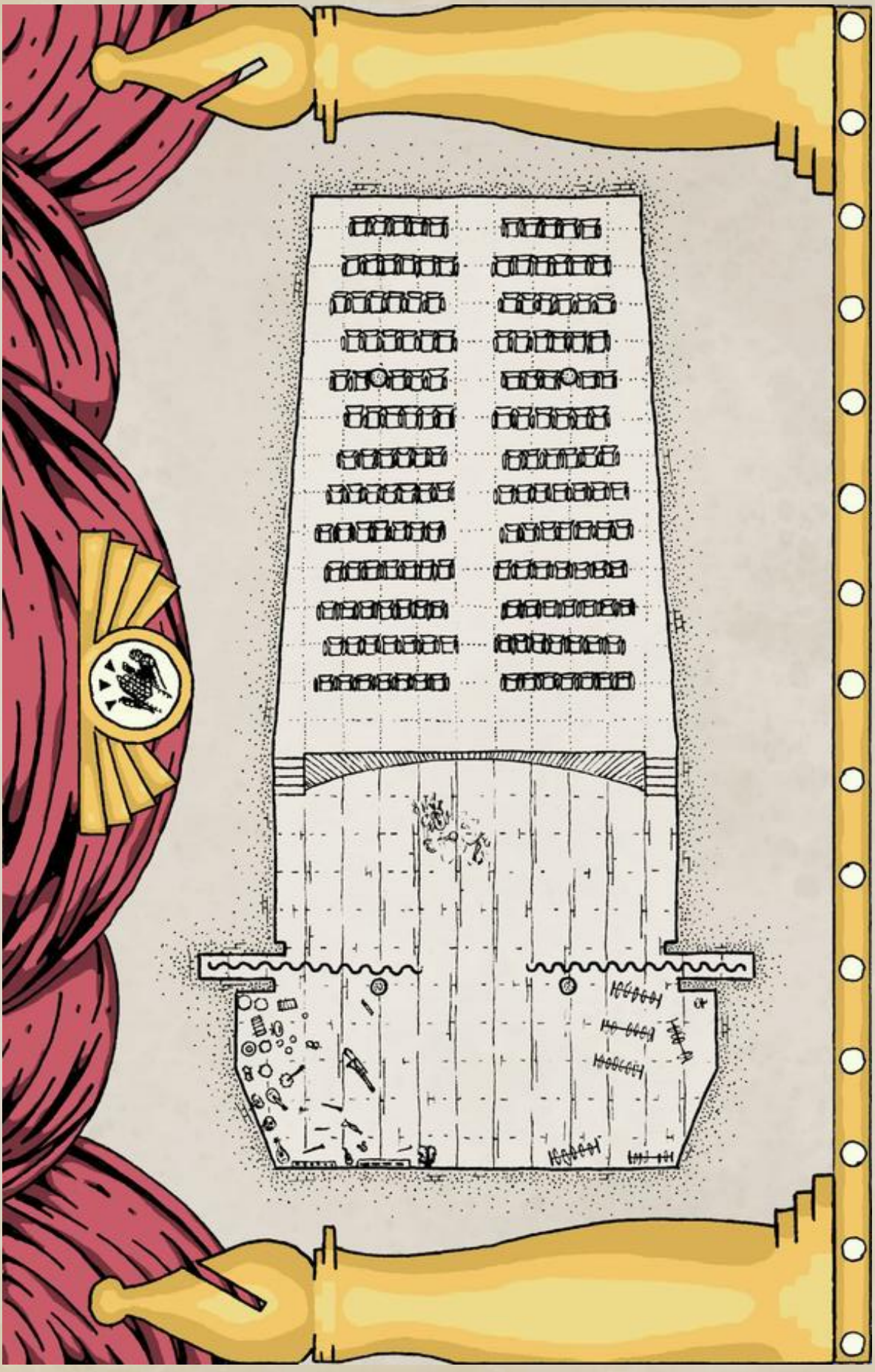

The Tablet
SEDGEWYCK
Shallow flooding further inland
THE OLD COURSE
SPROUTS BRIARS
Overgrown
THE GROVE
Here there be dragons!
Seems friendly
KARKÍNOS FORK
They weren't kidding! Yowch!
Dangerous!
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Contact lost
Trees gone! Whole place murky, temple?
MAEVEPORT
-F.B.
Major subsidence
Reports of earthquakes?
