Ptolus™

Monte Cook's
City by the Spire

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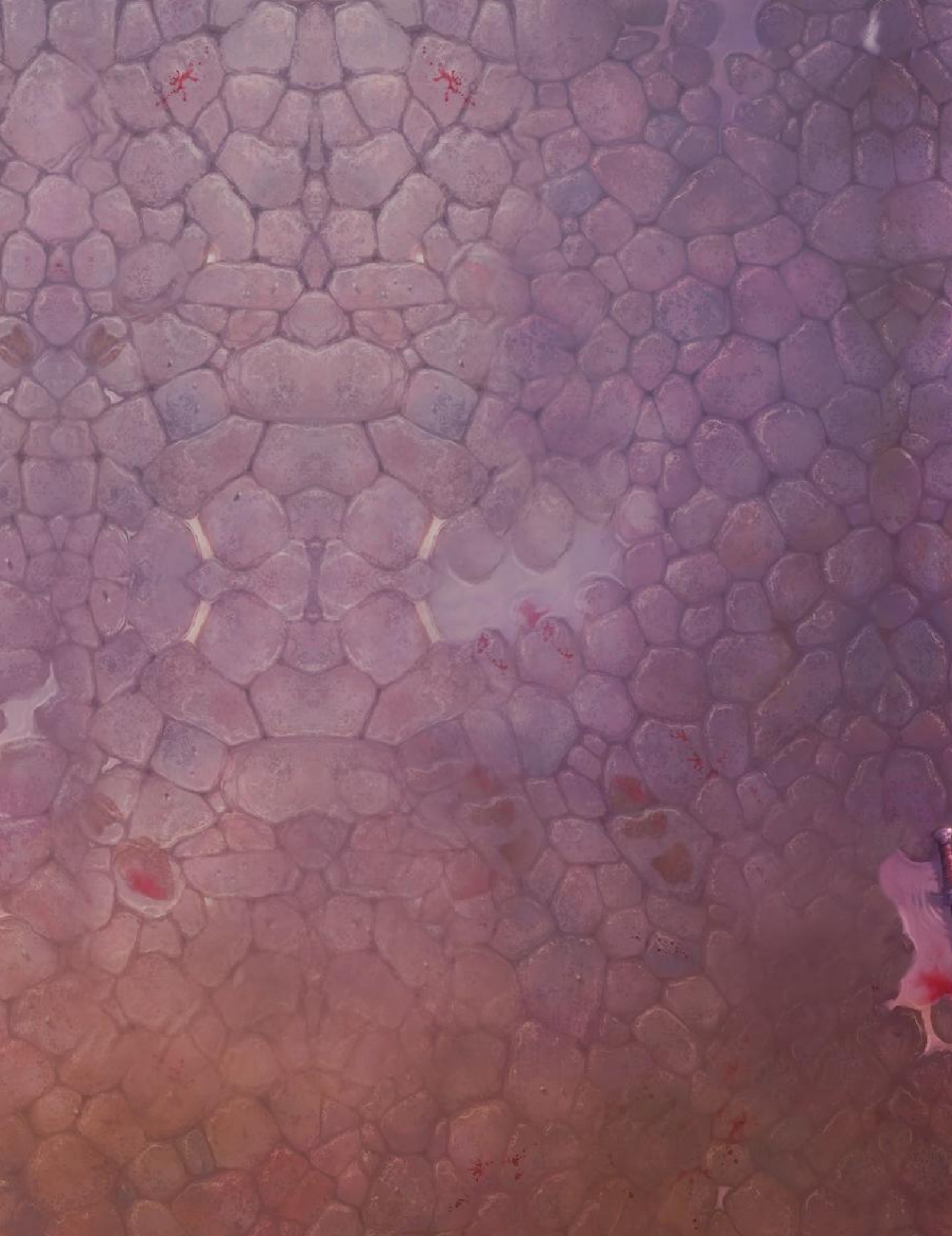
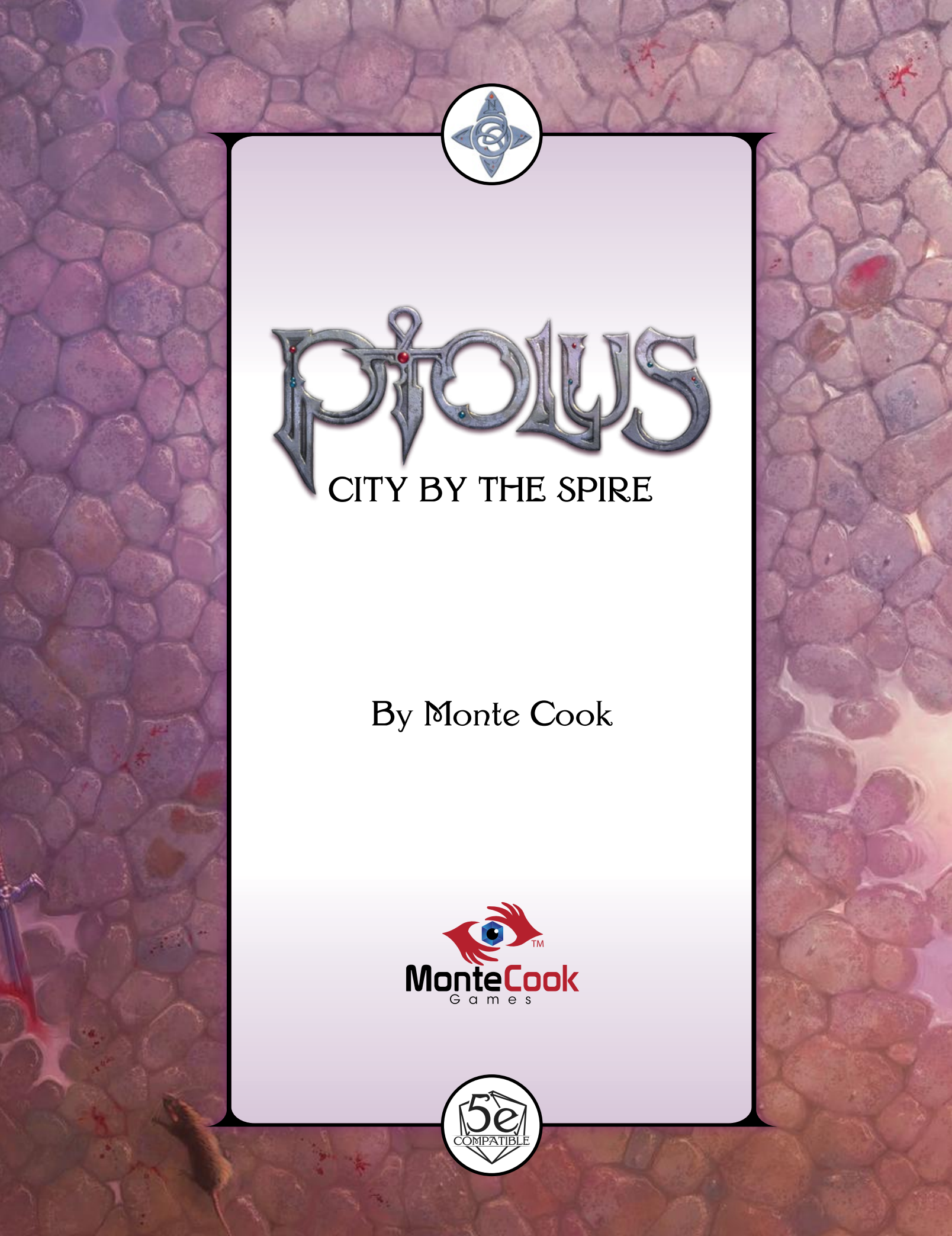
In Ptolus, there's always something going on beneath the surface.





Ptolus

City by the Spire

By Monte Cook

Monte Cook Games

5e Compatible

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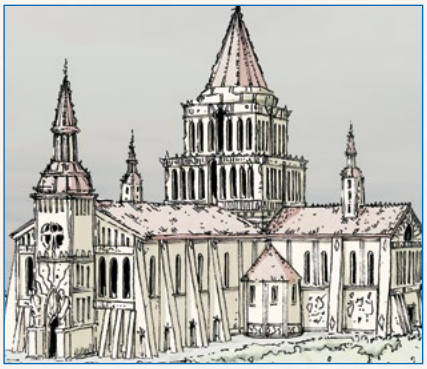

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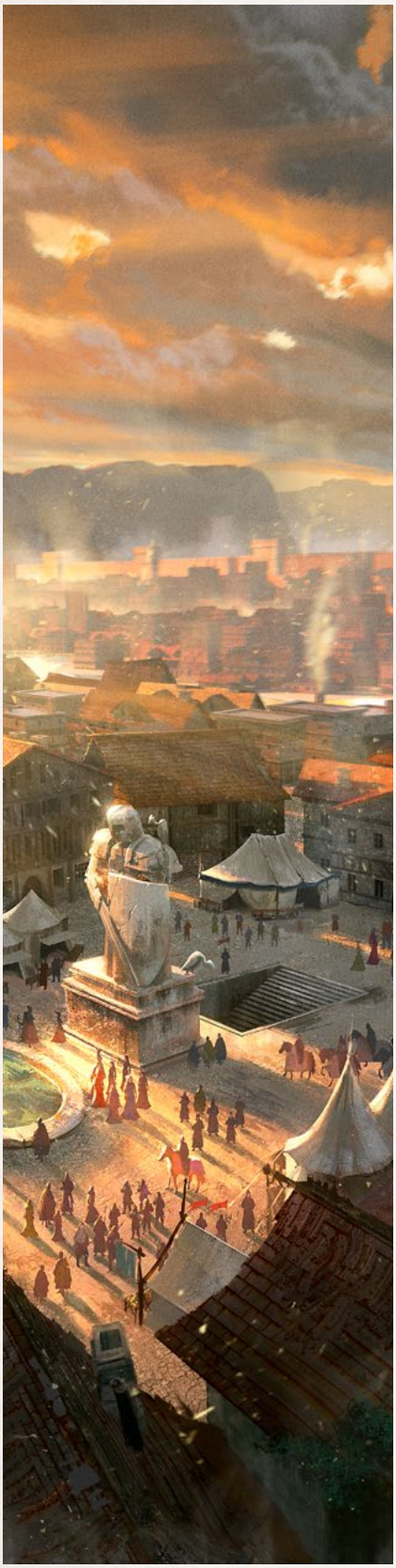

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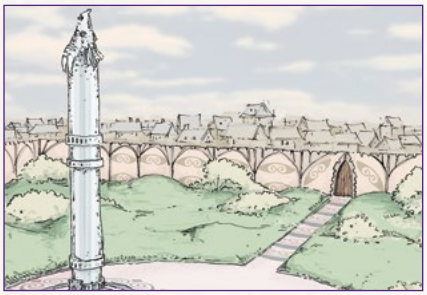

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City of Ptolus/The Spire Poster Map
Color Handouts
Black-and-White Handouts

PTOLUS DIGITAL EXTRAS

A Player's Guide to Ptolus
Handouts (printer-friendly)
Campaign Journals
Saga of the Blade
This Week in Ptolus
Bookmarks
Expanded Table of Contents
Searchable Index
Full Ptolus Map Key

Introduction:

LOOKING BACK . . . AND AHEAD

In 1997, I was an employee of a company that no longer existed. TSR, birthplace of D&D, had been purchased by Wizards of the Coast. Almost all of us who worked on D&D uprooted and moved to Seattle, Washington. I had wanted to start running a new game once we got there, and did—a 2nd Edition game in a world called Praemal.

Then I started working on 3rd Edition with Jonathan Tweet, Skip Williams, and Rich Baker. It seemed an obvious time for a transition. (I'd already been sneaking 3E mechanics into my 2E game on a regular basis.) So I started running a game set in the same world of Praemal, advanced thousands of years. The whole thing was set in a fantasy city, with deep dungeons beneath and an evil fortress on a Spire high above.

Ptolus.

The players of the Ptolus campaign were a veritable who's who of D&D at the time: Bruce R. Cordell, Sean Reynolds, Chris Perkins, Michele Carter, Sue Weinlein, Andy Collins, Jesse Decker, Erik Mona . . . the list goes on. No game master has ever been more fortunate.

By the time 2006 rolled around, I was no longer working at Wizards, but instead ran a game design studio called Malhavoc Press, making 3E-compatible stuff. But Ptolus was still going strong. It was the third Ptolus campaign (we'd already seen two groups—running concurrently—ascend to greatness in the city) and we released the setting as a mammoth product. It was the most deluxe (and, I'll be honest, priciest) RPG product ever produced up to that point. A whole campaign in a single book. It was a smashing success. So successful, in fact, that it sold out quickly. Sadly, it was too expensive to reprint.

The third Ptolus campaign came to a climactic finale in 2007, although there was a reunion game for my 40th birthday the following year. There was also a shorter fourth Ptolus campaign in 2007–2009.

Bringing Ptolus back wasn't my idea. It came from Charles Ryan, COO of Monte Cook Games. I'd always wanted to bring back Ptolus in some form, and heaven knows I got endless requests from gamers to do so. However, I also knew what a mammoth undertaking the project was. My editor and partner at Malhavoc, Sue, had a saying: everything having to do with Ptolus took twice as long as you thought it would. And it was true. Without exaggeration, both she and I damaged our wrists working on the massive book, laboring long hours. Ptolus wasn't just big, it was presented in a format no one had ever used before. It was based on travel guides, taking little bits of inspiration like each page of the book referring to the page where you would find the map related to what you were reading. Page references in the margins to help guide the reader toward more information on a topic. Color-coded sections. Bookmarks. Multiple glossaries and indexes. A six-page (!) table of contents. All of this was as much work as you might think—in fact, using Sue's rule, it was twice as much. And to be clear, while I wrote every word, Sue did absolutely as much work as I did, coordinating, organizing, and editing the book. She had almost every page reference memorized by the end. You could say to her "Menon Balacazar," and she would say "page 101" without looking.

But, like I said, I wanted to see Ptolus come back as much as or more than anyone else. So in 2020, with both the Cypher System and the newest edition of D&D more popular

than ever before, we launched a Kickstarter to fund not one, but two versions of Ptolus.

Now the monumental task before us wasn't to write or edit this huge book (although we did a bit of rewriting and editing, of course), but to convert all the material in it to not one but two different game systems. I can tell you right now, there were times when I thought we were insane to even try.

But thanks to hard work by Sean Reynolds and Bruce Cordell, and new edits by Ray Vallese, Shanna Germain, and Teri Litorco (and maybe an old has-been like me poking his head in now and again), the material was assembled and, well, you hold it in your hand now.

Actually, I hope you're resting it on a table, because it will hurt your back otherwise.

Art director and layout artist Bear Weiter commissioned some new art and gave the whole book a fresh look while still retaining the essence of the original.

Throughout this book, you'll see references to the "packet," which is the envelope included in the back. Inside the envelope are printed materials for use in a Ptolus Campaign, including such things as a calendar, a poster map of the city, character sheets, and a map of the adventurer-friendly neighborhood called Delver's Square. The GM can use the packet materials as props for the current adventure or to help players immerse themselves in the city. Because some of these handouts contain spoilers, players shouldn't look through them without the GM's permission.

In this book, you'll also see references to various items accompanied by this symbol. These are references to the Ptolus Digital Extras: a collection of useful PDFs for a Ptolus Campaign, including maps for the adventures in this book, handouts, and more. Even more so than the packet, the contents of the Ptolus Digital Extras contain spoilers and shouldn't be read by players without the GM's permission.

The GM is free to print anything from the Ptolus Digital Extras for the purpose of enhancing their campaign.

You can download the Ptolus Digital Extras for free at: myMCG.info/PtolusDigitalExtras

Throughout this book, you'll see references to additional titles, such as *Banewarrens* and *Night of Dissolution*. These are separate products that can provide additional details, adventures, and ideas for your campaign.

Some authors say that their books are like their children. If that's true, this book is really sort of a grandchild. It's not the same book that I wrote more than fifteen years ago, but it's clearly the new—and dare I say improved—version of that book.

The material inside these pages means so much to me. When I open it up and see names like Kirstol Dallimothan or Ebbert Boltcrafter or Kaira Swanwing, it's like being reminded of old friends. I ran two sessions of Ptolus a week for years, and one session a week for still more years. This isn't just a book to me—it's about ten years of my life. I'm so thrilled that it's back, and it's as beautiful and high quality as it ever was.

Where Do I Start?

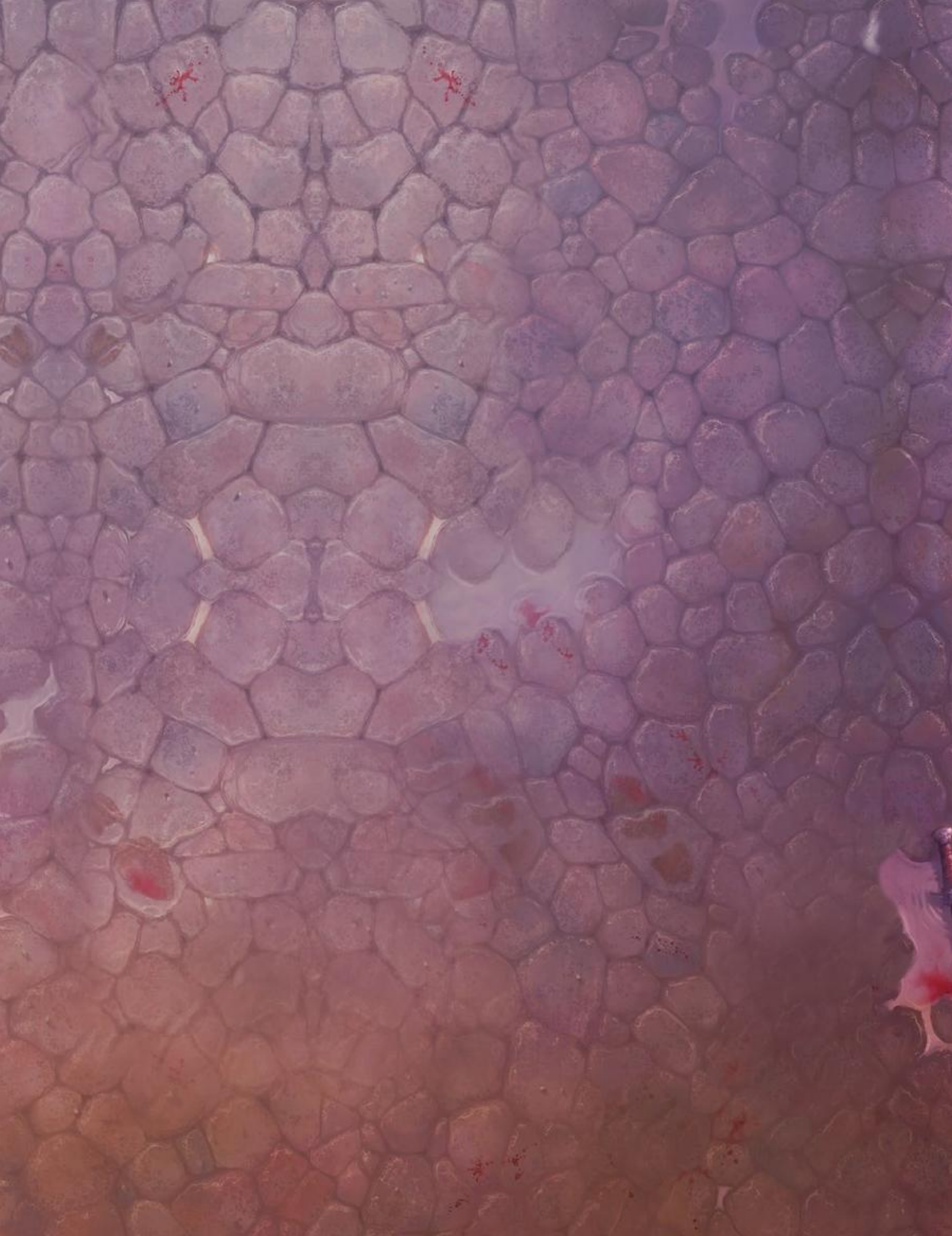
Whether you're a player or a game master (GM), start by reading Part I: Ptolus Player's Handbook. That section provides a quick overview of everything else in the book. Of course, it doesn't go into any of the secrets of the setting—those are for the GM to reveal as time goes on.

If you want to hand out just that section to your players, you can find *A Player's Guide to Ptolus* as a free downloadable PDF file at myMCG.info/PtolusPlayersGuide. Print out a copy for each player. Let everyone have a chance to learn about the city and get a feel for the setting.

Where you go next depends on how you're going to use this book. If you want Ptolus to be your campaign setting, move right along to Part II: Background and learn all the basics of the world. If Ptolus is destined to become a city in your existing world, jump straight to Part III: City Guide and read about the various parts of town. If you only want to mine the book for ideas, flip through it and look at whatever strikes your fancy. You'll find interesting city locales, strange and fascinating NPCs, dungeon complexes, evil fortresses, haunted ruins, complex organizations, a few new species, monsters, character options, spells, and a lot more. The glossaries and index in the appendix can help you find what you're looking for quickly. Use the stitched-in bookmarks and the tear-out bookmarks to help you remember the sections you want to use.

It was my campaign, and now it's yours. I hope you get as much enjoyment from this city as I did.

Monte Cook
October 2020



PART I:
PTOLUS PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

Player characters, having spent their lives in Ptolus—or at least in the same world as this city—certainly know a fair bit about the place. The following section should be required reading for a player creating a character for a Ptolus Campaign. GMs should also read the material, as it summarizes much of the general information about the setting. The rest of the book provides more specific detail, but it all builds from the information found in this player's guide.

GMs should feel free to make this information available to all players in whatever way is easiest. Permission is granted to photocopy the player's guide (pages 14 to 39) or download the information as a free PDF file at ptolusrpg.com. You can also just show them this portion of the book, but keep in mind that players will want to refer to the information throughout the campaign, not just read it all at the beginning.

A few details in this section differ from what's presented in other chapters of this book. Such disparity arises because chapter 1 provides the information known to city residents or visitors to Ptolus. But common knowledge is not always the truth of the matter.

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Chapter 1:

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO PTOLUS

A city of mysteries, secrets, and dark histories, Ptolus lies forever in the shadow of a towering stone spire reaching impossibly high into the sky, itself an enigma and a reminder of evil long past. In Ptolus, the supernatural is expected and treachery lies around every corner—or is it that the supernatural lies around every corner and treachery is expected? Either way, the city of Ptolus abounds with danger, magic, intrigue, and above all, adventure.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In my original Ptolus Campaign, the characters started out not as Ptolus natives, but as a group of unrelated people waiting in line to gain entrance through the city gates.

This chapter is designed to introduce you as a player to the fundamentals of Ptolus, so that you can create and run a character with plenty of knowledge about the world. The city is rich enough in detail that it's difficult to absorb it all at once, so keep this information handy as a reference while you play in a Ptolus Campaign—and be prepared to discover that the information you learn in these pages is only the very briefest overview.

WELCOME TO THE CITY

You are a native of a port city called Ptolus, or you have recently arrived there. Native or not, you know a few things about this city—it is not without a reputation, to say the least. To call Ptolus a dynamic place with a strange and varied identity is to understate the situation greatly. Only now are explorers truly discovering how ancient the city really is and unearthing details of its varied history. Ptolus is where that strange breed that calls itself "adventurers" congregates. It's a place where people are as concerned with what lies below the ground as they are with what's above. This is like no place else in the world.

Ptolus lies in the world of Praemal within the bounds of a very old Empire unsure of whether or not it has toppled. Three different emperors claim the throne, and portions of the once-great realm cleave off like icy shards from a melting glacier. This decaying society looks upon previous centuries and sees grander, more civilized, and certainly better days. Progress seems on the decline—skills and lore that people possessed just a few hundred years ago are lost now.

But this is not a time to lose hope altogether. This civilization, older than our own real-world cultures, is more sophisticated than our own in some ways, but less so in others. A myriad of species and peoples have come and gone, creating an intricate (and sometimes confusing) amalgam. Good struggles against evil, and law against chaos. But the shadows only threaten the light—they do not yet consume it.

Not so long ago, the first people who would one day be called "delvers" returned from exploring the catacombs below the city of Ptolus laden with gold and magical treasures. Today, hundreds of new would-be delvers pour into the city each month, hoping to strike it rich like others before them. Most never crawl up from the realms below, but adventurers keep arriving with dreams of gold and fame. Those who do emerge back into the light bring with them tales of surprisingly vast reaches of natural caverns and ancient hewn passages, perhaps dating back to the dark days when this area lay in

the thrall of the terrible Skull-King, Ghul, and the region was pocked with winding warrens and subterranean chambers created by his dark armies. They also tell of the horrors that dwell outside the life-giving reaches of the sun: unknown monsters and devious demon-minded things with a cunning not known to human-, elf-, or dwarfkind. In the city, entire industries have evolved quickly to service the needs of these adventurers. In the shadow of an unnaturally tall, ancient spire with a very dark past, a whole new form of economics, politics, and social structure struggles to be born.

Creatures and individuals (good, evil, and otherwise) that normally remain in the shadows are drawn to this large gathering of adventurers and magic. The needs of the delvers prompt renewed devotion to magic, science, and religion. As the Empire of Tarsis dies, Ptolus—for years a backwater town on the edge of civilization—is quickly becoming the center of something much larger than itself. Omens and prophecies of children born with strange birthmarks surface in the city with increasing frequency. No one yet knows exactly what, but something is happening in Ptolus. Something new stirs in the city . . . and that something is very, very old.

CAMPAIGN FEEL

Ptolus is an urban campaign setting. However, it is also one that deals with dungeon delving and subterranean exploration. In your own Ptolus Campaign, you can probably expect about a fifty-fifty split between dungeon adventures and urban adventures. The latter involve a surprising array of organizations and individuals that live in this less-than-typical fantasy city.

As a setting, Ptolus should prove a somewhat realistic interpretation of a place in which dungeon explorers really do plumb the depths of a gigantic underground labyrinth filled with treasure, monsters, and traps. As much as possible, many standard tropes of fantasy adventures, including "dungeons," are presented in a fashion that makes sense.

While late medieval culture provides one building block of the setting, it's not the focus that you might think it to be. The game's rules are that focus. So, while Ptolus is based strongly in historical reality, many notions from real-world history that often hold true in other campaigns (most adults don't believe in monsters, everyone's bewildered by magic, you never see lizard men walking down the street) are not present here. Instead, Ptolus is a campaign where the common tropes of fantasy gaming and all that they imply hold sway. That means "monsters" are common. Wizards are everywhere. Lots of people walk around in plate armor. Humans strolling down the street rub shoulders with elves, dwarves, halflings, gnomes, half-orcs, and even stranger beings.

In a way, this campaign is "fantasy gaming with the volume turned all the way up." Creating this city did *not* involve building a fantasy world first, then adapting the rules to make it work. Just the opposite, really. As a setting, Ptolus has been under the influence of RPG rules for a long, long time. The things that make fantasy gaming unique—the prevalence of magic (including the specific spells we all know), the ever-increasing power of individuals, and the creatures common in the genre—have shaped the reality of Ptolus. And because I used this setting as a playtest backdrop as I worked on the design of the Third Edition core rules, Ptolus influenced the d20 System rules as well. This is a setting steeped in game history and significance.

That doesn't mean Ptolus contains nothing new, however. As the city developed, new material grew out of the process. The firearms, creatures, spells, species, and foreboding atmosphere all came very naturally.

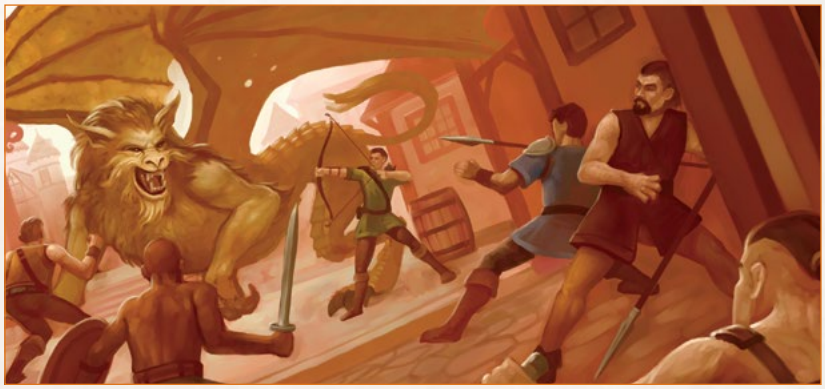
The Ptolus Campaign is a fantasy that some would label "dark," although it's as much about rising up out of the darkness as living within it. It is clearly an urban fantasy, for the campaign takes place entirely within or beneath the city of Ptolus—a place with a vast history of dark secrets waiting to be discovered.

THE CITY OF PTOLUS

Ptolus is a major city of about seventy-five thousand people. It is located in the land of Palastan near a large bay on the southern end of the Whitewind Sea. The place was established to serve as the port for an important fortress built at the time of the Empire's foundation, a citadel called Dalenguard. More significantly, however, it lies in the shadow of an impossibly tall (almost 3,000 feet) and thin pinnacle of rock known simply as the Spire. The Spire and

"Someplace needs to be the worst place in the world. Why not here?"
~ Brusselt Airmol, well-known rogue adventurer

Ptolus was created to be, first and foremost, a place where characters could have interesting and exciting adventures. It's designed to accommodate both urban- and dungeon-style adventures. The city's background provides a foundation for political intrigues, monster-bashing adventures, treasure hunts, and even adventures involving demons, angels, and other interdimensional creatures.



The City Watch approaches any given situation with an appropriate response. To handle a bunch of rowdy drunks, the Watch captain sends low-ranking guards. To deal with a rampaging monster or a group of unruly adventurers, the captain sends well-equipped fighters supported by multiple spellcasters.

its surroundings seethe with mysterious legends and rumors. These tales tell of ancient battles waged and cities erected on the site, of demons and dark lords, of forgotten kings and mighty wizards. Many such stories might be at least somewhat true, for recent developments have revealed vast complexes beneath the city.

Of late, Ptolus has become a city of adventurers. Treasure-seekers flock there to explore and plunder the labyrinthine structures beneath the streets, which they call the "Dungeon." If the stories are correct, these catacombs include:

- The sewers of the city
- Vast stretches of subterranean passages and chambers created by Ghul and his minions (see Timeline, page 30)
- The remains of an even older city
- An abandoned underground dwarven settlement called Dwarvenhearth
- Levels that plunge incredibly deep below the present urban area

Ptolus lies in a cool, rainy coastal region with harsh winters. It serves as an important port on the Bay of Ptolus off the Whitewind Sea and belongs to the Empire of Tarsis, although a growing faction in the city feels that Ptolus should declare itself independent.

For more on House Vladaam, Sadar, Khatru, and the other noble houses of Ptolus, see page 100.

RULERS

The city is ostensibly ruled by a council, at whose head is the Commissar, a representative of the Empire of Tarsis. The other main council members are Kirian Ylestos, the Prince of the Church, and the Mother Superior of the Sisterhood of Silence (see below). Other City Council members (with less influence) include guildmasters, the heads of the noble houses, and a few wealthy merchants. People of the town often refer to this body as the "Council of Coin," because money is a powerful and influential force among its members.

The Commissar of Ptolus, Igor Urnst, is a war veteran and a military man. Even though Ptolus has not been threatened with attack in centuries, he has a very defensive-minded approach to running the city. At the same time, he is wise enough to know that the residents of Ptolus are not soldiers and that sometimes he needs to give them what they want to make them happy. This understanding makes him both efficient and fair, and he is extremely well liked.

Guildmaster Delver Sorum Dandubal, also a council member, is quickly becoming another force to reckon with—almost a fourth main member—but the three forces controlling the council dislike and oppose him.

Truth be told, the real ruler of the city is the Commissar, Igor Urnst. The City Watch operates under his direct command from Dalenguard, a historic fortress that still stands in Oldtown. Urnst's group of advisors in charge of the city's defense and protection is called the Twelve Commanders. These include Lord Dorant Khatru of House Khatru, Aoska (a half-celestial), and other local luminaries.

THE AUTHORITIES AND THE LAW

To police the streets, the Commissar of the city commands a force of more than eight hundred troops and City Watch guards, including a few dozen elite individuals (captains, mages, clerics, and the like). While the constables in many of the Empire's cities are considered glorified street-sweepers with little competence or desire to actually enforce the law, this is not true of the experienced and well-equipped guards of Ptolus, particularly those known as the Commissar's Men.

Nevertheless, this well-trained and well-paid force has its hands full maintaining order in the city. Helping to enforce the law is a special order of monks called the Sisterhood of Silence. These nonspeaking female monks patrol the streets and apprehend criminals, even though they are not—strictly speaking—sanctioned to do so officially. A male eunuch always accompanies a small unit of the Sisters of Silence to speak on their behalf.

However, neither the city guard nor the Sisterhood of Silence is willing to go down into the Dungeon and fight monsters. Nor are they likely to help against well-known and influential noble families such as House Vladaam or House Sadar, or powerful groups like the Church of Lothian or the Shuul. Of course, those groups would never break any laws, so there's surely nothing to worry about. . . .

THE FORCES OF LIGHT

Aside from the law-enforcing authorities, both official and self-appointed, Ptolus benefits from the presence of various forces of munificence. Orders of knighthood like the Keepers of the Veil, Order of the Dawn, and Knights of the Pale uphold such concepts as benevolence and nobility. There are even angelic beings in Ptolus—more than anyplace else in the world—from half-celestials to true angels. Many of these beings congregate in a place called the Pale Tower and call themselves the Malkuth. Paladins and clerics of good deities like Lothian, Gaen, and Navashtrom help Ptolus stand against the darkness as well.

And in Ptolus, the dark is deep.

THE DARK SIDE

Like every city, Ptolus has a dark side. Here, criminal lords command veritable armies of rogues and assassins, and war among each other as well as against the law. These criminals deal in extortion, smuggling, gambling, usury, and prostitution. Chief among these criminals are Menon Balacazar, leader of the oldest criminal syndicate in the city, and the newcomer Kevris

Killraven. They are bitter enemies. Depraved assassins called the Vai hunt victims for money and to fulfill their own bloodlust.

But worse things lurk in Ptolus than simply criminals. Dwelling among the crypts of the city's graveyard are the death-loving Forsaken, so called because the rest of society finds them so abhorrent. Worse still, chaos cultists—in league with terrible inhuman things—plot the city's downfall and, in fact, the annihilation of the entire world to sate their lust for destruction. Last, and strangest of all, Ptolus is home to actual demons from the lower realms. Some are merely demon-blooded tieflings, but others are full-blooded fiends that call themselves the Fallen. These beings dwell alongside the Forsaken in a place called the Dark Reliquary.

THE PEOPLE OF PTOLUS

Ptolus is primarily a trade city, serving not only as a major port but also as a link between the northwest and the central portions of the Empire of Tarsis. About two-thirds of the population is human, with the remaining third being (from most populous to least): Shoal elves, Stonelost dwarves, halflings, litorians, Grailwarden dwarves, gnomes, half-elves, centaurs (aram), orcs and half-orcs, and others—lizardfolk (assarai), ogres, and far stranger things. (Some of those species might sound unfamiliar. Read on.)

DISTRICTS OF THE CITY

Ptolus lies between the Spire and the sea. The highest portion of the city, the Nobles' Quarter, is built on the base of the Spire. From there, the level of the city drops down a sharp cliff to Oldtown, and then down again into Midtown. The final cliffs at the edge of Ptolus drop into the bay, with the only area of dry land at the bottom of those cliffs occupied by the city's docks. Well-worn paths connect the various elevations and help make Ptolus very defensible (although the city has never been attacked).

The King's River flows through the city, spilling into an eroded chasm in the northwest corner and flowing down to the Bay of Ptolus near the docks. The bottom of the chasm, called the King's River Gorge, is 80 feet below the level of the ground on the north side, but more than 200 feet below on the south side. The south side still holds the old city walls and fortifications. A bridge built atop two massive pillars, themselves erected atop natural rock columns, stretches across the King's River Gorge at a steep angle, leading into the area of the city known as Oldtown. Another bridge stretches across the chasm to join Oldtown with the Rivergate District. Although Oldtown is higher, the difference in elevation between these two districts is not steep, so the slope of this bridge seems far less noticeable than that of the other.

Crimes in Ptolus

While obvious offenses such as murder and theft are illegal in Ptolus, so are compulsion spells cast upon citizens (locals frown on charming shopkeepers to get a better price) and spells of mass destruction cast within the city proper (no fireballs or disintegration spells). In particular, the authorities hate spells that bring more undead to the city. They also prosecute people severely for doing anything that spreads disease. These and other crimes can be reported at a district's Watchhouse.

See the map on pages 26–27 or the Ptolus poster map for a good look at the city's layout.

Buying Magic

People looking for magic items could do worse than come to Delver's Square in Midtown. In the square, one can find Myraeth's Oddities, a shop that buys magic items of all kinds and resells them. This is a good place to acquire miscellaneous items, as well as potions, rings, wands, and scrolls. However, Myraeth doesn't sell weapons or armor—for those items, try Rastor's or the Bull and Bear, also in Delver's Square. Like Myraeth's, they may have used magical equipment to sell. Just a few buildings down is Danbury's, a tavern in which one can find a representative of the Dreaming Apothecary, an organization that makes new magic items (see page 116). Across the street you can also visit St. Gustav's Chapel, a great place to obtain healing potions and holy items.

THE DOCKS

Far below the level of the city's streets, the Docks rest at the bottom of the city's eastern cliffs on a narrow strip of land. The wooden buildings here sit slightly askew from one another, because the entire small district is built upon slowly sinking sand. Even the streets are sand. A dozen or more ships moor in the deep waters here at any given time. This is a particularly rough area of the city, thanks to the influx of sailors and its isolation from the other districts. A single winding road provides access up a steep incline to the city proper.

The Docks area is full of warehouses, shipyards, hostels, and taverns, all catering to sailors and merchants. Isolated from the rest of the city by the cliffs, sometimes it seems as though the Docks area has had to become its own little community. Many Ptolus residents live their whole lives without going there—but, of course, they probably haven't been to the Nobles' Quarter, either.

GUILDSMAN DISTRICT

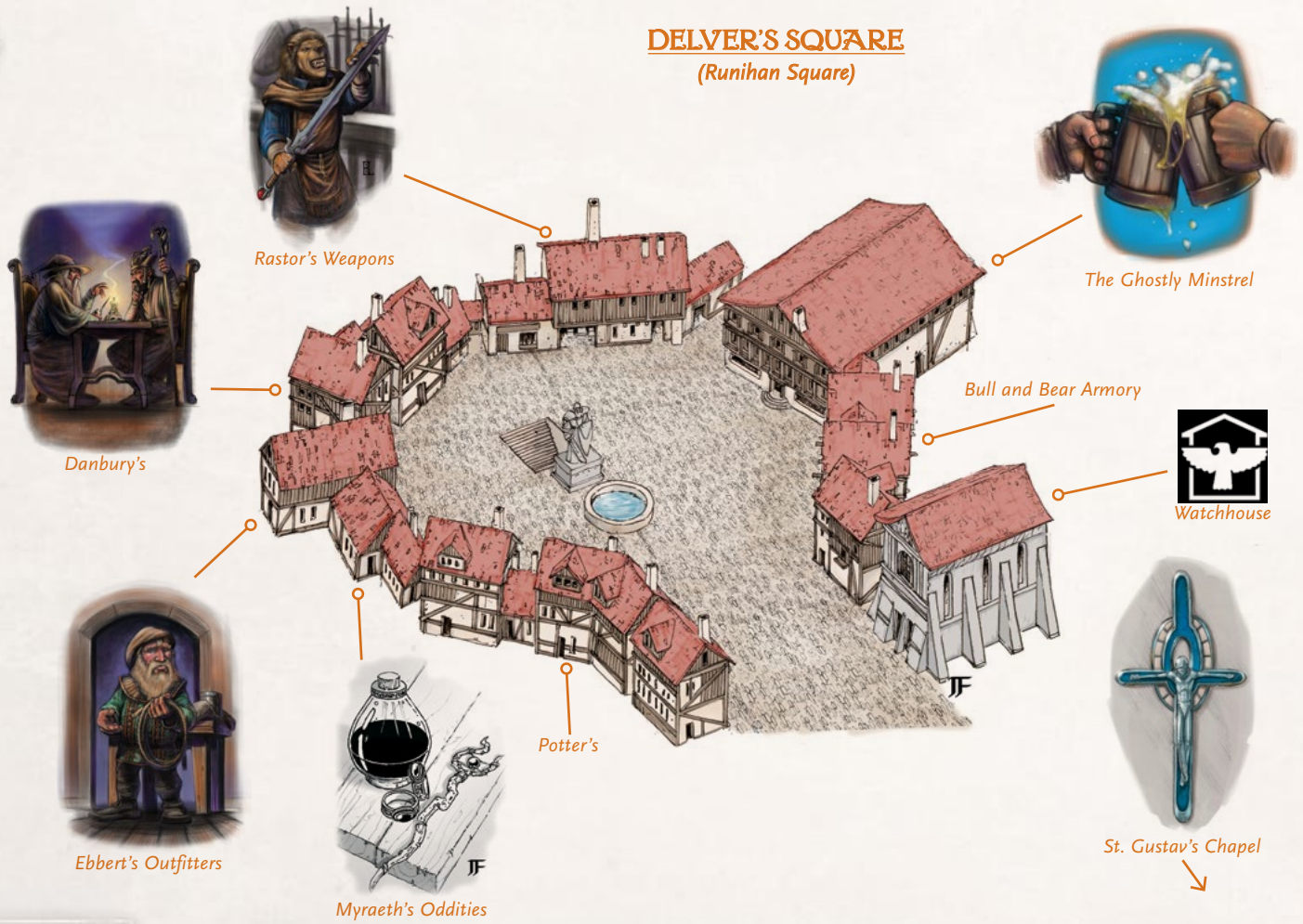
Ptolus teems with guilds. Every type of artisan, smith, or other professional belongs to a guild of similarly trained and employed individuals. These guilds enjoy a strong voice in the City Council. This district in the south end of the city holds many tanneries, smithies, foundries, textile houses, grain mills, paper mills, brickmakers, bookmakers, woodworkers, and other production facilities, as well as warehouses, granaries, coalhouses, stockyards, and similar storage sites.

Not surprisingly, this district has a distinct odor.

Unless one works here, a local rarely finds a reason to visit, although this district sports a few taverns and other businesses catering to the working class. The Guildsman District's rough reputation prevents most people from frequenting the area at night. Those who live there often join a guild for protection.

Just a few of the guilds in this district include the Drapers' Guild, Goldsmiths' Guild, Herbalists' Guild, Ironworkers' Guild, Masons' Guild, Silversmiths' Guild, Tanners' Guild, Weaponsmiths' Guild, and Woodworkers' Guild.

The Sages' Guild, the Shipwrights' Guild, a warriors' guild (called the Order of Iron Might), and a few others are headquartered elsewhere in the city.



MIDTOWN

As the central area of the city, Midtown is both a commercial and a residential hub. It is also where one finds many local entertainment offerings, in the form of pubs and taverns as well as theaters, dance halls, gambling dens, and more. Visitors looking for a place to stay usually find themselves directed here, as most of the temporary lodgings in the city are found in Midtown.

Midtown is home to both Tavern Row and Delver's Square, where many employers seeking to hire adventuring parties can post their announcements. It also has a few shops and plenty of residential areas, such as Emerald Hill, where most elves choose to live, and Narred, a centaur neighborhood.

Besides the Delver's Square shops that adventurers frequent (Rastor's Weapons, the Bull and Bear Armory, Ebbert's Outfitters, and Myraeth's Oddities), those in the know also appreciate Saches clothiers on Yeoman Street and, of course, the Row Bathhouse. Potions and Elixirs offers a large stock of potions for sale.

The most popular adventurer hangout is the Ghostly Minstrel tavern and inn in Delver's Square. Many folks seem leery of both the Onyx Spider (on Tavern Row) and the Black Swan (which is mainly for dwarves). Danbury's, also in Delver's Square, caters to spellcasters.

THE NECROPOLIS

A city several centuries old tends to have a large graveyard, and Ptolus is no exception. The vast Necropolis in the city's northeastern corner sits on a few rolling hills, now completely covered with mausoleums, crypts, and graves. The entire Necropolis is surrounded by a wall, with guards posted at each of its four gates. Their primary duty is to warn people not to stay in the Necropolis after nightfall and to watch for grave robbers. Most people know that undead roam the Necropolis, but various churches and holy orders, such as the Keepers of the Veil, do their best to contain the menace.

NOBLES' QUARTER

Ptolus has no shortage of wealth or wealthy people. Technically outside the city's walls, the Nobles' Quarter, with its row upon row of manors and estates, climbs the city's western cliffs abutting the Spire itself. Travelers can enter the area only via a single avenue up from Oldtown that runs through the fortress of Dalenguard before reaching the Nobles' Quarter. The heights where this district now sits were easily defensible in the city's younger days; originally, all Ptolus residents could gather here in times of emergency, secure behind Dalenguard's stout gates. However, as time passed and the city grew, members of the elite class claimed these enviable heights for their residences, leaving the less wealthy to expand into the lower quarters.

The largest estates in this section of town belong to the ten noble families that have held power in the area—to one degree or another—for centuries. In addition to the homes of the wealthy and the services that cater to them, this district houses the Holy Palace, where the Prince of the Church lives; lately he is joined by his father, the Emperor of the Church, visiting from his eastern capital. The Nobles' Quarter holds the Crown Theater opera house, the Imperial Academy of Music, fabulous eating establishments, a floating apartment building, and other luxuries and sites of interest.

NORTH MARKET

When one enters the city from the north, one is greeted with the sights and smells of a busy marketplace. Well-worn cobblestone streets are packed with vendors occupying wooden booths, pushing carts, or simply hawking wares they tote in massive baskets on their backs. Fresh foods of all kinds—fish and shellfish from the sea, fruit from the orchards to the north, and breads and pastries from the city being favorites—are available in any quantity. Other goods are for sale in small shops and tents, or from the backs of wagons. The City Watch patrols this busy area to keep thieves and pickpockets from running rampant. Rumor has it that the guards employ sorcerers to patrol the area invisibly, using spells to keep an eye out not only for traditional thieves, but for magically aided ones as well. They watch for invisible robbers, overt use of charm or compulsion magic, and similar tricks.

If you're looking for tasty baked goods, try Tavoh's Bakery; for a good clothier, try Endle's Finery; for a fair weapon shop, go to Mitoren's Blades, although Rastor's Weapons in Delver's Square (in Midtown) is probably better for traditional arms. A small firearms emporium called the Smoke Shop opened recently as well.

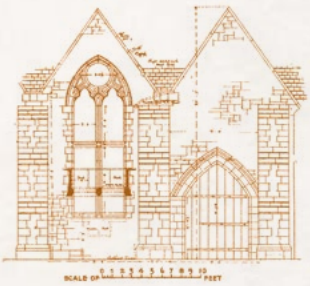
OLDTOWN

Ptolus was founded three centuries ago as a small community surrounding a fortress called Dalenguard. The fortress's original purpose was to keep the area clear of evil creatures drawn by the power of Jabel Shammar, the citadel at the top of the Spire. It also sought to watch over Goth Gulgamel, the fortress halfway up the Spire built by Ghul, the Half God. Dalenguard was constructed more than seven hundred years

Ptolus Architecture

Visitors to Ptolus will discover a melange of architectural styles. Many of the buildings—especially official Imperial structures—represent traditional Prustan designs from the east: imported marble facades, tall columns, and grand entrances. On the other hand, local Palastani influences are visible on nearly every street. Characteristics include much simpler and more practical designs, use of local stone and wood, and insulating siding materials.

Of course, the predominant style changes from district to district, and even from block to block within the same area. But overall, Oldtown and the Nobles' Quarter appear heavily Prustan, while the markets, Rivergate, and the Guildsman District are generally Palastani in style. Midtown is a good example of a blend of styles, plus some more exotic architecture of elven, gnomish, and halfling design.

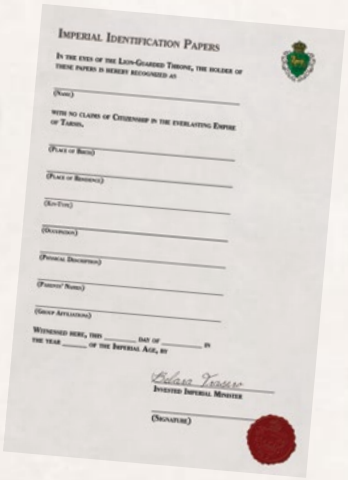


This structure shows a blending of Prustan style (soaring facade, tall windows, prominent entry) with Palastani influences (local brickwork, economical design).

Imperial Identification Papers and Citizenship

The Empire of Tarsis requires all citizens and noncitizens to carry identification papers. Display of these papers, which the Empire issues to all residents, is required for purchases over 100 gold pieces. Guards and other officials also can demand to see one's papers at any time. Identification papers include a person's name, species, place of birth, current residence, occupation, and a general physical description. Forgeries are fairly common.

Almost all humans within the Empire automatically become citizens at birth. This is also true of most dwarves and many elves. It is more difficult, but not impossible, for members of other species to gain citizenship status; they are not automatically citizens. Citizens enjoy legal rights that noncitizens do not, as well as greater protection under the law.



ago, just after the defeat of Ghul, to serve as a symbol of the union of elves, dwarves, and humans in that war.

Over time, the community grew into an important port, and the need for Dalenguard as a wilderness bastion waned. Today the old fortress is still used by the Imperial-appointed ruler of the city, the Commissar, and the area surrounding it on the city's near west side is known as Oldtown. It sits atop a ridge higher than most of the rest of Ptolus, but still lower than the Nobles' Quarter.

The stone and marble buildings of Oldtown reflect a grander, earlier age. Graceful columns, majestic entrances, tall stone towers, and buildings of three or four stories are common sights here. Yet all bear the signs of age and wear. Today many of these buildings house the bureaucracy the Empire forces upon the city. Still others are museums or homes for the wealthy (those not quite wealthy enough to live in the Nobles' Quarter). There are wonderful theaters, auditoriums, and even a grand Arena in this large district. The Arena provides a spot for tournaments, fairs, and sporting games of all sorts. Nearby, the Inverted Pyramid mages' guild sponsors a magical ball sport simply called "the Mage Game," held in an indoor coliseum in Oldtown.

This is where citizens go to get licenses, like those needed to carry a firearm. The City Courts are located here, as are the City Council's meeting chambers. Both the Delver's Guild Library and Maproom (but not the guild's main office) and the City Library are here. Oldtown has a fair number of parks, monuments, and other touches of class and beauty.

RIVERGATE DISTRICT

Strictly a residential area, the Rivergate District is as close to a middle-class neighborhood as Ptolus gets. It is located on a rise of land, surrounded by cliffs on all sides except the northeast, where a steep slope mostly free of buildings and covered in trees rolls down to the North Market and the main North Gate. Each of its residential cul-de-sacs—called "burrows" by those who live here—boasts its own unique architectural identity.

SOUTH MARKET

To locals, the North Market is simply "the Market," while this area is "the South Market." Unlike its counterpart, the South Market is not an open-air marketplace. It has fewer vendors dealing out of carts and more established shops and places of business. Goods usually cost more in the South Market, but a buyer is far more likely to find trustworthy and reliable salespeople here. This is also where one finds the city's commodities markets and the headquarters of large merchant organizations, such as the Rogue Moon Trading Company. As in the North Market, many of those who work here also live here; the district has substantial residential sections.

The South Market is newer than the North Market and has more artisans and industry than its counterpart. You're more likely to get something made to order in the South Market, as the store selling leather goods, for example, is probably also a leatherworker's shop (such as Donnel's, a friendly dealer in leather goods). Nonstandard species or those with special physical needs when it comes to clothing should check out Maran's Odd Sizes. Navaen's Bowcraft is a fine place to buy bows or arrows, and those looking for a real treat should stop by Ramoro's Bakery.

TEMPLE DISTRICT

Although the worship of Lothian, the official Imperial deity, is the dominant religion of the city, Ptolus's cosmopolitan residents revere hundreds of other gods as well.

Temples, churches, shrines, and small monasteries fill this district in the north central part of town, with the Street of a Million Gods (a bit of an exaggeration) running through it all. Even the Blessed Bridge across the King's River here has small shrines built upon and into it.

The district stretches east and west from the Street of a Million Gods. Notable sights include St. Valien's Cathedral for worshippers of Lothian and the Priory of Introspection, where the Sisterhood of Silence is based. Although clerics are the most common representatives of the many gods, a number of temples support monks and paladins as well. The Temple District has a single bar, Taggert's, which is also a temple to Ollom, god of the keg.

THE WARRENS

The Warrens in the eastern part of town is a terrible slum sick with poverty and crime. Rumors say that the City Watch won't go down into the Warrens. The streets here have no names, and most of the buildings aren't marked—the place is not friendly to outsiders. Some visitors to Ptolus may experience a little theft or crime in the city, but it's nothing compared to what goes on in this district. Some people place the headquarters of the Vai within the Warrens. Others whisper that a crime lord named Jirraith and his gang of young thieves called the Pale Dogs really run the place.

THE UNDERCITY MARKET

Although not a district of Ptolus, the Undercity Market, accessed by a wide staircase in the middle of Delver's Square, is the place to go for most adventuring gear (although Ebbert's Outfitters in Delver's Square is a handy one-stop shop with good prices). Looking for potions? Try Urnst, Alchemist. For scrolls, try the gnome wizard Neridoc Bittersong, who runs a booth in the market under the sign "Arcane Scribe."

Also located here is the Delver's Guild, an association that provides assistance in the form of maps, reference material, and equipment to explorers of the ancient dwarven city, Dwarvenhearth, and other areas below the streets of Ptolus.

Nearby are entrances into the sewers as well as tunnels leading into the Dungeon, as adventurers call it. The Chamber of Longing is a nearby landmark that features a strange statue of a huge hand and serves as an occasional meeting place for adventurers, because everyone knows where it is. One can access the profoundly mysterious and magical Mirror Maze from the market as well.

The presence of the Delver's Guild makes the Undercity Market a center of employment relating to Dungeon exploration. Those looking to hire adventurers frequently post bills in the guild's meeting hall (much like the post in Delver's Square). A number of market establishments hire out scouts, guides, porters, and guards, as well as skilled labor to pick locks, cast spells, and perform other necessary services.

As the city grows, more people have begun to live in and around the Undercity Market and throughout the underground levels. This is particularly true of species not always welcome elsewhere—minotaurs, lizardfolk, orcs, and so on.

THE LOOK OF PTOLUS

Ptolus looks a little like a Germanic city from the late medieval period. The buildings usually have stone first stories with wooden upper stories. The main exception is Oldtown, where many buildings are more classical in design, with impressive, Roman-style facades and marble columns.

It rains more often than not in Ptolus—at least, that's the way it seems. Winters are cold, grey, and wet, but summers are dry and mild. Occasionally, a cold, razorlike wind comes off the Bay of Ptolus, but usually it's quite calm. The smell of sea salt fills the air, when it's not overpowered by the stronger odors of such places as the leatherworking shops, slaughterhouses, and breweries of the Guildsman District.

One always feels the presence of magic in Ptolus. A spellcaster flies over the city, a minor demon scurries down an alleyway bearing a message, or an adventurer walks down the street followed by their manticore companion.

The touch of the technology that built the Empire of Tarsis is found here as well, although its influence wanes with each year as fewer people rely on its comforts or remember its secrets. Still, aeroships, some with steam-powered engines, fly overhead from time to time. The City Watch employs firearms, and local defenses include cannons watching over the harbor and within Dalenguard. Leaflets printed on presses with movable type distribute news and information. In a few places, steam-powered pumps help clean out the sewers, while in others clockwork machines power heavy doors that protect wealthy estates.

NOBLE HOUSES

Ptolus has ten noble families, all of whom enjoy special status by ancestral right. Although the Empire does not officially recognize their titles, Ptolus is far enough removed from the heart of the Empire that local traditions and beliefs still grant the noble houses hereditary seats on the city's ruling council. Plus, most of them are quite wealthy, and with affluence comes influence. The noble houses were once the seats of real power in the area, serving a dynasty of kings that ruled the entire region of Palastan before the Empire took over. (That's where the

The Midtown Partisan

The folk of Ptolus love to gossip with each other about the nobles and their activities and intrigues, and to read about the latest high-society affairs in the various broadsheets available about town. For example, there is speculation that Peliope Erthuo has taken up with a mysterious new love interest and that the half-mad members of House Vladaam scheme to destroy House Nagel once and for all.

House Abanar is unique among the ten noble houses in that it allows wealthy citizens to buy their way into House membership. A minor noble title costs 10,000 gold pieces. The other houses look upon this practice with disdain.

Menon Balacazar is one of the most feared men in Ptolus—not for his personal power, but because of the might of his criminal organization.

After painting this portrait of the Vladaam family, local artist Tulian Kremps disappeared mysteriously, leaving behind a notebook filled with indecipherable ravings.

King's River gains its name.) The noble houses are as follows:

Abanar: A mercantile house, Abanar is very wealthy but not well regarded. Dered Abanar is the very old head of the house. There is much controversy now among his many children as to who will take control when the elder Abanar is gone.

Dallimothan: Often called "House Dragon," the members of this house dress in dragonscale armor, use dragon regalia, and are even said to truck with dragonkind. House Dallimothan, led by Kirstol Dallimothan, remains a powerful and wealthy force in the city.

Erthuo: Scholars and gentlefolk, House Erthuo normally avoids confrontation and rarely gets involved in squabbles between other houses. A family of elves and half-elves belongs to this house, headed by Peliope Erthuo, a half-elf.

Kath: A wealthy house, Kath is known for its talented, glamorous, and attractive family. Devina Kath is the head of the house, which patronizes the arts.

Khatru: Famous for its military leadership and martial prowess, House Khatru is made up of arrogant boors and self-righteous warriors. Dorant Khatru is the current master of the house.

Nagel: This old, charitable, and altruistic house has recently fallen on hard times. Fransin Nagel is mistress of this rather minor house. She and her family are the enemies of House Sadar.

Rau: Foes of House Khatru, the Rau have a reputation as rogues, pirates, and scalawags. The house has a fair number of spellcasters as well. The head of the house is Verrana Rau.

Sadar: Known for its long line of mages, this house—which some call the House of Shadows—is quite powerful. Its leader, Lord Renn Sadar, has a strong association with the Inverted Pyramid arcanists' guild and shadow magic. They are enemies of House Nagel.

Shever: Known for its skill with machines, House Shever made a great deal of gold long ago, but until recently was fading in influence. Now with strong ties to the Shuul organization of technophiles, the house is on the rise again. Thollos Shever is the head of the house.

Vladaam: An evil house, and very ancient, House Vladaam seems to have lost much of its power and influence in recent times. Iristul Vladaam is the current master of the house, although he has not been seen in the city for years. Most people whisper that demonic blood runs through the family's veins.

ORGANIZATIONS

Ptolus teems with various factions that all have their own agendas and secret goals. In brief, these include (but are not limited to) the following groups.

BALACAZAR CRIME FAMILY

Probably the most powerful crime family in the city, the Balacazars are certainly the oldest. Menon Balacazar is the aging head of the organization, with his son, Malkeen, serving as his second-in-command. Other siblings include at least two daughters. Arkhall Vaugn, an infamous wizard, works with the family.

The family funds a number of criminal endeavors, gaining profit from theft, extortion, smuggling, illegal gambling, assassination, and trade in slaves, drugs, and evil magic items.

BROTHERHOOD OF REDEMPTION

An order of monks who believe that no evil is irredeemable, the Brotherhood of Redemption seeks to give any evil creature a chance to repent. Its members do not believe in inherent evil. Specializing in rehabilitation, they operate in the Dungeon out of the Fortress of the Redeemed but maintain a surface headquarters in the Guildsman District. They make it known that they willingly accept any prisoners who are not of the major species—in fact, they'll pay a small bounty for evil creatures with a modicum of intelligence.

THE CONCILIATORS

The Church of Lothian runs an organization called the Conciliators, which consists of inquisitors dedicated to converting infidels, destroying a power called chaositech (which resembles both magic and technology), and stamping out evil. The group is headquartered in the Temple District.

DELVER'S GUILD

For the last five years, the Delver's Guild has grown in influence, becoming both popular to join and wealthy. The guild offers its members information about job opportunities and events pertaining to the exploration of regions below Ptolus. It also maintains the city's most extensive collection of maps of the underground realm and an impressive library for research.

Members receive passwords that allow them to access secret chambers within the underground regions. These chambers, called waystations, are stocked with food and simple supplies. High-ranking members have retrieval insurance, which guarantees that, if they die while exploring, guild members will retrieve

their bodies and have them raised if possible (retrieval and raising paid for out of a special guild account funded by the insured).

The guild's membership hovers around eight hundred. In addition, there are said to exist at least four hundred delvers not affiliated with the guild. At any given time, about one-fifth of this total (about two hundred fifty people) is exploring the Dungeon.

It is estimated that for every ten delvers who go down each week, one does not come back. About one hundred new adventurers come to Ptolus and some twenty-five are raised from the dead every week. Since the Delver's Guild began keeping records three years ago, approximately eight thousand adventurers have died permanently while exploring the Dungeon. Another two hundred thirty have permanently retired, either in the city or elsewhere.

DREAMING APOTHECARY

The Dreaming Apothecary may be more legend than fact. Those in the know claim that a secretive group of spellcasters crafts magic items for people, making transactions with them magically in their dreams. Darker rumors accuse these powerful mages of keeping others in the city from making magic items for profit by coercion, backed up by their formidable magical might. Potential customers can reach the group at Danbury's in Delver's Square.

THE FALLEN

The Fallen are fiends also known as the "young demons," though few people care to dwell long on the question of who the "old" demons might be. The Fallen live in the Dark Reliquary of the Necropolis with their allies, the Forsaken, and follow the leadership of two demons whose names are only whispered: Raguel and Lilith.

Most people wish the Fallen were not in Ptolus but, for demons who dwell within the city's walls, they cause surprisingly little trouble. Few speak of them, but when they do, they often claim these demons are waiting for something or quietly looking for something.

FATE WEAVERS

The Fate Weavers are a small group of prophets and seers who claim the ability to tell people's fortunes. Locals consider the group a front for prostitution.

THE FORSAKEN

Those who value death and undeath more than life are called the Forsaken. Necrophiles, necrophages, and necrophiliacs, these disgusting people worship dark gods and consort openly with undead and the Fallen. They base their activities in the Necropolis.

The Forsaken are the sworn foes of the valiant Keepers of the Veil. A smaller subgroup within their ranks called the Licheloved carry out the will of dark death gods in ways that—it's said—even the other Forsaken find difficult to stomach. Another subgroup, the Torrens, are specifically anti-Lothianite.

Some of the Forsaken are living people who consort with the undead, while others are undead themselves. They particularly revere ancient undead called the Wintersouled, who reportedly built the Dark Reliquary. If any of the Wintersouled still exist, no one in the city knows about it.

HEALERS OF THE SACRED HEAT

Healers, physickers, and surgeons who use a magical process involving heat to heal wounds, the Healers of the Sacred Heat base themselves in the Temple District and offer inexpensive healing. It's said to be painful, however. Theirs is not a place known to appeal to adventurers (who look for instantaneous and painless healing and have the gold to pay for it), but rather to locals for treating various chronic ailments.

INVERTED PYRAMID

The Inverted Pyramid is a mysterious and ancient guild of arcanists. Their membership roll remains shrouded in mystery, but it most likely includes the most powerful mages in Ptolus—and probably the world. For years they have wielded considerable influence in the city. Their headquarters is said to lie somewhere hidden from normal sight by powerful spells.

In days past, the Inverted Pyramid was a great foe of the Church of Lothian. When the Edict of Deviltry was issued centuries ago proclaiming all arcane spellcasting to be an evil act, a number of mages gathered to form a secret society dedicated to preserving themselves and their lore. Within the Inverted Pyramid, the members of this guild meet, store their valuable books and supplies, and craft magic items and other creations. The Inverted Pyramid concerns itself with preserving magical lore and all things arcane from those it believes would eradicate such knowledge.

KEEPERS OF THE VEIL

The Keepers of the Veil is an order of holy knights dedicated to the destruction of undead, specifically free-willed spirits that should have remained on their own side of the great veil of death. Occasionally they ally with a smaller group called the Knights of the Pale.

Adventurers weary of dealing with the "What do we do with the prisoners?" situation can simply take their monstrous captives to the Brotherhood of Redemption. Not only will the Brothers attempt to "rehabilitate" the captives, but they will pay a reward, too. Urlenius the ogre-mage was brought in by a group of delvers years ago and now is a well-respected priest of Navashtrom.

People of Ptolus do not bring up the Fallen or the Forsaken in polite conversation. Most think of them like a hive of wasps, hoping that if they don't disturb these undesirables, the dangerous groups won't threaten them. Certain stalwart orders, such as the Keepers of the Veil and the Knights of the Pale, believe otherwise.

It's fairly well accepted that Kevris Killraven is not a member of one of the major species. But as to what she really is, opinions vary widely. Folks presume her to be perhaps a medusa, a particularly intelligent harpy, or even a female giant.

The Keepers of the Veil has a fortress, the Siege Tower, on the edge of the Necropolis. They strive to eradicate the curse of the undead from the world forever. Their co-leaders are Sir Beck Von Tibbitz and a Lothianite priestess named Phadian Gess.

KILLRAVEN CRIME LEAGUE

Kevris Killraven arrived in the city only recently, but in that short time this mysterious woman has created the second most powerful criminal organization in Ptolus. The league deals in extortion, prostitution, and illegal drugs. A number of nonhumans work for Killraven—troglodytes, ogres, and many other creatures.

Although early on Killraven was rumored to have ties with the Shuul technophiles and the Sorn mages, most people now dismiss such tales as nonsense.

KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN CROSS

An ancient order, the Knights of the Golden Cross has remained alive through the extreme devotion of its members and their descendants. They oppose evil in all its forms, although they have a particular hatred for the wicked House Vladaam. They also revere the mysterious Elder Gods and serve as a focal point for the pantheon's reintroduction into society. The knights have a citadel in Oldtown. Their leader is an elf named Kaira Swanwing.

Zophas Adhar, Knight of the Pale

KNIGHTS OF THE PALE

The Knights of the Pale are a small order dedicated to combating supernatural threats, particularly demons and spellcasters. Although not an official organization of the Church of Lothian, they focus on the veneration of Lothianite saints. Their leader, Dierna Hillerchaun, bases the order out of her home, a manor in Oldtown called the Bladechapel. The knights work with the Keepers of the Veil and the angelic Malkuth.

Characters thinking about joining the Longfingers Guild first must find the guild headquarters. This task involves either a lot of exploration below the city or a good deal of networking above the city. Obviously, most members of the guild are rogues and thieves, but not all of them are.

LONGFINGERS GUILD

This thieves' guild has enjoyed a long tradition in Ptolus, but many say its day has passed in light of the growing power of other, broader criminal organizations. Its headquarters is said to lie deep below the city.

THE MALKUTH

The Malkuth are a mysterious group of celestials and half-celestials who live in the Pale Tower in Oldtown. Little about them is known, as they keep to themselves and rarely come out of their impressive abode.

ORDER OF THE FIST

Calling themselves the Order of the Fist, a small band of monks and warriors believes in action: setting a goal and doing whatever it takes to achieve it. Although members may differ in their particular goals—even in their outlooks on the world—they all agree on the importance of going for what you want in life. Their leader is Wynn Rabinall, a human man.

PALE DOGS

A gang of young thieves based in the Warrens, the Pale Dogs paint their fingernails black and often wear double rings. They follow a mysterious figure named Jirraith and may have connections to the Balacazars or the Vai.

THE SHUUL

Once a simple organization created to uphold the concept of order, the Shuul has grown over the years into a powerful force that attempts to restore the prominence of technological devices such as firearms, clockwork devices, and steam technology in the city. Despite a predilection for machines, the Shuul do not reject magic, as one might expect. Instead they embrace it and see the union of magic and machine as the ultimate accomplishment.

Most members of the organization are humans and dwarves, particularly Grailwarden dwarves.

The Shuul maintain close ties with the Temple of Teun, the Mother of All Machines, as well as with House Shever.

SISTERHOOD OF SILENCE

Founded in Ptolus more than two hundred years ago, an all-female order calling itself the Sisterhood of Silence established itself as a major force for law and defense. While the order has since spread to other cities, the Priory of Introspection in Ptolus remains the central headquarters of the Sisterhood.

As their name suggests, the Sisters of Silence do not speak. Instead, they employ a cadre of devout eunuchs to speak for them. Among themselves, they use a complex set of signs, postures, and expressions to convey vast amounts of information quickly.

THE SORN

Rumors say this quasi-legal spellcaster organization maintains a close association with the Shuul. Others say its real backing comes from Kevris Killraven. Its members favor the use of technology and mechanical devices to supplement their magic.

THE VAI

The Vai is a wicked assassins' guild in Ptolus. Each member takes an oath to kill an intelligent creature every day. They are tied to almost every evil organization in the city in some way.

VIRIDIAN LORDS

The men and women calling themselves Viridian Lords are powerful, twisted rangers who haunt the wilderness of Palastan. They have learned a way to fuse with plants to grant themselves greater power and a stronger affinity for nature and the land.

RELIGION

In Ptolus, there is one religion and there are many. While the Church of Lothian remains the official religion of the Empire, tied closely to every aspect of Imperial government, many other far smaller and less popular religions exist as well. These faiths worship gods like Ahaar, Lord of the Air, a minor elemental sky god; the Fifty-Three Gods of Chance, deities of chaos and randomness; Gaen, Goddess of Light, a popular benevolent deity; and the orderly Teun, Mother of All Machines, goddess of technology. And these are just examples. Your GM can provide you with a full list, or you can work to create your own with the GM's help.

THE CHURCH OF LOTHIAN

Lothian was a mortal who lived about 1,500 years ago. He ascended to godhood based on his own good works and strength of spirit. Lothian today is the god of justice and purity. His followers usually take one aspect or the other (justice or purity), focusing either on Lothian's lawful qualities or on his good qualities. In his lawful aspect, Lothian is the Lawgiver. In his good aspect, he is called the Daykeeper. In either case, he remains a staunch foe of cruelty and destruction and harbors a particular hatred of undead. He promotes peace, harmony, and safety. His symbol is an ankh crucifix.

The Church of Lothian is the most powerful religion in the Empire, and thus in Ptolus. So closely tied are the Empire and the Church of Lothian that the head of the religion's hierarchy is known as the Emperor of the Church. Alongside the traditional secular Emperor of Tarsis, he rules over all Imperial lands and citizens. The Emperor of the Church normally lives in the far-off capital city of Tarsis but of late has been in Ptolus staying with his son, the Prince of the Church.

When it initially spread its influence across the growing Empire, the Church was far less tolerant of divergent beliefs and of arcane magic than it is today. The Church of Lothian released the Edict of Deviltry centuries ago, proclaiming all arcane spellcasting to be an evil act. (The more enlightened modern Church rescinded the Edict.) In Ptolus, many different chapels are devoted to Lothian. The Church maintains its headquarters in St. Valien's Cathedral in the Temple District.

A knighthood called the Order of the Dawn serves the Church of Lothian as elite defenders of the faith. While low-ranking members are warriors and fighters, the higher ranks include paladins and a few martial clerics.

In general, the Church of Lothian seeks to convert heathens and protect and nurture the faithful. Far more than typical organized religions, the Church remains involved in day-to-day government administration and the making (and sometimes enforcing) of laws. Lothian's priests serve as judges and officials in the government of the Empire.

His clerics normally wear white and blue, although on high holy days they wear golden garments.

IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS IN PTOLUS

As a player in a Ptolus Campaign, you may find that your character has occasion to meet some of these important citizens.

Aoska. One of the Commissar's Twelve Commanders. A Malkuth woman with a unicorn horn growing out of her head.

Beck Von Tibbitz. Paladin and one of the leaders of the Keepers of the Veil.

Daersidian Ringsire. Well-known elf battle mage who rides a wyvern.

Dered Abanar. Head of House Abanar.

Devina Kath. Head of House Kath.

Dierna Hillerchaun. Leader of the Knights of the Pale. Lives in a manor house called the Bladechapel in Oldtown.

Doraedian Mythlord. Elven master of Iridithil's Home, an elvish sanctuary. Very influential in town.

Dorant Khatru. Head of House Khatru.

Ebbert Boltcrafter. Dwarf who operates an outfitters' shop in Delver's Square.

The Emperor of the Church. Holy Emperor Rehoboth, who claims to be the rightful temporal Emperor as well.

Fabitor Thisk. Cleric and pastor of St. Gustav's Chapel, which caters to adventurers.

Igor Urnst. The Commissar of Ptolus.

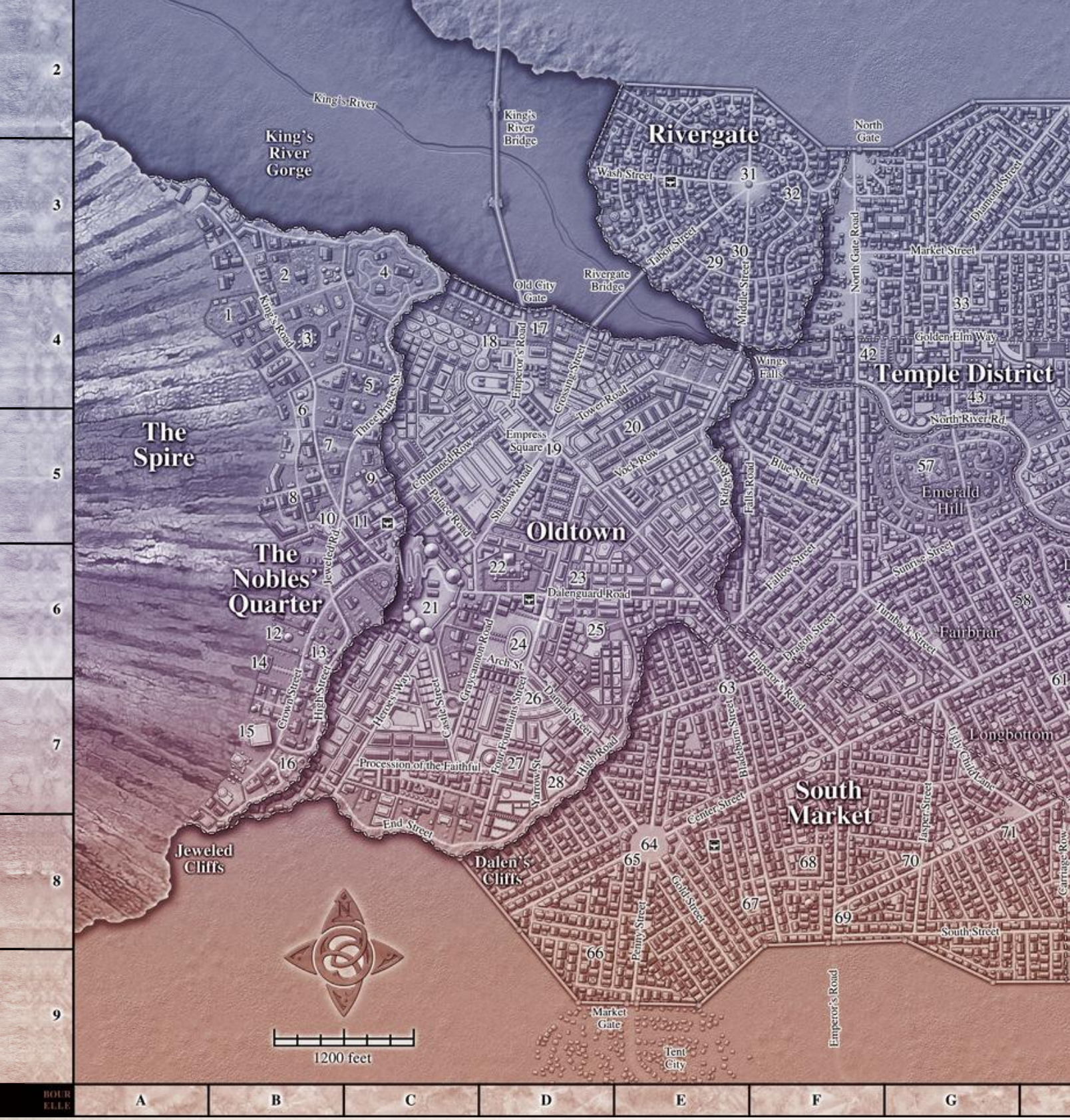
Iristul Vladaam. Head of House Vladaam.

The Iron Mage. Rarely seen in public. It's said that the Iron Mage is the most powerful wizard in Ptolus (he notably does not belong to the Inverted Pyramid).

"The Viridian Lords were keeping the peace in this region long before the Empire arrived, and we'll be doing so long after the Empire dies."
~ Rechel Pattemon, Viridian Lord

Most people in the city are Lothianites, and most Lothianites attend religious services every Theoday. This means that the various churches in Ptolus hold services all day long to accommodate all the faithful. Many of the "devout" attend services because, if they don't, their employer may make them work on Theoday—piety means getting a day off from work.

Daersidian Ringsire is a friend of Sheva's and a fellow adventurer. He is never seen without his adventuring partner, the halfling rogue Brusselt Airmol (see page 213). These two have made names for themselves with such diverse adventures as stopping an entire tribe of hill giants from raiding small communities outside of Ptolus, and infiltrating the manor of House Sadar to find an artifact called the box of shadows.



NOBLES' QUARTER

1 Rau Estate
2 Sadar Estate
3 Castle Shard
4 Kath Estate
5 Erthuo Estate
6 Nagel Estate
7 Dallimothan Estate
8 Rosegate House
9 Swordthrower's
10 Imperial Academy of Music (Conservatory)
11 Abanar Estate
12 Shever Estate
13 Khatru Estate
14 Holy Palace
15 Soaring Idyll
16 Vladaam Estate

OLDTOWN

17 Citadel of the Golden Cross
18 Pale Tower
19 Clock Tower
20 White House
21 Dalenguard
22 Imperial University
23 Administration Building
24 Arena
25 City Courts
26 Citadel of Might
27 City Library
28 Yarrow Street Forum

RIVERGATE

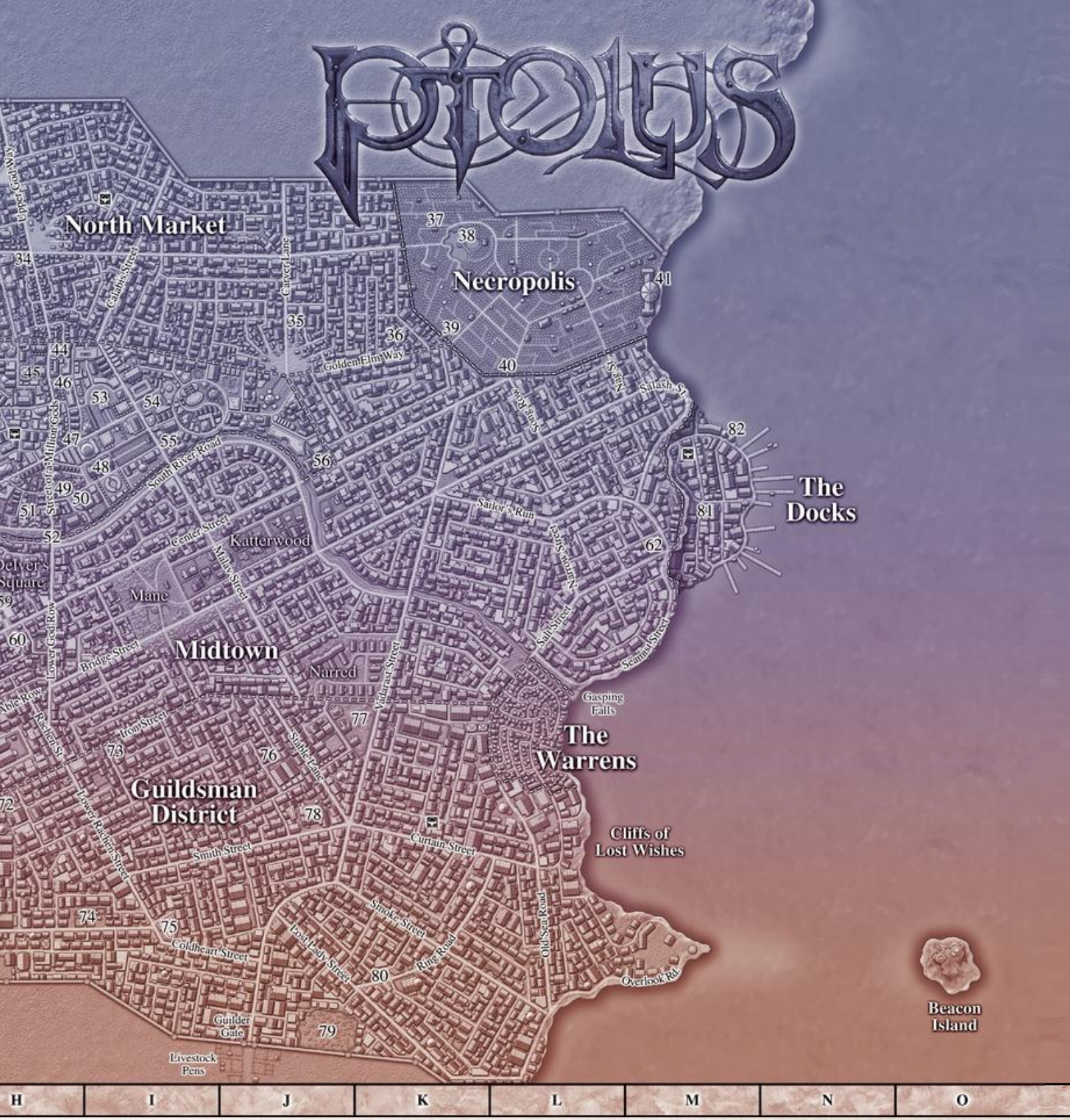
29 Jangave Lesh's Training Hall
30 Barbarian Balloonists
31 Center Circle
32 Finelle's Pleasant Diversions

NORTH MARKET

33 Red Stallion Pub
34 Mitoren's Blades
35 Smoke Shop
36 Zar'at

NECROPOLIS

37 Hall of the Valiant
38 Clasthamus Isle
39 Siege Tower
40 Deathguild Headquarters
41 Dark Reliquary



TEMPLE DISTRICT
42 Conciliators Chapterhouse
43 Temple of Teun
44 Celestial Conclave
45 Temple Observatory of the Watcher of the Skies
46 Temple of Asche
47 Order of the Fist Compound
48 Hall of Heroes
49 Temple of Ahaar
50 Temple of Navashtrom
51 Temple of Gaen
52 Blessed Bridge
53 St. Valien's Cathedral
54 Priory of Introspection
55 Temple of Excellence
56 House of Sacred Heat

MIDTOWN
57 Iridithil's Home
58 The Griffon
59 Delver's Square
60 St. Gustav's Chapel
61 Onyx Spider
62 Fish Market

Watchhouse

SOUTH MARKET
63 Exotic Market
64 Star Crossing Plaza
65 Rogue Moon Trading Company
66 Golden Tooth
67 Mahdoth's Asylum
68 Fabric Market
69 Welcome Inn
70 Spice Market
71 Blackstock Printing

GUILDSMAN DISTRICT
72 Ironworkers' Guildhouse
73 Skull and Sword
74 Stockyards
75 Longdraught Brewery
76 Darkbirth Madhouse
77 Herbalists' Guild
78 Foundry
79 Midden Heaps
80 Masons' Guildhouse

THE DOCKS
81 Savage Shark
82 Dockmaster's Tower

Sheva Callister was a well-known adventurer in Ptolus, but she retired and sold most of her equipment. She still frequents places like Delver's Square and the Undercity Market, though, and she still carries her infamous magical greatsword.

People today still do not say the name "Eslathagos Malkith" aloud, but refer to him only as the Dread One.

Jevicca Nor. Human member of the Inverted Pyramid. Powerful sorceress.

Jirraith. Crime lord operating out of the Warrens. Runs the Pale Dogs.

Kevris Killraven. Female crime lord.

Kirian Ylestos. The Prince of the Church.

Kirstol Dallimothan. Lord of House Dallimothan. May be a dragon or half-dragon.

Malkeen Balacazar. Son of the crime lord Menon.

Menon Balacazar. Crime lord who also deals in necromancy and black magic, the trade of forbidden items, demonic slaves, and so on.

Myraeth Tuneweaver. Elf who owns Myraeth's Oddities in Delver's Square. Sells odd trinkets, adventuring souvenirs, and minor magic stuff recovered from the Dungeon.

Peliope Erthuo. Head of House Erthuo.

Phadian Gess. A cleric of Lothian and one of the leaders of the Keepers of the Veil.

Rastor. Litorian who operates a weapon shop in Delver's Square.

Renn Sadar. Head of House Sadar.

Savane. Leader of the Shuul.

Sorum Dandubal. Guildmaster Delver and council member.

Steron Vsool. Human champion of Gaen. His heart glows so brightly that you can see it within his chest.

Tagel Unergart. Paladin of the Church of Lothian and head of the Order of the Dawn.

Tarin Ursalatao. Male human bard, uncanny in his charm.

Shibata is a well-known minotaur priest of Niveral, god of secrets.

The city map on the previous two pages contains many important locales within the districts of Ptolus. If your character seeks a particular service or shop, or wants more details about the ones marked on the map, your GM can tell you what you need to know.

Thollos Shever. Head of House Shever.

Urlenius, Star of Navashtrom. Ogre-mage cleric of Navashtrom, God of Harmony. Bears many magical gems. Major representative of the Brotherhood of Redemption.

Verrana Rau. Head of House Rau.

Wynn Rabinall. Powerful monk and leader of the Order of the Fist.

Zade Kenevan. Human bartender at the Ghostly Minstrel. Bald, thin, and gruff.

PEOPLE FROM HISTORY

Abesh Runihan. Defeated the lich Kagrisos as he rose to cast a spell that would spread a plague throughout the city. Runihan died in the process. A statue of him stands in Delver's Square (also known as Runihan Square).

Danar/Eslathagos Malkith. Creator of the Banewarrens and Jabel Shammar, the citadel atop the Spire. Also known as the Dread One.

Delian Von Tessel. The first Emperor of Tarsis.

Ghul. Creator of Goth Gulgamel, the fortress halfway up the Spire. Also known as the Half God and the Skull-King. Claimed to be the offspring of Eslathagos Malkith.

Parnaith. Wife of Danar and creator (along with the Wizard-Priests of Ni-Gorth) of the Seven Jewels of Parnaith: small demiplanes associated with the Spire and Ptolus.

Tacheron Kint. Famous delver and explorer.

Yrkyth Vladaam. Mad wizard who attempted to destroy the world by gaining access to powerful magic below the city.

THE WORLD (AND BEYOND)

Two moons hang in the night sky. Lunas is a large bluish-white orb, and Rogue is the smaller, more erratic satellite. Most people are well aware that the world is round and that the moons orbit around it, while the world circles the sun. (They do not, however, have any concept that the stars are suns or that other worlds might circle about them—but then, who's to say that's true?)

Learned folk know the world is made up of matter and energy (the essence of both of which can be expressed as air, earth, fire, and water) and that matter is made of particles smaller than a person can see. Magnetism, lighter-than-air gases, and other basic aspects of science are not unknown, either.

Most people know that the Ethereal Sea is a magical place that shares the same space with the world but remains apart from it or "out of phase." The Elemental Planes are conceptual places based around the fundamental building blocks of matter and energy. The Upper Realms, Upper Planes, the Heavens, the Celestial

Realm—these are all names for the place of ultimate goodness where angelic beings rule and good people go when they die. Most do not believe this to be the realm of the gods, however—the gods dwell in secret places within the world or high in the sky.

The Heavens' opposite, the Hells (or just Hell)—also known as the Pit, the Abyss, the Dark Realms, the Lower Planes, or the Nether Realms—exist in a similar metaphysical state. They are a place of demons and devils, where the evil go when they die to face eternal torment (or get their deserved reward, according to some). Plenty of evil gods and demons live right in the world, however, hiding in the shadows.

You will find no references in myths or legends, let alone in history, to people traveling to these realms beyond (except the Ethereal Sea). However, demons and angels do live in the world, clearly having come here from beyond. That such mystic places as the Heavens and Hells exist is beyond question.

To the vast majority of Ptolus residents, all good creatures from other planes are simply angels, and all evil ones are demons. More specific distinctions seem pointless to anyone but a sage.

OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS

Although the campaign takes place entirely within the city of Ptolus, there are, of course, lands beyond the city. Knowledge of these places may prove useful for designing your character's background, if you are not playing a Ptolus native. Your character might be from Tarsis, the oldest and largest city in the world and the heart of the Empire. Or you might run a barbarian from the Eastern Hordes beyond the Grey Mountains to the east of Tarsis. Your arcanist character might hail originally from the mysterious land of Kem along the Southern Sea.

The land surrounding Ptolus along the Whitewind Sea is Palastan, an ancient realm that stands on the verge of breaking away from the Empire. Its capital is Trolone. The people who founded the Empire, the Prust, hail originally from the Prustan Peninsula to the east. This is also where Grail Keep, home of the Grailwarden dwarves, lies.

These are only examples. Your GM can show you a map of the world beyond the walls of Ptolus and tell you about all the interesting and sometimes exotic lands.

Even though a mug of ale in a tavern is cheap, most Ptolus locals still can't afford to frequent drinking houses. Neighborhood parties, in which everyone pitches in to buy a keg of cheap ale, are common. These parties usually involve a lot of dancing, music, and storytelling.

CUSTOMS

Below is a small sampling of cultural customs widely observed throughout the setting.

Brightfather's Day. This longstanding holiday is still observed every Fourteenth of Blessing, although its exact origins are now lost. Most religions have adopted it as a high holy day to revere an important god. All look upon it as a day of feasting, family, and making peace with enemies.

Dreamspeakers. Since ancient times, religious people have attempted to interpret the dreams of others, thinking they represented some sort of "sending" from a divine source. Today, dreamspeakers are minor fortune-tellers or wise women who, for a small price, tell one the meaning of one's dreams. Many people do not take these oracles seriously, and even believers admit that some dreamspeakers make up their interpretations. Only a select few actually have any preternatural affinity with dream meanings.

Friendship Bands. Long ago, it became a custom to write one's name on a thin strip of cloth and wrap it around the index finger of an ally. This sacred bond of trust displays your feelings of close friendship. It's said that in older times, kings used the bands as a way

Players wishing to have characters from lesser-known lands might choose Kem, a place still reeling from ancient magical wars, or Ren Tehoth, a land thick with ancient ruins and mysterious stone circles. Players who want to create characters from outside of Ptolus with more mundane backgrounds might hail from Rhoth, a remote realm of farmers and ranchers, or nearby Palastan, whose inhabitants are mainly herders and fishermen.

"The fact that the Empire is coming apart at the seams only shows that totalitarianism is an outmoded and inefficient means of governance."
~ Helmut Itlestein, leader of the republican movement

The Lion-Guarded Throne sits in the center of the Imperial Palace in the capital city of Tarsis. Its crafters used hundreds of pounds of gold and other precious metals in its construction and spent collectively more than one thousand hours on its relief work and ornamentation.

The Emperor of the Church lost the bulk of his army during the barbarian attack on Tarsis about a decade ago and now keeps only his Knights of the Dawn and bodyguards.

"It doesn't matter to a fellow like me who's in charge. I still gotta work six days a week and break my back to support my family, no matter what."
~ Harris Ralston, delivery man

to demonstrate their support to their vassals (and, in turn, lesser nobles gave them to their liege to show loyalty). Essentially, the giving of a friendship band means, "I'll work with you/follow you/help you because I respect you."

House Gifts. Although not everyone adheres to the belief behind the giving of house gifts, it's practiced widely. It is held that every home develops a spirit, sometimes called a *luritas*. When coming to someone's home for the first time, or when invited formally, people bring the *luritas* a little gift—a shiny bauble, a coin, a tiny icon, or anything similar. The small object is placed upon a shelf always found near the entrance on an inside wall.

HISTORY

History, as it was taught to your character, centers on the formation of the Empire of Tarsis and the establishment of the Lion-Guarded Throne, its hereditary seat of power. However, history stretches for thousands and thousands of years before that—not that the Empire, in its arrogance, believes anyone should care about such "primitive" times.

TWO EMPERORS

To understand the Empire is to understand that there are truly two Empires: a spiritual one and a temporal one. When Delian Von Tessel became the first Emperor, he also named himself Holy Emperor of the Church of Lothian, which became the official religion of the Empire of Tarsis. After his death, his nephew Radlov Von Tessel took both positions, but quickly abdicated the role of Holy Emperor. Since that time, the same individual has never held both seats of power and, in time, they have built very different infrastructures around themselves.

Although he controls no lands the way the Emperor of Tarsis does, the Emperor of the Church governs the spiritual lives of all citizens. The Holy Emperor has his own court, his own army, and his own vast treasuries. He has the power to pass laws and issue edicts, although they must involve spiritual matters, such as the Edict of Deviltry, issued in the year 560 IA to ban the use and practice of arcane magic.

LIFE UNDER THE EMPIRE

Unlike many empires, the Empire of Tarsis gained little of its dominion through conquest. A thousand years ago, the evil lord Ghul waged war against the rest of the world, his armies comprised of demons, undead, and horrible monsters. At that time, a group of humans called the Prust occupied the area around the city of Tarsis far to the east. When the Prustan

TIMELINE

BE = Before the Empire of Tarsis
IA = Imperial Age

350 BE	The dwarves of Dwarvenhearth observe that someone has moved onto the Spire near their city and has begun building a fortress. Their spies reveal it to be Ghul—the Half God, the Skull-King—who claims to be the son of Eslathagos Malkith, an evil lord from the distant past. Ghul calls his fortress Goth Gulgamel and builds it by the labor of Toruk-Rul (meaning "closing fist"), creatures he created from orcs.
319 BE	Ghul's forces drive the dwarves from Dwarvenhearth.
292 BE	The Skull-King begins the Ghulwar, an invasion to conquer the surrounding lands. His forces include Toruk-Rul, dark elves, tribes of evil men and dwarves, and monsters.
291 BE	Palastan falls to Ghul.
290 BE	The Sea Kingdoms fall to Ghul.
289 BE	Eastern Rhoth falls to Ghul, cutting off Cherubar to the far west from the rest of the continent.
288 BE	Ghul conjures forth a vast magical darkness called the Utterdark, which covers the lands he has conquered.
285 BE	The elves of the northern Moonsilver Forest fall to Ghul. They are taken to Goth Gulgamel and filter out again slowly as Harrow elves—the blighted ones.
282 BE	The Elder Elves of Theridae stop the advance of Ghul's armies near the River Tonam.
281 BE	The Cold Quiet begins. Few pass into or out of the Utterdark.
152 BE	The Cold Quiet ends. The armies of Ghul issue forth from the Utterdark, composed of his creatures the Toruk-Rul and the even mightier Sorn-Ulth (meaning "bleeding breath"), ogres, trolls, giants, undead, and other monsters.
150 BE	The Elder Elves, now allied with the Stonelost dwarves (descended from those who fled Dwarvenhearth), drive back Ghul's armies.
87 BE	The elven wizard Khelaeson banishes the Utterdark.
86 BE	The elves and dwarves invade the realm of Ghul.
85 BE	The invaders take back the Moonsilver Forest and most of Palastan from Ghul.
84 BE	Ghul calls forth the Squirming Horde, also known as the Shrieking Horde, and defeats the elves and dwarves. The horde, composed mainly of minor demons, lycanthropes, fiendish

monsters, and incorporeal undead, follows the Elder Elves back to their homeland of Theridae and razes it.

71 BE The Stonelost dwarves, Shoal elves, halflings, and gnomes forge the Pact of Brightfather's Day with eastern forces—the Grailwarden dwarves and the Prustan humans of Tarsis—to ally against Ghul. They also gain allies from among the aram and the Cherubim elves, as well as a few select individuals—giants, unicorns, and others.

61 BE The dark hordes of Ghul, weakened from a battle with an unknown foe, fall to the combined forces of the Brightfather Pact, bringing an end to the Ghulwar.

59 BE Goth Gulgamel falls in the harrying that follows the war. Ghul flees to a mysterious place known only as Orr.

55 BE The Great Seven—Uthegos (a dwarf fighter), Saerth (an elf wizard-rogue), Runshallot (a human cleric), Yllistro (a half-elf sorcerer-ranger), Kam (a halfling monk), Dionys (a human fighter-druid), and Eriskal (an elf rogue)—hunt down Ghul and destroy him in Orr.

50 BE With help from Tarsis, the people of the once-dark lands begin to rebuild.

43 BE Construction of Dalenguard, a fortress the dwarves build for the Tarsisans, begins near the Spire.

41 BE Tarsisan outposts and garrisons dot the landscape, providing security and maintenance on the roads.

40 BE Construction of Dalenguard is completed.

9 BE Delian Von Tessel becomes ruler of Tarsis. He christens his seat of power "the Lion-Guarded Throne" after his family symbol.

1 IA The Lion-Guarded Throne proclaims Imperial control over the lands around it. The Age of the Empire of Tarsis begins.

110 IA Despite magical aids, Delian Von Tessel, first Emperor of the Lion-Guarded Throne, dies.

386 IA Following the assassination of her husband, Empress Addares (Von Tessel) X makes it illegal to own a firearm without an official Imperial dispensation.

413 IA Ptolus—named after fragmentary facts from the distant past discovered by the loremaster Gerris Hin—is founded as a small port city on the edge of a large bay off the Whitewind Sea. It is built near the fortress of Dalenguard and eventually will encompass it.

c. 500 IA The demigod Raguel arrives in the world with a demonic host, seeking his divine parents. They find a home with the undead-loving Forsaken in the Dark Reliquary.

560 IA The Edict of Deviltry is issued, adding strict laws prohibiting arcane magic to the *Vast Codex*.

562 IA The First Inquisition terrorizes the Empire. The "Days of Blood" begin.

564 IA The First Inquisition ends.

598 IA The Second Inquisition begins, in particular looking for a group of arcanists called the Inverted Pyramid.

609 IA Despite tortures and horrible massacres, the Second Inquisition ends in failure. The Edict of Deviltry falls into disfavor. The "Days of Blood" end.

615 IA The leadership of Ptolus declares the city a safe haven for arcane spellcasters.

641 IA The Edict of Deviltry is officially overturned.

657 IA In a surprising move by the Church of Lothian, the Prince of the Church takes up permanent residence in the fairly remote city of Ptolus.

706 IA The Empire is in chaos, with three different people claiming the Lion-Guarded Throne. Empress Addares (Von Tessel) XXXIV attempts to move the capital to Dohrinthas, her longtime home.

708 IA The mysterious and ornately armored Urthon Aedar begin to appear in Ptolus, prophesying doom.

710 IA Tarsis is overrun by barbarians from the Eastern Hordes. Holy Emperor Rehoboth of the Church of Lothian flees to Ptolus to stay with the Prince of the Church, his son Kirian.

713 IA Explorers plumbing down into ancient Dwarvenhearth discover great treasures and begin bringing them to the surface.

714 IA The barbarians leave Tarsis. "Emperor" Segaci attempts to reestablish the Empire from its traditional capital.

717 IA Ptolus becomes the center of much attention as more and more would-be treasure-seekers plumb the depths below the city. Activities of so-called "chaos cults" increase. The potential for both greatness and danger has never been as intense.

721 IA Today.

The Ghulwar

The Ghulwar, which began more than a thousand years ago and lasted for three centuries, both shaped and scarred the present-day world. It was the unification of the species to oppose Ghul under the command of the Prustan armies that paved the way for the Empire of Tarsis to form and spread. Schoolchildren are taught the history of this time, even though it was so long ago, because these events are considered vital to today's society. Even the uneducated know that the world came very close to falling into eternal darkness. Those who took part in defeating Ghul are still discussed in reverent tones.

A similar but far more ancient struggle against the Dread One is all but forgotten. Were it not for the presence of Jabel Shammar atop the Spire, most people likely would never have heard of this long-ago foe.

forces from Tarsis came westward to help defeat Ghul, they stayed, helping to rebuild and establish order. Following their terrible defeat in the Ghulwar, the folk west of Tarsis welcomed not only the Prust's help but also their advances in science. The Prust (and the Grailwarden dwarves of the same area) brought with them firearms, clocks, printing presses, and even steam-powered engines. They built roads, waterways, and well-ordered cities with running water, sewer systems, and postal services. Their laws were codified in a book called the *Vast Codex* rather than arbitrary. In short, life under the Empire seemed good.

The Empire, however, also brought with it strict controls. Various freedoms suddenly vanished in the name of maintaining order. Official citizens of the Empire achieved rights denied noncitizens, such as permits to own firearms. The Church of Lothian became the official religion of the Empire, and eventually the only allowed religion. Other faiths were persecuted, and ultimately arcane magic was demonized, restricted, and finally outlawed. Life became very complicated.

For hundreds of years, the Empire of Tarsis expanded its domains and influence. The Church of Lothian, or simply "the Church," became omnipresent within society. Emperors and empresses came and went. It seemed that the Lion-Guarded Throne was destined to rule the known world forever.

But slowly the pillars supporting the Empire began to decay. The Edict of Deviltry was overturned, and arcane spellcasting became legal once again (even before that, time's passage had brought with it more and more safe havens for the practitioners of magic—including the city of Ptolus). Other religions practiced fairly openly, and the Church of Lothian was no longer organized or powerful enough to stop them. Education worsened. Complex Prustan and dwarven devices wore down and were forgotten rather than repaired. If anything, the last two hundred years have seen a decline in science rather than its further advancement.

THE EMPIRE TODAY

The Empire teeters on the brink of disintegration. Barbarians from the distant east have defeated Tarsisan armies and ransacked Tarsis itself. Three different people claim the Lion-Guarded Throne, including the current Emperor of the Church, Rehoboth Ylestos.

The secular Empress Addares XXXIV is the cousin of the previous Empress Addares, who died with no children or siblings. No one currently holds the title of Prince or Princess of Tarsis, so there is no heir apparent. Segaci Fellisti, a powerful and aged councilor who has survived six Emperors, now claims that only he is fit to rule in these trying times. Despite his non-Prustan heritage, his followers believe he has more right to rule than the Empress, whose blood ties to the original Von Tessels are convoluted at best. Addares now holds court in Dohrinthas, the city she has proclaimed as the new capital, while Segaci apparently has returned to Tarsis following its sacking. Meanwhile, the Emperor of the Church, now residing in Ptolus, claims to be the only true ruler with the title Emperor.

Outside of Tarsis, some see the fall of the Empire—if it has indeed fallen—as a good thing. The hereditary monarchies, long disenfranchised, now return to power as Imperial governors lose their influence. Like a disease overcome, the Empire is fading and life is returning to its state of a thousand years ago—but not without many indelible scars left behind.

Humans make up around 70 percent of Ptolus's population. Elves are the next most common species, but they constitute only 10 percent of the populace. After that come dwarves, halflings, litorians, gnomes, half-elves, centaurs, orcs and half-orcs, and lizardfolk—in that order.

Physically, the differences between Stonelost dwarves and Grailwarden dwarves are so slight, they are recognizable only by dwarves. However, Grailwarden dwarves usually dress more formally and are more likely to wear spectacles than their Stonelost cousins (although not necessarily more likely to need them). Grailwarden dwarves hold themselves to high standards regarding their physical appearance, whereas the Stonelost dwarves are not as concerned with their looks and dress.

CREATING A CHARACTER FOR A PTOLUS CAMPAIGN

You will find the following information especially useful when creating characters for a Ptolus Campaign. As always, your GM is the final arbiter of what is allowed in the game.

COMMON SPECIES

All of the following species are available as player characters (your GM can tell you what you need to create one of these PCs). They're also the most common NPC species.

DWARVES

Although most people call them "dwarves," their own name for their species is Haurdir, the Stalwart Kings of Order. There are two great overclans of dwarves in the known world—the Stonelost and the Grailwardens—but rumor claims there was once another.

Dwarves, Stonelost

These are the children of the dwarves of Dwarvenhearth, said to be the greatest of all dwarven cities. Although their small villages lie scattered about the north, since the evil lord Ghul's forces drove them from their glorious city, they no longer have the centralized focus they once did. Hence the name Stonelost.

When Ghul fell and Dwarvenhearth was liberated, influential dwarven leaders would not allow their people to repopulate the city. No one knows why. Instead, the city was sealed.

From left: Shoal elf, Stonelost dwarf, litorian, halfling, human, and gnome.

Dwarves, Grailwarden

Deep within the mountains of the Prustan Peninsula, the Grailwarden dwarves build large underground cities devoted to industry. Their name comes from their stewardship of the *White Grail*, one of three powerful, linked magical artifacts (the *Black Grail* and the *Unseen Grail* are the other two).

While the Stonelost dwarves—and the Stonemight dwarves of Dwarvenhearth before them—developed stalwart fighting skills by warring against evil humanoids and dark elves, the Grailwarden dwarves focused their attention on science, craft, and magic.

Machine-based skills are introduced in Chapter 29: Technology.

ELVES

Their ancient name *aduel deaistorm* refers to the seven "Species of Chaos," for once there were many more types of elf than one can find today (although the dark elves and Harrow elves are technically additions). Today, the Elder Elves are thought to be extinct. Elves have always preferred the deep woods or the open sea to the mountains or cities, magic over the mundane, the moon and stars over the sun.

When non-elves just say "elf," they're probably referring to the Shoal elves, or simply the Shoal. Generally dark-haired, these elves are prevalent in the Sea Kingdoms, for they love the sea and ships. Some can be found in the Moonsilver Forest along the Whitewind Sea as well, but they care less for the cold, and so are fewer in number than those in the south. Unlike in other fantasy settings, elves in the world of Praemal need sleep, like humans and other species do.

Halflings and gnomes are technically distant elven relations. In fact, they were once considered elven subspecies.

GNOMES

Frequently mistaken for halflings (or the other way around), gnomes are the rarest of the major species, particularly in Ptolus. Unlike halflings, they are more likely to consort with elves than with humans. They favor song and magic over just about anything else, often combining the two (in fact, some call them "loresong faen"). They dwell throughout the lands of Cherubar, Rhoth, Palastan, and the Sea Kingdoms.

Months of the Year

Newyear, Birth, Wind, Rain, Bloom, Sun, Growth, Blessing, Toil, Harvest, Moons, Yearsend

Days of the Week

Theoday, Kingsday, Airday, Waterday, Earthday, Fireday, Queensday

Ptolus is an extremely humanocentric city. However, compared to other cities in the world, it seems very cosmopolitan. Creatures such as orcs and minotaurs, which would be considered monsters anywhere else in the Empire, make their homes right here in the city. It should be noted, though, that such creatures are by far the exception and face daily prejudice, discrimination, and hostility from other residents. Even far more common creatures, such as litorians (which make up 2 percent of Ptolus's population), frequently face similar reactions.

Two tribes of orcs that dwelled in the area around Ptolus were magically transformed by the evil lord Ghul, creating two entirely new species: the Toruk-Rul and the Sorn-Ulth, which resemble orcs but are no longer orcs. The Toruk-Rul are large, bestial, and ferocious. Their name means "closing fist" and they are bloodthirsty, gluttonous, and concerned only with strength and power. The Sorn-Ulth ("bleeding breath") are dark skinned and smaller, bred for evil magic and stealth. Both of these kinds of creatures live along the coast of the Whitewind Sea.

The Ornu-Nom orcs never suffered Ghul's manipulations, and they loathe Toruk-Rul and Sorn-Ulth, seeing them as beast-like corruptions of orcs without any honor or virtues. Likewise, the Toruk-Rul and Sorn-Ulth revile orcs as weaklings, much like how demons view mortals.

HALF-ELVES AND HALF-ORCS

Although understandably rare, these species are more common in Ptolus than in many other places in the world. Half-elves are always half Shoal elf, while half-orcs usually come from the Ornu-Nom tribes of Palastan and Rhoth.

HALFLINGS

Although members of this species were originally called "quickling faen," humans named them "halflings" due to their stature, and the name stuck. They are small, fair, and nimble, but their childish size does not carry with it a childish demeanor. Although originally considered a type of elf, they do not have much contact with other species of elves—in fact, they interact more with humans. Nomadic halflings often move about in roaming tribal caravans throughout the nearby lands of Rhoth and Palastan.

HUMANS

According to the elves and dwarves, the humans are the youngest of the common species. Despite this fact, they are the most prevalent of all intelligent peoples.

MINOR SPECIES

Far less numerous than the common species are the following peoples. You should not have more than one of these species represented in the PC group at any time. The GM can provide you with game information regarding any of these species.

Aram: The Dwarvish name for these folk is "centaur." These half-horse, half-human people are boisterous, arrogant, and boorish, yet many others find them likable nonetheless. They live in both Palastan and Rhoth. Many have found their way into human communities, but usually as individuals rather than groups.

Elves, Cherubim: More common in the western mountains, these winged elves are frail but graceful even by elven standards. They live mainly in Cherubar, a land named for them. They are aloof (again, even by elven standards) and rarely travel outside their homeland.

Elves, Harrow: The parents and grandparents of these very rare individuals were tortured and changed by the dark lord Ghul almost a thousand years ago. Once Elder Elves, they now are misshapen and cursed, often displaying perverse magical powers. While not strictly evil, most seem continually besieged by a darker nature within, tugging at them to do wrong.

Litorians: Once masters of the Plains of Panish to the east, the golden-maned, feline litorians were scattered in the Wars of Fire thousands of years ago. Small prides hunt here and there in the wilderness, and occasionally a litorian attempts to fit into a human culture.

Lizardfolk (assarai): More common in the lands to the south, these saurians attempt to keep out of the affairs of other species but often fail. Their own myths say they originated in a vast, swampy forest that once covered most of what is now the Cold Desert, Palastan, and the Whitewind Sea. Sages indicate there are reasons to believe this is true.

OTHER NPC SPECIES

While by no means comprehensive, the following list includes some of the more predominant nonplayer character species in a Ptolus Campaign. These species cannot be player characters without permission from the GM.

Aasimars: Graced with celestial blood in their veins, these fortunate scions of blessed creatures have a representative of Heaven as part of their heritage.

Elves, Dark: One must delve deep into elvish history to trace the origin of this splinter species of elvenkind. Mostly subterranean, dark elves are rarely seen, although the Stonelost dwarves say their people fought great underground wars with them before Ghul drove the dwarves from Dwarvenhearth. Dark elves from the city under Ptolus revere evil gods who urge them toward conquest and dominance.

Minotaurs: Although most of them are quite bestial, some minotaurs are intelligent and civilized—albeit bloodthirsty by most people's standards. Most of these intelligent individuals are outcasts, although sometimes they become leaders. They often become powerful sorcerers or clerics as well.

Orcs: Orc myth contends that these creatures were birthed by an evil demon god, although some ancient texts claim they were created by an evil wizard. The orc tribes who call themselves Ornu-Nom (meaning "howling axe") dwell in the wilderness throughout Palastan and Rhoth. The Ornu-Nom are proud beings and have a strong sense of honor, but tend to be aggressive. They are sometimes deadly enemies of humans and other city-dwelling species, but they have been known to ally with humans against greater threats. Other peoples of Praemal tend to be prejudiced against orcs, but the residents of cosmopolitan Ptolus are much more tolerant of them.

Tieflings: These individuals have fiendish blood flowing through their veins in a small but measurable quantity. Tieflings are a rare but significant force in Ptolus.

The Unwanted: The city also is home to goblins, ratmen, and other undesirable elements. Most

PLAYER CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

Here are some ideas to keep in mind as you create your Ptolus player characters.

Background	Contacts	Home District
Alchemist's apprentice	Skilled alchemist	Guildsman, Midtown, either market, Oldtown, Rivergate
Arena fighter	Skilled trainer or warrior	Oldtown, Rivergate
Artisan's apprentice	Skilled artisan	Guildsman, South Market
Carriage driver	Wealthy individual	Guildsman, Midtown, either market, Oldtown
City Watch guard	City Watch captain	Any but Nobles' Quarter
Clerk in office	Important official	Guildsman, Oldtown, Rivergate, South Market
Clerk in shop	Almost anyone (customer or other merchant)	Any but Warrens
Conservatory student	Famous entertainer	Nobles' Quarter
Gang member	Influential criminal	Guildsman, Midtown, Warrens
Gardener	Wealthy individual	Midtown, Nobles' Quarter, Oldtown, Rivergate
Imperial soldier	Army officer	Oldtown
Laborer	Almost anyone	Docks, Guildsman, Midtown, either market, Oldtown
Messenger	Wealthy or influential individual	Any
Sailor	Sea captain or dockworker	Docks
Servant	Wealthy individual	Nobles' Quarter, Oldtown
Squire	Knight or other noble	Nobles' Quarter, Oldtown
Stablehand	Almost anyone	Any but Docks
Temple acolyte	Influential priest	Midtown, Temple
University student	Professor	Oldtown
Wizard's apprentice	Skilled wizard	Midtown, either market, Oldtown, Rivergate

Background: This was the occupation the character had before the game started.
Contacts: These are people the GM creates related to the background; the PC can consult them for information or assistance.
Home District: This is the district that a Ptolus native with the given background would call home (although not necessarily the district where their family lives or where they were born). If more than one is listed, the player may choose. The Necropolis is never considered a home district, even when it says "any."

people consider these creatures more of an infestation than true inhabitants. These creatures contribute nothing to Ptolus, but they prey on its populace, stealing what they need to live.

NAMES

Since the dawning of the Empire, surnames have become popular, because the Prust have long used them. Prustan (Imperial) names sound Germanic or even Prussian. Other human names descend from such diverse cultural backgrounds that they can be almost anything. Some halfling names sound a bit like non-Prustan human names, while others hearken back to their distant elf ancestry.

Dwarvish names are short and somewhat harsh, often using diphthongs like "au" and "ou." Elvish names are long and grand, using diphthongs like "ae," "ai," and "oe." Both dwarves and elves often use surnames that are Common tongue translations, like Stonemate or Hammersblood for dwarves and Moonshadow or Wavesong for elves; many gnomes have a similar practice. Some elves—particularly those from the south—keep the Elvish translations of their surnames, like Lorenci or Vaenarum.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

You either are from Ptolus or have come to the city from elsewhere. If you are a city native, think about what district you grew up in and where you live now. Think about some of the organizations involved in the city, and decide whether you have any affiliation with them or, more likely, aspire to have one (your GM may wish to have a say in this). If you are not a Ptolus native, the GM will help you create your background by providing details about the lands that surround the city. You should think about why you've come to Ptolus.

"Every day, more eager young treasure-seekers come through the city gates hoping to find adventure and riches. Most of them leave Ptolus in coffins, yet still they keep coming."
~ Zade Kenevan, bartender at the Ghostly Minstrel in Delver's Square

Ptolus offers specific organizations that various kinds of characters can join. These groups have backgrounds, goals, and connections geared toward particular types of characters: the Inverted Pyramid for arcane spellcasters, the Knights of the Dawn for martial characters with an interest in holy power, and so on. Ask your GM for more information about groups that might be appropriate for your character to join.

It also is the responsibility of the players to decide how the PC group forms. Some ideas:

- You've all come to Ptolus looking to strike it rich (or for other reasons), and you meet on the road and decide to work together.
- Two or more people in the group are family members or long-term friends already.
- Two or more of you met recently and discovered that your goals coincide enough to band together for mutual support.
- A major patron has gathered you together for a specific task.

You can also work out a couple of different reasons to join together into two or three small groups, then leave it to the GM to throw the groups together once you're in the city. In that case, at least some of your initial meetings will occur in-game, and you'll know some of the PCs better than others.

Your GM can give you access to a larger map of the city of Ptolus than the one in this book, as well as a calendar to help you keep track of time passage, and various other visual aids.

CHARACTER CLASSES

Here are a few notes regarding how various character classes fit into a Ptolus Campaign.

Barbarians: Human barbarians likely come from the recent invasion from east of the Grey Mountains (known as the Eastern Hordes). There are no elven or dwarven barbarians (unless you've got a really interesting backstory).

Bards: This being an urban-based campaign, bards fit in very well. Minstrels with talent are well received in the city, where the taverns are outnumbered only by the temples. An organization of martial bards called the Knights of the Chord dwells in Oldtown.

Clerics: Clerics are, not surprisingly, among the most respected people in society. Clerics of Lothian have some political clout (but in turn have to cope with the Church's byzantine structure and politics). You can work with the GM to choose a deity appropriate to your needs.

Druids: A long time ago, there were many more druids in the area than there are now, and they belonged to a group called the Circle of Green. No major druid organizations exist anymore. Druids are mostly loners now, and—truth be told—aren't often found in Ptolus. They are almost certainly the least common character class.

Fighters: The campaign includes a number of orders of knighthood that you may wish to join one day. There is also the warriors' guild, the Order of Iron Might, to consider. Many fighters get their start in Oldtown's combat arena.

Monks: The monk tradition, it is said, comes originally from the far south. Now it is pervasive, and orders of monks are quite common, usually dedicated to a particular cause or belief. Unlike the way monks are presented in the core rules, many temples treat them as religious figures. In this way, they become like very different sorts of clerics, but remain representatives of a deity and a belief system.

Paladins: The campaign includes a number of orders of knighthood that you may wish to join one day. Also, look at the cleric discussion above regarding religion, as most paladins in the campaign have a close connection with a specific deity.

Rangers: Rangers are uncommon but certainly not unheard of in Ptolus. Human rangers are likely to be from the Viridian Lords of Palastan. Elves are very often rangers, particularly elves from the Moonsilver Forest north of the city.

Rogues: While there is a major thieves' guild in Ptolus (the Longfingers), remember that as a rogue, "thief" is just one option. Rogues make

excellent scouts, spies, and even merchants and artisans, due to their skillfulness. This may be the most common PC class in the city.

Sorcerers: Sorcerers were the first mages, born with magical abilities innate within their very blood. They command great respect. Many sorcerers aspire to join the Inverted Pyramid mages' guild, although no character can begin the game with such an affiliation.

Warlocks: Warlocks in Ptolus are few, and those who have evil patrons are often involved with the Fallen. Even warlocks not allied with such groups were likely drawn to Ptolus like moths to a flame, for within this city, some eldritch beings are not distant entities but actual inhabitants.

Wizards: Wizards, as opposed to sorcerers, are extremely scholarly. They look upon magic as a science and attempt to learn its rules and use its loopholes. Because people acknowledge and respect their power, wizards often figure into the military, the City Watch, and the like. Elves are very rarely wizards—they become sorcerers instead. A surprising number of Grailwarden dwarves in Ptolus are wizards. Many wizards aspire to join the Inverted Pyramid mages' guild, although no character can begin the game with such an affiliation.

MAGIC

Not surprisingly, magic is prevalent in a Ptolus Campaign. That is, magic remains beyond the reach of the common person, but certainly well within their observable world. One can say the same of monsters—while not everyone's seen a dragon, there's certainly no one who refuses to believe in them. And most people have seen many other types of horrible creature in their lives. They're just far too common for locals to remain unfamiliar with them.

SPELLS

In a world this old, with magic having been common throughout history, there are literally thousands of magical traditions, theories, and methods. To reflect this heritage, all players with spellcasting characters should name their own spells and be able to describe the appearance of their effects fairly freely. One wizard might know a spell called "magic missile" while another knows a spell called "Inoris's slap of retribution" and cast it as a slapping hand made of energy, while still another wizard casts "daggers of death," which causes white-hot daggers to fly through the air. And yet they are all basically the same spell.

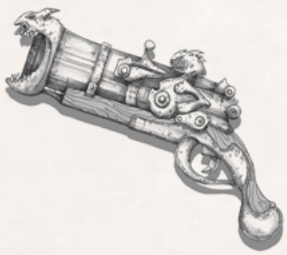
Further, players creating spellcasting characters should be aware that a few spells—mostly of a planar nature, such as *astral projection* or *banishment*—function a bit differently in Ptolus. Your GM can provide you with details, should you need them.

BLESSED CHILDREN

Blessed children are the "opposite" of undead. They are the spirits of people not yet born. Just as evil priests can call upon the undead, good priests can call upon the blessed children for aid. In a Ptolus Campaign, spells that summon monsters may make blessed children available for summoning.

THE WINTERSOULED

Once, long ago, there were no undead in the world, or so it is said. But through a great act of villainy, the veil between life and death was rent asunder, allowing the dead to enter the world



Using firearms may require special training.

In Ptolus, as in the rest of the Empire, people tell time on a twenty-four-hour clock: 1st Hour begins the hour after midnight, followed by 2nd Hour, and so on, all the way to 23rd Hour.

of the living. The first of these are called the Wintersouled, and they remain among the most powerful of all undead. A small handful of them is said to dwell within the world to this day.

EQUIPMENT

Characters can buy and sell equipment costing up to 100,000 gold pieces in the large city that is Ptolus. Standard gear is available throughout the city, although Ebbert's Outfitters in Delver's Square is a popular spot for adventurers. One can buy and sell magical gear in Midtown at Myraeth's Oddities, a shop run by an elf wizard named Myraeth and guarded by powerful wards and an ogre fighter. Myraeth also buys other valuables (gems, jewelry, artwork, and so on) for a fair price and offers spell components and similar wares as well as resale magic items. The GM should determine what magic items Myraeth has on hand at any given time. For 100 gold pieces per item, he also can identify items brought to him, with a twenty-four-hour turnaround.

For custom-made permanent magic items, people sometimes speak of the Dreaming Apothecary, but characters just starting out do not know how to contact this group.

A place called Potions and Elixirs, also in Midtown, has a large stock of potions for sale. A number of arcanists offer scrolls for sale all over town. A few other places sell potions as well, and most temples sell divine scrolls and potions to help fund their religion.

FIREARMS AND TECHNOLOGY

In Ptolus, characters have access—albeit extremely limited—to a slightly higher level of technology than what would be considered early medieval. This includes firearms, most commonly known as dragon pistols and dragon rifles (although there are other types as well). This category also includes spyglasses, pocketwatches, spectacles, and powder bombs. In the city, player characters will find printing presses, hot air balloons, and even steam engines.

However, all these devices are rare and steadily becoming more so. Such advancements in science helped forge the Empire, but as the Empire declines, so too does the knowledge of how to create and maintain these wonderful devices. It is often difficult to purchase such items these days—although rumors abound of a place in the North Market called the Smoke Shop where they are available.

LIVING IN PTOLUS

What does the average Ptolus resident know about their community? Here are some basics:

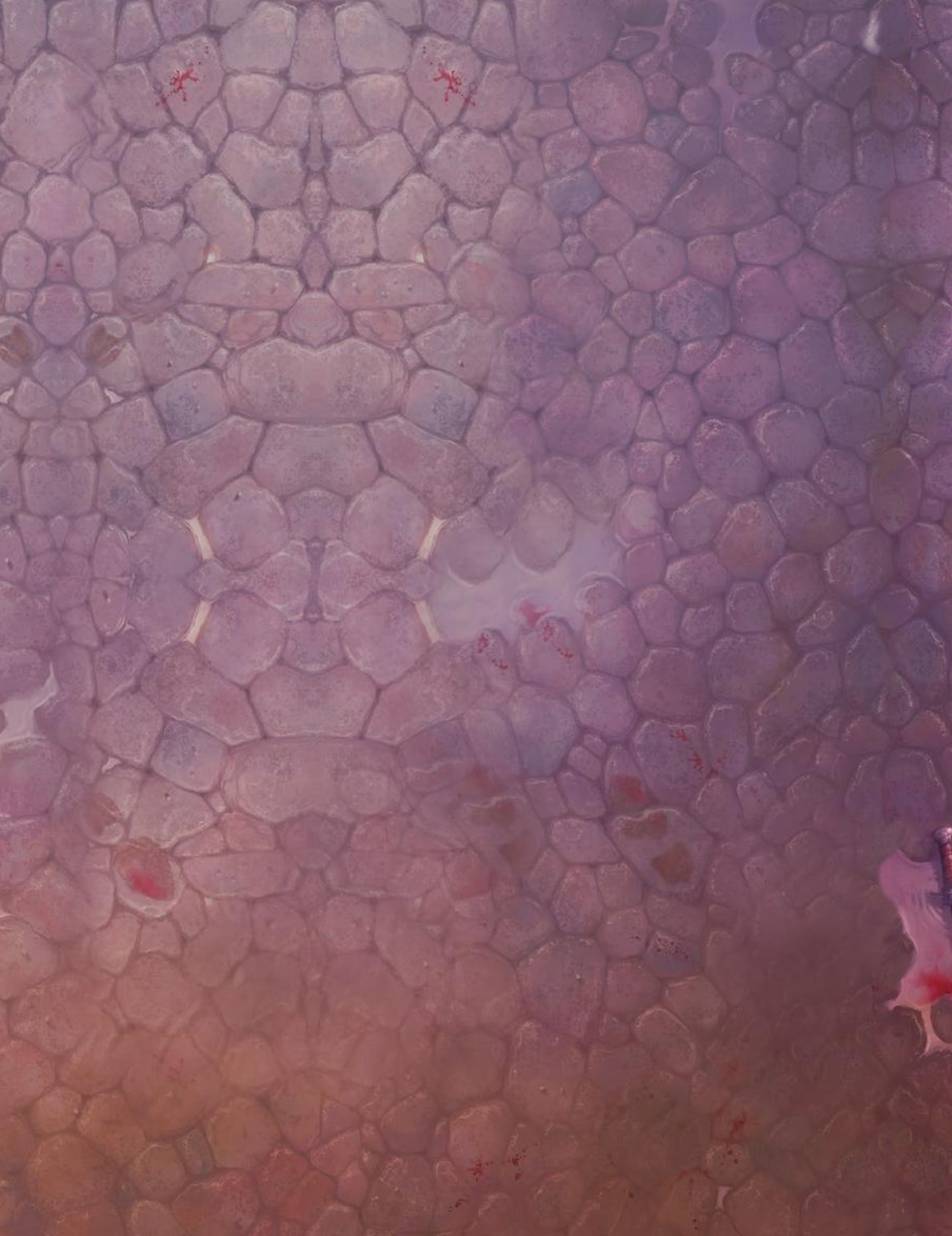
- Humans are by far the most common species in the city.
- The Ptolus year has 364 days, with twelve months and a seven-day week.
- The Ptolus climate is cool, with many overcast or rainy days.
- Commoner men typically wear white shirts and vests, sometimes with a wide-lapeled coat. Hats are frequently worn. They usually keep their hair short and their faces clean shaven. Commoner women wear dresses, often covered with an apron. They wear their hair long, sometimes styled up. Commoners of other genders might favor men's or women's clothing, or mix and match from different sources.
- The typical commoner earns 1 to 3 silver pieces per day. A silver piece is often called a "shield" or a "shiny."
- There are no banks, as such, but you can rent out a small personal vault to store your valuables at places such as Hammersong Vaults in Oldtown.
- Buildings have glass windows that hinge open.
- Most buildings, but not all of them, have indoor plumbing, including privies that pump water in via hand pumps and drain it away into the city sewers.
- You can hire a messenger to carry notes and packages anywhere in the city. This typically costs 1 silver piece per delivery. There is also a magical messenger service.
- Carriages are widely available for hire to take you wherever you want to go. This service costs about 1 silver piece per trip.
- While no stranger to magic or monsters, the typical Ptolusite fears the undead rumored to stir in the Necropolis. Even more real, however, are fears of thieves, fire, and plague.
- The Ptolus City Watch is extremely competent. Despite this fact, the city has a terrible crime problem.
- Ratmen live in the sewers.
- Rumors speak of chaos cults finding new members about the city these days.
- Imperial law requires that everyone carries identification papers. Written law favors citizens over noncitizens, but practical law favors the upper classes over the lower.
- Spells that make people do things they normally wouldn't, like mind-control magic, are illegal in Ptolus. So are spells that create undead or spread plague.
- Most shops and places of business stay open as long as the sun is up, which means that business hours are longer in the summer than in the winter. Many are open seven days a week.

Your Arrival in Ptolus

If your character is not a native of Ptolus, you arrive at the city through one of the main gates or by ship at the Docks. At the main gates, the City Watch will ask to see your papers and demand an entrance toll of 2 copper pennies. At the Docks, you'll also be greeted by the Watch, as well as by a low-ranking Imperial official who likely spends a little time looking over your belongings. Again, you'll be asked to pay a toll of 2 copper pennies, and you also might face other taxes or tariffs, depending on what you have with you.

Once in the city, you'll find the streets bustling with a staggering array of individuals going about their business. If you're hungry or thirsty, you'll find numerous vendors and establishments clustered close to the entrances to the city. They will be more than happy to take your coin. Since you're likely an adventurer, anyone you meet can direct you to Delver's Square, which lies near the heart of the city. There you'll find places to stay, gear to purchase, an entrance to the Undercity, and lots of other adventurers who can help you get started in your new delving career.

As an adventurer in Ptolus, your first mission might very well deal with the humanoid ratmen—diseased, ratlike thieves that live in the sewers—that plague the city. Even as you prepare for your first adventure, you might look upward to the very top of that 3,000-foot Spire rising above you. What dangers, what treasures, might still lie in the fortress at the top? Will you ever be so powerful as to find out for yourself?



PART II:
BACKGROUND

Ptolus is an exciting city, but in order to truly understand the place, one has to understand its context, in relation both to the world around it and to the events that have come before now—even those that occurred before the city existed.

In part II, you will find a wealth of information to establish the background of Ptolus. You'll learn about the world of Praemal: the lands around Ptolus and the languages spoken there. You'll discover new facts about the species available in a Ptolus Campaign. You'll read about the creation of the world and its relationship to other worlds and planes, as well as the various gods worshipped across the lands—especially the most popular religion, that of the god Lothian. You'll delve deeply into the ten-thousand-year history of Praemal, discovering many amazing and significant events. And finally, you'll meet many of the groups that operate in Ptolus.

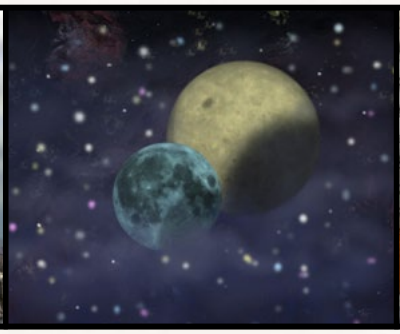
Much of the information in part II is of interest to players, but most of it should remain a secret at first. For example, consider the majority of the cosmological details privileged information—facts the PCs might discover as the campaign progresses.

Chapter 2: The World 42
Chapter 3: Species 48
Chapter 4: Cosmology and Religion 61
Chapter 5: History 78
Chapter 6: Organizations 92

Chapter 2:

THE WORLD

The world of Ptolus is called Praemal, a name that comes from its creator, Praemus—although today only a few people have ever heard the name Praemus. Most don't even know he exists; they believe in the divergent creation myths of their homelands. Folks simply call the world "The World" and leave it at that.



FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

The disappearance of the Vallis moon heralded the change from Second Edition to Third Edition in my original Praemal campaign. For more on this moon, see page 61.

Return of the Vallis moon: see The Night of Dissolution *adventure (see page 11).*

Praemal is a medium-sized world, just a bit smaller than Earth. (Its circumference is slightly less than 20,000 miles.) It is cool in temperature, with encroaching ice from the north and the south threatening to consume the rest of the land. About four-fifths of the world is ocean. A major continent lies on the opposite side of the world from Ptolus, but for most people, it exists only in rumor and conjecture. The continent of which Ptolus is a part, located in the world's northern hemisphere, has had many names but currently is called simply "the Empire," referring to the Empire of Tarsis that has ruled most of it for the last seven hundred years.

Praemal's days are twenty-four hours long, and its year has three hundred sixty-four days. (See the calendar in the packet.)

THE MOONS AND STARS

The world of Praemal has three moons, although most people only know about two of them. The largest moon, which appears bluish-white in the sky, is called Lunas. Much smaller, but far too large to be a star in the night sky, is Rogue. Rogue has a strange and erratic elliptical orbit and usually ranges much farther away from the world than Lunas.

Traditionally, people from the east (such as the Prust) believe that nights when Rogue passes in front of Lunas are unlucky. Conversely, those who hail from western lands (such as Cherubar and Rhoth) feel that such an event brings good tidings.

The third moon, Vallis, disappeared from orbit ten thousand years ago, although it was invisible even when it circled the world. Vallis is the moon of magic and a keystone of the world. Its disappearance changed the way that magic worked on Praemal, cementing the current systems in place. Should it ever return, things would certainly change again.

Vallis, page 648

THE EMPIRE

For more than seven hundred years, the Empire of Tarsis has ruled most of the known world. Currently, however, it is an Empire in decline. In fact, some say that the Empire has fallen but that no one yet realizes it. Three different people claim the Lion-Guarded Throne, the technology that once cemented the power of the Empire is on the wane, and the capital city of Tarsis is rebuilding after a barbarian invasion.

Still, the Empire directs much of daily life. The distinction between Imperial citizens and noncitizens remains important in most lands, with citizens afforded more rights under the law in all cases. Imperial law dominates even in places where it is enforced mainly by non-Prustan peoples. The Empire brought much peace and prosperity to the lands it ruled, so those under its sway seek to hold onto certain vestiges, even if the winds of political change are indeed blowing strong.

Chapter 5: History, page 78

See Chapter 5: History for more information on the Empire.

GAZETTEER

The following is a brief description of the lands, cities, and major features of the known world. In an all-Ptolus campaign, this information is purely background material. As such, this section offers only the vaguest of generalities.

As you read this section, refer to the Empire map in the packet.

CHERUBAR

Mountainous Cherubar to the far west of Ptolus is a mysterious place filled with isolated villages and remote settlements. Humans live among the winged Cherubim elves here, attempting to keep savage giants at bay. These folk, it is said, consort with spirits of the air to such a degree that cold winds flow through their veins instead of mortal blood. This region is separated from the Plains of Rhoth by the Cherubar Mountains.

THE COLD DESERT

Surrounding the mysterious shaft known as Mrathrach's Pit, the Cold Desert is a dry, dead wasteland southwest of Ptolus. The extremely inhospitable area is barren and virtually lifeless—a region of orcs, hobgoblins, and monstrous things with almost no humans, elves, or other civilized folk.

THE EASTERN HORDES

Long ignored by the west, the peoples beyond the Grey Mountains east of Tarsis unified under King Oulgas around 700 IA. Assailing the Grey Mountains, they swept across the Plains of Panish in the next few years and fought great battles with the Imperial Army. Due to the barbarians' great numbers and the lack of unity among the Imperial forces (the Empire was pulled in three ways due to the contesting of the Lion-Guarded Throne), the Hordes met with large-scale success. By 709, Oulgas laid siege to Tarsis itself. By 710, he sat in the Imperial Palace.

People expected Oulgas to proclaim himself Emperor, but he did not. Reportedly, the man had nothing but contempt for the more civilized folk of the west. When Oulgas left Tarsis in 714, taking the majority of his people with him back over the mountains, rumor has it someone asked him why he invaded in the first place. Oulgas is said to have answered, "Because I could."

Some of the easterners stayed behind, most of them settling in the Plains of Panish or southern Nall.

KEM

Antique and shadowy Kem, located south of Prustan lands along the Southern Sea, was a place of powerful magic and sorcery five thousand years ago. Now it lies in ruins, brought low by the same spells that made it great.

Blighted millennia ago by magical conflicts called the Wars of Fire, Kem has become a haven for Harrow elves who fled east after their release from Goth Gulgamel. Only the toughest, coarsest of plant life grows in the magically tainted soil, and few natural animals stalk the wastelands. Kem is a land of ghosts and shadows, lost to time.

The few cities that remain in Kem stand upon ruined metropolises of fallen tors. The mixed population includes humans, lizardfolk, gnomes, Shoal elves, Harrow elves, and the occasional dwarf.

NALL

Said to be haunted by the ghosts of the "first men," icy Nall is a rough northerly forestland trapped between the Dragonsbirth Mountains to the west, the Grey Mountains to the east, and the Endless Sea of Ice to the north. The people of Nall are few but hardy. Most of them live in nomadic barbarian groups, each ruled by a shaman woman. Some dwell in the depths of the Black Angel Forest or the Great North Woods. The small communities here are isolated, accustomed to living through the long winters without ever seeing anyone from another village or group.

Evil and the World

The Ptolus setting assumes that evil is a real, palpable thing, not a subjective label pinned on one's enemies. Supernatural powers that destroy souls, create undead, summon demons, corrupt spirits, and draw upon negative energy cannot be used without ill effects, either on the user or upon the world. Many locations in Ptolus are proof of this fact. The Dark Reliquary, Goth Gulgamel, and, worst of all, Jabel Shammar are so steeped in evil and darkness that the places themselves have become evil. Like a virus, that evil can spread to those who spend time in such places.

Cherubim elves, page 52

Plains of Rhoth, page 45

Mrathrach's Pit, page 78

Tarsis, page 46

When referring to dates, IA means "in the Imperial Age," and BE means "before the Empire."

The typical barbarian warrior prefers using a two-handed weapon rather than a one-handed weapon with a shield and tends to choose axes over swords. Many wield two weapons, usually two axes. They also use javelins or bows. In recent years, elite barbarian warriors have developed a fondness for heavy crossbows.

The court of King Anathais and Queen Miaga is fraught with difficulties. A large percentage of the populace is still unsure as to whether they should accept the rule of the monarchy. And even those who are eager to do so fear that the Empire still has the might to enact revenge on those pledging allegiance to the king and queen.

Circle of Green, page 107

Theridae is the ancient name for the land that is now Palastan. Once it was the dominion of the Elder Elves.

Viridian Lords, page 132

Dwarvenhearth, page 429

Aram, page 51

Viridian Lord Rechel Pattemon (page 132) is one of the Commissar's Twelve Commanders.

Grailwarden dwarves, page 48

PALASTAN AND THE MOONSILVER FOREST

About a year ago, Palastan's Imperial Governor appointed by the Lion-Guarded Throne died amid chaos and rioting in the capital city of Trolone. Forces loyal to the hereditary monarchy, long exiled from the land, returned order to Trolone. King Anathais and Queen Miaga returned to their palace and took control of Palastan "until the Empire appoints a new governor." With the ongoing problems in Tarsis, this has not happened—nor is it likely to happen in the near future.

Palastan is a verdant land of rolling hills and green fields. The people farm and herd, as well as fish along the southern coast of the Whitewind Sea. Although of late political power has remained in the hands of the monarchy or the Imperial Governor, most would say that the Viridian Lords hold the true power in the land.

These rangers operate independently from the government, but the populace looks to them for guidance and leadership. The Viridian Lords are said to have physically bonded with plant life in a manner handed down to them by the Circle of Green, an ancient group of druids that disappeared long ago.

Technically, the city of Ptolus falls within the borders of Palastan. However, since the death of the Imperial Governor, it has maintained its independence from the monarchy.

Palastan is a realm of rugged individuals. The people are simple and generally virtuous, but not interested in complex, rigid sets of laws. They have never much liked being a part of the Empire. Culturally, Palastani enjoy proclaiming their individuality, and do so through piercings, body art, and distinctive (but not necessarily flamboyant) dress. Besides humans, Shoal elves and centaurs make up most of Palastan's population, although the Stonelost dwarves maintain a few small villages in the hills after losing their city, Dwarvenhearth, thousands of years ago. The humans get along equally well with dwarves and elves, as well as the communities of aram that gallop across the open fields.

While not rulers in Palastan, the Viridian Lords as a group are well respected by all. They patrol the wild lands and the roads, keeping the people safe from orc raiders, bandits, goblins, ogres, giants, wyverns, and worse.

Most of the area's Shoal elves live in the Moonsilver Forest, a place of sylvan magic that retains many secrets even after all these centuries. Non-elves (except for the Viridian Lords) keep strictly to the few roads that pass through these woods. The forest holds many elven communities, most of them small and well hidden—unlike the larger, more prominent elven cities along the coast of Ren Tehoth to the east.

THE PLAINS OF PANISH

These rolling plains of grassy, fertile fields east of Tarsis stretch for seemingly endless miles up to the foothills of the Grey Mountains. The River Sorenth flows out of the Grey Mountains to empty into the Gulf of Satran at Tarsis. Remote and primitive communities of humans, litorians, and other species live here. One will find almost no elves or dwarves, however.

THE PRUSTAN PENINSULA

The Prustan Peninsula, which juts boldly out into the Southern Sea, is home to the Grailwarden dwarves and the human Prust. More than a thousand years ago, the Prust took over the lands around the city of Tarsis

to the north and eventually established the Empire of Tarsis. As rugged as their mountainous homeland, these industrious people built fabulous roads for their Empire and developed great devices using gears, steam, and gunpowder.

This land has a harsh environment, with strong winds and seemingly unnaturally cold weather. (Some blame the toxic spells unleashed long ago in ancient Kem on the southern tip of the peninsula.) The Grailwarden dwarves and the Prust have worked hand in hand here for as long as either species can remember. The dwarves' Grail Keep, a fortress built into a cliff face in the Hotash Mountains, protects their city, which lies below. The Grail Temple beneath the city holds the fabled *White Grail*, an object of great power from which the Grailwarden dwarves take their name.

REN TEHOTH

Though it was once a fabulous kingdom, most of Ren Tehoth's cities now lie in ruin, proof that nothing lasts forever. Even before the founding of the Lion-Guarded Throne, Tarsis annexed Ren Tehoth, its neighbor that stretched as far west as the Vantaran Peaks. The royal bloodline had long since been extinguished, the people of the kingdom scattered and warring amid tiny, feudal states without an ultimate liege to keep the peace among the vassals. Intimidated by Tarsis's growing strength and eager to live in peace, Ren Tehoth accepted foreign rule with little resistance. The few nobles and thanes unwilling to submit found themselves overrun by the extremely efficient Prustan army that enforced Tarsis's might.

Today, the cities of greatest interest in Ren Tehoth are elven. Running from the Dragonsbirth Mountains to the southern tip of the Bay of Ptolus within the Morn Woods are a number of well-established elven settlements, larger than those in the Moonsilver Forest. They include Paelinth, Sariush, and Phinothae. The Shoal elves of Ren Tehoth resemble their western cousins but are even less comfortable around humans, due to the region's scarce human population in recent centuries.

RHOTH

The Plains of Rhoth due west of Ptolus are known for their farms and vast herds of horses and livestock. Rhothans are a good-natured folk, standing tall and fair. They dwell in small towns and villages frequented by halfling caravans. Few other civilized humanoids frequent this land (no elves, dwarves, gnomes, or litorians, for example), and the folks there tend to be

Find a full-page version of this map on a sheet in the packet.

The White Grail's *counterpart, the* Black Grail, *is said to be in the Banewarrens below Ptolus (see page 389).*

The land of Rhoth is still very much in the grip of a strict, conservative sect of the Church of Lothian. Many residents of small villages still look upon those who revere other gods as demon worshippers, for example.

It is a commonly held opinion that today the greatest artists and writers live in the city of Dohrinthas.

Empress Addares, page 91

Segaci Fellisti, page 91

Ptolus in Perspective

In the world at large, there are no "dungeons" to explore. "Adventurer" is not a common career choice. Newcomers to Ptolus from elsewhere will find these aspects of city life very strange. Also odd-seeming are the number of gods other than Lothian that people worship there. Ptolusites also have a casual attitude about danger, evil, and general weirdness when compared to their fellows in other parts of the world.

xenophobic and isolationist. The people do come into conflict with orcs and sometimes even gnolls; the Gnoll War in southern Rhoth three decades back is well known.

THE SEA KINGDOMS AND DOHRINTHAS

A federation of once-warring pirate princes, the Sea Kingdoms on the southern edge of the continent earned their power and wealth from fishing and shipping in the Southern Sea. Bounded by two rivers—the Sunwash in the west and the Calathan River in the east—this is a place of politics and betrayals, plots and assassinations. It is also a place of great beauty, for gold and silk flow like water, it is said, and the area has seen little warfare to despoil it for hundreds of years.

Dohrinthas, the Golden City, has prospered greatly in the last few centuries, for ships laden with wealth come to this large port daily from the southern lands. When massing barbarians began to threaten Tarsis in 706 IA, Empress Addares XXXIV attempted to move the Imperial capital to her home of Dohrinthas. As a result, she succeeded in splitting the Empire, as Segaci Fellisti—an aging councilor who also claimed the throne—maintained the government in Tarsis, until the barbarians sacked the city a few years later.

Dohrinthas is a large and well-established city teeming with many species. For the last three centuries it has remained second only to Tarsis in influence and power. Although it remains under the domain of the Lion-Guarded Throne, the Holy Empire was never able to completely solidify its power amid its baroque, pinnacled towers and spired minarets.

The people of Dohrinthas and the Sea Kingdoms as a whole are an odd mixture of jaded, cynical urbanites and rough-and-tumble seafarers.

TARSIS

Tarsis, the fading capital of more than half the world, is recovering slowly from the barbarian invasions of a decade ago. Toppled walls and buildings are being rebuilt, and slowly people are returning to the city. The Grand Cathedral here serves as headquarters of the Church of Lothian, despite the fact that the Emperor of the Church remains in the city of Ptolus.

Ancient beyond reckoning, the vast city of Tarsis was merely an important trading center at the mouth of the River Sorenth until the militaristic Prust from the peninsula to the southeast took over the area and eventually founded an empire centered in the quickly growing city. The Prust chose Tarsis as their hub of power because their own cities were remote and trapped within rugged mountains. Some claim that Tarsis was the world's first urban center—another reason the Prust chose to stake their empire there.

At its height, the Empire of Tarsis encompassed all of the Prustan Peninsula and the lands immediately surrounding the Southern Sea, including Uraq, and the northern lands from Cherubar to the Grey Mountains. Today, its control is questionable. To some, the Empire has fallen. To others, it exists in name only. Yet to many proud citizens, the Empire still retains control over its lands, and all owe fealty to the Emperor.

URAQ AND THE DISTANT SOUTH

Hundreds of years before the Lion-Guarded Throne rose to power, the land of Uraq held sway over most of the known world. By controlling the Southern Sea, this economic seafaring power also controlled commerce in the surrounding lands.

As the seat of a mercantile empire, Uraq once ruled through economic power. But those days are long past; it fell to the Empire of Tarsis over five centuries ago after a series of bloody wars. Uraq remains a wealthy land of spice, silk, and fertile oases. The Tarsisans have been tolerable rulers—in fact, they usually ruled from a distance. The hot desert sands of Uraq never seemed to appeal to the Prustan overlords, nor did the climate provide a good environment for their guns and machines.

Far to the south of Uraq, past a mountain range called the Scorched Peaks, lie the distant realms of Panogolan and Buneir—kingdoms of savanna and jungle ignored by the Empire. Beyond that is ancient Kellisan, with its own empire, and the Sea of World's End. Even the folk of Uraq rarely travel to such places except to trade, although thousands of years ago Kellisan ruled Uraq and left much of its culture behind. Most people in the Empire think of all lands south of Uraq as simply "the distant south" and know no details of such places.

LANGUAGES

The languages spoken and read throughout the world of Praemal are numerous and varied. Most of the major idioms appear in the list below.

Abyssal: The language of Hell itself, spoken by demons and their fiendish ilk. Thousands of years ago the Dread One, Eslathagos Malkith, adopted this language and taught it to his creations and servants. It remains common among many aberrations and other monstrous beings.

Charad: The Charad Titans, who visited the shores of the Whitewind Sea six millennia ago, had their own extremely sophisticated language. Today it is known only to a handful of elven scholars.

Common (Imperial): A variation of Old Prustan (see below), this language could be called "New Prustan." Carried throughout the known world by the people who forged the Empire of Tarsis, it is now common in every land. If nothing else, it provides a way for people to conduct trade without the need of translators or spells.

Draconic: Vying with Elder Elvish and Dwarvish for the oldest language, Draconic has always been spoken by dragons. Many other creatures have since picked it up—some reptilian in nature, others not. Quite a number of magical works are written in Draconic.

Dwarvish: Unlike the language of the elves (see below), Dwarvish has remained almost entirely unchanged in the thousands of years of dwarven civilization. A modern dwarf could find an ancient scroll of their most distant ancestors and would be able to understand the vast majority of it. The fact that their mother tongue has for so long remained unchanged says more about the dwarves than about their language. Dwarvish words are typically short, with many compound word constructions that create new words as needed.

Elvish: A newer tongue based on an older version, Elvish is surprisingly different from its parent language, Elder Elvish. Modern Elvish is, in fact, no closer to Elder Elvish than it is to Halfling or Gnomish. It is a lyrical, beautiful language that almost sounds (particularly to humans) like singing when spoken correctly. Elvish boasts a huge and very precise vocabulary.

Elvish, Dark: Like Elvish, this language has Elder Elvish as its root, but it has deviated from that starting point so much that today it is not very similar to Elvish. Dark Elvish has many subtly different words for betrayal, but no words for charity or benevolence.

Elvish, Elder: Virtually a dead language, the original tongue of the elves may be the oldest language in the world. With very few exceptions, no one speaks it any longer. The letters in Elder Elvish also represent numbers, which makes it easy to craft double meanings with words and numbers.

Gnomish: Gnomish also derives from Elder Elvish. Some people say it has been influenced by Dwarvish, but this is true in only minor ways.

Halfling: The language of the halflings descends from Elder Elvish and an ancient language of humans called Westron (see below). It is a far simpler tongue than its predecessors.

Litorian: A gruff language, Litorian is interesting because it seems unrelated to any other tongue spoken in the world.

Old Prustan: An old language of humans, Prustan sounds harsh when compared to those derived from Elder Elvish. This tongue shares a few similarities with Dwarvish, but not many. Today only scholars speak it.

Orcish: Interestingly, this language is a mixture of Westron and Abyssal. Originally, orcs spoke Abyssal, taught to them by their creator, the Dread One. After his destruction, they fled west, where they became heavily influenced by the cultures there.

Palastani: A rather simple language, Palastani is once again coming into vogue, after having faded considerably during the height of the Empire of Tarsis.

Nallish: This straightforward language is used by the people of Nall and the barbarians of the east.

Undercommon: This derivative of Elder Elvish is mixed with Abyssal and Draconic. Originally, it was the language of the dark elves. It has since become almost unrecognizable as related to any of its roots.

Uraqi: Another human tongue, Uraqi is very different from Old Prustan and even Westron, having originated in ancient Kellisan, far to the south. It is spoken almost exclusively in Uraq and along the coast of the Southern Sea (a relic of the fact that Uraq conquered most towns and cities along that coast long ago).

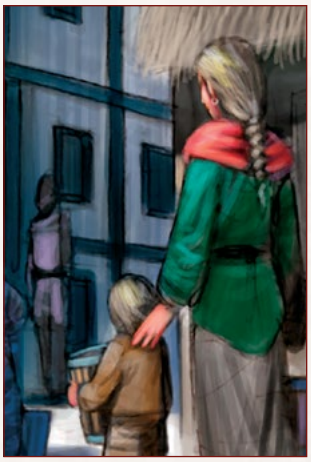
Westron: Perhaps the oldest human language—older even than Old Prustan—is Westron. Some scholars believe it was a common tongue of much older times, long before the Empire. Some believe the language was given to humans by the Creator himself.

Eslathagos Malkith, page 79

Charad Titans, page 81

Old Prustan sounds a little like German in the real world. This is why many human names in Praemal sound vaguely German, Austrian, or Prussian.

Other languages spoken in Ptolus include Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Giant, Goblin, Ignan, Rattish, Sylvan, and Terran.



In Ptolus today, children in school learn only Imperial Common. If they know any other languages, they most likely learned them from their parents. The one exception is that wealthy and aristocratic children are sometimes taught Elvish or Palastani.

The modern Elvish language builds politeness and decorum right into its structure. This grants a character advantage on Persuasion checks when speaking Elvish, assuming the target understands the language. This isn't to say that one cannot be rude in Elvish—it just requires more skill and thought.

Chapter 3:
SPECIES

The species of Ptolus are in many ways the same standard species found in most fantasy worlds (humans, elves, dwarves, and so on). However, a few unique aspects to each species, discussed in this chapter, tailor them for the setting. In addition, a few new species and a few "monsters" also make acceptable PC species in Ptolus. This chapter contains player-appropriate information about the various species available for PCs. There are no spoilers in this chapter, but page references to other chapters may have spoilers.

In their own myths of ancient times, dwarves are named the "Stalwart Kings of Order" (the Haurdir), and the elves call themselves the "People of Chaos" (the aduel deaistorm).

Prustan Peninsula, page 44

Core rules species include those found in the 5e sources.

GMs should decide which species they want to allow in their Ptolus Campaign. For convenience, this chapter divides the species into major species, minor species (new, alternate, or monstrous species), and NPC species. The latter are species in Ptolus that are probably not appropriate for player characters without a lot of consideration on the GM's part.

Use all the information about these species found in the core rules, unless the information here contradicts it. See Part I: Ptolus Player's Handbook for more details as well.

MAJOR SPECIES

The so-called major species are otherwise known as the common species. For a Ptolus Campaign, they require only a few changes, discussed below. In theory, every GM should allow these species as player character choices.

DWARVES

Dwarven history says there once were three overclans: the Grailwarden, the Stonemight (now called the Stonelost), and the Earthsingers. Few know of this third tribe, for no one has heard from them in millennia. Their greatest queen was kidnapped by the Dread One, Eslathagos Malkith, and never returned, which ended her noble line. The Earthsingers never recovered and eventually died out.

Dwarves almost never belong to any chaotic alignment, although there are exceptions.

Stonelost and Grailwarden dwarves' symbols

Eslathagos Malkith, page 79

GRAILWARDEN DWARVES

In ages long past, the Grailwarden dwarves settled the Prustan Peninsula in the Hotash Mountains. When the Prust spread northward, their dwarven allies came with them and helped establish the Empire of Tarsis.

The Grailwarden dwarves take their name from the *White Grail*, a fabulously powerful artifact they uncovered as they carved their main fortress-city into the side of a mountain. They renamed the fortress Grail Keep and proclaimed that watching over the *Grail* was their destiny. They have done so ever since.

Grailwarden dwarf artisans are known for their skill with gears, lenses, gunpowder, and other devices. Unlike other dwarves, they also are known for their use of magic—but it is a studious, methodical approach to magic. They treat spells as they would any science. Dwarves in general are fabulous artisans, and throughout the Empire people prize dwarf-crafted items more than any other.

Grailwarden dwarves are usually fairly serious, dedicated, and hardworking, but not

as gruff or unsociable as other dwarves. They get along with humans, but the various types of elves are only tolerable to them. They dislike orcs, but not as much as other dwarves do. They have no general opinions about most other species.

STONELOST DWARVES

The Stonelost are the displaced builders of Dwarvenhearth, their ancient realm below the city of Ptolus. Driven out of their ancestral home by Ghul hundreds of years ago, they refuse to go back, and now they live in and around the city of Ptolus. No nondwarf knows, or at least understands, why they will not go back to reclaim their ancient city. To the Stonelost, however, it represents a life they feel they no longer deserve. By deserting their home, they lost the rights to it.

Yet they refuse to permit anyone else to go into Dwarvenhearth, either. That would be a defilement of a perfect memory.

The Stonelost have great skill with stone and metal. In the city, they frequently work as artisans, architects, engineers, or merchants dealing in stone or metal. Most dwarves in Ptolus are Stonelost by a fair margin, although some do not actually call Ptolus home. These live in the largest gathering of Stonelost dwarves, Kaled Del, a subterranean community beneath Ptolus near one of the entrances to Dwarvenhearth.

ELVES

In ancient days, halflings and gnomes were considered types of elves. Even though modern people look at those species as distinct, there are still many elven types: Shoal elves, the winged Cherubim, subterranean dark elves, and the twisted Harrow elves. And of course the Elder Elves, now gone, comprised two more subspecies, called the Solarr and the Lunas.

Elves today revere the moon (although not as much as did the ancient Lunas elves, after whom one moon is named). They love good food and wine, and they like both elaborately prepared and served. They prefer silver to gold. Elves in general know a great deal about the stars, the moons, and the world—for example, they know the planet is round and has a circumference of slightly less than 20,000 miles.

The elves work with many special minerals, materials, and herbs. In particular, they are known for two metals—ithildin (a decorative silver that glows at night but is dull and almost invisible during the day) and ithilnaur (a thin, strong material with the same properties as ithildin).

Elves (except Harrow elves) are only rarely of a lawful alignment.

Dwarf nonbinary names:
Berd, Larr, Turk

(For male and female dwarf names, see the core rulebooks.)

Dwarvenhearth, page 429

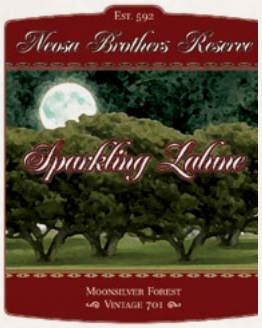
Ghul, page 83

Solarr and Lunas Elves

Collectively known as the Elder Elves, these two species once were the greatest and most powerful of elvenkind. Today, however, they are all extinct—or so most people believe. The truth is, members of both species survive today as the Urthon Aedar. The Solarr were golden-haired and fair, and stood very tall. The Lunas were usually white-haired, although some had golden hair as well. They stood shorter than the Solarr.

Ithildin and ithilnaur, page 647

Kaled Del, page 418



Elven wine, such as this Moonsilver Forest vintage, is popular at Ptolus's more upscale taverns and restaurants.

Dreta Phantas, page 425

Elf nonbinary names:
Cas, Mal, Quo

Gnome nonbinary names:
Em, Erno, Suli

Halfling nonbinary names:
Cam, Ren, Wink

(For male and female elf, gnome, and halfling names, see the core rulebooks.)

Buelow Stridetaker, married to the owner of the Hungry Halfling tavern in the Guildsman District, entertains patrons several nights a week with ethnic table-dancing.

SHOAL ELVES

Dark-haired with deep, smoldering eyes, the Shoal elves have always been just as much at home on the sea as on the land. They are, by far, the most common type of elf—in fact, most people simply call them "elves" rather than "Shoal elves." They typically wear their hair long and favor clothing in shades of blue and green.

If they can't be on or near the sea, the Shoal prefer the forest, the so-called "sea of leaves." They find open terrain oppressive. Elven cities are fabulous places of slowly twirling towers and curving walls, but sadly, they are few in number now. The most wondrous of these cities was Dreta Phantas, the Dreaming City, magically stolen by the dark elves in ages past. Most Shoal now live in small communities or cosmopolitan cities.

Shoal elves often seem aloof and arrogant, but as the centuries pass, they have grown more accustomed to other species. In particular, they respect some of the rarer species, such as the litorian tribes. Humans, as a group, are generally acceptable, but dwarves are a burden. Elves hate orcs.

If this book refers to a character as an "elf," without specifying the subspecies, that character is a Shoal elf.

PRAEMAL ELVES AND SLEEP

Unlike what is stated in the core rules, elves do indeed sleep, just as humans do, and they do not have the trance elven trait. In fact, elves place a greater value on sleep and dreams than any other species.

GNOMES

In most ancient lore, gnomes are considered to have been a species of elvenkind. Rarest of the major species, gnomes love magic and music above all else (an alternate name for them is the "loresong faen"). They dwell throughout the lands of Cherubar, Rhoth, Palastan, and the Sea Kingdoms (see Chapter 2: The World).

HALFLINGS

As with gnomes, most creation myths and stories name halflings as an original species of elvenkind. They frequently live among humans, although many halflings wander the plains to the south and southwest as nomads. They do not call themselves halflings, of course, but they no longer find the name derogatory, either. Their own name for themselves is "saelas faen," which roughly translates to "quicklings."

HALF-ELVES AND HALF-ORCS

Although understandably rare, these species are more common in Ptolus than in many places in the world. Half-elves are always half Shoal elf, since a Cherubim elf would never pair with a human and Harrow elves always breed true. Half-orcs usually come from the Ornu-Nom tribes of Palastan and Rhoth.

HUMANS

According to the elves and dwarves, humans are the youngest of the common species. Despite this fact, they are the most prevalent of all intelligent peoples. No changes are required for standard humans in a Ptolus Campaign, but details on the various ethnic divisions of human (Prust, Eastern Hordes barbarians, Uraqi, and so on) are available in the Gazetteer of Chapter 2: The World.

A more cosmopolitan city than most, Ptolus boasts more half-elves and half-orcs than probably any other place in the world.

Gazetteer, page 43

MINOR SPECIES

The minor species are named as such not because of their stature, but because of their relative rarity and—from a game point of view—their suitability as potential PC species. GMs should consider whether or not these species would make appropriate player characters for their Ptolus Campaigns.

CENTAURS (ARAM)

Although quite rare elsewhere in the Empire, centaurs—or, as they call themselves, aram—live in great numbers in Palastan, and thus in Ptolus. They have earned the respect of the humanoid folks of the region thanks to their forthright and open manner and because of their help against Ghul and other enemies in the past.

Personality: Aram are boisterous, arrogant, and boorish, yet many find them likable nonetheless. Centaurs sometimes refer to humanoids derisively as "sitters." The biggest difference they see between themselves and most other people is that others are content—or even happy—to sit for long periods of time in the same place. Aram cannot stand to remain in one place for long unless they are eating or sleeping. In their herds, it is the sick, the old, and the infirm who perform tasks that require stationary work, like sewing garments or making tools. In the city, they simply rely on others to do such things.

Physical Description: These half-horse, half-human-appearing people stand almost 7 feet tall. While those who live on the plains prefer to wear minimal clothing and travel with as little gear as possible, city dwellers have adopted the garments and equipment of their humanoid neighbors.

Relations: Aram probably don't look upon humanoid species as positively as those species look upon them. Still, the centaurs recognize that humans, dwarves, elves, and the rest

Aram do not take offense at comments or comparisons that relate them to horses. In fact, they take such remarks as compliments.

Although centaurs in the wilds are often rangers, you will find as many or more aram fighters in Ptolus. Rangers often visit the city, but few choose to live there.

The aram adventurer Turas is well known in Ptolus. He was one of the founding members of the Delver's Guild and surprisingly skilled at underground and cavern exploration. Unfortunately, Turas disappeared recently while exploring the shores of Umbral Lake (see page 419).

Most centaurs in Ptolus choose to dwell in the Narred neighborhood of Midtown (see page 190).