Free Harbour still called "Maeveport," making map at least 800 years old?
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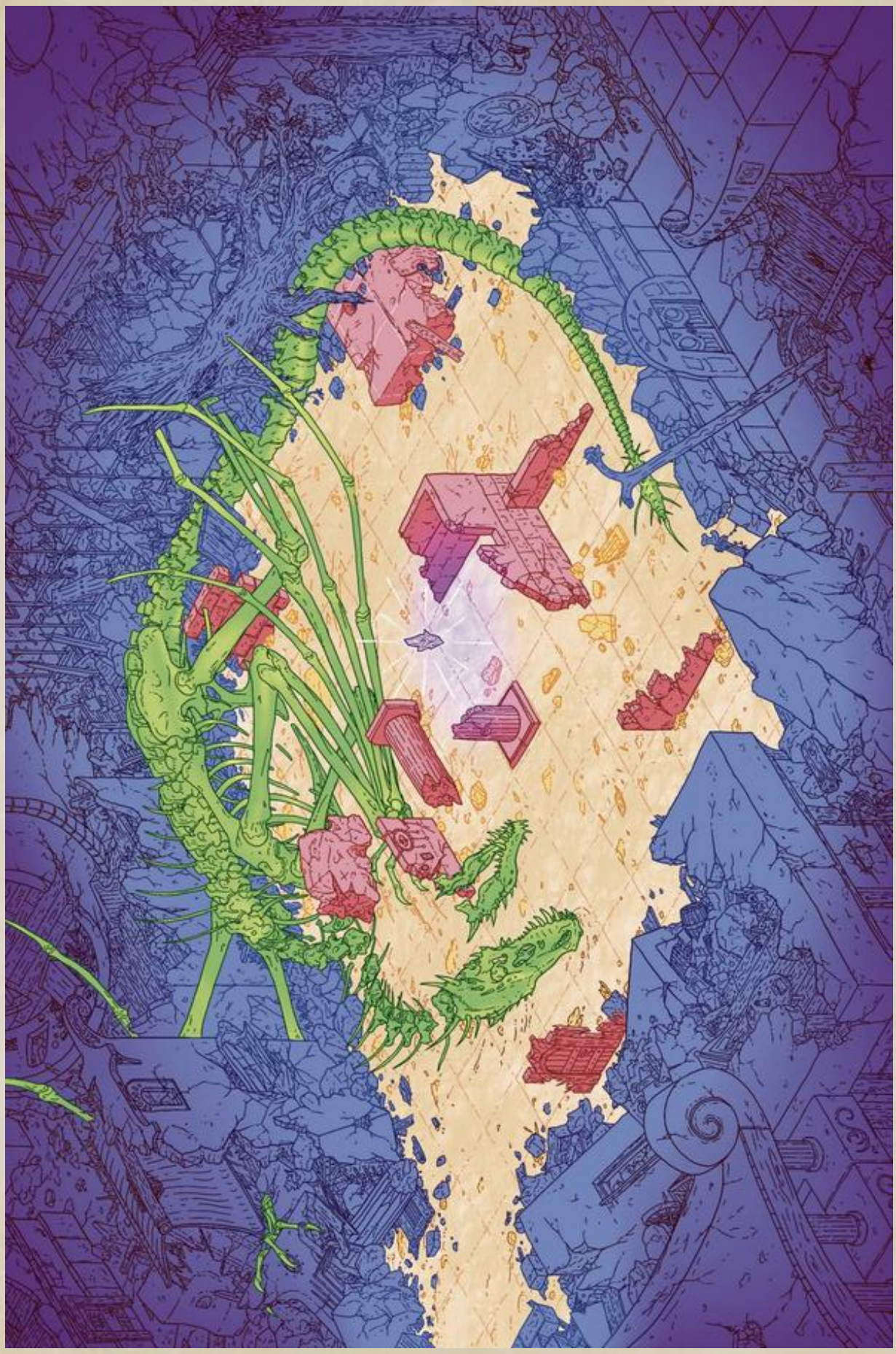




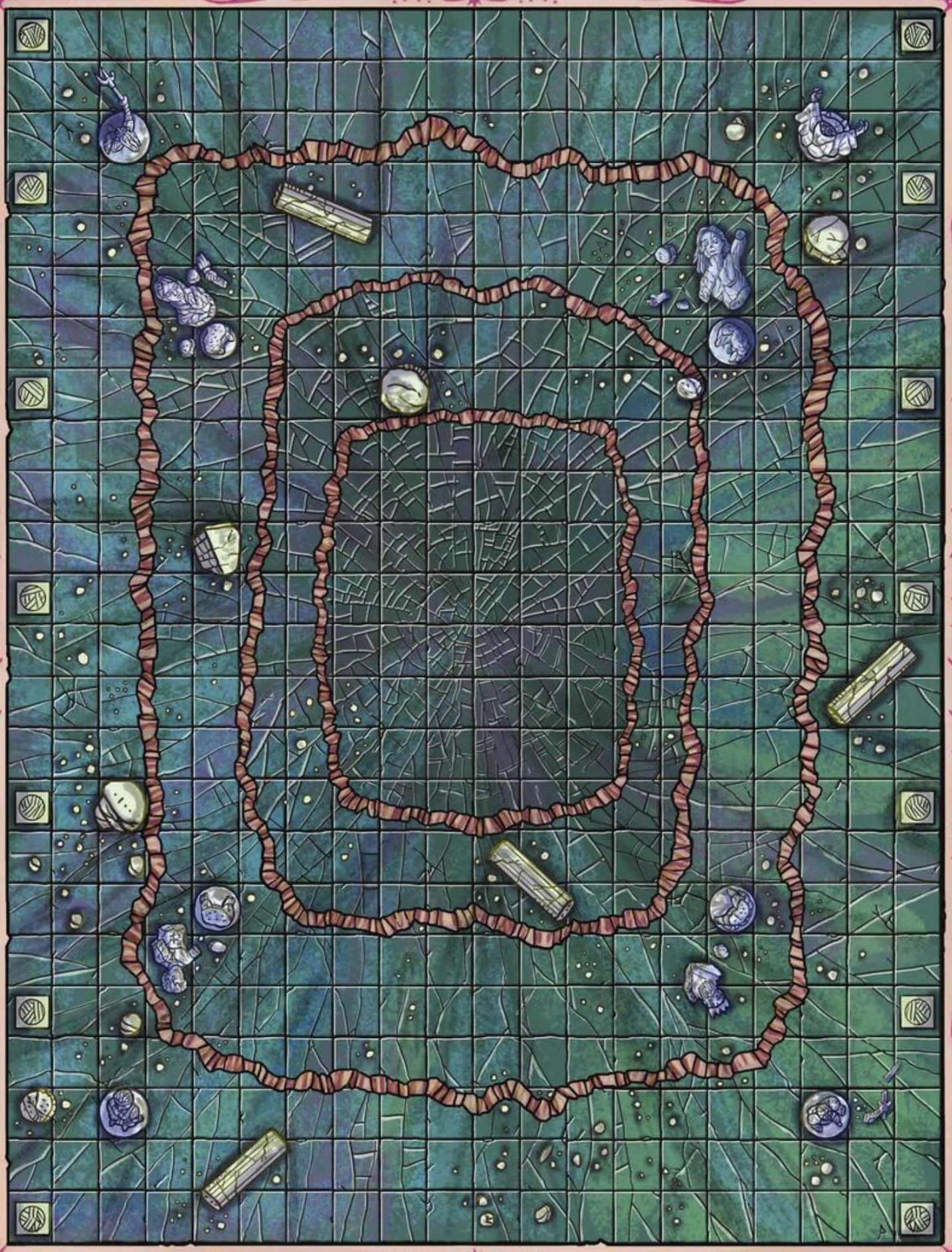

The Crescent Grove
1- Moonhold Plaza
2 - Council Hall
3 - Wisdom's Height/Banquet Hall
4 - Araushnee's Grove
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THE CRIMSON CAGE

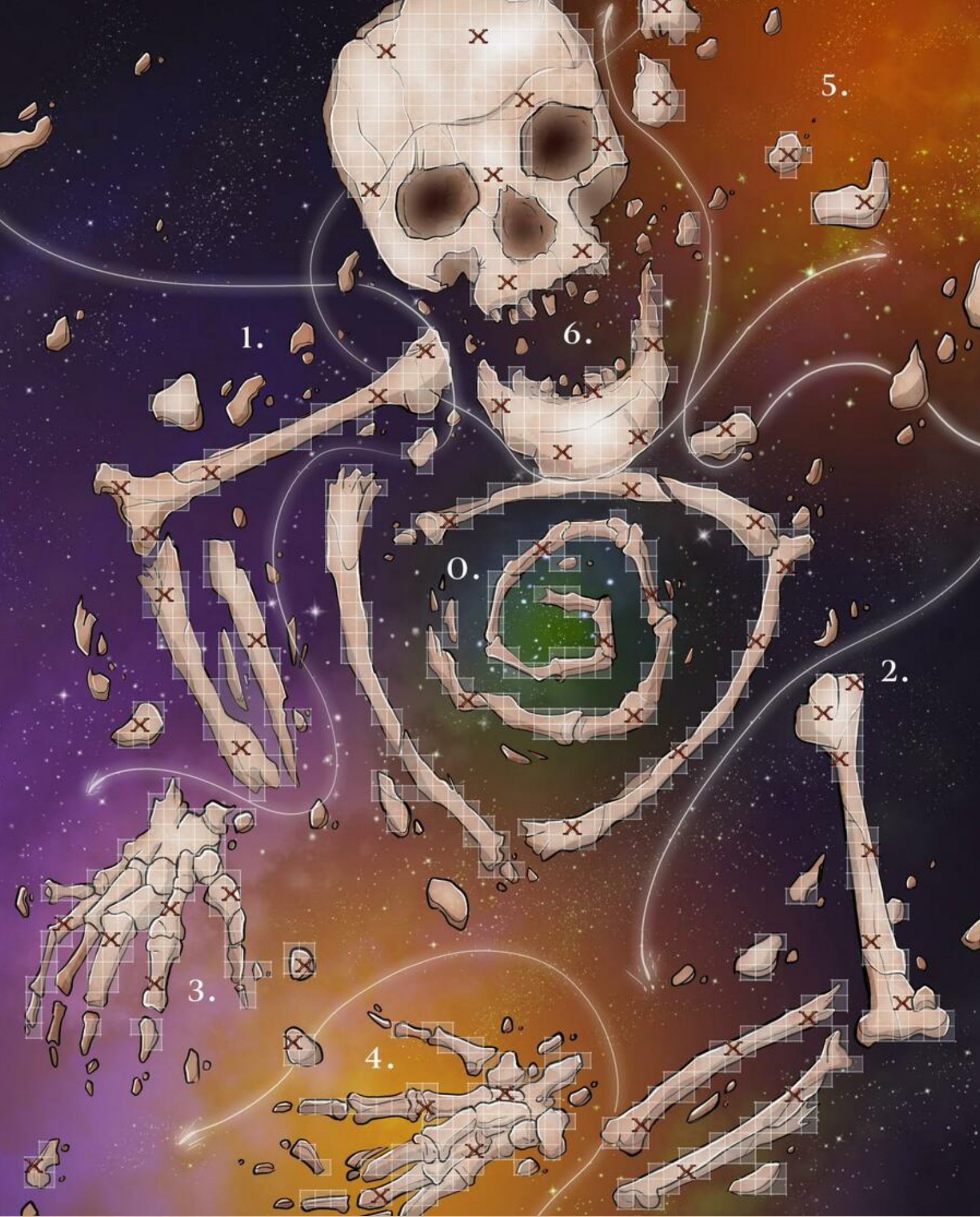


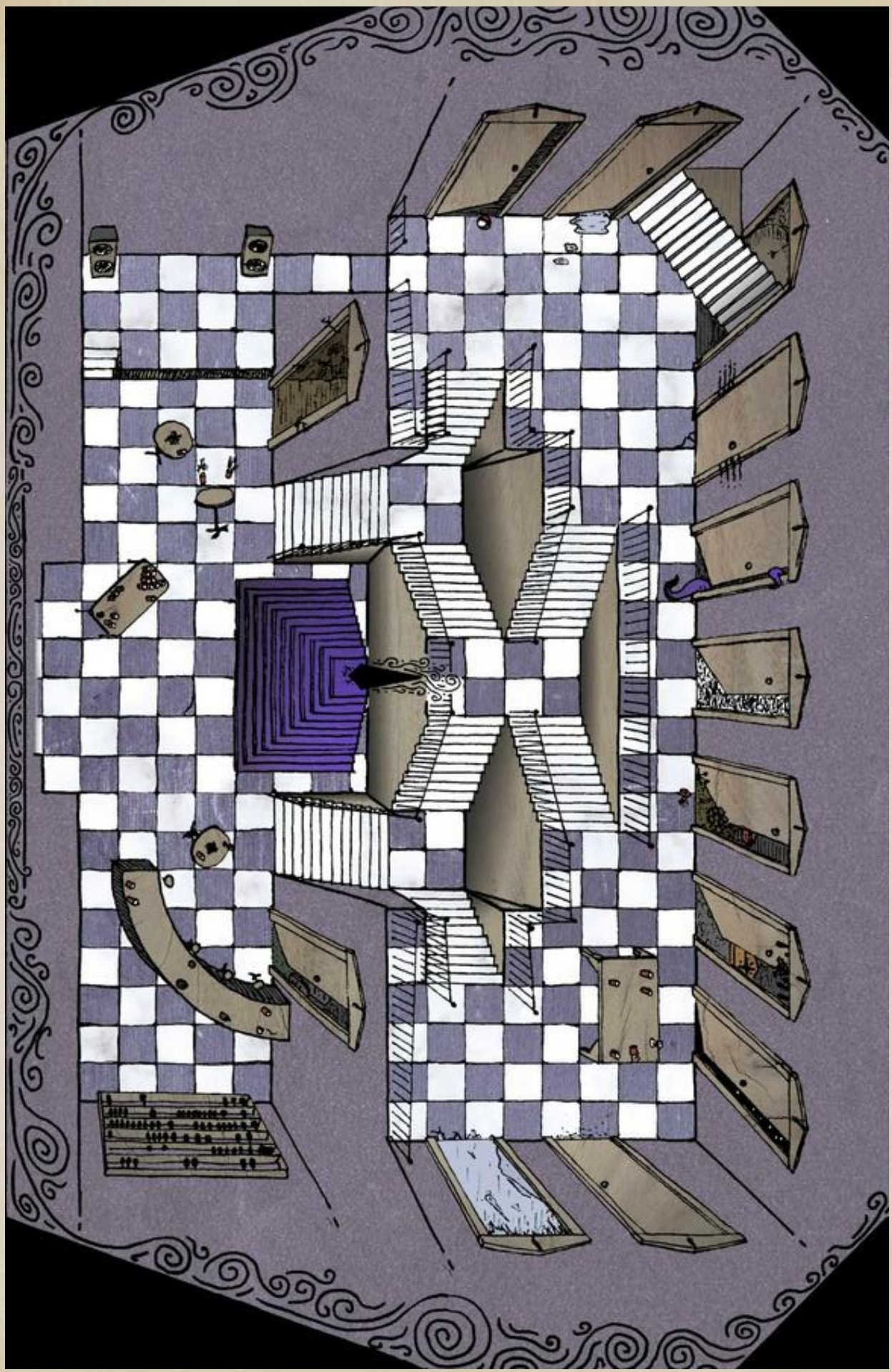

SILVERYMOON
ASCORE
SUNDABAR
STONE STAND
GRANDFATHER TREE
HELLGATE DELL
MHIILAMNIIR
THE HIGH FOREST
ASCORE
RUNLATHIA
THE HIGH ICE
THE FROZEN SEA
PLAIN OF STANDING STONES
WHITEHORN
SPIEL
ANAUROCH DESERT
THE BORDER FOREST
SNOWMANTLE
CITADEL OF THE RAVEN
THE FLAMING TOWER
GRANDFATHER TREE
THE LOST PEAKS
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KARSE
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STRONGHOLD OF THE NINE
ANAUROCH DESERT
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OROFIN
HILLSFAR
CORMANTHOR
MYTH DRANNOR
SHADOWDALE
THULTANTHAR
HARROWDALE
ESSEMBRA
ORDULIN
FARSEA MARSHES
SELGAUNT
SUZAIL
SEA OF
SAERLOON
ISLE OF PRESPUR
PIRATE ISLES
NHALLOTH
FALLEN STARS
MOONRISE HILL
HIGHMOON
STARMANTLE