List of deities, page 71

An archetypal centaur adventurer in Ptolus has high Strength and Constitution scores, is proficient in Athletics and Survival, and knows Aram and Common.

clearly dominate the lands, so they have made their peace with those other species, and many willingly live among them. There has never been open conflict between the aram and any of the major humanoid species, although there once were great wars between centaurs and orcs and, less frequently, battles between centaurs and lizardfolk. These are all events of the distant past.

Alignment: Centaurs are usually neutral good.

Centaur Lands: Aram once roamed the plains to the south and west of Ptolus in huge, nomadic herds. Today, however, the herds have dwindled. Aram in Ptolus find work in physical roles, hauling loads in warehouses or for other businesses. Some work as imposing bodyguards or hired muscle. Still others serve as messengers or pull small carts for hire, hauling goods or people. They almost never have jobs as merchants, clerks, artisans, or other employment that would require them to remain stationary for long periods.

Religion: Again we see a difference between city dwellers and herd aram. While Ptolusites tend to honor a variety of deities, most tribal centaurs revere an aspect of Melann, a nature goddess. Some aram also pay homage to Rajek the Wanderer, a god of luck, protection, and travel, or to Torskal, the aram god of just vengeance.

Language: Although they have a fairly complex spoken language, the aram long ago developed a written language that focuses on brevity. Few centaurs have the patience to read or write a book, so they have their own set of simple symbols for conveying general ideas. Other than that, aram rarely know how to read the languages they speak (generally Elvish, Sylvan, and Common). Most centaurs living in Ptolus learn to read enough Common to get by—enough to understand signs, for example, and things of a very general nature.

Names: Aram go by a single name, with no tradition of surname use. Tribal centaurs may refer to themselves by their name and tribe name: "Carak of the Redhooves," for instance.

Aram Male Names: Carak, Norris, Reddik

Aram Female Names: Esthana, Narenth, Susail

Aram Nonbinary Names: Arvas, Nesham, Rith

Adventurers: The aram respect those who bravely face danger to accomplish great deeds. In fact, their culture values heroes greatly. Centaur adventurers seek adventure for its own sake. They want to undertake mighty quests and perform acts of great heroism; treasure and other rewards are secondary.

CENTAURS AS CHARACTERS

Your centaur character has a number of traits in common with all other centaurs.

Ability Score Increase. One ability score of your choice increases by 2 and another increases by 1.

Age. Centaurs mature at the same rate as humans and live for around seventy years.

Alignment. Centaurs are usually neutral good.

Size. The human and horse parts of a centaur are proportionate to humans and horses. Like a horse, your size is Large.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 50 feet.

Hooves. You can use your hooves to make an unarmed strike that deals (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

Athletic Hunter. You have proficiency in two skills of your choice.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Aram and one other language that your GM agrees is appropriate (such as Common, Elvish, or Sylvan). Unless reading is important to you, your ability to read this second language is probably only enough to get by.

CHERUBIM ELVES

As ancient as the Shoal elves (and, for that matter, the Elder Elves), Cherubim elves are unknown in many places of the world simply because they have never found comfort living among others not of their kind. Cherubim are winged elves with lightweight frames to help them soar high in the sky. They come to Ptolus only rarely—and when they do, they spend their time almost exclusively among other elves.

Personality: Cherubim elves are self-absorbed and typically somewhat timid, preferring to fly over or away from danger rather than confront it. Aware of their physical fragility, they know that the best way for them to survive is to stay wary and alert. Their greatest fear is that something might happen to their wings. Introspective and contemplative, Cherubim speak only when necessary and have no time for humor, song, or frivolity. Many Cherubim are curious and investigative, which often clashes with their inherent fear—apprehension usually wins out.

Physical Description: Cherubim are thin and frail even by elf standards. Their skin is very pale—almost white—and their hair is typically black, pale blond, or white. The feathers on their wings match their hair color, and their wingspan is usually three times their height. Their eyes are pale grey or silver.

The Cherubim's lifespan resembles that of other elves, but their birth rate is considerably lower. (As a species, their numbers are ever so slowly decreasing, rather than increasing.)

Relations: Cherubim feel skittish around non-elves. Humans and other species often mistake them for angels or aasimars, however, so most people seem favorably disposed toward them.

Alignment: Cherubim share the outlook of most other elves, although they are perhaps even more aloof and retiring.

Cherubim Lands: Cherubim elves hail from Cherubar, a land named for them in the distant west. They prefer mountainous regions, particularly places accessible only from the air. Cherubim are not farmers or herders, but hunters and gatherers—mostly gatherers. Their communities are very small.

Religion: Cherubim worship most of the same gods as other elves, but also Ahaar and other air-oriented deities.

Language: Cherubim elves speak Elvish.

Names: Cherubim names are similar to other elven names, except that they do not use surnames.

Adventurers: Cherubim elves rarely adventure, simply because they are a bit timid and physically quite weak. Their ability to fly is such an asset, however, that most Cherubim who do attempt such a dangerous profession find that they are well suited to it.

Zaetra is a Cherubim wizard who spends a great deal of time in Iridithil's Home in Midtown and is a great friend of Doraedian Mythlord.

CHERUBIM ELVES AS CHARACTERS

Your Cherubim elf character has a number of traits in common with all other Cherubim elves.

Ability Score Increase. One ability score of your choice increases by 1.

Size. You are the same size as a Shoal elf, but thinner and more frail. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet, and you have a flying speed of 40 feet. Flying is especially tiring. Each minute of flying gives you one level of exhaustion (minimum one level of exhaustion). Finishing a short or long rest reduces your flight exhaustion by one level. When you reach 3rd level, your flight stamina increases so that each ten minutes of flight gives you one level of exhaustion (minimum one level of exhaustion). When you reach 5th level, your flight stamina increases again so that each hour of flight gives you one level of exhaustion, and anything less than ten minutes of flight doesn't exhaust you at all.

Frail. You have disadvantage on Constitution checks.

Aasimar, page 59

Cherubar, page 43

Normally, a long rest is needed to remove one level of exhaustion.

Rumors abound that, while Cherubim enjoy the fact that humans and others imagine a connection between them and angels, the angels among the Malkuth resent it and generally do not care for Cherubim.

With a few rare exceptions, Cherubim never mate outside their own subspecies. There are no half-Cherubim elves. However, in their native land, many Cherubim have creatures of elemental air in their lineage.

HARROW ELVES

When Ghul, the Half God, captured many Shoal and Elder elves from the Moonsilver Forest, he herded them into the dungeons beneath Goth Gulgamel, his dark fortress halfway up the Spire. There, he and his demonic servants (including the zaug and the Elder Brood) twisted them in body and spirit. While many of the elves received new magical powers, they were dark powers that corrupted their souls utterly. When he finished his awful work, Ghul released the elves—dubbed Harrow elves—back into the world to show his contempt for all that was good and pure, and to demonstrate his ability to unmake anything made.

The Harrow elves, for the most part, did not join in the great Ghulwar that followed between the Skull-King and most of the rest of that part of the world. Instead, the majority of the Harrow elves fled east and south.

Shorter-lived than normal elves, many Harrow elf generations have passed in the thousand years since their creation. Since then, their dramatic powers and physical deformities have softened with each new birth, but still the taint of evil remains. Harrow elves are mistrusted and disliked. Occasionally, one is born who displays the power and evil of the original Harrow elves, but such a child is rare (albeit feared). They have spell-like abilities far beyond the norm.

Moonsilver Forest, page 44

Goth Gulgamel, page 452

Zaug, page 602

Elder Brood, page 602

Personality: Even after all this time, Harrow elves are as twisted on the inside with bitterness and hate as their flesh is twisted and deformed on the outside. They know that everyone hates and fears them and, truth be told, they hate and fear themselves, at least to a degree. They resent the happy lives of others, and evil Harrow elves often seek to make others as miserable as they are. They frequently attempt to disfigure their enemies the way they have been disfigured. Some still seek revenge on those who mutated their forebears.

Physical Description: Harrow elves have the same general build as other elves. Their bodies typically bear horrible birthmarks, scars, and various deformities. Their flesh is a pale yellowish-white, and their eyes are red.

Harrow elves have a lifespan similar in length to that of humans.

Relations: Harrow elves are disdained by virtually all others, but especially by other elves,

Gaerioth Shadowhand, a Harrow elf and member of the Company of the Black Lantern

Most Harrow elves in Ptolus live in a North Market neighborhood called the Zar'at (page 287).

who see them as abominations only slightly better than dark elves. Harrow elves share a general wariness for all other species, but beyond that they have no preferences.

Alignment: Harrow elves lean toward evil, but some have overcome this predilection. Unlike other elves, they are not typically limited to nonlawful alignments.

Kem, page 43

Harrow Elf Lands: The Harrow elves have no lands of their own. Most live in Kem, in isolated communities. Typically, Harrow elves find mates only among their own kind, but sometimes they take mates through violence from among Shoal elves or even humans. Offspring from such rapes are always Harrow elves.

Harrow elves do not gain any of the standard elf traits. Harrow elf PCs gain only the traits listed here.

Religion: Harrow elves generally are too bitter to find much solace in religion. They have very few clerics, but the few who do pay homage to a deity often worship one of the demon gods or perhaps Kran, Goddess of Faults.

An archetypal Harrow elf adventurer in Ptolus has a high Dexterity score, is proficient in Arcana and Intimidation, and knows Common and Elvish.

Language: Harrow elves speak Elvish.

Names: Harrow elf names are similar to other Elvish names.

Adventurers: Harrow elves make excellent adventurers, given that most of them feel they have little to live for—many have a death wish. They are fierce combatants, often quite ruthless. Usually, however, they do what they do more to prove themselves than to gain riches or fame.

HARROW ELVES AS CHARACTERS

Your Harrow elf character has a number of traits in common with all other Harrow elves.

Ability Score Increase. One ability score of your choice increases by 2.

Age. Harrow elves reach adulthood in their early teens and live less than a century.

Alignment. Harrow elves are usually evil or neutral. They may be lawful, chaotic, or neutral.

Size. Harrow elves range from under 5 to over 6 feet tall and have slender builds. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. You have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of grey.

Close Resemblance. You know how to disguise yourself as a Shoal elf and are proficient in disguise kits when doing so. Elves of all kinds have advantage on ability checks to recognize that you are not a Shoal elf.

Unnerving Prodigy. You gain proficiency in two skills of your choice. You have disadvantage on Persuasion checks when trying to influence a creature that dislikes Harrow elves.

Harrow Elf Magic. You know the *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, and *prestidigitation* cantrips, and the *detect magic* spell. You know one 1st- or 2nd-level sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell chosen by the GM; you can cast it once and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Languages: You can speak, read, and write two languages that your GM agrees are appropriate.

SPECIES AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

Clearly, with so many species and cultures calling Ptolus home, not everyone is going to get along.

Elves, for example, have a reputation, often deserved, of being a little intolerant of others. They believe in the general superiority of their own kind, perhaps not in every field, but in all areas that truly matter (spellcasting, winemaking, woodcraft, and so forth). Halflings have a reputation for being very accepting of others, including their cultural traditions and beliefs—it's not uncommon for halflings living in a human city like Ptolus to take on the mannerisms and outlook of humans.

Humans, however, remain the most adaptable species, as well as the most accepting. They are put off by the perceived arrogance of elves, the aggressive nature of half-orcs, and the alienness of lizardfolk, but they can learn to get along with any of them.

Of course, there is a level of inherent deception in any discussion that lumps all dwarves, elves, and in particular humans together as if they all think and feel alike. The table below is strictly one of generalities. Not every elf is going to like every centaur. It's possible for a litorian and a halfling to be the best of friends—but it would be rare and seem strange in the eyes of others.

Species Preferences

	C	D	E	G	Ha	H-O	H	L	Lz
Centaurs	P	T	L	T	T	T	L	L	D
Dwarves	T	P	T	T	L	T	L	L	D
Elves	L	T	P	P	L	D	T	T	D
Gnomes	T	T	P	P	P	D	L	T	D
Halflings	T	T	L	P	P	D	L	T	D
Half-orcs	T	T	D	D	D	L	T	L	T
Humans	L	L	T	L	L	T	P	L	T
Litorians	L	T	T	T	L	L	T	P	T
Lizardfolk	D	D	D	D	D	T	T	T	P

Prefer (P): The species in question enjoys being around this other species. All species prefer their own kind, but some are welcoming to others as well.

Like (L): The species in question gets along just fine with this other species; the two are usually quite compatible.

Tolerate (T): The species in question can coexist well enough with this other species, but it's difficult to imagine members of the two being friends.

Dislike (D): The species in question actively does not enjoy the company of this other species and avoids its members if possible.

Culturally, things get even more complicated. The cultures within the Empire today are shaped by the Imperial conquest of more than seven hundred years ago. It's important to realize that the Empire took control with little bloodshed. Thus, there is less resentment for Tarsisans—and, by extension, the Prust—than one might think. This is one reason the Empire has lasted so long.

Still, it's obvious that even today most people of pure Prustan descent look upon other cultures, like the Palastani or the Rhothans, with some disdain. The Palastani are a fiercely independent people who proclaim their individualism by decorating their bodies with paint and piercings. Many think that Rhothan folk are simple farmers, perhaps even backward or unsophisticated. Just about everyone looks upon people of Kem with some manner of distrust, as if there's something not quite right about them. The northmen from Nall and the folk from beyond the Grey Mountains are both dismissed as uncouth barbarians, despite the fact that those two cultures have little in common any longer.

In Ptolus, however, social class means more than species or culture. The nobles of the various houses (who, despite their Palastani origins, have fully adopted Imperial modes of dress and manner), as well as distinguished individuals in the government or certain elite organizations, clearly stand at the top of a tall social hierarchy. Beneath the nobility are the very wealthy, and beneath them are government officials and clerics of Lothian. Next come the middle class merchants and craftspeople, a level of the strata currently growing faster than any other. Near the bottom come the low-class laborers and tradesmen, who themselves are above the beggars, criminals, and other so-called riff-raff.

Of course, many have found interesting ways to detach themselves from the social hierarchy altogether. Mages of the Inverted Pyramid, for example, do not truly fit into the structure, and most of them do not care. Adventurers would normally fit into the lower classes, except those who strike it rich or gain heroic reputations are sometimes accepted into the upper classes.

LITORIANS

While visiting Ptolus, most litorians prefer to stay at the Mane, located in Midtown (see page 190).

The most well-known litorian in Ptolus is arguably Rastor, owner of Rastor's Weapons in Delver's Square (see page 204).

An archetypal litorian adventurer in Ptolus has high Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores; is proficient in Intimidation, Perception, and Survival; and knows Common and Litorian.

Litorians are bestial, honor-bound hunters. Usually found roaming open grasslands far from civilization, litorians only rarely separate from their tribes. Unlike members of the common species, only the unique individual litorian interacts with other species.

Personality: Litorians are thoughtful and quiet until provoked past their limit. Once angered, they become savage and brutal, almost incapable of showing mercy.

Litorians love the outdoors, good food, and long, well-considered stories (not boastful or exaggerated ones). They have a deep sense of personal honor—personal in that it's not about saving face but about being true to oneself. Litorians will not compromise their morals for fear of losing their own self-value, even if this makes them appear strange or foolish to others, and even if it means making a choice that others might not consider the best one. All litorians develop their own sets of morals and ethics, although some principles remain true across most members of the species. Because they highly value both honor and life, for example, their need to repay those who save their lives—a lifedebt—is very strong.

Physical Description: Litorians are taller and more muscular than humans. Their bodies are covered in light brown hair, and their faces are clearly feline in appearance with a pronounced snout, a flat, catlike nose, and sharp teeth. They have dark eyes with narrow pupils. Manes of brown hair surround the heads of males. Most people notice a thick, almost musky scent around litorians, but few think it unpleasant.

Litorians mature much faster than humans, but have a similar lifespan.

Relations: Litorians have little history with most other species except aram, whom they respect (but do not entirely understand). In Ptolus, they get along best with halflings, who

LITORIANS AS CHARACTERS

Your litorian character has a number of traits in common with all other litorians.

Ability Score Increase. Three ability scores of your choice increase by 1.

Age. Litorians reach adulthood in their early teens and live less than a century.

Alignment. Litorians tend to be chaotic, and are usually good or neutral rather than evil. Your personal code and the current situation are more important to you than historical laws or general concepts of good and evil.

Size. Litorians are somewhat taller and more muscular than humans. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Accustomed to life outdoors, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of grey.

Skills. You gain proficiency in three skills of your choice.

Keen Smell. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write two languages that your GM agrees are appropriate.

ROLEPLAYING LITORIANS

Litorians are impressive in stature and in their honor-bound nature. Anyone who calls them "cat people" doesn't understand them at all. With due respect to cats, these are not self-interested, aloof felines, but proud warriors and hunters who are principled and thoughtful in their actions. They ascribe high importance to the well-being of their allies, their families, and their people.

Also, do not dismiss them simply as primitive hunters. The litorians have been around as long as the elves and know much about the major species and the cities they build. The litorians, however, have rejected the ways of the other species to embrace their own. These noble people value personal honor very highly. They also closely guard their image in society. Litorians teach their children that to be caught in a lie, to be seen as a failure, or to be called a coward are all fates as bad as death. Taking this ideal to the extreme, some litorians almost never speak, attempt only what they are good at, and never turn from a fight, no matter what the odds. Most litorians, however, realize that intent matters more than action. Abandoning a fight is not cowardly when one has no chance of winning. There is no shame in failing at an impossible task. And a statement is never really a lie if you believe it when you say it.

But other things can shame a litorian as well: associating with honorless people, betraying a friend, dishonoring one's parents, and failing to repay a debt—or, worse, failing to recognize when one is in someone's debt. Anyone who saves the life of a litorian usually finds that litorian swearing to aid them in a great task. Litorians have a strong sense of lifedebt and will go to great lengths to repay their saviors. When you play a litorian, carefully consider your actions. When you make a friend, stick by that friend no matter what. When you make an enemy, strive against that enemy with all your might. And thus do neither lightly.

surprisingly share many of their sensibilities regarding loyalty (this may come from their similar nomadic lifestyles). They get along with the Ornu-Nom tribes of orcs in Palastan and Rhoth fairly well.

Alignment: Litorians lean toward chaos rather than law simply because of their tribal upbringing. They believe in only a very loose organizational structure. Litorians organize their tribes by strength and respect, not by law. They find the concept of delineated parameters of right and wrong difficult to understand; they are much more likely to judge situations on a case-by-case basis. Bound by their sense of honor and respect for others, far more litorians are good or neutral than evil. They are very rarely selfish or cruel and hold concepts of personal freedom quite dear.

Litorian Lands: Litorians are nomads, but to call their wandering "random" shows a profound misunderstanding of their culture. They subtly control the open grasslands upon which they wander: Their power and cunning makes them clear masters of the region they inhabit. No one passes through the plains where they live without their knowledge—and, therefore, their leave.

Religion: Litorians have no concept of worship and see little need for ritual. They simply do not understand or crave the need to trust in a higher power. When confronted with proof of a powerful being's might, a litorian grants respect, but not reverence.

Language: The complex litorian language proves difficult for humans and many others to speak. It is a tongue full of deceptive subtlety, and few nonlitorians attempt to master it. Litorian has an alphabet of its own, but by the standards of other species, its written form is fairly crude and basic.

Names: The tribe gives all litorians names that carry a special meaning in their own tongue. These names are then transliterated into Common for use by others who have difficulty with Litorian speech. Here are some sample names:

Litorian Male Names: Charnaset, Chron, Malethar, Rastor

Litorian Female Names: Marel, Rann, Sorret, Yintra

Litorian Nonbinary Names: Chren, Marrin, Restir, Solor

Adventurers: Litorians away from their tribe are usually hunters, mercenaries, or members of another profession that allows them to use both their outdoor instincts and their natural strength and agility. Frequently shunned by members of other species (because they find the "lion people" intimidating), litorians often find acceptance and friendship among adventurers—many of whom are loners or wanderers themselves.

LITORIAN IMPORTANT DATES

1. Time of the Gathering
One day a month, each litorian warrior and hunter must rest from all activity, commemorating the time of the Great Movements, when the tribe would remain in one area so the elderly and the young could rest from their long journey. The tribe often would celebrate such gatherings with song and dance.

2. Days of Memory
For three days each year (the 12th to 14th of Toil), warriors of the tribe honor those who were killed by their enemies. For litorians, the greatest way in which to honor those who have died in battle is to offer their own victories to the memory of the fallen. During these days, the litorian penchant for ferocity in battle is heightened. Any spoils of battle they earn during the Days of Memory are sacrificed to the spirits of those who have fallen.

3. Winter Fast
In preparation for the lean hunting of winter, and as a sign of a warrior's dedication, strength, and tenacity, every blooded litorian undergoes a four-day fast from the 2nd to the 5th of Moons. Fasting litorians may consume only water. At the end of the fast, each litorian must hunt its own prey and consume the meat raw.

4. Great Feast
At the height of midsummer and midwinter (the 21st of Growth and of Newyear), litorians of particular tribes gather for a great feast, in which warriors contend with each other in bouts of drinking and the fine art of storytelling. Tribal elders preside over many of the contests, awarding the winner a weapon of distinction and proclaiming the victorious litorian Chieftain of the Great Feast.

One familiar tribe to the litorians of Ptolus is the Clan of Malethar, located about a week's hike to the southeast of the city. Local litorians believe that young Charnoth (below) is destined to become the chieftain after Malethar.

PCs of any species can choose to be illiterate, but doing so is definitely a disadvantage in a Ptolus campaign.

A former assarai slave named Ssethenus hopes to rule the Slave City (see page 393).

There are more lizardfolk in the city of Ptolus than most people think. This is because, to non-lizardfolk, they all look so similar that those of other species think they are seeing the same assarai on multiple occasions, when in fact they are seeing two or three different individuals. In addition, many lizardfolk steer clear of other species and thus are rarely seen in public.

Despite the fact that their ancestors were riverfolk (and many assarai outside the city still make their homes along riverbanks), the lizardfolk of Ptolus would never swim in the highly polluted King's River.

LIZARDFOLK (ASSARAI)

In truth, few people in Ptolus use the word "lizardfolk." To the ignorant, they are "lizard men," whether the individual is male or female. To those in the know—and, of course, to members of the species—they are assarai.

Personality: The common perception of the lizardfolk is that they are sneaky, slippery, and most likely thieves and liars. These are unfair characterizations. In fact, most assarai are as honest as most humans—as likely to be good as evil and, in reality, usually a complex web of both.

Physical Description: These reptilian humanoids stand a little taller than a human, and their tails can measure up to 4 feet in length. Their scales range in color from green to grey to brown. City-dwelling lizardfolk dress in standard human clothing: shirts and pants, often including hooded cloaks to help disguise their forms when they venture into certain districts. Their clothing often looks worn, as its condition matters little to most assarai.

Relations: Lizardfolk are primitive in the eyes of most other humanoids, but they do not have the litorians' inherent culture of savage nobility and honor. Instead, one can characterize them most easily as folk with simple goals. Few assarai seem ambitious by human standards. Most are content when they simply have enough to eat and can stay relatively safe from harm. They aren't even that demanding about shelter; many are happy enough without it, as long as the climate never turns very cold. They sleep at night along the docks or sometimes in alleys or in parks with fountains or pools. In a city where they are tolerated, like Ptolus—a place known for its tolerance, relatively speaking—the assarai's needs are easily met.

This fact of urban life results in copious free time for lizardfolk, which their people never enjoyed in the past, when they dwelled in small villages and had to hunt and cultivate their own food. Over the years, however, non-assarai have decided that most lizardfolk are lazy, shiftless thieves, for how else could they get along without jobs or homes?

The truth is that lizardfolk in the city are very resourceful. They often perform menial tasks for those who will hire them on a temporary basis, earning just enough money to tide them over for a time. Others catch fish in the bay or down by the river. Still others forage through trash to find food or something to sell. And, of course, some do steal—but even then, only enough to meet their simple needs.

The thing to remember is that most assarai in Ptolus do not find their state of indigence and homelessness an undesirable situation. They don't need more than a little food to eat, and most don't want permanent shelters like other humanoids. On warm days, it's not uncommon to see them sunning themselves in a city square or on a rooftop. The City Watch routinely clears them out of these places, but they always come back. In fact, some assarai have grown so accustomed to the Watch that they have learned to migrate through the city from one favored location to the next, keeping just ahead of the guards. Others have found it easier to remain in lairs below the city, living near the underground pools or streams, just to stay out of the way.

Alignment: Lizardfolk are usually neutral.

Lizardfolk Lands: In a different world, the assarai would have been a more prominent species. At one time, they dominated much of the western portion of the continent, particularly the lands near the coasts, although they rarely trod the regions north of Ptolus. However, their territorial culture, as well as their physical nature, brought them into

frequent conflict with mammalian species that assumed—particularly long ago—that all lizardfolk were evil.

Though still common in most lands, lizardfolk find little welcome in all but the most cosmopolitan cities.

Religion: Many lizardfolk in Ptolus choose to worship Harredda in her animal and protection aspects, although they revere her in reptilian form rather than in raven form.

Language: City-dwelling assarai almost always speak Common as well as Draconic. In fact, more and more lizardfolk are forgoing Draconic altogether. Only about one in three can read, and most of those read Common, not Draconic.

Names: Lizardfolk do not distinguish between male and female names. Assarai names are often quite sibilant sounding, such as Slaathan, Ssethenus, and Thessisth.

Adventurers: Not all lizardfolk are transient and poor. The exceptions often become mercenaries or adventurers. Every once in a while in Ptolus, assarai warriors attempt to inspire their people to rise up and fight for a better place in the city's culture, but this never works because the lizardfolk are generally satisfied with their lot. The rabble-rousers, while trying to look out for their people's well-being and pride, have been overly influenced by the cultures of other species—ones that look down on the lizardfolk.

Unfortunately, because assarai are both homeless and hardy, wicked slavers in the city frequently make use of them. This is a situation the lizardfolk (and others of non-evil alignment) do not accept, and many an assarai's adventuring career has begun with a quest to rescue enslaved friends or family. Many lizardfolk carry weapons to protect themselves and their comrades from abduction.

Harredda, page 72

LIZARDFOLK AS CHARACTERS

Your lizardfolk character has a number of traits in common with all other lizardfolk.

Ability Score Increase. One ability score of your choice increases by 2 and another increases by 1.

Age. Lizardfolk reach maturity around age 15 and usually live 50 to 60 years.

Alignment. Lizardfolk are usually neutral.

Size. Lizardfolk are a little taller than humans, with tails up to 4 feet long. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet, and you have a swimming speed of 30 feet.

Bite. You can use your bite to make an unarmed strike that deals (1d6) piercing damage.

Lizardfolk Canny. You have proficiency with your choice of any two of these: tool, shield, simple weapons.

Hold Breath. You can hold your breath for up to fifteen minutes.

Skills. You gain proficiency in two skills of your choice.

Natural Armor. Your skin is covered in tough, flexible scales. Your AC can't be less than 13, regardless of what kind of armor you are wearing.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write two languages that your GM agrees are appropriate.

NPC SPECIES

The following species are typically reserved only for NPCs in Ptolus, although a GM may consider allowing one to be used as a player character species.

For full details and game information on NPC species in this section, please see the 5E sources that describe them either as a playable species or as a monster entry that serves as the basis for creating the same.

AASIMARS

These holy-blooded planetouched are rare but more common in Ptolus than elsewhere, mainly because of the presence of the angelic Malkuth. Aasimars, when recognized as such, are viewed with awe and respect. Most aasimars support this reaction by furthering their kind's reputation for benevolence and heroism. Virtually all aasimars are good-aligned. They typically live among the Malkuth in the Pale Tower, although some keep to themselves and develop independent lives among humans or elves.

Zophas Adhar is a well-known aasimar paladin and Knight of the Pale.

Most aasimars in Ptolus work in the Temple District or serve in knightly orders.

Malkuth, page 124

Pale Tower, page 305

An archetypal lizardfolk adventurer in Ptolus has high Constitution and Wisdom scores, is proficient with simple weapons and shields, is proficient in Acrobatics and Athletics, and knows Common and Draconic.

Zophas Adhar, page 542

DARK ELVES

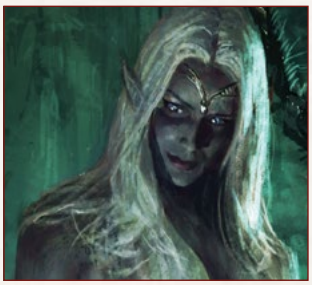
In ages long past, it is said, an evil goddess—one of the Vested of the Galchutt named Gorgoth-Lol—corrupted a tribe of Shoal elves, taking them deep underground to embrace wickedness and rage against the sun and moons. The dark elves, as they soon became known, became the bane of all elvenkind, much to the shame of the Shoal, who speak of them only in tones of utter disgrace.

Dark elves revel in corruption. Although it's possible for them to overcome the negative influence of their society, they almost never do. Dark elves hate the sun and all bright light. Wide-open spaces make them uneasy, but they feel at home in the subterranean passages deep below the surface.

These elves are sinister and crafty. They value deception and guile and scoff at honesty. They love poison and see betrayal as a fact of life.

Vested of the Galchutt, page 62

Gorgoth-Lol, page 78



Some settlements of dark elves elsewhere in Praemal have rejected the power of Gorgoth-Lol and are content to isolate themselves in subterranean communities, but the dark elves beneath Ptolus are wicked beings who glorify their murderous history against surface elves and crimes against the light. All other references to dark elves in this book pertain to the evil dark elves under Ptolus.

The rare dark elf PCs in Ptolus almost always come from reclusive settlements outside the city, but they still face the prejudices earned by centuries of evil wrought by their local counterparts. Because it is illegal for dark elves to be in the city (they are arrested and imprisoned or executed simply for their species), dark elves make poor player characters in a Ptolus Campaign.

NOT ALWAYS EVIL

If you're uncomfortable with the idea that an entire species of intelligent creature is "always evil," talk to the GM. It's all right if your campaign discards that idea and treats dark elves like people with individual attitudes and preferences. Dark elves might still experience bigotry and assumptions about their nature, or they might be as accepted as humans, dwarves, or half-orcs. You might even want to apply this same discretion to other intelligent humanoid creatures like goblins, ratmen, and so on.

Dark elves typically dress scantily. They lack the sense of decorum and modesty that their surface-dwelling brethren have, and would favor provocation over practicality in any case.

Dark elves who dwell in a large community in the caverns hate and fear the zaug perhaps more than any other creature. This sentiment has led them to ally with other subterranean peoples at times. They hate dwarves almost as much as they hate surface elves.

In the Warrens, the dark elf Madame Kaethea runs a sanctuary for her kind.

Radik has berserker stats, and can make two attacks on his turn.

Narlu has druid stats.

Fallen, page 109

Forsaken and Urasta, page 111

Dark elf caverns, page 424

Zaug, page 602

Vai, page 131

Prison and Odsen Rom, page 405

Vladaams, page 100

Madame Kaethea, page 379

Minotaur: *77 hp*

Shibata, page 370

Canabulum, a minotaur arcanist, is a member of the Runewardens.

MINOTAURS

More than simple monsters, some minotaurs—usually outcasts from their own kind—are quite intelligent and sophisticated. These individuals choose to live among other intelligent and civilized creatures in such places as Ptolus. Even in the city, though, they are barely tolerated. Many people look upon them with disdain and distrust.

City-dwelling minotaurs wear clothing like humans and take on other human affectations. They retain their carnivorous appetites but do not eat their meat raw. Most civilized minotaurs are neutral or evil. Almost all are chaotic.

Shibata is a powerful minotaur cleric of Niveral, God of Secrets. Canabulum is a mighty minotaur wizard.

ORCS

Orc myth contends that these creatures were originally birthed by an evil demon god, although some ancient texts claim they were actually created by an evil wizard.

The orc tribes who call themselves Ornu-Nom (meaning "howling axe") dwell in the wilderness throughout Palastan and Rhoth. The Ornu-Nom are proud beings and have a strong sense of honor, but tend to be aggressive. They are sometimes deadly enemies of humans and other city-dwelling species, but they have been known to ally with humans against greater threats. Other peoples of Praemal tend to be prejudiced against orcs, but the residents of cosmopolitan Ptolus are much more tolerant of them.

A prominent Ornu-Nom orc chieftain named Radik (male orc) lives just outside the city with his consort Narlu (female orc) and his hunting tribe.

TIEFLINGS

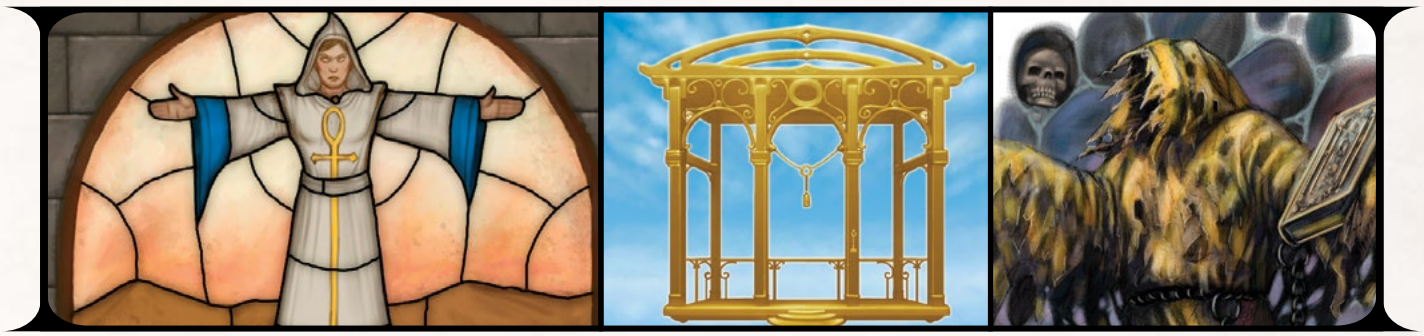
Just as aasimars are found in Ptolus because of the Malkuth, tieflings live here primarily because of the Fallen. Many live and work among the demonic Fallen and the undead-loving Forsaken, while others abandoned these obvious ties to make lives for themselves. Individuals work as mercenaries, assassins (such as among the Vai), or clerics of evil gods. Most tieflings retain their ancestors' evil outlook, and a great many are also chaotic.

Urasta, leader of the Forsaken, and Odsen Rom, warden of the Prison, are both tieflings. The members of the noble Vladaam family are rumored to be tieflings.

Ornu-Nom ("howling axe") orc

Chapter 4:
COSMOLOGY AND RELIGION

A god known to most simply as the Creator, but more specifically to some as Praemus, created the world and everything in it. He called it Praemal. This was no ordinary world, however. Praemus created it for a purpose. He devised it as a trap for evil beings: the Galchutt, known to some as the Lords of Chaos and to others as the Natharl'nacna.



Praemus knew the Galchutt would come to this world in its early moments to taint it with the seeds of evil and chaos. They brought with them foul artifacts and banes to sow across the surface of the newborn world to wreak havoc in coming millennia. What the Galchutt did not realize when they entered Praemal was that it was created with no exit.

Upon the Vallis moon, Praemus placed the soul of his new world, anchoring it there with seven enchanted golden chains. While they remained intact, the creator's magic would prevent any escape from the world. To guard this treasure, the god called forth seven solar angels. He bade these Lords of the Seven Chains to remain on guard to prevent the dissolution of the magical bonds.

Now creatures, objects, and energies from other planes could come to the world, but they could never leave. Like rats caught in a trap, the Galchutt were stuck.

Praemus knew, however, that the Galchutt would struggle within their prison, doing whatever they could to break out. No prison by itself is perfect, no matter how high or sturdy the walls. A prison needs guards. It needs wardens. So Praemus filled the world with life, and granted these creatures the sentience and free will to operate perfectly in that regard.

Of course, the wardens did not know they were guards of a prison. They only knew that, for their own continued survival, they had to protect the world from the forces of evil and destruction.

ELDER GODS

The deities known now as the Elder Gods are the children of Praemus. Most of the time, they work in concert, and thus are worshipped collectively—when they are worshipped at all anymore. When the children of Praemus saw what their sire had done, they rebelled against him on behalf of his creation. It was unjust, they felt, to create the mortals of Praemal only to trap them unknowing in a prison with the most horrible creatures in all of existence. The War of the Gods began.

The Elder Gods warred with their father for many years in the early days of creation. While the gods were thus occupied, civilizations grew and prospered. And mortals encountered the Galchutt. Some were tempted away to help the Lords of Chaos, while others fought them.

Eventually the war in Heaven came to an end. Praemus and his children made peace. Working together, they helped mortal heroes prevent the Galchutt from destroying the soul of the world by corrupting the Lords of the Seven Chains

Symbol of the Elder Gods

Vallis moon, page 42

Lords of the Seven Chains, page 64

The so-called War of the Gods is said to have created some of the mountains, valleys, and other physical landmarks in the world of Praemal. That active presence of the gods in the world also imbued various artifacts with their power.

Praemus created all living creatures at a place called the Mountain of Making. This mystical site still exists in the frozen northland of Nall. However, its magical protections allow no one to find it unless Praemus wants it found (or in other extraordinary circumstances).

The Night of Dissolution

Upon the return of the Vallis moon, the Lords of Chaos will awaken, the Galchutt's followers know. With the magical moon high in the sky, the Galchutt will marshal their evil forces and finally dissolve the Seven Chains, destroy the soul of the world, and lay waste to Praemal. This is what is known as "the Night of Dissolution"—and it may be nearer than anyone supposes.

Elder Brood, page 602
Zaug, page 602
Rhodintor, page 594
Chaositech, page 529

Seven Jewels of Parnaith, page 485

Before coming to Praemal—prior to being ensnared by its bonds— the Galchutt were much more powerful than they are now. Due to the mighty magic woven throughout the very fabric of the world, their present power is limited. Thus they must come up with schemes and plots to escape, rather than simply using brute force.

guarding it on the Vallis moon with a magical virus. When, in their vengeance, the Galchutt rent the veil between life and death to snuff out all that lived, the gods split off a portion of the Vallis moon, and those same legendary heroes used it to seal the fissure. In so doing, they sent the Vallis moon—and the soul of the world it guarded—hurtling away from Praemal, out of the reach of the Galchutt.

With the world now safe, the Elder Gods and Praemus struck a deal. Only the Creator has the power to allow creatures to leave the world, and then only if he himself is within the plane. The gods all agreed to depart Praemal together. Before leaving, however, the children of Praemus left behind a secret legacy: a hidden vision that contained the secret of subverting this world-prison by ridding Praemal of the Galchutt. You see, the Elder Gods had never stopped believing that it was wrong to trap innocent people alongside the epitome of evil. Their plan embodied in the vision required the return of the Vallis moon, so it would have to wait—for when the Vallis moon returned, the Galchutt would surely attempt to destroy the world again, and every living thing in it. And without the Elder Gods to stop them, how could they fail? (See "Calista, the Dreaming Stone, and the Cask of Frozen Dreams" on page 543 for more details on the secret plan of the Elder Gods.)

Interestingly enough, Praemus knew what his children had done. In fact, he permitted it—perhaps, on some level, he agreed with them. He even went a step further and created a legacy of his own. In secret, Praemus left behind a conduit so he could continue to observe and communicate with his creation, even transfer some of his own power to his wardens from time to time. He called this conduit Esh (one of the Seven Jewels of Parnaith).

THE GALCHUTT

Even before the world existed, the Galchutt *were*. The foulest of demons, the darkest of gods, these beings were masters of destruction, chaos, and oblivion. They had no interest in the small concerns of lesser demons, such as pain, misery, temptation, lust, and so on. They sought the apocalyptic end of all that is, everything beyond the boundaries of Praemal. Of all worlds that exist, all worlds that will exist, and all the spaces in between.

The Lords of Chaos destroyed one world after another, their foul touch causing entire planes to crumble. Finally, the god Praemus saw that one day they would succeed at destroying all of creation. So he forged a plan. He crafted a world as hardy as he could fashion, and then waited for the Galchutt to appear. This world, Praemal, was in fact a trap.

The Lords of Chaos found themselves caged in this prison-disguised-as-a-mortal-world—and they were not pleased. Kept from the wanton destruction and multiversal corruption they desired, they focused their energies on trying to slip the bonds that trapped them here and kept this world from being destroyed by their formidable power. First, the Galchutt sought to corrupt the wardens of their new prison. To a few, they granted great personal power. These they named the Vested of the Galchutt, for they were invested with the Lords of Chaos' own essence. These first Vested were called Baalhazor, Gorgoth-Lol, Mrathrach, Thoggidrum, and Vladaam. With their help, the Galchutt learned of the Seven Chains that held the soul of the world upon the Vallis moon. They sought the destruction of the chains but were thwarted.

After the disappearance of the Vallis moon, the Galchutt turned on each other for a time, which led to great and evil wars. During this period, the Galchutt moved away from destruction and toward creation. Some spawned new creatures, called the Elder Brood. Ranking just above them were the zaug, who eventually rebelled and struck out on their own. Some of the Galchutt tried to summon demons to the world, and when they did not come in the vast quantities desired (the new rulers in Hell who supplanted the absent Galchutt forbade it), they created earthbound demons called the rhodintor. Still other Galchutt developed a new craft called chaositech to create devices powered by chaos and corruption.

RUNEBEARERS

In ancient times, before history books were written—indeed, before there was any writing at all—many people were born with runes upon their faces or hands. In those days, about one person in four was a so-called "runebearer" and thus enjoyed some intangible quality that set them apart from others. Each rune hinted at the bearer's talent: skill with arms, arcane magic, divine magic, and so on. All the great mythic heroes were runebearers.

Without the Vallis moon, fewer and fewer runebearers were born, until one day they were gone completely. Today, however, a small handful of children are once again born with the ancient marks. Many see this as a presage that the Vallis moon is returning. And they are correct. (See Chapter 31: Campaign Advice.)

The major Galchutt, from left to right: Abhoth (top) Shallamoth (bottom), Dhar Rhyth, and Kihomenethoth.

Eventually, the Galchutt decided they could do nothing to escape until the Vallis moon returned. So they crawled into hidden holes and seeped down deep into the bowels of the earth to sleep near a fortress they had made called the Black Spike. Unbeknownst to virtually everyone, this is the location of modern-day Ptolus—although it is no coincidence. Instead, it is all part of their diabolical plan.

For more on the secret dwelling place of the sleeping Lords of Chaos, see Caverns of the Galchutt on page 422.

Praemal as a Prison Plane

No one can leave the world that Praemus created. Its boundaries include portions of the plane known as the Ethereal Sea—the portions that occupy the same metaphysical space that Praemal occupies. Essentially, creatures and objects can become ethereal, but they cannot use the Ethereal Plane to leave Praemal. No amount of magic can do that—and no special loopholes exist.

This means that the spells and magical abilities that would normally allow a creature to travel to another dimension or plane of existence do not function. It also means that spells and effects that would normally banish a creature originally from some other plane of existence do not send creatures away from the plane involuntarily, but only stun affected targets for a few rounds. Spells that summon basic creatures from other dimensions work normally because the summoned creatures don't truly come here physically, so they can disappear at the end of the spell.

Spells that call specific otherplanar entities are another matter. They exist, but are rarely used. The call is rarely heeded and, when it is, the called creature usually doesn't know that it can never leave again. Casters who make such calls find themselves with a particularly irate outsider on their hands—one with all the time in the world to mete out its revenge. Some self-sacrificing being may heed the call willingly: usually a celestial who sees that the caster is in real need or requires someone to perform a truly vital task, such as the Malkuth.

Lastly, it is not uncommon for extremely powerful casters to create gates that draw energy or creatures into the plane, like Eslathagos Malkith's Gates of Delirium. These gates are always one way, of course.

There are exceptions to the prohibition against leaving, after a fashion. Eslathagos

Ethereal Sea, page 66
Malkuth, page 66
Eslathagos Malkith, page 79
Gates of Delirium, page 463

You can find descriptions for some of the Galchutt in Chapter 34: Monsters.

Dread One's Path, page 495

Antithesis stone, *page 389*

There's Chaos, and Then There's *Chaos*

Long ago, "chaos" just meant the opposite of order. At its best, it represented freedom and individuality; at its worst, disharmony and destruction. To most people today, references to "chaos" suggest only its darker side. The chaos cults, for example, are uniformly evil as well as chaotic.

"Chaotic good" and "Chaotic neutral" are still perfectly fine alignment choices, but in actual conversation, no one would be likely to use those terms.

The Lords of the Seven Chains are Ambriel, Jeduthon, Machidiel, Matikon, Shamdan, Thel, and Zuriel.

Night of Dissolution, page 62

Malkith created something called the Dread One's Path, for example, which allowed him to pierce the veil around the plane in his search for an artifact called the *antithesis stone*. Even this was imperfect, however, as all the Path really did was extend this plane out into other planes—he never really left it.

In theory, other structures such as the Dread One's Path could exist, provided they were backed up by fantastic sources of power. The idea of reaching out into the multiverse to bring something back, or even expanding the plane's interdimensional area, is not inconceivable. Yet these methods still do not provide escape. If there were a means of escape, the Galchutt would have discovered it and used it by now.

The only instance of a creature actually being able to leave the plane occurred very early in the world's history. This being, the Gilded Angel, was sent by a higher power—higher than Praemus—to judge the god's creation and ensure that it was good and proper. The angel managed to leave by force of her own power or that of the entity she served, or perhaps through a special contingency Praemus set up at the very beginning. That early on, the Galchutt were too slow to take advantage of the angel's escape, although they did try to murder her while she was here, hoping to bring negative judgment upon Praemus and his creation and, as a consequence, see them both destroyed.

BREAKING OUT OF THE PRISON

The crux of the magic that prevents exit from this plane is represented metaphysically by seven golden chains of mystical energy. These chains manifest on the moon of magic, called Vallis. These Seven Chains bind together a force known as the "soul of the world." To break out of the prison, one must destroy the prison, and the only way to accomplish that is to break the Seven Chains and destroy the soul of the world.

Each chain, however, is protected by a celestial lord—a solar angel. Collectively, these angels are called the Lords of the Seven Chains.

And, of course, in order for one to reach the Citadel of the Seven Chains at all, the Vallis moon must once again hang in the skies above the world, floating invisibly and providing the world with magic as it did in the early days of creation. But this moon has been gone for more than ten thousand years. Virtually everyone has forgotten that it exists. Except for the Galchutt—they never forget. And its return shall herald the Night of Dissolution, when the Galchutt break the chains holding this prison shut around them.

HELL WITHOUT ITS MASTERS

In their capacity as the lords of evil, the Galchutt once ruled over the hellish planes. When they left and did not return, the dark realms were thrown into chaos. In order to quell the upheaval, two of the children of Praemus named Nathrak and Dien gave birth to a divine child. But as it was being born, they thrust its essence out of the boundaries of the plane—a task only beings of their power could accomplish, and even then only with the help of their father, Praemus. It was an ordeal that only a divine being could survive.

This child, born as a fully formed adult, was called Raguel. His god-parents placed him in the Hellish realms to rule over the demons. Raguel, not a demon himself nor even an inherently evil being, found this task quite onerous. Further, having never known his parents, he failed to truly comprehend his role. He immediately appointed lieutenants and magistrates from among the demonic hordes to whom he could delegate most of his duties. Thus, new lords of evil rose to take the place of the old. Demons with names like Demogorgon and Orcus reigned in Hell now. Raguel kept to himself for the most part, leaving the minions of darkness to their own devices, but always maintaining order among his appointed magistrates and keeping the demonic hordes from invading mortal worlds or committing other overtly destructive acts.

This created an interesting situation. The new demonic magistrates liked their positions, so they did not want the Galchutt freed. Thus, when the Galchutt attempted to summon enough demons into the world to make it literally burst from within, the new lords of evil forbade it. Some demons came, to be sure, but not nearly as many as the Galchutt wanted. This made the Lords of Chaos seethe with even greater anger and curse the metaphysical walls of their prison all the more. (In fact, they began creating their own native, earthbound demons; the rhodintor are one example.)

Still, because they can never leave, there is no real shortage of demons on Praemal. In fact, if you're a Ptolus resident, you probably think of demons as quite commonplace. This is because most demons in the world live in the Dark Reliquary of the Necropolis or around Ptolus somewhere—drawn there by the power of the sleeping Galchutt.

DEMONS AND DEVILS

In Ptolus, only the most pedantic of sages makes a distinction between demons and devils. These beings, while different in their outlooks (demons being chaotic and devils lawful), remain wholly evil. They may have originated in different planes, but once they find themselves stuck in this world, those distinctions mean little. They work together with an acceptable amount of betrayal and backstabbing to seek escape—which is ultimately the goal of their ancient masters, the Galchutt, as well. Thus, even some devils work for the "forces of chaos."

Put simply, the distinctions that some campaigns place on these beings do not matter here. Lawful or chaotic, they're all called demons (or fiends). The evil planes are all lumped together as "Hell." Because the inhabitants of Praemal cannot leave, their understanding of other planes is greatly limited and somewhat simplistic. Only the very wisest mages or sages who specialize in esoteric lore might ever learn the difference. And in the end, from the point of view of this world's inhabitants, the differences are meaningless.

THE YOUNG DEMONS

Metaphysically speaking, the demons who dwell on Praemal are quite young, in that they were spawned after the Galchutt's imprisonment, when Raguel ruled in Hell. (The Galchutt and their kind are "old demons." No old demon from the Galchutt's time would enter into the trap to which their old masters had fallen victim.) The young demons call themselves the Fallen.

Fallen, page 109

The leader of the young demons in this world is none other than Raguel, onetime ruler of Hell. Growing ever more dissatisfied with his lot and not understanding why his parents would consign him to Hell for all eternity, he left. Raguel came to Praemal seeking his parents, but found them gone. Now the god does not know what to do. Trapped here with the rest of the young demons, should he attempt to help the Galchutt and destroy the world to gain his own freedom, or should he help protect the world created by his grandfather and nurtured by his parents?

Dark Reliquary, page 223

THE MALKUTH

Malkuth, page 124

The Malkuth are the Fallen's opposite number: angels and celestials who have come to the world willingly, even knowing they could never leave, in order to perform some vital task. A small handful are related to the Lords of the Seven Chains, solars who willingly devoted themselves to the task Praemus asked of them. These are beings of supreme duty and sacrifice, and their legacy inspires younger angels to do likewise if the need is great. Once they have performed their task in the world, the Malkuth gather in Ptolus, as it is clear that this city is where the battle lines are being drawn. They live in a place called the Pale Tower.

Pale Tower, page 305

THE ETHEREAL SEA AND ETHEREAL ISLANDS

Planar lore contends that a single plane, the Ethereal, occupies the same metaphysical space as all other planes, and thus joins them all together. However, this is not true of the world of Praemal. Those in this world have access only to the portion of the Ethereal that directly intersects with the material plane their world occupies. In other words, Praemal intersects with the Ethereal, but one cannot pass from such intersection points into portions of the Ethereal that intersect with another world.

In Praemal, the portion of the Ethereal that one can reach is called the Ethereal Sea. To most, it seems like either an infinite expanse of grey mists or a void of darkness punctuated by distant swirling colors. But some perceive it as a literal sea, with a liquidlike substance that one can swim in or sail upon in a magical craft. It is interesting that the Ethereal Sea takes on such different qualities at different times for different people, although individuals in a group always perceive it the same way. On the rare occasion that one encounters fellow ethereal travelers, they also perceive it the same way.

Floating about this limitless expanse are solid masses of ether, the intangible stuff of the plane somehow solidified to resemble normal matter. These masses, called Ethereal Islands, are sometimes inhabited. Ethereal Islands are always small and self-contained (in other words, finite). They have their own governing laws and conditions. Many seem to have been created by spontaneously congealing ether. A few were crafted intentionally by powerful magic. The former all have the characteristics of islands (bits of "land" surrounded by an "ocean"), but the latter only occasionally do; more often they seem like entire worlds unto themselves. These are commonly called half-worlds.

When Delian Von Tessel was Emperor of both the secular and religious aspects of his domain, he often relegated religious matters to his wife, Addares, a notably spiritual woman.

The ancient communities of Palastan knew the Ethereal Sea as "The Goodland."

The Elder Elves called the Ethereal Sea the Everwood. Rather than seeing it as an ocean with islands, they saw it as an endless forest of silver trees punctuated by clearings.

TWO KINDS OF RELIGION

The two kinds of religion presented here are very different. On the one hand, the Church of Lothian is monolithic, powerful, widespread, and fairly thoroughly described. On the other hand, the various other religions are myriad, extremely specific (some intentionally a little off-the-wall), and only sparsely detailed.

As the GM, you can choose which type of religion you want to focus on, if any, in your campaign. You also can direct your players to the type most appropriate to their needs. Players who want to explore their religion in depth (particularly those running clerics or paladins) probably should choose to worship Lothian, while those who don't care about that level of detail might want to stay out of something so campaign-centric. Of course, regardless of such concerns, some players will find themselves drawn toward the Church of Lothian because of its temporal power, while others will be turned away from being part of "the establishment."

The Quaan is an example of a half-world, while the Seven Jewels of Parnaith are examples of natural Ethereal Islands—albeit ones shaped for specific purposes.

Inhabitants of Ethereal Islands either come from Praemal or are outsiders now trapped in Praemal. The Ethereal Sea has no known native inhabitants. Even creatures that rely on the Ethereal or spend great amounts of time there, such as phase spiders or ethereal marauders, originated in the normal physical world.

RELIGION IN PTOLUS

Religion, like so many things in Ptolus, is based around a set of apparent contradictions. On the one hand, Ptolus is a part of an Empire that has long been a true monotheistic culture centered around the worship of Lothian. On the other hand, the world around Ptolus is very old and full of many different cultures, each with its own gods. In fact, theologically speaking, Praemal has seen successive generations of gods, with ancient "elder gods" no longer worshipped or even—in many cases—remembered.

In over ten thousand years, there has been time for many new gods and faiths to rise and, in some cases, fall—more than any one person can track. The cosmopolitan meeting of all these cultures and various religious faiths in Ptolus has created an atmosphere where people take polytheism to new extremes.

When the Imperial Census came to Ptolus in 633 IA, the administrator wrote this in his journal:

"The number of outlandish, unnerving, unknown (mayhap unknowable) gods that gazed down upon me from graven images and idols atop temple doorways and pagan shrines assaulted my very sense of being. Most of these deities are so minor that they watched over only small aspects of life, like laughter, fire, sex, or mathematics. Each possessed its own bizarre appearance, its own unique dogma, ritual, and sacraments. Has anyone ever cataloged them all? Could one? It would seem that as soon as it was done, a thousand new gods would spring up, unbidden, into the hearts of men and into this place they call 'the Street of a Million Gods.' It is almost as if, as soon as a person supposes a god, it exists and becomes available for adulation. A worse place I cannot conceive."

THE CHURCH OF LOTHIAN

The Church of Lothian, often just called "the Church," has been inextricably entwined with the Empire of Tarsis for as long as the Empire has existed. When Delian Von Tessel was crowned Emperor and ascended the Lion-Guarded Throne in Tarsis, the act granted him both secular dominion over the Empire and spiritual leadership of the Church. Even when the Emperor of Tarsis and the Emperor of the Church split into two different positions (and thus lineages), Lothianism remained the official religion of the Empire.

The Church of Lothian is based around a martyred saint named Lothian who rose from his own grave and ascended into Heaven, becoming the most powerful of the gods, according to his followers. In fact, the harshest of Lothian doctrines maintains that Lothian discovered that all other beings claiming to be gods were actually demons in disguise; this belief teaches that he rose again to bring order to the previously disordered, godless universe.

Throughout the first five centuries of the Empire, in fact, other religions were outlawed. People could practice their "pagan" faiths only in secret or in remote areas. However, in recent years, as the power of the Empire has waned, so too has the influence of the Church. Other religions are now permitted, and newer, more liberal doctrines allow that not *all* the other gods are demons. Some are in fact true deities—albeit lesser gods than Lothian.

CHURCH HIERARCHY

Like so many Prustan organizations, the Church has a strict structure. It is set up like the Empire's hierarchy, with an Emperor, a Prince, and a council of accomplished elders called archbishops. From there, each major community in the Empire looks to a bishop who operates out of a cathedral. The bishop usually consults directly with the community's Commissar or local governor and wields a great deal of influence and power. Every cathedral has a dozen or more satellite churches, each managed by a high priest who answers to the bishop. One normally finds these satellite churches in surrounding settlements, but large cities sometimes have a handful of community churches in addition to the cathedral.

Other than Holy Emperor, Holy Prince, archbishop (or elder), and bishop, priests of Lothian have three ranks. The aforementioned high priest is a special rank indicating charge of a church—a building, a congregation, and probably a number of attached priests. Clerics who are not high priests are either acolytes or

Quaan, page 125
Seven Jewels of Parnaith, page 485

Lothian's Law vs. Church Law

On rare occasions, the Church recognizes that someone can violate Church law without committing a crime against Lothian. For example, a curate might violate a high priest's direct order but still retain his spellcasting abilities. Clearly, Lothian continues to reward and appreciate the curate's faith, even if he has violated the temporal authority of the Church hierarchy. In such an instance, the curate might be rebuked but not defrocked—for who are the Church authorities to challenge what is obviously Lothian's will? At worst, he could be removed from Church hierarchy altogether to become a priest errant. Far rarer is the case where a lay person might violate Church law but not contravene Lothian's will. For all intents and purposes, to nonclergy, Church law is Lothian's law.

New gods, page 71

The Grand Cathedral in Tarsis serves as the headquarters of the Church of Lothian, despite the fact that the Emperor of the Church has resided in Ptolus for some years now.

curates, the latter being a rank of distinction earned through time and accomplishment. The faithful often address acolytes and curates as "Brother," "Sister," or "Sibling."

Crime and the Law, page 511

A further distinction is that all priests of Lothian are either bespoken priests or itinerant priests. Bespoken priests are assigned official duties and belong to a specific congregation or organization. Itinerant priests have no specific role within the church hierarchy other than to perform good works, obey Lothian's will, and spread the word of Lothian ("adventuring" clerics are virtually always itinerant priests). Itinerant priests function as missionaries, wandering caregivers, or spiritual consultants tied to another organization. For example, a number of itinerant priests work among the Keepers of the Veil as healers, support troops, and even accountants and administrators. There is also the title *priest errant*, which is a cleric who still has spellcasting ability but has violated Church law. Such priests wield no authority (secular or spiritual), but their faith and power still allow them some respect.

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

In Ptolus, Lothianism accounts for about 60 percent of the city's religious belief.

SECULAR AND HOLY EMPIRE

Since the Church is tied directly to the Imperial government, all official members of the Church hierarchy are also Imperial officials. This not only affords them a special status under the law (see Crime and the Law), but it grants them some measure of authority. A cleric or paladin falls somewhere between an Imperial soldier and an Imperial captain in terms of rank—not unlike the level of most low-ranking Imperial bureaucrats, such as an inspector. A cleric of Lothian can make a request of an Imperial soldier and expect it to be granted. Even private citizens are required by law to carry out the simple, short-term orders of clerics of Lothian.

Most clerics are careful not to abuse this power, else they be reprimanded by their superiors in the Church hierarchy. And as long as they do not abuse it, the secular Empire does not burden them with onerous Imperial duties and responsibilities to go along with this authority.

THE CHURCH IN PTOLUS

Of all large cities in the Empire, Ptolus is probably the least devoted to Lothian, a fact made all the more ironic because this has become the traditional home of the Prince of the Church. Since 657 IA, the heir apparent to the Holy Throne has lived in Ptolus, with the idea that the heir should not live in the same city as the current Emperor of the Church. However, since the sacking of Tarsis by barbarians in 710 IA, the Holy Emperor, Rehoboth, has lived with his son in Ptolus. Although Rehoboth's stay has been officially declared a visit, he has now dwelled in Ptolus for eleven years.

Ptolus has a bishop—a man named Nireus Pard (male human)—but he does not enjoy the power of most bishops in a city the size of Ptolus. In fact, he has almost no power at all. His traditional roles are filled instead by the Prince of the Church and the archbishop, Adlam Theobold (male human). And now, with the Holy Emperor himself living in Ptolus, the bishop is virtually ignored, except for issues dealing directly with St. Valien's Cathedral. And even St. Valien's prominence comes into question when the temple within the Holy Palace is becoming a more "important" church than the cathedral; when the city's powerful and influential elite need to visit a Lothianite church for any reason, they go to the Holy Palace more often than St. Valien's.

In addition to St. Valien's Cathedral, Ptolus has various satellite churches: St. Gustav's Chapel at Delver's Square in Midtown, Daykeeper's Chapel in Midtown, St. Daris' Church in the Guildsman District, Church of the Lawgiver in the North Market, Church of Lothian the Redeemer in Oldtown, St. Chausle's Chapel in the South Market, and the Chapel of St. Thessina in Rivergate. With the temple inside the Holy Palace, that makes nine churches altogether.

CHURCH HISTORY

Obviously, it all begins with a man named Lothian. Lothian was seemingly a simple man, a wanderer. At that time, folk in his homeland of Prust worshipped a god of life called Castain. His clergy was powerful and held great influence in the land. Lothian, however, preached that Castain was no god at all, and certainly no deity of life. Instead, he told the people, Castain was a demon posing as a god, and his priests were devil worshippers more concerned with political power than with truth.

As he wandered and preached, Lothian worked great miracles and, in time, revealed that he knew whereof he spoke because he, himself, was on his way to becoming a god.

Not surprisingly, none of these things pleased the clerics of Castain. Eventually, with the blessing of the king of Prust, the clerics captured and crucified Lothian on the symbol of their god, the ankh. On that day, a great earthquake shook the land and mighty waves engulfed the shores. These cataclysms killed more than a thousand people, including the king and most of the high-ranking clergy of Castain. When they were over, Lothian had returned to the world, alive but not alive—a martyred god risen of his own power.

The Kingdom of Prust collapsed that day, although the peninsula where it once lay still bears its name. Lothian continued to wander and perform miracles, only now those he spoke to bowed down in worship. The engine of Castain's church aligned itself with the adoration of Lothian, the true god. Lothian's new clerics took the symbol of the false god Castain and added Lothian's crucified form to it to show the lengths to which he would go to achieve his victory. Never mind that the new church of Lothian used much the same hierarchy, priesthood, temples, and even dogma as in the old church of the "false" Castain.

Although the catastrophes that surrounded Lothian's demise certainly broke the kingdom, the Prust remained strong. Eventually, they pushed north and west to the city of Tarsis, and not long after founded an Empire that continues to this day. For more information on the creation of the Empire of Tarsis, see Chapter 5: History.

After a time spent walking the world, Lothian took his seat in Heaven as the one true god, according to his early followers. His very presence there revealed to his worshippers the falsehood of all other gods. Thus, during the height of the Empire, the Church applied Lothian's statements regarding Castain to all other gods, claiming that only Lothian was a true deity. Furthermore, not only were worshippers of other gods the servants of devils, but those who practiced the arts of magic (or were born with such skills) consorted with

Adlam Theobold (page 351), archbishop of Lothian in Ptolus, never gets involved with politics and rarely interacts with the bishop, the Emperor, or the Prince of the Church. Instead, he focuses on caring for his flock.

Lothian grants the following domains to his clerics: Life, Light. His clerics normally wear white and blue, although on high holy days they wear golden garments. Lothian's favored weapon is the longsword and his holy symbol is the ankh crucifix.

St. Valien's Cathedral, page 350

Holy Palace, page 269

St. Gustav's Chapel, page 206

The Prince of the Church holds an honorary position in the Tribunal of the City Council. The current prince, Kirian Ylestos, often neglects this duty, however—much to the chagrin of his father.

THE SAINTS OF LOTHIAN

Lothian is not a creator god. In fact, the dogma of Lothian teaches that to ask questions about the origins of the world is fruitless and, if dwelled upon, evil.

In the first days of Lothian's church, the god commanded a number of extremely devout, extremely influential followers. Early Emperors of the Church granted these people sainthood posthumously. The rituals of granting sainthood are very complex but, as a result of them, the spirits of the saints have special powers channeled from Lothian himself. Faithful worshippers can pray to the saints and are sometimes answered with aid or a vision. The saints are said to watch over the Holy Emperor, his family, and other powerful clerics of Lothian. Relics left over from the lives of the saints—from objects they used to portions of their bodies—are powerful holy talismans. Most of these relics remain in Tarsis, although the Hammer of St. Daris is kept in the Holy Palace in Ptolus. Many other relics have been stolen or lost. According to the *Ninth Holy Book of Lothian*, the current list of saints includes the following:

Saint	Title	Area of Influence
St. Chausle	Guardian of the Temple	Churches, gatherings
St. Colosom	Keeper of the Dominion	Animals, farms
St. Daris	The Swift Avenger	Justice
St. Dayra	Giver of Mercy	Children, mothers, the poor
St. Feldin	The Faultless Rock of Faith	Warriors, knights, defenders of all sorts
St. Gustav	Protector of the Just	Protection of the innocent and the helpless
St. Thessina	The Provider	Food, necessities
St. Valien	The Hands of the Host	Clerics, church hierarchy, the Holy Emperor
St. Yessid	The Judge	Punishment of sins, authority figures

the legions of Hell and should be eliminated. The Edict of Deviltry in 560 IA made all use of arcane magic illegal. The reverence of gods besides Lothian technically had always been illegal in the Empire, and now that law also saw strict enforcement. During this time, called the Days of Blood, Church inquisitors and soldiers murdered thousands in the name of stamping out diabolism.

Almost one hundred years later, the Edict of Deviltry was repealed. The harsh teaching that all other gods are demons has softened in recent years, particularly among the more liberal, urban congregations, but some remote parishes still preach this doctrine.

Twelve Commanders, page 140

ORDER OF THE DAWN

The Order of the Dawn symbol

Originally formed to be the Holy Emperor's royal guard, the Order of the Dawn has grown to become the martial arm of the Church, serving congregations throughout the Empire and protecting the faithful from all manner of darkness and danger. The core members of the knighthood are paladins, although such support personnel as clerics, fighters, and even wizards play other roles.

For the most part, the Order of the Dawn is a defensive knighthood, there to protect the temples, holdings, and interests of the Church. Only occasionally are they sent on quests, and then only with the direct blessing of the Holy Emperor or Prince. In Ptolus, one finds the Knights almost exclusively in the Holy Palace and St. Valien's Cathedral.

Sir Kabel Dathimol (male human), leader of the order locally, is also one of the Commissar's Twelve Commanders. He operates out of the Holy Palace, where the Knights are barracked. In Ptolus, there are about fifty Knights, with eight on duty at St. Valien's at any given time. The order's Imperial head in Tarsis and Lothian's mightiest paladin is named Tagel Unergart.

ORDER OF DAYRA

The Order of Dayra, sometimes called the Sisterhood of Dayra, is an all-female order dedicated to tending the sick, clothing the poor, and generally helping the helpless. They run soup kitchens and charitable services throughout the Empire and in particular manage orphanages; over the years, they have become more and more focused on the well-being of children.

The children in the orphanages of the Sisterhood are not all actual orphans. People—particularly the very poor—sometimes sell one of their children to the Church for about 50 gp (almost a year's wages for a laborer). These children, called *oblates*, are raised to become clerics, paladins, or other servants of the Church. A great many people associated with the Church started as oblates, and thus have a special affection for the Order of Dayra, looking upon the sisters as mother figures.

The sisters are celibate clerics or paladins who live in convents, usually attached to an orphanage and oftentimes a school.

THE CONCILIATORS

The Days of Blood are, for the most part, a time of shame for the modern Church. However, within the hierarchy are those who still believe in the principles of the Edict of Deviltry and still see in modern society much evil that must be suppressed. Most of these clergy have found their way into the Conciliators. This somewhat ironically named branch of the Church formed in order to enforce the Edict of Deviltry—these were the inquisitors who put many wizards, sorcerers, "heathen" clerics, and others to the sword in the name of Lothian, often torturing confessions and sometimes repentance out of them. They "made peace," as the order's name implies, by rooting out and destroying any who would oppose the Church. Conciliation by force.

Today, the Conciliators are not nearly so bloodthirsty. Most who join the order are some of the more reactionary members of the clergy, to be sure, but they no longer hunt arcane spellcasters or other enemies of the Church to place on the torturer's wheel or burn at the stake. Their fervent devotion to the goodness of Lothian and the holiness of the Church makes them adamant hunters of evil, however, seeking in particular to root out darkness that slithers too close to the light. In Ptolus, that means one thing, although it is something of a secret.

Since its creation, the Church has been keenly aware of the history of the Ptolus region. (In fact, it opposed the founding of the city.) Somewhere in the Grand Cathedral Library in Tarsis lie ancient tomes that speak of primordial history. The Church not only knows the full history of Jabel Shammar but has at least some clues regarding the existence (and general whereabouts) of the Galchutt. It is the Conciliators, then, who lead the effort to root out the chaos cults and to destroy all chaositech they find. On orders from on high, they also oppose any exploration of the areas beneath the city, as they fear that delvers will find more chaositech and stir up more ancient evils.

NEW GODS

There is one religion, and there are a thousand. Beyond the Church of Lothian, there are myriad gods, some newer, many older. Collectively, they are called the New Gods, but only when doing so in contrast to the Elder Gods. Aside from a few throwbacks (the Knights of the Golden Cross among them), no one reveres the Elder Gods today. More than any other city, Ptolus has become a gathering of these different religions.

The New Gods did not create the world, nor did they create much of anything in it. They have no existence beyond the world itself. This suggests that the so-called "New Gods" are less the truly metaphysical, conceptual beings that the term "god" evokes, but instead just very powerful individuals. Ultimately, though, the difference seems purely academic.

Like everyone else, the gods are trapped in this world. However, none of them (or at least very, very few of them) actually live on the world of Praemal. Instead, they dwell in the heavens (the physical heavens—the sky far above the world) or in the Ethereal Sea. The only exceptions to this statement are the demon gods, actually powerful demon princes and the like who dwell still in Hell.

HOW TO BECOME A GOD

All the current gods in the world either were mortal creatures who ascended to godhood, or—in far rarer cases—are concepts given life by worshippers. All gods require worshippers. Without them, they eventually fade and die.

Many gods owe their deific existence to the trials they endured passing through the Seven Jewels of Parnaith.

The Seven Jewels of Parnaith, page 485

THE NEW GODS AND THEIR DOMAINS

Some gods worshipped in or near Ptolus include the following (an asterisk [*] refers to a new domain defined in Chapter 35: Magic):

Ahaar, Lord of the Air (chaotic good). Nature, Tempest. An elemental sky god of some popularity.

Aldinach, Goddess of the Moons (neutral good). Future*, Light, Sleep*. Aldinach provides insight into the future on full-moon nights. Her worship is all but forgotten today.

Ardaen, Dead God of Light (neutral good). N/A. Once a powerful elven god of light, Ardaen is dead, tricked and slain by evil gods (including Gorgoth-Lol).

Asche, God of Cities (neutral). Civilization*, Knowledge, Life. A major god of civilization and sophisticated living.

Baalhazor, Demon God of Technology (chaotic evil). Death, Technology*. Originally one of the Vested of the Galchutt, this minor deity/demon lord is the lord of chaositech.

Blurrah, Goddess of Comfort in Sadness (chaotic good). Light. A very minor goddess turned to occasionally but rarely attracting lifetime followers.

Castain (lawful good). Life, Light. Old Prustan deity of life, supplanted by Lothian. No longer worshipped.

Celestan, Lord of the Silver Moon (neutral good). Life, Light. Celestan is the main

Sacraments
Every temple service includes the following Sacraments of Lothian:

Air: *Burning incense represents the breath of Lothian and the efforts of his followers to do good in his name.*

Earth: *A stone or a bag of dirt represents the body of Lothian and his sacrifice for truth.*

Fire: *A burning candle or brazier represents the soul of Lothian and the fires of life, emotion, and action.*

Water: *A flask or bowl of water represents the blood of Lothian and the restoration of all injustice.*

Symbol of Ahaar

Jabel Shammar history, page 465
Chaos cults, page 75
Chaositech, page 529

For more on religions in Ptolus, see Chapter 17: Temple District, page 343.

Symbol of Danace

elven deity. Ithildin, ithilnaur, and ithilirid (moonsilver) are said to all be his gifts to his people.

Charlathan, God/Goddess of Retribution and Reward (chaotic neutral). Trickery, War. This capricious god has few worshippers today. Offering alternatively banes and boons, the deity has both male and female aspects at different times.

Danace, Master of the Thousand Pains (lawful evil). Death, Trickery. A god of torture, sadism, and masochism.

The Demon Gods (Demogorgon, Orcus, countless others; chaotic evil). Death, War. This is a catch-all for the many powerful demons (which may or may not be true gods) worshipped in small numbers throughout the lands.

Destor (chaotic evil). Trickery. A god of cruel fate who sends the ill fortune that should befall his worshippers onto others. Destor's religion was outlawed under the Empire.

Engelan, God of the Present (neutral). Life. Unconcerned with the past or the future, this religion is based on the immediate present and in living in the moment. Many halflings worship Engelan.

Father Claw, the Serpentine Lord (chaotic evil). Death. Worshippers of the draconic Father Claw, one of the oldest gods, are very rare in Ptolus.

The Fifty-Three Gods of Chance (chaotic neutral). Trickery. A religion of chaos and randomness, but not directly tied to the chaos cults.

Frega (lawful good). Nature. This very minor dwarf goddess is revered only by Stonelost dwarves. She watches over all animals, but in particular goats and boars.

Gaen, Goddess of Light (lawful good). Light, Radiance*. A popular and powerful religion. The Temple of Gaen is one of the largest and most impressive temples on a street of large and impressive temples. Gaen's clerics are proactive and struggle against evil at every turn. Gaen is the sister of Mirresh.

Father Claw followers put the prefix "Ni-" in front of their names to designate their devotion. (The god Ni-Gorth was himself once a follower of Father Claw.)

Symbol of Gaen

Knights of the Chord, page 120

Gorgoth-Lol (chaotic evil). Death. Originally one of the Vested of the Galchutt, this deity is the goddess of the dark elves.

Hannan, Lord of the Sun (neutral good). Life, Light. The worshippers of Hannan have recently rejected Gaen and her faith as not the true path to see the sun's light. There is a strange rivalry between these two faiths now, with the religion of Hannan much less prominent than that of Gaen.

Harredda, Mistress of Ravens (neutral). Nature. Brought originally from the northern

reaches of Nall, this goddess has a fair number of worshippers in Ptolus.

Heiran and Nareis, the Sisters of Death (lawful evil and chaotic evil). Death. These twin death goddesses are feared, but revered because of what they might do to one in the afterlife if not appeased.

Herkan, Goddess of the Stones (chaotic good). Life. A rare chaotic dwarf goddess, Herkan represents the healing energies of the earth.

Inurath, Mistress of War (chaotic neutral). War. The most popular of many war deities, Inurath was originally a goddess of the people of Nall.

The Iron God (lawful neutral). Technology*. A mysterious deity of the old Prustan humans and Grailwarden dwarves. No image of this god is ever seen. He is the patron of all things iron.

Jode, Guardian of Song (chaotic good). Life. Goddess of music and creativity, her worship in Ptolus centers around the Knights of the Chord and the Jodan Templehall in Oldtown.

Juranis, God of the Open Sea (chaotic neutral). Nature. God of the sea fearfully worshipped by sailors and sea creatures.

Kharos, God of Magic (neutral). Knowledge. An old Prustan deity, Kharos is lord of wizardly magic.

Kran, Goddess of Faults (neutral evil). Knowledge. Another old Prustan deity, Kran has a very small following.

The Lady (neutral). Trickery. This deity is one of luck and, to some degree, fate. Her shrines are numerous, although she has few worshippers devoted strictly to her. She is a goddess of long shots and last chances.

Locharit, the Goddess of the Written Word (lawful good). Knowledge. A religion of wizards and scholars favored by gnomes.

Maleskari, God of Shades (neutral evil). Death. An evil god of undead spirits and ghosts.

Melann, Goddess of Farming (neutral good). Nature. A very popular goddess. Melann's temple is frequented more by visitors than locals.

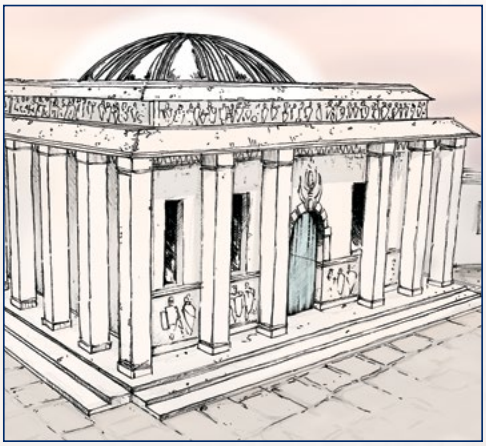
Mirresh, Goddess of Laughter (neutral good). Life, Trickery. A minor goddess, Mirresh is popular among entertainers and children. Mirresh is the sister of Gaen.

Mocharum, God of Dwarves (lawful good). Civilization*. This is the main dwarven deity, popular in particular among Grailwarden dwarves. Brother of Morachon.

Morachon, God of the Forge (lawful neutral). Knowledge. A religion centered around a craftsman deity revered mostly by dwarves. He is the brother of the god Mocharum.

Mylieshа, Mistress of the Wind's Path (chaotic good). Nature. An elven elemental deity popular particularly with displaced elves living among humans.

Navashtrom, God of Strength and Harmony (neutral good). Life. A popular religion in Ptolus. The followers of Navashtrom are often warriors and adventurers.



Ni-Gorth (neutral). Knowledge. Once a priest of Father Claw, Ni-Gorth betrayed the dragon and imprisoned him. Eventually, he ascended to godhood. First of the New Gods, he is no longer worshipped.

Niveral, God of Secrets (neutral). Future*, Knowledge. Also known as the Master of the Five Lost Lores (one of which is the Lore of the First Fire), Niveral is a minor god worshipped only by those who seek forgotten secrets and knowledge no longer known.

The Old Man (lawful neutral). Knowledge, Trickery. A strange religion based around a brooding figure known only as "the Old Man" who watches over yet disdains virtually everything.

Ollom, God of the Keg (chaotic neutral). Civilization*. A minor god of alcohol and brewing popular among a handful of gnomes and humans.

Phoeboul, God of Dreams (chaotic neutral). Knowledge, Sleep*. An elvish god, Phoeboul is the patron of Dreta Phantas, the Dreaming City, which is now lost.

Raddashin's Eye (chaotic good). Life. Nature. Raddashin was a god of rain, slain by evil beings long ago. The god's eye survived and still carries out his will. Many people in Ptolus revere Raddashin's Eye.

Rajek the Wanderer (neutral). Life. Originally worshipped in the far south, Rajek is a god favored by adventurers and those down on their luck. The aram also like Rajek.

Ravvan the Beast God (chaotic evil). Death, Nature. A minor god and demon prince who rules over an extradimensional hell of savagery and beasts.

Sylvanae, the Woodland Shaper (neutral). Nature. God of the fae, the elves, and the woods, this androgynous deity is rarely revered in Ptolus except by gnomes.

Taeshandra, Elvish God of Travel (neutral good). Nature. Watches over travelers, particularly those who pay homage at her roadside shrines, usually found only in the woods. Also worshipped by halflings.

Tardeshou, Goddess of Truth (lawful good). Knowledge. Sister of Navashtrom, this deity is overshadowed in Ptolus by the worship of her better-known brother.

Teun, Mother of All Machines (lawful neutral). Civilization*, Technology*. Another old Prustan deity, Teun is the goddess of machines and technology. She is revered by Grailwarden dwarves as well as humans.

Ni-Gorth, in ancient history, used an artifact called the dragonchain *to shackle Father Claw to the side of a mountain. Father Claw eventually escaped.*

Maleskari reportedly achieved divinity when one thousand people all committed suicide at once in his name. These are known as the "Thousand Martyred Souls of Maleskari."

Dreta Phantas, page 425

Symbol of Phoeboul

Symbol of Navashtrom

Many symbols of chaos exist, some of which are shown on the robes of the cultists here. Despite the fact that many individual cults embrace one symbol over the others, in actuality, all the cults use all the symbols. Cultists particularly like to spread these symbols as anonymous bits of graffiti or even print them on a piece of paper and send them to a random person in the city. The cultists see the spread of the awareness of these symbols as analogous to the spread of their faith. The more chaos symbols they use and see, the more powerful they feel they have become. This explains why adventurers who discover hidden chaos temples find symbols inscribed everywhere within them.

Symbol of Ynchabolos

Unnom, Lord of the Caverns, is often depicted as a rocklike being covered in mineral deposits, his huge arms dripping with stalactites.

Balacazars, page 102
Hussar, page 103

Tevra, the Clockwork Goddess (lawful neutral). Life, Technology*. Still another Prustan deity, Tevra is the daughter of Teun. She is thought to sleep now, but will awaken one day to help restore order to the world.

Thamus (neutral good). Life, War. God of protection and defense.

Torskal (lawful good). War. This aram god of just vengeance has no temple in Ptolus.

Twenty-Four Gods of the Hours (varies). Domains vary. Each of these two dozen minor gods represents one hour of the day, but they are all quite different in nature, reflecting how most people view the different times of day.

Unnah, Mistress of the Blades (lawful neutral). War. A minor goddess of swordfighting and skill. Her extremely devout followers are called the Hussar. See the Balacazar Crime Family in Chapter 6: Organizations and The Hussar in Chapter 33: Adventures for more information.