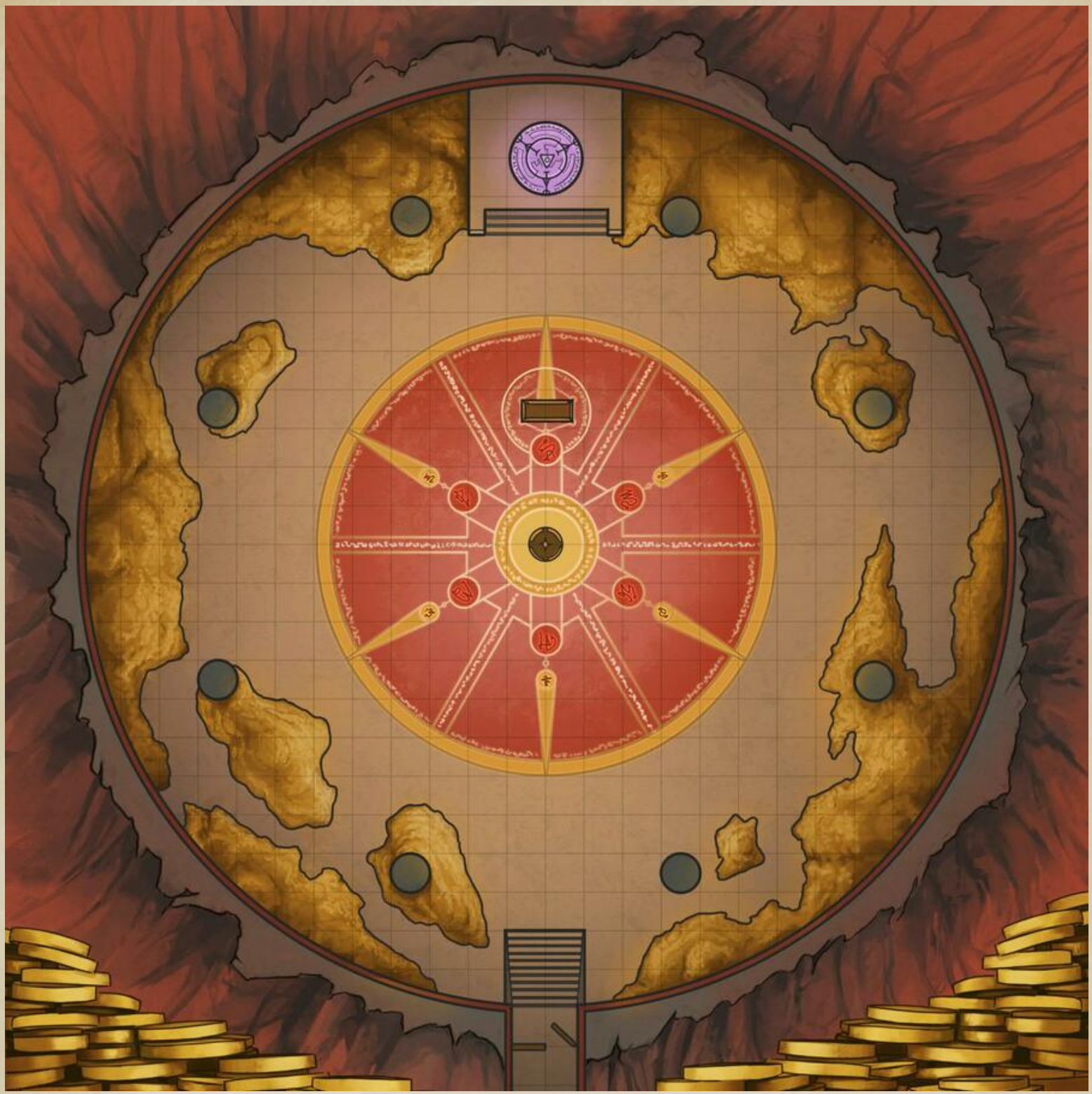


FERNANDO SALVATERRA




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DAVID MARKIWSKY

PITCH REVIEWERS

A big thank you to our pitch reviewers who helped the project management team evaluate the pitches we received and determine which adventures you find in this book today.

Ally Sulentic, Alison Huang, David Markiwsky, Gwen Bassett, Jessica Marcrum, Kristina Sisto Kindel, Lore Evans, V.J. Harris

PLAYTESTERS

We are indebted to everyone who playtested a module in our anthology, including the following playtesters:

Andrew Sinsheimer, Daniel Moller, Ryan Campbell, Michelle Murgia, Nicholas Gibson, Michael Clements, Matthew Whitby, Connor, G Stainsby, Kevin, Joshua Brown, Joseph Hector, Sam Rasmussen, Andrew Neel, Lily H., Breya (B) Mendenhall, Caitlin Chiampou, K. Molnar, Ley, Gwen, Ucsae, Luna, Jack Sinclair, Alexandra Nieto, Harry Gao, David Zeager, Jessica Xing, Lia Warner, Thomas Hsu, Taylor Holst, Benjamin Wang, Noah Grand, Deb Berlin, Ross Hooper, Anthony Ventura, Fred Schocked, Nickolas Gagne, Erik Tukey, John Bacelis, Von Michael Bringhurst, Ethan McDaniel, Graham Ward, Kyle Marie, Noah E. Smith, Billie Morgan Terry, AnaMae Rose Bances, Leor Benjamin Szleifer, Robert Gibney, Casey Kempton, Mei Kurakake, A Particularly Verbose Hippopotamus, Joel Russ, Spencer Hibnick, Casey Williams, William Pfeiffer, James Dewar, Cassandra "Dig" Crary, Rebecca, Liam, Lexie, Karen, Emily Zhang, Justin Hou, Joshua James Gervais, Katherine Raine, Raven Kai, Jessica Ryder, Katie White, Alpha Group, Allen C. Johnson

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David Markiwsky is a writer, artist, and game designer in Canada who is obsessed with everything fey and horror. You can find him on Twitter **@DavidMarkiwsky** and view some of his art at **https://circe10.artstation.com/**. For work inquiries, email **dmarkiwsky@gmail.com**.

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Gwen is an ENnie award–winning freelance fantasy illustrator and a big fan of glowing eyes, sparkles, and sharp teeth. When not painting powerful women and dense forests, she likes to eat inadvisable quantities of dessert and pet other people's dogs.

You can find her work on Twitter **@gwendybee** and at **https://gwendybee.artstation.com**. For work inquiries, email **gwendybee.arts@gmail.com**.

Jessica Marcrum

Jessica Marcrum, also known as angrynerdgirl, is a social worker and silver ENnie winner who dreams of crushing the patriarchy and recycling the rich. She has created numerous games and supplements including the *Book of Seasons* and *Nekomancy*, as well as contributed to publications for Cubicle 7, OnyxPath, and MetalWeave Games. Jessica can be contacted on Twitter **@Miss_Jess03**, on Twitch at **angrynerdgirl**, through Magpie's Curated Play Program where she works as a GM, and via her website at **http://www.jessicamarcrumwrites.com**.

Lore Evans

Lore Evans is a freelance artist and editor who broke into the TTRPG scene with the original *Uncaged* series in both roles. They love all things creepy and fantastical.

They can be found on Twitter **@crit_lore** and **https://loreevans.artstation.com/**.

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Alaire is an American sequential artist and fantasy illustrator living in Canada with her husband Toben and their son. Being a huge fan of video games, particularly *Final Fantasy* and *Tomb Raider*, she also has a long-lasting love for mythology and theology. Her favorite, most unhealthy pastime is eating crinkle-cut fries.

Her most notable works are *Crown & Anchor* and *Sidequest*. You can find more of her work (and comics!) at **http://racicot.art/alaire** and follow her on Twitter **@shiningcapella**.

Alex Niederberger

Alex Niederberger is a game designer, cartographer, and classical composer based in Denver, Colorado. He strives to experiment with design, with a focus on dungeons, non-violent conflict resolution, and adventure form. Alongside solo works, he's been a part of the bestselling *Not Another Monster Quest* anthology, M.T. Black's gold-bestseller *Iskandar City Sourcebook*, and other wonderful collaborations. You can find him on Twitter **@soundsofbones** or on your nearest mountaintop at precisely 4:19 AM.

Amelia Ng

https://ameliandesigns.wixsite.com/portfolio

Amelia is an unknowable entity from Leicester, United Kingdom. They love to be immersed in fantasy lands and stories of all kinds and spend a lot of free time creating and playing within those worlds. She is never one to sit still on one thing for too long, and is easily distracted, but tries her best.