Unnom, Lord of Caverns (neutral). Life, Nature. This dwarven god is also revered by other subterranean dwellers.

Watcher of the Skies (neutral). Future*, Knowledge. A religion based around a deity that knows all and sees all, including the future. The Watcher of the Skies is an impassive observer most of the time and may be related somehow to the Old Man. A resurgence in this faith has occurred in the last year.

Ynchabolos, God of Numbers (lawful neutral). Knowledge. A god of logic, numbers, and order. His religion is small but wealthy and supported by influential people in the city.

Yurabbos, Goddess of Supreme Devotion (lawful neutral). Life. A very minor dwarf deity of sacrifice and unswerving devotion to a cause.

Even this list is only a small sampling of the New Gods. Many people pick one deity and revere him or her above all else. Others honor many, although it can be difficult to remember them all. Because of this fact, many religions recognize two or more "levels" of faith: one that acknowledges a god as superior to most or

all others, and another that views him or her as an equal peer among many. Some religions group various deities together as ad hoc pantheons, families, or gods with some sort of relationship, while other deities seem to fit only into a mutually exclusive worldview, despite the fact that other gods are worshipped in the temple next door.

CHAOS CULTS

This catch-all term refers to a hundred or more tiny cults all worshipping chaos, usually in the form of ancient dark gods called the Galchutt. It is technically incorrect to refer to the "chaos cult," for, in fact, there are many cults. While they are unified in overall belief, the groups are quite fractured. The different chaos cults do not necessarily compete but often work together, trade members, and occasionally wholly subsume one another.

The following short descriptions cover each of the main cults.

BROTHERS OF VENOM

The Brothers of Venom, like the Deathmantle cult below, have a taste for murder. Unlike the Deathmantle, though, these worshippers of chaos like their death slow and their murders subtle. These cultists are perhaps the most clandestine and guileful of the chaos cults. Both patient and careful, they never let the authorities know they exist but sow chaos and dissolution in secret. They consider slow erosion and disintegration just as valuable as dramatic, sudden destruction.

This cult rarely operates in cells larger than a half-dozen members. Most members of the cult know the identities of very few other members. They seek to infiltrate high levels of society to murder important individuals. The more influence a person has over law and order, the more desirable a target that person represents.

In their small cells, the Brothers of Venom practice unholy ceremonies and take part in all manner of vile activities, including drug abuse, sexual perversions, and acts of cruelty and violence.

The Brothers of Venom's symbol is that of a shadowy, coiled serpent.

CRIMSON COIL

In some lands, typical chaos cultists carry torches, axes, and scythes and wear blood-red robes covered in various symbols of chaos: spirals, demonic faces, many-pointed arrows. In these lands, the cult of the Crimson Coil has spread like a virus.

Members of the Crimson Coil wear hooded red robes and do not believe in showing their faces. They do not mix into normal society, preferring instead to spend their lives cloistered in remote temples, often established within the ruins of an older structure for symbolic purposes. The only time these cultists make an appearance is *en masse* to carry out some act of terrible destruction. The Crimson Coil chooses a target seemingly at random, then shows up to burn down a building, set fire to a field, slaughter a family, or deface a monument. They are neither subtle nor gentle. They show neither mercy nor fear. Usually, their raids come so suddenly and unexpectedly that they meet little resistance. They usually appear in numbers so great, they simply cannot be stopped—a hundred cultists to burn down a single house, a dozen to murder a merchant walking down the street. They disappear quickly, often using spells to cover their escape.

Authorities sometimes mobilize militias to hunt down Crimson Coil cult members and root them out of their secret temples. Usually such attempts result in failure. When the hunters do find a Crimson Coil temple, the cultists and priests put up a vicious fight. They battle to the last in their defensible, trap-laden temple and cost the attackers many, many lives. Worst of all, however, it takes little time for the cult to reappear in the area, stronger than ever.

THE DEATHMANTLE

The Deathmantle cult, known also as Death's Grimace, reveres death, and obviously so. Each cultist wears a death's head mask, usually of copper or bronze but occasionally of iron painted skull-white. However, the Deathmantle is no simple death cult. Its members worship murder, specifically mass slaughter. The slaying of a whole town, a whole city, or a whole nation or species—these are their ultimate goals.

The Deathmantle cult associates closely with an assassin's guild called the Vai. The Vai are not simply killers for hire but a quasi-religious group that revels in slaying. Each member of this elite guild must kill every day. They believe the only path to true power and enlightenment is found through taking the lives of others. The Deathmantle cult and the Vai, in fact, may be different arms of the same group.

The cult frequently associates with undead. Some of their leaders and priests, for example, are vampires. Others specialize in necromancy. They frequent graveyards, holding evil rites there and establishing hidden temples in mausoleums and crypts.

Galchutt, page 62

The Brothers of Venom work with the Ebon Hand cultists to develop a toxin that mutates its victims before killing them.

The Vai, page 131

The Deathmantle cult has close ties with the Forsaken.

Cult of the Ebon Hand symbol

See Temple of the Ebon Hand (page 354) for a detailed layout and description.

EBON HAND

The cult of the Ebon Hand worships physical deformity. If a member is not deformed naturally (many are), they seek magical mutation. The cultists refer to mutation as "the touch of the Ebon Hand."

Cells of this cult operate in cities, usually within chapels hidden underground. Somewhere within the chapel is featured a large stone hand, palm exposed and painted black. This is the heart of the cult. Cultists of the Ebon Hand kidnap adolescents and magically deform them. Many children die in these horrid rites, but others become mutated slaves of the cult. Upon hearing of a rash of missing children, those in the know understand that they must start looking for an Ebon Hand chapel.

Of all the chaos cults, this is one of the most insidious, because it proves the most resilient. Its cells are small, its chapels often insignificant and difficult to find. The cultists are quick to flee if discovered and ready at a moment's notice to abandon their chapel to move to a new location. Enemies of the cult of the Ebon Hand liken them to cockroaches.

Cultists of the Ebon Hand have no distinctive garb but usually bear a black hand symbol: a tattoo, a charm, a small embroidery on their clothes, and so on. And, of course, many of them are physically deformed in some way, ranging from a prominent birthmark to a withered leg to ritual scarring to a magical mutation, like an extra eye or oversized arms.

The plagueborn attempt to harbor diseases within themselves, often using the deadly carrier *spell (page 628) or such chaositech implants as disease incubators (page 535).*

Order of the Blooded Knife symbol

Ratmen, page 591
Temple of the Rat God, page 363
Galchutt, page 62

ORDER OF THE BLOODED KNIFE

In prehistoric times, before most organized religions of today, a bloodthirsty human cult sacrificed people in honor of a moon goddess whose name no one remembers any longer. After a fashion, this cult exists today in the form of the Order of the Blooded Knife. Gone is the reverence for the moon, but this newer religion preserves many of the same rituals involving human sacrifice. But such sacrifice is not enough to distinguish this cult from other followers of chaos. The order's main identifying trait is that it poses as other religions to establish itself secretly in society.

Often, the order chooses some vague, innocuous-sounding deity, like "the Snake God" or "Jellig, god of slime"—something that sounds fairly harmless but distasteful enough that most people leave them alone. Other times, the cultists choose an existing god and pose as worshippers who establish a temple that appears normal, at least on the outside. Actual followers of that deity may choose to join them, usually to their dismay; the cult uses threats of violence and enchantment magic to force these honest churchgoers into their terrible rites of chaos.

The Order of the Blooded Knife applies its infiltration abilities to make money for the cult, using its temples as dens for gambling, prostitution, black marketeering, centers for extortion, and simple thievery.

Sometimes a few cultists infiltrate another religion and use force, blackmail, magic, or simple persuasion to sway its members into secretly worshipping chaos with them, a process that can take years. Eventually, the cult eats the other religion from the inside out, consuming it until the temple of the great sun god Errad is entirely a front for the secret temple of the Order of the Blooded Knife concealed in the church basement.

The members of the order usually carry or bear a symbol of a curved knife dripping blood. Other than that (usually secret) symbol, they dress like the members of the religion they use as a front.

THE PLAGUEBORN

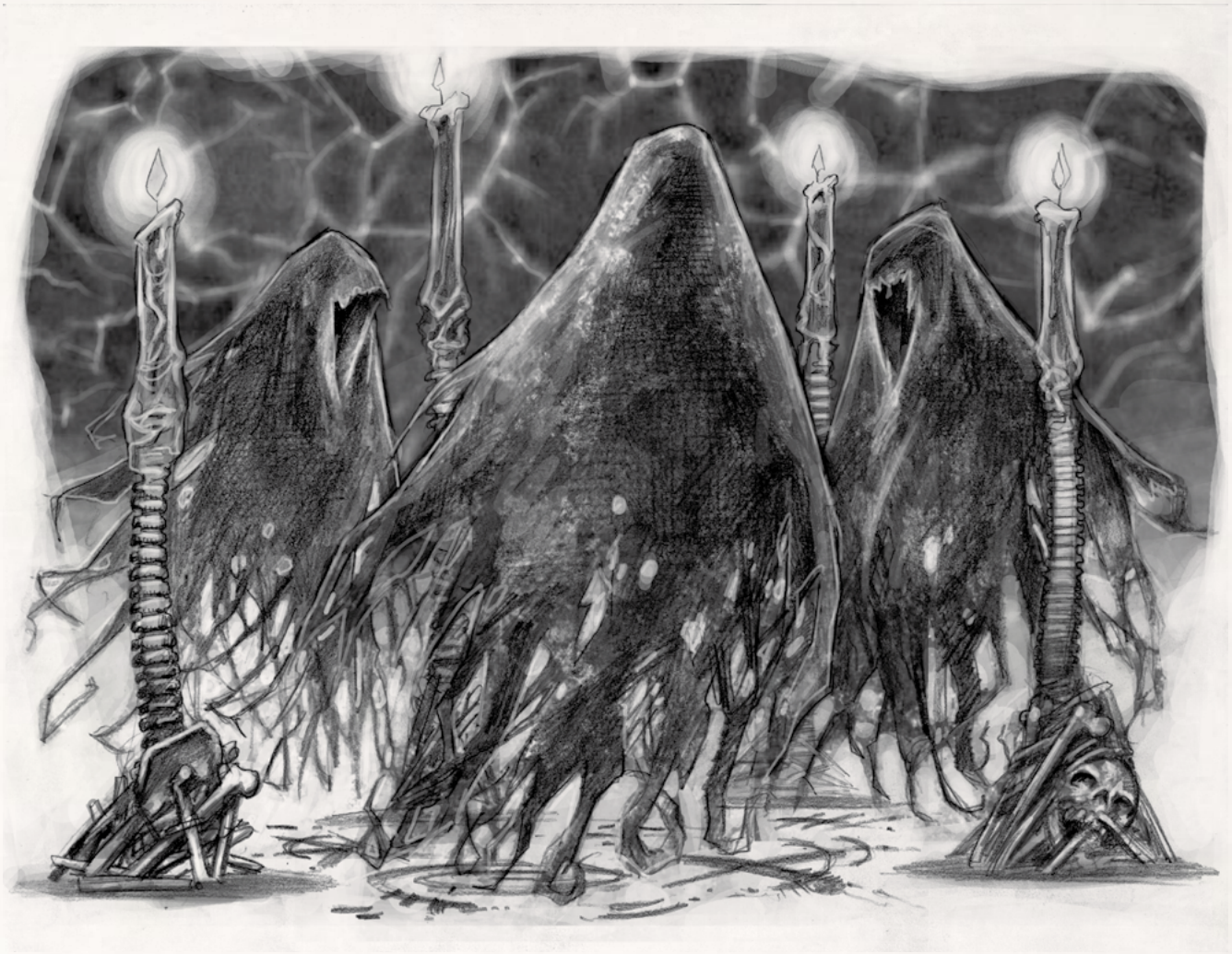
The cultists known as the Plagueborn seek to achieve the elegance and artistry of destruction through disease and pestilence. They attempt to harbor diseases within themselves. The Plagueborn also promote the accumulation of filth, rot, and decay that harbors disease.

Not surprisingly, Plagueborn temples are found in sewers, trash heaps, waste pits, and other places of filth and decay. Taking the rat as their totem, they bear rat symbols and even wear the skins of rats and dire rats.

The Plagueborn sneak contaminated food into marketplaces. They steal the bed linens of the ill and slip them into the beds of children. They dump filth into wells and do whatever else they can think of to spread disease. When they cannot encourage illness, they help foster infestation of vermin—rats, insects, spiders, and so forth—into cities and homes.

Unlike most chaos cultists, the Plagueborn often do not bear standard chaos symbols. They do, however, leave hunks of rotten meat on hooks to mark their lairs and to claim credit for their crimes.

All of the ratmen in and below Ptolus worship "the Rat God." This, however, is merely a front for the worship of Abhoth, Lord of the Unclean and one of the Galchutt. Thus, technically, all ratmen are members of the Plagueborn. Humans that associate with them are nearly always Plagueborn as well.



TOLLING BELL

In certain ancient books, the end of the world is described as coming like "the tolling of a bell." The members of the Tolling Bell cult take their name from this fact and seek nothing short of the eschaton—the end of the world.

Individual cults of the Tolling Bell are rare and often small, but its members usually wield great skill and power. It seems that members of other cults sometimes "graduate" to this one, as though it were one of the inner mysteries of a general cult of chaos.

Cultists of the Tolling Bell wear tattered blue cloaks and carry large handbells. Their symbol is a bell with cracks in its surface.

In order to fulfill their goal of immanentizing the eschaton, the cultists research powerful spells and artifacts that they could use to trigger some type of cataclysm that could itself trigger an even bigger cataclysm. Ultimately, however, the cultists of the Tolling Bell revere the Galchutt and the destruction they will bring when they claim this world as their own on the Night of Dissolution.

Of all the chaos cults, the Tolling Bell cult is most aware of the Galchutt and their true nature. While other cultists might simply revere chaos in general or the unknown and unnamed "Lords of Chaos," the members of the Tolling Bell are very deliberate in their actions as they apply themselves to the ultimate liberation of the imprisoned Galchutt and the resulting destruction of the world.

CHAOS UNITED?

In Ptolus today, the only reason one can refer to "the chaos cults" collectively is due to the efforts of the Tolling Bell cult. This group serves as an overarching chaos cult and has taken it upon itself to do what some might consider unthinkable: to organize and unify the various other chaos cults.

The leader of this effort is a half-demon named Wuntad. He recently has assumed the title "shigmaa" to appeal to the Forsaken who have joined his cause. For more on him, see *The Night of Dissolution* adventure.

Tolling Bell symbol

The Night of Dissolution *adventure, page 11*

Night of Dissolution, page 62

Chapter 5:

HISTORY

The history of Praemal extends back more than ten thousand years, with many amazing and significant events. GMs will want to become familiar with this information, because it is rife with possible adventure hooks. What if the ghost-lich Kagrisos rose again, or someone found the secret to unleashing the Utterdark once more?

The history of the world is vast and complex, stretching back almost eleven millennia. The information presented here is heavily skewed toward events important to the city of Ptolus, however. Whole civilizations rose and fell in some of the gaps left blank.

TIMELINE

BE = Before Empire; IA = Imperial Age

c. 10,000 BE — Praemus creates the world as a trap for the Galchutt, the main purveyors of evil, chaos, and non-existence in the multiverse at the time.

c. 9,900 BE — Praemus's children revolt in order to free the intelligent species he created from servitude. The War of the Gods ensues. An evil goddess—one of the Vested of the Galchutt named Gorgoth-Lol—corrupts a tribe of Shoal elves, taking them deep underground.

c. 9,800 BE — The Galchutt—through one of their Vested servants, Mrathrach—attempt to destroy the world by imprisoning the Gilded Angel, an envoy from another plane sent to visit and judge Praemus's creation. Mrathrach is thwarted by runebearer heroes. The Gilded Angel leaves safely (the last being to come to the world physically and then leave). The magical energies released at the time of the Vested's death create the Pit of Mrathrach, which begins to convert any matter that seeps into it into ether that leaks out into the Ethereal Sea.

The Galchutt then send a strange, magical virus to the Vallis moon to corrupt the Lords of the Seven Chains and destroy the soul of the world they guard. Again they are thwarted. Finally, they rend the veil between life and death, allowing the dead to return to the world as undead creatures (which had never happened before). The gods, aided by heroes, seal the breach with a huge piece of the Vallis moon, but in so doing they catapult the moon into the distant reaches of space.

c. 9,700 BE — The War of the Gods ends, with Praemus and his children coming to an understanding; Praemus reveals the purpose of the world to them.

c. 9,600 BE — What was once the Sinking Swamp around the Pit of Mrathrach, now entirely drained, has become a desert. The land mass begins to shift southward. The waters of the Southern Sea begin draining away, and the Northern Sea—eventually called the Whitewind Sea—moves southward.

Continued on page 80

PREHISTORY

The early days of creation are more a matter of myth than history. It is widely accepted that a single creator god forged the world out of nothingness. In this primordial age, evil creatures known as the Galchutt waged war against man and god to destroy the world, but were thwarted at every turn. Eventually, the Galchutt turned on each other and ultimately retreated into a state of aeons-long sleep to await a time when they could better wreak their chaos and destruction. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Cosmology and Religion.)

History, according to most scholars, starts with Eslathagos Malkith. But even then, the details of a time more than eight millennia prior to the present day are sketchy at best. Most history books have little to say about it, and most historians know little else. One must find truly arcane texts to learn the truth of his story.

ESLATHAGOS MALKITH

After the Galchutt retreated into their hibernation, the balance tipped in the favor of light and order. A wizard-priest named Ni-Gorth put the great and mighty Father Claw in chains. Goblins, undead, and other fell creatures retreated into shadowy holes to hide. Cities grew, civilizations prospered, and new gods came to light to fill the void left by those who had retreated. For fourteen hundred years, the forces of evil were quelled, and during most of that time, the world knew relative peace. Then, a powerful and benevolent cleric set upon a well-intentioned plan.

With malevolence on the wane, the cleric Danar Rotansin sought once and for all to rid the world of its remaining evil influences. This powerful figure began to gather up all the evil artifacts, objects of dark power, trapped essences of vanquished fiends, demonic relics, and even the last vestiges of particularly horrible diseases. Condemning all of these things as "banes," Danar imprisoned them. He believed that, if destroyed, the banes would simply release their evil into the world to wreak more havoc and bring about other darknesses. Destroying banes begat new banes.

So Danar used powerful spells and magical items to accomplish his task, working tirelessly to bind these legacies of evil. As his collection of banes grew, he began to bury them beneath his tower, Mosul Pearl, located near the sea. Danar constructed a vast catacomb, well warded and sealed, deep underground, and he called it Tremoc Korin, the Banewarrens. He also found allies to aid him in his cause. Among them were the dragon known as Saggarintys the Silver King and a number of celestials.

But Danar's goal was folly. Concentrating so much raw hatred and despite—so much darkness and evil power—in a single place was a terrible mistake. The earth itself, no longer able to tolerate the concentrated evil that the banes represented, thrust Tremoc Korin away from it, creating a tall, impossibly high and narrow spire atop which Mosul Pearl stood.

Danar's actions also drew the attention of sleeping Galchutt. These secretive forces manipulated events (perhaps even time and space) to ensure that the *Book of Inverted Darkness* fell into the hands of this well-meaning cleric.

The *Book of Inverted Darkness* is an artifact older than the world itself. Scribed by gods and demons, its pages contain vast lore (only *The Book of Eldritch Might* contains greater lore, it is said), all of it dreadful. Unfortunately for Danar Rotansin—and the world—the book presented this horrid knowledge using supernatural techniques that gave it an irresistibly seductive quality.

While he intended to seal the book away with the rest of the banes, Danar lingered over its pages for an instant too long. Its cunningly

Book of Inverted Darkness, page 490

To this day, priests and scholars still debate whether Eslathagos Malkith, at the height of his power, was truly mortal or had become divine.

Ni-Gorth, page 73
Father Claw, page 72

Adventurers battle in Tremoc Korin at left.

Galchutt, page 62

Vested of the Galchutt, page 62
Gorgoth-Lol, page 72

Lords of the Seven Chains, page 64

Banewarrens, page 389

c. 9,500 BE — The first city of Ptolus is founded, named after a scholar who originally explored the area. It is ruled by a number of noble families, and the Knights of the Golden Cross defend the city against evil. At this point, Ptolus is not yet a coastal town (the Northern Sea continues to shift south).

c. 9,000 BE — The Galchutt provide their servants with chaositech and begin to attack all areas of civilization. They assail Ptolus with the aid of the traitorous House Vladaam and destroy it all—except for the mysterious Castle Shard. Eventually, the Galchutt's forces turn on themselves and destroy each other.

c. 8,900 BE — Their schemes thwarted, the Galchutt sleep beneath what once was Ptolus, hoping that time will be their ally in their bid to escape this prison-world.

c. 8,000 BE — Ni-Gorth, a priest of the evil Father Claw, rises up against his master in the hidden city of Shoggoth. He fetters Father Claw with the *dragonchain*.

c. 7,900 BE — Ni-Gorth is killed by other priests of Father Claw but ascends to godhood, the first of the New Gods that one day would supplant the children of Praemus.

c. 7,500 BE — A good cleric named Danar Rotansin builds a vault called Tremoc Korin in order to safely store all the evil artifacts and "banes" of the world, including any chaositech that has survived the centuries since the Galchutt went to sleep. He constructs this "Banewarrens" beneath his own fortress of Mosul Pearl. Danar's wife, Parnaith—a powerful sorcerer in her own right—anchors the Seven Ethereal Islands around this fortress. These become known as the Seven Jewels of Parnaith and, along with the Wizard-Priests of Ni-Gorth, she builds great wonders upon each of the islands.

c. 7,450 BE — By now, the evil stored within the Banewarrens has grown so repugnant that the earth itself thrusts it away, forming the Spire. Danar repairs the damage done to Tremoc Korin by this upheaval. Mosul Pearl now rests atop the Spire.

c. 7,420 BE — Danar grows corrupt thanks to the proximity of the Galchutt and the influence of the banes—particularly the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. He becomes the Dread One, taking the name Eslathagos Malkith. He calls forth the former servants of the Galchutt and many other evil beasts and demons from the depths of the earth. He changes the name of his castle to Jabel Shammar and begins using the banes he once strove to keep out of evil hands to create more wicked servants.

c. 7,300 BE — The Dread One creates a magical vortex of chaos within the Spire called the Entropy Sphere. He configures magical portals called the Gates of Delirium to regulate its power so that he may utilize it freely.

Continued on page 82

crafted words beguiled him to keep the book by his side. Soon, he read more. And more.

And still more.

The book consumed Danar. He neglected his quest to gather the remaining banes. He withdrew from his family and comrades. The book's dark lore corrupted his spirit and twisted his mind. The allure of the dark power and forbidden knowledge was too much, even for him. Danar Rotansin became Eslathagos Malkith—the Dread One. With the vast resources of the banes he had gathered and the knowledge he had gained from the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, the Dread One withdrew into his tower, also renamed: Jabel Shammar.

He emerged only a few years later, launching an attack so devastating, it threatened to tear the world asunder. His might knew few bounds, and with his magical aid, the armies he created or summoned conquered the surrounding lands with ease. From his fortress atop the Spire, its former pearly hue now turned black as night, the Dread One could survey the world—a world he desired to conquer or crush entirely.

Only the actions of all the mortal species, led by powerful and stalwart heroes—many of whom had been friends and companions of Danar—stopped the forces of Eslathagos Malkith. It is said they carried the battle into the halls of Jabel Shammar itself. When it was over, the Dread One lay defeated, the world's greatest heroes sprawled dead and dismembered all around him. Most of them had lost not only their lives but also their souls to their foe's magic and the banes he wielded.

Some bit of Danar—the good and true man he had once been—still remained, however. His spirit, now free of corruption, managed to seal the Banewarrens once again. Although his quest remained uncompleted, and some of the banes were released again when he became Eslathagos Malkith, Tremoc Korin still contained vault upon vault of evil artifacts, foul creatures, and vile relics that must be kept away from the world at large.

THE AGE OF THE ELDER TITANS

Almost two millennia later—over six thousand years ago—strong, powerfully built sailors calling themselves the Charad arrived on the shores of Theridae north of Ptolus in huge vessels made of wood and, curiously, stone. The Charad looked much like muscular, regal humans, but on a grander scale: the shortest stood over 8 feet tall, the largest at least twice that height. The Charad, called the Charad Titans by the Lunas elves they first encountered, wielded powerful magical might

as well as physical puissance. Their vast lore far outstripped even that of the Elder Elves.

The Charad never told their new elvish allies exactly where they hailed from, although they clearly came from across the sea. Speculation at the time suggested that they originated in the north, in the area now known as the Endless Sea of Ice. In those days, the theories profess, the ice did not cover that entire land, and the Charad thrived in those cold climes. If this is true, their homeland was long ago swallowed by ice as the world grew colder and is now forever gone.

A few years after arriving and conducting the first trade and information exchanges with the elves, the titans built the fortress Ar-Nampur on an isolated cape north of present-day Ptolus, near the site of their landing. The huge structure's existence remains unknown to most people in modern times. Most sailors simply call the area the Fogbottom, because it is perpetually shrouded in mist. Due to the rocky coastline, ships always avoid it.

Eventually, after spending more than thirteen hundred years in Ar-Nampur and interacting with the native elves, most of the Charad decided to return to the sea. Presumably they sailed for their homeland—a homeland, of course, they had never seen, for this was not the same generation of titans that had come to Theridae originally. Truth be told, the Charad sensed a slowly growing evil in the land and

Knights of the Golden Cross, page 120

House Vladaam, page 100
Castle Shard, page 263

Kadavalus, the Ageless Titan, dwells in Goth Gulgamel and guards the entrance to the Gates of Delirium and the Entropy Sphere (page 463). He allied himself with Ghul long ago and exists today in undead form. For details, see page 461.

Banewarrens, page 389

Seven Jewels of Parnaith, page 485

Spire, page 150

Jabel Shammar, page 465

It is entirely possible that the Charad came from some other, still undiscovered land to the east or west, accessible only by sea. Elvish sailors, however, will tell you that no such land exists.

Entropy Sphere, page 463
Gates of Delirium, page 463

c. 7,260 BE	Eslathagos Malkith attacks the civilized lands, raining destruction down upon the world and all its inhabitants. Only runebearer heroes, blessed by the gods' divine power, are able to stop him and his armies.
c. 7,200 BE	The Dread One's invasion over, the world's remaining forces—organized primarily by the Wizard-Priests of Ni-Gorth—attempt to destroy the Spire and its fell fortress. They fail. Instead, they seal it, shoring up the magic that Eslathagos Malkith (as Danar) created centuries ago. To maintain contact with the Seven Jewels of Parnaith, the wizard-priests create the *colordoor nodes*, places where the moving Ethereal Islands occasionally pass that one can access through particular notes of music.
c. 7,000 BE	The seas cease their shifting, and the land mass looks much as it does today.
c. 6,000 BE	The wizards of Kem build the city of Erish-aga.
c. 5,900 BE	The Solarr and Lunas elves finish construction of Dreta Phantas in the land then known as Theridae, north of the Spire along the coast. The line of the Dream Kings rules over the elves in an age of prosperity and peace. They are close allies of the followers of Ni-Gorth, who continue to maintain the Seven Jewels of Parnaith.
c. 5,600 BE	The cthorn, a strange and malevolent species of humanoids, prosper near the Gulf of Satran along the coast of the Southern Sea. They terrorize those around them and focus on gathering magical lore, particularly black magic.
c. 5,500 BE	The Charad Titans arrive in Theridae in great ships. They establish trade with the Solarr and Lunas elves of Dreta Phantas.
c. 5,300 BE	The Charad Titans discover the sleeping Galchutt and vast caches of chaositech. Some of them become corrupted by their discovery, and the titans begin to fight among themselves.
c. 5,000 BE	As the religion of Ni-Gorth fades into obscurity, the wizard-priests abandon the area surrounding Jabel Shammar and the Spire.
c. 4,800 BE	Last of the Earthsingers, the third overclan of dwarves, dies.
c. 4,600 BE	The cthorn diminish, undone by their own corruption. The wizards of Kem steal many of their secrets.
c. 4,200 BE	The Charad Titans leave in their great ships, ultimately repulsed by the evil of the area.
c. 4,000 BE	The Wars of Fire. Wizards from the west and those from Kem meet on the Plains of Panish and fight horrible magical wars.
c. 3,400 BE	The dark elves surface for the first time since their Shoal ancestors disappeared for their long subterranean exile. They wage wars with the elves of Theridae and Dreta Phantas.
c. 3,000 BE	Much of Kem is consumed in the Metalstorm, unleashed by wanton magic. Ochremeshk the Demon God is imprisoned in a magical rune.
c. 2,800 BE	The dark elves are driven back down underground by the armies of the surface elves. More Shoal elves settle in Theridae than ever before, having come to the region to help fight the dark elves.
c. 2,000 BE	Dwarves settle in the area near the Spire and build the fortress-city of Dwarvenhearth. Most of the city lies underground, but portions extend to the surface.
1,554 BE	The dark elves launch a massive attack on the surface elves and use a powerful spell, channeled directly from their goddess Gorgoth-Lol, to steal the entire city of Dreta Phantas, which they hide deep below the Spire. They settle in nearby areas even below Dwarvenhearth. The surface elves of Theridae are dispersed.
c. 1,500 BE	Humans settle in Theridae, founding the Kingdom of Palastan. They establish friendly relations with the dwarves of Dwarvenhearth.
c. 1,200 BE	The Wintersouled undead come to the area around the Spire, led by the King in Yellow. They find themselves drawn by the power of the sleeping Galchutt. Being undying creatures, they silently wait for the evil ones to awaken.
c. 1,000 BE	The Circle of Green, a powerful group of druids, forms in Palastan.
c. 800 BE	Uraq establishes itself as the world's major power economically, through its control of the Southern Sea.
c. 700 BE	The Metalstorm in Kem completely fades.
c. 600 BE	Seeking the *Black Grail* held within the Banewarrens, the half-demon wizard Sokalahn builds an underground fortress near the coast by the Spire. He eventually uses a powerful spell to shatter one of the Gates of Delirium and breach the wards around the Banewarrens. This causes the Entropy Sphere to spin forth great energies, which twist into pools and eddies called the Pits of Insanity. They dot the interior of the Spire and nearby subterranean locations, playing havoc with physical laws and magical powers.
c. 500 BE	Uraq's influence begins to decline.
477 BE	Lothian the wandering preacher is crucified. The Kingdom of Prust collapses when an earthquake and floods kill thousands, including the king and his entire court.
443 BE	The first of the dwarven wars with the dark elves begins.
c. 440 BE	Ghul the Half God, the Skull-King who claims to be the resurrected son of Eslathagos Malkith, slays the last of the cthorn.
436 BE	The first dwarven/dark elf war ends.
399 BE	Ghul slays the Circle of Green.
376 BE	The human wizard Alchestrin takes over Castle Shard.
351 BE	The second of the dwarven wars with the dark elves begins.
350 BE	The dwarves notice that someone has moved onto the Spire and has begun building a fortress. Their spies reveal it to be Ghul. This fortress, which he calls Goth Gulgamel, is built by creatures he created: the Toruk-Rul (which means "closing fist"). The war with the dark elves is too costly for the dwarves to do anything but seal off Dwarvenhearth's entrances to the surface.

Continued on page 84

wished to leave its presence. A small number would remain, having grown accustomed to the area and developed an affection for it.

They never told their brethren, as they waved goodbye to the departing Charad fleet, but those who stayed were drawn to the Spire and the lands around it. They built large fortresses surrounding it, and from them delved deep below the surface. The titans had no idea at the time, but they were compelled by the Galchutt, drawn to their immense power like moths to a flame. Through eldritch processes, they tapped into the sleeping Galchutt's power and siphoned it into themselves. But such potent energies come at a price. The Galchutt's evil nature tainted the power the Charad took, corrupting them into aberrant mockeries of the noble beings they once were.

Seven Jewels of Parnaith, page 485

Theridae is the ancient name for the region now known as Palastan, so named and governed by the Elder Elves.

Cthorn, page 460
Charad Titans, page 81
Ochremeshk, page 589

Dwarvenhearth, page 429

Today those few who even know of the existence of the so-called Elder Titans think of them only as terrors and evil beings that lived in the area around the Spire for a thousand years. But because this time was almost four thousand years in the past, their very existence is hardly ever mentioned in today's history texts. The corrupted titans spent most of their time underground. For a time, a small number of them conquered and ruled over the dark elves. Another group lived among the zaug. Still others spent their lives hoarding chaositech. It is unknown whether any of them still survive today.

THE UTTERDARK OF GHUL

The man (or creature) known as Ghul claimed to be the son of Eslathagos Malkith and some dark, unnamed demon goddess. He called himself the Half God and claimed the Spire as his birthright.

These were all lies.

He was indeed a half-demon, but he had no blood relation with the Dread One (who never had children). Ghul was a mighty sorcerer with incredible natural talent and an innate aptitude for utilizing and shaping power toward his own ends. Originally from the land of Kem, he searched the world for sources of power to exploit. When he came to the Spire, he knew he had found what he sought.

Ghul had discovered the Entropy Sphere, anchored in the middle of the Spire but not truly existing in that space—its wild, chaotic energies created their own spatial location. Ghul tapped into its almost limitless power to expand this supernatural space and found that it existed within a realm of complete blackness, which he named the Utterdark. He built his fortress, Goth Gulgamel, at an access point halfway up the Spire.

Palastan, page 44
Entropy Sphere, page 463
Wintersouled, page 223

Circle of Green, page 107
Zaug, page 602
Uraq, page 46
Chaositech, page 529

Ghul so admired the Dread One, he even assumed his symbol of a black skull and took from it the name "Skull-King." Most historians don't even recall that the symbol originally belonged to the first master of the Spire.

Pits of Insanity, page 387

Lothian, page 69

The paths within Goth Gulgamel stretched to points that magically joined with warrens that his servants quickly carved out of the living rock surrounding the Spire, all the way to the sea. These burrows provide the basis for most of the underground labyrinths that lie under Ptolus today, although many have been significantly altered, partitioned, or incorporated into other subterranean structures. In these chambers, Ghul

Alchestrin and Castle Shard, page 263

Goth Gulgamel, page 452
Kem, page 43

347 BE	The death of Caliph Ulrazed marks the true end of Uraq's position of power and influence.
343 BE	The second dwarven/dark elf war ends.
330 BE	Goth Gulgamel completed, Ghul sends his armies down to attack the dwarves.
319 BE	Ghul's forces drive the dwarves from Dwarvenhearth.
292 BE	Ghul begins an invasion to conquer the surrounding lands that history has termed the Ghulwar. His forces include Toruk-Rul, dark elves, tribes of evil men and dwarves, and monsters.
291 BE	Palastan falls to Ghul. Ghul slays King Rissathion upon the King's Stone.
290 BE	The Sea Kingdoms fall to Ghul.
289 BE	Eastern Rhoth falls to Ghul, cutting off the realm of Cherubar from the rest of the continent.
288 BE	Ghul conjures forth a magical darkness called the Utterdark, which covers the lands he has conquered.
285 BE	The elves of the northern Moonsilver Forest fall to Ghul. They are taken to Goth Gulgamel *en masse* and filter out again slowly as Harrow elves—the blighted ones.
282 BE	The Elder Elves of Theridae stop the advance of Ghul's armies near the River Tonam.
281 BE	The Cold Quiet begins. Few pass in or out of the Utterdark.
152 BE	The Cold Quiet ends. The armies of Ghul issue forth from the Utterdark, composed of Toruk-Rul, the newly spawned Sorn-Ulth (meaning "bleeding breath"), ogres, trolls, and worse.
150 BE	The Elder Elves, now allied with the Stonelost dwarves (descended from those who fled Dwarvenhearth), drive back Ghul's armies.
c. 100 BE	The dark elves drop their alliance with Ghul, concerned now with matters in the under-realms. The zaug begin a series of aggressions known as the Deep Wars.
87 BE	The elf wizard Khelaeson banishes the Utterdark.
86 BE	The elves and dwarves invade the realm of Ghul.
85 BE	The invaders take back the Moonsilver Forest and most of Palastan from Ghul.
84 BE	Ghul calls forth the Squirming Horde, also known as the Shrieking Horde, and defeats the elves and dwarves. The horde follows the Elder Elves back to their homeland of Theridae and razes it.
c. 75 BE	The dark elves drive their zaug enemies back from Dreta Phantas but grow sorely depleted in power.
74 BE	Ghul attacks Dreta Phantas in order to wrest it from the dark elves. He hopes to gain control of Koth, the dream tower fabled to guard the path to the many worlds.
71 BE	The Pact of Brightfather's Day. The Stonelost dwarves, the Shoal elves, the halfling tribes, the Grailwarden dwarves, and the Prustan humans of Tarsis from the east forge a pact to ally against Ghul.
c. 70 BE	The dark elves seal Dreta Phantas so that no one can enter (or so they think).
61 BE	Weakened from their battles with the dark elves, the foul hordes of Ghul fall to the combined forces of the Stonelost dwarves and the eastern Prustan forces. This marks the end of the Ghulwar.
59 BE	Goth Gulgamel falls. Ghul flees into the Jewels of Parnaith.
55 BE	The Great Seven hunt down Ghul and destroy him.
50 BE	With the help of Tarsis, the people of the once-dark lands begin to rebuild.
43 BE	The dwarves begin construction on Dalenguard, a fortress for the Tarsisans.
41 BE	Tarsisan outposts and garrisons dot the landscape, providing security and maintenance on the roads.
40 BE	Construction of Dalenguard completed.
9 BE	Delian Von Tessel becomes ruler of Tarsis, naming his seat of power the Lion-Guarded Throne after his family crest.
1 IA	The Lion-Guarded Throne proclaims Imperial control over the lands all around it. The Age of the Empire of Tarsis begins.
15 IA	After a short conflict, Rhoth falls to the Tarsisan armies and becomes part of the Empire.
61 IA	The noble houses of Palastan swear allegiance to the Lion-Guarded Throne.
110 IA	Despite magical aids, Delian Von Tessel, first Emperor of the Lion-Guarded Throne, dies.
180 IA	Uraq falls to the Empire after a series of bloody conflicts.
223 IA	A conclave of divine beings appoints Emperor Rudolf Von Tessel the Main Purveyor of Law. They grant him vast power, which he uses to strengthen the Empire.
301 IA	The Great Earthquake devastates much of Tarsis. Rebuilding takes almost fifty years.
386 IA	Following the assassination of her husband, Empress Addares (Von Tessel) X makes it illegal to own a firearm without official Imperial dispensation.
413 IA	The second city of Ptolus, named after fragmentary information regarding the distant past discovered by the loremaster Gerris Hin, is founded. It is built near (and eventually encompasses) the fortress of Dalenguard. The Church of Lothian opposes the founding of the city but takes no overt action. It does not explain its opposition.
417 IA	After years of labor, the artificial shoreline for the docks of Ptolus is finished and the harbor opens.
418 IA	The Brotherhood of the Sword is founded in Ptolus.
c. 420 IA	Sensing that the Galchutt would awaken within a few hundred years, the Wintersouled begin granting soldiers who fell in the Ghulwar the gift of unlife. They build the Dark Reliquary on the cliffs overlooking the sea. The Wintersouled manage to keep their undead servitors from drawing too much attention by residents of the growing city.

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The Main Purveyors

The idea of the four Main Purveyors, each a single being charged with representing Good, Evil, Law, or Chaos, is a concept unknown to most people. The most famous of the known Main Purveyors, Emperor Rudolf Von Tessel, was the Main Purveyor of Law throughout his unnaturally long lifetime. These individuals, each a shining example of the concept they embody, are said to be chosen by a conclave of the gods. They are always mortals, and obviously they are always enemies of each other. There is not always a Main Purveyor of every alignment at work in Praemal at all times; they arise only when worthy individuals answer the call.

With the mantle comes extra-long life and special powers—mostly involving influence over like-minded creatures. Thus, the Main Purveyor of Chaos gains the power to command creatures of chaos.

constructed breeding pits and laboratories where he created all manner of foul creatures that became part of his so-called "Squirming Horde." It was here, too, that Ghul tortured and twisted Elder and Shoal elves into Harrow elves as well as into the elves that became the Urthon Aedar (the latter a fact not widely known).

By 288 BE, Ghul had so mastered the power of the Entropy Sphere that he drew the Utterdark out into the normal, physical world. This darkness covered the lands for almost two centuries, until an elf wizard named Khelaeson finally banished it. Khelaeson was instrumental in Ghul's eventual downfall, as he also helped engineer the Pact of Brightfather's Day, wherein a unified army of elves, dwarves, humans, and halflings gathered to fight against the Squirming Horde. Eventually, the unified armies were victorious and laid siege to Goth Gulgamel. A group of heroes known today as the Great Seven pursued Ghul, who, upon seeing that his defeat was imminent, fled into the Jewels of Parnaith. It was there they slew him.

With Ghul dead, champions of the unified armies entered Goth Gulgamel, slaying every creature they could. Khelaeson used his knowledge of the Utterdark to sever many of the branching corridors from their anchors within the darkness, sending them to be lost forever in the void. Some of them, however, he left, claiming it was not within his power to destroy all of the fortress—but this was a lie. In truth, he knew that if they annihilated Goth Gulgamel, they might lose contact with the Entropy Sphere for good, and Khelaeson had the foresight to realize the sphere would have its uses. In fact, Khelaeson became the first of the Urthon Aedar, seeking and eventually finding a way to use the sphere to reach the stolen elven city of Dreta Phantas.

When Khelaeson and the other champions had finished with Goth Gulgamel, they left nothing alive (or undead). The place still reeked of evil, though, and the Brightfather armies did not want to risk another dark lord arising from the foul puissance of the Spire. So, under the guidance of the dwarves, they built Dalenguard to protect the location from intrusion. Thanks to that move, Goth Gulgamel lay quiet and vacant for centuries.

King's Stone, page 93

Zaug, page 602

Ghul, page 452

Delian Von Tessel, page 90

Urthon Aedar, page 130

Dreta Phantas, page 425

The Great Seven

The slayers of Ghul are: Dionys, a human fighter-druid; Eriskal, an elf rogue; Kam, a halfling monk; Runshallot, a human cleric; Saerth, an elf wizard-rogue; Uthegos, a dwarf fighter; and Yllistro, a half-elf sorcerer-ranger. Statues of the Great Seven stand in the Hall of Heroes in the Temple District (page 347).

Gerris Hin, page 308

Dark Reliquary, page 223

420 IA	Based on the research of Gerris Hin, Shay Orridar recreates the Knights of the Golden Cross to stand against evil and bring back the worship of the Elder Gods.
c. 431 IA	The noble families of Palastan relocate to Ptolus and begin building estates. Some of these are descendants of the original noble families of the first (but nearly forgotten) city of Ptolus.
440 IA	The Commissar of Ptolus grants each noble family a seat on the Assembly of the City Council as a way of placating the people of the region who have for so long looked upon the noble houses as rulers and thought-leaders.
444 IA	Construction of the Pale Tower is completed.
449 IA	As it is wont to do every thousand years or so, the tarrasque rises in Nall and ravages the countryside. It is eventually defeated by the half-orc warrior Brusk. After this, half-orcs are afforded a little more tolerance across the land.
c. 450 IA	Sewer workers, gravediggers, and construction workers begin to spread stories of the vast underground structures beneath Ptolus. Ghul's Labyrinth, Dwarvenhearth, dark elf tunnels, and natural caverns make for a complex system of interconnected subterranean spaces unlike anything anywhere else.
512 IA	The Brotherhood of the Sword disbands.
513 IA	By Ptolus's centennial, it has spread beyond its original bounds, the area that is now called Oldtown.
514 IA	Construction of Ptolus's Arena begins.
519 IA	Maven Balacazar consolidates many of the criminals in Ptolus for the first time. The Longfingers thieves' guild begins to lose its influence.
520 IA	Thadeus Koll discovers the Shadow of Ptolus and brings the *box of shadows* he finds there to the Malkuth.
532 IA	A drought in the north leads to food riots in Ptolus. The Sisterhood of Silence helps maintain order.
533 IA	The Sisterhood of Silence builds the Priory of Introspection in Ptolus.
554 IA	Fleeing the Empire's growing distaste for arcane magic (due to the influence of the Church of Lothian), the mages' guild known as the Inverted Pyramid relocates to Ptolus, in the hinterlands of the Empire.
560 IA	The Edict of Deviltry is issued, adding strict laws prohibiting arcane magic to the *Vast Codex*.
562 IA	The First Inquisition terrorizes the Empire. The "Days of Blood" begin.
563 IA	With sponsorship from the First Inquisition, the Keepers of the Veil forms in Ptolus.
564 IA	The First Inquisition ends.
590 IA	The wall around Ptolus is finished.
598 IA	The Second Inquisition begins. Its main goal is to find the Inverted Pyramid.
601 IA	The Order of Iron Might warriors' guild is founded in Ptolus.
602 IA	The ghost-lich Kagrisos rises from beneath the city streets to cast a spell that would spread a plague throughout the city. Before he can complete this horrible act, the great hero Abesh Runihan strikes him down. However, Runihan dies in the process.
609 IA	Despite tortures and horrible massacres, the Second Inquisition ends in failure. The Edict of Deviltry falls into disfavor. The "Days of Blood" end.
615 IA	The Commissar of Ptolus, Norrid Favanar, officially declares the city a safe haven for arcane spellcasters. Both Emperors officially reprimand the Commissar but make no move to stop the action. More and more wizards and sorcerers come to Ptolus.
617 IA	Commissar Norrid Favanar begins to make use of spellcasters in the City Watch.
618 IA	Aelian Fardream, an elf wizard, creates a number of clones of himself, including the one that will one day call itself the Shadow Eyes.
620 IA	Derrin Darkbirth establishes in the Guildsman District an asylum that will one day bear his name.
633 IA	The Imperial Census records the population of Ptolus as fifty thousand people.
c. 640 IA	Ptolus begins in earnest to incorporate existing underground structures as usable parts of the city. The Prison and other underground locations are established.
640 IA	The Brotherhood of Redemption finishes development of a magical process to redeem evil creatures and compel them to turn to good.
641 IA	The Edict of Deviltry is officially overturned.
643 IA	The Healers of the Sacred Heat begin their work in Ptolus.
651 IA	Yrkyth Vladaam creates the Enigma Engine, which he hopes will tap into the power of the Dread One's Entropy Sphere. He fails.
657 IA	The Prince of the Church is permanently stationed in Ptolus. The Prince at the time is Lukas Mikolic. The Church of Lothian is secretly concerned about the underground activity in Ptolus.
688 IA	The Keepers of the Veil move their headquarters to Ptolus.
690 IA	After almost two centuries of working unofficially to help keep order, the Sisterhood of Silence gains official Imperial sanction to enforce laws and deal with criminals in Ptolus.
693 IA	The first incident of Faceless Rage is recorded in Ptolus.
695 IA	Prince Lukas Mikolic dies of a degenerative disease called the Rotting Fester, which even magic could not permanently cure. The new Prince is his cousin, Rehoboth Ylestos.

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RISE OF EMPIRE

Although a powerful alliance already existed among the Prust and the Grailwarden dwarves, it would be incorrect to refer to their creation as an "empire" until after the Pact of Brightfather's Day, the building of Dalenguard, and, of course, the rise of Delian Von Tessel: first Emperor of Tarsis.

Unlike the previous chapters of history, the last seven centuries or so are extremely well documented and detailed. This is the history that schoolchildren know.

The Prust were humans who had originated in the southeast. Dark haired but fair skinned, from the earliest days they were ruled by authoritarian kings who organized them into an efficient, regimented society. Their traditional enemies were the peoples of the northern lands such as Nall or the tribes beyond the Grey Mountains to the east.

When the Prust and their Grailwarden allies took control of Tarsis, reputedly the oldest city in the world and certainly one of the largest, they developed a bond with the place. They called it the Eternal City and soon began to believe that it had always been theirs. From there, they would plant the seeds for their eternal Empire. After the Pact of Brightfather's Day, they knew the time had come.

However, the Empire almost collapsed before it could really form, amid dissent from squabbling nobles and numerous powerful factions. It took the charisma and drive of one man—Delian Von Tessel, son of the human signer of the Pact of Brightfather's Day—to unite the people of Tarsis. He was crowned Emperor.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Empire of Tarsis was that it was not born entirely of conquest. Resistance arose in some places, to be sure, but other lands had been so devastated by Ghul that they welcomed Imperial control—and the wealth, organization, and goods that came with it. Life was simply more stable and safe in the Empire, so Imperial armies often were welcomed at city gates with open arms. (This was certainly true at first in Palastan, one of the most ravaged lands.) By 100 IA, the Empire had spread from the Grey Mountains in the east to Cherubar in the west. That done, the Emperor next annexed all the lands beyond ever known to exist, literally claiming rulership over the entire world. Of course it took years for the distant lands to the south to even know this had happened, and by the time they did, it was simpler to send a minor tribute and words of fealty than to argue. At its height, the Empire of Tarsis controlled lands so distant that no Imperial soldier ever set foot there. The rulers of Panogolan and Buneir in the far south were simply declared Imperial governors and left to rule as they had always done.

The spread of Empire brought with it the spread of innovation. Grailwarden firearms, clockworks, and steam-powered machines were as much a part of the Empire as were Imperial laws, bureaucracy, and garrisons.

THE DECLINE

Some blame the Church. Some blame greedy or shortsighted Emperors. Some blame the forces of evil, whatever they may be. Some simply blame time. But after more than seven hundred years, the Empire of Tarsis is coming apart at its very seams.

At the height of the Empire, the power it wielded was supreme—both temporally and spiritually. The Emperor issued the Edict of Deviltry in 560 IA, declaring arcane magic akin to diabolism. The Edict made arcane spellcasting illegal, and worse, it gave the Church the power to punish, incarcerate, and even execute someone for violating Church doctrine. During the First and Second Inquisitions, the Church wielded supreme power in the Empire, both in the spiritual realm and the secular. And it is

It is the genius of Delian Von Tessel (page 90) that he created the "Empire of Tarsis," rather than the "Prustan Empire." This subtle but important move appeased the noble families of Tarsis while still giving the conquering Prust what they wanted.

Knights of the Golden Cross, page 120

Elder Gods, page 61
Pale Tower, page 305

The Arena, page 292
Balacazars, page 102
Longfingers Guild, page 123
Shadow of Ptolus, page 304
Box of shadows, *page 305*
Sisterhood of Silence, page 127
Nall, page 43
Priory of Introspection, page 349
Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

Order of Iron Might, page 125
Kagrisos and Abesh Runihan, page 111

Aelian Fardream, page 329

Derrin Darkbirth, page 175

The Prison, page 405

Brotherhood of Redemption, page 106

Healers of the Sacred Heat, page 348
House Vladaam, page 100

Holy Emperor Rehoboth, page 269

696 IA	The Gnoll War rages in southern Rhoth. General Igor Urnst leads Imperial troops to victory there.
700 IA	Holy Emperor Palabosh dies, and Rehoboth Ylestos becomes the new Emperor of the Church.
700 IA	The Eastern Hordes unite under the barbarian King Oulgas.
703 IA	Igor Urnst is appointed the Commissar of Ptolus.
706 IA	Empress Addares XXXIII and XVIII dies. The Empire is in chaos, with ultimately three different people claiming the Lion-Guarded Throne. Empress Addares XXXIV attempts to move the capital to her home city of Dohrinthas.
707 IA	The Commissar assembles the Twelve Commanders in Ptolus.
708 IA	The Urthon Aedar begin to appear in Ptolus, prophesying doom and performing enigmatic deeds.
709 IA	The Eastern Hordes lay siege to Tarsis. Eight-year-old Prince of the Church Kirian Ylestos arrives in Ptolus.
710 IA	Tarsis is overrun by barbarians from the Eastern Hordes. Holy Emperor Rehoboth of the Church of Lothian flees to Ptolus to stay with the Prince of the Church.
712 IA	The Commissar recruits willing volunteers to be transformed into trolls to guard the King's River Bridge from all threats.
713 IA	Explorers plumbing the ancient reaches beneath Ptolus discover great treasures and begin bringing them to the surface. Tacheron Kint gains fame as tales spread of the strange underground treasure troves he has found, reportedly dating back to the days of Ghul.
714 IA	The barbarians leave Tarsis. Emperor Segaci Fellisti attempts to reestablish the Empire from its traditional capital.
717 IA	Ptolus becomes the center of much attention as more and more would-be treasure-seekers plumb the depths below the city.
718 IA	The Delver's Guild is established. Thoy Champous, paladin of Ahaar, disappears while exploring the regions below Ptolus with the famous *bow of Ahaar*.
719 IA	Sheva Callister, a famous delver, uncovers the *Crown of Ki-Lias*, an artifact of the Charad Titans, below the city. She retires after she sells it.
720 IA	Minor outbreaks of Scarlet Death spread throughout Ptolus. Future crime lord Kevris Killraven arrives in the city.
721 IA	Today.

King Oulgas, page 43
Commissar Igor Urnst, page 140
Empress Addares, page 91
Twelve Commanders, page 140
Urthon Aedar, page 130
Kirian Ylestos, page 270

Polymorphed Defenders

In 712, the Commissar, having fought against monsters throughout his career as a military man, wanted monsters on his side when planning the defense of Ptolus. So he employed Inverted Pyramid mages to polymorph willing volunteers into appropriate monsters. The lack of volunteers limited the program to merely the use of polymorphed trolls guarding the King's River Bridge. One can see these trolls there today, garbed in Imperial military uniforms and serving a human commander. The Commissar still really likes this plan and, should the defense of Ptolus ever become an issue, would conscript "volunteers" for polymorphing.

Tacheron Kint, page 348
Emperor Segaci, page 91
Delver's Guild, page 108
Thoy Champous, page 348
Sheva Callister, page 208
Kevris Killraven, page 119

PLAGUES AND DISEASES OF NOTE

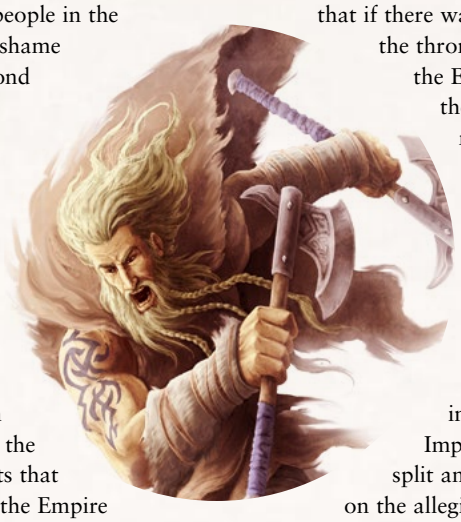
The following diseases have a magical rather than biological origin. Some say the appearance of these diseases is actually a reappearance that points to a festering cyst of chaos and darkness beneath the city that is seeping slowly to the surface.

Faceless Rage is a magical disease of evil and chaos that affects only humanoids. It transforms its victims by erasing their face and turning them into murderous creatures. Creatures are infected by contact with a diseased individual (DC 18 Constitution save to resist), with symptoms starting to show after one day. Each day, the creature must save again or their Intelligence and Wisdom each are reduced by 1d4. Only magical treatment can save a victim, namely a *lesser restoration* spell (or similar magic that cures diseases) followed by a *regenerate*, *greater restoration*, or *wish*.

Rotting Fester is a magical disease once contained solely within the Banewarrens. It causes its victims to deteriorate physically over time. Creatures are infected by contact with a diseased creature or object (DC 16 Constitution save to resist). Symptoms appear after 1d3 days, at which point the creature can no longer regain hit points and their hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every twenty-four hours that elapse. Disease-curing magic of 3rd level or lower only suspends the progress of the disease for 1d3 days; 4th-level or higher magic is required to actually cure it.

Scarlet Death is another magical disease spawned by chaos. Its victims turn red and die very quickly. Creatures are infected by contact with a diseased creature or object (DC 15 Constitution save to resist). Starting about an hour after exposure, the infected creature's hit point maximum decreases by 7 (2d6), continuing every hour.

difficult to describe what Church leaders did with that power, beyond simply stating that they abused it. They may have thought they were reforging the world in Lothian's name, but today that period of inquisition is called the Days of Blood, and most people in the Church look upon it with shame and regret. In 609 the Second Inquisition ended, and in 641 the Edict of Deviltry was overturned (although most regions were ignoring it long before that).



By then, people's faith in the Empire had been quite shaken, and the Inquisitions stirred up anti-Imperial sentiments in every jurisdiction. Further, the technological advancements that had been the backbone of the Empire slowed to a halt. Over time, people found it harder and harder to locate someone who could repair or maintain their firearms, clockworks, or steam engines. Even among the Grailwarden dwarves, the number of technicians declined with each passing year.

In 706, Empress Addares XXXIII and XVIII died, leaving no direct heirs. Her cousin in Dohrinthas, calling herself Addares XXXIV and XIX, declared herself empress and moved the capital to her city. But many opposed her claim. An imperial advisor named Segaci Fellisti, who had counseled many emperors and empresses, decided that only he could save the Empire. Soon after, Holy Emperor Rehoboth claimed that if there was no clear successor to the throne, he—the only person in the Empire officially holding the title "Emperor"—should rule, as the first and greatest of the emperors, Delian Von Tessel, did, wielding both religious and secular authority at once.

Holy Emperor Rehoboth, page 269

No one knew whom to follow. Everyone seemed to choose a side, including factions of the Imperial army. Taxes were split among all three, depending on the allegiance of the various governors or commissars. Thus, Imperial finances were in terrible shape when in 710 barbarian invaders from the east stormed Tarsis and sacked the city. Upon leaving the city four years later, King Oulgas, leader of the united Eastern Hordes, said he had conquered it simply because he could. Resentment of the Empire had finally taken its toll.

For more information on the state of the Empire today, see Chapter 2: The World.

THE IMPERIAL LINE

When Delian Von Tessel established the Lion-Guarded Throne in 9 BE, he forged a dynasty that lasted more than seven hundred years. Only very recently, with the death of Empress Addares XXXIII, did the line come to an end—of course, Addares XXXIV claims that it never died but continues in her.

Delian Von Tessel was a Prustan noble and general with a distinguished career. He used his reputation and political clout to get himself named Emperor, promoting the idea that a true Empire would bring peace and prosperity to the known world under his guiding hand. His wife, Addares Von Tessel, was a strong woman well suited to serve as Empress next to her husband. It was Delian who decided that Tarsis, long considered the oldest city in the world, would be the seat of Empire rather than some city deep in the Prustan Peninsula. Tarsis was also where he had been born and raised; his Prustan ancestors took control of the city long before his birth. Delian enjoyed the deep respect of the Grailwarden dwarves, which ensured that they would support the Empire with their fantastic innovations in technology and that Imperial soldiers would be backed by dwarven cannon.

THE SUCCESSION

Delian lived a very long life, enhanced by all the magical aids the Empire could provide. He died at the age of one hundred forty-three, after outliving his wife and even his children. Though she died nineteen years before he did, and thus never ruled directly as Empress herself, his wife Addares accomplished much for the Empire and its citizens during her life. She was so influential, in fact, that by the end of her rule it had become commonplace for parents of the Imperial line to name their girls Addares. Later it became tradition for any woman ascending to the throne to take the name, even if it was not hers to begin with.

Further complicating the naming convention is that one distinguishes the Empress's name both by the number of Addareses that came before her and by the number of prior Addareses that actually ruled as Empress (as opposed to being the wife of the ruling Emperor). Thus, each Addares has two numbers associated with her name. The most recent fully accepted Empress was Addares XVIII and XXXIII, meaning that she was the thirty-third Addares of the Imperial line but only the eighteenth to sit upon the Lion-Guarded Throne. Males in the Imperial line have no parallel; each male emperor has a different name.

Delian was not only the ruler of the Empire but the spiritual leader of its official religion as well. Serving as the head of the Church of Lothian, he directed all matters of the Church, interpreting and creating holy doctrine as easily as he interpreted and created Imperial law. When Delian died, his heir—an elderly nephew, Radlov Von Tessel—abdicated the position as head of the Church and created a position known as the Emperor of the Church. In theory, this individual would be a co-ruler, handling all spiritual and Church matters while the secular Emperor dealt with more worldly concerns.

In truth, the Emperor wields a great deal more power than the Holy Emperor. But that is not to imply that the Holy Emperor is not a personage of vast influence. Being the second most powerful figure in an Empire that rules the known world is nothing to ignore.

The Von Tessel family was known as the Lions of Tarsis, and thus the Imperial seat was founded as the Lion-Guarded Throne, which it has remained ever since. The line of succession, although complex, is gender neutral. When an Emperor or Empress dies, the oldest living member of the immediate family (spouse or child) takes the throne. If there are no direct heirs, a complicated line of succession involving siblings, nephews, nieces, cousins, and so forth is traced until an appropriate heir is found. (It should be noted that the succession of the Holy Emperor does not work this way but is focused on males and male heirs.)

THE THREE EMPERORS

Of course, as the Empire stands today, there are no clear heirs to the Von Tessel line. The current claimants to the Lion-Guarded Throne are as follows:

Addares XXXIV: A distant cousin of Addares XVIII and XXXIII by marriage, this native of Dohrinthas had never even been to Tarsis before the Empress died. Far more interested in pomp and wealth than in actually ruling, Addares XXXIV has a reputation for throwing incredible parties, wearing amazing magical gowns, and stringing along a list of lovers too long for even her advisors to track. She is no fool, however; knowing her links to the throne are tenuous at best, she has put into motion plans to discredit her rivals. She also has the support of two influential generals in the Imperial Army. They have moved their legions to the lands surrounding her new capital, Dohrinthas, where she has promised to construct a new Imperial fleet greater than any that have come before.

Segaci Fellisti: With no legitimate claim to the Imperial line, Segaci is perhaps the unlikeliest of the three Emperors. He contends that, great as it was, the Von Tessel line finally has come to an end. An advisor to the last three Emperors, Segaci feels that only he can restore order to the Empire and bring back its quickly fading greatness. Segaci, a very old man, has the support of much of the Imperial Court due to his experience as a diplomat and his skill as a ruler. Segaci will do whatever it takes to restore the Empire, and this single-mindedness has led him to forge some strange and perhaps ill-advised alliances, including one with Kevris Killraven (see page 119). Segaci puts much of his faith in an organization known as the Shuul, which promises to restore the technological might and innovation that made the Empire strong so long ago.

Holy Emperor Rehoboth: The reigning Holy Emperor, Rehoboth Ylestos is a power-hungry man interested in joining both "halves" of the Empire under himself. His claim to the throne is simple: only one person in the Empire today legitimately has the title "Emperor," and it is he. The fact that he fled Tarsis when the barbarians were coming, making a prolonged "visit" to his son in Ptolus, has earned him a poor reputation among the influential of the Imperial government. In return, ignoring those who belittle him, he plans to declare Ptolus the seat of the Empire. This has caused nothing but outrage among the citizens. Even the Commissar of Ptolus is unlikely to support Rehoboth when the time comes for him to pick a side.

POSSIBLE FUTURES

Obviously, the Imperial line—and the Empire itself—stands at a crossroads. The shape of the future likely depends on which Emperor finally takes true control of the Lion-Guarded Throne.

If Addares takes the throne, she obviously will keep the seat of Imperial power in Dohrinthas. Such a move will be wildly unpopular in the Empire, and she likely will not have the support or the ability to hold the Empire together. Should she take the throne, one could expect the Empire of Tarsis to truly begin to fall apart within ten years, and possibly collapse entirely during her reign or that of her successor. The various lands of the Empire—Nall, Rhoth, Palastan, and so on—would declare their independence. Ptolus likely would become an independent city-state.

If Segaci becomes the true Emperor, one might expect him to attempt to reinstate the technological glory of days gone by. And with the support of Shuul advancements in machineworks, this might be possible. In such an Empire, Ptolus would become a hub of industry with a Commissar who was nothing more than a Shuul puppet. Imperial troops, armed with firearms as in days of old, would strengthen the Empire's hold on its lands and deal with the barbarians in the east once and for all. Segaci might even decide to expand, setting his sights on Uraq and the south.

If Rehoboth gains the throne, the Holy Emperor would once again be the secular Emperor as well. The Church would be strengthened to the position it held during the Days of Blood, although Rehoboth would not allow such inquisitions to begin again—he is no reactionary theologian, and he would be too interested in earning and keeping the goodwill of the people to renew the witch hunts. Ptolus would become the new Imperial capital. However, in his obsession to become a beloved emperor and to promote goodwill for the Church, he likely would make concessions that would greatly weaken the Empire, and slowly it would collapse from within.

Holy Emperor Rehoboth Ylestos

Chapter 6:

ORGANIZATIONS

Unlike the previous chapters, this lengthy one deals specifically with the city of Ptolus. However, it does not cover any particular portion of the city, but instead the city's residents: the groups and families that wield power and influence here. These organizations are in many ways the heart and soul of the Ptolus Campaign, and most player characters will deal with them extensively, some as allies and some as enemies.

The relationship between the noble families and the common folk of Ptolus is a complex one. On one hand, a commoner in Ptolus is likely to have their fair share of contempt for the nobility and their decadent lifestyles.

On the other hand, the Commissars of Ptolus have allowed the nobility to continue to exist because they have the support of the people. Plus, common folk love nothing more than gossiping about the lives of the nobility and have historically preferred the rule of local nobles to that of the Empire. In the end, perhaps they simply prefer the nobles they know to those they don't.

Palastan, page 44

King's Stone, page 93

City Council, page 140

The key to understanding Ptolus almost certainly requires an understanding of the organizations of people who live there. Ptolus as we know it exists as a result of the ways these groups interact. From the noble houses to the criminal organizations, from the knighthoods to the guilds, these are the groups that have really shaped the city. This chapter details dozens of the most important groups in (and under) Ptolus.

NOBLE HOUSES

Ptolus has ten noble families, all of whom claim a special status by ancestral right. Although the Empire does not officially recognize their titles, Ptolus is far enough removed from the heart of the Empire that local traditions and beliefs still grant the noble houses hereditary seats on the city's ruling council. Plus, most of them are quite wealthy, and with affluence comes influence.

While not every house is equal in terms of power or money, the Commissar granted each one a single seat on the Ptolus City Council close to three centuries ago. The people of Ptolus and the surrounding area feel a sense of tradition and respect for the noble houses, for they represent the familial lines that have commanded power and influence in the region since at least a thousand years before the founding of the Empire. Thus, the noble houses are all far older than Ptolus itself—many thousands of years old, in most cases, although not all the houses can claim the same longevity. In the days before the Empire, the leader of one house was appointed King or Queen of Palastan and ruled over all the houses and most of what is now southern Palastan. (It should be noted that this king has no relation to the monarchy that now claims rulership in the city of Trolone—see Chapter 5: History.)

What only the high-ranking members of each house know is that, after a fashion, the last king still rules, despite the fact that he died at the claws of Ghul hundreds of years ago. His ghost, known only as the Last King, resides in a sacred stone called the King's Stone. Although he does not take an active hand in ruling the houses, he still presides over all disputes between them, enforcing what the families call the Ancient Rites of Custom. First and foremost, these rites forbid any member of a noble house from murdering another, whether from the same house or a different one, except as part of a formal challenge performed before the Last King. The rites are enforced by an ancient and powerful curse that would bring inevitable doom to anyone who violated them.

THE KING'S STONE

Once located far to the south, the King's Stone is a single megalith made of a strange blue and silver mineral said to have fallen from the sky when the world was young. It long represented the power of the king of the region that is now southern Palastan and all areas north of the Cold Desert. It is, in fact, this king that gives the King's River in Ptolus its name, although the people who know that bit of lore are few and far between today.

When Ghul, the Skull-King, rose to power, he personally slew King Rissathion and laid his corpse upon the King's Stone to defile it forever. Instead, Rissathion's soul entered the stone, and he became known as the Last King.

When the noble families all moved to the city of Ptolus about three centuries ago, they discreetly moved the King's Stone with them and secreted it away in a recess at the base of the Spire. Today the Last King remains in this hidden crevice within the King's Stone, presiding over all challenges and disputes between the noble houses as a part of the Ancient Rites of Custom. The king has the power to seal off the crevice so that no force short of a deity or a wish can penetrate it unless he allows it. Within this area, challenges are sometimes settled by trials of combat, although this is quite rare today.

Because of the Ancient Rites of Custom and the power of the Last King, all the noble houses obey his rulings and judgments. Even the most immoral members of House Vladaam and the most conniving members of House Abanar know that to disobey the Last King or break with the Ancient Rites of Custom will bring down doom upon them.

Each house comprises two levels of membership. The first members are titled individuals. In most cases, these are people who can draw a direct blood tie or familial connection by marriage to the noble family itself. The head of each house is always known by the title of lord or lady. The second type of house affiliation is known simply as an "extended association." These are people with no title or familial bond to the house who nonetheless enjoy strong ties with it. For example, Nestlin Ka, the majordomo of House Dallimothan, is not a member of the family, but he is a member of the house. (Technically, these people are "associates," although in truth that term is rarely used. They are simply "members" of the house in question.) These extended association members often have a relationship with their house that goes back generations, further distinguishing them from simple servants or employees.

Extended association members usually earn a stipend from the noble house, while family members have funds placed in trust that represent some portion of the house's total wealth (with the head of the house commanding the lion's share).

Members of noble houses are predominantly human.

ABANAR

A mercantile family, House Abanar commands great wealth. Abanar is the largest house as well as the wealthiest, although probably not the most powerful or influential. In Ptolus, people say, "Wealth breeds contempt," and that's true of the merchants of Abanar. The members of the house have a poor reputation. Most people think of them as greedy, usurious cheats and liars who use their power, position, and wealth to gain greater power, position, and wealth.

Abanar is unique among the noble houses, due to the fact that one can quite literally buy one's way into it. For approximately 10,000 gp, anyone can buy a minor title and position within the house hierarchy. This enables the titled individual to attend house functions and participate in house business (from making investments to actual employment in a house-owned business at a managerial level). This is what makes the house so large. The house has as many as one hundred titled members, with an extended association of another two hundred individuals. (Most houses have five to twelve titled members and an extended association of perhaps forty to eighty.)

Dered Abanar (male human) is the very old head of the house. Most people believe he is not long for this world—most, that is, except for Dered. If he has made plans for what will become of the house leadership when he is gone, he hasn't let on, much to the consternation of his many children and other high-ranking members of the house. Dered is worth millions of gold coins when one considers all holdings and controlling interests in various businesses in addition to liquid wealth. He is still quite sharp mentally but has grown feeble in his old age. He floats about the house's estate on a huge magical chair, never leaving the premises; he conducts all business by proxy and agent. His wealth has not made him kind or happy, but instead deadly serious, spiteful, and even quietly paranoid.

Abanar keeps many adventurers, mercenaries, and bounty hunters busy by offering a sizable

House Abbercombe

Once the eleventh noble house, House Abbercombe had enemies—Houses Abanar, Sadar, and Vladaam—that engineered its downfall over five centuries ago. In its day, Abbercombe was an ally of Erthuo and Shever, but it was always a small house. Most people believe that its last lord fell victim to a curse and died of a wasting disease. The truth is that in the house's last days, a powerful wizard and cleric fashioned an artificial body of gold to house the lord's spirit while his body was healed and the curse was lifted. Once his spirit was within the golden body, however, the spellcasters were slain by Sadar agents. Thus, Lord Abbercombe, last member of his house and family, lives today within an immortal body not his own. He prefers to wander the caverns and tunnels below the city rather than its streets. For more on Lord Abbercombe, see Chapter 33: Adventures.

Nestlin Ka, page 95

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

Dered Abanar has aristocrat stats (page 606), with History +4, Investigation +4, and Insight +4.

House Abanar Coat of Arms

Abanar currently offers a bounty for the capture of a dark elf thief named Shilukar. See page 563.

Andach the druid, page 219

The Malkuth, page 124

Kirstol Dallimothan has adult silver dragon stats; alignment lawful good. When he assumes human form, he takes on the stats and capabilities of a deadly warrior (page 607) as described under Change Shape, with AC 23 (25 against ranged attacks) and +6 on melee attacks and damage. Equipment: +3 plate armor, arrow-catching shield, Sword of the Dragonkings *(page 644)*, belt of fire giant strength, thoughtstone, helm of telepathy, potions of superior healing *(4)*, *ivory ring of House Dallimothan (worth 10,000 gp), 100 pp. He can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks): 1/day each:* cure wounds *(5d8 + 5 hit points)*, haste, locate creature, teleport, wall of force

House Dallimothan Coat of Arms

Father Claw, page 72

Ni-Gorth, page 73

House Vladaam, page 100

While many people fear House Dallimothan due to its relationship with dragons, most realize that these nobles are stalwart enemies of the forces of darkness.

Some years ago, a half-dragon named Synethys sought to join House Dallimothan but was deemed unworthy. See page 321.

reward (500 to 1,000 gp, or sometimes as high as 5,000 gp) for the head of anyone who steals from the house or one of its businesses. This serves as a fairly good deterrent, though not a perfect one. With its vast holdings, Abanar always has one or two recent outstanding bounty offers—and far more old ones (some thieves are just never caught). The Commissar has stopped objecting to this kind of mercenary justice, if for no other reason than it occasionally works.

Abanar has no real allies among the other houses or other important organizations in the city. Its members frequently butt heads politically with House Khatru and House Nagel.

See Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257) for information about the estate of House Abanar.

DALLIMOTHAN

To the people of Ptolus, House Dallimothan is "House Dragon," although no member of this noble house would ever use that name. In fact, while it is fairly common knowledge that the lineage of Dallimothan extends back to dragonkind—and some would speculate that most family members are dragons or half-dragons—the members of the house make no such claims. In fact, they would look upon an outsider doing so (or even asking whether it were true) as an insult of the highest degree. The house's official position is that "Dallimothan is a friend to dragonkind." This hardly needs stating, however, since as often as not there is a dragon roaming, sleeping, or even romping about the grounds of this noble house's estate.

The truth is that the Dallimothan family does indeed descend from dragons who could take human form. It goes back to at least the time of Father Claw and Ni-Gorth, some eight thousand years ago. Only House Vladaam is older. Occasionally, humans or elves would join the family by marriage, producing half-dragon sons and daughters. Of the current family, there are five half-dragons and six full-blooded (or nearly so) dragons. Strangely enough, not all the dragons that have been, or currently are, part of the family have been of the same type. Most have been metallic, but there have been a few chromatic wyrms as well. Of the six dragon family members, four are silver, one is gold, and one is bronze. This draconic interbreeding has produced interesting offspring over the millennia. One type or another almost always breeds true, but the individuals sometimes have unique abilities. They usually seem in some way superior to a typical member of their type.

KIRSTOL DALLIMOTHAN

Lord Kirstol Dallimothan leads the house. He is an old (adult, but not yet ancient) silver dragon who almost always keeps a human form—that of a tall and handsome man. He is able to use his breath weapons even in human form, although when he does, his mouth opens wide in a reptilian manner and his skin flashes with silver scales. He also retains some of his draconic strength in human form. Kirstol is a personal friend of Andach the druid and some of the more powerful celestials among the Malkuth.

Lord Kirstol used to be known as Phord Dallimothan, Kirstol's "father," and before that as Hallos Dallimothan, his "grandfather." The lord, at more than four hundred years old, has undergone these identity changes to help preserve the illusion that he is human (or at least partially so). In his human form, he wears an ivory ring of House Dallimothan worth 10,000 gp.

OTHER MEMBERS

Other family members include Narris, a young male silver; "Uncle Favil," a nearly ancient silver; "Great Aunt Klaron," an ancient silver; "Grandmama," an older adult gold; Utresh, an adult bronze; and the various half-dragon "cousins," three of whom are still just children. (Most Dallimothan half-dragons are not obvious

ORGANIZATIONS AND MONEY

The organizations discussed here command vast wealth, but at any given time much of that wealth is tied up in property, business holdings, and investments, as well as in the assets of its members. Thus, the vault of, say, House Dallimothan may hold only 10,000 gp in coins, but the noble house is worth millions. Most organizations also have extensive lines of credit that they can draw upon if necessary, extending their financial reach even farther.

In effect, unless an organization is described as being extremely small or poor, it may be useful to assume that it always has access to the funds it needs, at least from the PCs' point of view. For example, if the player characters need to sell a powerful magic ring and hope to get about 60,000 gp for it, it's safe to assume that either Menon Balacazar or Lord Khatru could purchase it (as well as others, most likely) if they wanted to—although it might take them a day or two to gather the necessary funds. Likewise, if an adventure hook requires that the Knights of the Pale offer the PCs 5,000 gp each to perform a task for them, the GM can always assume that they have it (particularly if they offer to pay in letters of credit, magic items, or treasure).

Coins listed as the possessions of the heads of organizations represent not their total accessible funds, but what they generally carry on them at any given time.

For more on money, see The Economy in Chapter 7: The City by the Spire (page 145).

The Dallimothan estate in the Nobles' Quarter has a quite interesting tower with unique properties; see page 272.

Members of House Dallimothan have an outstanding offer of 50,000 gp for any of the ancient artifacts called orbs of dragonkind. *Any orbs brought to them are destroyed—the Dallimothans hate these dragon-controlling items. No one has found an orb in centuries, but the offer is still valid for any orbs that remain.*

as such in appearance.) It's common to see Uncle Favil or Great Aunt Klaron playing with the half-dragon children on the estate grounds in dragon form. Narris delights in flying about the city in his true form as well. They never allow outsiders to see them change from one form to another, however. Sometimes dragons from elsewhere in the world visit the estate.

Nestlin Ka is the majordomo of the house. This slight, short, bald man has impeccable manners and a crisp, precise style of speaking. Visitors to the house often speak only with Nestlin, but he makes that a pleasant experience.

House Dallimothan has always strived toward benevolence and seeks to live among other sentient beings as equals. Its members look harshly upon dragons (usually chromatic) who prey upon other intelligent creatures or terrorize and steal from those less puissant than themselves. Despite this outlook, they view all dragonkind as kin and tend to forgive others of their kind generously. In the past, members of House Dallimothan have paid secret reparations to those harmed by other dragons in the region, leaving bags of gold mysteriously on doorsteps.

No one attached to the house ever mentions the name of Father Claw. They refer to him only as the Destroyer or the Annihilator, and rarely that.

In the library of the estate, Kirstol keeps an ancient book of great dweomercraft. The Great Book magically records the name of all dragons who have ever lived, as well as their exploits, the location of their lairs, and other pertinent details.

House Dallimothan has always been a bitter rival of House Vladaam. The members remain on good terms with House Kath and House Nagel. Despite a shared hatred for House Vladaam, no member of House Dallimothan will work with the Knights of the Golden Cross, for they were once well-known dragonslayers.

See Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257) for details about the estate of House Dallimothan.

Knights of the Golden Cross, page 120

ERTHUO

Scholars and gentlefolk, House Erthuo normally avoids confrontation and rarely gets involved with the various rivalries or intrigues that seem to be the lifeblood of other houses.

House Erthuo Coat of Arms

Like most of the other noble houses, Erthuo started out as an aristocratic human family, but over the years it has become more and more devoted to the culture of elvenkind. Family members have married elves, producing half-elf Erthuo offspring, as well as making the members' elven mates full members of the house. Of all the titled Erthuo members in the family today, only three are humans; seven are half-elves, and three are elves. Cordelia Erthuo (female human) technically has at least a little elvish blood, and Vaethir Erthuo (male elf) has a little human blood.

Nestlin Ka has steward stats, page 613

Cordelia Erthuo has noble stats.

Vaethir Erthuo has expert stats (page 609) and knows a few 1st-level wizard spells.

House Erthuo is said to own one of the finest collections of rare books, antiquities, and artifacts of historical significance in this part of the world. Most of their wealth, in fact, is tied up in their various private collections.

The head of the house is Peliope Erthuo (female half-elf). She enjoys the placid tranquility of her home and the calm that comes from staying well away from intrigue, politics, and conflicts. However, her life is not without risk or danger. Peliope has indulged in a long-term sexual affair with Renn Sadar, a married man. If this were to come to light, not only would Peliope be shamed by the scandal and gossip, but she would risk bringing her house into an alliance with House Sadar. Such

Peliope Erthuo has aristocrat stats, page 606

Renn Sadar, page 99

Tallaeth has aristocrat stats, page 606
Sallina has artisan stats, page 606
Raule has aristocrat stats, page 606
Katerin has artisan stats, page 606

House Kath Coat of Arms

Imperial Academy of Music, page 271
Crown Theater, page 268

Soldiers in Khatru's army have guard, knight, or veteran stats.

House Khatru Coat of Arms

Order of Iron Might, page 125
Knights of the Chord, page 120
Edict of Deviltry, page 87

Garin Vnata has noble stats.
Myalla Wurt has expert stats, page 609
Lady Devina Kath has aristocrat stats, page 606
Matrenus has aristocrat stats, page 606
Ethisha has aristocrat stats, page 606

Lord Dorant Khatru has deadly warrior stats (page 607), with AC 25, +1 to all saves; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: +3 breastplate, +3 shield, axiomatic longsword *(page 636)*, cloak of protection, brooch of Khatru *(page 636)*, thoughtstone *(page 644)*, potion of supreme healing, potion of vitality, *50 pp, 150 gp.*

a pairing would destroy Erthuo's neutrality and place the family in league with a noble house with whom it has not a single political opinion in common. Peliope and Renn's mutual attraction and affection defy all logic, for they agree on virtually nothing.

See Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257) for information about the estate of House Erthuo.

KATH

If there are stars on the Ptolus social scene, they are the Kath family. These wealthy aristocrats have striking talents, winning charm, and extreme comeliness. People in the city follow the exploits of House Kath with wonder and admiration. Kath concerns itself almost exclusively with the arts, and most members of the family are trained musicians, dancers, painters, sculptors, or writers.

House Kath administers the respected music Conservatory in Ptolus (also called the Imperial Academy of Music). It owns the Crown Theater and serves as patron of a number of theater troupes and opera companies, as well as small dancing and singing groups in the city. Kath also employs talent scouts to search the city for young, beautiful, and talented individuals to recruit as house associates, trained for free at the Conservatory or apprenticed under master artists. Such recruits are treated extremely well. They are set up for life financially, as long as they remain diligent and perform well—and remain always loyal and obedient to House Kath.

House Kath has strong and ancient ties to the Knights of the Chord and can call upon them for assistance when needed. Likewise, it is in Kath's interest to support the knights and keep them strong, well funded, and secure.

Among the members of House Kath, decorum and etiquette are the rule of the day. This is particularly true among their extended association, such as Garin Vnata (male human), a haughty effete who serves as Vice Chancellor of the Conservatory, or Myalla Wurt (female human), the estate's severe house matron, who greets guests with a cold, suspicious eye and insincere but properly polite compliments.

Lady Devina Kath (female human) is the head of the house. She also composes music and writes poetry with wide critical acclaim as well as mass appeal. Although in her forties, she is a striking example of womanhood, her flaxen hair usually worn up. Whenever anyone sees her, she is wearing a beautiful and original gown and carefully applied cosmetics. Other family members include Matrenus (male human), Devina's husband; Ethisha (female human), Devina's ballerina daughter; Tallaeth (male half-elf), Ethisha's husband; Sallina (female human), Devina's sister; Raule (male human), Sallina's son, a well-known singer and songwriter; and Katerin (female human), Devina's sculptor cousin.

Kath maintains good relations with House Nagel, House Dallimothan, and, surprisingly, House Sadar. This family dislikes House Vladaam, House Khatru, House Abanar, and House Rau.

See Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257) for information about the estate of House Kath.

KHATRU

Famous for its military leadership and martial prowess, House Khatru is made up entirely of headstrong warriors and fighters. Most people believe them to be arrogant, self-righteous warmongers—and that opinion isn't far from the truth.

Members of the Khatru family are poorly equipped to hide their nature even if they wanted to. They have no respect for spellcasters or sneaky combatants such as rogues—only for those who live by the skill and strength of their sword arm. To Khatru, might makes right . . . and they have the most might.

House Khatru has its own private army, numbering around a hundred extremely well-trained troops. Almost to a soldier, these warriors also belong to the Order of Iron Might warriors' guild. House Khatru does not hesitate to use this army if needed, putting them at the city's disposal in times of crisis as well as in private disputes.

Although they have neither the time nor the patience for religion, the members of Khatru have regretted the Church's abolition of the Edict of Deviltry ever since it happened some eighty years ago. They think of all arcanists as cowards at best, and diabolists at worst. Even most clerics, in their eyes, are likely demon-lovers, weak in their hearts and overly dependent on others—even if the "others" in question are in fact gods.

Lord Dorant Khatru is the current master of the house. At eighty-nine years old, Dorant is far older than he appears (about forty, according to most). Rumors blame this on some magical effect, but he denies any such thing, claiming he simply comes from strong stock with good breeding.

The truth is even more interesting. Unbeknownst to Dorant, his youthful appearance and vigor are indeed the result of a spell, cast upon him more than sixty years ago. During a dalliance with an elf wizard, his

paramour cast a spell on him to grant him the lifespan of an elf, rather than that of a human. In this way, the two could share their love forever. Unfortunately, the relationship did not last (no Khatru would ever marry an elf), but the magical effect did.

Dorant is the head of the Order of Iron Might and one of the Twelve Commanders. He is a close confidant of the Commissar and supports the Empire more than representatives of any other noble family do, with the possible exception of the machine-savvy House Shever.

House Khatru hates the members of House Rau and would have long preferred to slay the lot of them. Khatru folk also dislike and mistrust House Vladaam and House Sadar, both of whom they assume to be evil, conniving wizards or demon-lovers—or both. They are no friends of Houses Kath or Abanar, but the enmity is minor. Of all the houses, Khatru prefers Shever.

See Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257) for information about the estate of House Khatru.

NAGEL

An older house, Nagel has recently fallen on hard times. The former head of the house, Kurtlan Nagel (male human), was placed in the Prison for murder. The truth of the matter is that House Sadar framed him and bribed or blackmailed various authorities to keep it quiet. Lord Kurtlan was never formally tried—just tossed into one of the darkest corners of the Prison and left to rot. (Odsen Rom, the warden of the Prison, is an ally of Renn Sadar.)

In days of old, House Nagel had a reputation for altruism and charity. Its members opposed those who would exploit or abuse the common folk and did much to help the impoverished and otherwise needy.

Lady Fransin Nagel (female human), wife of Kurtlan, is mistress of this house now. She devotes virtually all her time and energy to recovering her husband. This may involve an even larger bribe to Odsen Rom than what House Sadar gave him, but even that may not be enough to sever the warden's ties to that alliance. Lady Fransin looks for aid wherever she can find it. Despite her current straits, she remains an elegant, regal lady full of class, grace, and pride with a kind heart and undaunted courage.

The rest of the family members alive today consist only of Kurtlan's doddering uncle Yarek (male human) and Yarek's sickly daughter Nilla (female human). The rest of the house numbers less than a dozen, and the family recently had to let go of most of its servants.

Needless to say, House Nagel is an enemy of House Sadar and has been for centuries. In days long past, they called the Knights of the Golden Cross allies, but time rather than actions wore those ties away. Fransin Nagel is close friends with Doraedian Mythlord, master of Iridithil's Home. Among the noble houses, only Houses Kath and Dallimothan call Nagel an ally anymore.

For more information on the estate of House Nagel, see Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257).

RAU

The Rau, as they like to be called, have earned a reputation as rogues, pirates, and scalawags. Long ago, Rau ships prowled the Whitewind Sea looking for prey under the guise of explorers. Today, their past privateering and profiteering ventures are no secret, giving rise to the phrase "a deal with the Rau," meaning a cheat or swindle. They still own a fleet of ships that serve as merchant vessels or sometimes as mercenary craft hired to escort other vessels for

A valuable relic of House Nagel, its ancient crest sits in a secret vault of the Longfingers Guild headquarters (page 402).

Kurtlan Nagel has aristocrat stats, page 606

The Prison, page 405

Odsen Rom, page 405

Renn Sadar, page 99

Lady Fransin Nagel has aristocrat stats, page 606

Yarek Nagel, whom most people believe is a senile old man, is sharper than he appears. He spends a great deal of his time at the Yarrow Street Forum (page 312) listening to what people there have to say and generally getting an idea of where public opinion lies on the issues of the day. He is a wise old man, but he does tend to digress into stories of the old days with little provocation.

Uncle Yarek has aristocrat stats, page 606

Nilla has commoner stats

Knights of the Golden Cross, page 120

Twelve Commanders, page 140

Doraedian Mythlord, page 197

Iridithil's Home, page 197

House Rau Coat of Arms

Kevris Killraven, page 119

the right price (the employer always keeping one eye on the Rau ship for a sudden betrayal).

The truth is, however, that the Rau hardly ever work as brigands or con artists today. They have found what they call "soft crime" much more profitable. Soft crime, in the parlance of House Rau, means taking on a managerial role rather than a direct one. For example, the Rau finance criminal operations for a cut of the profits. They manage small gambling dens and bordellos, smuggle goods, and help minor criminals find work (for a cut). Ironically, in order for this new business to succeed, the Rau have learned that only honesty and integrity in their dealings earns them the trust they need, even if it is a trust among criminals.

In fact, they have perfected this underworld trust to such a degree that they have earned a parental figure's position among the thieves and other criminals of the city. In keeping with this role, rather than developing an antagonistic relationship with the other local longtime organized crime family, the Balacazars, the Rau instead work *with* the Balacazars, trading political favors (thanks to their position as one of the influential noble houses) for contracts and financial agreements. The Rau's ability to work with rather than against the Balacazars is aided by the fact that the latter are much more "hands on" than the Rau; the Balacazars, in truth, are a very different kind of organization.

Verrana Rau is in her mid-forties. She is thin and short, and often finds that her opponents underestimate her. In reality, she is quite competent and extremely intelligent. One of her many talents is her ability to get exactly what she wants for herself or House Rau without seeming to have bested anyone.

Verrana Rau has assassin stats.

Kalbir Rau is a sorcerer who has mage stats with Stealth +4 and +2d6 sneak attack.

Bellas Rau has spy stats.

Nara Rau has aristocrat stats (page 606) with Insight +4 and Investigation +4.

Balacazars, page 102

The Rau are not afraid to play both sides of the game, however. For example, even though the Longfingers Guild has no love of the Balacazars, the Rau have long served as the financial force behind the thieves' guild. Though they have not yet worked any deals with Kevris Killraven, the Rau would not be opposed to it. As members of a noble house, they see themselves as above gang wars and organizational rivalries. Further, they see the Empire and its laws not as an opponent, but as an opportunity. If so many things weren't illegal, the Rau would not enjoy so much profit from them.

Ancient Rites of Custom, page 93

Longfingers Guild, page 123

Not all the Rau are rogues. The house is also known for its spellcasters. The talent for sorcery runs strong in the family bloodline. Rau spellcasters often specialize in illusion, enchantment, or abjuration rather than conjuration or evocation. They are subtle rather than overt.

The head of the house is Verrana Rau (female human). Her son Kalbir (male human) is in his mid-twenties; he is her virtual equal in the house and helps manage all Rau business. Verrana's cousin, Bellas (male human), does little but use house finances to indulge in his vices, but his wife Nara (female human) is an expert in appraising goods and people, making her invaluable to the family as they work with and manage various criminals.

Longtime foes of House Khatru, the Rau to this day enjoy putting the Khatru family in awkward or embarrassing situations and otherwise being a thorn in their side. Only the Ancient Rites of Custom keep the Khatrus from taking their revenge the only way they know how—by putting all the Rau to the sword. The Rau family is also not on good terms with House Kath. It does have better relations with House Abanar than most houses do, although deep down Abanar still does not trust the Rau.

For more information on the estate of House Rau, see Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257).

NOBLE HOUSE ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Fransin Nagel comes to well-known player characters for aid in getting her husband out of the Prison.
- The PCs learn some detail regarding the *box of shadows* (see page 305). Agents of House Sadar begin hounding them for it.
- Kirstol Dallimothan asks the player characters to go to the Necropolis and deliver a package to Andach, the druid on Clasthamus Isle there.
- House Kath employs the PCs as bodyguards for a talented opera singer who is stalked by a rabid fan.
- The player characters find a wanted poster for a thief who stole from a minor noble of House Abanar, and they decide to earn the bounty.
- The PCs seek an entrance to the Banewarrens (see page 389), but so does Navanna Vladaam.

House Sadar Coat of Arms

Renn Sadar has made a secret alliance with the Holy Emperor; see page 270

Days of Blood, page 89

Shadowstaff, page 642

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

SADAR

House Sadar is sometimes called the House of Shadows. The family has long been "shadow-tainted"—gifted with a predilection for shadow-related magic, but in turn unnaturally obsessed with darkness and saddled with an aversion to light.

Known for its long line of mages, this house was persecuted and hated by the Church during the Days of Blood. According to house legends, Sadar had almost faded into oblivion some two centuries ago, but a mysterious stranger appeared and gave then–house leader Tal Sadar the *shadowstaff*. Things immediately turned around for the family. (It's worth noting that the Inverted Pyramid played a vital role in saving House Sadar in those days, a debt that few

Sadar Shadow Magic
Members of the Sadar family have a special affinity for shadow magic. Opponents have disadvantage on saves against their illusion spells and spells that create or manipulate darkness or shadows. All Sadar wizards have the abilities of the illusionist wizard tradition; those who are actually illusionists gain double the benefits of that tradition.

speak of but which no Sadar forgets.) Its current leader, Lord Renn Sadar, still wields the staff and remains one of the most powerful wizards in the city—and one of the highest-ranking members of the Inverted Pyramid. Unbeknownst to most, including Renn's wife Lady Enis Sadar (female human), he is having an affair with Peliope Erthuo. Renn is a confident, conniving, enigmatic figure in the city. He rarely shows up in person at house functions or at council meetings, preferring instead to send his proxy, Naephos Worldsea (male elf), a charismatic and well-mannered diplomat. Meanwhile, Renn is off studying lore, researching the *box of shadows*, or conducting Inverted Pyramid business.

Enis is no vacant, pampered noblewoman. Though she ignores most pursuits of the house (shadows, magic, and the like), she is, ironically, influential in the Church of Lothian. She works specifically with the Order of Dayra, helping the underprivileged and in particular orphans, and has accomplished much in this role.

Perhaps more than anything else, House Sadar seeks the aforementioned *box of shadows*. This mysterious artifact's origins are lost to antiquity, but it is said to have been the bane that Danar Rotansin was going to store away in the Banewarrens the day he succumbed to the evil of the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. Thus it was never placed in a vault but secreted away by a servant before fading into the mists of history.

House Sadar is the enemy of House Nagel and ally of House Vladaam. House Kath looks upon the family with favor, and the feeling is mutual—which is strange, as Kath is an ally of House Nagel. Because of Renn, the Sadar family has a strong association with the Inverted Pyramid and a subtle influence over House Erthuo.

Some members of this house are shadowdancer mages or even shadowdancer assassins.

For more details on the estate of House Sadar, see Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257).

SHEVER

Known for their skill with machines, the members of House Shever made a great deal of gold long ago and commanded significant political influence. Their connections to the Empire were very strong—ties much more evident than those of the other noble houses. Now, as the Empire partially built upon Shever technology fades (and the technical lore fades even faster), House Shever was until recently also fading in influence.

House Shever is the youngest of the noble houses. Still, only House Nagel finds itself in more dire straits today. Shever's finances are quickly drying up, and with each passing year the family loses more and more political influence. "Blossomed too fast, too early," people say of House Shever—although that seems to be overstating a bit the plight of a family that still commands some power, wealth, and respect after a thousand years.

Thollos Shever (male human) is the head of the house. A skilled technologist, Thollos spends more time in his workshop with steam-powered experiments than anywhere else. In truth, his wife Redalla (female human) maintains the order of the house and conducts most of its business. Their young children all study the technical arts of their father. The only other titled member of the Shever family is Thollos's younger brother, Marcad (male human), who shares none of his sibling's skills with machines.

Thollos has long feared that Marcad's lack of technical aptitude adds credence to the theory that the decline of the Empire and its technology is not just happenstance but a fundamental change in the way of the world. As one of the first of the Shever bloodline to have no propensity toward machinecraft, he may represent a shift toward chaos, ignorance, and simplicity. Marcad can often be found at the Arena or in any of the various gambling dens in the city.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

Although the members of the original Ptolus Campaign never confronted Renn Sadar directly, they frequently ran afoul of the minions of House Sadar, including shadowdancers and wizards that used shadow-based magic.

Renn Sadar has archmage stats; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: shadowstaff *(page 642)*, bracers of defense, robe of eyes, headband of intellect, thoughtstone *(page 644)*, Inverted Pyramid's invisible charm *(page 640)*, 10 mage coins *(in a vault)*.

Lady Enis Sadar has aristocrat stats, page 606

Naephos Worldsea has mage stats

Peliope Erthuo, page 95

Thollos Shever is in his late thirties, tall, and balding. With his thick spectacles and paunchy physique, he hardly looks the part of the noble. It surprises many to meet his wife, Redalla, who is a decade younger than her husband and strikingly beautiful. The two have an excellent marriage, however, and love each other deeply.

Thollos Shever has artisan stats (page 606) with Investigation +4.

Redalla Shever has aristocrat stats, page 606

Marcad Shever has gladiator stats with Stealth +4 and a +1d6 sneak attack.

Box of shadows, *page 305*

Order of Dayra, page 70
Danar Rotansin, page 79
The Arena, page 292
Book of Inverted Darkness, *page 490*

House Shever Coat of Arms

The Shuul, page 126

House Shever is infamous for the conflicts between Thollos and his brother Marcad. These two seem to agree on absolutely nothing. Marcad has a reputation as something of a gadabout, but in truth he has a strong interest in politics. He just doesn't share his brother's interest in machines.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In the original Praemal Campaign, the PCs encountered a foe named Vladaam (see page 223). When some of those same players joined the first Ptolus Campaign and heard of House Vladaam, they knew that these were not people to trust!

Entropy Sphere, page 463
Gates of Delirium, page 463

Iristul Vladaam has deadly warrior stats (page 607) with +3d6 sneak attack and the spellcasting of a 20th-level Oathbreaker paladin.

Hungerswords, page 639

Vested of the Galchutt, page 62

Lord Zavere of Castle Shard was once an associate of Iristul Vladaam.

The Fallen, page 109
Knights of the Golden Cross, page 120

Caverns of the Galchutt, page 422
Chaos cults, page 75
Jabel Shammar, page 465

HOUSE RIVALRIES AND ALLIANCES

Noble House	Allies	Enemies
Abanar	None	Khatru, Nagel
Dallimothan	Kath, Nagel	Vladaam, Knights of the Golden Cross
Erthuo	Sadar (secret ally)	None
Kath	Dallimothan, Nagel, Sadar	Abanar, Khatru, Rau, Vladaam
Khatru	Shever	Abanar, Kath, Rau, Sadar, Vladaam
Nagel	Dallimothan, Kath, Knights of the Golden Cross, Iridithil's Home	Sadar
Rau	Abanar	Kath, Khatru
Sadar	Vladaam, Kath, Inverted Pyramid, Erthuo	Nagel
Shever	Khatru, Shuul	Vladaam
Vladaam	Sadar, Balacazars, chaos cults, Fallen/Forsaken	Dallimothan, Khatru, other houses, Knights of the Golden Cross

Unsurprisingly, House Shever maintains strong ties to a new upstart organization called the Shuul, which promises the return of progress, order, and technology, as well as the strengthening of the Empire. These goals all would benefit the Shever family and, perhaps more importantly, reinforce their worldview. Most other noble houses ignore the members of House Shever, although if they were ever to rise again to prominence, they certainly would be enemies of House Vladaam. In the past, they have held an alliance with House Khatru.

For more details on the estate of House Shever, see Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257).

VLADAAM

House Vladaam is not only the oldest of the noble houses but also the most decadent and corrupt. A fact that remains unknown to most, the members of this noble family trace their lineage back to the ancient species of dark entities called the Natharl'nacna—or at least to their servants. The members of House Vladaam descended from a being known as Vladaam, one of the ancient Vested of the Galchutt. Today, the family funds a number of criminal organizations, profiting from theft, extortion, smuggling, illegal gambling, assassination, and trade in slaves, drugs, and evil magic items. Even in a city where demons walk the streets (as the Fallen), the Vladaam family may hold its darkest depths of evil.

House Vladaam seeks the awakening and return of the Natharl'nacna. Aside from gaining as much evil power as they can, its members want to find a path to the Caverns of the Galchutt where the Natharl'nacna sleep. Barring that, they would settle for finding a way into Jabel Shammar, the Dread One's fortress atop the Spire.

The family has, in no uncertain terms, been a menace to the world virtually since day one. For example, in 651 IA, Yrkyth Vladaam created the Enigma Engine, a monstrosity of technology and magic, which he hoped would tap into the power of the Entropy Sphere by regulating the Gates of Delirium from a distance. He failed, but the Enigma Engine still exists somewhere under the city. Some knowledgeable, power-mad mages seek it, believing that, unlike Yrkyth, they could make it work.

The house's leader is Iristul Vladaam (male tiefling), currently abroad seeking the six *hungerswords*. This man of decadent and unsavory appetites is father to all the other titled House Vladaam members: Navanna, Aliaster, Gattara, and Godfred. Their mothers are all dead.

While Iristul is away, his daughter Navanna runs things. All the Vladaams are wicked and cruel, but Navanna is also extremely devious and more cautious than most of her relations. She is not the most powerful of the family, nor the eldest, but she is the best leader.

House Vladaam's list of enemies is long. Most people do not trust this family, either because of the rumors of its demonic heritage or because of nefarious deeds its members have committed over the years. With the exception of House Sadar, all the noble houses despise Vladaam, although House Dallimothan and House Khatru remain the clearest of their foes. The Knights of the Golden Cross, an organization as old as House Vladaam, has opposed nearly every action the family has ever taken.

The house's allies include House Sadar, the Balacazars, the chaos cults, and even the Fallen and the Forsaken (as allies of allies).

For more on the estate of House Vladaam, see Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter (page 257).

The Vladaam family (from left): Gattara, Aliaster, Iristul, Godfred, and Navanna.

The Vladaam children presented here have game stats, but their father Iristul does not. This is because Iristul is far, far away at present, searching for the *hungerswords*. He seeks them because he has unearthed an ancient spell that, if cast on all six *hungerswords* at once, can make them even more deadly and powerful: the spell would allow them to literally annihilate any living thing they touch. If you make his search part of the campaign, it shouldn't happen until quite late in the campaign, as Iristul is very powerful. If he should gather all six swords and use the spell, he and his children will become extraordinarily deadly.

NAVANNA VLADAAM

Navanna (female tiefling) maintains a number of false identities in the city, including one as Nicalon Regelis, a member of the Knights of the Chord. As Nicalon—a tall, thin, dark-skinned human man—she speaks out strongly against House Vladaam in order to learn what her enemies have to say. Nicalon keeps to himself most of the time, so few of the other knights know anything about him. He seems to be a devout worshipper of Jode but very poor at calling upon the magical power of music.

Nicalon is entirely a creation of Navanna's. She used her brother Aliaster's magical aid to fake her way through the order's initiation rites. In any of her many guises, Navanna has Aliaster cast a spell that obscures her true alignment so she can avoid magic that detects her alignment. In addition to her manufactured identities, Navanna has a network of spies and agents throughout the city. Her personal agents are all urban werewolves, although she is not a lycanthrope herself.

Her real appearance is that of a short-haired, pointy-chinned human woman in her twenties, extremely fit and thin. Her hair is dark brown and her skin is extraordinarily black—almost blue—so she might be mistaken for a dark elf. However, her teeth are bright yellow, and she has four tiny yellow horns on her forehead right at the hairline.

ALIASTER VLADAAM

Aliaster Vladaam (male tiefling) appears to be a human in his fifties with completely black eyes. He wears special lenses to disguise his eyes if he feels the need, but when lounging about the estate (which is what he normally does), he does not wear them. He has six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. While Navanna has great ambition and drive, Aliaster does not. What little motivation he has he puts into his study of magic. Aliaster helps his younger half-sister with her schemes by casting spells on her or for her in the simple hope that she will leave him alone and not force him to go into a dangerous situation. His cowardice seems doubly surprising, as his unnatural heritage has clearly left him much sturdier than a typical wizard.

Navanna Vladaam has assassin stats, with the Use Magic Device ability of a rogue; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: headband of the mountebank *(as* cape of the mountebank*)*, +1 longsword, +2 leather armor, potion of superior healing, potion of invisibility, spell scroll of nondetection, +1 longbow, *arrows (12), purple worm poison (2 doses), gold necklace worth 500 gp, gold and emerald ring worth 1,700 gp, disguise kit, 10 pp, 50 gp.*

A typical Navanna agent has werewolf stats, but they are "urban" werewolves and their hybrid form has size Large, Armor Class 14, hit points 67, Speed 40 ft., advantage on Constitution and Wisdom saves, +2 on attack and damage rolls.

Aliaster Vladaam has archmage stats, with no 8th- or 9th-level spell slots, alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: ring of spell storing *(*death ward*)*, wand of lightning bolts, thoughtstone *(page 644), dagger, platinum black pearl ring worth 850 gp,* 1 mage coin *(in a vault).*

Navanna Vladaam is one of the main antagonists in The Banewarrens *adventure (see page 11).*

Werewolves guard the estate of House Vladaam in the Nobles' Quarter.

House Vladaam Coat of Arms

GATTARA VLADAAM

Gattara (female tiefling) is the eldest sibling, and she is hopelessly mad, given to fits of irrational rage without notice. Once thought a promising wizard, she gave up her studies to serve as a priestess to the Galchutt. She has a round face and shoulder-length dark brown hair. She wears scandalously revealing garments much of the time.

Gattara Vladaam has ecclesiastic stats (page 608), plus the spellcasting ability of a mage; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: +2 mace, ring of protection, bracers of defense, broom of flying, thoughtstone *(page 644)*, potion of vitality, spell scrolls *(*feeblemind, project image, raise dead, shapechange, teleport, true seeing, wall of force, wall of stone, word of recall*); silver and amethyst necklace worth 800 gp, silver and amethyst ring worth 300 gp, healer's kit, 50 pp.*

GODFRED VLADAAM

Godfred (male tiefling) is the youngest and Iristul's favored, but the head of House Vladaam is smart enough to know that the boy is too slow-witted and rash to be in charge. A lumbering oaf, Godfred is a master of the greatsword and wields the only *hungersword* his father has yet found. He is tall, dark haired, and pale, with extremely broad shoulders. Godfred has thick hair and bushy eyebrows, and a long scar down one side of his often-unshaven face.

Godfred Vladaam has gladiator stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: +2 breastplate, hungersword *(page 639)*, +1 longbow, +2 arrows *(20)*, potion of invulnerability, *climber's kit, 55 gp.*

Iristul gave the only hungersword *he has found to date to his son Godfred. What none of the Vladaam family knows is that one of the other five* hungerswords *has been found—it is currently in the hands of Sheva Callister (page 208). However, Sheva's sword has been altered magically and obfuscated to help keep it from the Vladaams.*

BALACAZAR CRIME FAMILY

Probably the most powerful crime family in the city, the Balacazar clan is certainly the oldest. Menon Balacazar is the aging head of the organization, with his son, Malkeen, as second-in-command. Menon has two other children, his daughters Fesamere and Maystra.

For more than two centuries—dating back to Menon's great-great-grandmother, Maven—the family has literally run the business of crime in Ptolus. Far from the seat of power in the Empire, Ptolus seemed an opportune place in which to do business: lots of commerce, lots of money, and few obstacles. Today, the family's extensive organization funds a number of criminal enterprises, gaining profit from theft, extortion, smuggling, illegal gambling, assassination, and trade in slaves, poisons, and drugs.

In addition to the houses and apartments it holds in a variety of false names throughout the city, the family owns a number of warehouses, storefronts, crafthouses, and other buildings. Some of its businesses are entirely legitimate, and some are purely fronts. In any case, all these locations serve as potential safe houses or meeting places for members of the organization.

Under Menon, the family has begun to deal more and more in magic-related contraband, such as magic items with illegal spells (controlling minds, creating undead, contagious diseases), evil magic items, mind-controlled slaves, and demonic or undead slaves. He seems to have a fascination for black magic.

The Balacazars are very smart. They know that as long as they don't do anything terribly overt—burn down a noble estate, kill dozens in broad daylight, murder a large number of City Watch guards, or commit a major crime easily traceable to the family itself—the Commissar will allow them to continue. Taking them on would be too difficult, and in the end fighting them would amount to a war in the city. So the Balacazars keep their businesses going subtly and quietly, earning hundreds of thousands in gold every year. This is the way it has worked for generations, and it's the way the family feels it should continue. Now and then, challenges to this status quo arise to make trouble for the Balacazars.

Menon Balacazar pretends to be a wealthy financier, even though virtually everyone in town knows he leads a large criminal organization. If during one of his rare public appearances someone suggests he is something other than a businessman, that person usually disappears soon thereafter—no matter who it is.

RELATIONS

The Balacazar family has no allies, but it does have partners. The Twin Lords Keper of the Vai do as Menon commands, and in exchange receive goods and information. Through them, the Balacazars can exert influence over the various chaos cults and even—to a degree—the Forsaken. And, of course, all these groups, plus the Fallen and most religions of evil gods, do business with the Balacazars to obtain various commodities: slaves, victims, poisons, drugs, evil magic items, and so on. The family also has friends in the Nobles' Quarter, particularly among Houses Vladaam and Sadar, but also in House Rau. They even do extensive business with some of the darker members of the Inverted Pyramid and among the Pale Dogs of the Warrens.

As influential and as long as their list of business partners may be, the Balacazars surely have more enemies than friends. No one hates the family more than the Sisterhood of Silence. While the Sisters need not limit themselves to acting upon what can be proven in court and they don't worry about evidence, they don't confront the Balacazars directly, for they do not believe it to be a fight they can win—at least, not yet.

Throughout his administration, the Commissar has done little to oppose the Balacazars. He views them as something of a necessary evil. Sure, he'd like to see Menon behind bars and all his criminal operations brought to an end, but the truth is, there will always be crime. The structure of the Balacazar family brings a sort of organization to the otherwise anarchic nature of crime in the city. With the Balacazars behind it, criminal activity maintains an ordered, predictable pace. The Commissar knows that Balacazar doesn't want a war with him, so he makes sure that those under his command never stray past unacceptable bounds. It's a way to maintain the status quo. And, truth be told, the Commissar is

The Vai, page 131
Forsaken, page 111
Fallen, page 109
Pale Dogs, page 126
Sisterhood of Silence, page 127

not entirely certain that if he went to war with the Balacazars, he could win.

The family's greatest opponent is also its newest. The recent emergence of Kevris Killraven onto the organized crime scene has hit the city's underworld elements like a firestorm. Suddenly, the Balacazar family has competition. Today Ptolus exists in the midst of a gang war between these two organizations. The bloody aftermath of their secret nighttime battles can be seen in back alleyways the following mornings.

Menon Balacazar

To reach Menon Balacazar (male human), one must peel the onion of the criminal underworld to its very core. No one goes to see Menon—people find themselves summoned before him, or, rarely, he goes to see them. Layers and layers of bureaucracy lie between the average thug and the grand master of the family. Most people in the organization have never laid eyes on Menon Balacazar and have no clue where he is at any given time. He is a most mysterious figure.

Dark and ruthless, Menon is full of spite, bile, and cynicism. He sees no light in the world, only shades of darkness, and he believes the only real way to get ahead is to embrace the deepest darkness that he can find. Although he is no spellcaster, he is one of the world's foremost experts on black magic, demons, and supernatural corruption. Menon even looks the part—he is shriveled, decrepit, and palsied, and he likely sustains himself only by drugs and magic.

Menon ultimately wishes to retire. He assumes his son will take his place, and Malkeen assumes the same. His daughter Maystra has other plans, but Menon, unlike the rest of the family, is fully aware of her schemes. He assumes that Malkeen will discover them eventually and most likely kill her.

The family owns a number of residences throughout the city, but Menon prefers the manor along the sea cliffs north of town. A secret underwater entrance allows the Covenant of Blood to interact with the local sahuagin who serve the vampires.

Rumors say that Menon himself is a vampire. Although this tale is false, he takes no steps to dissuade people from thinking him undead, and it's worth mentioning that Menon is one living human that even vampires will work with and treat with respect.

Both rumors and respect might stem from the copious amounts of black magic with which Menon surrounds himself. First and foremost, there's the powerful artifact known as the *Dread Cloak*. This item, said to have been stolen from Orcus himself, was brought here by Lilith and sold to Menon in secret for an undisclosed sum (but certainly enough to fund her convoluted schemes in the Dark Reliquary).

Malkeen Balacazar

Another rumor has it that Menon keeps a minor goddess, Unnah, Mistress of the Blades, captive in his manor north of town. This incredible rumor is true. Within a vault this minor goddess remains trapped inside a magic candle. Apparently, a group of powerful wizards in Kem captured her just before their own murder. The candle was traded to the Balacazars and brought here. The Hussar—fanatical warrior-cultists who serve Unnah—must work as enforcers and assassins for the Balacazar family while he holds their deity hostage.

Malkeen Balacazar

Malkeen (male human) is Menon's middle child. His older sister, Maystra, never wanted a position of power within the organization (although things have changed; see the next section). Thus, it fell to Malkeen to take up the mantle of heir apparent. One day, after his father retires or dies, Malkeen will run the organization. Contrary to what many would assume, Malkeen has no desire for that day to come prematurely. As it is now, he wields a great deal of power in the city and commands almost limitless wealth. He sees his father's position as having only more responsibility, not additional benefits. That said, when the day comes, he will not shirk his duties—he will control the family and its operations, and most likely will do so with great efficiency.

Kevris Killraven, page 119

Dark Reliquary, page 223

Unnah, page 74

Menon Balacazar has assassin stats, with Arcana +6, Insight +6, Intimidation +6, Investigation +6, Religion +6; alignment chaotic evil. Without his drugs, he has disadvantage on all rolls based on Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. Equipment: Dread Cloak *(page 637)*, boots of elvenkind, amulet of health, void bomb *(see Chapter 30: Chaositech)*, onyx ring worth 2,500 gp, platinum ring worth 1,200 gp, 70 pp, 45 mage coins *(in a vault; page 146)*.

Sahuagin: *22 hp*

The Covenant of Blood

The Balacazar family has long held an affection for vampires. Over the last five decades, Menon has used magic and influence to gather together six particularly powerful vampires to recreate the bonds of an ancient pact called the Covenant of Blood. In ages past, mighty vampire sorcerers forged an agreement with the sahuagin of the Whitewind Sea that ensured able-bodied sahuagin warriors would serve the vampires in exchange for fresh blood (specifically, live land-dwelling victims). Now that six vampires work together once more in the name of the Covenant, sahuagin once again come to the coast to serve them. And since the vampires work for Balacazar, so do these sea creatures.

The most powerful of the vampires is Medre Allaconda, a member of the Forsaken. She owns the horn of blood, *which the Covenant can use to call in sahuagin from the deep sea in exchange for blood, as laid out in the original agreement. They use the horn very sparingly.*

Medre Allaconda, page 233

Horn of blood, *page 639*

Hadrien Runihan, one of the Covenant of Blood (page 185)

Dread Cloak, *page 637*

Lilith, page 110

The Balacazar crime family has been such a constant presence in Ptolus for so long that its existence is fairly well accepted by the common folk. If a person who is known to work for the Balacazars is observed committing a crime, many people will simply look the other way—sometimes including even the City Watch.

Onyx Spider, page 203

Malkeen Balacazar has recently acquired a tattoo over his right eye. It is a symbol of an ancient and obscure assassins' cult from the far south, worn only by those who master the marriage of stealth and magic.

Runebearers, page 62

Malkeen Balacazar has mage stats, with Deception +6, Insight +6, Investigation +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6; alignment lawful evil. Without his drugs, he has disadvantage on all rolls based on Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. Equipment: disruption ray emitter (page 535), bracers of defense, cape of the mountebank, figurine of wondrous power *(obsidian steed),* thoughtstone *(page 644), void bomb (page 537),* wand of fireballs, spell scroll of divinatory expungement *(page 629),* potions of superior healing *(3),* potion of fire resistance, *pocketwatch, 350 gp, 10* mage coins *(in a vault; page 146).*

Na'haras has vampire stats, but without Children of the Night or the ability to create spawn; he attacks with a longsword (use bite stats, including necrotic damage); alignment lawful evil. Equipment: +2 leather, shortsword of wounding, ring of protection, potion of speed, sunless salve *(page 644).*

Maystra Balacazar has assassin stats, with History +4, Persuasion +4, and Sleight of Hand +4; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: bracers of defense, amulet of disguise *(as a* hat of disguise*),* potion of flying, potion of greater healing, potion of invulnerability, *gold ring worth 150 gp, gold and silver necklace worth 800 gp, disguise kit, 12 pp, 60 gp.*

Fesamere Balacazar has assassin stats, but with no Assassinate ability, plus Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +9, and the Uncanny Dodge and Evasion abilities of a rogue; alignment neutral. Equipment: +2 studded leather, +2 dagger, +1 light crossbow, +1 bolts *(15),* bag of holding, potion of invisibility, potion of superior healing, *gold ring with a ruby worth 1,000 gp, climber's kit, 50 feet of rope, 50 gp.*

Na'haras was a deadly assassin in Kem more than two thousand years ago. Malkeen Balacazar received his remains as a gift from his father on his twentieth birthday and had him reconstituted as an undead protector.

WHY AREN'T THESE PEOPLE ARRESTED?

While it's true that the City Watch in Ptolus is quick to apprehend individuals without direct proof of criminal activity, the Balacazars are another matter entirely. The family is extremely wealthy and influential. It's a well-known fact that if some naïve city guard attempted to arrest a member of the family or even a mid-ranking member of the organization based on hearsay alone—assuming the guard could even pull off the arrest—not only would the criminal be released almost immediately, but the guard likely would disappear soon afterward. The system harbors enough corrupt people (see page 143) and those vulnerable to intimidation for the Balacazars to remain out of prison.

Of course, if the Commissar really wanted to get rid of them, he would be within his rights to send troops to slay Menon and family. The problem is, the Commissar doesn't know if his City Watch could pull it off—and if they couldn't, the retribution would likely be ghastly.

Already, when new contacts wish to parley with the Balacazar family, they must come to Malkeen first. Menon sees only his longtime acquaintances and associates. In his role as the family's public representative, Malkeen spends a great deal of time at the Onyx Spider (on Tavern Row in Midtown), using it as a meeting place for much of his business activity. As the tavern is wholly owned by the family, it is not only a safe place for him, but one where he enjoys special treatment. He has a reserved booth always waiting for him, and the Spider's two bartenders take messages for him whenever he is not there.

Malkeen has average looks, with dark hair and medium skin. Dark circles and a weary redness frequently mark his somewhat droopy eyes. He has the appearance of one who does not sleep much, which is accurate. He takes extensive illegal stimulants to keep himself going, but the wear and tear this causes to his body is evident. Still, despite these conditions, his mind is sharp. Malkeen never falls prey to overconfidence; he usually assumes that those he deals with are dishonest, at least on some level. Once he finds the heart of someone's dishonesty, he doesn't let on, for it gives him the upper hand.

Malkeen's bodyguard is Na'haras, an ancient human recently brought back to life via an equally ancient, powerful, and evil spell to walk the earth as a "vampire of the void" (a vampire powered by necrotic energy rather than blood). Even in life, Na'haras was a cold-blooded killer without an inkling of remorse, and he had an engineered genetic talent for deadly strikes. No one ever sees Malkeen without Na'haras—in fact, the vampire is usually seen first. Na'haras has bright red hair, chalk-white skin, and a small, slight frame. When he opens his mouth, only utter blackness is revealed, as though his interior is an open gateway to an endless void (which is exactly what it is).

Maystra and Fesamere Balacazar

Unlike her brother, Maystra (female human) wants nothing more than to see her father die so she can take control of the family. She has so far tried to keep her ambitions a secret; she thinks her father believes she has no interest in the organization. Presently she lacks the influence to have her father murdered, so she is waiting for something to happen to him so she can seize power.

To further confuse things, Maystra often poses as her younger sister, Fesamere, using a magical amulet. She does this to gather information and sow seeds that will help her later. In addition, if she wants someone murdered, she might pose as Fesamere to order it done.

Maystra is tall and lithe, with dark hair and skin. She has an eight-year-old son, Dullin, whom she dotes upon. For instance, she uses her family's influence to get Dullin parts in local plays and to get him into exclusive schools that simultaneously teach him magic, martial arts, and diplomacy. Dullin is indeed a prodigy. In fact, he is a runebearer.

Fesamere Balacazar (female human) is a mystery to most, including her own family and particularly her father. While her ties to her family are strong, Fesamere—"Fes" to her friends—does not share their dark hearts. She's not altruistic, nor does she work against the organization, but she would blanch at committing outright murder herself. Still, she's a renowned thief in her own right, practicing her skills for the sheer enjoyment of it. She frequently breaks into well-guarded homes, vaults, or other structures, steals something of great value, and then returns it anonymously (unless it strikes her fancy as a souvenir, but this is rare, as she wants for nothing). Sometimes she takes on breaking-and-entering assignments for the family—the more challenging, the better. No one in the city knows the wards of elite homes and the security of wealthy storehouses better than Fesamere.

Fesamere has dark skin and dyes her hair golden blond. She is slight and very fit.

To achieve her wish of controlling the family business, Maystra Balacazar will have to kill her brother and maybe even her sister as well. She has laid plans for eliminating her siblings immediately after her father's passing.

Arkhall Vaugn

Once a prominent member of the Inverted Pyramid (he has technically retained his membership), Arkhall Vaugn (male human) serves as the family's foremost magical advisor, representative, and enforcer. When Menon's children were young, Arkhall was the second-in-command, and now—even with Malkeen in that role—the organization's activities are vast enough that Arkhall's duties and power have not diminished. He remains a trusted ally of both Menon and Malkeen, and with good reason. Arkhall's loyalty is sincere, as is his desire to see the organization prosper. There are rumors that Arkhall's loyalty is cemented by his unrequited love for Maystra, but this is untrue; Arkhall is only attracted to men.

Extremely intelligent and shrewd, Arkhall makes it his business to know the names, affiliations, and shortcomings of anyone of power or influence in the city. He keeps this information in his head, never committed to paper.

Arkhall is a rotund man with dark skin. He keeps his head clean shaven. Unless he is trying to avoid notice—which is rare—he wears striking, flame-red robes with gold trim.

Cerrinthan Sanserra

Known around town as the nicest criminal in Ptolus, Cerrinthan (male half-elf)—or Cerry, as he is often called—works alongside Malkeen and sometimes Arkhall. He is the diplomat of the Balacazar organization. In many ways, he's the glue that holds it all together, for Cerry manages the internal affairs of this criminal empire. He makes sure that the underbosses stay happy, satisfied, or (if need be) intimidated.

Cerry is well known throughout the city. Most people know what he does, but even such figures as Lord Dorant Khatru and Aoska of the Malkuth find him a likable and pleasant fellow. When a group or individual that normally would not consort with the Balacazars—such as the Knights of the Pale or Doraedian Mythlord—must deal with them, they often ask for Cerry.

Cerry is of medium height and has fairly average looks, although there's something about his winning smile and sparkling eyes that makes people think he's far more attractive than he really is. He has a gentle, winning manner and knows that kindness and reason usually accomplish as much as—if not more than—threats or violence.

Cerry is married and has two children. He lives in the Nobles' Quarter in a modest flat. Menon has two bodyguards follow him around for protection. They are so good at blending in that even Cerry doesn't know they are there.

The Rest of the Organization

The immediate Balacazar family organization, not including partners (such as the Vai, the Pale Dogs, and so on), involves hundreds of people of all species. The organization spreads throughout Ptolus and uses the city's boundaries (districts, and within them neighborhoods) to organize its own hierarchy. Each district of Ptolus has a crime boss; below them, usually two or three underbosses divide up the territory even further, typically by neighborhood.

Each crime boss oversees all the illegal gambling, trade, prostitution, extortion, and thievery in their district and collects a cut from the underbosses (who in turn collect money from the criminals and gangs who work for them). All crime bosses pay tribute money to Menon Balacazar. In addition to collecting these feudal-like payments, each level of the organization—underbosses, crime bosses, and the immediate family itself—also carries out its own criminal operations.

Outside the group's hierarchy, various independent or semi-independent criminal organizations and gangs pay tribute to the

Dorant Khatru, page 96

Aoska of the Malkuth, page 124
Knights of the Pale, page 121
Doraedian Mythlord, page 197

Cerrinthan Sanserra tries very hard to keep his professional life and his personal life separate. His wife and children know almost nothing about what he does and whom he works with. If he can, Cerry tries to keep those he works with from knowing anything about his family, for he fears that his enemies might use them against him someday.

Cerrinthan Sanserra has assassin stats, but no Assassinate ability, plus Investigation +6, Perception +6, and Sleight of Hand +6; alignment neutral. Equipment: +1 rapier, *light crossbow, bolts (10), leather armor,* potion of invisibility, potion of speed, *gold and emerald rings worth 1,000 gp each (3), 100 pp, 54 gp, 5 sp.*

Cerrinthan's bodyguards have defender stats, page 607

Arkhall Vaugn has archmage stats, but with no 8th- or 9th-level spell slots; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: +1 dagger *(2),* ring of protection, wand of fireballs, potion of superior healing, spell scrolls (scrying, stoneskin, true seeing, wall of force)*; pocketwatch,* 20 mage coins *(in a vault; page 146), 90 gp.*

Anyone of power or influence includes anyone over 10th level.

The Balacazar family uses a wide variety of hired muscle, thugs, and enforcers. They even recruit from other groups, such as the Pale Dogs (see page 126) and other criminal gangs. However, to become a crime boss—or even an underboss—an aspirant must have an interview with either Menon or Malkeen. Although few people know what goes on in these interviews, it is not unknown for candidates to die during them. Presumably, these applicants must have angered the interviewer in some way.

Ferrid Naphon has thug stats.

Uldrick Kord is a sorcerer with mage stats, 60 hp, and proficiency in armor, shields, and simple and martial weapons.

Ireve Nal has spy stats.

Cravish Nathed has aristocrat stats (page 606) with Stealth +4 and a +2d6 sneak attack.

Meither Amost has assassin stats.

Lerthan Dergstrom has assassin stats.

Elga Kord has spy stats.

Halgrim Fatherstone has veteran stats with Stealth +4 and a +2d6 sneak attack.

Nagrus has assassin stats.

BALACAZAR CRIME BOSSES AND UNDERBOSSES

District	Crime Boss	Underbosses	Notes
Docks	Ferrid Naphon (male tiefling)	2	—
Guildsman	Uldrick Kord (male human)	2	—
Midtown	Ireve Nal (female human)	3	—
Necropolis	N/A	N/A	See also the Forsaken
Nobles' Quarter	Cravish Nathed (male human)	3	—
North Market	Meither Amost (male half-elf)	2	—
Oldtown	Lerthan Dergstrom (male human)	3	Almost ready to betray the family to Killraven
Rivergate	Elga Kord (female human)	2	—
South Market	Halgrim Fatherstone (male dwarf)	2	—
Warrens	Nagrus (male half-orc)	0	See also the Pale Dogs (Jirraith)

Balacazar family through the local crime boss or sometimes an underboss. Even though these smaller groups and gangs do not specifically belong to the organization, the Balacazars can exert influence and control over them. This has become less true in recent months, as some of these smaller groups now work for Kevris Killraven. Others still see Killraven's sudden appearance last year as a sign of weakness for the Balacazar family and may attempt to make their own way.

It would be a mistake to think that every member of the vast Balacazar organization works in harmony. While there is a definite hierarchy, a great deal of autonomy is afforded to the crime bosses and underbosses. Sometimes these "allied" bosses vie for control of a territory or go to war over anything from a personal slight (intended or unintended) to a dispute over a financial deal. Menon believes this kind of activity keeps his bosses sharp and culls the weak. Although this is true, the infighting almost certainly weakens the family when pitted—as an organization—against its new rivals working for Kevris Killraven.

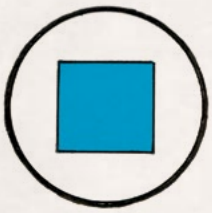
Banewarrens, page 389

Lady Rill of Castle Shard, page 264

BRIDES OF MAGIC

The Brides of Magic is a very small, elite organization of female sorcerers. To join, a member must give up her normal life and devote herself solely to magic. She can have no romantic or familial ties.

The membership meets in secret once each month when Lunas is full. They have no permanent headquarters, so their meeting place changes each month. They gather to discuss arcane matters and, rarely, to work together to perform a ritual or create a magic item. The brides have no secrets from one another, but they keep each other's confidences well.



In the Brides of Magic symbol, the blue square represents the feminine heart, and the white circle represents the magic that immerses and embraces that heart.

The goal of the Brides of Magic seems extremely esoteric in the minds of nonmembers. Being sorcerers and not wizards, the brides see magic as a part of the natural order—it comes freely from within them, an innate energy intended to nurture and promote life. They seek a purity of balance in the flow of magic into the world, perhaps erring ever so slightly on the side of the good and positive. As such, they avoid aligned spells and items if possible and work against those who would gather a great deal of magical power focused to either end of the spectrum. They look upon Danar's creation of the Banewarrens, a massing of good energies to contain all evil magic, as the greatest folly ever perpetrated by a mortal.

The Brides of Magic believe that, at some point in the future, something will drastically alter or perhaps permanently destroy all magic in the world. Their devotion to sorcery bids them to prepare for that eventual day and, if possible, prevent it.

The group has no leader or hierarchy. The most powerful and prominent member is Lady Rill of Castle Shard, but she holds no position of authority over the other brides.

The Brides of Magic rarely take overt action as a group. Most people do not even know the organization exists. Nevertheless, one cannot overlook their ability, as a network, to promote change over the long term.

BROTHERHOOD OF REDEMPTION

Few groups spark debate like the Brotherhood of Redemption. This order of monks sees killing evil beings as a terrible waste. They believe in the sanctity of all life, even that which is corrupted by evil or which threatens to wreak destruction and death. As their name implies,

the Brothers seek to redeem evil, rather than destroy it. To that end, about eighty years ago they worked with Hogun Silvergleam (male dwarf) and a human bard named Konna Werran (now deceased) to develop a process to turn evil creatures good. This process involves alchemical mixtures, bathing in magical light, and long-term exposure to certain magical music.

The Brothers started out with the goal of hunting down evil beings and confining them in underground cells to redeem them. With the advent of the Delver's Guild and the arrival of so many adventurers to the city, they found it far more efficient to put out a public offer to pay gold for living evil creatures. They detain these creatures in the Fortress of the Redeemed, their dungeon complex beneath the Guildsman District. There the creatures receive the magical treatments that slowly change their outlook and reform them.

The exact details of the process are proprietary and thus remain secret. The Brotherhood does not allow nonmembers other than the prisoners themselves into their dungeon complex. Visitors come to the Monastery of Redemption, a modest building in the Guildsman District.

The Brotherhood does not value free will or really even believe in it. The group's doctrine says that life is inherently good. The Brothers look upon their magical process as a means to put right what has gone wrong and set creatures upon their natural path.

Nevertheless, to avoid controversy, they refuse to accept evil humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, gnomes, centaurs, and litorians as prisoners to be redeemed (this would also raise legal issues that they would rather avoid). However, rumor has it that this is just a public relations policy and that, in fact, they accept any evil creature.

Two individuals currently vie for leadership of the Brotherhood of Redemption. One, a monk named Yuethi Mooncircle (female elf), simply wants to continue the group's existing modus operandi. The other, Fhomas Reen (male human), wants to use the Brotherhood's magical resources to implant dormant mind-influencing triggers in those they redeem so the organization has the means to control them directly, should the need arise. He also wants to speed up the magical process, even though doing so would make the treatment far more unpleasant for those forced to endure it.

The order is small, numbering only a dozen Brothers, plus a handful of support personnel, in particular a sorcerer named Regan Frome (female gnome), who helps keep powerful magic-using prisoners in line with antimagic, counterspelling, and other means. Not surprisingly considering their duties, all members of the order and those who help them are reasonably powerful.

BROTHERHOOD OF REDEMPTION: TWO OPTIONS

When the players are introduced to the concept of the Brotherhood of Redemption, some will recoil with distaste, regardless of their characters' alignment. The idea of using magic to force evil creatures to be good will seem abhorrent to them. Others may take this a step further and assume that the group has a sinister secret related to the process or its overall goals. They will find it impossible to trust a group that forcibly exerts its will and worldview on others, even if it seems to be for the cause of good.

You can set up the Brotherhood of Redemption however you wish in your campaign, having either Yuethi or Fhomas take control of the group. The order can be as altruistic as its members claim or as sinister as some people believe.

Either way, from a metagame point of view, the Brotherhood can help the player characters deal with prisoners. When an evil monster surrenders, the PCs can bring it to the Brotherhood and receive a reward for their troubles, while avoiding the sometimes sticky issue of "Do we kill this creature just because it's evil?"

CIRCLE OF GREEN

More than seventeen hundred years ago, long before there were even dreams of empires from the east, a powerful conclave of druids held sway over all that lived within the wilderness of Palastan and beyond. These druids were called the Circle of Green, and their power was unmatched. The Viridian Lords served the circle, walking the land in their name.

The druids were not cruel or selfish in their position, but neither were they merciful to those who transgressed their will. In truth, a typical commoner would never come into contact with the Circle of Green and would only rarely see the druids' envoys or servants. Local governments and nobility ruled over their subjects on a daily basis, but if the Circle of Green gave an order, princes and dukes—even the King of Palastan himself—had to obey.

Such power, even if used fairly, draws resentment. The Circle of Green operated for more than six centuries but came to a dire end. When Ghul, the self-proclaimed Half God, came to Palastan, he found it easy to move from community to community sowing ire and disapproval for the Circle of Green. Thus,

The Brotherhood of Redemption symbol represents a triumvirate of stars seen in the night sky to the west. Legend has it that these stars are the souls of three evil fey who, at the end of their lives, redeemed themselves by saving a mortal hero from a terrible whirlwind.

Delver's Guild, page 108

Fortress of the Redeemed, page 392

Monastery of Redemption, page 184

A typical Brother of Redemption has assassin stats, with no Assassinate ability, and with the ki points (9), Slow Fall (45 hp), Stunning Strike, Ki-Empowered Strikes, Evasion, Stillness of Mind, and Wholeness of Body (27 hp) abilities of a 9th-level monk; alignment lawful good.

A typical bounty for an evil creature is 50 gp × the creature's CR.

Hogun Silvergleam has ecclesiastic stats, page 608

Yuethi Mooncircle has assassin stats with the ki points (12), Slow Fall (60 hp), Stunning Strike, Ki-Empowered Strikes, Evasion, Stillness of Mind, Purity of Body, and Wholeness of Body (36 hp) abilities of a 12th-level monk.

Fhomas Reen has veteran stats with the ki points (10), Slow Fall (50 hp), Stunning Strike, Ki-Empowered Strikes, Evasion, Stillness of Mind, Purity of Body, and Wholeness of Body (30 hp) abilities of a 10th-level monk.

Regan Frome is a sorcerer with mage stats.

Viridian Lords, page 132

Ghul, page 83

Brotherhood of Redemption leader Yuethi Mooncircle has very short, dark hair, and is lithe even for an elf. She wears a look of both serenity and compassion at virtually all times. The group's coleader Fhomas Reen is short and extremely muscular. He has dark hair, a dark complexion, and a stern face. More often than not, his hands are balled into fists.

Some people suspect that Andach, the mighty druid who guards Clasthamus Isle in the Necropolis, is the son of a member of the Circle of Green (see page 219).

when he attacked the conclave with his giants, destrachans, and rakshasas, no one came to the druids' aid. In 399 BE, every member of the Circle of Green lay dead at Ghul's hand, a precursor to the horrors he soon would unleash upon the world.

Today, the Viridian Lords still patrol the wilderness of Palastan, but the Circle of Green is no more.

Or is it?

Destrachans are bizarre, blind, quasi-humanoid creatures that sense their environment with sound and can produce deadly blasts of sonic energy. They have chimera stats plus blindsight 100 feet, but their breath weapon inflicts thunder damage instead of fire damage.

Rakshasa: *110 hp*

DARK LEAF

This extremely small confederacy is composed entirely of elves operating on the shadowy side of the law. Mostly, the members of Dark Leaf hire themselves out as mercenary agents for some of the major criminal interests, such as the Balacazars or Killraven. They also help ensure that elves remain relatively safe from criminals in the city by being very good at their jobs, thus making themselves desirable as allies. Of course, they won't work with anyone who preys upon the elves, particularly those in Emerald Hill.

Balacazars, page 102

Killraven Crime League, page 118

City Council, page 140

Emerald Hill, page 189

Really more of a network than a cohesive group, the members of Dark Leaf never gather together. If need be, word spreads from member to member quickly but subtly. Most of the time, at least two members are at Iridithil's Home in Midtown, and one of those is usually their *de facto* leader, Celdore Silverwood (male elf). Celdore commands great respect among the elves of the city—almost as much as his friend Doraedian Mythlord.

Iridithil's Home, page 197

Sorum Dandubal has veteran stats.

Celdore Silverwood has assassin stats.

From time to time, Celdore has used his position as a "disinterested third party" to act as a highly paid negotiator when someone—either an individual of importance or an organization—runs afoul of one of the city's criminal groups. His actions have stopped blood feuds from starting more than once. He is close friends with Cerrinthan Sanserra of the Balacazar organization and knows most of the important figures in the Killraven Crime League.

Rumor has it (DC 20 Investigation check) that Celdore, who originally hails from the Moonsilver Forest (page 44) north of Ptolus, committed a crime there that was so heinous he can never return. He will not speak of it, but he remains very knowledgeable about that region.

Doraedian Mythlord, page 197

Cerrinthan Sanserra, page 105

DELVER'S GUILD

Despite the fact that the Delver's Guild has existed for just over three years, it is already one of the most powerful and prominent guilds in the city. It offers its members information about job opportunities and events pertaining to the exploration of regions below Ptolus, which many call the Dungeon. The Delver's Guild also maintains the city's most extensive collection of maps of the underground areas and an impressive library for research. Most active adventurers in the city belong to the Delver's Guild, at least for the discount at Ebbert's Outfitters and access to the maps and library.

Delver's Guild officials will pay 10 gp for a map of an area of the Dungeon that they do not already have mapped.

Ebbert's Outfitters, page 192

Members not only have access to this information, but also receive passwords that allow them into secret chambers within the underground regions. These secret chambers, called waystations, are stocked with food and simple supplies. High-ranking members have retrieval insurance, which guarantees them that, if they should die while exploring, guild members will retrieve their bodies and have them raised if at all possible (retrieval and raising paid for out of a special guild account funded by the insured).

The guild's membership hovers around eight hundred. There are said to be at least four hundred delvers not affiliated with the guild. At any given time, about one-fifth of this number (about two hundred and fifty people) is exploring the Dungeon. The Guildmaster Delver, Sorum Dandubal (male human), is quickly becoming one of the most powerful and influential people on the City Council.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

There are four levels of Delver's Guild membership.

1. **Associate Guildsman.** Open to anyone
   Dues: 10 gp per year (payable upon admission)
   Benefits: Access to guild information, 10% discount at Ebbert's Outfitters

2. **Guildsman.** Open to anyone
   Dues: 20 gp per year (payable upon admission)
   Benefits: As associate, plus access to guild library, maproom, and waystations

3. **Master Delver.** Open to guildsmen after at least one year's membership
   Dues: 500 gp per year
   Benefits: As guildsman, plus voting privileges and retrieval insurance

4. **Grand Master.** Open to master delvers with at least three years' membership. Title held by all founding members (eighteen total)
   Dues: 5,000 gp per year
   Benefits: As master delver, plus claim staking

Guild Information: The Delver's Guild compiles reports of what dangers and treasures their members encounter below the city. The guild keeps track of monsters, inhabitants, traps, hazards, and other factors of note. It then rates each area on a scale of 1 to 20 based on difficulty and reward—typically, the higher the difficulty, the higher the reward.

Guild Library and Maproom: The Delver's Guild Library and Maproom is located in Oldtown, despite the fact that the main headquarters of the guild is just off the Undercity Market, below Midtown. The guild librarian is a kindly fiftyish man named Shad Livbovic (male human). Guild maps are not free. Access to the library and maproom costs 1 gp, and copying a map costs 50 to 200 gp, depending on the map. Guild maps always show waystations, if any.

Guild Waystations: Each waystation contains a week's worth of iron rations and water, a couple of doses of antitoxin, ten torches, flint and steel, a healer's kit, perhaps one healing potion, a few sacks, a few daggers, 50 feet of rope, and miscellaneous simple tools. About 10 percent of the time, however, a waystation is completely empty.

Most waystations are protected in areas sealed with voice-activated magical locks. All waystation locks open to a single password known to members of guildsman rank and above. The password changes weekly. Members using a waystation's supplies are expected to return and restock them, but in reality this happens only about 25 percent of the time. The rest of the time, if possible, the guild pays for teams to restock waystations.

Retrieval Insurance: If a master delver dies while exploring the Dungeon, the Delver's Guild guarantees that it will attempt divinations to find the fallen member and—if successful—send someone down to recover the body so it can be raised. The master delver must put aside sufficient money in a special fund (held in trust by the guild) to pay for the spells and to recompense those who go down to retrieve the body. Typically, this amount is 2,750 gp. Some adventurers make their living doing nothing but working as part of a retrieval team.

Voting Privileges: The guild operates as a democracy of a sort. All master delvers get a vote on guild actions and the election of the Guildmaster Delver, who represents them on the City Council and leads them for a two-year renewable term. Grand master votes count as five votes.

Claim Staking: Grand master delvers are allowed to stake a claim on a certain area of the Dungeon, either to ensure that no one else can explore it, or to use it as a base of operations or residence. The claim must be approved by a majority of the existing grand masters. When a claim is posted, no guild members may enter the claimed territory without permission, or they immediately lose their membership and are fined 1,000 gp. In fact, the guild pays up to five associate guildsmen to serve as guards (such a job usually pays 20 gp per month) if the grand master with the claim wishes it, and they are free to hire more on their own.

THE FALLEN

The Fallen is an organization of demons referred to as "young demons," although only a handful of people really know what that means. To understand the Fallen, one must first understand the ancient history of the world and its unique cosmology.

Before the creation of Praemal, the Galchutt ruled over all fiends, even the so-called Demon Gods. Thousands of years ago, however, when the Galchutt were imprisoned, the hellish planes were left without leadership. Powerful demons like Demogorgon, Orcus, and Ochremeshk quickly moved in to fill the void, but it was not long before the Elder Gods produced their first child, a demigod named Raguel. Through powerful elder magic, the newly born Raguel was sent outside the world to the nether realms to rule over all demonkind. His main job was to make sure the Galchutt were never able to contact the fiends outside the boundaries of the world and somehow gain their help to escape. More powerful than any of the demon princes at the time, Raguel's might ensured that he would attain the position bequeathed to him by the parents he never met.

Thousands of years passed, and eventually Raguel—who was not a fiend and did not share their delight for the nature of his domain—grew weary of life in Hell. He sought his parents to learn more about why they sent him to rule over a kingdom of depravity and evil when he himself had no place there. A host of demonkind followed their ruler, contrary to their previous refusal to come into the world physically. Almost all of the demons that came were born, spawned, or created recently enough that they lacked firsthand memories of the Galchutt or those distant days when they reigned in Hell. Although they knew the ancient Lords of Chaos resided in the world to which they traveled, they had no idea what that meant. They knew that, like the Galchutt, they would be trapped in Praemal, but they trusted in Raguel. Sadly for them, they had no concept of what it would be like to be separated from their dark home realms.

Raguel arrived in the world with his demonic host two hundred years ago, but to his dismay he found his parents missing. Almost no word of their existence had been recorded for thousands of years.

Immediately, though, the host of demons—now calling themselves the Fallen—heard the

Library and Maproom, and Shad Livbovic, page 299

Shad Livbovic has expert stats, page 609

Antitoxin, page 525

Unique cosmology: see Praemal as a Prison Plane, page 63

Retrieval insurance cost breakdown:

- *500 gp to magically find the general location of the body*
- *1,000 gp for a retrieval team to recover the body*
- *1,250 gp for returning the body to life with the least expensive magic available*

Many master delvers pay an additional 1,000 gp to use magic that precisely locates the body, 1,000 gp for a skilled retrieval team, 1,000 gp to teleport the team to and from the body, and the cost of a more powerful or less traumatic resurrection spell.

Delver Statistics

It is estimated that for every ten delvers that go down into the Dungeon each week, one does not come back. About a hundred new adventurers come to Ptolus every week, and about twenty-five are raised from the dead. Since the Delver's Guild began keeping records three years ago, about eight thousand adventurers have permanently died exploring the Dungeon. Another two hundred and thirty have permanently retired, either in the city or elsewhere.

For more on the adventurer's lifestyle, see Chapter 27: On Being a Delver, page 507.

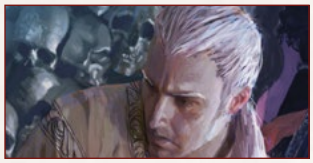
Dark Reliquary, page 223
The Forsaken, page 111
Night of Dissolution, page 62
Seven Jewels of Parnaith, page 485
Parnaith's mirrored sphere, *page 641*
Crimson Court, page 226
Chaos cults, page 75
Balacazars, page 102
Vai, page 131
Knights of the Pale, page 121
Keepers of the Veil, page 117

Over the years, there were many exceptions to the rule forbidding demons from physically entering the world of Praemal. Some demons did come to the world, particularly at the behest of powerful mortals like the Dread One or Ghul.

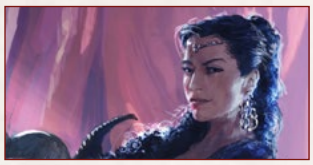
In a way that is not fully understood, Lilith claims all of the Demon Gods (Demogorgon, Orcus, Ochremeshk, and so on) as her fathers. Her mother, if she has one, is never spoken of.

GM TIPS

When the PCs first hear of Raguel, they should learn only that he is the leader of the demons and a resident of the Dark Reliquary. It should come as a surprise to them—should they ever get the chance to meet him—that he is not a demon, or even evil. Raguel's father is the Elder God Nathrak, and his mother is the Elder Goddess Dien.



Raguel has solar stats, with AC 22, Int +15, Wis +15, Cha +18; he attacks with his bare hands instead of weapons; alignment neutral. Equipment: ring of protection, rod of rulership, crystal ball of true seeing, Parnaith's mirrored sphere *(page 641).*



Lilith has succubus stats, with AC 17, 130 hp, advantage on all saves, and the spellcasting of an archmage; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: bracers of defense, ring of regeneration, spell scroll of imprisonment.

A hezrou is an ogre-sized brutish demon shaped like a humanoid toad.

clarion call of the Galchutt. Their dark sires would be stirring again relatively soon and sought the aid of their metaphorical children—or, rather, grandchildren. The young demons turned to Raguel. What would they do? Flock to the side of the Galchutt? Work against the Galchutt in the name of Raguel's parentage? Wreak havoc and chaos on the mortal world, ignoring any allegiances at all?

Raguel had to make a decision. He brought his host near where the Galchutt slept—near the Spire of Ptolus. While he contemplated, he and the demons that followed him settled in the Dark Reliquary within the Necropolis. There was no resistance; the Forsaken welcomed them eagerly.

And still today Raguel contemplates. And the Fallen wait.

Raguel's lover, Lilith, is a unique demon princess in her own right. She favors siding with the Galchutt and attempts to influence Raguel in that direction. When that proves fruitless, she clandestinely works with the Forsaken and various chaos cults to bring about the Night of Dissolution. She enjoys the support of many of the Fallen.

Meanwhile, Raguel has learned that the only way to contact the Elder Gods is by journeying through the Seven Jewels of Parnaith. He has, through his own agents, obtained an artifact called *Parnaith's mirrored sphere*, which can speed travelers along the journey. He contemplates going to the Jewels himself, but fears that Lilith will usurp his power while he is gone. So what he really wants is to find someone to go to the Jewels without him—someone who is not a demon.

Many of the Fallen are half-fiends, some able to pass for human, others able to do so if they disguise themselves. Even some of the full-blooded fiends attempt to take human shape and manner. These Fallen, calling themselves the Crimson Court, have become "tainted" by the physical world. Those that can take human shape (or occasionally the shapes of elves, dwarves, and so on) do so regularly. Those that cannot have had their physical form magically altered so they look somewhat more human. Either way, most wear humanlike clothing—usually raiment of great finery and expense. Thus, a hezrou of the Crimson Court might appear slightly smaller than a normal hezrou with a more human shape, although it is still an ogre-sized humanoid toad, so no one would ever mistake it for a human. It might wear a black and dark green suit with a flowing black cape.

The Crimson Court uses vast halls outside of Raguel's throne room for lavish parties that continue for weeks, dancing to the music of undead minstrels accompanied by the carefully orchestrated screams of torture victims, drinking wines mixed with blood, and feasting on entrails and hearts. They fancy themselves a noble court and have assigned themselves various titles and ranks.

The Fallen are allies of the Forsaken, sharing both their disgusting appetites and their main residence, the Dark Reliquary. The Fallen believe themselves superior to the Forsaken, an opinion the weaker (albeit more numerous) Forsaken can do little to argue against. Some of the Fallen are also allies of the chaos cults and occasionally have dealings with the Balacazars and even the Vai. The Fallen's greatest enemies are the Knights of the Pale, but the Keepers of the Veil are also a thorn in their collective side. And that's not even mentioning the occasional group of paladins or other heroes who—dismayed that an organization of demons operates somewhat openly in the city—show up at the doorstep of the Dark Reliquary looking for a fight. They usually get one, and they are never heard from again.

Raguel commands his followers not to draw too much of the city's attention, but he has spent his entire life among demonkind, so he knows they must have victims on which to feed—both physically and spiritually. So, although they do sneak out of the Necropolis to prey upon local residents, they do so with care and subtlety. Sometimes they leave the city and waylay travelers or small farming villages away from Ptolus. For the most part, the demons keep a surprisingly low profile, allowing Ptolus's citizens and authorities to attempt to ignore them.

RAGUEL

Raguel is a demigod, although he shed some of his power when he left his position in Hell (see above). He has feathered wings like an angel, but he can make them appear or disappear at will, and they're usually not visible unless he needs them.

LILITH

Under the command of Lilith, a unique demon who may be related to one or more demon princes, a small but powerful group of the Fallen acts to learn more about the Galchutt's current situation, the impending doom of the Night of Dissolution, and the cultists and creatures working to aid these Lords of Chaos. In her own strange, demonic way, she may actually love Raguel, but she craves power too much to sit idly by and allow him to waste the opportunity she sees set before them. Lilith wants to reign in Hell next to the Galchutt themselves, and in so doing see this world annihilated.

FATE WEAVERS

Long ago, Ptolus stood on the brink of disaster with a powerful ghost-lich ready to loose a plague that would certainly kill most if not every living thing in the city. But the hero Abesh Runihan fought and defeated Kagrisos, the undead chaos worshipper who sought to slay the city. That much is well known.

What is less known is how Runihan knew that Kagrisos was a threat, scheming his schemes below the city.

Abesh Runihan had two friends, Arlian and Nitham, a brother and sister with a strange gift. Taught many secrets by their grandmother, the siblings could look at the skeins of destiny and see how one individual's fate fit into the lattice of all other fates.

After the death of Runihan at the hands of Kagrisos, the two started a secret school in the Rivergate District to teach others their skills. Most of their students were young waifs living on the streets with few other options, and the Fate Weavers offered opportunities no one else would. Not everyone had the gift, though, so the school stayed small.

The Fate Weavers all bear the mark of their affiliation on their foreheads. Once trained in the art of fate weaving, members earn money by reading the destinies of others. The Fate Weavers get little respect—particularly from spellcasters, who call them charlatans. Wizards, sorcerers, and clerics warn that magic able to presage the future is extremely powerful and difficult to master; a group of young waifs certainly could not accomplish such a potent metaphysical task. The group also loses the respect of the more upstanding city residents, as many members also work as Imperially licensed (and thus legal) prostitutes to help earn funds for the school.

Still, many people believe what the Fate Weavers have to say. Much of what they see seems to come to pass, or at least the advice they give seems to be more beneficial for the subject than not.

Currently, the leader of the organization is a woman named Marija Elinek (female human). She and her close associate, Erred (male centaur), both live at the school and are the primary teachers as well as the administrators. Although not a Fate Weaver, a man named Dharim Boch (male human) also lives at the school. An adventurer, Dharim was exploring regions under the city more than two decades ago (long before the current rush to do so) near what he believed was the edge of the Banewarrens, close to a Pit of Insanity, when he found one of the mysterious Urthon Aedar. The figure was dying, horribly wounded from the energies of the nearby pit. Dharim did what he could to help him, and in return the Urthon Aedar spoke of his mysterious brethren, their history, and their goals. He bequeathed his possessions, including his *Urthon Aedar full plate armor*, to Dharim Boch.

Henceforth, Dharim wore the armor, but told almost no one where it came from. He considered himself a sort of honorary Urthon Aedar and remained always loyal to them. He did what he could to further their goals, which was in fact very little. Dharim is now quite old—too old to go off on adventures anymore, but he found solace among the Fate Weavers, perhaps because, like them, the Urthon Aedar are tied to the future and see how the present shapes it. Still, a handful of locals are aware that, if you want to know about the Urthon Aedar, Dharim Boch is the man to ask. But first you have to convince him that you mean the Urthon Aedar no harm.

What many people overlook is that this group's name is the Fate *Weavers*. They ultimately don't want simply to predict the future, but to shape it for the better. Because of this leaning, for example, the Fate Weavers secretly back the republican movement led by Helmut Itlestein. They believe that being free of the Empire would be best for the people of Ptolus.

Urthon Aedar plate armor, page 645

Helmut Itlestein, page 363

Fate Weaving

The Fate Weavers don't predict future events so much as they look into the fate of an individual to see whether they are on a path toward prosperity or doom. They can answer specific questions only up to a point—details are never available to a Fate Weaver. "Am I on the path to reuniting with my sister?" will get an answer. "Where are the kidnappers holding my sister?" will not.

GMs should consider whether they want to handle the Fate Weavers' talents as a sham (even a well-meaning one), a flavorful aspect of the city, or something supported by game mechanics. If the latter, consider making Fate Weaving a Wisdom-based skill. The DC for Fate Weaving checks is normally 15; modifiers increase the DC based on how far into the future the weaver looks and how specific the topic is. "Will I be successful in life?" has no modifier, while "Will I be successful in my new career as a sailor?" might increase the DC by +1, and "Will my voyage to Trolone succeed?" garners a +5 modifier.

As a general rule, Fate Weaving helps one determine whether one is on the right path, not identify a secret door's location or tell what lies in the next room in a dungeon.

THE FORSAKEN

The most reviled group in the city of Ptolus, the Forsaken are living people who have an unhealthy fascination with death and—worse—undeath. Not surprisingly, the Forsaken spend much of their time in the Necropolis. The vast majority of this group are humans, with a few half-elves and half-orcs. The other species seem even more universally repelled than most humans by the idea of consorting with undead.

The Forsaken value death and undeath more than life. These disgusting necrophiles, necrophages, and necrophiliacs worship dark gods and consort openly with undead and the Fallen. They headquarter their activities in a place called the Dark Reliquary in the Necropolis. Many become ghouls unintentionally by means of something they refer to as the Lovely Malison or the corpse kiss.

The Forsaken are subdivided into two groups: the Torrens and the Licheloved. The Torrens hate the living to the point of self-loathing but they despise Lothianites beyond all others. They relish wanton murder and destruction in the name of death and undeath. They sympathize with the causes of the various cults and favor a

The Forsaken (living and undead) often use a magic item called Forsaken body paint *in their daily activities; see page 638.*

Marija Elinek has artisan stats, page 606

Erred has defender stats, page 607

Dharim Boch has veteran stats.

Dark Reliquary, page 223

Lovely Malison, page 112

Pit of Insanity, page 387

Urthon Aedar, page 130

Lilith of the Fallen, page 110
Vaults of the Rhodintor, page 421
Wuntad, page 77
Night of Dissolution, page 62
Vai, page 131
Balacazars, page 102
Zachean, page 435
Dwarvenhearth, page 429

close alliance with them and with Lilith of the Fallen. The Licheloved are far more detached, interested in the esoterica of death and undeath. They rarely concern themselves with the affairs of the living at all, so they have no interest in killing or allying with other groups. The Licheloved would rather be left alone with their undead companions.

Not surprisingly, the suicide rate among both groups is very high.

The Forsaken share their home in the Dark Reliquary with the Fallen. The demons make good neighbors, as they don't mind living among the undead (although they certainly do not revere them the way the Forsaken do) and they have similar morbid tastes. The Forsaken appreciate the fact that the presence of the Fallen keeps away most of their enemies. They know that, were it not for the demons, the city authorities probably would have marshaled an army to cleanse the Necropolis and the Dark Reliquary by now.

The Forsaken have close ties to the Vai and a loose connection with the Balacazars (the crime family supplies them with magic items, drugs, and other contraband). They also have made a recent alliance with Zachean, a dark elf vampire who has found a way into Dwarvenhearth far below the Undercity. This alliance allows Zachean to learn more about goings-on in the city and, in exchange, the Forsaken have learned the location of the Vaults of the Rhodintor, uncovered by accident in the vampire's attempts to get to the subterranean dwarven city.

Many Forsaken worship chaos; crossover with the chaos cults is common. Worshippers of the gods of death—such as the sisters Heiran and Nareis, or Maleskari, God of Shades—find friends among the Forsaken as well. Despite their outcast nature, they have surprising ties all over (and under) the city. Recently, the powerful creature known as Wuntad, in the process of uniting all the forces of chaos in the city to help bring about the Night of Dissolution, has sealed an agreement with the Forsaken that joins them with the cultists forevermore. (The chaos cultists were particularly interested in the location of the Vaults of the Rhodintor.) Wuntad has even taken on the mantle of shigmaa to show this fellowship.

The shigmaa are among the most powerful Forsaken: living people who have touched death and returned to speak of it. Their bodies course with necromantic energy to the point where they are practically undead, even while still alive.

While the Forsaken have little more than contempt for the living people of Ptolus, they also rarely cause them any direct harm. They do, however, frequently disturb graves in the Necropolis, which infuriates the citizenry. For

The Lovely Malison

The Lovely Malison, also known as the corpse kiss, is a supernatural disease contracted by eating the flesh of an undead creature or a corpse that has been corrupted in some other way. An intelligent creature dining on such flesh must succeed at a DC 17 Constitution save or become infected, taking 5 (1d10) necrotic damage each day and gaining 1d3 levels of exhaustion each day until it dies. The following night, the victim rises from the dead as an undead ghoul. The creature retains all its memories and, if it succeeds at a DC 20 Wisdom save, it may retain some or all of its other abilities (such as spellcasting or class abilities) as a ghoul. Many Forsaken undergo this transformation intentionally.

this reason, recently the Commissar has made grave-robbing a crime punishable by death. Forsaken captured by the authorities rarely reach trial but are killed on the spot.

Most people—particularly Forsaken enemies, such as the Keepers of the Veil—lump the Forsaken in with the undead that they live among and revere. Truthfully, the Forsaken and the undead work so closely together that the distinction is fairly irrelevant.

Many of the Forsaken don't hold all undead in the same regard. For example, while they look up to vampires as veritable gods, zombies are nothing but slaves or tools. In fact, Forsaken agents make money for the organization by selling zombie slaves—through Balacazar connections—to well-paying clients. In so doing, they also sell magic items keyed to the zombies to make them obey the new owner, even if the client is not a spellcaster.

The current leader of the Forsaken is Shigmaa Urasta, a female tiefling whose demonic lineage has helped her get along with the Fallen. Although she resisted for quite some time, Urasta has embraced the alliance with the chaos cults and Wuntad as well.

THE GUILDS

Ptolus has many guilds—a whole district devoted to them, in fact. A few guilds appear in their own sections in this chapter (see the Delver's Guild, the Longfingers Guild, the Order of Iron Might, the Sorn, and the Vai). Some have more details in Chapter 9: Guildsman District, Chapter 11: Necropolis (the Deathguilders), and Chapter 14: Oldtown (the Bankers' Guild, the Order of Iron Might, and the Sages' Guild). Some groups—even though they are organizations of people with similar professions—are not considered guilds because their membership is so exclusive, because the group operates in a very unusual manner, or because the similarity of the professions or interests of the membership is not the main point of the organizations. Such exceptions include the Inverted Pyramid, the Order of the Fist, the Order of the Dawn, the Naltegro Suun, and others detailed in this chapter. The list that follows, however, is a comprehensive list of all the city's functioning guilds:

Bankers' Guild: This powerful guild of moneylenders and bankers allies itself closely with House Abanar. Chuster Nogol (male human) serves as the guildmaster. Its headquarters is in Oldtown.

Bellringers' Guild: This small operation disseminates information using criers from its base in Oldtown.

Brewers' Guild: This guild covers all brewers and associated workers. It is based in the Guildsman District.

Cobblers' Guild: This guild of shoemakers is also based in the Guildsman District. Though shoemaking and repairing is one of the most common occupations in Ptolus, this guild is one of the least influential. Most cobblers do not bother to join the guild.

Coppersmiths' Guild: This small group of metalworkers is controlled by the Ironworkers' Guild.

Deathguilders: An organization of morticians, embalmers, gravediggers, and professional mourners, the Deathguilders operate out of the Necropolis. (See page 221.)

Delver's Guild: This guild organizes those who explore the levels beneath Ptolus. (See page 108.)

Glassblowers' Guild: Small and quiet, this guild is based in the Guildsman District.

Goldsmiths' Guild: This guild has its headquarters in the Guildsman District. It is a rival of the Silversmiths' Guild but is more or less controlled by the Ironworkers' Guild.

Herbalists' Guild: This group covers all herbalists and physickers, including dentists and even barbers—all are considered similar professions in Ptolus. They are based in the Guildsman District.

Ironworkers' Guild: One of the most powerful guilds in the city, they control the Goldsmiths', Silversmiths', Tinsmiths', Coppersmiths'. and Weaponsmiths' guilds.

Jewelers' Guild: Jewelry makers and gem cutters belong to this small guild based in the Guildsman District.