They are always up for freelance projects, especially in the TTRPG spheres!

Angela O'Hara

Angela O'Hara works as a lead artist in the video game industry, and moonlights as a freelance fantasy artist and comic book artist. Based out of Canada, she enjoys telling stories through illustrations of beautiful fantasy characters and environments in luminous colours. Her most notable works are the original fantasy comic *The Moonstone Diadem (2020)* and cover and interior art for *Zafir: Tactical RPG (2020)*. You can find her on Twitter at **@FellminaGames**, and view her work at artbyangela.ca and **https://fellmina.artstation.com/**.

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Beatriz is an illustrator based in Spain, who specializes in fantasy illustration and concept art with interest in TTRPG and videogames. You can find her on social media as **@Aszith**. For work inquiries, she can be contacted at **aszith.art@gmail.com**.

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Portfolio: **https://www.artstation.com/cecilia_nesti**

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David Markiwsky

David Markiwsky is a writer, artist, and game designer in Canada who is obsessed with everything fey and horror. You can find him on Twitter **@DavidMarkiwsky** and view some of his art at **https://circe10.artstation.com/**. For work inquiries, email **dmarkiwsky@gmail.com**.

DW Dagon

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Portfolio: **https://www.artstation.com/dw_dagon**

DW Dagon is a trans non-binary writer, designer, and scribbler of weird things. They love monsters, weird fantasy, and bones.

Elaine Ho

Elaine is a Singaporean-American illustrator and writer. Her work is influenced by Renaissance and Baroque mannerism, and she's drawn to themes of the broken and the beautiful. She has been featured in *American Illustration*, *Spectrum Fantastic Art*, and *Infected by Art*. View her work at **https://artofelaineho.com/**, or follow her on Twitter and Instagram **@artofelaineho**. For work inquiries, contact her at **elaine@artofelaineho.com**.

Fernando Salvaterra

Fernando Salvaterra is a Brazilian illustrator and writer with interest in tabletop roleplaying games, cartography, random tables, mysterious trinkets, travel stories, and strange places. You can find him on Twitter as **@fersalvaterra**.

Flo Young

Residing in a quiet corner of Toronto, Canada, Flo works as a concept artist. She is currently art directing a mobile game and during her downtime she likes to cuddle with her bearded dragon and read a good book. To see more art from her here is her portfolio **https://www.artstation.com/fyo** and on Instagram and Twitter she goes by **@flodapop**.

Gretchen Meinzen

Gretchen is a queer painter and writer of all things fantastical, unusual, and vulnerable. They currently reside in Churubusco, Indiana with their cat, Towan. They can often be found at home, scribbling hieroglyphs on a nearby surface in between commissions, playing DnD, and reading books. You can find their work as well as commissions at **https://www.gretchendraws.com/** and their Twitter (which, let's face it, is mostly existential dread by now) is **@gmeinzen**. You can support them on Patreon at **https://www.patreon.com/Tang**.

Gwen Bassett

Gwen is an ENnie award–winning freelance fantasy illustrator and a big fan of glowing eyes, sparkles, and sharp teeth. When not painting powerful women and dense forests, she likes to eat inadvisable quantities of dessert and pet other people's dogs.

You can find her work on Twitter **@gwendybee** and at **https://gwendybee.artstation.com**. For work inquiries, email **gwendybee.arts@gmail.com**.

H. "Ink" Kugler

Ink is a Korean-American illustrator, roleplayer, and game enthusiast living in a small pocket of the universe. All of their work focuses on inclusivity, fantasy, and the variety and wonder of human experience. Ink has worked on multiple projects and supplements, including *Wisdom Under Fire*, *Eyes Unclouded*, and the *Unbreakable* anthology and is happy to finally have worked on *Uncaged*. Outside of illustration, Ink is usually playing games in some capacity, and can usually be found playing adventures from *Uncaged* every Friday night at 8 PM ET on **https://www.twitch.tv/angrynerdgirl**, where they are part of the Threeflings actual play stream.

If you would like to see more from Ink and their specific brand of chaos, you can find them on Twitter under the username **@TheseDeadPens** and **@TheseDrawnPens**. Links to their portfolio, contact information, and other things can be found at **https://thesedeadpens.carrd.co/**.

Herman Lau

Herman Lau is a Chinese-Canadian artist mostly published in speculative fiction, fantasy, and sci-fi genres of books and gaming products. He has also run children's visual art programs for non-profit organizations and galleries, as well as provided graphic facilitation services for various municipal groups and initiatives. Aside from illustration, Herman works as a martial arts and circus coach.

You can see more of Herman's visual and performance art on Instagram (**@paintedmonk**) and **https://paintedmonk.wordpress.com/**.

Kari Kawachi

Kari is a Uchinanchu digital painter based near Seattle, Washington with her partner and their sharp cat, Catsonova. When she's not painting characters or scenes with a cinematic flare, she's either playing video games, doing tabletop roleplay, or watching professional wrestling.

She has worked on notable titles such as the ENnie-nominated *Book of Seasons: Solstices*, *Book of Seasons: Equinoxes*, *Table for Two*, and *Unbreakable Volume 1*. She can be found on Twitter at **@yutrio**. You can find more of her work at **https://yutrio.artstation.com/**.

For work inquiries, she can be contacted at **karikawachiart@gmail.com**.

Kata Kemi

Kata Kemi is a Finnish neurodivergent illustrator and concept artist living in the USA. Originally from northern Finland, she draws her inspiration from the endless Finnish tales of nature, history, mythology, and fantasy. Pouring that inspiration into imagination and then into art, Kata illustrates neat characters who are managing through the challenges of life.

When she isn't thinking about brewing glöki, she's playing video games such as *The Legend of Zelda* series and *Guild Wars 2*, where she is also a Guild Wars 2 Creative Partner.

Kata considers every cat she sees her baby.

Check out Kata's portfolio and social media websites at **https://katakemi.carrd.co/**.