Leatherworkers' Guild: This guild for all who work with leather—tanners, saddlers, beltmakers, and glovemakers, but not cobblers—operates out of the Guildsman District.

Longfingers Guild: This thieves' guild once had more power than it does today. (See page 123.)

Masons' Guild: Notorious for its corruption, this guild makes its home in the Guildsman District.

Merchants' Guild: This new guild operates out of the South Market. So far, most merchants seem resistant to the idea of guild membership, however, as they fear regulation and the domination of larger merchant organizations over smaller, individual merchants.

Order of Iron Might: A guild of soldiers, mercenaries, gladiators, and anyone else who earns a living with sword or spear. This warriors' guild is based in Oldtown.

Any fire magic Urasta uses has a dark blue color and inflicts cold damage instead of fire damage.

Shigmaa Urasta is a tiefling with high priest stats (page 610), advantage on saves against magic, and Forsaken shigmaa abilities (Second Chance, Call of Death, Necromantic Lore, Reap the Living, Love of the Dead, Death Ward, Paralyzing Touch, and Immunities of the Grave, page 615); alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: +1 breastplate, +1 shield, unholy morningstar *(page 645)*, unholy dragon pistol *(page 645)*, *ammunition (20), harrower chaositech device,* scarab of protection.

Using Guilds

So you think the Cobblers' Guild and the Glassblowers' Guild are unlikely to come up in adventures in your campaign? Even such mundane groups have politics and intrigues. Imagine if someone embezzled all of the Cobblers' Guild funds, and the guildmaster looks for someone to help track down the culprit, perhaps using magic. But the culprit uses her ties with the Balacazar organization to help her lay low. Now, suddenly, an association with the Cobblers' Guild leads the player characters into potential conflict with one of the most powerful and dangerous groups in the city.

Or perhaps a member of the Glassblowers' Guild was commissioned to create a glass orb to use in fashioning a magic item. Once the orb was finished, however, the artisan was found murdered. His fellow guilders want retribution, so they hire the PCs to see what they can find out. The trail leads into the Dungeon, where a number of Sorn-Ulth—who had hired the glassblower in disguise—wish to finish their magic item.

Chuster Nogol has expert stats, page 609

See Chapter 36: Character Options for details on playing a Mage of the Inverted Pyramid (page 649).

Tyrese Anvilfist has expert stats, page 609

Inverted Pyramid symbol

Renn Sadar, page 99

Balacazars, page 102
The Dread One's rise, page 80
Kevris Killraven, page 119
Days of Blood, page 89
Church of Lothian, page 67

Chaos cults, page 75
Inverted Pyramid headquarters, page 302

Sages' Guild: Headquartered in an aging building in Oldtown, this guild is open to sages and scholars of all kinds.

Silversmiths' Guild: This guild of silvercrafters based in the Guildsman District is a rival of the Goldsmiths' Guild but, like that group, is more or less controlled by the ironworkers.

The Sorn: This mages' guild also operates as an unofficial assassins' guild. (See page 129.)

Textile Workers' Guild: Clothiers, weavers, seamstresses, and textile dyers form this large and surprisingly influential guild in the Guildsman District.

Tinsmiths' Guild: This small guild based out of the Guildsman District is controlled, at least in part, by the Ironworkers' Guild. A man named Tyrese Anvilfist (male dwarf) is the guildmaster.

The Vai: This notorious assassins' guild comprises depraved murderers who worship death. (See page 131.)

Weaponsmiths' Guild: This surprisingly small guild is controlled almost entirely by the ironworkers. In fact, most of its members also belong to the Ironworkers' Guild. Many people consider it obsolete.

Woodworkers' Guild: This large and influential guild is open to carpenters, woodcarvers, furniture makers, cabinet makers, barrel makers, and more. It is based in the Guildsman District.

THE INVERTED PYRAMID

While most people assume the Inverted Pyramid was formed out of necessity hundreds of years ago when arcane magic was outlawed in the Empire, the truth is that it has joined the most powerful wizards and sorcerers in the world together since before recorded history. Even before the Dread One rose to power, the Inverted Pyramid served as a society of magic wielders who wished to separate from the rest of the world. Little is known of the secretive organization's history, except that it centered in the lands south of Ptolus, just east of the Cold Desert. The Inverted Pyramid enters the annals of history most prominently during the Days of Blood.

From the earliest days of the Empire of Tarsis, the Inverted Pyramid was a great foe of the Church of Lothian. So when the Church declared that all arcane magic was evil, the Inverted Pyramid worked tirelessly throughout the Empire to rescue persecuted mages and bring them to secret safe houses. In so doing, the Inverted Pyramid also gathered the arcane knowledge that survived this terrible time. Thus, as they saved the lives and work of many wizards and sorcerers, they also managed to create a network of arcanists and a collection of knowledge unparalleled throughout the world. When Commissar Norrid Favanar offered Ptolus as a sanctuary for mages in 615 IA, the Inverted Pyramid relocated its headquarters to the City by the Spire.

Today, the Inverted Pyramid is less a sanctuary from oppression than a force for fostering magical study and rewarding those who excel at it. Members never refer to their organization as a "guild"—the Pyramid is far more than that. The group is concerned with preserving magical lore and all things arcane from those it believes would eradicate such knowledge. Its membership includes most of the powerful arcanists in Ptolus and the world.

Even with the fame it garnered opposing the Church, the Inverted Pyramid has remained extremely secretive. The general public has no idea where in the city the group bases its operations, and no one knows any details about its membership, other than perhaps the identities of its more flamboyant or famous members (probably Moynath Autumnsong, Jevicca Nor, and Lord Renn Sadar).

Although no longer openly antagonistic toward the Church of Lothian, the Inverted Pyramid fears that at any time the religion could fall into the grip of its more right-wing clergy and oppose arcane magic again. While such an event seems unlikely, this paranoia keeps the Inverted Pyramid watching the Church of Lothian closely and with great distrust.

Through Lord Renn Sadar, a prominent member, the Inverted Pyramid allies itself with House Sadar and thus its ally House Vladaam. The mages have found that dealing with criminals like the Balacazars makes their secretive life easier than attempting to always stay on the proper side of the law, but the appearance of Kevris Killraven—a powerful individual who wants to replace both the Balacazars and the Inverted Pyramid—has pushed the mages and the criminal family even closer. In theory, these alliances might draw connections between the Inverted Pyramid and such groups as the Vai, the Forsaken, and the Fallen, but in reality no such connections exist. And to be sure, the Inverted Pyramid wants nothing to do with the growing chaos cults and their dreams of destruction. For the most part, the Pyramid wants to preserve the status quo, not make radical change.

The organization takes its name from its headquarters, probably the city's strangest structure: a floating, upside-down pyramid that hangs almost a thousand feet above

Oldtown. The pyramid and everything within it are invisible, however, so it is also the city's most mysterious structure. The vast majority of citizens have no idea where it is; those few who know it is in Oldtown don't know exactly where, or that it sometimes moves.

MEMBERSHIP

The Inverted Pyramid has more than one hundred members, which means that Ptolus has, by far, the greatest concentration of high-level spellcasters of any city; one out of about every seven hundred fifty people is an arcane spellcaster of significant power. And that number is even a little low, since not every arcanist belongs to the Inverted Pyramid. The list of elite members of the organization, called masters, has some of the most powerful beings in the world. They include:

Moynath Autumnsong: See Castle Shard in Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter.

Unirthom the Blue: This very old man (male human) is known to have created magic items whose power levels could only be described as artifacts, including his own *staff of the magi*. He moves very slowly now and stands hunched over. Small tufts of white hair remain on either side of his otherwise bald head.

Kaeran Altarstone: This powerful sorcerer (male elf) claims to be the reincarnation of Saerth, one of the Great Seven who defeated Ghul. He is rather arrogant and not well liked.

Iniah Croesh: A powerful spellcaster, Iniah (female human) was rendered permanently invisible in an unreplicable magical experiment a few years ago. This condition has not deterred her from her constant studies.

Renn Sadar: See House Sadar.

The Genesis: This strange individual (male tiefling) keeps to himself, specializing in creating constructs and even artificial life. He stands about 5 feet tall, with dark skin, hair, and eyes. His hands each have only three fingers and a thumb.

Jevicca Nor: Youngest and perhaps least powerful of the masters, Jevicca (female human) is so talented at magical studies that the Inverted Pyramid welcomed her into its inner circle with open arms. When she lost an arm in a battle with a dragon, she created her own magical prosthesis out of red glass. Because Jevicca is warm and friendly, she serves as the public face of the Inverted Pyramid when needed, attending public gatherings and holding a seat on the City Council. She has also created some well-known spells (see Chapter 35: Magic). Jevicca is tall with long red hair. Many consider her fairly attractive. Her one-room house in Oldtown connects to other one-room buildings all over the world via gates, creating a vast mansion.

JOINING

Inverted Pyramid membership is available to characters who have established a reasonable mastery with arcane magic. An invitation is required to join. Membership dues are 2,000 gp per year, but various duties within the organization can earn a member far more gold than that, if one desires. New members are called initiates and have access to additional special abilities (see Chapter 36). Characters who have belonged to the group for at least two years and meet other requirements can gain the rank of adept. Those who have been members for at least five years and meet extremely strict other requirements gain the rank of master, the highest within the Inverted Pyramid. Most masters have reached the mortal pinnacle of arcane magic. Note that the Inverted Pyramid special abilities described in Chapter 36 are not membership requirements—even for adepts or masters.

Aside from the dues, initiates must honor the reasonable requests of adepts and masters at any time, and adepts must likewise do as the masters bid them. "Reasonable" is a subjective term;

The Inverted Pyramid does not invite anyone who is not at least an 8th-level sorcerer, warlock, or wizard.

Moynath Autumnsong, page 266

Great Seven, page 85

Arcane spellcasters of significant power are those of 8th or higher level.

Unirthom the Blue has archmage stats.

Kaeran Altarstone is a warlock with archmage stats.

Iniah Croesh has archmage stats.

The Genesis has archmage stats.

Jevicca Nor has archmage stats; alignment neutral good. Equipment: Jevicca's Arm *(page 640)*, white robe of the archmagi, ring of protection, spell scrolls *(*blink, disintegrate, polymorph, power word stun, scrying, stoneskin*)*, potion of superior healing, *ruby necklace worth 2,750 gp, ruby ring worth 1,000 gp,* Inverted Pyramid's invisible charm *(page 640), 25 pp, 25 gp, 23* mage coins *(in a vault, page 146)*.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In the original Ptolus Campaign, the character Serai Lorenci joined the Inverted Pyramid. He didn't live there, but he used his thoughtstone *(page 158) to network mentally with other members.*

Inverted Pyramid mages are often extremely elitist and will not work with or trust mages who are not members. They look with particular distaste upon the Sorn. (No member of the Sorn may be admitted to the membership of the Inverted Pyramid.) At first, when the Iron Mage (page 316) would not join the organization, the members were quite embarrassed. Later, however, they circulated their version of the story, which painted the Iron Mage in a poor light and made it clear that they did not want him. By all appearances, the Iron Mage could not care less.

Any Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion check made within the library by a character who takes at least 1d4 + 1 hours to research has advantage.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

A character can attempt an Investigation check to learn background about the mysterious Inverted Pyramid as follows:

- *Learn of the group's existence and origins as related here (DC 12).*
- *Learn that group members reside in an upside-down pyramid that floats above the city; one can reach it only by teleportation (DC 18).*

Thoughtstones, *page 158*

Invisible charm, *page 640*

No matter what the circumstance, the Dreaming Apothecary agents always make it clear to customers that they are extremely busy, and that making any item quickly is quite a burden.

members who find a request unreasonable must take it up with a board of inquiry. If the board finds the request unreasonable, the higher-ranking member can be fined up to 10,000 gp. If the request was deemed reasonable, the lower-ranking member can be expelled from the organization. Realistically, requests are made only when absolutely necessary—members are taught to respect the privacy, work, and studies of all other members, even those of lower rank. They do not abuse this privilege, lest they look poorly in the eyes of their peers.

Benefits to joining the Inverted Pyramid are many. Members can, if they wish, take up quarters in the pyramid itself, or simply maintain a laboratory or workshop there. The primary benefit of the organization, however, is information: both arcane knowledge and contacts. The Inverted Pyramid structure holds the greatest library of arcana in the world, with every known spell on file. This collection grows constantly, as members devise new spells all the time and share them with their fellows. The library also has extensive sections on history, the planes, religion, and other topics. And of course, members can approach most other members for advice or lore, although some require appointments.

Since the membership includes some of the most powerful people in the city, it is one of the best-informed organizations. When there is news in Ptolus, members of the Inverted Pyramid know about it before most others. Also, all members can buy *thoughtstones* for the standard price if they wish.

Lastly, all members receive a 20 percent discount on magic items created by the Dreaming Apothecary.

Membership in the Inverted Pyramid is usually considered secret, although many members—particularly the masters—have allowed their association with the group to become known. In any case, every member is given a magic brooch called an *invisible charm*. It projects above the wearer's head an upside-down floating pyramid symbol, which only someone wearing an *invisible charm* can see.

DREAMING APOTHECARY

The Inverted Pyramid is likely the wealthiest organization in Ptolus, thanks to the Dreaming Apothecary.

Most city residents have heard of the Dreaming Apothecary, although many may think it a myth. Reportedly, it is an organization that dwells only within the realm of dreams and can provide one with anything desired, as long as the interested party has the funds to pay for it.

The rumors are more or less true. The Dreaming Apothecary is a group of spellcasters who make magic items to order. What few realize (but at least some suspect) is that it is not a separate group, but one and the same as the Inverted Pyramid. Occasionally, the Pyramid takes certain steps to distance itself from the Dreaming Apothecary's actions, which are not always legal, but there is no foolproof way to trace the Apothecary or its operators.

Selling magic items—the most expensive objects in the world—is a dangerous business. The mages of the Dreaming Apothecary have concocted a means of handling the extraordinarily pricey transactions with virtually no risk to themselves or their inventory. All interaction with the public is done through dreams.

The Dreaming Apothecary operates no storefront. It has no known location in the city. Instead, it employs local representatives. While the representatives remain safely ignorant of the group's secrets, they can provide people with the means and the knowledge to do business with the Apothecary. They grant anyone wishing to contact the group a small bronze token with the image of a male human's face on one side—his eyes closed, as though asleep—and a female elf's face on the other, her eyes likewise closed.

The representative instructs the interested party to place the token under their pillow or bed when they go to sleep that night, or otherwise very near their sleeping body. The Dreaming Apothecary will contact the character in their dreams, the representative says. The representative advises prospective clients to have the exact funds needed for the transaction in their possession or gathered in a secure place. What the representative does not make clear is that following these instructions essentially makes the character a willing recipient of a powerful divination that tells the mages of the Apothecary their location and that they want to be contacted. Further, the character willingly and automatically becomes subject to a spell that allows a mental conversation and another spell that identifies when the client is lying.

The sleeping character with a token has a lucid dream in which a levitating figure appears to them in the room where they sleep. This figure usually looks like a beautiful woman in a long, flowing red-and-gold robe or a dapper elf gentleman in a formal suit with a walking stick. In either case, the figure is an illusion, although the dreamer has no means to discern that. The friendly figure gets right to business, asking the dreamer what they want. Early in the transaction, the figure asks the dreamer whether they have the money to pay for the

item (remember, the dreamer is subject to magic that opens their mind and detects lies). Those without adequate funds are politely refused, and the dream ends.

Those with the means to pay for the desired item can haggle with the figure over the terms. Basically, the figure offers a base price and states the amount of time it will take to fashion the item. The time quoted is double the time it would normally take to make the item, or two weeks, whichever is longer. If the dreamer needs the item faster, the price increases (up to 50 percent more). The time required for most items obviously cannot be less than the time it takes to make the magic item, although in the case of unremarkable common and uncommon items (a typical magic sword, a ring of protection, animated rope, and so on), the Apothecary probably has one or more on hand and can produce them as soon as the next morning. The representative never negotiates a price lower than the base price.

Once the price and delivery date are secured, the figure asks the dreamer for the physical location of the funds. Payment is made entirely up front—no exceptions. Again, the dreamer is subject to mind-reading and other divinations, so even someone who lies probably reveals the truth. The next morning, the item's exact price is missing from the character's funds, no more and no less. This is true whether the money was in a bag under the dreamer's bed or locked in one of Ollam Hammersong's vaults. If the funds lie someplace protected from teleportation or divination, the character does not get their item.

If a client wants an additional ability added to an item they already possess, the item is likewise gone when the dreamer awakens.

Characters sleeping under the effects of a spell, item, or anything else that makes them proof against divinations receive no visit from the Dreaming Apothecary; the process will not work for them.

Delivery of an item comes on the appointed morning. Small, inexpensive items are delivered by a courier who has no idea what is in the package, who originally sent it, or where it came from. Larger or expensive items appear via teleportation magic in a location designated during the transaction.

The Dreaming Apothecary does not sell potions or scrolls.

This unusual service provider can afford to be extremely demanding, as it controls an absolute monopoly on magic items made to order. After all its years of existence, it has become common knowledge that spellcasters who attempt to create and sell magic items (except for potions and scrolls, and some wands of divine magic sold by temples) end up having terrible accidents. Shops catch on fire, explode, or sink into the ground. Mages turn into gnats or become babbling idiots. The Dreaming Apothecary is ruthless in maintaining its viselike grip over this lucrative business, and none of the "accidents" or attacks are ever successfully traced to anyone. Nothing happens to spellcasters who make items for their own use, or the use of their allies.

Those who try to cheat the Dreaming Apothecary earn similar treatment. A half-dozen timed magical explosions under their beds while they sleep is a common retaliatory action.

KEEPERS OF THE VEIL

The Keepers of the Veil are an order of holy knights with a history dedicated to the destruction of undead, specifically free-willed spirits that should have remained on their own side of the great veil of death. The order is almost eight hundred years old. It started among the Prust in Tarsis, led by the uncle of the man who would become the first Emperor. The founder, Sir Vaklav Von Tibbitz, was the ancestor of the current leader, Sir Beck Von Tibbitz, despite the fact that it is not a hereditary position. The Von Tibbitz line has always enjoyed a special affinity for combating the dead. In fact, the family has always been able to see spirits, even those that are invisible or incorporeal.

In 688 IA, the Keepers of the Veil—who had been coming to Ptolus frequently to help deal with the Necropolis—relocated the entire order to the city. Since then, the ranks have swollen to the current membership of more than fifty knights and two dozen support personnel. The knights are mostly paladins and fighters, although a few martial clerics fill out the ranks. The support personnel include squires, stewards, and the like, some scouts and spies (rogues), auxiliary warriors (bards and clerics, mostly), and a couple of arcanists. Virtually all members are good aligned, and they all dedicate themselves to the fight against undead.

The Keepers of the Veil operate out of a small keep called the Siege Tower, built into the wall surrounding the Necropolis. The order has reconfigured the keep to be more of a gatehouse, with the main structure rising above a well-fortified tunnel into the Necropolis. Sir Beck also owns a large home in Oldtown, which the order uses as a supplementary barracks, storehouse, and garrison.

As the name of their headquarters suggests, the Keepers of the Veil consider themselves to be

GM TIPS

The first few times the player characters contact the Dreaming Apothecary, play out the entire encounter. Stress the strangeness of an outside force invading the character's dream to do business. Later, it will not be necessary to play out the entire encounter, and PCs with the funds can simply order whatever they need.

For standard magic items in the core rulebooks, use the prices suggested on the magic item rarity table.

Aside from battling the Forsaken and undead of the Necropolis, the Keepers of the Veil also offer their services as exorcists to rid any location in town of undead, particularly ghosts. This keeps them fairly busy and earns them a reputation for trustworthiness and skill.

Hammersong Vaults, page 299

People looking to buy minor magic items like potions, scrolls, or wands can go to Myraeth's Oddities (page 199) in Delver's Square, various large temples (especially for potions or scrolls of healing spells), or Undercity Market specialty shops like Arcane Scribe (page 395) or Potions and Elixirs (page 397).

Siege Tower, page 222

GM TIPS

It's likely that your players will constantly get the Keepers of the Veil and the Knights of the Pale confused. Use this as a flavor-making tool. Have everyone in the city confuse the two groups all the time. Perhaps the NPCs that the party interacts with misuse the names or mention that they can never keep the two knighthoods straight. This shared experience will make the player characters feel more a part of the city.

at war. The Siege Tower is a fortress in enemy territory. It once incensed the knights that they could not convince the Commissar to turn over his troops to fight the undead and assail the Dark Reliquary, but they have since realized that, for now, it is their duty alone to deal with the undead threat. And they are wise enough to know that they do not yet have the strength to take on their foe directly—in fact, doing so might stir up the creatures and put the city at risk. So for the time being, they fight a defensive war, making sure that no undead get out of the Necropolis.

Occasionally the Keepers of the Veil ally with the smaller Knights of the Pale, particularly when dealing with the Fallen. Dierna Hillerchaun, captain of the Knights of the Pale, holds the Keepers at arm's length, however; despite their numbers, their membership is not as powerful as her own knights. She does not want to lead them into a situation they are not ready to handle.

The Keepers of the Veil have an official Imperial Charter and, as such, receive direct funding from the Commissar for the services and good works they perform. This includes a monthly stipend as well as an activities-based bonus system.

Sir Beck Von Tibbitz (male human), a tall, broad-shouldered man with red hair and a beard to match, came to Ptolus to join the order fifteen years ago. He ascended through the ranks quickly due to his prowess and became head of the order in 715 IA. The following year, he appointed Phadian Gess (female human), a cleric of Lothian, to join him as the seneschal of the Siege Tower. Effectively, Phadian—a warm-hearted woman with short black hair and a short, fit frame—became coleader of the order.

Beck and Phadian are two of a kind. Both self-sacrificing to the end, they would be quick to cast a defensive spell on an ally before themselves or put themselves on the line to save another. Beck is boisterous and Phadian quiet, but both are ruthless and single-minded when confronting undead. The rest of the time, they are good natured, pleasant, noble, and helpful. On the other hand, they won't give folks a hand if they're on the way to their own doom. They stop far more adventurers headed into the Necropolis or toward the Dark Reliquary than they help. Sir Beck, who is married with children, serves as one of the Commissar's Twelve Commanders. He and Phadian are not, as many assume, romantically linked.

KILLRAVEN CRIME LEAGUE

The members of the Killraven Crime League never use that name for themselves—it's a name others coined, needing something to call this new criminal organization. Those working for Killraven avoid something so frivolous as a name, simply calling themselves "us" or "we." In this context, "them" refers to their main adversaries: not the representatives of law and order, but the Balacazar crime family.

Kevris Killraven arrived in Ptolus only last year, and already her organization has spread throughout the city like a virus. Rather than attempting to turn or conscript existing criminals into her empire, Killraven brought outsiders into Ptolus. Many of the important figures working for her are not members of the traditional character species. Most people do not know that she herself is a magical creature called an annis hag—one greatly skilled in combat and given infernal powers to boot.

Kevris's ambition knows no bounds. She arrived in Ptolus intending to create not only a criminal organization to replace the Balacazar family, but an arcane guild to replace the Inverted Pyramid and an assassins' guild to replace the Vai. Taking on three of the most powerful and influential groups in the city at once might seem foolhardy if not downright insane, but Kevris has managed to become a threat to all of them. Part of the reason she has done so well involves the vast funds at her disposal that come from her secret alliance with Emperor Segaci Fellisti in Tarsis. Segaci has seen that something important is going on in

Player Character Allies

When the PCs are midlevel or perhaps even lower, the Keepers of the Veil make for excellent allies, particularly if they must journey into dangerous areas in the Necropolis or combat undead elsewhere in the city. Once the characters face high-level challenges, however, if they're looking for allies, the mightier Knights of the Pale can lend a hand.

Phadian Gess has ecclesiastic stats (page 608), with AC 18; alignment lawful good. Equipment: +1 breastplate, +1 shield, mace of disruption, spell scroll of cure wounds *(4th-level spell slot)*, spell scroll of greater restoration, spell scroll of raise dead, silver holy symbol, *flasks of holy water (3), healer's kit, 55 gp.*

Twelve Commanders, page 140

Dark Reliquary, page 223

Balacazars, page 102

The Keepers of the Veil take their name from the veil that serves as a barrier between the lands of the living and those of the dead. This veil was first breached by the Galchutt early in the history of the world.

The Keepers of the Veil and the Church of Lothian have very strong ties. Not only is the seneschal of the Siege Tower, Phadian Gess, a cleric of Lothian, but Sir Beck himself is a devout worshipper of Lothian. The Church sees the order as almost a religious knighthood, useful for combating or exorcising the undead.

Annis hags are strong, ogre-sized hags with iron teeth and nails. They thrive on spreading fear and paranoia.

Knights of the Pale, page 121

Dierna Hillerchaun, page 122

Imperial Charter, page 517

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Killraven maintains a false headquarters in an old stone tower in the North Market; see page 284.

"Kevris Killraven" is not her real name. It's a far too human/elvish name for a hag, but she adopted it upon coming to live among these species. Because of her adopted moniker, she enjoys using raven symbols and even enchanted ravens to serve as spies.

Vai, page 131

Segaci Fellisti, page 91

Sir Beck Von Tibbitz has gladiator stats, with AC 19, advantage on saves against attacks from undead, Religion +5, Persuasion +5, and the Lay on Hands and Holy Smite abilities of a holy champion (page 610); alignment lawful good. Equipment: +1 plate, holy greatsword *(page 639)*, potion of heroism, *flasks of holy water (2), spyglass, 50 feet of rope, wooden stakes (3), 35 gp.*

Ptolus, and he does not trust Commissar Igor Urnst to handle it. He also worries that his rival, the Holy Emperor, and his son Kirian have too much influence in the city. So he has allied himself with the unlikeliest of collaborators: the would-be crime lord Kevris Killraven.

Using the gold from Segaci, Kevris first involved herself with the Shuul—a move supported and probably even suggested by Segaci—providing them with enough funding so they could begin producing large numbers of firearms and other devices. Today Killraven's people use these innovative weapons and tools, although she herself does not. An alliance with the Shuul also got Killraven the secret support of the temples of Teun and the Iron God. It is important to note that many members of the Shuul, almost all the devotees of Teun and the Iron God, and virtually all of Segaci's advisors and followers have no idea that they are, at least indirectly, tied to Kevris Killraven and her organization.

Kevris ended up combining her attempts to create a new spellcasters' guild and a new assassins' guild, and thus the Sorn began. The Sorn have closer and more obvious ties to Killraven, though they also work closely with the Shuul when needed.

KEVRIS KILLRAVEN

Kevris Killraven is an annis hag with lofty ambitions. Using her magical disguise ability, she has spent a great deal of time among humans and other humanoids. It became clear to her fairly early in her long life that, due to their numbers, technologies, and magic, human civilization held the reins of power in the world. To get ahead, she would have to work within their systems. However, her natural strength would help her in these endeavors.

At first, Kevris's power came from two sources: her money and her physical might. She ruled her growing number of followers and employees with a mixture of great rewards and terrible punishments. Her wrath was infamous. Over time, however, she has earned the respect of many of those she works with, based on the impressive things she has accomplished so quickly in Ptolus. Still, she is close to no one. She has no inner circle of confidants or advisors. She holds the reins of power she has coveted for so long very closely.

Whenever possible, Kevris rides her powerful nightmare steed, Tallix. The extremely loyal Tallix fights for his mistress and spirits her away ethereally if she's in trouble.

Kevris surrounds herself with followers and employees, but she does not rely on them if danger rears its head. Instead, she wades into battle, often starting by using her magical horn and ring. If she has time to prepare, she casts protective and enhancing spells on herself, but she won't waste time in a fight to cast them. She believes in a strong offense and enjoys disarming opponents or breaking their weapons or magic items.

OPPOSING KILLRAVEN

While the Balacazars remain deeply entrenched in all aspects of the city, Killraven's organization is still new enough that it stands on fragile ground. Defeating a Balacazar crime boss may be cathartic, but there likely are two or three underbosses waiting to fill that void the very next day. Killraven's hierarchy is not yet so resilient, her organization not quite so intricate.

The biggest difference involves Killraven herself. If Menon Balacazar dies, one of his children takes his place. If the whole family dies, a crime boss of high level would surely fill the ranks after a period of intergang fighting. But kill Kevris, and it all topples with her. No one is in a position to take her place, and her followers likely would flee the city.

THE ORGANIZATION

Kevris's criminal organization has a loose structure. Basically, she has placed a crime boss in every district of the city except the Necropolis and the Warrens—and Midtown, which she runs directly. Each boss is set up to run a number of criminal operations as if they were independent organizations, but backed by Killraven's money and, if need be, force of arms. Each of these bosses pays a cut to Killraven and follows her orders, delivered in secret. It doesn't take a great deal of savvy to figure out that these criminals work for her, but they take pains that no physical evidence ties them to her or to each other.

Killraven herself lives in the Undercity below Midtown with a large force of mercenaries and enforcers that she can dispatch to any of her subordinates as needed. (She draws upon the Sorn for that as well.) A troglodyte named Durant conducts much of the region's day-to-day business. He walks around town with his features hidden, so most know him only as "the Stink Man." Durant has mastered the ability to suppress his stench down to just a bad smell, except when he gets agitated.

Kevris has hired no less than an efreeti to oversee her concerns in the Nobles' Quarter. This tyrant, named Malasir, does not intend to work as a subordinate to Killraven for long. Trapped in this world for centuries, he has come to Ptolus to learn more about the Galchutt and whether helping them might free him.

Commissar, page 140

Holy Emperor, page 269

Kirian Ylestos, Prince of the Church, page 270

Shuul, page 126

Teun, page 73

Iron God, page 72

Sorn, page 129

Kevris Killraven, page 618

Tallix has nightmare stats, plus an additional 70 hit points; advantage on attacks, checks, and saves; his hoof attack inflicts an additional 5 bludgeoning and 5 fire damage. He is challenge rating 9.

Durant the Stink Man has spy stats plus the Stench ability of a troglodyte.

Durant the Stink Man

Malasir, page 277

Galchutt, page 62

Pactlords of the Quaan, page 125
Korben Trollone, page 335
Dohrinthas, page 46

Thuela Nasarini has spy stats, can change shape from her giant spider form into a Medium or Small humanoid, and knows a few 1st- and 2nd-level sorcerer spells.

Pianett Thundalin is a sorcerer with mage stats and Stealth +4.

Dollin Ebonhome has thug stats.

Ularis Gadare has spy stats.

In Oldtown, the Killraven-sponsored crime boss is a halfling woman named Thuela Nasarini. She is not actually a halfling, but a shapechanging magical spider-creature taking that form. Thuela has long been an ally of Killraven's and is also a member of the Pactlords of the Quaan, a group with whom Killraven would like closer ties.

Pianett Thundalin (female human) is Killraven's representative in the Rivergate District. Before coming to Ptolus, she was a somewhat infamous pirate captain.

Another human, Korben Trollone, works for Killraven in the South Market, while in the North Market, a fat dwarf named Dollin Ebonhome (dwarf male) runs her operations, albeit not very well. Durant frequently has to step up and make Dollin's extortion collections.

Ularis Gadare (male half-elf) is a lieutenant of Killraven's originally from Dohrinthas who operates mainly in the Guildsman District.

RELATIONS

Some see Killraven's rise to power as an opportunity. For generations, the Balacazars have held the city in their grip. Now, someone dares oppose them. While this hasn't earned Killraven many overt allies, it has won her quiet support. Some noble houses, including Shever and factions within Abanar, favor her over Balacazar. A few, such as Khatru, Kath, and Nagel, would do so if forced to choose.

Imperial Charter, page 517
Jodan Templehall, page 313
Noble houses, page 92
House Kath, page 96

Knights of the Chord symbol

Of course, the organizations controlled or backed by Killraven, such as the Sorn and the Shuul, are allies of the Killraven Crime League. Kevris is slowly building an alliance with the nonhumanoid Pactlords of the Quaan, and would like to bring more of them into the city under her command—she sees them as perfectly suited masters of humans and other humanoids. House Rau is a potential ally that she has yet to court.

Obviously, the Killraven Crime League has many enemies. Besides the Balacazars, its members are hated by the Inverted Pyramid, the Vai, Houses Sadar and Vladaam, and to a lesser extent the Forsaken and the chaos cults. Groups like the Knights of the Pale, the Knights of the Golden Cross, the Malkuth, the Church of Lothian, and so on oppose them and the evil that they do.

Further, while it is somewhat dangerous politically to oppose the Balacazars (they have council members in their pocket and, some would say, the unspoken support of the Commissar), this is not yet true of Killraven's forces. This makes them the criminals that are politically acceptable to fight.

Hallusiun Everfar has deadly warrior stats (page 607), except his attacks deal thunder damage instead of lightning damage.

Nivae Tamelli has archmage stats but with the spellcasting of an 18th-level bard instead of a wizard.

KNIGHTS OF THE CHORD

The Knights of the Chord are a small knightly order dedicated to upholding freedom and protecting the innocent. The knights all have mastered, to some degree, the art of drawing power from music and song. While many may have at one time been bards, they are no longer minstrels. These knights are a martial order and focus heavily on combat skills.

The Knights of the Chord hold an official Imperial Charter but do not receive direct funding from the Commissar or any other source. They own a small keep in Oldtown called the Jodan Templehall, which serves as an informal temple to Jode, goddess of music, as well as the order's headquarters. Many knights live at the hall, while others simply use it as a base of operations when in Ptolus. The templehall has a chapel, a practice hall, a meeting room/dining hall, a kitchen, single-room apartments for some of the knights, and an office suite for the order's leader, Hallusiun Everfar (male elf).

In truth, an even greater asset than Everfar is Nivae Tamelli, the greatest bard in all of Ptolus. She has turned down offers to lead the knights numerous times, but whenever they need her, she is there—and no greater supporter could they desire. Nivae isn't interested in combat or adventuring, however. In her spare time, she researches musical history, attempting to learn old songs and dances important to cultures long dead.

The Knights of the Chord are bound by an ancient oath that ties them to the fate of House Kath. The head of House Kath can invoke this vow and call upon the knights to aid the house when it is in need.

Navanna Vladaam maintains a secret identity as Nicalon Regelis, a member of the Knights of the Chord. In this guise she ferrets out those who scheme against her family. For details, see page 101.

While Nivae Tamelli has no interest in leading the Knights of the Chord, she is very interested in politics. She finds herself drawn to the populist aspects of the republican movement (page 142).

KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN CROSS

Founded millennia ago, this ancient order has endured through the ages thanks to the extreme devotion of its members and their descendants. They oppose evil in all its forms with a selfless altruism that sometimes shakes the credulity of those who interact with them. They support goodness and benevolence for its own sake but maintain a low profile, choosing their fights, their

goals, and their enemies carefully. Altruistic does not mean stupid. In the case of these knights, it goes hand in hand with serious caution.

Due to events shrouded in the mists of time, the Knights of the Golden Cross have a particular hatred for House Vladaam. The (true) story goes that their earliest members clashed with the progenitor of that noble house, a man called Vladaam (one of the Vested of the Galchutt). Kaira Swanwing, the order's current leader, knows that her knights lack the power to confront House Vladaam directly at present. So they do what they can to thwart the workings of the wicked family—often from afar or in secret—or help those who also oppose the Vladaams.

They also secretly revere the Elder Gods. And like those gods, the Knights of the Golden Cross have been all but forgotten by most people. They keep their faith secret out of habit—years ago, the Church persecuted them for their belief. Today, while no one would think ill of them for it, most people would not understand it. The Elder Gods are at best gone and at worst forgotten.

Over the millennia, the Knights of the Golden Cross have struggled against some of the greatest evils ever to rear their heads in the world. The order's secret records have taught the knights more about the Galchutt, the Vallis moon, and other ancient matters than most sages know. They also have become somewhat paranoid over time, each generation schooling the next in the dangers of openly opposing the ruthless and malevolent. Today, the Knights of the Golden Cross—while still as stalwart and dedicated as ever—find themselves weighed down by worry. Kaira Swanwing, having only recently taken on the mantle of leadership, would like to change this pessimism. She feels she can do so only by achieving some great victory for the cause of good.

The Knights of the Golden Cross do not have an official Imperial Charter. This does not make them an illegal group; it just means the Empire does not recognize them.

The knights come from every class and many species—there is no "typical" member of the order, but membership currently is very small. There are only nine knights: Kaira Swanwing (female elf), her father Naevin Swanwing (male elf), Jallek Pedastan (male human), Stavislav Felatt (male human), Uetha Wolanat (female half-elf), Tuea Severwing (male Harrow elf), Quaelin Fillasti (male elf), Dessis Palath (female gnome), and Ralelle Noramar (female human).

The Knights of the Golden Cross have a small, somewhat dilapidated manor in Oldtown, but they keep it locked up, meeting there only rarely for fear of drawing unwanted attention. Mostly, they meet at the spacious home of Kaira and her father, also in Oldtown, not far away.

The order's symbol is a golden cross with four wide, splayed ends. It is worn around the neck as a medallion. While only a few of these medallions are magical as well, all have long histories of the former knights who bore them around their necks and the great deeds they achieved in the name of the knighthood. Kaira has a supply of many more of these symbols and knows the lineage of the successors behind each one.

The best known knight is Kaira Swanwing. She is idealistic, generous, and kind. She harbors great ambition, but it is an ambition for her order, her religious faith, and the good of all people, not for herself. She is tall for a Shoal elf, and her hair is shimmering silver, as are her eyes. She keeps all her gear except her bracers and *thoughtstone* in her *bag of holding*, even her weapons.

KNIGHTS OF THE PALE

An order of knighthood dedicated to combating supernatural threats, particularly demons and evil spellcasters, the stalwart Knights of the Pale make up for their small membership with skill and power. Although they are not an official arm of the Church of Lothian, they base their order on the veneration of a number of that religion's most important saints.

Sixteen members comprise the Knights of the Pale, although twice that number of retainers, men-at-arms, and cohorts also work with the order, making it seem larger than it really is. The Knights of the Pale are quite exclusive and discriminating.

The Knights of the Pale hold an official Imperial Charter and, as such, receive direct funding from the Commissar for the services

Even more than other knightly orders based in the city, the Knights of the Golden Cross are a purely altruistic organization, comparable even to the Malkuth. They are, however, an extremely small group, and their history is filled with mystery and even some misinformation, which leads many Ptolusites to distrust them. This distrust also comes from the cynicism of thinking that no one can really be as selfless as these knights.

With her silver hair and eyes, Kaira Swanwing likely has Elder Elves in her family background. Elven historians would say that she looks more Lunas than Shoal.

Kaira Swanwing has mage stats, with Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +4, and Stealth +4; alignment lawful good. Equipment: +1 longsword, bracers of defense, thoughtstone *(page 644)*, bag of holding, wand of binding, wand of magic missiles, spell scroll of see invisibility, spell scroll of wall of ice, *gold cross symbol worth 150 gp, silver earrings worth 50 gp, silver and gold ring worth 180 gp, 10 pp, 56 gp.*

Naevin Swanwing has gladiator stats.

Jallek Pedastan has holy champion stats, page 610

Stavislav Felatt is a sorcerer with mage stats and knows a few 1st-level ranger spells.

Uetha Wolanat has priest stats.

Tuea Severwing has holy champion stats, page 610

Quaelin Fillasti has mage stats.

Dessis Palath has spy stats.

Ralelle Noramar has veteran stats.

House Vladaam, page 100

Vested of the Galchutt, page 62

Elder Gods, page 61

Vallis moon, page 42

The order's headquarters, a falling-down castle, is located in Oldtown (page 294), as is Kaira's own family home (page 305).

Imperial Charter, page 517

The symbol of the Knights of the Pale represents the group's hatred of otherworldly evils coming into this world. The vortex being pierced by the sword represents a gate through which a demon or other fiend might come into Praemal.

Bladechapel, page 294

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

The Malkuth, page 124

Twelve Commanders, page 140

Runewardens, page 542

Dierna Hillerchaun received her holy avenger *sword from Adlam Theobold, archbishop of Lothian. It was originally wielded by a paladin of Tarsis named Handel Werner.*

See also the Knight of the Pale PC options in Chapter 36 (page 651).

Dierna Hillerchaun has holy paragon stats (page 611), with AC 26, +3 on melee attack and damage rolls, and a 30-ft. aura that grants her and allies advantage on saves against magic and spells; alignment lawful good. Equipment: holy avenger, +3 plate armor, +3 shield, helm of comprehending languages, thoughtstone, potion of vitality, *gold and diamond necklace (worth 1,300 gp), healer's kit, holy water (2), letter of credit from House Khatru (worth 2,000 gp), pocketwatch, 35 gp.*

Stillis Covenrow has spy stats.

Sister Terella Spoch has ecclesiastic stats, page 608

Brig Stoneheart is a Stonelost dwarf with holy champion stats (page 610), size Large, AC 19, and +4 on melee attacks and damage; alignment lawful good. Equipment: +1 plate, +1 greataxe, belt of stone giant strength, rope of climbing, potion of greater healing, *alabaster and gold ring (worth 250 gp), compass, spyglass, healer's kit, holy water (2), 1,400 gp.*

"Prince" Ironheart has gladiator stats, with AC 21 and +2 on melee attack and damage; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: +2 longsword, potion of heroism, potion of superior healing, *50 feet of rope, climber's kit, 43 gp.*

Perhaps due to Ironheart's "princely" nickname and the metal coating on his flesh, people confuse him with the mysterious Lord Abbercombe (page 93). They are in no way related and are truly only superficially similar.

and good works they perform. This includes a monthly stipend as well as an activities-based bonus system.

Dierna Hillerchaun is the order's leader. The knights base themselves out of her home, a manor in Oldtown called the Bladechapel. It is a luxurious abode with many guest chambers, training rooms, and large meeting halls. Dierna employs a number of servants and guards who live and work in the Bladechapel, including her majordomo Stillis Covenrow (male halfling). Her private chapel to Lothian has its own full-time attending cleric, an elderly woman named Sister Terella Spoch (female human).

Dierna is stern and confident. She has short brown hair, bright eyes, a round face, and a tall, lithe body. She seems quick to judge but slow to trust. Although a noble and principled woman, Dierna enjoys the finer things in life and does not deny herself a few luxuries. She amassed a large fortune four years ago as one of the early delvers in the Dungeon and was a founding member of the Delver's Guild.

The knights work with the Keepers of the Veil and the Malkuth from time to time, struggling against evil creatures below the city, in the Necropolis, or elsewhere. Dierna Hillerchaun has recently been selected to fill an empty position among the Commissar's Twelve Commanders, a role that has diverted much of her attention of late.

The symbol of the Knights of the Pale is a sword thrust into a blue vortex.

Aside from Dierna, the most famous Knights of the Pale include Zophas Adhar, a male aasimar paladin and member of the Runewardens adventuring company, and the adventuring duo "Prince" Ironheart and Brig Stoneheart.

Brig Stoneheart and "Prince" Ironheart are known as the Brothers of the Heart, but that's not what they call themselves. They see no humor in the coincidental similarity of their names. Brig is permanently magically enlarged to stand almost 8 feet tall, but he retains the stocky, broad proportions of a dwarf.

Ironheart is not really his partner's name, nor is he actually the prince of anything—these are affectations the human adopted, not out of ego but because a spell erased his memory a few years back, and he has had to make up an identity for himself. The name "Ironheart" comes from the fact that he has a layer of flexible metal bonded to his skin, making him look like a man made of iron. He has no idea how he attained this metal coating. He is otherwise tall, muscular, and entirely hairless. Considering the fact that he is covered in

metal, he is surprisingly nimble, which catches opponents off guard.

Ironheart follows Brig's lead in almost every situation. As Brig is one of the most noble and compassionate dwarves alive, that may be an excellent plan.

KNIGHTS OF SHADOW

Ptolus is a city of secrets: secret organizations, secret people, and secret agendas. The group that calls itself the Knights of Shadow is a secret group bent on bettering society at large through enlightenment. Currently, the members are torn into two factions. One group, the Knights of Enlightenment—led by one of the captains of the Commissar's Men, Robel Pillian (male human)—seeks to overthrow the Commissar and all temporal aspects of the Empire of Tarsis. The other faction, the Knights of the Secret Sun, supports the Empire because of the peace and prosperity it has brought; they follow an elderly North Market baker named Edwina Coll (female human).

The Knights of Shadow are not like other knightly orders. Their membership is entirely secret, and they gather only in closed meetings at undisclosed locations. Most members are not standard "knightly" types, either. Rather, they are merchants, bankers, constables, physickers, sea captains, and other typical members of society, particularly those of the middle class.

The Knights of Shadow have secret symbols, including a black sun shape, that mark them as members, but only in the eyes of other members. If needed, they can use secret hand gestures to communicate when among nonmembers, but most of the time they don't even attempt such communication, lest they accidentally betray the order.

Plotting in secret, the knights attempt to manipulate events along a desired path. They concern themselves mostly with social and economic issues and desire a world in which people act a certain way and everyone is prosperous (and certain types of people are even more prosperous—namely themselves, their families, and people like them). They are strangely both populist and elitist. They manipulate things by changing the prices of certain goods, importing one product and not another, pressuring the City Council to pass certain laws and not others, and—when necessary—paying for the intimidation or even the elimination of those who oppose them, knowingly or not. The order can be extremely ruthless.

Meeting places—usually the homes or businesses of members—shift frequently. Today the order's clandestine meetings are segregated, the Knights of Enlightenment gathering separately from the Knights of the Secret Sun. The two factions do not oppose each other directly, however. They still believe all Knights of Shadow are better fit to control things than nonmembers, and both groups know their order has the best interests of the people (and themselves) in mind.

Most people do not even know that the Knights of Shadow exist. Those who do can rarely find any hard facts about membership or meeting locations.

Knights of Shadow and the PCs

The player characters can run afoul of the Knights of Shadow in many ways. PCs looking into the death of a friend might discover a conspiracy behind it. Someone could hire them to perform a task, but when things start to seem odd about the job, investigation shows that their employer is actually the order. Or the knights decide that the party has to be eliminated—or perhaps recruited.

Commissar's Men, page 141

Robel Pillian has defender stats, page 607

Edwina Coll has expert stats, page 609

LONGFINGERS GUILD

The Longfingers Guild once commanded a great deal of respect in Ptolus—at least among the local underworld—as the city's thieves' guild. Today, however, most skilled thieves find it far more lucrative to work for the Balacazars or the Killraven Crime League. The idea of a thieves' guild, according to such naysayers, is outmoded and obsolete, and the Longfingers Guild places too many restrictions on what a thief can and cannot do in the city. The guild is more interested in politics than profit, say its detractors among the criminal element.

It is true that the Longfingers Guild teaches the old-fashioned philosophy of honor among thieves. This ideal is upheld by aging Guildmaster Hayman Knapp. An old-fashioned thief, Hayman looks back fondly on days when thieves were not organized into gangs that feuded and worked for depraved individuals, but instead belonged to a guild that trained them in the art of thievery. Of course, even Hayman isn't old enough to remember the days before organized crime, but he heard the stories when he was a boy, and they stuck with him—stories of thieves with honor who policed their own. Fewer and fewer thieves these days seem interested in conforming to Hayman's ideals, however, and that is hurting the guild.

Much of the guild's finances come from House Rau. Hayman Knapp carefully keeps the Rau happy and pays them a monthly percentage of the guild's take, always on time. He knows that without the Rau, the guild would certainly dry up and blow away like so much dust.

The role that the guild plays now is that of a school for young and upcoming thieves. Most of the skilled burglars, pickpockets, muggers, and cutpurses in the city were members of the guild when they were younger, even if they no longer belong to it.

In the guild's sprawling underground headquarters, the members train, meet, plan, and store their loot. Many of them live there as well. The headquarters is full of traps, both to

Rogues and Hiding Loot

Fearing pickpockets, many people in Ptolus keep their money pouches secure or hidden—or both—and rogues doubly so. Assume that any NPC with a listed bonus to Sleight of Hand has hidden all valuables (loose gems, coins, and the like) using that skill, making them difficult to find. Also, assume that any significant NPC associated with pickpocketing or organized crime has paid around 50 gp for secret pockets and pouches that give disadvantage to any attempts to pickpocket them.

Guildmaster Hayman Knapp has master thief stats (page 612), with AC 20, +1 on all saves, and +3 on melee attacks and damage; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: +3 studded leather, +3 rapier, silent dragon pistol, ring of protection, thoughtstone, potion of invisibility (2), potion of superior healing, potion of vitality, 50 feet of silk rope, climber's kit, disguise kit, thieves' tools, pocketwatch, spectacles, gold ring with diamonds (worth 3,000 gp), gold ring (worth 750 gp), 10 diamonds (worth 1,000 gp each), 200 pp, 10 gp.

A typical Longfingers thief has scout or spy stats.

Longfingers Guild symbol

Find out about the guild's headquarters in Chapter 20: The Undercity (page 394).

House Rau, page 97

Longfingers thieves give a 10 percent cut to the guild on all their takes. In exchange, the guild offers supplies and training, and helps cover up crimes when needed.

keep out intruders and to keep the members on their toes. Members are continually being tested; the Longfingers motto "A relaxed thief is a dead thief" holds true even in their headquarters and homes.

THE MALKUTH

The opposite number of the Fallen, the Malkuth are angelic beings who came into the world willingly to help fight evil, even though they know that physically entering Praemal traps them there for all eternity. Although these angels were once scattered across the world, they now know to come to Ptolus. They do so because the city holds the greatest concentration of evil in the world; this is where they will be most needed.

Over the millennia, the presence of these angels has led to the birth of half-celestials who, in turn, become the parents of aasimars. These angelic mortal offspring are welcome among the Malkuth.

Most of the true Malkuth keep to themselves high in their Pale Tower, a structure they built in Oldtown almost three centuries ago. It is not common, even around the tower, to see a solar or deva walking the streets. Mostly, the true angels let the half-celestials and aasimars deal with mortals, while they meditate amid the lilting tones of magical music.

Some particularly altruistic humanoids live among the Malkuth. One such is Tasilicus Rhendron (male human), who specializes in the magic of mirrors. In addition, the Pale Tower houses Narlus Dye (female human), who studies the music of Heaven, and Asaiel Silverdoor (female elf), who sees the defense of angels as a most suitable self-imposed geas.

It is a common misconception that the leader of the Malkuth is a half-celestial woman named Aoska (female half-celestial human). She is certainly the highest-profile Malkuth and, indeed, is one of the Commissar's Twelve Commanders. However, she is by no means the leader of all the angels here. That would be Sephranos, the Winged King, a solar. If he is not available, Kadiradel, another solar, is certainly a well-respected leader.

Aoska is tall and regal, with a single horn spiraling from her forehead. Unlike most half-celestials, she has no wings. In battle, her glory and fury combine with a force that brings terror to the dark hearts of her foes. She prefers not to charge into combat immediately, taking at least one round to fire a volley from her bow. After that, she charges in with a battle cry: "For Heaven's Thrones!" or "By the Seven Chains!" Out of battle she is cool and collected, never rash or quick to anger.

NALTEGRO SUUN

The Naltegro Suun are, strangely enough, non-evil assassins. Their name is an ancient one, coming from the distant west and meaning "the just avenger." (Some claim the word is Orcish, but in truth it comes from an even older language—one that influenced the speech of orcs back when orcs spoke only Abyssal.) The Naltegro Suun do not see themselves as bringers of justice the way the Sisters of Silence do. They do not hesitate to call themselves businessmen. But they understand the ethical dangers of their business and tread carefully to stay on the right side, as they see it.

The main stipulation that the Naltegro Suun demand of their members is that they must see proof that the victim deserves whatever ill they are hired to deliver (not all assignments involve killing—sometimes they just give a victim a beating, burn down a building, or the like). Clients fool them occasionally, but when they find out about it, they enact a just punishment on the employer who wronged *them*.

The members of the Naltegro Suun are rogues and fighters; they number only thirteen. They are always careful not to sully themselves with

Tasilicus Rhendron has mage stats.

Narlus Dye has priest stats, with Divine Eminence adding thunder damage instead of radiant damage, and she knows bard spells instead of cleric spells.

Asaiel Silverdoor has holy champion stats, page 610

Aoska has deadly warrior stats (page 607), with celestial type, AC 22, and +3 on attacks and damage; alignment lawful good. Equipment: +3 breastplate, +3 shield, +3 longsword, +2 longbow, +1 arrows *(12)*, thoughtstone, potion of superior healing, potion of flying, *letter of credit from the Malkuth (worth 1,000 gp). She can innately cast the following spells: 1/day each:* aid, bless, conjure celestial, detect evil and good, mass healing word, protection from poison

Sephranos, the Winged King, and Kadiradel have solar stats.

Fallen, page 109

Pale Tower, page 305

Twelve Commanders, page 140

Malkuth Leaders

Sephranos, the Winged King, appears as a 9-foot-tall man with glistening gemlike eyes, silver skin, and golden wings. A golden crown floats above his head. On the rare occasion that mortals lay eyes upon him, most assume that he is a deity.

Kadiradel, on the other hand, while equally tall, assumes the form of a rather nondescript-looking man with brown hair and white wings.

the emotions of the act. They do what is right, but they are not sadistic or inherently violent. They do not relish seeing others suffer, even if it is deserved. They do it because they are paid to do it.

Although they are criminals, the Naltegro Suun have no connections to other illegal organizations. The authorities are well aware of them but do little to stop their missions. In truth, the Naltegro Suun end up doing more good than evil, and sometimes it's hard to argue with such a direct application of justice. Their headquarters lies in a secret meeting hall beneath Oldtown, a trap-filled subterranean fortress that is usually empty except when they gather for meetings.

Many Naltegro Suun members have assassin stats, but are much more likely to be neutral than evil. Others have scout or spy stats, plus the Assassinate ability of an assassin.

The Naltegro Suun's secret meeting hall lies beneath a tower on the north end of Oldtown, near the King's River Gorge; for details, see page 308.

ORDER OF IRON MIGHT

Originally created on a bet, the Order of Iron Might was founded one hundred and twenty years ago by Arbon Sevolve and Mystia Descri. Arbon contended that an organization for swordfighters and mercenaries, *a la* the Inverted Pyramid, could be extremely popular and profitable. He won the bet, as mercenary bands and gladiators from the Arena flocked to join the group.

The Order of Iron Might is a warriors' guild dedicated to finding employment for its martial membership. Lord Dorant Khatru serves as perfunctory guildmaster, although in truth, he hardly ever comes to the headquarters. The group's headquarters—the Citadel of Might, near the Arena in Oldtown—is primarily a hiring hall for mercenaries, guards, and sellswords, but it also has an open yard where members can train and a small, fairly crude flophouse where members in need of shelter can stay on a first-come, first-served basis each night.

Dues for the order amount to 20 gp to join, plus 10 gp per year. Benefits include training, discounted prices for weapon and armor repair, and shared contacts. The guild maintains a small full-time staff of attendants, officers, and trainers, some of whom provide their services for free on behalf of House Khatru. The guild currently has more than four hundred members.

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Arena, page 292

Dorant Khatru, page 96

Citadel of Might, page 295

PACTLORDS OF THE QUAAN

Very few people in Ptolus have ever heard of the Pactlords of the Quaan. This group formed in ancient times as the main humanoid species began to populate the world. A few intelligent nonhumanoids saw this coming threat and resented the power of the newcomers. From a secret extradimensional realm called the Quaan, they made a pact to work together to destroy their common humanoid enemy. This pact is magically binding, which compels even the most chaotic members to keep it.

Pactlords include individuals from all intelligent monstrous species: aboleths, lamias, manticores, medusas, and even dragons. Membership never includes undead and virtually never fiends. Because only individuals join the Pactlords—not groups—it is just as likely to encounter two wildly different Pactlords together (a troll and a naga, for example) as it is to find two of the same type of creature.

The Pactlords of the Quaan frequently use trolls, ogres, giants, ettins, and other less intelligent beings as minions; they call them Pactslaves. Sometimes they trick humans, elves, or other humanoids into working with the Pactslaves, and thus ultimately for the Pactlords: creatures dedicated to their very destruction.

The Pactlords of the Quaan secretly sponsor the largest slaver operation in Ptolus. The slavers, who call themselves the Ennin, operate out of an abandoned warehouse in the Docks. The warehouse is built into the cliffs and extends into the solid rock, where the Ennin keep their slaves and billet their guards and slave-catchers. Many high-ranking Ennin are Pactslaves, and the group's leaders are Pactlords.

Deep below the slave pits lie underwater caves where an aboleth dwells alongside a creature that calls itself the Eye of the Deep. These Pactlords issue commands from their murky lairs to the slavers above.

In the early days of the city, an organization similar to the Order of Iron Might called the Brotherhood of the Sword brought together a number of former Imperial soldiers and warriors of the untamed wilderness around the Spire. The group disbanded after almost a century when corruption and embezzlement left it heavily in debt.

Banewarrens, page 389

Eternity Cave, page 418

Virtually all Pactlords and Pactslaves wear a magic item called a Quaan bone ring *(page 642).*

GOALS

The Pactlords want to eradicate humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, and gnomes—in that order—from the face of Praemal. Since that goal remains quite far from fruition, they seek more and more power.

In recent times, they have set themselves upon the quest for the *Black Grail*, an artifact of great power said to have been trapped long ago in the Banewarrens below Ptolus. Through a great deal of information gathering and research, they have ascertained a way to enter the Banewarrens and have set in motion a plan to break in and obtain the object of their desire.

The Pactlords hate virtually everyone in the city. They operate only in the shadows or deep underground. They are said to maintain a secret base of operations on an island in the Umbral Lake within the Eternity Cave. The few people who have encountered them report that the Pactlords prove not only powerful but also dedicated and extremely intelligent. Their only weakness appears to be occasional dissension in their ranks due to differing outlooks among the various kinds of creatures.

The Quaan

The Quaan is a mysterious place—a magical creation of an elf wizard named Maeritha Moonrise—that does not exist on this plane. Rather, it is a closely connected half-world floating on the Ethereal Sea. Once a realm hidden in the Heartwood of all trees, the Quaan is now a place of dried and shriveled branches and stinking, fetid bogs.

At the center of this small, closed half-world lies the Font of the Pact, a gargoyle-covered magical fountain that powers the Pact itself, and to which all the Quaan bone rings *are linked.*

A few of the most powerful Pactlords have homes and lairs in the Quaan. The largest structure is called the Black Manor, the Pactlords' true headquarters.

The Shuul symbol

Jirraith, page 378

A typical Pale Dog has scout stats.

Menon Balacazar, page 103

Vai, page 131

Lothian and the Shuul

Interestingly, the extremely pro-Empire Shuul are fairly strongly anti-Church. In fact, the Shuul believe that the wedding of Church and Empire early on was the root of the downfall of science and learning. They feel the Church has had too much power—during the Days of Blood, in particular—and that it suppressed not only magic but also many fields of study, including technological development. As of now, the Shuul keep these opinions to themselves, but the rising conflict between the Emperor of the Church and Segaci, the claimant to the throne whom they support, suggests that they are unlikely to remain mum for long.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In every Ptolus game I have ever run, the players never really know what to make of the Shuul. Are they misunderstood antagonists, or are they deluded protagonists? On the one hand, their ideals seem commendable, but on the other, they seem to be allied with all the wrong people. This was always an apprehension that I attempted to foster. I never wanted the players to truly get a handle on this enigmatic group.

PALE DOGS

Gangs control the Warrens. The larger, more prominent among them have the backing of various individuals within the criminal hierarchy. The largest gang of all, the Pale Dogs, is led by a mysterious man known only as Jirraith.

No one knows what Jirraith looks like, or even what species he is. In fact, it is only an assumption that he is male. Those in his employ usually get their orders and payments through an intermediary. At least some of those who work for him must know how to identify him, but even they say they can tell him only by his unmistakable magical ruby ring. It seems Jirraith has no appearance or identity at all, but most of the time, the intermediary *is* Jirraith. Jirraith wanders the Warrens and other districts all the time, but no one knows it. Jirraith is a powerful doppelganger.

Jirraith works directly for Menon Balacazar and uses the Pale Dogs as a kind of proving ground. The particularly bloodthirsty members, once they have some experience with murder and deception, he sells to the Vai. Other promising members he gives to the Balacazars to use as guards and enforcers. The rest languish in the Warrens, but these dregs of the gang don't last long. Consequently, the Pale Dogs are always very young, and almost exclusively male. They prefer humans, although half-orcs and half-elves aren't terribly uncommon.

The Pale Dogs do not have a central headquarters (other than the home of Jirraith; see Chapter 18: Warrens). Instead, they consider the entirety of the Warrens as their territory. Their authority trumps that of any other gang in the area, although many other local organizations resent their youth and position and resist from time to time. The resistance ultimately proves futile, however. The size of the Pale Dogs—and their powerful backers—make them impossible to oppose for long.

One can easily recognize members of the Pale Dogs by their shaven heads and black-painted fingernails. Some use bitter herbs to stain their teeth black as well. Aside from general extortion in the Warrens, the Dogs (through Jirraith) hire themselves out as muscle for other criminals. Most of the time, however, they just throw their weight around and terrorize neighborhoods in the Warrens and surrounding districts.

THE SHUUL

The Shuul are a very new group, dedicated not only to restoring the reign of science and reason to the Empire, but to advancing it. Although they bill themselves as supporters of law, the Shuul are more accurately thought of as masters of technology.

As any student of history can relate, the Empire of Tarsis was founded by the Prust far to the east on the ideals of science and technological advancement. Working with the Grailwarden dwarves over the years, the Prust perfected firearms, printing presses, steam engines, and various clockwork wonders. However, in the last century, technological knowledge has regressed rather than progressed, decaying like the Empire that once fostered it.

The Shuul plan on doing all they can to change that. Working hand in hand with religious groups representing Teun and the Iron God (both old Prustan deities), they have gathered many remaining trained technicians and scientists to preserve their knowledge and foster their work. For now, the Shuul are strictly a Ptolus-based group, but one day see themselves as spreading throughout the Empire, functioning as an official technological guild and society.

For some reason, many people assume that because the Shuul dedicate themselves to technology, they dislike or disapprove of magic. This is not the case. In fact, they are allied with the spellcasting Sorn; a few of their own members are arcanists, and still more are clerics. Many Shuul have come to revere mystical creatures called the iron angels, neutral extraplanar beings related to the Iron God.

The Shuul have one of the largest stockpiles of firearms and gunpowder in the Empire today. Most of their members carry firearms, and they even have some to spare—up until now they have used them for bribes. Recently, however, the Shuul started a small firearms shop in the North Market called the Smoke Shop. They also sell magical firearms there (with help from the Sorn and the clerics of Teun), as well as other interesting technological equipment and magical technological materials (like magical pills that do the job of potions). They hope one day to make enough money selling such equipment that they can be free of their patron (see below). Their production of magical goods has cast the eyes of the Dreaming Apothecary upon them, however, and the two groups are likely to come into conflict over it.

The Shuul plan to create a technologists' guild, but that day remains some years off—there aren't enough people skilled in the creation and repair of mechanisms and scientific discoveries to form such a guild just yet. To further their eventual goals, the Shuul carefully monitor all schools in Ptolus—often clandestinely, sometimes involving break-ins to see school records. The group keeps tabs on the brightest children with an aptitude for mathematics and science, and agents attempt to recruit them when they reach sixteen years of age. For now, the Shuul leadership uses the Temple of Teun as a base of operations, as well as the Foundry in the Guildsman District. They are currently building the Tower of Science in Oldtown.

The Shuul count House Shever as an ally and Houses Sadar and Vladaam as enemies.

THE DARK SECRET OF THE SHUUL

Creating and developing new technological wonders and clockwork devices is extraordinarily expensive in terms of resources, money, and personnel. When it became clear that they could never accomplish their goals on their own, the leadership of the Shuul turned to a dark source of all three: Kevris Killraven. More specifically, they came together through a mutual patron, Emperor Segaci Fellisti. Segaci strongly supports the goals of the Shuul and wants Killraven to help them reach those goals—that is, in fact, the main reason he supports her criminal empire.

Others are also interested in the Shuul's pursuits. For example, the zaug deep below the city are, of course, skilled in the use of chaositech created by their former masters, the Galchutt, but they also can be adept with real technology as well. One or two joined the Shuul, initially in disguise, to learn about their science, which they adopted with impressive and alarming speed. Of late, some of the Shuul have learned of the zaug in their midst, but the evil creatures have become so technologically proficient and have made so many significant breakthroughs in the fields of biology and alchemy that they have found acceptance.

MEMBERSHIP

Shuul agents are obvious by their long coats of black leather, goggles, tool belts, and firearms. Less action-oriented Shuul—technologists who spend their time in workshops and laboratories—wear black leather aprons full of pockets for tools. Most have shaved heads, regardless of gender. Most are human, but a high percentage are dwarves (mostly Grailwarden). Very few are elves or halflings, but there is a handful of gnomes.

The leader of the Shuul goes by the name Savane in public, although his real name is Boris Ilvata. Savane keeps his identity a secret, for he knows the Shuul have many enemies. He spends most of his time in the Temple of Teun in the Temple District. A relatively quiet, reserved man, Savane has wild brown hair and thick spectacles. He usually wears a long, dark coat.

Iron angels have deva stats, but their attacks inflict lightning or thunder damage instead of radiant damage.

Sorn, page 129
Zaug, page 602
Chaositech, page 529
Smoke Shop, page 286
Magical pills, page 526
Dreaming Apothecary, page 116

A typical Shuul agent has expert stats (page 609); alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: leather coat, dragon rifle, dragon pistol, bullets (12), dagger, protective goggles, spyglass, gunsmithing tools, pocketwatch, pills (potion of healing, 2), 23 gp.

A typical Shuul technologist is a dwarf with artisan stats (page 606); alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: dragon pistol, bullets (6 rounds), protective goggles, gunsmithing or machinesmithing tools, smoke bomb, tindertwigs (3), alchemist fire (2), pocketwatch, 25 gp.

Savane has arcanist stats (page 605), with Investigation +5, Persuasion +2, and Sleight of Hand +4; alignment lawful neutral. He usually has the identify device and lock and load spells prepared (see Chapter 35: Magic). Equipment: +2 dragon pistol, +1 bullets (12), pill (potion of superior healing), dagger, protective goggles, spyglass, gunsmithing and machinesmithing tools, compass, pocketwatch.

SISTERHOOD OF SILENCE

Although the Sisterhood of Silence has chapters in lands beyond the walls of Ptolus, surely nowhere else does it command the respect and fear that it wields here. Most consider this all-female order of monks and fighters to be a secondary police force after the City Watch. In fact, people in the know (which is to say, criminals) fear the Sisterhood far more than they do the Watch. The Sisters are beyond reproach when it comes to bribery, coercion, or corruptibility. Patrols of Sisters, walking silently about town with stern faces, are a common sight in almost every district, save perhaps the Necropolis.

Since its inception, the order has fought against criminals and wrongdoers. More than eighty years ago, the Commissar at the time saw that Ptolus was becoming a dangerous place and decided to work with the Sisterhood of Silence

Temple of Teun, page 367
Foundry, page 176
Tower of Science, page 310
City Watch, page 141

The black-and-white symbol of the Sisterhood signifies their own extraordinary duality. Not only do they see the world in terms of clear-cut right and wrong, but they themselves are compassionate and nurturing toward those they feel deserve it while being utterly ruthless toward lawbreakers.

Kevris Killraven, page 119
Segaci Fellisti, page 91

Stunning bolts, page 643

Priory of Introspection, page 349

Rumor has it that the Sisters work harder to find—and are more severe in apprehending—those who commit crimes against women. This is not true, but since so many crime victims are women, it seems true.

Adult women cannot join the Sisterhood of Silence. Training for the order is so demanding—both mentally and physically—it must begin before maturity sets in. Girls who are unable to complete the training are still cared for by the Sisterhood until they become adults and can make their own way in the world.

For more on reporting crimes to the Sisterhood and/or the City Watch, see Chapter 28: Crime and the Law (page 511).

No one has ever heard of a Sister of Silence who has broken her sacred vow of silence.

A First Circle Sister of Silence has disciple stats (page 608); alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: heavy crossbow, bolts (12), maul (monk weapon), potion of greater healing, potion of flying, *tanglefoot bags (2).*

A Second Circle Sister of Silence has experienced monk stats (page 609), with +1 on crossbow attack and damage; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: heavy crossbow, +1 bolts *(10),* stunning bolt, *maul (monk weapon),* potion of flying, potion of speed, potion of superior healing, *tanglefoot bags (2).*

A Third Circle Sister of Silence has superior monk stats (page 613), with constant see invisibility, *+1 on monk weapon damage, +2 on crossbow attack and damage; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment:* +1 heavy crossbow, +1 bolts *(8),* stunning bolts *(4),* +1 maul *(monk weapon),* potion of flying, potion of superior healing, potion of vitality, *tanglefoot bags (2).*

The Mother Superior of the Sisterhood of Silence has Third Circle Sister of Silence stats, with AC 17, telepathy 120 ft., can't be surprised; advantage on attacks, checks, and saves; foes have disadvantage on attacks against her; alignment lawful neutral. Additional equipment: bracers of armor, headband of teleportation *(as a* helm of teleportation*). She can psionically cast* detect thoughts *(DC 15) and* telepathic bond *at will, requiring no components.*

rather than against it. In 690 IA, the Sisterhood received special Imperial authority within the walls of Ptolus to apprehend criminals and protect the peace.

The Sisterhood of Silence works toward justice. In so doing, the Sisters are careful not to break Imperial laws, but they do not enforce them—they mete out justice. The distinction is important. They never incarcerate criminals on their own, but always turn them over to the City Watch. If a criminal is harmed or killed while being apprehended by the Sisters, no wrong has been committed. Thus, the Sisterhood has earned a reputation of being particularly ruthless and violent to those who break serious laws. On the other hand, they never act unless they are certain the suspect is guilty.

Most of the Sisters are muscular women with stout frames. They are monks, and aside from their skill at unarmed combat, they are well known for their deadly accuracy with crossbows (often loaded with *stunning bolts*) and their use of their signature greathammers (two-handed mauls). They all wear voluminous black and white habits made of thick, coarse material, specially cut so as not to hinder fast movement or unarmed combat.

True to their order's name, the Sisters never speak. Rumors circulate that they have developed telepathy; at least to some extent, these rumors are true.

The Sisterhood of Silence employs a number of men called Speakers. These eunuchs devote their lives to the Sisterhood as much as do any of the Sisters themselves. As their name would suggest, the men speak for the order. Talking to one of the Sisters (or a group of them) through a Speaker is like using a translator. The Speaker says something on behalf of the order, and when a reply is needed, he pauses as if receiving a message to translate into spoken words. Then he relates the order's response. Throughout this exchange, the Speaker never looks at any of the Sisters—ever.

The Sisters do use a form of unspoken communal communication: they convey feelings and sometimes images rather than words. They don't "speak" with their minds, but they do manage to communicate. This shared link makes them even more efficient in combat and other operations. The range of this ability varies with the level of the Sisters involved, but powerful members of the order can communicate across the city.

Girls and young women from the streets, from broken homes, or from orphanages come to the Priory of Introspection, the group's headquarters in the Temple District. The Sisters care for, feed, house, and clothe the needy young women. They also begin training them immediately. Training never stops.

The Sisters of Silence are organized into three circles, each more advanced than the one before it. Most Sisters are First Circle members. After years of training and experience, one advances to the Second Circle. Only the most gifted and experienced Sisters advance to the Third Circle. It is interesting to note that the three circles do not convey greater authority, but greater respect and power.

The Mother Superior of the Sisterhood is a special case. Born with a number of inherent mental gifts, she is a powerful telepath with limited precognitive powers. She also enjoys long life—she is three hundred fifty-six years old, although she seems only sixty. She stands about 5 feet, 6 inches and has a slight stoop, but she is otherwise fit. If confronted with a threat, in almost every case she teleports away.

THE SORN

"Word on the street is that there's a new assassins' guild in town called the Sorn."

"I hear rumors that there is a mages' guild in town, here to compete with the Inverted Pyramid. They're called the Sorn."

Both of these rumors are true, and both, after a fashion, are false. The Sorn are a new group in Ptolus, a recently formed organization backed by both Kevris Killraven and the Shuul. Like many of Killraven's associates, most of the Sorn are from outside the city. Sorcerers comprise most of the Sorn, although warlocks and wizards are also welcome. No other characters are eligible to join, and in fact the Sorn are extremely exclusive. They only want members who are both capable and willing to undertake action, specifically combat. One will find no studious bookworms or pudgy, unfit mages in this group.

The Sorn use their magic to act as enforcers, spies, assassins, and support for more conventional fighters. They are highly adaptable, and most are willing to do whatever is asked of them. (Just under half the organization is of evil alignment, and the rest are neutral—they do not share their Shuul allies' affinity for lawfulness either.) They always wear masks or go about in disguise.

The Sorn organize themselves into small, independent cells. There is no centralized headquarters or leader. In fact, even within the cells, there are no leaders per se. However, less powerful members always defer to those of greater power and experience. No Sorn cell knows much about the activities of the others, and those activities are usually very different and very specialized. One cell might focus on working with the Shuul, another might operate as magical assassins, yet another might work with a specific Killraven-aligned crime boss, and still another might work as a legitimate magical mercenary service that will do anything from consulting on protecting your home from magical intruders to helping to locate lost items.

The list of the Sorn's enemies is long and intimidating. Members of the Inverted Pyramid hate the Sorn for obvious reasons, and the feeling is mutual. In fact, rumor on the street is that both groups are preparing for a clandestine magical war fought in the streets and alleyways of Ptolus, as well as the skies above and the tunnels below. The Vai, the Balacazars, House Sadar, and, to a lesser extent, House Vladaam all hate them as well. And of course the authorities would like to put a stop to most of their activities.

SOUL RIDERS

The rarest of rare children are born with the ability to leave their own body and "ride" the souls of others. They control the actions, thoughts, and emotions of the creatures whose souls they ride, making the hosts utter puppets, helpless even to feel what they want to feel. These beings, known as soul riders, can cause untold havoc and suffering on their own. But when gathered into a group, they can dare almost any goal—even that of secretly ruling the world.

The soul riders number about a dozen individuals. They have completely discarded their own original bodies and exist only as wandering souls, or rather as riders upon the souls of others. Without any kind of physical form—even an incorporeal one—they cannot be affected by any sort of physical attacks or effects. They cannot be slain except in the most extreme circumstances, and harm that befalls the mind or body of the soul they are riding does not affect them at all. Only a handful of magical effects can affect a soul rider.

Otherwise, only the willpower of the host creature can stave off the soul rider's control. Resisting a soul rider is very difficult, but a success means the soul rider cannot try again with that subject for twenty-four hours. Those who fail must do anything and everything the soul rider wants them to do, for as long as the soul rider wishes them to do it. The soul rider knows everything that its host knows and can use all of the host's abilities. A soul rider wishing to move from one subject to another can travel without riding a soul, at a very fast speed. When a soul rider leaves, victims retain only hazy memories of their experiences while controlled and remain entirely unaware of the soul rider. Only a creature with a mortal soul can be ridden, so creatures such as angels, constructs, elementals, fiends, and undead are immune to their abilities.

The soul riders seem utterly without morals or ethics, without compassion or empathy. They use people as someone might use a rag, a hammer, or a shoe. All others are just means to an end. Their current plans involve subtly manipulating events in Ptolus to encourage the city to secede from the Empire and eventually become an independent city-state, ruled by people they control. This is, of course, a much more difficult and slow process than it might appear, even to those with such control.

It is interesting to note that the soul riders desire a complete and whole city over which to rule. As such, they oppose the chaos cultists and similar destructive elements. They hate the

The Sorn symbol

Kevris Killraven, page 119

The Shuul, page 126

A typical Sorn agent is a sorcerer with mage stats, Persuasion +3, and Stealth +5; alignment neutral. It is a 4th-level spellcaster and knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): acid splash, light, mage hand, message, prestidigitation

1st level (4 slots): fog cloud, mage armor, shield

2nd level (3 slots): invisibility, Mel's acid arrow

Affecting a Soul Rider

- *A* banishment *or* banishing smite *spell can force a soul rider to leave a subject and not return for twenty-four hours.*
- *An* imprisonment *spell imprisons a soul rider, although it imprisons the soul being ridden (and the host's body) as well.*
- *A* wish *used to destroy the creature or object imprisoning the soul rider slays the soul rider.*
- *A* mind blank, protection from evil and good, magic circle, *or* holy aura *spell renders a subject immune to the abilities of a soul rider, but does nothing to a soul rider already riding the subject.*

Resisting a soul rider is a DC 20 Wisdom save.

A bodiless soul rider has a 100-ft. flying speed.

The Sorn take their name from an Abyssal word meaning "breath," with the idea that they come and go like a breath—unseen and untouchable. It is the same word used to name Ghul's creatures, the Sorn-Ulth, meaning "bleeding breath." (See page 599.)

Although they'll use their magic to make money in almost any way, the Sorn specialize in acts of violence. More often than not, people think of them as magical assassins.

Sorn rumor: *DC 12 Investigation check*

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

The Fallen, page 109
The Forsaken, page 111

The Commissar, the Twelve Commanders, and other powerful people in the city are aware of the soul riders and take steps (using protective spells and magic items, most often) to make sure they themselves are not ridden. Such precautions are a major stumbling block for the soul riders, as these are exactly the people they would like to control.

Some soul riders like to toy with people, particularly those who know of their existence. They might have a conversation with a person while "hopping" from soul to soul among all the people around that individual, so that each person speaks a different sentence of their message, or even a different word.

For a soul rider encounter, see Chapter 24: Goth Gulgamel (page 452).

Fallen and the Forsaken for obvious reasons and might use their powers against such forces if the need arose. While they have no empathy for those they use, soul riders hate to see widespread death, such as through a plague or war, because it reduces the number of tools they have at their disposal.

There may be as many as twenty or thirty more soul riders in the world, most unaware that there are others like themselves. Very, very rarely the gathered soul riders discover new members and bring them into their fold. Some soul riders are thousands of years old.

Campaign Use: The player characters should not learn of the soul riders until late in the campaign, but they may encounter a person under their control much earlier. Perhaps throughout the campaign they have occasional encounters with people acting strangely or inappropriately, or they themselves discover that they have done things for which they have no memory or explanation. Eventually, they learn of the soul riders, and this ties up a lot of loose ends.

Urthon Aedar plate armor, page 645
Ghul, page 83
Goth Gulgamel, page 452
Harrow elves, page 53

Khelaeson, page 85
Entropy Sphere, page 463
Dreta Phantas, page 425

URTHON AEDAR

Most people know the Urthon Aedar only as an enigma. Their name, in Elder Elvish, means "Wandering Judges." These mysterious, armor-clad figures appear suddenly, perform some inexplicable task, and then seem to disappear promptly. People have seen the Urthon Aedar accost citizens on the street and take a very specific item, abduct people, or even attack and kill seemingly honest folk. Other times, they show up at a particular location and destroy a wall or remove an object. They never speak and never leave behind clues as to why they do what they do. Sometimes, however, the repercussions of their actions become clear. A victim of their attack is revealed to be a medusa in magical disguise. A wall they destroy turns out to have some treasure hidden within it.

The truth about the Urthon Aedar, which virtually no one in Ptolus knows, is that they are elves: Elder Elves, believed to be extinct. Their origins stretch back to the time of Ghul, the Skull-King. This evil lord held a special hatred for elves and slew them with wanton pleasure. Those he did not murder he captured and brought to his fortress Goth Gulgamel and its extensive underground warrens. It is well known that many of these elf prisoners were warped and twisted into the Harrow elves. However, not all of his elven prisoners fell victim to his malevolent works—some resisted with an almost supernatural will. These Ghul tortured endlessly and, to further their anguish, he cursed them with visions of the future so they could see their own bitter ends while they still lived; they could experience future torments before they occurred, even as they were afflicted in the present. But most of all, he wanted them to see the ultimate darkness he would bring to their world, a future where only he ruled and their kind was forever eradicated. This proved to be his undoing. For they saw the *real* future, and while it held horrors and depredations, they glimpsed that Ghul eventually would fall. They suffered through the torment knowing that one day it would end.

This small handful of Elder Elves, led by the elf wizard Khelaeson, slipped away when Goth Gulgamel finally fell to Ghul's enemies. Using a powerful spell and the Entropy Sphere in the Spire, they found a way to reach Dreta Phantas, the stolen elven city. From there, they used their magical and martial abilities, coupled with their uncontrollable visions of things to come, to shape the future. Their ultimate goal is to restore Dreta Phantas, but they also want to promote the overall well-being of elves and their allies. When they presage an event they want to

alter, the Urthon Aedar find one aspect of it—a key person or object—and change that aspect, hoping to achieve their desired result. They do not always succeed.

Early on, one Urthon Aedar now known as Kohoath the Betrayer (male elf) turned against his brethren and joined the forces of chaos. Driven mad by the mental powers of a mysterious creature working with the dark elves besieging Dreta Phantas, Kohoath was seduced into joining them. He has since switched his allegiance again, now working directly for the rhodintor. (These servants of the Galchutt believe that destroying Dreta Phantas may be the key to destroying the world.)

The Urthon Aedar want to keep as much about themselves as possible secret from the rest of the world, at least for now. Of course, some of their enemies—including the zaug, dark elves, and rhodintor—know of them. And there is one human who knows about the Urthon Aedar. His name is Dharim Boch, and he lives among the Fate Weavers.