Kendal Gates

Kendal is a Texas-based freelance illustrator and sequential artist specializing in fantasy and science fiction. When she's not playing tabletop games she can be found drawing tabletop characters and content, or posting pictures of her dog at **@candlegoats** on Twitter or **https://kendalgates.artstation.com/**.

Lore Evans

Lore Evans is a freelance artist and editor who broke into the TTRPG scene with the original *Uncaged* series in both roles. They love all things creepy and fantastical.

They can be found on Twitter **@crit_lore** and **https://loreevans.artstation.com/**.

Maartje Heere (Tangrim)

Tangrim is a neurodivergent concept artist and illustrator hailing from the Netherlands, where they have worked on various games as an artist and art director. Having grown up amongst the woods, dunes, and sea of the Netherlands, and the rivers and mountains of Switzerland, they have a great interest in nature, history, and science, and the stories they tell. Besides this, they find happiness in collecting knowledge, finding little treasures, keeping their hands busy with an obscure craft, or growing succulents and chili plants. Always cheerful and curious, it is rare to find them without a book, game, or losing themselves in the wonders the world offers in things great and small. You can find them at **https://www.artoftangrim.com/** and as **@Tangrim** on Twitter and Instagram.

Margarita Bourkova

Margarita is a freelance illustrator based in rainy Belgium, and passionate about all things fantasy. She's currently working in the TTRPG industry for clients like Dungeon in a Box and Heartleaf Games. You can find her on Twitter **@margawart** and have a look at her portfolio at **https://www.margawart.com/**.

Mike Pape

Mike is a fantasy illustrator and former industrial designer from Toronto, Canada. He's worked on TTRPGs through Kobold Press, Ghostfire Gaming, and indie publishers on Kickstarter, as well as promotional illustration for *Baldur's Gate 3*. You can find more of his work on **https://www.artstation.com/wingbuffet** or **twitter.com/wingbuffet**.

Mina Dupont-Issalys

Mina is a trans illustrator from Quebec, Canada. She works digitally and specializes in character-focused work with a dark yet colorful fantasy flavor and queer themes. You can find her portfolio at **https://www.minadiart.com/**.

Morrighan Corbel

https://morrighancorbel.co.uk
Twitter: **@morrighancorbel**

Morrighan Corbel is an atmospheric gothic horror illustrator living in the northeast of England. Heavily inspired by folklore, ghost stories, and moments of feeling out of place and time, Morrighan uses a mix of watercolour, graphite, and digital overlay to create quietly haunting artworks. Her love of TTRPGs has led her to work with companies such as Wyrmwood, Nerdy Pup Games, and Black Armada, as well as work within comics and publishing. When she's not working, Morrighan can be found hyperfixating on old maps, scouring antiques shops for Victorian portrait photography, and wondering exactly how much she'd have to win on the lottery to buy the abandoned country house her aesthetic demands. You can contact her at **morrighancorbel@gmail.com**.

Nala J. Wu

Portfolio: **https://naladraws.com**

Nala (they/them) is a queer trans neurodivergent illustrator of color who specializes in character/costume design, sci-fi/fantasy illustration, and concept art for animation and games. Through their work, they advocate for diversity in order to increase the positive representation of minority groups in the media. Besides art, Nala does voice acting, diversity & cultural consultations, and makes appearances on TTRPG Actual Play streams & panels. You can follow their Twitter **@NalaWu** (main) / **@naladraws** (art only) to keep up with their work. If you'd like to hire them for your project, please send any inquiries to **naladraws@gmail.com**.

Reid Aster

Reid is a Malaysian-born, Filipino-American illustrator and concept artist currently residing in the Pacific Northwest USA. They love all things neon, gothic, vampy, and eldritch. They have smatterings of qualifications in social studies, writing, teaching, journalism, and telecommunications, but mostly they are just a little color goblin smacking brushes around like chromatic spaghetti. They have recently worked on fun projects like the Alleyman's Tarot, an independent major arcana project, and an upcoming book cover.

You may find their portfolio at **https://www.kollapsart.com/**, watch them bounce around Twitter under **@kollapsart**, or reach out for professional inquiries by their email **kollapsar.illustrations@gmail.com**.

Sabaa Bismil

Sabaa is a Canadian freelance illustrator. She likes tabletop RPGs, sci-fi and fantasy, iced tea, and bad jokes, in no particular order.

Twitter: **@sabaadraws**
Portfolio: **https://sabaa.squarespace.com/**

Saga Mackenzie

Saga Mackenzie is a queer trans illustrator, cartographer, and (occasional) writer from the Highlands of Scotland. As well as a gold bestseller adventure writer on the DMs Guild, she has provided cartography for projects including *Dreadful Realms: Caverns of the Wise Minister*, *Aaralyn's Stolen Notes to Velea*, and *Incredible Creatures*, among many others. You can follow her work at **@pyxistyxGWJ** on Twitter, or check out her online portfolio at **https://smackfolio.wordpress.com/**.

Samara Lee

Samara is a fantasy concept artist and illustrator from a small town in Wisconsin, living with her amazing partner and their two cats, a precious tortoiseshell and an incredibly cuddly orange tabby. Although relatively new to TTRPGs, she has fallen madly in love with them and their engaging and impactful storytelling. Outside of creating visual art, she loves worldbuilding, writing, reading, playing video games, and attempting to cook.

To find more of her work, please see her portfolio at **https://www.artstation.com/SamaraLeeArt** or on Twitter/Instagram at **@SamaraLeeArt**. For work inquiries, please email her at **SamaraLeeArt@gmail.com**.

Sejuti Bala

Portfolio: **https://fiovske.artstation.com/**

Hailing from a sunny corner of Calcutta India, Sejuti Bala (they/them) is a queer non-binary writer and illustrator who specializes in character design and concept art. When not busy with a PhD degree in Postcolonial Literature Studies, Sejuti can often be found excitedly plotting new TTRPG adventures for friends and listening to horror podcasts with their cat. Rolling with a username that was once a whimsical keysmash, Sejuti is an avid lover of bright colors, vampires, speculative science fiction, and fantasy – and has an incurable penchant for always merging these avenues together to create something new.