Kohoath the Betrayer has deadly warrior stats (page 607) and has the spellcasting ability of a mage.

Rhodintor, page 594

Zaug, page 602

Fate Weavers, page 111

THE VAI

The Vai began as a cult devoted to death—not to any specific death god, just to death itself. This cult had no clerics, for each member saw themself as a priest who would one day ascend to the "final resolution." On the way, a cleric tried to "help along" as many others as they could, shepherding their victims to an individual demise. It didn't take long for the Vai to begin to choose their victims based on whom they were paid to kill. For the last sixty years, the Vai have grown in strength and reputation until now the very name brings dread and terror.

Most residents of Ptolus think the Vai is a large group with cloaked spies and invisible eyes everywhere. This is false. Most of the time, Vai membership numbers around a mere thirty-five. The members usually operate only in groups of two to four, and each individual cell rarely, if ever, knows anything about the others. As an organization, the Vai has ties to the Deathmantle chaos cult, the Forsaken, and the Balacazars.

The symbol of the Vai is a curved knife, sometimes—but not always—dripping with blood. Members performing official Vai duties generally wear all-black clothing, usually made of silk. A hooded black cloak and black face mask complete the ensemble. Weaponry varies from member to member, although few if any would be caught dead without various kinds of poison on their person.

Getting in touch with the Vai isn't easy. A ratcatcher named Rintha (female half-fiend/halfling) who lives above a bar called Kerrik's in Midtown acts as a contact for the Vai, but that is only for now. Every eighteen months or so, the Vai get a new extraneous contact to throw anyone attempting to trace them off the trail. The organization's actual headquarters, called the Chapel of the Final Resolution, is located in a secret area below the streets in the Warrens.

It is no coincidence that the Vai symbol and that of the Order of the Blooded Knife, a chaos cult, are so similar. They are both based on prehistoric symbols used by the elf assassin Vaiod the Slayer.

Chapel of the Final Resolution, page 376

A typical Vai assassin has spy or assassin stats; alignment neutral evil. (Those with spy stats use poison like an assassin.)

The Twin Lords Keper have master thief stats (page 612), with AC 19, +2 on attack and damage rolls, and the Assassinate ability of an assassin; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: +3 studded leather, +2 rapier, *light crossbow,* +2 bolts *(10),* arrow of slaying, thoughtstone, *50 feet of silk rope, grappling hook, climber's kit, thieves' tools, 25 pp, 100 gp. They can innately cast the following spells:*
3/day each: darkness, dimension door, disguise self, enhance ability, freedom of movement, greater invisibility, locate creature, nondetection, sleep

The leaders of the guild/cult call themselves the Twin Lords Keper. These two men are as vile as any beings in Ptolus, including the demons of the Fallen. Unlike other members of the Vai, the Twin Lords Keper almost never leave the Chapel, except to kill. They take assignments only rarely, when there is no risk or when the risk is so great that only someone of their skill can complete the mission. They always work alone, except in the case of an ultimate assignment (killing the Commissar or something equally outrageous).

THE VAI QUOTA

A well-known rumor asserts that every member of the Vai must kill a living, thinking being daily. Simple math shows that, even with only about thirty-five members, at that rate the Vai would kill off the entire city of Ptolus in only six years. The real truth is that the Vai must kill something every day, but it can be as minor as a fly, a cockroach, or a rat. Most still try to kill an intelligent foe at least once a month, if not more often. It is certainly true that it's not all that uncommon for an individual to disappear now and again, the victim not of a paid assassination attempt, but of a Vai member looking to keep their skills sharp and satisfy their lust for murder.

Deathmantle cult, page 75

Rintha has mage stats with resistance to cold, fire, lightning, and poison; and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check reveals how much a character knows about the Vai.

- *The Vai are a group of assassins in Ptolus (DC 10).*
- *The Vai worship death and kill as an act of veneration (DC 12).*
- *The Vai have a base of operations somewhere below the city (DC 14).*
- *The Vai's headquarters is called the Chapel of the Final Resolution, and it lies somewhere beneath the Warrens (DC 16).*
- *The Vai are in league with the Forsaken (DC 18).*
- *Two twin human brothers lead the Vai (DC 20).*
- *The Vai leaders are the Twin Lords Keper, and they are extraordinarily powerful (DC 22).*

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In the Ptolus Campaign, the Vai were hired to assassinate the Prince of the Church but failed in this mission. They had devoted so much of their resources to this murder that when it failed, the organization needed money badly. To raise funds quickly, they offered some of the targets they had contracts to kill the option to pay double the contracted rate to cancel the hit. This tactic helped save the organization from ruin, but it cost them respect in the eyes of many.

Kaira Swanwing, page 121

Twelve Commanders, page 140

Circle of Green, page 107

A typical Viridian Lord has scout or spy stats; alignment neutral good. They usually have a few +1 arrows and some kind of potion of healing.

Rechel Pattemon has deadly warrior stats (page 607) with the spell slots, Primeval Awareness, Land's Stride, Hide in Plain Sight, Vanish, and Feral Senses of an 18th-level ranger.

Rumor has it that the twin lords are, in fact, nothing of the sort. Supposedly, one of the twins died years ago and was replaced by a close confederate (using disguises and physical and magical operations to alter his appearance) to keep the tradition going. Some stories go even farther, claiming that this happened years ago, both original twins are dead, and the current ones are *both* replacements. Whether or not this is true, the twins go by the names Reddis Keper and Neivis Keper as they always have, although only a handful of people in the world know these first names (most people don't even know they exist).

VIRIDIAN LORDS

The Viridian Lords exist primarily in Palastan, outside the walls of Ptolus, but they make their influence felt within the city as well. Most members of this group are rangers, although a few are barbarians or combine skills from both practices.

Once closely allied with the seemingly defunct Circle of Green, the Viridian Lords bond themselves physically to the natural world in a lengthy ritual that literally infuses living plants into their flesh.

The Viridian Lords hold claim to a great deal of power and influence in Palastan. In effect, their word is law on the road or in the wild. They come into Ptolus only occasionally and enjoy no special authority here except among the Palastani residents familiar with the group; their reputation earns them a great deal of respect.

The group has no leader and no hierarchy. One is either a Viridian Lord or one is not. The most experienced Viridian Lord, however, is Rechel Pattemon (female human). She seldom comes to the city, and then only to spend time with friends like Kaira Swanwing in Oldtown or to attend meetings of the Twelve Commanders.

USING ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations are important in the game for three reasons.

First, they do a lot to showcase the setting and provide an idea of the flavor of the place. Reading this chapter, you learn that Ptolus is a city where knightly orders, crime syndicates, demons, undead, and noble houses all live side by side, sometimes clashing and sometimes working together.

Second, they provide foes for the player characters. Such groups as the Forsaken or the Balacazars offer nearly endless fodder for adventures.

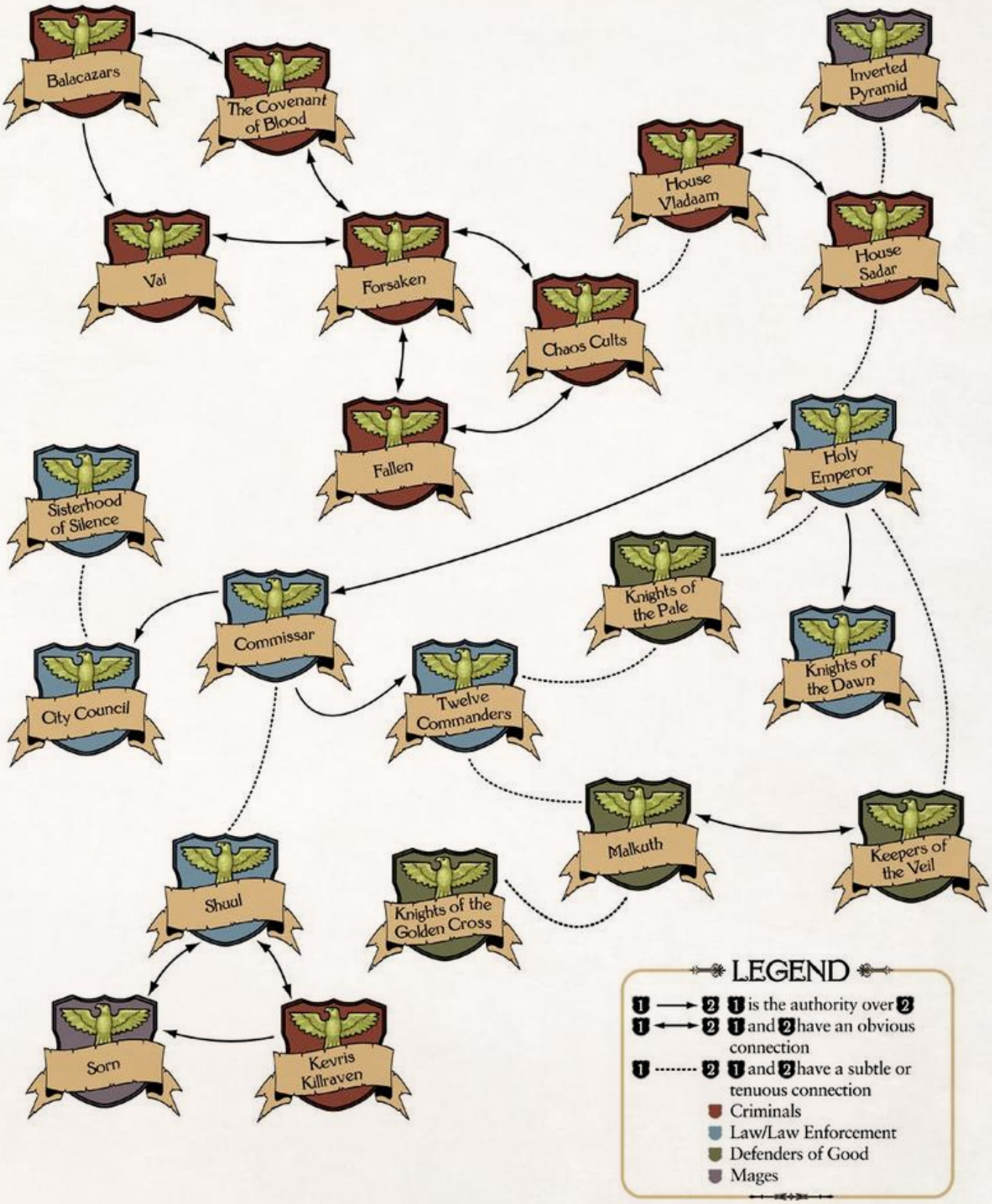
Third, they provide allies for the PCs, and possibly even families to join. It is not uncommon to expect that members of a given adventuring group will want to join the Keepers of the Veil, the Knights of the Golden Cross, the Inverted Pyramid, or even the Longfingers Guild, just to name a few.

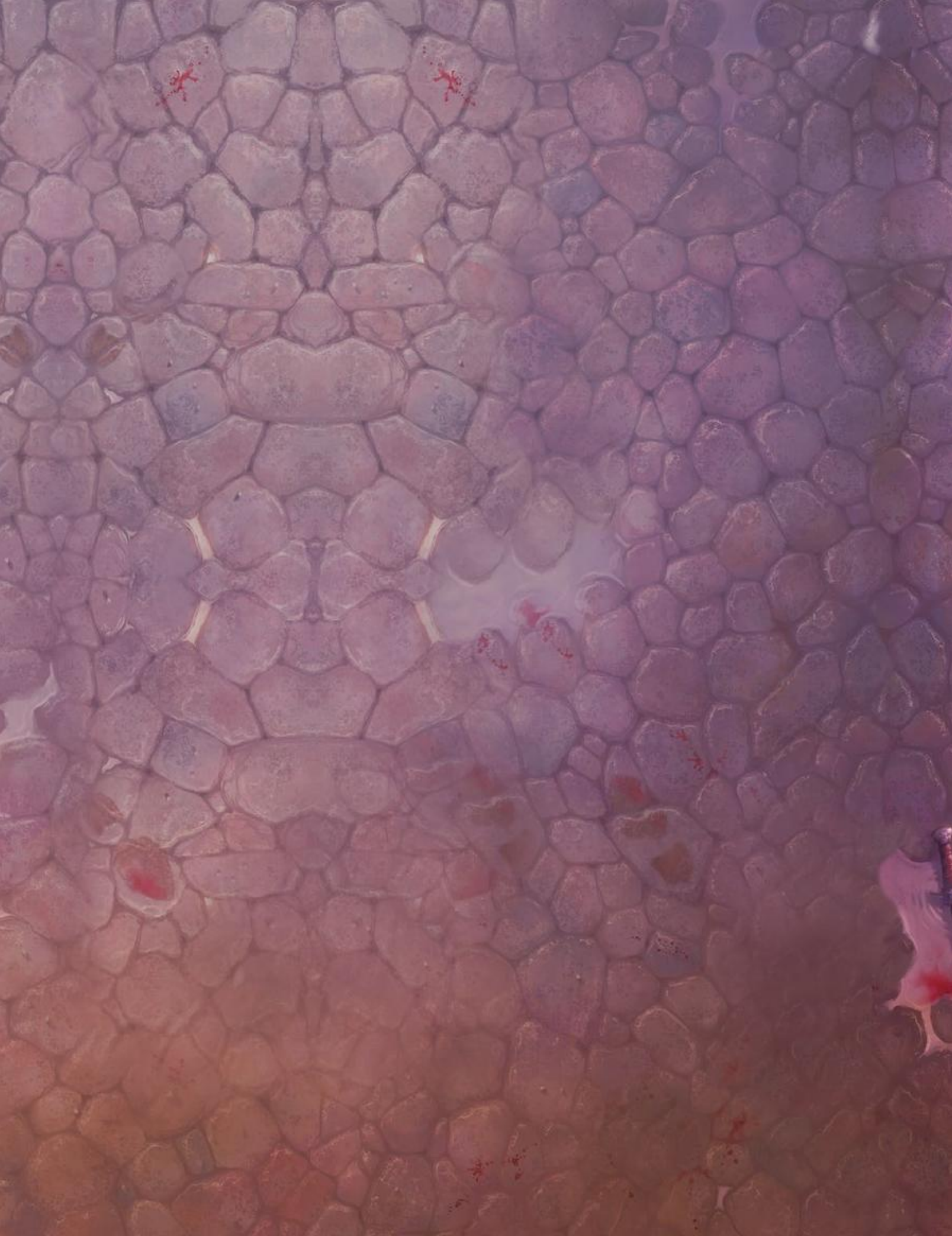
If the player characters choose to join a group, a lot more information is required. For groups such as the Inverted Pyramid or the Delver's Guild, membership information appears in this chapter. But a PC could conceivably join any group in this chapter.

Virtually any organization has requirements to join, and membership usually comes by invitation only, through some kind of initiation, or with a fee (or perhaps some combination). Often there is also an ongoing cost in terms of dues or time. For example, the Longfingers Guild levies a yearly fee on its members and takes a percentage of all loot, but the Keepers of the Veil require only service, probably fighting undead. On the other hand, there are always benefits to joining, including resources, contacts, and sometimes payment (the Knights of the Pale provide stipends for members, for example, although many members waive them).

The GM should always keep a careful balance in mind. Being a member of an organization costs time and sometimes money, but it should likewise provide some kind of benefit. In theory, these benefits are unattainable elsewhere—Delver's Guild members are privy to information about the Dungeon unknown to others, while the Shuul have unique access to certain technological items and skills.

ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS





PART III:
CITY GUIDE

Finally, the city of Ptolus! This section of the book has a chapter on each of the city's eleven districts. But first, Chapter 7: The City by the Spire provides information that applies to every district or to the city as a whole. There, you'll find information about Ptolus's species, climate, layout, economy, and much more. This overview also details the Commissar and City Council, the City Watch, and other official institutions. (For information regarding crime and punishment, and further details about being a Ptolus resident or an adventurer in the city, turn to Part VI: Living in Ptolus.)

Following the overview chapter, you will find the individual districts. Players should not read the district chapters. That information is best left for the player characters to discover firsthand. Although GMs can freely explain that the most popular tavern in Midtown is the Ghostly Minstrel, or that the best place to look for unusual magic items is a shop in Delver's Square, they won't want to reveal the secret location of the Chapel of the Final Resolution in the Warrens or let the PCs learn the details of the dungeons that lie below the Dark Reliquary.

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Chapter 7:

THE CITY BY THE SPIRE

Well over three hundred fifty years old, Ptolus is a city of seventy-five thousand people, the largest urban area in the northwestern Tarsisan Empire. While neither the largest nor—from most people's point of view— the most important city in the world, it is perhaps the most interesting one.

"This city is the center of everything happening today. The Empire is no longer of consequence. Soon, we will all realize that the next phase of history begins here."
~Helmut Itlestein, high priest of the Watcher of the Skies

This chapter covers a broad spectrum of information that applies to every district of the city. Here, you'll learn about Ptolus's species, climate, layout, economy, official institutions, and much more.

THE FLAVOR OF THE CITY

It's sometimes difficult to find a single label for Ptolus. Depending on who you talk to, the city is either a festering nest of liars and thieves or the last bastion of nobility in the otherwise mundane Empire. It is either the land's central hub of magical knowledge or an inconsequential backwater port on the fringes of the Empire. It is the home of the Prince of the Church, and it is the focus of evil in the world.

Ptolus is the least human-dominated metropolis in the Empire. By the standards of the rest of the world, it teems with elves, dwarves, and far stranger creatures. The very idea of counting orcs or lizardfolk among the population is unheard of elsewhere, and most people in the world have never heard of tieflings, let alone seen one—unless they've been to Ptolus.

The influence of the ancient evil below the streets of Ptolus has probably led to the city's widespread corruptive elements—powerful criminals, demons, undead, and monsters of all types. Of course, being on the fringe of the Empire rather than more centrally located contributes to at least the first of those, if not the others. However, the ancient evil and its resulting corruption has brought the forces of light to Ptolus like nowhere else as well. You won't find an entire fortress of angels and aasimars in Tarsis or Dohrinthas, for example.

Perhaps the best way to think of Ptolus is as an adventurer's city. "Adventurers" are not common throughout the Empire. In fact, the Imperial authorities look down upon such people and discourage their activities. Adventurers—often a euphemism for tomb robbers, mercenaries, and thieves—typically carry dangerous weapons and even more dangerous magic, making them a threat to public safety, order, and the authority of local government. However, the Empire, through the Commissar, allows them a sort of safe haven in Ptolus. Why?

The unplumbed depths below the city, with their potential risks and rewards, have drawn most of the adventurers from around the Empire, which is just fine by other local magistrates. Those communities are happy the adventurers head to Ptolus rather than sticking around in their areas causing trouble.

The powerful and influential Delver's Guild keeps the adventurers in Ptolus organized.

Fortress of angels: see Pale Tower, page 305

Ancient evil: see the Galchutt, page 62

Adventurers perform a helpful service by ridding the city's underrealm of dangerous creatures that could come up to the surface and wreak havoc.

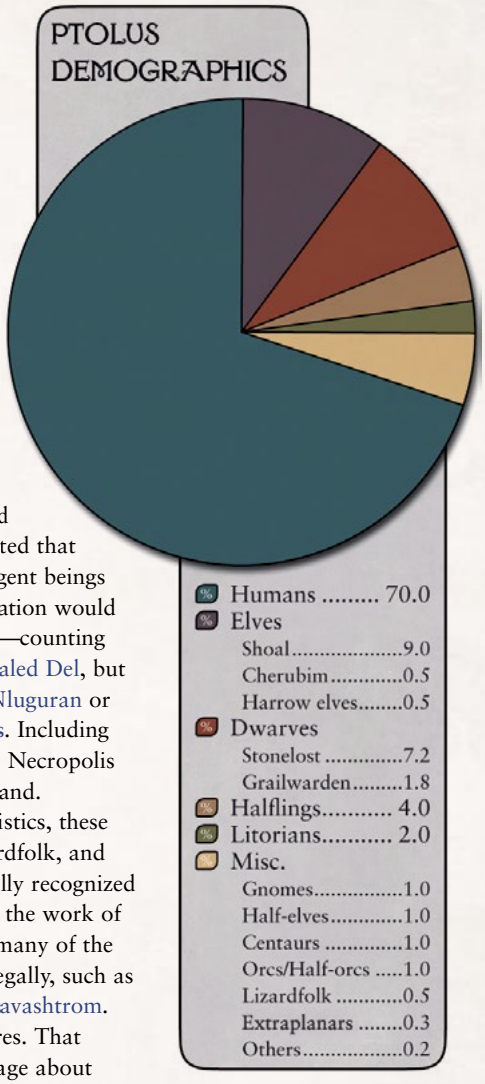
But as much as Ptolus differs from the rest of the world, it shares much as well. As elsewhere, the Church holds considerable power, both spiritual and secular. Like other major cities, Ptolus is governed by a Commissar representing the Empire of Tarsis. The technological level of the city has fallen in recent years, like that of the rest of the Empire—as the Empire crumbles, so too does its knowledge. Every year, there are fewer and fewer smiths who can repair the firearms, printing presses, elegant clocks, and other wonders from the Prustan folk and the Grailwarden dwarves of the east.

Overall, the flavor of Ptolus, as you will discover in the chapters to come, combines the city's great age, its incredibly varied population, its large number of adventurers and classed characters, and its dark side, which has surfaced more and more of late and continues to grow.

Ptolus is cosmopolitan in the extreme. The names of many humans, for example, have become so jumbled that often they no longer offer a clue as to a person's original lineage and familial land of origin. Likewise, the currency is a mixture of very old coins and standard Imperial coins, as well as a smattering of foreign money, such as from Uraq. Lastly, the many and varied gods of Ptolus come from everywhere. It's been said that if someone, somewhere worships something, you can find a temple for that religion in Ptolus. The City by the Spire has always been accepting of variant outlooks and beliefs, even when they are not popular; for example, the Inverted Pyramid hid in Ptolus when the Edict of Deviltry outlawed the use of arcane magic.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ptolus is far more cosmopolitan than most cities in the Empire. The city's population breaks down demographically as shown in the diagram at right.



These population figures count only individuals living above ground who are recognized in the city more or less legally. No dark elves figure into the population, as their very presence is illegal. No skulks figure into the population breakdown, as they dwell underground; a band of goblins living under the city would not be counted, either. It is estimated that if one were to count all the intelligent beings dwelling under the city, the population would increase by another five thousand—counting the Stonelost dwarf community Kaled Del, but not counting the dark elf city of Nluguran or the captured city of Dreta Phantas. Including the undead and the demons in the Necropolis would add perhaps another thousand.

When applied to the above statistics, these criteria imply that some orcs, lizardfolk, and even ogres and demons are officially recognized city residents. This is true. Due to the work of the Brotherhood of Redemption, many of the "monsters" in the city live there legally, such as the ogre-mage Urlenius, Star of Navashtrom.

Ptolus covers roughly 2,000 acres. That makes its population density average about thirty-seven people per acre, which sounds comfortable. However, much of the city is not residential. Residential areas average more along the lines of fifty people per acre. In some districts, such as the Nobles' Quarter, it is more like ten or even five people per acre, while in others, such as the Warrens, it can be as high as two hundred.

ICONOGRAPHY

The symbol of the city of Ptolus is the golden hawk, and its device shows a golden hawk with wings stretched across a blue field. The Imperial symbol is a golden lion, and its device is a lion on a green field. Thus the Commissar has taken as his personal crest a golden lion over a golden hawk on a split field of green and blue.

Ptolus Seal

Imperial Seal

Commissar's Seal

Skulks, page 596

Kaled Del, page 418

Nluguran, page 425

Dreta Phantas, page 425

Uraq, page 46

Brotherhood of Redemption, page 106

Urlenius, page 361

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

"Put simply, Ptolus is the focus of all significant evil in the world."
~Sheva Callister, adventurer

DISTRICTS OF PTOLUS

The city of Ptolus comprises eleven official districts.

Docks: Though small, the Docks is an important area in this trade city. In chapter 8, make sure you read about the strange Dockmaster and the mystery of Pier Five.

Guildsman District: This is where much of the city's commerce occurs. Most local guilds have their headquarters in the Guildsman District. Chapter 9 includes descriptions of the city's largest breweries and tanneries, the Foundry, and the Stockyards. The district also contains such strange places as the Darkbirth Madhouse and the Midden Heaps.

Midtown: The heart of the city, Midtown is one of the largest and most populous districts. In chapter 10, you'll want to check out everything in Delver's Square, in particular the Ghostly Minstrel, Myraeth's Oddities, Ebbert's Outfitters, and Rastor's Weapons. Iridithil's Home is of particular interest to elves.

Necropolis: Like just about everything else in Ptolus, the local cemetery is more than it appears. Undead creatures and the Forsaken, their living allies, dwell within the Necropolis. You'll find the entire Dark Reliquary, home to both the Forsaken and the demonic Fallen, detailed in chapter 11, but don't miss the crypt home of Igor Reichstav and the Siege Tower.

Nobles' Quarter: The wealthy of the city live atop the highest cliffs in Ptolus. The intrigues among the nobles drive a fair bit of the action in the city, so chapter 12 can prove important, particularly for higher-level groups. Aside from the traditional noble estates, don't miss the very strange Castle Shard and the Holy Palace.

North Market: One of two markets in Ptolus, the North Market in chapter 13 is known for its open-air stalls more than its workshops. Those interested in the technology of the Empire should check out the Smoke Shop, and shoppers can always take a break at the Red Stallion pub.

Oldtown: As the name implies, this is the oldest part of the city. Today the district of Oldtown serves as the center for all local administrative needs. You'll find the fortress of Dalenguard here, as well as the Administration Building, the Imperial University, and the City Library. You won't want to miss the details chapter 14 offers about Kadmiel, a tower that exists only within its own shadow, or the Inverted Pyramid, the invisible floating headquarters of the most powerful arcanists in the world.

Rivergate: Although primarily a residential district, the Rivergate section of Ptolus described in chapter 15 still offers interesting locales to visit. Two of them are the Well of the Shadow Eyes and Finelle's Pleasant Diversions.

South Market: The South Market offers more shops than open markets, as well as a number of commodities markets and workshops. The proprietors of Blackstock Printing hold an interesting secret, and the Golden Tooth offers wares for those with a taste for gold. But there's more in chapter 16 than just shops. Check out the gambling den known as the Cock Pit and the hideout of the criminal Korben Trollone.

Temple District: Teeming with churches, shrines, and the headquarters of various religious orders, the Temple District is a strange hodgepodge of good and evil. The dangerous and hidden Temple of the Rat God is found here in chapter 17, as is the Priory of Introspection and St. Valien's Cathedral. Those interested in strange disappearances in town may want to check out the Temple of the Ebon Hand cult.

Warrens: The smallest district in Ptolus is also the worst. The Warrens holds the city's slums, and it's a place as lawless and dangerous as one might fear. Although you'll find no addresses or street names here, you might want to check out chapter 18 for the home of Jirraith, a crime lord with no appearance, and the headquarters of the Eight Shadows.

SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Of all the districts, Midtown is the most species-diverse, containing neighborhoods devoted to elves, aram (centaurs), halflings, and litorians. Orcs, assarai (lizardfolk), and less desirable creatures are found in many districts, but nowhere in as great a concentration as the Warrens. Dwarves are more heavily represented in the Guildsman District than elsewhere. Both market districts also have fair diversity.

The least likely place to find a nonhuman is the Nobles' Quarter, and most nonhumans who live there are elves.

Although each species has its own prejudices and preferences, the only ones that routinely face real discrimination are those considered by most to be generally evil (whether it is true or not). Examples include orcs, lizardfolk, goblins, dark elves, and so forth.

CHARACTERS IN THE CITY

As in any city, most of Ptolus's citizens are commoners. The next most populous groups are merchants and crafters (use expert or artisan stats) and people who fight or guard for a living (use guard or thug stats). There are few acolytes, but the city has more than its share of nobles.

HIGH-LEVEL CHARACTERS IN PTOLUS

The table below shows a sample high-level member of each class, along with the character's group affiliation (if any) and general location.

Class	Character
Barbarian	Kragas the Bold (independent, Midtown)
Bard	Nivae Tamelli (Knights of the Chord, Oldtown)
Cleric	Adlam Theobold (Church of Lothian, Temple District)
Druid	Andach (independent, Necropolis)
Fighter	Lord Dorant Khatru (House Khatru, Nobles' Quarter)
Monk	Wynn Rabinall (Order of the Fist, Temple District)
Paladin	Steron Vsool (Church of Gaen, Temple District)
Ranger	Rechel Pattemon (Viridian Lords, Oldtown)
Rogue	Hayman Knapp (Longfingers Guild, Oldtown/Undercity)
Sorcerer	Moynath Autumnsong (Inverted Pyramid/Castle Shard, Oldtown/Nobles' Quarter)
Warlock	Kaeran Altarstone (Inverted Pyramid)
Wizard	The Iron Mage (independent, Oldtown)

CHARACTER CLASSES AND ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Almost every type of PC character class has an associated organization or guild (all except barbarian), which means that PCs have some sort of organization they can aspire to join, pay for training, and so on. See Chapter 6: Organizations for more information on these groups, which include those shown in the table below.

Class	Organization/Guild
Bard	Imperial Academy of Music, Knights of the Chord
Cleric	Keepers of the Veil, various temples
Druid	Circle of Green
Fighter	Knights of the Pale, Order of the Bow*, Order of Iron Might
Monk	Order of the Fist, various temples
Paladin	Keepers of the Veil, Knights of the Pale, various temples
Ranger	Viridian Lords
Rogue	Balacazars, Killraven Crime League, Longfingers Guild, the Vai
Sorcerer	Brides of Magic, Inverted Pyramid, the Sorn
Warlock	Inverted Pyramid, the Sorn
Wizard	Inverted Pyramid, the Sorn

* An elven archery organization run out of Iridithil's Home in Midtown; see chapter 10.

Monsters in the City

Unlike in most cities in the Empire, it's not out of the ordinary to see "monsters" in the streets of Ptolus. Nobles use ogre slaves to carry palanquins. Elf battle mage Daersidian Ringsire rides a wyvern through the streets. At least one local druid has a giant owl companion. In 712 IA, the Commissar himself offered to pay volunteers to be transformed into trolls to contribute to the city's defense. (He found only a handful of takers.) It's almost odd not to see a dragon on the grounds of House Dallimothan's estate. A strange ocular tyrant runs the asylum for insane arcanists. And, of course, there are the creatures redeemed by the Brotherhood of Redemption, not the least of which is the ogre-mage cleric Urlenius.

Acolyte: *9 hp*
Artisan, page 606
Commoner: *4 hp*
Expert, page 609
Guard: *11 hp*
Noble: *9 hp*
Thug: *32 hp*

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

Some GMs might allow players to already be a member of a faction, guild, or organization as their background option, such as an acolyte of the Church of Lothian, a criminal of the Longfingers Guild, or an artisan who belongs to the Leatherworkers' Guild.

For the average cost of buying or renting a home by district, see The Cost of Living on page 502 in Chapter 26: On Being a Resident.

Berserker: *67 hp*
Druid: *27 hp*
Knight: *52 hp*
Mage: *40 hp*
Priest: *27 hp*
Scout: *16 hp*
Spy: *27 hp*
Veteran: *58 hp*
Archmage: *99 hp*

PC-type characters (such as berserkers, druids, knights, mages, priests, scouts, spies, and veterans) are much less common than any other sort of NPC. Of these kinds of NPCs, there is at least one powerful member of every type of character living in Ptolus (for example, archmages), but most of them have unique stat blocks.

Organizations and guilds are potentially open to newcomers, more or less, which means that PCs have groups they can aspire to join, gain contacts within, and so on. See Chapter 6: Organizations for more information on these groups, which include those shown in the table on the previous page.

GOVERNMENT

As part of the Empire of Tarsis, Ptolus has a Commissar who acts as a regional governor: an administrator who manages the city "in the Emperor's stead." Of course, the fact of the Empire's slow disintegration continues to threaten the position of the Commissar, particularly out on the very edge of the Empire. Many think Ptolus should be an independent city-state. The current Commissar is Igor Urnst, a native of Tarsis who has lived in Ptolus and acted as its administrator for eighteen years. Urnst remains quite popular among Ptolusites; if the city did ever secede from the Empire, many would want him to stay in his current position.

Commissar Igor Urnst has deadly warrior stats (page 607) with fire resistance; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: adamantine breastplate, ring of fire resistance, animated shield, +2 dragon pistol, *ammunition (10),* thoughtstone, potion of flying, potion of invisibility, potion of supreme healing, *silver and emerald ring (worth 1,000 gp), signet ring of Ptolus (worth 10,000 gp).*

Commissar Urnst maintains popularity for two reasons. First and foremost, he has a well-earned reputation as the general who won the Gnoll War in 696 IA. He maintains a military mindset in his role as Commissar, which makes the people believe him a strong leader who fights to keep them safe. "You think things are bad?" people say. "Imagine what it would be like here without the Commissar and his men!"

The Commissar maintains a regiment of elite troops called the Commissar's Men based in Dalenguard. He keeps a battery of two dozen huge cannons, which he used in Rhoth during the Gnoll War, in perfect condition in case of emergency. Called the "Commissar's Guns," they are very mobile and could be positioned to bombard a foe from the north, the south, or along the cliffs to fire at approaching enemy vessels.

Further showing that he has the city's safety as his foremost concern, almost fifteen years ago the Commissar also assembled the Twelve Commanders to serve as his advisors and lieutenants in times of emergency. This group, comprising some of the most powerful and martially focused individuals in the city, has served him well against threats from the undead and Forsaken in the Necropolis and monsters coming up from the realms below.

Dalenguard, page 297
Kirian Ylestos, page 270
Mother Superior, page 128
Sorum Dandubal, page 108

The Twelve Commanders
The current roster of the Twelve Commanders is as follows:

- *Aoska, half-celestial fighter from the Pale Tower (page 124)*
- *Ashby Gerard, retired City Watch captain*
- *Beck Von Tibbitz, leader of the Keepers of the Veil (page 118)*
- *Dierna Hillerchaun, head of the Knights of the Pale (page 122)*
- *Dorant Khatru, head of House Khatru (page 96)*
- *Geffrey Barton, a renowned war hero*
- *Kabel Dathimol of the Order of the Dawn (page 70)*
- *Boren Darsal, well-known warrior and weaponsmith*
- *Lothao Valinth, elf proxy of Doraedian Mythlord (page 197)*
- *Ogden Reinhard, well-known fighter*
- *Rechel Pattemon of the Viridian Lords (page 132)*
- *Yorid Glitterfist, representative of the Kaled Del dwarves*

The second reason the Commissar remains popular is his willingness to accommodate the needs and desires of the people. As his first act as Commissar, he elevated the authority and responsibility of the City Council, a group of nobles, guildmasters, and other influential individuals. Under Commissar Urnst, the Council became a decision-making body with two chambers: the Tribunal and the Assembly.

The Tribunal has only three positions. One is occupied by the Commissar, one by Kirian Ylestos, the Prince of the Church, and one by the Mother Superior of the Sisterhood of Silence. Although the Commissar technically remains the ultimate authority, the influence of the Tribunal members makes them voices he can't afford to ignore. The Commissar currently feels pressure from a number of sides to add at least one more chair to the Tribunal. If that happened, he most likely would ask Guildmaster Delver Sorum Dandubal to fill it. The Assembly has twenty-five members, including a representative from each of the ten noble houses. While not as powerful as the Tribunal, the Assembly can still enact policy, particularly when the members speak with a unified voice.

A cynical Ptolus resident might call the City Council the "Council of Coin," referring to the fact that the members deal mainly with economic issues, and that every chair in the Council chambers is filled by a wealthy

individual. The Council makes no apologies for this fact and sees nothing wrong with a governing body from the upper class. And while most of the Council's issues do deal with economics, that's because the Commissar makes decisions on other matters himself or with the help of the Twelve Commanders. This is particularly true for issues that relate to the safety and well-being of the city and its people.

As an individual, the Commissar is a fearless, determined, but ultimately arrogant man. His strength comes from his adaptability and his willingness to try original solutions to problems. His weakness comes from his inability to recognize and admit his own mistakes. The Commissar has a reputation for being outspoken, denouncing the actions even of those more politically powerful than himself if he happens to disagree with them. For example, on numerous occasions he has spoken against the decisions of the Emperor of the Church. Of course, this has strained the relationship between the Church and his government, but that has only served to make Ptolus more welcoming to diverse religions—ultimately making the Commissar even more popular.

The Commissar is married and has four daughters, ages twenty-four, twenty-two, nineteen, and sixteen.

THE CHURCH AND PTOLUS GOVERNMENT

As noted in Chapter 4: Cosmology and Religion, priests of the Church of Lothian are also considered at least minor government officials within the Empire. In Ptolus, so far from the Lion-Guarded Throne and so steeped in non-Lothian religions, one might think this would be the first Imperial concept to fall by the wayside. Such is not the case, however. The Church retains a strong hold in Ptolus and has ever since 657 IA, when the Emperor of the Church Cheroboth Ylestos built the Holy Palace in the Nobles' Quarter and bade Lukas Mikolic, his son and heir to the Holy Throne, live there until he assumed the mantle of Emperor. The tradition of the Holy Empire's heir apparent residing in Ptolus has continued ever since. Emperor Cheroboth did this to help stabilize the religious upheaval Ptolus faced at the time due to the influx of adherents of minor religions. It proved extremely effective.

Today, the Prince of the Church, Kirian Ylestos, maintains a high profile in the city. What's more, his father, Holy Emperor Rehoboth, has lived with his son for the last eleven years. Rehoboth has not taken his son's seat on the Tribunal of the City Council, however—he seems relatively unconcerned with the everyday affairs of Ptolus. Instead, he concentrates on furthering his claim to the Lion-Guarded Throne in addition to the Holy Throne.

Thus, Church officials are still accorded a great deal of power in local government. They can command the guards of the City Watch, and they gain certain rights under the law not granted to typical citizens.

THE COMMISSAR'S MEN

The Commissar's Men (who are not, in fact, all men) are an elite company of well-trained troops. These soldiers, stationed in Dalenguard in Oldtown, number about three hundred. Extremely disciplined and loyal to the Commissar, the company has not had much to do since coming to Ptolus in 703 IA. In times of crisis, such as during a major fire, the Commissar's Men move in to help. The Commissar also dispatches them in small teams to deal with specific threats that arise, including the emergence of a monster from under the city or a troublesome group of adventurers who get out of line—anything that lies beyond the City Watch's ability to handle effectively.

THE CITY WATCH

The City Watch has one primary goal: to keep the peace. To this end, the Watch patrols each district (except the Warrens, although they deny that fact) and maintains guards on duty to answer when called by shouts or warning bells. The Watch has absolute authority in the city, and the right to arrest and detain anyone for any reason. The Commissar empowers them to use force—even deadly force—on anyone who resists. Guards do not need proof to apprehend a wrongdoer, but they're usually careful not to arrest the wrong person—after all, their mistaken quarry might be (or have ties to) someone of influence. If, on the other hand, the suspect is poor with no important connections, the guards make no bones about treating that person as they like.

The City Watch spends much of its time breaking up fights, although often they arrive after the fight is over. Residents can summon the guards to deal with threats like a dire rat or other monster that comes up from the Dungeon. They attempt to apprehend criminals, trying to catch them in the act whenever possible. Otherwise, the Watch serves as more of a deterrent than anything else. Investigating crimes rarely makes it to the Watch's list of duties; once a crime is over and the perpetrator gone, the guards generally file a report and

Rehoboth's claim to the throne, page 269

Church officials' rights under the law, page 68

The majority of the Commissar's Men, as opposed to the City Watch, came with Igor Urnst when he was appointed to his current position. They wear livery recognizably distinct from that of the City Watch, in a darker shade of blue. The typical Commissar's Man is older than most guards and has an air of experience about him that the typical City Watch member does not have. The Men come up through the ranks of the City Watch or from the Imperial military ranks.

Typical Commissar's Man has aristocrat stats (page 606), with AC 19, Athletics +2, Perception +3; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: splint, shield, dragon rifle (see page 522), ammunition (10 rounds), longsword, potion of healing, *25 gp.*

Typical Commissar's Man (Captain) has veteran stats, with AC 22, Perception +4; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: +1 plate, +1 shield, +1 longsword, *double pistol (see page 522), ammunition (12 rounds),* potions of greater healing *(2),* potion of heroism, potion of vitality, *gold captain's ring worth 100 gp, 270 gp.*

Holy Palace, page 269

Investigating crimes, page 513

"A backwater cesspool of a city, as far from civilization as I dare imagine."
~Lady Kruellis of Tarsis

Typical City Watch guard has guard stats; alignment neutral. They usually carry equipment useful against various well-known monsters, such as wooden stakes and garlic for vampires, wolfsbane for werewolves, and so on.

Typical City Watch constable has thug stats, with AC 16, Investigation +2, Perception +2; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: breastplate, shield, longsword, dragon pistol (see page 522), ammunition (12 rounds), potion of greater healing, lantern of revealing, *tanglefoot bags (2, see page 527), whistle, wooden stake, sprig of wolfsbane, necklace of garlic, silver bullets (3), mirror, flask of holy water, 42 gp.*

Typical City Watch captain has veteran stats, with AC 20; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: plate, shield, +1 longsword, *double pistol (see page 522), ammunition (12 rounds),* potions of greater healing *(2),* lantern of revealing, *tanglefoot bags (2), whistle, wooden stake, sprig of wolfsbane, necklace of garlic, silver bullets (3), mirror, flask of holy water, 450 gp.*

Helmut Itlestein, page 363

Fire Brigade, page 144

Pistols and rifles, page 521

Life at a Watchhouse

Guards on duty at a Watchhouse are billeted at the house as well. Most work in shifts lasting four days, followed by two days off (during which time they live elsewhere). The guards' main duty is to patrol the streets of their assigned district. While not on patrol, they relax, sleep, eat, and train at the Watchhouse. On slow days, the captain may stage drills to keep the guards sharp.

Friendly rivalries have developed among the various Watchhouses. Once a year, the guards get together at the Arena in Oldtown for contests of strength and skill. The reigning champions are the guards of Midtown.

A typical Watch spellcaster has mage or priest stats.

forget about it. Only when a criminal begins repeating his offense does the Watch take investigative action to prevent future crime.

Guards in the Watch know the city streets and layout very well. A patrol checks the locks of sewer grates, doors on the city wall towers, and businesses known to be closed for the night. They poke around areas where trouble might brew, such as abandoned warehouses or back alleyways. They know most of the good hiding places in Ptolus. The City Watch is familiar with the ins and outs of criminal groups and activities. They know where the offenders hide, where they like to strike, and even what most of them look like on sight. They are perfectly within their rights to haul in a known criminal, even if the individual isn't doing anything wrong at the moment.

Keeping order and peace sometimes involves fighting fires. Each Watch garrison has equipment to help the Fire Brigade do this.

The uniforms of the City Watch consist of blue tunics worn over chainmail armor, with thick blue wrappings tied around their helmets. The guards carry shields bearing the device of Ptolus: a golden hawk on a blue field. They carry high-quality battleaxes or spears, as well as longswords and light crossbows. Usually one or two guards on duty at a Watchhouse carry dragon rifles rather than crossbows. Constables wear similar uniforms, with the addition of a yellow sash. They also wear breastplates rather than chain armor and carry dragon pistols rather than crossbows. A captain of the guard wears plate and a special shield insignia as well as the yellow sash of a constable.

WATCHHOUSES

The Watch is divided up into various precincts that correlate to the city's districts (not counting the Warrens and the Necropolis). Thus, there are nine Watchhouses. Each district has a Watchhouse (sometimes called a garrison) that serves as a temporary jail and a barracks for the guards on duty. Most Watchhouses are tall structures or even towers, which allows a single guard on duty to keep a vigil. Usually, however, the Watch is summoned by cries of danger, the sound of trouble (usually a fight), or the sounding of one of the warning bells mounted on poles throughout the city. An attempt has been made to place the bells on the streets farthest from a Watchhouse, so that a citizen in trouble can run to either the nearest Watchhouse or the warning bell. Typically, it takes anywhere from one to ten minutes for the City Watch to respond to a warning bell, but it could take as long as thirty minutes, depending on how far the trouble is from a Watchhouse, how well the area is patrolled, and what else is going on in the district.

A Watchhouse usually keeps about two dozen guards on duty at any given time, at least half of whom are on patrol. During the day, most guards patrol on their own, although occasionally they wander in teams of two or three. At night, a patrol always consists of at least three guards, and often has as many as six. The constable on duty at each Watchhouse is expected to go on patrol with their guards. Commanding the City Watch members in each district (again, except for the Warrens and Necropolis) is a captain of the guard. These nine captains answer directly to the Commissar.

Watchhouses are marked on the Ptolus poster map and the book's district maps with this icon: .

SPELLS AND SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Each Watchhouse has at least one spellcaster on duty. They usually attempt to cancel hostile magic first and foremost (either on their own or through an item), with spells that allow them to see invisible creatures or break a foe's invisibility coming next in importance. Of course, a sleep spell can turn the tide of a dangerous encounter or bring a tavern brawl to a quick end, and a paralysis spell can stop a fleeing thief dead in their tracks, so magic of that nature is most welcome as well. Sorcerers and wizards sometimes work with the guards as freelancers, but many are full-time members of the Watch themselves, enjoying a special status that places them above the regular guards but not the constable (although some constables are mages too).

THE REPUBLICANS

The republicans are a subversive political group that wants to see Ptolus not only become independent of the Empire, but establish a governing council of representatives elected by a majority of the city's inhabitants—a republic. The movement does not yet command much support, primarily because so few people have heard of it. The Commissar, with the full support of the Empire, has declared the group's ideals seditious and, moreover, insane. "Government by the Rabble," he has called the idea. The republicans, on the other hand, call it "Government by the People."

Membership of the republicans remains secret, but their leader is the rather outspoken high priest of the Watcher of the Skies, Helmut Itlestein. Various members of the Fate Weavers also belong. Considering that the Watcher and the Fate Weavers both specialize in divining the future, the republicans may be destined to grow more powerful in days to come.

Clerics working with the Watch are almost always Lothianites; their duties require them to provide support for the guards once or twice a month. As priests of the Church, such clerics have the authority to give orders to City Watch guards and perhaps even a constable. Only a powerful cleric has authority over a captain of the guard.

The Watch stands ready for various unorthodox contingencies. If they are hunting a murderous werewolf, for example, they can quickly produce silvered crossbow bolts. If they must go up against a single foe far greater than any one of them, they use team tactics, with some guards aiding others who move in for an attack. They might also attempt to grapple as a group in order to bring down a powerful opponent. When facing an invisible adversary, they spread out in careful and well-orchestrated search patterns to attempt to find the foe, sometimes using nets. The nets also come in handy for dealing with the dangerous beasts they encounter from time to time.

Members of the Watch are also smart enough to identify a foe or situation that is clearly beyond them. They will not throw their lives away.

In times of war or invasion, the Watch forms the basic ranks of Ptolus's defenders. There are about five hundred members of the City Watch, although just under half that number is on duty at once.

CORRUPTION IN THE WATCH

Corruption runs rampant throughout the City Watch. Individual guards, constables, and even captains are on the take from criminal organizations. Of course, not all organizations that "own" members of the Watch are strictly criminal. It's useful for a powerful guild or other group to have a friend in the Watch. The corrupt officers look the other way when crimes are committed by their benefactor organizations and may even work against the wheels of justice to help them. Others, while not in the pocket of an organization, may decide not to arrest certain individuals in exchange for a bribe.

Some corruption is institutionalized. For example, the City Watch gives thieves from the Longfingers Guild special treatment, often letting them go when they are caught (although they still confiscate the stolen goods). This comes from a traditional agreement between the thieves' guild and the Watch that says that as long as the guild members confine their activities to petty theft or stealing from other criminals, and keep out of the Nobles' Quarter altogether, the Watch will overlook most of what they do. In addition, the Commissar has let it be known that, as long as the Balacazars

THE DEFENSE OF PTOLUS

Should the city ever face an attack, the three hundred Commissar's Men and the five hundred members of the City Watch are not its only defenders. The Sisterhood of Silence also would come to the city's aid (they number approximately one hundred fifty), although they likely would work to keep order within the walls rather than defend against outside invaders. House Khatru maintains its own private army of about one hundred well-trained soldiers that would be at the city's disposal as well.

Further, the various knightly orders of Ptolus certainly would contribute to the city's defense, including the Order of the Dawn, the Keepers of the Veil, the Knights of the Pale, and others (adding another three hundred or so trained combatants).

Next, the Commissar likely would commission the city's sizable mercenary population, and a number of stalwart warriors would find themselves quickly conscripted, adding up to another thousand troops. If necessary, he could widen the nets of conscription to garner another thousand infantry, albeit far less trained and disciplined specimens.

In all, Ptolus could call to its defense approximately thirty-two hundred troops fairly quickly. The majority of these would have combat experience or training, and most would be more than minimally skilled—sometimes much more. Although one can imagine a larger army marching against Ptolus, its main force most likely would be composed of common soldiers. They'd find themselves no match for the knights and elite forces the Commissar could muster against them.

When one adds in mages of the Inverted Pyramid and clerics from the Church (and probably some of the other more benevolent religions), it becomes clear that Ptolus is a dangerous place to attack, despite the city's many gates and lack of a standing army. The Commissar is not only keenly aware of these facts but also takes secret pride in them. Deep down, he probably would like to see someone attempt to attack his city.

For details on reporting crimes to the Sisterhood and/or the City Watch, see page 511.

For more on crime and punishment, see The Process of Law on page 512.

Corrupt Watch Captains

These three City Watch captains are on the take:

- *Bartel Denton, captain of the guard in the South Market; works for the Balacazars*
- *Erda Schenk, captain of the guard in Oldtown; works for the Balacazars, but only because they hold her daughter hostage*
- *Everard Wibert, captain of the guard in the Guildsman District; works for Kevris*

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

A DC 15 Investigation check allows a character to estimate how long the Watch will take to arrive at a given location after a shout, whistle, or bell-ringing, given the distance to the nearest Watchhouse and the local conditions.

A typical Watchhouse (above) and warning bell (below)

An attack on Ptolus just might come to pass. See The Night of Dissolution *adventure (see page 11) for an update on the eastern barbarians' recent activities.*

Some neighborhoods also have local firefighting groups that require—some would say extort—a monthly fee from residents and businesses to ensure that they are on duty when needed.

For more on fire and other urban hazards, see Handling Dangerous Events on page 552.

restrict themselves to their current activities (theft, extortion, smuggling, illegal gambling, and trade in slaves, poisons, and drugs) and do not operate flagrantly, the Watch is to give them some latitude. Secretly, Urnst is not certain that he could take on the crime family successfully, and any attempt to do so would certainly cause all-out war on the streets of Ptolus.

Some of the City Watch's corruption is internal. Confiscated goods taken from smugglers or from a merchant who didn't pay his taxes often disappear from storage in the Watchhouse. A City Watch patrol may even extort funds from citizens as protection money or as bribes paid to avoid hassle or arrest.

GOLDSHIELD

Treading the fine line between an independent organization and an arm of the City Watch under the command of the Commissar, a group of wizards and sorcerers called Goldshield helps prevent crime in the city. Members patrol high-commerce areas invisibly and use magic that allows them to see invisible creatures, detect ongoing magic (usually for sensing mind control and persuasion magic used on shopkeepers), and read thoughts to catch thieves. Goldshield is based within Dalenguard in Oldtown.

Dalenguard, page 297

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Although most people do not believe it, Goldshield is in no way affiliated with the Inverted Pyramid. Instead, it is administered by a wizard named Renala Hotterin (female halfling). Renala is a secretive figure in the city—although many important people know who she is, few have actually met her. She rarely attends public functions or social events.

Renala Hotterin has archmage stats, with no 9th-level spell slot.

A typical Goldshield mage has arcanist stats (page 605); alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: quarterstaff, light crossbow, bolts (12), scroll of detect thoughts.

IMPERIAL EYES

The Commissar commands a small team of spies called the Imperial Eyes. They technically work for the Emperor, but those stationed in Ptolus report directly to the Commissar. Most—if not all—feel they owe a deeper allegiance to the local ruler than any Emperor. In fact, some folks in the know call them "the Commissar's Eyes."

Lyrasa Contair has artisan stats, page 606

Not all Imperial Eyes are rogues. The Empire has a long-standing tradition of employing wizards—particularly diviners—in this role. Their use of magic compensates for any lack of specialized skills.

These elite infiltrators roam the city in disguise. Most have multiple false identities and belong to different organizations. Imperial Eyes have infiltrated the Balacazar crime family, the Brotherhood of Redemption, the Naltegro Suun, various noble houses (in staff or servant positions), and even the Church, just to name a few significant groups.

Brotherhood of Redemption, page 106

Naltegro Suun, page 124

Some of the Imperial Eyes work together, or they know each other's identities and exchange information. Others remain entirely solitary and unknown even to their comrades. (Sometimes—although not often—this can lead to spies spying on spies.) Only the Commissar knows the identities of all the Eyes.

A typical Imperial Eye has spy stats; alignment neutral

FIRE BRIGADE

It should come as no surprise that, after centuries under the careful rule of the Empire of Tarsis, every major city possesses a full-time force of fire watchers and firefighters. Once the greatest of these, renowned throughout the Empire, the Ptolus Fire Brigade has fallen on hard times. Up until six months ago, a young human wizard named Tyrus Marphel led the Fire Brigade, having researched a powerful divinatory spell that allowed him not only to sense uncontrolled fires in the city but also to predict them before they occurred with astounding accuracy. Under his leadership, firefighters often appeared on the scene as a fire was just starting or even a few moments before. While Ptolus had its share of dangers, rampant fires were not one of them.

Then, however, a scandal broke involving Tyrus and Therese Urnst, the oldest of the Commissar's daughters: she was married, Tyrus was not. To avoid controversy, Tyrus stepped down from his position and left town. Unfortunately, he took his spell with him.

Now the Fire Brigade must take on the task of monitoring the city and responding to fires in a more mundane fashion. The Brigade's new captain is a woman named Lyrasa Contair (female human), brought in from outside the city. She has a great deal of experience fighting fires but is not a spellcaster like Tyrus.

Firehouses are located throughout the city, often near Watchhouses. Each has ladders, buckets, and other tools necessary to fight fires.

In most districts, members of the Fire Brigade usually respond to an alarm within thirty minutes. They arrive with a wagon of firefighters, buckets, ladders, water, and other tools. This is rarely fast enough to save the building on fire, but it is fast enough to prevent its spread to other buildings. In fact, "fighting fires" rarely means attempting to save the building already in flames, but rather keeping the fire from spreading. When a building has fully caught fire, the Brigade makes no attempt to save it. They allow the fire to burn itself out without spreading.

The Fire Brigade deals with fires in the Warrens only if they threaten to spread outside the slum.

Firehouses are marked on the Ptolus poster map and this book's district maps with this icon:

THE PERSPECTIVE OF MONEY

It's common for player characters who have completed a few adventures to become so wealthy that they toss around silver and even gold like it was copper. Although Ptolus is a wealthy city, most commoners still deal in copper and silver pieces. Giving the man selling beef jerky from his street cart a silver piece for his 2 cp sack of dried meat is extraordinarily generous. Giving him a gold coin and telling him to keep the change is just imprudent. That's the kind of thing that can engender contempt rather than gratitude. People that loose with their money gain the reputation of being fools. They will soon find themselves besieged by beggars and con artists. Merchants in that neighborhood will have no respect for them, and certainly won't cut them any good deals—they may even inflate their prices when known big spenders come into their shops.

On the other hand, plenty of merchants the PCs do business with are very wealthy themselves. Rastor of Rastor's Weapons in Midtown won't be impressed by an adventurer with a bag of gold. Neither will the Urnst brothers who run the alchemy shop in the Undercity Market. The player characters need to learn that, just like you don't use a fireball spell on a single giant rat or a sleep spell on a vampire, you don't tip or bribe a messenger, a carriage driver, or a bartender the same way you do a master silversmith, a potionmaker, or a guildmaster.

For more information on money, see The Cost of Living in Chapter 26: On Being a Resident (page 502).

THE ECONOMY

First and foremost, Ptolus exists to facilitate the exchange of money and goods. In fact, the city was formed three centuries ago as a small port town to provide goods to the new fortress of Dalenguard. Ptolus's economy still centers around its role as a gathering place for traders and goods.

Farmers to the south bring their produce to Ptolus to sell, whether it be grain, fruit, or vegetables. They also bring in livestock, including sheep and cattle. Loggers from the north ship timber into town to sell. Merchant vessels from all along the northern coast of the Whitewind Sea come to Ptolus to buy these goods and bring in others.

Ptolus also teems with craftspeople, from simple coopers (barrel makers) to incredibly skilled metalsmiths. The city even boasts a few artisans who can create and maintain delicate or complex devices such as clocks, firearms, and printing presses—and, to a limited extent, steam engines and other wonders.

Cash flows like a golden river through the streets of Ptolus, which is an extremely wealthy city by any measure. Some of the wealth is old money stemming from the noble families. Some of it is new money coming into the city in the hands of delvers who arrive in town to strike it rich or who come up from the Dungeon, having struck it rich.

In many respects, Ptolus is a boomtown, the same way a city near a new vein of valuable ore would be. But rather than gold or silver, the allure is the ancient treasure buried long ago beneath the city's streets. (To be sure, there are also veins of valuable ore beneath and around the city, but these days they play second fiddle to the allure of the Dungeon.)

Any item priced at 100,000 gp or less is probably available in Ptolus one way or another, although when it comes to magic items, access is restricted (see the Dreaming Apothecary). Further, characters wishing to sell goods in the city could easily dispose of up to 150,000 gp worth of items in the various markets. Likewise, they could probably find 150,000 gp worth of any one type of good at any given time.

Dreaming Apothecary, page 116
Dalenguard, page 297

COINAGE

Officially, all merchants in the Empire of Tarsis are supposed to accept only Imperial coins as currency. Ptolus, however, remains far enough away from the heart of the Empire that most people ignore such regulations. This is particularly true of late, as delvers flood the city with ancient coinage or money minted by dwarves, elves, and even dark elves from the Dungeon. Still, some merchants accept only Imperial currency, and all government facilities demand Imperial coin—including for tax payments. But not to worry, as moneychangers in Oldtown, Midtown, and the two Market districts will convert non-Imperial money into Imperial currency for a 10 percent fee.

Gold thrones, silver shields, and copper pennies

Imperial coins have specific names, as follows:

- Platinum pieces (pp) are *dragons*.
- Gold pieces (gp) are *thrones*.
- Silver pieces (sp) are *shields* (although slang terms include "shinies" and "moons").
- Copper pieces (cp) are *pennies* (also known as "jennies," "bobs," or "jacks").

The Dungeon, page 384

Because a plethora of differing currency is used within the city walls, residents usually refer to coins simply as "coins" as opposed to the Imperial standard names. Thus, the price of a longsword is "15 gold coins." Merchants who take the law requiring Imperial currency seriously might charge "15 Imperial gold," or

"15 gold Imperials" (or "150 silver Imperials"). Surprisingly few would say "15 gold thrones," unlike in other places in the Empire, where that phrasing would be the standard.

Platinum coins are quite rare. In fact, most establishments—taverns, bathhouses, bakeries, and so on—balk at accepting them. A simple street vendor selling apples might never have seen one in their life. Silver is still the standard among the common classes.

NOTES OF CREDIT AND PAPER MONEY

No one carries around sacks of thousands of gold coins in Ptolus. It's not only inconvenient, it's dangerous. Years ago, the wealthy businesspeople of the city began using notes or letters of credit: officially endorsed papers that represent a large sum, usually at least 1,000 gp (carrying 20 to 80 pp isn't really cumbersome). These notes can be transferred or used as payment for goods and services, but never for less than the value of the letter. In other words, one cannot expect "change" back from a letter of credit.

Merchants are not required to accept a letter of credit, but if it comes from a reputable source, they almost always do (after first examining it closely for hints of forgery).

Technically, there's nothing stopping folks from writing as many notes of credit as they wish. However, every letter comes with the understanding that the holder can go to the issuer and exchange it on the spot for coin. Failure to honor a note of credit results in immediate Imperial involvement and almost certain fines, jail time, dishonor, and the cancellation of the offender's credit across the city.

Some of the larger merchant companies (see Chapter 16: South Market) use notes of credit as currency unto themselves—a sort of paper money. Rumors say the Empire itself has begun issuing official notes of credit in Tarsis. If true, such would literally be paper money, as official as any coin.

MAGE COINS

Mage coins are another example of how the presence of the Inverted Pyramid, the largest gathering of powerful spellcasters in the world, alters the way things work in the city. These triangular glass tokens are a bold new initiative created by the Dreaming Apothecary and issued to make money for the Inverted Pyramid.

Mages of the organization began using them first, claiming each was the value of 100 gp. The attractive nature of mage coins—and the reason the bold initiative is working—is their magical property. The last person to touch a particular coin can summon it into their hand with a simple mental command. This means a character need not carry a lot of money around with them; they can keep their mage coins safely tucked away in a secure vault somewhere, still perfectly accessible. (Note that the coins cannot be sent back magically.)

Not everyone is willing to accept the coins as payment, however. In particular, the Church does not accept them, nor does any official Imperial agency. Governmental bodies consider the coins illegal, since only the Empire can mint coins, according to the *Vast Codex*. Nevertheless, there may already be eight hundred to a thousand mage coins in circulation in the city.

Dalenguard, page 297

GM TIPS

Someone who isn't especially skilled with forgery probably shouldn't even try to pass a forged letter of credit in Ptolus. Faking a letter of credit requires the forger to have an actual signature of the person supposedly issuing the letter. GMs should feel free to give experienced merchants and similar professionals a bonus to spot forged letters of credit.

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Dreaming Apothecary, page 116

CITY LAYOUT

The Spire, Ptolus's most obvious and recognizable landmark, is visible from almost any point in town, rising 3,000 feet into the air at the city's western edge. But even without the Spire, Ptolus remains an extremely vertical place.

At the highest and westernmost point of the city proper atop the Jeweled Cliffs lies the Nobles' Quarter. One of the newer areas of town, it is built on the highest major shelf alongside the Spire's base. Below that is, ironically, the oldest part of town, called Oldtown. Built around the ancient fortress of Dalenguard, Oldtown is not as high in elevation as the Nobles' Quarter but still overlooks the rest of the city. One must pass through the gates of Dalenguard to begin the climb to the Nobles' Quarter; this is the only approach.

The King's River cuts through the center of town, flowing east to empty into the Bay of Ptolus. The river comes into town from the north and west, cutting a wide swath north of Oldtown called the King's River Gorge. The gorge separates Oldtown from a small residential district to the northeast called Rivergate. At the end of the gorge, the river plummets down 200 feet in a tall waterfall, to flow more gently toward the bay within narrower and more modest banks. The King's River, which effectively cuts the city in half, is spanned by no fewer than twelve bridges.

Dalen's Cliffs, the defensible ridge upon which Oldtown was built, rise almost 200 feet above the rest of the city. A wide, man-made ramp along the Emperor's Road extends for 400 feet from these heights down into the city center.

One can also reach Oldtown via a bridge that extends south across the King's River Gorge from Rivergate and another that leads out of the city at its northwestern corner.

South of Oldtown lies the South Market district. North of the river and east of Rivergate is the North Market, which is far more open and chaotic than its southern counterpart. Sandwiched between the two markets and due east of Oldtown is the largest of the city's districts, called Midtown. Southeast of Midtown is the smoke-filled Guildsman District, which extends all the way down to the cliffs overlooking the Bay of Ptolus. Wedged in just northeast of the Guildsman District and south of the King's River at the cliffs' edge is the small and dangerous slum known as the Warrens.

Northeast of Midtown and south of the North Market lies the Temple District, with its infamous Street of a Million Gods. East of the Temple District at the northeastern corner of town lies the city's vast cemetery, the Necropolis, which sits atop the cliffs.

In most sections of the city, the river rushes through its narrow channel 100 feet or more below street level. It eventually empties into the Bay of Ptolus in another grand waterfall just south of the thin strip of land at the bottom of the cliffs where the Docks lie. These grand Cliffs of Lost Wishes, which run along the city's shoreline, rise over 500 feet above the crashing waves below. A winding path carved into the cliffside connects the Docks with the rest of the city.

It is well over 2 miles from the western edge of the Nobles' Quarter to the cliffs above the bay. On a clear day, as the sun sets in the west, you can tell the time by the length of the shadow the impossibly tall Spire casts upon Ptolus.

THE WALL AND TOWERS

Construction of the wall surrounding Ptolus began in 587 IA and ended in 590. At the time, it was built to give the city room to grow, with the walls encompassing vast acres of unused land, particularly on the south end of town. Today the city bursts at its seams, although major construction has yet to spill outside the perimeter.

The walls surrounding Ptolus actually do nothing of the kind. They merely restrict access into the city from the north and the south. The walls do not run along the clifftop to the east, nor do they skirt the base of the Spire to the west.

The walls measure 15 feet thick and 40 feet high. The top of the wall sports battlements on either side; a 12-foot walkway in between them runs the length of the walls. About every 800 feet, the wall is punctuated by a tower. These towers are 50 feet high; each has four interior levels, a flat, crenellated rooftop, and a cellar. Every tower can be entered through an iron

GM TIPS

Remember that Ptolus is a city filled with hills and different levels of elevation. Even in places not marked as such on the city map, areas of town may be slightly terraced, or streets might involve steep inclines. In general, these inclines always go up from east to west. Have NPCs always refer to places as being "up the hill" or "down the hill" when giving directions to player characters. When describing common street scenes, include lots of steps and steep slopes. The flattest areas of town are those nearest the sea.

Although Ptolus is surrounded by a wall, it has never been attacked. Locals don't take the wall very seriously. It's not uncommon for teenagers to climb the walls at night to meet up with friends away from their parents' eyes. These youngsters are skilled at hiding from the guards on patrol. During festival times, people hang banners and decorations from the tops of the wall on the inside, even though this is against Imperial regulations. Technically, no buildings may abut the walls, but it's rare to find places in Ptolus where this doesn't happen.

door from within the city and from entrances atop the walls, making it possible to "walk the walls," moving through each tower.

As defensible as all of this is, Ptolus has never been attacked. The City Watch patrols the walls once each night, but the guards use it as a vantage point to look *into* the city, not out. The towers stand empty, and even though the doors stay locked, vagrants or squatters sometimes sleep within the lower levels or cellars to avoid notice when the Watch patrols the wall. Small criminal gangs have been known to hide out in one tower or another for as much as a week.

For a criminal hideout in the city wall tower, see the Secret Hall on page 308.

It is a crime to climb over the city walls to get into or out of Ptolus, or to attempt to smuggle goods over or under the walls in either direction. Typically, the fine for such a crime is 1 gp, and any smuggled goods are confiscated (though there is some corruption in this process).

Corruption in the Watch, page 143

Inside the city, many buildings use the wall as their own back wall. In some places, these adjacent structures rise even higher than the wall itself. Locals call these buildings "smuggler's houses," because criminals use them to get atop the wall and lower baskets or cargo nets over the side to bring up illegal items or goods the owners do not want taxed.

See Chapter 28: Crime and the Law (page 516) for more information on taxes.

Sometimes mapmakers charge businesses a fee to put them on the maps sold at the city gates. The fee is even higher to not put a competitor on the map.

Watchhouse, page 142

Imperial Identification Papers, page 512

People like to congregate near the city gates, on both the inside and the outside. This is a good place to pick up news from outside of Ptolus. Vendors enjoy coming here to sell goods to those newly arrived in town, often at inflated prices. It's also most pickpockets' favorite place to ply their trade.

THE FIVE GATES

Five gates lead into the city: three in the south wall and two in the north wall. Two of these are major gates and three are minor.

The major gates are set into sections of the city wall measuring about 25 feet thick. At each one stand twin sets of massive iron-bound, iron-hinged wooden portals 20 feet wide, with metal knobs to deter axes. A 20-foot-square space lies between each set of doors. From a small gatehouse here, guards control an iron-bound, wooden portcullis, which they can lower between the valves. Murder holes here allow defenders to drop burning oil or fire crossbows. Both major gates are flanked by towers. Unlike other towers in the city wall, these are used as offices, storage, and off-duty areas for guards assigned to gate duty. The major gates are simply called the North Gate (in the North Market) and the South Gate (in the South Market).

The two minor gates in the south wall are more recent additions for the sake of convenience, so they do not offer much in the way of defense. They consist of iron-bound wooden double doors, each about 10 feet wide. There is no gatehouse (and no portcullis or murder holes), although each minor gate stands next to a tower that is used as those flanking a main gate. These are called the Market Gate

(to the west of the South Gate) and the Guilder Gate (to the east of the South Gate).

The minor gate in the north wall is the Old City Gate in the western part of town. One can approach it only by taking the high King's River Bridge across the King's River Gorge into Oldtown. This gate is a single door 15 feet wide; it has no gatehouse.

Each gate is guarded, but the guards almost never close the gates. Most of the five, in fact, are so old and have not been closed in so long, the hinges have rusted in place. Typically, four guards from the Watch are stationed at a given gate at any time, although, should any trouble arise, up to a dozen more guards from the nearest Watchhouse will appear within a few minutes in an emergency.

The guards at each gate demand to see Imperial identification papers from anyone wishing to enter the city. They record each person's name, reason for entering, and point of origin. They also demand a 2 cp toll per person, plus an additional 1 cp for a horse or other sizable animal (such as livestock) and 3 cp for a wagon. This is a daily toll, so someone entering, leaving, and returning in the same day pays only once. The guards do not stop people leaving the city unless ordered otherwise. This happens from time to time, usually when there is a search for a criminal who might be looking to leave.

On all goods brought into the city to be sold, merchants must pay a levy: 5 percent of their assessed worth. Merchants without a gate receipt showing they've paid the taxes on goods for sale can face fines of 10 gp or more and have all the goods confiscated.

PTOLUSITES: A CHARACTER STUDY

To better understand a group or individual, it's often informative to examine how others see that organization or person. However, exactly how one views the people of Ptolus depends on where the viewer hails from.

Someone who comes from one of the other major cities in the Empire, such as Dohrinthas or Tarsis, sees Ptolusites as a bit backwater and certainly strange. "Ptolus? That's where they have all those wizards and ruffians and things, isn't it?" the other city-dweller might ask.

Traditionally, Ptolus has always been a smaller Imperial city located far from the heart of civilization and sophistication. In the view of those from larger urban areas, it's a fairly lawless, unsophisticated, and unsafe place.

More well-informed citizens most likely think of a Ptolusite either as someone sinister (or at least untrustworthy) or as someone quite capable, experienced, and even brave. The distinction between perfidious and stalwart depends on the observer's own disposition, and the part of Ptolus they have heard about. Someone who sees Ptolus as an evil or menacing place is probably thinking about the Necropolis, the monsters beneath the city, or perhaps even the Inverted Pyramid. One who feels the opposite is caught up in the stories of courageous and rare individuals who brave the darkness and undertake wild adventures. It's worth restating that, anywhere outside of Ptolus, adventurers and monster-filled "dungeons" are almost unknown, and spellcasters are less common due to historical prejudices.

Residents of small towns or rural areas around Ptolus almost universally regard Ptolusites as obnoxiously wealthy merchants, untrustworthy thieves, or unruly wizards. The stories of sorcery and terrible beasts lead these simple folk to conclude that someone from Ptolus is even worse than someone from another big city—although all cityfolk are probably not to be trusted.

Someone from a village or farm far from Ptolus has probably never heard of the place.

THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE

In comparison to others in the Empire, Ptolusites are jaded. Of that, there is no question. It is not uncommon to see a spellcaster flying overhead, carried aloft by a spell, next to a warrior mounted on a griffon. Invisible thieves are a nuisance, but not a surprise. Ogres occasionally walk the streets, and everyone knows that ratmen scurry about the sewers. Magic and its effects are an everyday occurrence. Magic figures in the city's defense, economy, architecture, entertainment, and even the cuisine. It's simply a part of life.

Experience with magic and monsters grants the average Ptolusite a level of bravery not usually seen elsewhere. Spells and strange creatures do not cause an immediate panic. Don't confuse bravery with foolhardiness, however. A member of the City Watch knows that if they charge an outlaw sorcerer, they're likely to get a faceful of magical darts, if not a ball of fire, and they have a pretty clear idea of what such spells do. A Ptolus merchant isn't going to be terrified of a troll because of its monstrous size and appearance alone, but they will run away because they know it has the ability to tear them limb from limb (and regenerate after any injury they manage to inflict upon it).

Because of the great heroes who helped throw down both Eslathagos Malkith and Ghul the Skull-King, Ptolusites seem historically predisposed to look favorably on adventurers far more than outsiders do. Those who no longer remember specific references to the Dread One certainly at least know the name Ghul (or the Half God). And even those who don't know the historical details of these warmongers' defeats are immersed in a culture that appreciates rather than resents its heroes. The idea of groups of armed, magically powerful individuals not directly under the command of the Empire may worry members of other communities—but not Ptolus.

The Street of a Million Gods (page 346) extends onto the Blessed Bridge, which is covered with small shrines and temples. Rumors claim that, within the bridge's stout construction, tiny cellars and tunnels are used by some of the city's less savory religions. See also Temple of the Rat God in the Temple District (page 363).

Dalenguard, page 297

Goth Gulgamel, page 452

Jabel Shammar, page 465

The Spire

On most days, a long line forms at each gate, particularly in the mornings as people wait to be allowed access to the city. Around each gate outside the walls, vendors sell goods to those entering the city—and to those stuck waiting in line. These goods include food, water, ale, and maps of the city (with varying degrees of accuracy).

The southeasternmost gate, called the Guilder Gate, has large pens for keeping livestock that will be brought into the city; a few private guards keep watch to prevent theft. The Market Gate has some fairly ramshackle storehouses built outside the walls for merchants to store goods without taking them through. A small settlement called Tent City is growing around that gate as well. Some one hundred individuals live in this encampment at any given time, and most of what goes on there is legally questionable at best. In Tent City, criminals sell forged identification papers, meet with contacts from other cities who don't wish to enter Ptolus, and make plans to smuggle in illegal goods.

THOROUGHFARES

To really get around, every visitor to Ptolus needs to know the main thoroughfares in town. It takes a while to become familiar with the street names, however, as road signs are posted only on the major streets. Authorities may stencil the names of roads on the sides of buildings at some intersections to help with navigation.

The Emperor's Road, the main highway connecting Ptolus and points north with Tarsis, winds through much of town. This thoroughfare begins at the Old City Gate, runs south through Oldtown and the South Market, and exits at the South Gate. Visitors entering the city at the Guilder Gate find themselves on Guilder Street in the Guildsman District, while the Market Gate opens up onto Penny Street in the South Market.

Those entering Ptolus from the North Gate can follow the wide North Gate Road south into Midtown. The main north-south streets that bisect the city are Diamond Street/Emerald Way/Tavern Row and Upper God Way/Street of a Million Gods/Lower God Row, both of which connect up with Rachen Street in Midtown, which ends not far from the Guilder Gate. Vadarast Street is a major north-south road on the eastern side of the city, running from near the Necropolis south to the heart of the Guildsman District. Salt Street/Old Sea Road runs north-south at the very southeast side of town. On the western side of town, major north-south thoroughfares include Four Fountains Street in Oldtown.

North and South River Roads follow the King's River as it winds its way through the center of the city in the North Market and Temple districts. This pair of roads combines to form the longest west-east thoroughfare in Ptolus, although Center Street runs at an angle all the way from the South Market to the Necropolis, and the similarly diagonal Iron Street crosses from near the South Gate to the Warrens. On the north end of town, the west-east Market Street and Golden Elm Way connect North Gate Road with the walls of the Necropolis.

One can easily cross the King's River via the King's River Bridge and Rivergate Bridge (in Oldtown), and via bridges at Middle Street (connecting Oldtown and the Rivergate District); North Gate Road and Emerald Way (connecting the North Market and Midtown); Sunrise Street, the Street of a Million Gods, and Malav Street (connecting the Temple District and Midtown); Center Street and Bridge Street (connecting the Temple District and Midtown); Vadarast Street (in Midtown); and Salt Street (at the Warrens).

NATURAL FEATURES

Ptolus's very identity as a city is shaped by the natural features that surround it and form its foundations. Oldtown is shaped the way it is because of the restrictive plateau it's built upon. The river serves as a border for many districts. Lots of aspects of life in the City by the Spire are the way they are because of the local topography.

THE SPIRE

The Spire reaches 3,000 feet into the sky, a pinnacle of dark grey rock that grows darker as it rises; the top is pitch black. It is a wholly unnatural creation and anyone gazing upon it knows it—the Spire is simply too impossibly tall, too incredibly thin. It is very broad and surprisingly flat on its eastern side, making it perfect to build a fortress and eventually even a city upon. The western side is rougher and more sheer.

Two other fortresses are associated with the Spire, in addition to Dalenguard at its base. Approximately halfway up, built into the side of the Spire and perched on a rocky shelf almost certainly created by magic, lies Goth Gulgamel, a disturbingly featureless castle of twisted black stone. At the very top of the Spire rests Jabel Shammar, an equally black fastness of stone and iron with three tall, pointed towers surrounding an even taller, daggerlike spike of dark metal.

Most people say they find the Spire disturbing to look upon. Although only a few know its

true history, many folks tell fabricated but dire tales of demonic sculptors; angry gods impaled after a war in the heavens; and black spears thrown down from the Lunas moon. One hears equally tall tales of what lies in the fortress at the top of the Spire, whose name is slowly fading from the public consciousness (people just call it "the fortress at the top of the Spire") along with its history. Some even doubt there's a fortress up there at all—they say it's just a rock formation. Still, no explorer-mages with fly spells or brave souls with other means of flight have ever returned from a trip there.

Goth Gulgamel people do remember, but only as "the fortress of Ghul." Given that the threat of Ghul has been over for seven hundred years, even his memory is starting to fade. People remember that he was an evil conqueror, and that's about all.

Over time, new Ptolus residents start to ignore the Spire. For one thing, the skies are often so overcast that dark clouds obscure most of it. For another, one eventually grows inured to fearing that some supernatural foe will emerge from the Spire to devour the town. People don't want to think about what might still linger in the Spire fortresses, so they don't.

THE KING'S RIVER

The King's River runs through Palastan, a fairly slow and inconsequential waterway throughout most of its course. When it nears Ptolus, however, runoff from the Spire and the area's frequent rains feeds into the river, making it much faster and more substantial. The river skirts the northern edge of the Spire to pour into the King's River Gorge in a 200-foot plunge. The waterfall here is called the King's Falls. When it leaves the gorge, it runs into a narrow channel between Rivergate and Oldtown and down Wings Falls. The channel the King's River cuts through the rest of the city usually is no more than 60 or 70 feet across, but it measures up to 100 feet deep as the land slowly slopes toward the shoreline. When the river reaches the Bay of Ptolus, it spews forth from the Cliffs of Lost Wishes in a grand, 400-foot waterfall called Gasping Falls.

In geological terms, the river is a new one, its course diverted by the creation of the Spire. In the city the river is entirely unnavigable, being far too rapid and with too many waterfalls as it courses to its final drop into the sea. Since the river is not used as a source of water for the city (it gets its water from much cleaner underground wells), the sewers pour into it from both sides of its narrow channel. Likewise, residents dump trash and refuse of all kinds into the river as it roars through its ravine. This is one of Ptolus's main sources of refuse disposal, which speaks to the degree of contamination in the river.

In addition to the King's River, the area is home to a number of underground rivers. These join the King's River near its end, rushing out of caves beneath Midtown and the Warrens. The action of these rivers has formed many caves that honeycomb the area beneath Ptolus, some of them massive in size.

KING'S RIVER GORGE

The channel the King's River cuts as it flows through Ptolus is an extension of the vast King's River Gorge. This defile is 200 feet deep and more than a mile long. The bottom is very rugged with sheer sides. A number of natural stone columns rise up from the bottom of the gorge, the most prominent being two called the Devil's Legs. These provide the foundations for the stone supports of the King's River Bridge, which is, in fact, three bridges: one from Oldtown to the southern leg, one between the two legs, and one from the northern leg to the far end of the chasm, where the Emperor's Road continues north out of town.

Ghul, page 83

A few people have noticed that over the last couple of years with growing intensity, strange lights occasionally appear from within Goth Gulgamel.

BEACON ISLAND

A rocky crag jutting up from the cold waters of the Bay of Ptolus, Beacon Island hosts a tall stone lighthouse used to guide ships through the relatively narrow safe course into Ptolus's harbor. The remains of a much older lighthouse still stand a bit away from the newer structure—"newer" being only relative in this case, as it is four hundred years old. The older lighthouse is said to be haunted by the spirits of all the sailors who have died on the rocks nearby. Some say it was built by the Charad Titans, who once dwelled in the area for a time. (Both of the rumors are true.)

The lighthouse on Beacon Island is staffed by a handful of willing people who work for the Dockmaster.