For any inquiries or to hire them on a project, you can contact them at **fiovske@gmail.com**.

Sonya Henar

Sonya Henar is a mixed race Asian-American artist who specializes in character design and illustration. She's done comic work, illustrations for the *Tales of BarBEARia* board game, the successfully Kickstarted 2022 Baby Bestiary Calendar, concept art and illustration for a mobile game, and a children's book. In the world of TTRPGs, you can find her work on the upcoming Quest RPG adventure *Bone Appetit* and on the cover of *The Princess Project* and *The Heart of the House*, which are available on the DMs Guild, as well as *Unbreakable: Revolution* and the upcoming *Unbreakable: Pathways*, *Unbreakable Vol 2*, and *Unbreakable Vol 3*.

Twitter: **twitter.com/sonybaloneyart**
Website: **https://sonybaloneyart.com/**
Contact: **sonybaloneyart@gmail.com**

Will Hallett

https://twitter.com/WilHallett_art
https://www.artstation.com/wil_hallett_art

Will Hallett is a fulltime in-house illustrator and freelance artist from the UK. He grew up reading and drawing fantasy and now loves making characters and stories come to life. He lives near the rugged peak district in England and loves walks and long bike rides getting lost in nature.

Editors

AJ Freyley

AJ Freyley is an editor and writer based in Nottingham, UK. *Uncaged: Goddesses* is his first big D&D project! When he isn't struggling to focus on his day job as an engineer, he can be found sharing his mechanically quirky monsters and magic items on Twitter **@DungeonMasterAJ** and in **@TroveZine**.

Ashton Duncan

Ashton is a freelance writer and editor still trying to figure out where she's based. Her previous work includes conversion of official Wizards of the Coast digital modules on Roll20, project management on *The Princess Project*, and many DMs Guild projects as editor or writer like *An Elf and An Orc Had a Little Baby* and *Wyrms of the Realms: Mythic Encounters*. Find her on Twitter **@ashtonnduncan**.

Bridie Dutton

Bridie is a writer and editor based in the UK. She flips wildly between bright, whimsical stories and spooky, atmospheric horror. Her previous works include *Eyes Unclouded*, on which she was project lead, and several short adventures published on the DMs Guild. Find her on Twitter **@Bridieiswriting**.

Brock Bergum

Brock Bergum is an editor and game designer based in the San Francisco Bay Area who cycles between sci-fi, historical fantasy, and whatever strikes their fancy. *Uncaged: Goddesses* is their first TTRPG editing project. You can find them on Twitter **@saintguardly** and check out their other content at **https://linktr.ee/saintguard**.

Dan Layman-Kennedy

Dan was born the same year as Dungeons & Dragons and hopes to see them both continue to become their best selves for a long time to come. Outside of games, he does editing and instructional design as his day job and for the occasional freelancing gig, most recently serving as editor for Jim Infantino's second novel, *The Wakeful Wanderer's Guide to Disillusionment*. You can find his game design portfolio at **https://2ndlevelbard.wordpress.com/** and follow him on Twitter **@2ndLevelBard**.

Dana Floberg

Dana Floberg is a writer and editor currently telling stories and causing chaos in Washington, DC. You can find them on Twitter **@dana_flo** and check out their portfolio at **https://danafloberg.carrd.co/**.

Florence Vale

Florence is a writer and editor based in Norway, with a background in both children's fiction and horror. *Uncaged: Goddesses* is her first foray into TTRPG editing. You can find her on Twitter **@aibari**.

John M. McKoll

John M. McKoll is a writer and editor living in Brooklyn. *Uncaged: Goddesses* is John's debut TTRPG project and he's excited to continue developing his craft alongside the rest of the D&D community. You can follow John on Twitter **@ariestherat**.

Kai Linder

Kai is an international editor and game designer with a background in psychology. He's been an editor on projects such as *Eyes Unclouded* and *Unbreakable*, and written for Cubicle 7, the Dark Dice Podcast, and more. You can find him on Twitter **@Paradoliak**.

Lynne M. Meyer

Lynne M. Meyer is a bisexual, genderfluid, disabled, chronically ill femme creator living her best life in Chicago. Named a 2021 Queer in Games Awardee by Rainbow Game Jam and a 2019 New Voices in Gaming scholar by Tabletop Network, Lynne launched her TTRPG career as a writer for the first volume of *Uncaged Anthology*; she went on to serve as an editor or proofreader for every subsequent volume in the series. Follow her on Twitter **@Lynne_M_Meyer**.

Sarah Madsen

Sarah Madsen is a writer living in the wilds (okay, suburbs) of north Georgia, and has written for Wizards of the Coast, Kobold Press, Ghostfire Gaming, Cubicle 7, and many others. When she's not at Starbucks, you can find her on Twitter (**@UnfetteredMuse**), Facebook (**https://www.facebook.com/SarahMadsenAuthor**), or WordPress (**https://unfetteredmuse.com/**).

Sebastian Yūe

Sebastian Yūe is a writer and editor based in Canada. They are the author of the fifth edition adventure *Lake of Secrets* and an editor for *Incantations*, published by Metal Weave Games. Sebastian is also an instructor for the Storytelling Collective's Write Your First Adventure workshop. Follow Sebastian on Twitter **@sebastianyue** and find out more about their work at **http://sebastianyue.ca/TTRPGs**.

Vis Subramanian

Vis is a community manager and editor with a love of tabletop gaming. Though this is his second tabletop RPG publication (after *Unbreakable: Revolution*), he has played dozens of campaigns in a variety of game systems since 2017. As someone of Indian descent born and raised in the US, he strongly believes in the importance of inclusivity and representation. When he's not getting paid to manage communities or edit publications, Vis spends his free time doing those things anyway. You can find him rambling about his passions on Twitter (**@V2Blast**) or anywhere else he can.