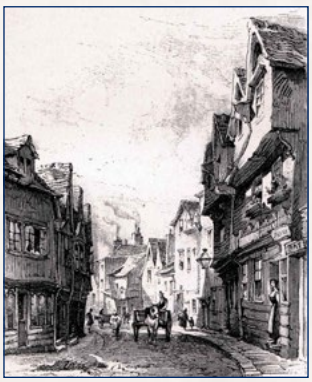
Charad Titans, page 81

Lighthouse, page 164

Dockmaster, page 164

ON THE STREETS

It's the smell of the city that gets to you first. No matter where you stand, you probably smell the rain, because it likely just finished raining, is just about to rain, or is raining now. The odors of damp clothes and people, moldy wood, wet straw, rain-slicked stone, and burning wood and coal mix together to create a unique aroma. But if it's not raining, this smell mingles with the odors of cooking food, domestic animals, garbage, and sewage. The latter two aren't as bad as they could be; the sewers in Ptolus, as



Those who volunteered to be transformed into trolls back in 712 still guard the King's River Bridge at the Commissar's behest; see page 88.

in most large Imperial cities, are quite efficient, and the constant rain keeps their contents moving.

After the smell, it's the noise you notice. People aren't shy about shouting to their neighbors out their windows, or calling down the street from their doors. Tolling bells and sounding horns signal various religious rituals from the Temple District, and entertainers sing, play instruments, and tell jokes in the street. Street orators attempt to inform and persuade those who will stop to listen, while bellringers shout out the news of the day for those too busy or too ignorant to read one of the many local broadsheets. Behind all those sounds, in many areas of town you can hear the rushing waters of the King's River through the ravine that cleaves the city in two, or the crashing of waves on the Cliffs of Lost Wishes at the city's edge.

Broadsheets, page 157

Local rumors say the deep King's River Gorge contains more than a few bodies dropped from the bridges or city wall by murderers and assassins.

No matter where you are in the city, you can look up and see the Spire, unless it's overcast or raining so hard that the sky is just a swath of grey. As you look west, the city rises. To the east, it falls until it reaches the cliffs.

LOOKING AROUND

Ptolus is crowded with buildings—you won't see many trees or grassy areas except in city squares or parks. The buildings are not tall, although a few towers and three- or four-story structures rise above their lower neighbors. The structures vary from district to district, but the typical Ptolus building has two stories. The bottom one is built of grey stones and mortar with wooden beams and slats. The top story is made of wood and generally has the same dimensions as the bottom story; some buildings are a bit wider on the top floor, creating an overhang of 2 or even 3 feet.

Roofs are usually slanted with gabled ends. They are covered with wooden shingles and patches of dark green fungus, due to the damp climate. Every building has at least one stone chimney.

Typically, the buildings of Ptolus abut each other on at least one side, and usually two. One side of a structure typically runs along a very narrow alleyway—often no more than 3 or 4 feet across. Most such alleys are full of trash, empty crates or barrels, and other clutter.

The streets are narrow and slick with rain. Most measure about 10 feet wide, while major thoroughfares are 15 or even 20 feet across. Streets are widest in the Nobles' Quarter and the Guildsman District—the former for the luxury of the residents, the latter for the practical needs of those who work there, bringing wagon-loads of material back and forth, herds of cattle and sheep for rendering, and so on.

Use the Random Encounter Matrix on the sheets in the packet to generate encounters the PCs might have on their way from one location to another in the city. Street-level encounters like this help add flavor to the game session. See page 552 for more about random encounters.

In the morning, amid the ringing of bells, someone on the street is likely to see people rushing off to work, merchants opening their shops, and middle- and upper-class children on their way to school, books and wax tablets tucked under their arms. Vendors selling fresh baked goods and fruit are common, and cafes are filled with people drinking their morning tea or coffee.

Vendors selling goods—particularly food—are common on almost every street in every district.

LOOKING UP

The Spire dominates the sky above Ptolus. It rises approximately 3,000 feet above Midtown. Of course, it is only visible perhaps half the time due to the dark, looming clouds or the grey overcast skies that are so common, particularly in the winter.

Even putting aside the Spire, the skies are rarely empty. Hot air balloons owned by noble families are a common sight. House Abanar even owns a sailing ship that flies in the air as easily as it might ply the seas. Mages under the effects of a flying spell; adventurers mounted on flying carpets, griffons, or wyverns; flying familiars and animal companions; and even a demon or genie in flight all might be making their way across the skies above Ptolus at this moment. The sky is also full of *shadow sendings*, although to the uninitiated they might just look like birds.

LOOKING DOWN

The streets throughout most of the city are cobblestone, although the major roads in Oldtown are made up of large paving stones that are quite cracked and old. The main streets of the Nobles' Quarter are likewise covered in large, smooth paving stones. With all the rain the city gets, muddy puddles are common; it is difficult to keep one's trousers clean in Ptolus, let alone one's boots. Some of the puddles become deceptively deep.

About once each block, a metal grate provides access to the sewers from the street. Water runs into the sewers from the gutters on either side or down the center of the street. The sewer grates are all hinged but locked. The locks exist mainly to keep some of the things that live down in the sewers *in* the sewers. It's not uncommon for people in need to use the sewer grates as a public toilet, particularly those located in more secluded spots.

CLIMATE

When in doubt, it's safe to assume that it's overcast in Ptolus, and that it either just finished raining or is just starting. Average annual local rainfall is about 38 inches. It is generally a cool climate, with temperatures in the 60s to 70 degrees Fahrenheit most of the year (40 to 50 degrees in the winter).

In the midsummer months, the sun is out more often than not, and the cloud cover is much less dominant.

The winters are characterized more by rain than by snow, although the occasional light snowfall in midwinter is not unknown. The fact that one of the months is named Rain is the source of many jokes in Ptolus: "Around here, all the months are called Rain," a native will tell you.

Occasionally, a strong wind will blow off the Whitewind Sea, but most of the time the winds are only a gentle but constant breeze.

For more details on the climate of Ptolus, see the city's average weather table on page 506.

GETTING AROUND TOWN

To get anywhere in the city, the vast majority of people walk. Virtually no permanent residents own horses—a person riding horseback is marked almost immediately as an outsider.

Some people use carriages, however. Unless residents are extremely wealthy, their carriages are cabs for hire, which are common throughout the city except in the Warrens, the Docks, the Necropolis, and certain areas of the Guildsman District. While it's easier to get a carriage during the day than at night, carriages can be found in just a few minutes day or night throughout the Nobles' Quarter, Oldtown, Rivergate, and Midtown. The same is true in both Market wards and the better parts of the Guildsman District, but only during the day. Most carriages cost 1 sp (plus tip) regardless of the destination, unless one wants to go from any district to the Docks, in which case the fee is doubled (they will not go into the Warrens at any time, or into the Necropolis at night). A typical carriage has two horses and one driver. Four people can fit comfortably within the cab, and up to two more can ride on the seat at the back. Some carriages have only one horse and usually carry only two passengers. A very few large carriages can fit six people within and two more on the outside. These are pulled by four horses. People reserve them ahead of time for a designated time and location.

Carriage drivers are excellent sources of information about current events and the locations around town.

On the more exotic end of the spectrum, in Ptolus it's not uncommon to see a mage under

In Ptolus, common parlance refers to the "top" of a street. This simply means the westernmost end of a particular street, if there is one. A street running north and south, for example, has no top.

House Abanar, page 93

Wyvern mounts: see Daersidian Ringsire and Thorntail, page 213

Shadow sendings, *page 154*

Sewer grate lock: *DC 15 Sleight of Hand check to open*

GM TIPS

Cabs and couriers generally should be available to the PCs. If the characters say, "We take a cab to the address in Oldtown," or "We hire a courier to send the message to Brother Fabitor," typically your response should be "Fine." The only exceptions to this rule come when you are trying to make a point. For instance, the PCs may not be able to find a trustworthy courier in a bad part of town, such as the Warrens. Similarly, if they have just come up from the sewers and are covered in waste and their own blood, they are not likely to find a cab that will stop for them.

TRAVEL TIMES IN THE CITY*

DESTINATION ON FOOT

Starting Point	Nobles	Oldtown	Rivergate	S. Market	N. Market	Midtown	Temple	Guild	Warrens	Docks
Nobles	—	10	25	20	32	20	22	35	50	38
Oldtown	13	—	15	10	22	10	12	25	40	28
Rivergate	28	17	—	25	10	20	10	30	40	34
S. Market	23	12	26	—	22	10	22	20	35	23
N. Market	35	24	11	22	—	18	10	25	40	23
Midtown	23	12	21	10	18	—	8	15	30	17
Temple	25	14	11	22	10	8	—	20	35	20
Guild	38	27	31	20	25	15	20	—	20	10
Warrens	41	30	34	23	23	17	20	10	—	16
Docks	63	52	51	43	50	40	45	30	28	—

DESTINATION BY CARRIAGE

Starting Point	Nobles	Oldtown	Rivergate	S. Market	N. Market	Midtown	Temple	Guild	Warrens†	Docks
Nobles	—	5	12	10	15	10	10	20	30	22
Oldtown	6	—	5	5	10	5	5	15	25	17
Rivergate	13	6	—	12	5	10	5	15	25	17
S. Market	11	6	12	—	10	5	10	10	25	12
N. Market	17	11	5	10	—	10	5	10	25	9
Midtown	11	6	10	5	10	—	5	5	20	6
Temple	11	6	5	10	5	5	—	10	25	10
Guild	21	16	15	10	10	5	10	—	15	5
Warrens†	23	18	17	12	9	6	10	5	—	13
Docks	36	31	30	30	30	30	30	20	11	—

* All times are in minutes and assume average crowds and traffic and a brisk pace as one travels from the center of a district to the center of another. Districts are listed from west to east.
† Public carriages for hire do not venture into the Warrens; these times assume travel by private carriage.

"If you gave me the choice between unlimited magical power and unlimited access to information, I would choose the magical power—but then I would use it to get information."
~Moynath Autumnsong, master of the Inverted Pyramid

Shadow Sendings table, page 157

the effects of a flying spell, or someone using a flying carpet to get around or riding a griffon through the sky.

THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

The City by the Spire is a sophisticated place where a lot of people and organizations all attempt to conduct business and carry out sometimes complex tasks. The flow of information is vital to these pursuits. And in Ptolus, there is a greater concentration of magic and extremely powerful people than elsewhere in the world. So naturally, some of the means of communication that have evolved are quite beyond the ordinary.

COURIERS

One of the occupations that thrives in Ptolus is that of the courier. In such a bustling city, couriers carry messages and packages back and forth across town: payments, invitations, friendly communications, contracts, gifts, deliveries, official documents, and more. Large businesses and organizations frequently have their own couriers and delivery people. A common courier carrying a message or small package earns 1 sp (plus tip). Larger packages often cost 1 sp per 10 pounds; additional fees that may double the price apply if more than one courier must deliver the package.

Those with no permanent address in town—or those who prefer to live anonymously—may rent small boxes at Postal Stationhouses in each district to receive correspondence and packages.

SHADOW SENDINGS

Challenging the traditional couriers is a relatively new business called Shadow Sendings. Despite its rather sinister name, the company provides a valuable service that is completely on the level. *Shadow sendings* are magical missives. They look like shadowy birds the size of a robin, but they are featureless and ephemeral. They flit through the air and unerringly travel to their destination to carry a message that contains verbal and even visual information.

There are twelve kinds of *shadow sending* (see the Shadow Sendings table). Some carry only verbal messages, some also carry images, some go to an address specified by the customer, and so forth.

OUTSIDE OF PTOLUS

The coastline of harsh cliffs along the Bay of Ptolus runs north and south of the city. Most nearby communities are small fishing villages or, farther inland, loose farming settlements. These farms grow wheat, flax, barley, and chickpeas. Herders keep large droves of sheep, cattle, goats, and pigs. Gentle, rolling hills make up the countryside, occasionally punctuated by a rocky outcropping, a small field of tumbled stones, or a dense copse of trees and brambles. Farms are connected by a winding, almost mazelike network of cow paths and narrow dirt roads that join up with the main roads.

The roads to and from Ptolus are still in excellent condition, having been built by the Empire at its height and made of fitted stones with drainage ditches on either side. Mile markers show a traveler's progress. However, it is the Viridian Lords and not the Imperial Army that keeps these roads as safe as they are—which is to say, more than adequate. Of course, bandits are not unknown, and the occasional dangerous beast (a manticore, a small dire wolf pack, or a giant insect) does cause trouble from time to time.

Immediately outside the Market Gate on the city's south end lies the so-called **Tent City**, a rather haphazard collection of shacks, tents, and people sleeping, cooking, and living out in the open. These people find Ptolus too confining, or the law inside the walls too limiting. Tent City is a dangerous place, particularly at night. One will find a higher percentage of aram and litorians in this settlement than in the actual city.

Larth (population 55), the closest community north of Ptolus, is a tiny collection of wooden buildings built on poles to raise them up out of the mud. It's located in a low area along the otherwise rocky coastline with clear access to the bay, although the inlet around Larth floods, turning the area into a soggy bog. The simple folk who call Larth home are either fishermen or pig farmers. Being covered in mud is a fact of life in Larth, and Ptolusites who speak of the place refer to it as "Mudtown." Without exception, the folk of Larth hate the city of Ptolus and the people who live there.

The next nearest settlements are **Charenburg** (population 500) to the east along the Emperor's Road and **Balleton** (population 450) farther north of Larth. These roadside communities, both conveniently located about a day out from Ptolus, cater to the needs of travelers, although the inhabitants also do some fishing, farming, and herding. Both villages have warm, dry inns for road-weary travelers. In Charenburg, the best of these is The Lost Dove, run by a person named Adnith Fror (female human), where pan-fried sea bass is always cooking. In Balleton, the place to stay is the Stewpot, for, true to its name, the lamb stew is plentiful, hot, and not half bad. The proprietor is an old sailor by the name of Charl Willothon (male human) with a pronounced limp and a bit of a drinking problem.

Rolomsford (population 1,000), about a day's travel northwest of Ptolus along the King's River Road, is a typical example of a small Palastani town. Most residents are farmers or herders, or work in an industry that supports them. It's a rough town of hardworking, serious-minded people who don't take well to strangers stirring up trouble or hindering them from doing as they please. (Strangers spending money in the local taverns and inns are just fine.)

As one travels north from the City by the Spire, the villages and towns show more and more of a pronounced elven influence. Once into the **Moonsilver Forest**, all the communities become entirely elven—the trees themselves create vaulted cathedrals and the buildings are made of curved, shaped wood and glistening glass. Travelers in the forest are warned to keep to the roads, however. Dangerous denizens prowl the wood, and the elves who live off the roads are even less welcoming to strangers. Far less.

Small, disorganized **bands of nomadic aram** make their way across the region with the seasons. Sometimes these centaurs come into Ptolus to trade, but they usually stay outside, sleeping in tents and keeping to themselves.

Farther to the south, a **tribe of Ornu-Nom orcs** wanders the open plains not claimed by Palastani farmers. They keep to themselves, although they occasionally deal with the litorian tribes that live even farther south near the Cold Desert. The orcs are hunters and occasionally raiders, but they're careful not to earn the wrath of the more powerful and populous humanocentric communities. The chief of the tribe is called Radik (male orc), and his consort is Narlu (female orc).

For a better look at these surroundings, see the larger map of eastern Palastan in the packet.

Adnith Fror has commoner stats.
Charl Willothon has scout stats.
Radik has berserker stats.
Narlu has druid stats.

Shadow Sendings office, page 209

Those sending verbal information can have their own voices recorded at the Shadow Sending office in Midtown, or they can have one of the neutral-voiced employees of the company speak the words to be conveyed.

Those wishing to send visual information must have recorded the visual in some way (such as in a painting or drawing, or through a magical illusion) or record the information at the company office. Moving images typically last about ten to twenty seconds.

When a *shadow sending* goes out to an address, it travels to the location specified as fast as the fastest bird might fly. Upon arrival, it magically knocks on the door or window and waits until activated by someone letting it into the building and touching it. It will release its information only inside the structure. The sender can specify a location within the address (such as a specific office in the Administration Building in Oldtown); in that case, the sending flies into the building, knocks on the door of the specific location, and waits outside, revealing its information only within that room.

The shadow sending *has flying speed 80 feet.*

Administration Building, page 291

If an individual person is specified (by name and general description) to receive the information, the *shadow sending* travels to wherever the person is, assuming the location lies within Ptolus. Magical protections against divinations foil the sending. A few people have attempted to use *shadow sendings* as an inexpensive way to magically locate someone they are seeking. Those crafty seekers have found it extremely difficult to follow the sending, though, mainly because of how it is sent out (see below).

House Sadar, page 98

Once a sending expresses its information, it fades away. It can convey its message only once; there is no automatic ability to reply.

Currently, *shadow sendings* can travel only to recipients in the city. Those who press the point can hire the unadvertised service of sending to anyone in the world, for a price ten times that listed in the Shadow Sendings table.

Shadow sendings are created in a complex magical process that involves five casters and expensive magical apparatus. The process works only because the messages go out simultaneously once every hour. (No exceptions.)

Shadow Sendings is backed by House Sadar, which most people do not know. It was, in fact, Lord Renn Sadar who invented the magic that makes the sendings possible. Because Sadar has a bad reputation in some circles, the house keeps its involvement secret so as not to raise suspicions.

Campaign Use: Shadow Sendings is a wonderful red herring. As soon as players hear about it, they might assume that its "shadow" connotation makes the service evil or nefarious.

SHADOW SENDINGS

Type	Verbal Information?	Visual Information?	Address or Person?	Price
I	Yes (25 words)	No	Address	5 gp
II	Yes (50 words)	No	Address	10 gp
III	Yes (500 words)	No	Address	20 gp
IV	Yes (25 words)	Yes (1 static image)	Address	15 gp
V	Yes (50 words)	Yes (1 moving image)	Address	30 gp
VI	Yes (500 words)	Yes (5 moving images)	Address	90 gp
VII	Yes (25 words)	No	Person	25 gp
VIII	Yes (50 words)	No	Person	50 gp
IX	Yes (500 words)	No	Person	100 gp
X	Yes (25 words)	Yes (1 static image)	Person	75 gp
XI	Yes (50 words)	Yes (1 moving image)	Person	150 gp
XII	Yes (500 words)	Yes (5 moving images)	Person	450 gp

If they investigate, they might learn that House Sadar is behind the business, which could add fuel to the fires of their suspicion (especially if they've had previous dealings with Sadar or their allies in House Vladaam). However, there is nothing sinister about the business or the magic. It's just a money-making venture, and it's on the up-and-up. The GM can use Shadow Sendings as a red herring for real villainy going on in town. Of course, poking into the business too closely likely draws the attention of House Sadar—and that can lead to actual malevolence directed toward the PCs, if they are not careful.

House Vladaam, page 100

BROADSHEETS

The second most common way to spread information in Ptolus is through the broadsheets or newspapers. Ptolus has dozens of these publications, all of which are fairly small and pursue their own agendas—there is no such thing as journalistic integrity in town, nor is there such a thing as freedom of the press. Some broadsheets are free, but some cost a copper piece. The more stable and/or interesting ones include the following:

The Courier: The largest, most prominent of the broadsheets, *The Courier* attempts to disseminate unbiased news, focusing on important events and stressing news from across the Empire. The paper has a pro-Empire bias that it attempts to hide.

The Guilder: This sheet focuses on news and gossip relating to the various local guilds. Control of its production changes frequently, usually when one guild takes it over from another. So, while *The Guilder* has a heavy, unabashed bias, that bias changes from time to time.

Local guilds, page 113

The Market Voice: Focusing on economic news and information, *The Market Voice* covers events and happenings in both Market districts (favoring the South Market, however). People interested in print advertising look to *The Voice*, and so do interested shoppers.

Street vendors often wrap their goods in the free broadsheets, so customers get today's fresh produce with yesterday's news!

The Midtown Partisan: *The Partisan* is a less-than-reputable, irregularly distributed gossip sheet concerned with the activities of the noble families, usually portraying them in an unfavorable light. Its production is secretly funded by House Rau to make the other houses look bad. Its staff and facilities are also secret.

For safety reasons, broadsheets are never distributed in the Warrens, making the grapevine the only way of disseminating information there.

House Rau, see page 97

The Noble Record: Once a competitor of *The Courier*, this infrequent broadsheet focuses mainly on the events of noble society, entertainment news, and

You can find an issue of The Midtown Partisan *among the sheets in the packet.*

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Republicans, page 142

Members of the Inverted Pyramid may purchase thoughtstones *without need of a formal invitation.*

Thoughtstone *magic item stats, page 644*

Very powerful characters include, generally, anyone 15th level or higher.

Bellringers' Guild Office, page 294

Owners of thoughtstones *include the following Ptolus residents:*
Aliaster Vladaam (page 101)
Aoska (page 124)
Barit Calomar (page 359)
Daersidian Ringsire (page 213)
Dierna Hillerchaun(page 122)
Doraedian Mythlord (page 197)
Lord Dorant Khatru (page 96)
Gattara Vladaam (page 102)
Hayman Knapp (page 123)
Commissar Igor Urnst (page 140)
The Iron Mage (page 316)
Kaira Swanwing (page 121)
Kevris Killraven (page 119)
Prince Kirian Ylestos (page 270)
Lord Kirstol Dallimothan (page 94)
Maeda Von Rustal (page 368)
Malkeen Balacazar (page 103)
Melior Kalen (page 359)
Moynath Autumnsong (page 266)
Myraeth Tuneweaver (page 199)
Nivae Tamelli (page 120)
Lady Rill (page 264)
Lord Renn Sadar (page 99)
Emperor of the Church Rehoboth Ylestos (page 269)
Sobac Redwand (page 212)
Steron Vsool (page 359)
Twin Lords Keper (page 131)
Lord Zavere (page 264)

fanciful fictions about actual people. No one ever seems sure whether to look at these stories as exaggerated reporting or yarns meant for amusement.

The Ptolus Herald: Secretly funded by the republicans, this anti-Empire newspaper remains unabashed in its biased portrayal of events and heavy-handed editorials. The City Watch has raided *The Herald* a number of times under the orders of the Commissar, but it always starts up again.

The Undergrounder: This seedy broadsheet focuses on events and people in the criminal underworld. Of late, it also has begun reporting news that deals with the "other" underground of Ptolus—the Undercity and Dungeon.

CRIERS

The Bellringers' Guild is a small operation that disseminates information. Its bell-ringing criers wander about town spreading short bits of news, primarily for those who cannot or will not read. The guild, based in Oldtown, spreads only the news it is paid to spread, often by the Commissar in order to circulate vital information or warnings to the populace.

THOUGHTSTONES

Far more secretive a trade, the Inverted Pyramid sells special items called *thoughtstones*, a type of mindlink gem. The *thoughtstone* network allows people to communicate instantaneously, telepathically, from anywhere in the city (traveling more than half a mile outside the city takes one out of range). Anyone with a *thoughtstone* can search the network mentally for the person they wish to contact. If that person has a *thoughtstone* too, they receive a mental alert that someone is attempting to communicate with them, and they hear the sender's name. The receiver can decide to answer the query or refuse it.

One cannot ask for a *thoughtstone*—the Inverted Pyramid has to invite you to join the network. Further, each *thoughtstone* works only for the person to whom it was given. Most local people of importance have a *thoughtstone;* typically anyone who gains notoriety or a position of influence is offered one. Generally, this means that very powerful characters are invited to join the network. Of course, a character's physical or magical power is not the only indicator of importance. Members of noble families, very wealthy merchants, and well-known celebrities may receive invitations to obtain *thoughtstones*. Important members of the Inverted Pyramid are also invited to own one.

Some people feel leery of these items, believing that the Inverted Pyramid monitors and stores all such communication. Others decide the convenience is worth it, even if they are being eavesdropped upon. The truth is that the Inverted Pyramid could listen in on any *thoughtstone* conversation, but long ago realized that it wasn't worth the bother.

USING THE DISTRICT CHAPTERS

The next eleven chapters present each district individually. Although each part of town is very different, the chapters are organized with some common elements to help convey the flavor of the district and provide useful advice to GMs running a game set in them. Overall, you will find that more attention has been given to providing the feel of a district and tips for running an encounter or adventure there than to an exhaustive list of all businesses and NPCs found there. The rationale for this approach is that such encounter information makes it easier to run the game than if the book merely provided the details of every local cobbler and candlemaker.

Following are the sections you'll find in chapters 8 to 18.

THE FLAVOR OF THE DISTRICT

This section is a few paragraphs that give you a quick feel for this part of town. It contains background to appeal to the five senses, which you can feed to the players as their characters enter the district for the first or the fiftieth time. Who is here, how does it look, what does it smell like, what's unique about the place—these are the questions that the flavor section answers.

RUNNING THE DISTRICT

Each part of town presents its own challenge to the GM. This section of a district's chapter identifies some of those challenges and offers suggestions for how a GM might deal with them. Will the characters spend a lot of time here or visit only rarely? Is this a part of town where they might like to live, or is it a place they should enter warily? At what power level can the PCs get the most out of this district? This section gives you the background you need to make the best use of this part of town.

PEOPLE OF THE DISTRICT

This large section offers a quick rundown of the sorts of people one might encounter in the district: common professions, species, types of NPCs, and so on. Are they genteel or a rough bunch? Adventurers or tradespeople? How will they react if they see an ogre-mage strolling down the street? You'll find the answers to such questions and more right here.

PERSON ON THE STREET

This subsection provides a few thumbnails of average citizens in the district. This way, when a player says, "I find someone on the street to ask for directions," you have a few details about the person they approach. Alternatively, you can use these people for flavor when describing street scenes, when fleshing out a random street encounter, or when a PC uses a skill to pick up local gossip and rumors. Any time you need a Ptolus inhabitant, you can use one of these "people on the street." Note that the descriptions don't contain game statistics—most of the time you won't need game information for these folks at all.

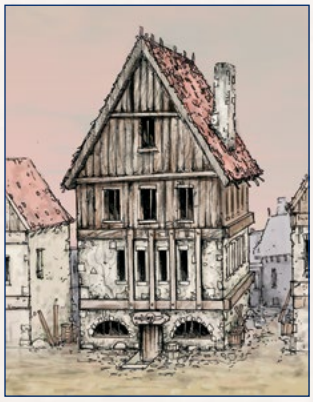
Random encounters, page 552

Use them sparingly, for there are only a few given for each district. If you use the same NPC twice and the player characters recognize the person from before, turn it into an interesting event rather than a GM mistake.

DISTRICT RUMORS

This section presents several rumors specific to the district. Any of them can be a potential adventure seed. Whether a given rumor is true or not is up to you to decide.

Locale Types
Commercial location
Cultural/Community center
Firehouse
Government building
Illegal establishment
Inn/Boarding house
Organizational headquarters
Residence
Restaurant
Service
Shop
Tavern
Temple
Tomb
Watchhouse
Workshop
Miscellaneous site



The Skull and Sword

Adventure Levels
Low level
Mid level
High level
All levels

The illustration opposite depicts a scene from three years ago when a fire giant stormed his way up through the Undercity Market and into Delver's Square, where he was overwhelmed by a number of adventurers.

Locales Glossary, starting on page 654

NPC Glossary, starting on page 657

NEIGHBORHOODS/LOCATIONS

Descriptions of key locations in the district appear next, presented alphabetically. For larger districts, such as Midtown, this section also discusses their various neighborhoods. Some of the locations, such as the Dark Reliquary in the Necropolis, are so large and complex that they have their own subsections.

Keep in mind that a given district has more locations than are described in this section. The ones presented here are simply the more interesting and campaign-useful ones. GMs should always feel free to add to this lineup and invite players to contribute locales germane to their own characters as needed.

Each location described in the book has an accompanying stat line. For example, here's one for The Skull and Sword in the Guildsman District:

Iron Street (#293, I7) ★ see map, page 171 725 gp

The location stat line starts out with one or more icons representing the type of site described. Locale types include workshops, organizational headquarters, residences, taverns, and more. (See the full list above, left.) Certain icons—services, restaurants, taverns, inns, and so on—have accompanying ratings, in the form of a number of stars or coins (see below).

Next, the stat line offers the street where one can find the location and the number and map coordinates to find it on the district map or city poster map. It also lists the page in this book where one can find a map that shows it.

PRICE RATINGS

- = Cheap (prices may be even less than in the core rules, but nothing costs more than 1 gp)
- = Average (prices are exactly as shown in the core rules)
- = Expensive (prices may be as much as double their core rules equivalents; items or services could cost up to 1,000 gp)
- = Luxury (prices are always at least double, if not triple, their core rules equivalents; virtually no upper limit on costs)

QUALITY RATINGS

- ★ = Poor quality (bare minimum service, unclean conditions; fairly distasteful)
- ★★ = Average (service, goods, and location are adequate but not impressive)
- ★★★ = Good (goods and services are above the norm in quality; conditions are very clean and pleasant)
- ★★★★ = Excellent (luxurious; conditions are opulent, goods and services exquisite)

OTHER INFORMATION

For adventure-building purposes, the stat line also has an icon showing a number of swords to designate whether it is suitable for low-, mid-, or high-experience characters (or those of all levels of experience). And finally, the last item is a gold piece value for the locale. This number provides an idea of how well appointed the location is—a place with a high gold piece total has a lot of valuables, fine paintings on the walls, and so on. And if the player characters ever get it into their heads to ransack a place, this value represents the amount of loot they get from it, assuming they take absolutely everything. It represents the worth of not just the valuables but all the items in the place—all the goods, objects, furnishings, treasure, and fixtures. (This value doesn't include the personal money or personal equipment of NPCs in the location.)

Subsections in some locations offer sample encounters, describe areas shown on accompanying maps, discuss long-term campaign use, or provide ideas for entire scenarios focused on the locale.

Most districts also have an Other Locales subsection as well. These sections briefly offer even more locales, in table form, for you to flesh out and insert wherever you choose.

For a handy guide to all the locales in this book, see the Locales Glossary.

MISCELLANEOUS DISTRICT NPCs

The final section of most district chapters offers descriptions and statistics of several important local figures. These NPCs are not tied directly to a single locale but to the district at large. When this section does not appear, it's because all the district's key NPCs are described in another section.

For a reference to the important NPCs in this book, see the NPC Glossary.

Chapter 8:
DOCKS

Far below the level of the city streets, the Docks rest at the bottom of the Cliffs of Lost Wishes on a narrow, sandy strip of land. A dozen ships moor in the deep waters here at any given time—sometimes far more than that. This is a particularly rough area of the city, thanks to the influx of sailors and the district's remoteness from the rest of Ptolus.

THE DOCKS IN BRIEF

Area: *16 acres*
Population: *About 2,000*
Primary Function: *Commercial*
Primary Social Class: *Low*
Salt Spray Street (M5)
Salt Spray Street (M5)

The Docks are full of warehouses, shipyards, hostels, and taverns, all catering to sailors and merchants who use them extensively. Isolated from the rest of the city by the Cliffs of Lost Wishes, sometimes the Docks area seems like its own separate community. Many Ptolus residents live their whole lives without going there. (Of course, they probably haven't been to the Nobles' Quarter, either.)

THE FLAVOR OF THE DOCKS

The smell of sea salt and fish clings to everyone in the Docks. Sand and grit cover everything. Even the streets are nothing but hard-packed sand. The wooden buildings, stained with salt and grime, stand at odd angles from one another because each one is sinking slowly into the sand. The district boasts no new buildings—there hasn't been available land to build on in over a century. Today, considering the sorry nature of the foundations here, any structures that collapse entirely or are taken by fire are not replaced.

The streets bustle from sunup until well after midnight with sailors and all manner of folk that support the shipping industry: dockworkers, shipwrights, carpenters, warehouse personnel, and so on. These are hardworking folk with rough demeanors. Most of them, particularly the sailors just off their ships, are looking for strong drink and entertainment when they're not working. This is no place for the fastidious or the easily offended. It's no coincidence that the Nobles' Quarter is as far from the Docks as it can be—laterally as well as vertically.

All sorts of ships come into Ptolus Harbor. Most are fishing vessels; dozens go out every morning and bring back nets laden with the catch of the day. Merchant vessels, coasters, galleys, and sailing ships of all kinds also come into the Docks carrying passengers and cargo. The largest of them drop anchor in the harbor and transfer whatever they are carrying into smaller boats, but this is rare. Usually, if a ship anchors in the harbor, it's to avoid the daily docking fees.

The spit that serves as this district's foundation was created in a massive feat of civil engineering by dwarves and humans after the defeat of Ghul three centuries ago. Workers dumped thousands of tons of rock and soil over the side of the cliffs to build up the area so they could build docks and support structures (warehouses and so forth). They also carved a sea wall around the perimeter of the man-made strip of land the district is built upon and a path

from the top of the Cliffs of Lost Wishes down to the new beach far below.

But perhaps the district's construction was less than a perfect marvel of city planning. The artificial beach that the Docks are built upon is slowly being carried away by the tide. The buildings are sinking into their soft, unstable foundations. In fact, the area has had to be virtually rebuilt four times since its creation.

In 689 IA, the Commissar at the time commissioned a team to build massive retaining walls to help shore up the ground under the Docks. This major project took eight years, but it proved to be a smart decision. In 702, mages from the Inverted Pyramid used magic to reinforce the walls and the land. It's a losing battle, but one the city intends to lose as slowly as possible. One day, though, the entire district will have to be either abandoned entirely or destroyed so that tons more sand and fill can be brought in to build up the land, after which all the buildings would need to be restored.

RUNNING THE DOCKS

Truthfully, it's almost better to think of the Docks as a separate little port town near Ptolus. It is quite isolated. Getting to and from the Docks isn't easy.

Unless the player characters have a reason to go there, they're likely to ignore the Docks. If they don't have any concerns involving a ship or someone who works on one, they just won't even think about it.

The district's potential to be overlooked creates an interesting opportunity to involve the area in the campaign in unexpected ways. The murderer the PCs are hunting for is hiding down in the Docks, or the wizard who has what they need just happens to live there. Not that scenarios involving ships, their cargo, their crews, their captains, or events at sea should be avoided. On the contrary, Ptolus is a major port on the Whitewind Sea, and events relating to the seas and those willing to brave them are always important.

The Docks district is a good place for inexperienced characters to spend time. It's a rough area, but the dangers come from rowdy, drunken sailors or simple muggers—nothing that even a weak group can't handle. The potential for adventures is endless, with new ships from far-off lands or exotic islands coming in every day. In fact, working for a time on board a ship makes an interesting diversion for characters looking for some excitement and pay. Of course, considering the conscription gangs that roam the streets at night, it may not be by choice.

PEOPLE OF THE DOCKS

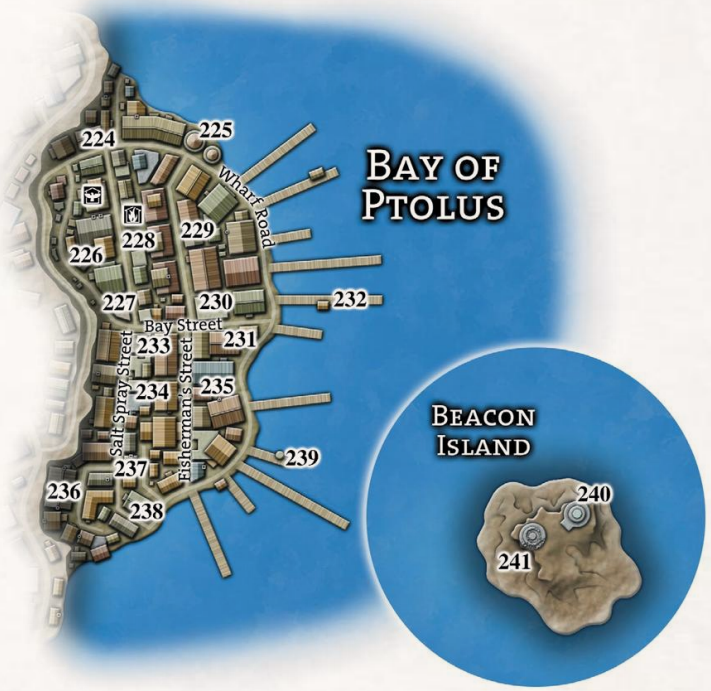
More than elsewhere in the city, the population of the Docks is transitory. Sailors come and go. Ships bring passengers (or stowaways) that hang about the district for a time, but they rarely stay for long. Obviously, many of the people the PCs will encounter here are sailors or fishermen. But other professions are just as important: shipwrights, sailmakers, netmakers, pitchmakers, ropemakers, and dockworkers, just to name a few. Powerful merchants typically have representatives working full time at the Docks monitoring various imports and exports and the handling of cargo.

In general, the people of the Docks are a rough bunch. They work hard, and they play hard. The area has more than its share of taverns, not to mention brothels and gambling dens. Because the movement of goods into and out of the city is so important, however, the Watchhouse here is well staffed, and the streets

GM TIPS

Most buildings in the Docks area have no basements. Neither does the sprawling Dungeon beneath the city extend under the Docks. The land the district rests upon is artificial and quite unstable. Any cellars that might exist are likely shallow and partially flooded.

Local fishermen sell their catch of the day at the Fish Market, up the ramp on the east end of Midtown (see page 193).



MAP KEY

224. Olaf's Flophouse (page 168)
225. Dockmaster's Tower (page 164)
226. Hammer and Nail (page 168)
227. The Sailor's Rest (page 166)
228. Zel's Creatures (page 168)
229. Larel's Implements (page 166)
230. Shipwrights' Guild (page 168)
231. Nevir's Nets (page 168)
232. Pier Five (page 166)
233. Savage Shark (page 167)
234. Esser's (page 168)
235. Silken Sail (page 168)
236. Ennin Headquarters (page 168)
237. Abbara's Bakery (page 168)
238. Shrine of Dreams (page 168)
239. Sard's Boats (page 167)
240. Lighthouse (page 164)
241. Ruined Lighthouse (page 164)

The Lighthouse

Ptolus's lighthouse sits on a rocky promontory connected to Beacon Island by a spit of land that is submerged at high tide. Three people staff this lighthouse, although no more than two of them are ever there at once. It is difficult to find people to work there because of the isolation. Elsewhere on the island is an older lighthouse in ruins; everyone agrees that it is haunted.

Commissar's Guns, page 140

Dalenguard, page 297

Savage Shark, page 167

The Dockmaster has veteran stats.

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see NPC Appendix, page 604.

Iron Mage, page 316

What's in the shipment? See page 423.

well patrolled. The guards choose to quietly ignore some of the illegal establishments because they help keep the peace.

PERSON ON THE STREET

Ednol Friss: This dockworker carries a wooden keg full of rum over one shoulder, walking toward a nearby cargo ship almost ready to set sail. Ednol, a male human, is about average height but very broad. His tanned skin is covered in tattoos, and he sports a thick mustache and thick eyebrows—he's hairy everywhere but on top of his head, in fact, although he wears a small white cap to hide that fact. Ednol is usually in his own little world, imagining what others' lives must be like, particularly those of the sailors who journey to exotic lands. He's not dissatisfied with his own lot, though. He's just imaginative. He tells everyone that one day he's going to write down some of the stories he thinks up. Ednol (called Ed by his friends, who are numerous in this district) knows the Docks as well as anyone and better than most, but the rest of the city sort of intimidates him.

Narlasa Hevron: A half-elf woman with fair skin and silvery-white hair, Narlasa is a dancer and server at a rough alehouse called the Savage Shark. She's likely on her way there now. Because she usually carries more cash than she should after her shift, Narlasa often looks nervous as she walks, making her way along at a brisk pace, wrapped in a long green cloak regardless of the weather. If approached on the street, she is likely to react with a fearful start.

Kellinar Lohahn: A minor city official, Kellinar wears his badge of office—a blue sash with gold trim—proudly. This human male stands about 5 feet, 5 inches tall and is in poor shape. Just under thirty years old, he wears a scraggly brown goatee. He covers his stringy hair with a wide-brimmed hat and carries a sheaf of papers with him on his way to approve of some new cargo ship's manifest. Kellinar is fairly new to the Docks and his job there, but already those he interacts with don't like him and his superior attitude.

DOCKS RUMORS

Delivery for the Iron Mage. Apparently, the Iron Mage has been seen in the Docks recently, waiting for an important shipment to arrive. What could be so important that he would wait for it personally, no one knows. And if it's so important, why wouldn't the most powerful wizard in town just transport it magically himself?

Unwanted Arrival. A ship waits out in the harbor. Reportedly, those on board have some kind of awful plague. The Commissar himself has refused to allow the vessel berth in Ptolus and threatens to bring the Commissar's Guns to bear to sink her if she comes any closer. This would mean wheeling them down from Dalenguard to the top of the Cliffs of Lost Wishes overlooking the sea, something that's never been done before.

Strange Music. A strange minstrel has been playing out at the end of one of the piers over the last few weeks. Some people joke that he is serenading the fish. Others wonder if his song is meant for other ears, deeper at sea. In any event, the bard won't tell anyone what he's doing or why.

DOCKS LOCATIONS

As with most areas in the City by the Spire, there's more going on at the Docks than is immediately apparent, as you will see from some of the locations described in this section.

THE DOCKMASTER'S TOWER

Wharf Road (#225, M5); see map, page 163 950 gp

A strangely shaped tower looks out across the Docks. This is the domain of the Dockmaster (male human). This individual—he is known

The Docks Map: Page 163

SAHUAGIN IN PTOLUS

Far out in the deeps of the Whitewind Sea beyond the Bay of Ptolus, a city of bloodthirsty sahuagin flourishes. These vile marauders occasionally come to the shore in small packs, usually to raid communities for food, goods, and sport. They come to Ptolus for these reasons as well, but not as often, as the large city can raise dangerous defenses when the alarm bells are rung. Instead, most of the time when a sahuagin or sahuagin pack comes to the Docks, it is for a more specific purpose than a simple raid. Often, it is for magic. Seeking magic weapons or items, spells, or even magical reagents, the sahuagin slip into the city by dark of night, don heavy cloaks, and merge into the shadows of Ptolus. Once within the bounds of the city, they sometimes make their way to the Dark Market or to the abode of a mage or temple of a cleric who does not mind consorting with such denizens of the depths. They bring with them strange treasures from beneath the waves for barter. Other times, they prowl the back streets, hoping to waylay someone who has something worth taking. Their trips to the city are usually brief.

These same sahuagin long ago forged a pact with vampires in Ptolus to work together when needed. These vampires—and the pact itself—are called the Covenant of Blood.

The sahuagin's greatest enemies hail from a city even farther into the sea. Riding dolphins or great sea horses, these enemies, the tritons, often watch the movements of the sahuagin. They might even follow them into the Bay of Ptolus, but never into the city itself.

Sahuagin: 22 hp

Dark Market, page 399

Covenant of Blood, page 103

by no other name—maintains all crew and cargo manifests, inspection reports, and ship information that pertains to any craft that enters or leaves Ptolus Harbor.

When a vessel docks alongside one of the piers or drops anchor offshore, the captain must report to the Dockmaster. Likewise, an officer must check in with him when they are ready to leave. When a merchant delivers a shipment of goods to the Docks, it must be inspected before it can be loaded onto a ship, and cargo must be inspected before being off-loaded. Imperial customs agents conduct these inspections and deliver their reports to the Dockmaster's Tower. The Dockmaster has the power to refuse any cargo coming or going and can turn away any craft or deny a ship permission to leave. He can even order the Watch to detain any crewmember or officer on board a ship docked in Ptolus for any reason. The Dockmaster is also in charge of the lighthouse on Beacon Island and the staff there.

A severely obese man, the Dockmaster never leaves the top of the tower. He transfers paperwork and messages via a basket on a string outside one window. For anything requiring more, he has a small girl named Secki, age eight, who works for him, delivering messages and bringing him food. Only Secki is allowed into the top of the tower—no one else is permitted. Many people worry that there is something unwholesome about the relationship between the Dockmaster and Secki, but any such suspicions are false. She was a homeless waif when he took her in a few years ago. Now she is well treated and happy.

Campaign Use: Player characters looking for a specific ship, crewmember, captain, or passenger can come to the Dockmaster's Tower and, for a small bribe (2 to 5 gp), find out the

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Insight or Investigation check allows a character to learn a bit about the Dockmaster's domain:

- *The Dockmaster is the source of all information about the Docks (DC 12).*
- *Something strange is going on with the little girl who works for the Dockmaster (DC 15).*
- *Secki, the girl who works for the Dockmaster, is actually well treated (DC 18).*

The slaver group known as the Ennin secretly operates out of an abandoned warehouse in the Docks. The warehouse is built into the cliffs and extends into the solid rock, where the Ennin keep their slaves and billet their guards and slave-catchers. For more details, see Pactlords of the Quaan in Chapter 6: Organizations (page 125) and Slave Market in Chapter 20: The Undercity (page 394).

This ship, the Waverider, *makes frequent runs between Ptolus and various ports of call on the Whitewind Sea. Her captain, Sturm Slavent, is a well-respected seaman and a frequent patron of the Sailor's Rest.*

The City Watch on the Docks spends much of its time clearing the district of lizardfolk, who come there to sleep at night or sun themselves during the day. The assarai tend to get in the way, and almost everyone complains about them.

location of their quarry. Likewise, if PCs need details about any cargo or facts about past comings and goings in the Docks, they can get that information here too, but it requires a larger bribe (probably 10 to 20 gp).

LAREL'S IMPLEMENTS

Fisherman Street (#229, M5) ●●●
see map, page 163 ! 1,575 gp

The alchemist Larel Notan (male human) has created many devices to aid in sailing voyages. These include compasses, a fire-resistant coating for sails and rigging, boots to aid in climbing ropes and rigging, and a paste for patching leaks quickly.

Peg the Tom, page 333

Tyrus Green has ghost stats; alignment lawful evil.

Larel Notan has artisan stats (page 606) and knows a few 1st-level wizard spells.

At his shop, Larel also sells sea charts, sextants, spyglasses, and alchemical substances like antitoxin, tindertwigs, and so on. He is middle aged and pudgy, with curly brown hair. His five-year-old son, Chol, is often in the shop with him, getting into mischief.

See Chapter 29: Technology for information about equipment available at Larel's.

PIER FIVE

Wharf Road (#232, M5); see map, page 163 ! 0 gp

There are eleven piers at the Docks. Pier Five, however, is well known to all the district's residents and to many sailors and captains who use the harbor. Pier Five is unlucky, cursed, and haunted, according to most people.

And the thing is, they're right.

Thirty-five years ago, a sailor named Tyrus Green, after winning a large bag of his shipmates' coins in a game of Peg the Tom, was murdered by the angry sailors. His body, weighted down by his own sea chest tied to his neck, was dumped beneath Pier Five.

The ghost of Tyrus Green haunts the pier to this day. Sometimes he causes ships moored there to take on water or for someone on the pier to trip and fall into the drink. Occasionally—still thinking like a sailor—he boards a ship docked nearby and travels with it, causing all kinds of havoc until the vessel gets more than twenty leagues from Ptolus, at which point his spirit is dragged back to the location of his demise. At night, either on the pier or on a ship he currently inhabits, Tyrus can manifest and cause even more direct harm. He is a bitter, malevolent spirit motivated only by causing woe. He cannot be permanently exorcised from the pier until his remains are dredged up and given a proper burial blessed by a priest.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Insight or Investigation check can reveal some details about Pier Five:

- *Pier Five is cursed (DC 12).*
- *Pier Five is haunted (DC 15).*
- *Tyrus Green disappeared at Pier Five about thirty-five years ago under mysterious circumstances (DC 23).*

THE SAILOR'S REST

Salt Spray Street (#227, M5) ●● ★★
see map, page 163 ! 800 gp

Once an unmarked, nondescript hole in a wall (literally) whose patrons just had to know how to find it, today the Sailor's Rest is the nicest place to get a drink and relax in the Docks. It's sometimes called "the captains' bar" because

The Docks Map: Page 163

it caters to the district's more well-off residents and visitors. The Sailor's Rest offers nightly entertainment in the form of dancers (both men and women, but mostly women) and is frequented by prostitutes, some licensed from a nearby legal brothel called Esser's and some unlicensed.

The owner of the Sailor's Rest is a woman named Vala Ivansk (female human), but she is almost never present—she lives in the Nobles' Quarter. Rumors abound about how she became wealthy, but most of them say she financed some adventurers' mission to find an Imperial ship, laden with tax revenues, that wrecked and was lost on an uncharted island; her share when they succeeded was many tens of thousands of gold.

The manager is Taran Mult (male human), a canny but dull fellow interested mainly in keeping the peace.

Vala Ivansk has artisan stats, page 606

Taran Mult has thug stats.

SARD'S BOATS

Wharf Road (#239, M6) see map, page 163 35 gp

From his booth right on Pier Eight, Sard Drin—or "Old Sard" as he's called—rents out his four boats: three rowboats and one small keelboat. Renting a rowboat from him requires a refundable deposit of 20 gp, plus a fee of 1 gp for twenty-four hours. The keelboat calls for a deposit of 500 gp, with a fee of 20 gp for twenty-four hours (minimum cost 50 gp). Renters have to prove some degree of seamanship to take the keelboat, or Old Sard goes along; he pilots the larger craft at an additional cost of 5 gp per day.

Most days, Sard (male human) doesn't have any business, but he needs to rent a rowboat only a few times a week and the keelboat once a month to make ends meet.

Sard has commoner stats.

SAVAGE SHARK

Bay Street (#233, M6) ★ see map, this page 175 gp

The Savage Shark, or just "the Shark" as it's known to most people on the Docks, is everything that one might expect of a harborside tavern, and the owner, Hanthan Yan (male human), knows it. In fact, it's intentional. Although he has the gold to make plenty of improvements to the establishment or serve better ale, he doesn't do so, because he wants to give his patrons what they expect. Hanthan is of medium build, but thin. He has the dark complexion of someone hailing from Uraq, but his family has lived in Ptolus for three generations.

The Shark does not serve food but offers ale, whisky, rum, and cheap wine. Nights that pass without some kind of brawl in this tavern are rare indeed. In fact, many people count on it. "It's so late, we've likely missed the brawl down at the Shark," one sailor working late might say to another.

From time to time, Hanthan buys black-market liquor from smugglers and keeps it in the secret cellar beneath the Shark's back room. Sometimes he even lets the smugglers hide down there—for the right price.

Encounter: There's already a brawl going on in the Shark when the player characters arrive. Seven miscellaneous drunkards are bashing each other's skulls, but amidst it all, perceptive PCs might notice that a male halfling is using the opportunity to pick the pockets of the combatants and others. If they get involved, the halfling—Ronam Tumblefoot, a member of the Longfingers Guild—tries to talk his way out of things.

Secret cellar trapdoor: *DC 12 Perception check to find*

A typical drunkard has commoner or guard stats.

Ronam Tumblefoot has spy stats.

OTHER LOCALES

While not a complete listing, GMs can use the table on the following page to insert additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit the Docks.

The Blitz

The Savage Shark serves a concoction called "the blitz," infamous throughout the Docks as the stiffest, harshest drink available. In truth, the blitz is a mixture of whatever is on hand at the time, which always means ale, whisky, rum, and wine but also often includes brine, wastewater, and even a bit of lamp oil, all mixed in a barrel the night before. The blitz has made many patrons very ill and driven a few of them blind, but, unlike what popular myth would have you believe, it has never killed anyone.

Pirates and smugglers needing to lie low for a while sometimes can take refuge in the secret cellar beneath the Savage Shark; see above.

Hanthan Yan has thug stats.

OTHER LOCALES IN THE DOCKS

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Abbara's Bakery		Salt Spray Street (#237, M6)	Abbara Nechill (female human expert*)	2	—
Ennin Headquarters		Salt Spray Street (#236, M6)	Malegoch Krill (male half-fiend mage) and Ritter Ratagan (male human veteran)	18	Slavers' organization tied to Pactlords of the Quaan
Esser's		Salt Spray Street (#234, M5)	Esser Nava (female human expert*)	9	Only legal, licensed brothel in the Docks
Hammer and Nail		Bay Street (#226, M5)	Jessul Karnest (male human artisan*)	2	Toolmaker
Nevir's Nets		Bay Street (#231, M5)	Nevir Goldstock (female dwarf commoner)	1	—
Olaf's Flophouse		Wharf Road (#224, M5)	Olaf Gudenfal (male human commoner)	1	—
Shipwrights' Guild		Bay Street (#230, M5)	Guildmaster Aemryn Chillmist (male elf artisan*)	22	—
Shrine of Dreams	★★	Wharf Road (#238, M6)	Onesh Fillari (female human commoner)	7	Exotic, Uraqi-themed inn
Silken Sail		Fisherman Street (#235, M5)	Nilea Farrowsong (female elf artisan*)	2	Sailmaker
Zel's Creatures		Salt Spray Street (#228, M5)	Zel Serrisio (male gnome artisan*, knows a few bard spells)	0	Sells exotic creatures from far-off lands as pets/guards

* Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604

MISCELLANEOUS DOCKS NPCs

Using one or both of these NPCs can make Docks encounters even more memorable for the party.

CAPTAIN NORRIS FELDER

Norris Felder has expert stats (page 609); alignment neutral. Equipment: leather armor, scimitar, +1 double pistol, sting pistol (hidden), ammunition (20), aethel stones (24), gold earring (worth 25 gp), 4 gp, 89 sp.

Charad Titans, page 81

Aethel, page 646

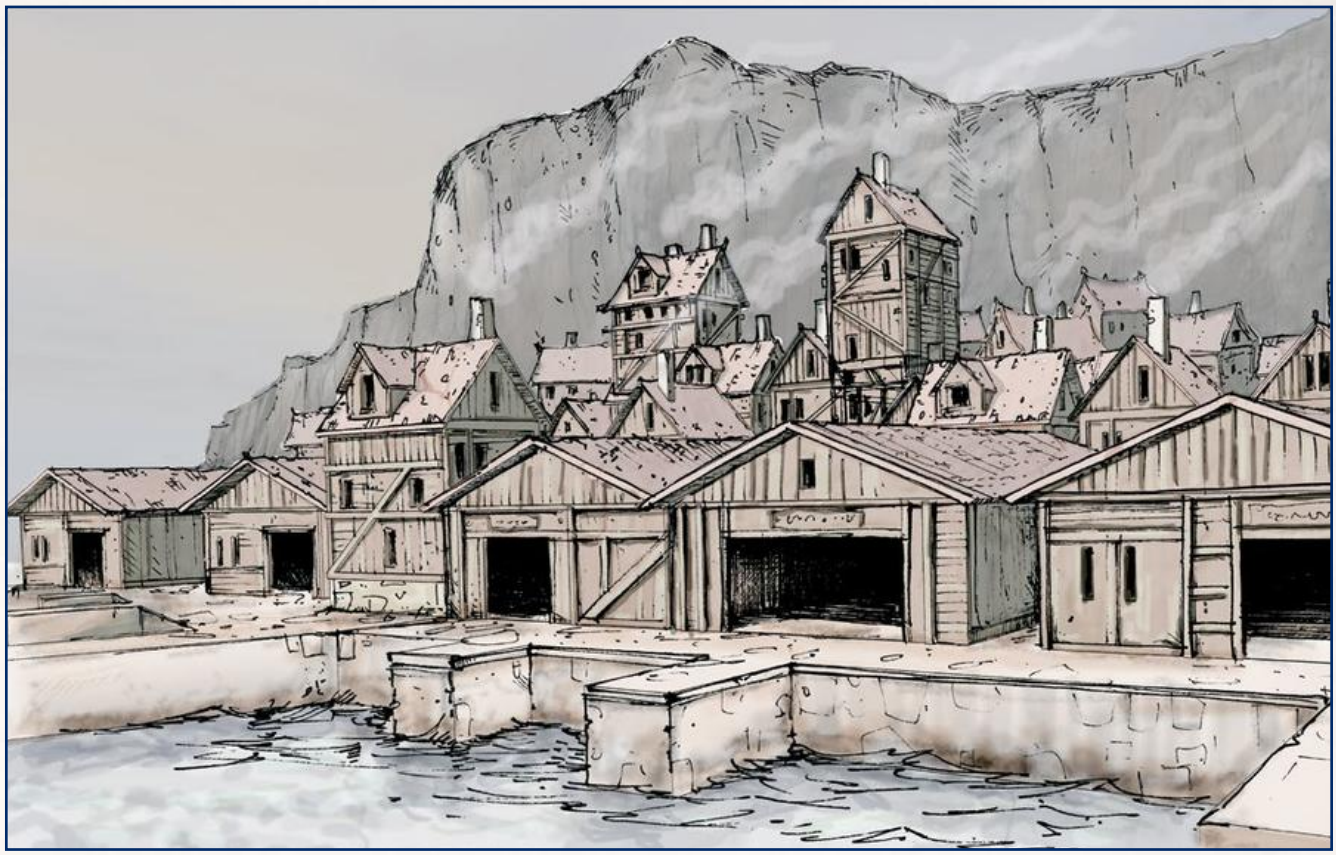
Even before the incident involving the aethel stones, Captain Norris Felder was no stranger to dangerous situations. On a previous voyage, he was carrying a number of passengers. One night in the middle of the trip, he and his crew discovered the hard way that they were all werewolves. Since that time, the captain has always carried at least two silver bullets with him wherever he goes.

Deep in the worst part of the Docks hides a human man named Norris Felder. He's a tall, heavy-set fellow with a salt-and-pepper beard, greying hair, and dark brown eyes. Norris commanded a merchant ship called *Blue Wind* as recently as three weeks ago. When *Blue Wind*, blown off course far to the northeast in the Whitewind Sea, came upon the wreckage of a strange ship along the icy coastline, Norris decided to investigate. His crew discovered that the ship's hull was made of stone rather than wood, and, what's more, every hatch, ladder, and berth was appropriate to a crew that stood at least 9 feet tall. The wreck was incredibly old—only the builders' skill and the strange choice of materials allowed it to remain as intact as it was. Nearby, the investigators found the remains of the ship's gigantic crewmembers, all of whom had been dead for centuries. They also found the ship's cargo: a chest full of magic-absorbing aethel stones. They brought the chest aboard *Blue Wind*, thrilled at their good fortune, and made for Ptolus.

The next day, crewmembers started to disappear. Sailors alone in the hold were just gone. The crew feared ghostly retribution for the booty they'd found, but Norris would not let them toss the chest overboard. They crawled into Ptolus with barely a skeleton crew. No sooner had they put *Blue Wind* into dock when a human cleric of the Church of Lothian appeared with a small group of paladins, forbidding Norris and his remaining crew to enter the city. This cleric, Sister Erissa Endal, said that Lothian had sent her a vision of doom regarding the ship and its cargo. The dock authorities impounded the ship, but as they did, Norris and three of his men stole away with the chest of stones, hoping to sell them off quickly. He contacted an elf wizard named Aisheth, who was interested. When Aisheth cast a spell on the stones to verify that they would absorb the magic, the gigantic ghosts of the lost Charad Titan crew suddenly appeared and dragged Aisheth and Norris's remaining men off into some ethereal realm. Somehow, Norris survived.

Today, Norris still wants to sell the aethel stones, but word has spread. It seems that people either don't want anything to do with him or they're eager to steal his treasure regardless of its haunted nature. Sister Erissa and the Church are still looking for him as well.

The Docks Map: Page 163

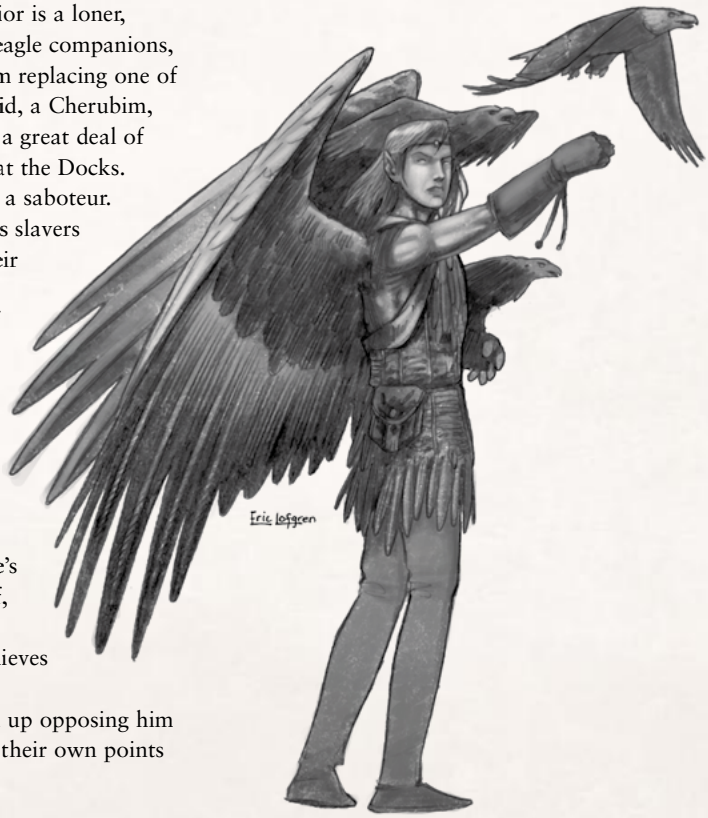


WYNTHAES

This Cherubim elf druid-warrior is a loner, friend to no one but his four eagle companions, each of which has a magic gem replacing one of their eyes. However, for a druid, a Cherubim, and a loner, Wynthaes spends a great deal of time in the city—particularly at the Docks.

Wynthaes works secretly as a saboteur. Rightly or wrongly, he believes slavers use the Docks to transport their cargo into and out of the city, and he's taken it upon himself to do whatever he can to stop it, even though his actions sometimes result in the deaths of innocent people. He uses his spells and eagles to sneak onto ships at night, rigging them to sink or run aground. Ultimately, he's more of a warrior than a thief, so sometimes he just ends up attacking crewmembers he believes to be part of the slave trade.

Player characters might end up opposing him or helping him, depending on their own points of view.



Cherubim elves, page 52

Wynthaes single-handedly destroyed a small Ennin stronghold along the coast to the southeast of the city. He has come to Ptolus only recently, following clues he found in that base. Those clues led him to believe there is an even larger Ennin stronghold in the city.

Although he doesn't know it, he's right—slavemasters operate out of the Dark Market (page 399). Both the Ennin (page 125) and the Balacazar family (page 102) have placed a bounty of 5,000 gp on Wynthaes's head.

Wynthaes is a Cherubim elf druid with ecclesiastic stats (page 608), fly 40 ft.; alignment neutral. Equipment: +1 leather, *longbow,* +1 arrows *(12), rapier,* wind fan. *He has the following spells prepared:*

Cantrips (at will): druidcraft, guidance, resistance

1st level (4 slots): cure wounds, fog cloud, speak with animals

2nd level (3 slots): barkskin, beast sense, moonbeam

3rd level (3 slots): conjure animals, protection from energy

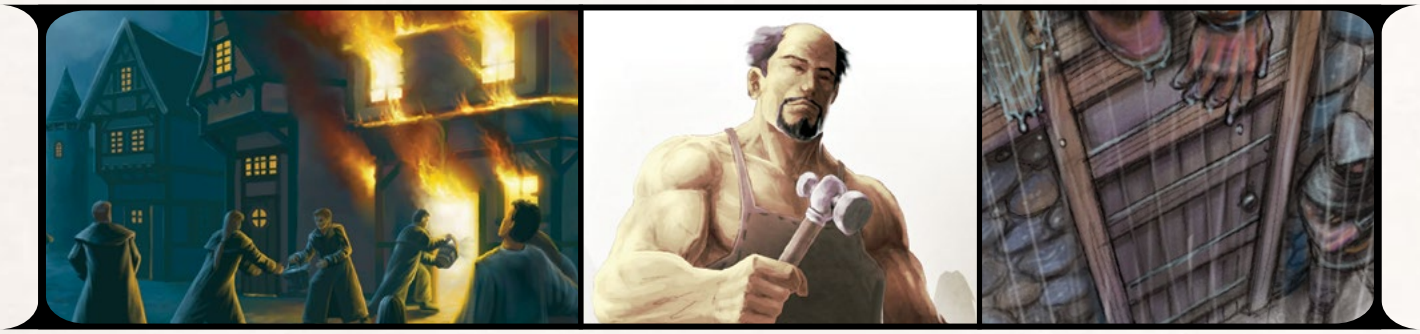
4th level (3 slots): freedom of movement, ice storm, stoneskin

5th level (1 slot): insect plague

Chapter 9:

GUILDSMAN DISTRICT

This is where much of the city's commerce takes place. Most local guilds have their headquarters in the Guildsman District. In this chapter you will find descriptions of the city's largest breweries and tanneries, the Foundry, and the Stockyards. It also contains such strange places as the Darkbirth Madhouse and the Midden Heaps.



GUILDSMAN DISTRICT IN BRIEF

Area: 308 acres
Population: About 9,000
Primary Function: Industrial
Primary Social Class: Low
Constable Way (K8)
Curtain Street (K8)

The Guildsman District is a large section of Ptolus located in the southeastern portion of the city, bounded by the Cliffs of Lost Wishes to the east, the city wall to the south, Iron Street to the north, and Carriage Row to the west. In this industrial area, ore is smelted, livestock is slaughtered, and artisans ply their trades.

THE FLAVOR OF THE GUILDSMAN DISTRICT

"This is where the work gets done," is a frequent saying by those who live in the Guildsman District. Powerful whistles and bells ring here in the mornings and evenings to mark the start and close of each workday, but in some places where labor continues around the clock, the sound only marks the change of shift. Grime-covered men and soot-laden women and children make their way to and from their jobs morning and night, filling the streets. At other times, while the tanneries, foundries, mills, and breweries are in operation, the streets remain mostly vacant.

Sawmills, flour mills, paper mills, textile-dying works, ironworks, leatherworks, brickworks, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, silversmiths, coppersmiths, tinsmiths, weaponsmiths, armorers, locksmiths, clockmakers, carvers, potters, masons, glassblowers, porcelain makers, carpenters, cabinet makers, coopers, wheelwrights, plowwrights, wainwrights, printers, gemcutters, cigar makers, coffin makers, cord makers, soap makers, chain makers, slaughterhouses, and dozens of similar establishments employ a great percentage of Ptolus's lower classes and some of the middle class (the skilled craftspeople and administrators). Most of these workers belong to one guild or another. They have learned to stick together and use the power of assembly and organization to avoid exploitation (although some would say that many workers are still exploited).

As ever-present as the manufactories, smithies, and mills are around here, much of the Guildsman District is filled with warehouses, storehouses, granaries, and livestock pens. Despite all the activity, about one in five buildings is vacant. Though prosperous, the district was even more so at the height of the Empire.

The shadows of the Empire's past are no more clearly visible in Ptolus than in the Guildsman District. Old smokestacks from manufactories that sported massive steam boilers to power the inner workings stand like undead towers over the other structures. These spectres of days gone by are cold and still for the most part; some of these smokestacks are

used for storage, but most just serve as lairs for nesting cormorants and gulls. Here and there a few still belch smoke, where the lore to keep the boilers and engines working was not completely lost.

The streets are dirty, and many buildings show signs of neglect. Though this district is no slum like the Warrens, squatters live in abandoned warehouses and mills, and muggers lurk in alleyways to prey upon workers. Most people who live in the district reside in the eastern portion, along the top of the cliffs overlooking the bay. Were it not for the Warrens, this would be known as the most dangerous and impoverished residential section of the city.

RUNNING THE GUILDSMAN DISTRICT

While the Guildsman District is vitally important to the life and well-being of the city, there's little cause for PCs to go there, at least at first glance. The truth lies within the district's essential irony: that while this is where poor laborers toil for long hours and little pay, it is also where much of the city's real power—and real money—lies. The nobles in their manor homes may hold wealth and influence, but they cannot match the total gold and power wielded by the heads of the largest guilds and the most prominent industrial concerns (a fact of which the mercantile House Abanar is well aware). And because the money in the Guildsman District changes hands often, as opposed to sitting in spell-guarded vaults in the Nobles' Quarter, it draws the attention of crime lords, who wield power and influence of a slightly different kind. Kevris Killraven's organization, in particular, is very interested in the district and remains quite active in it.

Characters coming into this district should feel almost as though they are entering a different city, or at least one with a much different leadership. While the City Watch patrols here as much as anywhere, it doesn't take too long to realize that just as influential as the Watch are the armed militias controlled by some of the more powerful guilds.

The guildmasters are the respected officials here, shown more deference than anyone who actually works for the Empire. The guilders have long resented the Empire; they tolerate it only because they have to and because it brings stability, which is good for business. The Empire imposes a number of regulations on guilds and commerce, however, which they despise. If trouble arises, guilders often summon their own security forces before they call for the City Watch.

See Chapter 6: Organizations for more on the guilds in the city.

When the player characters come to the district, do not neglect to mention the smoke hanging in the air like a visible pall, and the smells of the tanneries, the Midden Heaps, the smelted ores, and the cattle yards.

MAP KEY

285. Guildhouse of Iron (page 177)
286. Glassblowers' Guild (page 184)
287. Ullar's Sons' Tannery (page 184)
288. Slaughterhouse (page 184)
289. Stockyards (page 182)
290. Nalaster's Mill (page 184)
291. Weaponsmiths' Guildhall (page 184)
292. Towart's (page 184)
293. Skull and Sword (page 180)
294. Grand Guildhall (page 177)
295. Tal Ingersol (page 184)
296. Star Jewelers (page 181)
297. Gunlar's Forge (page 184)
298. Woodworkers' Guild (page 184)
299. Longdraught Brewery (page 178)
300. Textile Workers' Guildhall (page 184)
301. Hungry Halfling (page 184)
302. Darkbirth Madhouse (page 174)
303. Herbalists' Guild (page 178)
304. Tabby's Den (page 183)
305. Foundry (page 176)
306. St. Daris' Church (page 184)
307. Drapers' Guildhall (page 184)
308. Monastery of Redemption (page 184)
309. Masons' Guildhall (page 179)
310. Midden Heaps (page 179)
311. Tinsmiths' Guild (page 184)
312. Warredin's Mill (page 184)

Killraven Crime League, page 118
Chapter 18: Warrens, page 372
Chapter 6: Organizations, page 92
House Abanar, page 93

Local Terms

Aelectricity: *A near-mystical power generated by the most sophisticated of steam engines and sometimes stored in alchemical batteries.*

Guilder: *Member of a guild.*

Guildmaster: *Head of a guild.*

Manufactory: *Any of a number of places devoted to manufacturing large quantities of goods.*

Physicker: *Someone who looks upon the art of healing as a science, rather than as something done with magic.*

PEOPLE OF THE GUILDSMAN DISTRICT

As the name of the area suggests, the Guildsman District is where most of the members of various local guilds work and spend their time. Most of the low-ranking guild members also live here, though wealthier members move to Midtown or Rivergate, and some eventually move to the Nobles' Quarter.

Guild members, virtually without exception, wear badges that display not only their membership affiliation but also their rank. These badges are a prized possession for many of them—they provide a sense of camaraderie, solidarity, and pride.

The guilds encompass low, middle, and high social classes. The folk of the lower class join a guild to learn a trade and benefit from the organization. Skilled, well-trained artisans in any guild (as opposed to simple laborers) earn enough money and respect to make it into the middle class. In a large guild, the craftspeople may not even associate with the laborers, journeymen, and apprentices.

Guild leaders are usually very wealthy and influential—so much so that they rarely take part in the trade of the guild. They are purely administrators, advocates, and business owners.

No matter what your social rank, however, guilders typically distrust nonguilders in the district, at least a bit. On top of that, the various guilds vie for power and maintain a complex set of rivalries; members of one guild may distrust, dislike, or even wish harm upon the members of another. Nonguild laborers and craftspeople in the district are rare, usually because others either run them out or force them to join a guild. The few unaffiliated who do try to work here find themselves treated poorly.

The people of the Guildsman District sometimes work in large groups, such as in the Foundry or the Stockyards. Others toil alone in small workshops blowing glass, weaving cloth, braiding rope, fashioning tools, or something

TYPICAL WORKSHOP

A typical workshop in the Guildsman District employs between two and five craftsmen and two or three assistants per craftsman. Some of these assistants are apprentices learning the craft, while others are simply menial laborers without aspirations of becoming anything more. Most workshops have anywhere from 200 gp to 500 gp worth of tools. The value of the materials in a workshop varies widely from a few hundred gold pieces' worth in a leatherworker's shop to many thousands of gold pieces' worth in a goldsmith's shop. Often a workshop with expensive materials employs a guard.

similar. These small workshops usually cluster together near related crafters. A visitor would find women stitching gloves in a workshop next to a man crafting leather belts, or see a coppersmithy next to a tinsmithy.

The criminal element remains strong in the district. Laborers and artisans work long, hard hours; after work, they often seek liquor, drugs, and other vices. Gambling dens, brothels, drug parlors, and other shady establishments cater to these needs. Other criminals prey upon the workers here. The problem is so bad, in fact, that many foremen pay their workers daily rather than weekly, so that no one ever has to carry a large amount of money at once.

PERSON ON THE STREET

Terrosh Barro: A slightly overweight human man, Terrosh walks with a bit of a limp. He is balding, his face is pocked, and his ears are large. He proudly wears the badge of the Goldsmiths' Guild on his green coat's lapel. While he seems reluctant to speak with nonguilders, he is a good source of information, albeit an arrogant one. Terrosh seriously believes that working with gold, "the most precious of all materials," is a task that only one with magical talents can accomplish. He considers his skills as a goldsmith on par with those of any wizard or sorcerer. He is on his way to negotiate a deal with representatives from the Rogue Moon Trading Company and the mining guild of far-off Rhoth.

Rogue Moon Trading Company, page 339

Rhoth, page 45

Lynal Demanik: This short human man sticks out his broad chest when he walks, cocking his bare, muscular arms at his sides. A small cap sits askew on his head. His clothes bear the dirt of months of hard labor. Lynal works in the smelting chamber of the Foundry, and although he belongs to the Ironworkers' Guild, he bears it no love or loyalty. His thoughts stay always on his ailing wife and their two daughters. He is probably on his way to or from work, or perhaps from an herbalist, having purchased medicine for his wife, Magda.

Vices, page 518

TYPICAL WAREHOUSE

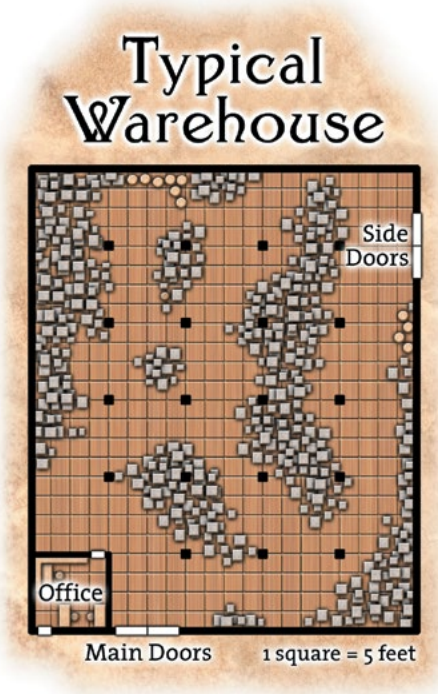
Although none are specifically detailed in this chapter, one of the most common sites in the Guildsman District is a warehouse, granary, or other storehouse.

The typical warehouse is closed, with locked doors and no one present. Occasionally, if particularly valuable merchandise lies within, the owner hires a guard or two to watch over the place. Mainly, their job is to call for the Watch if there is a break-in or a fire.

Locked warehouse door: *DC 18 Sleight of Hand check to open*

At times, however, an occupied warehouse has far more activity, with six to twelve laborers and a foreman unloading or loading goods onto carts or wagons, or simply moving around crates and barrels stored in the facility, taking inventory. Very large and busy warehouses (that is to say, exceptional ones) have a full-time clerk there all day long to monitor the coming and going of merchandise.

Many warehouses in the Guildsman District are abandoned.



Guilds control prices and they control wages. The amount of influence they wield over financial concerns draws the attention of some of the city's more powerful criminals, such as the Balacazars and Kevris Killraven. However, with one notable exception (the Masons' Guild, which is controlled by the Balacazars), the guilds have done a commendable job in warding off criminal influences. This isn't a matter of altruism or even a desire to be law-abiding, but simply a matter of self-interest—they don't want to give up their power.

GUILD CONCERNS

Guilds have two main concerns. The first is to facilitate all commercial enterprises involved with the sale and distribution of the goods or services the members provide. This includes setting and enforcing prices and standards of quality. It also can involve dealing with competition from nonguild operations—sometimes violently.

A guild's second concern is more internal. A guild sets wage standards, as well as standards for the length and conditions of apprenticeships and working conditions in general. It also works to protect the members' general welfare, manage individuals' obligations to the guild (such as paying dues), and maintain a hierarchy within the membership. The hierarchy is based on skill, experience, wealth, repute, and popularity.

Guilds are not the equivalent of modern labor unions, although there are some similarities, most of them social rather than economic. The main difference is that in a guild, management and employees belong to the same organization. Guilds are good for the membership because they carry a reputation for reliability and quality among consumers and because they maintain minimum standards for working conditions. It should be noted, however, that their very nature discourages competition.

In Ptolus, guilds control almost all manufacturing and craftwork, as well as many services, but individual vendors do not have guilds. Thus, the people who make rope and leather packs belong to guilds, but Ebbert Boltcrafter, who sells their goods to the public in his shop, does not.

If the Ironworkers' Guild and the Masons do go to war, it will not be the first time. Seventy-five years ago, these two guilds engaged in a bloody conflict that resulted in the deaths of more than one hundred guilders.

Sarra Finaloss: A tall human woman, Sarra has a large nose and green eyes. Her hair is brown with reddish highlights. Her garb looks fairly simple and not too clean. In her ink-stained hands she carries bundles of broadsheets, which she passes out to everyone she sees on the street. But she's not all that she appears.

In truth, Sarra works for the Church of Lothian as an observer, which is a nice way of saying that she's a spy. The Church knows that important things happen in the Guildsman District, often in the guise of minor business dealings. Wanting to keep up on which guilds, companies, and businesspeople are on top, the Church has Sarra spend her time down amid the crafters and manufactories, watching, listening, and gathering information.

GUILDSMAN DISTRICT RUMORS

Drilling for Godsblood. The Shuul use the Foundry as a cover for secret activities. Beneath it, they are using a sophisticated deep drill and pipe system to plumb the depths below Ptolus where a reservoir of great power lies in liquid form. This liquid, which some call "godsblood," may be the residue of a dead god (or even a dead Galchutt).

Guildwar. Two of the more powerful guilds, the Ironworkers and the Masons, are set to go to war in the streets of the district. Reports vary as to the nature of the dispute, but it seems to involve territoriality and mutual contracts. If such a battle were to happen, the entire membership of both guilds automatically would be conscripted into fighting forces to defend their mutual headquarters, workshops, and markets.

The *Black Grail*. Supposedly, a powerful but evil artifact lies beneath the Guildsman District. Finding it requires a trip through tunnels accessed from below the Darkbirth Madhouse, from the Prison (which lies below the district), or from somewhere else entirely. (This rumor is not true; the *Black Grail* actually lies in the Banewarrens. The location described here is the lair of Sokalahn, the lich who sought the grail unsuccessfully many centuries ago.)

GUILDSMAN DISTRICT LOCATIONS

The Guildsman District has a number of varied and interesting locations for player characters to explore.

DARKBIRTH MADHOUSE

Madhouse Street (#302, J7); see map, page 171 1,200 gp

Ptolus boasts not one, but two asylums. While Mahdoth's Asylum in the South Market deals specifically with mad spellcasters, the Darkbirth Madhouse is the home for all other insane individuals. About a hundred years ago, a young half-elf physicker named Derrin

Prison, page 405

Banewarrens, page 389
Sokalahn, page 430

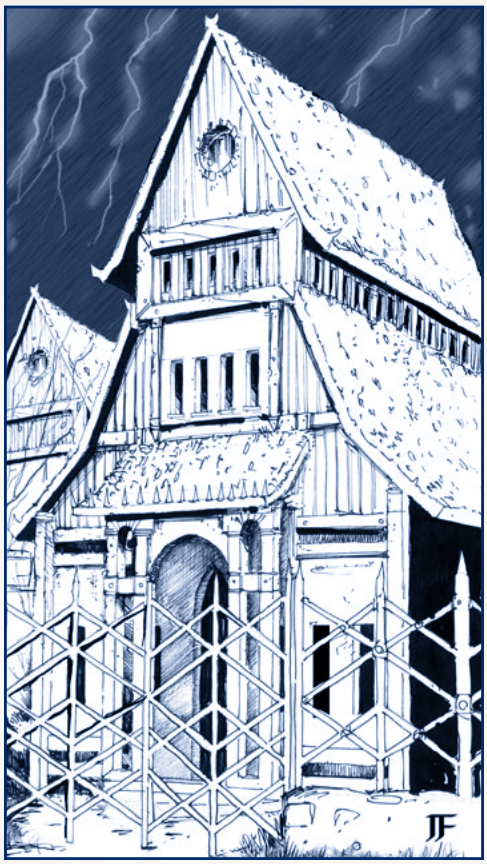
Shuul, page 126

Galchutt, page 62

Mahdoth's Asylum, page 336

MADNESS AND INSANITY DEFINED

"Madness" or "insanity" as portrayed in fantasy fiction does not exist in the real world. When we use either term in *Ptolus*, we are describing people who raise undead creatures, worship demons, use soul-warping magic to get their way, and so on. These terms and their use in the fiction of *Ptolus* have no intersection with the real world and those who legitimately suffer from mental illness.



Before Derrin Darkbirth founded his madhouse, the insane were often put in the Prison. Some were simply put to death.

Darkbirth began treating the mentally deficient and the insane. As one of the few people in the city who would do so, he soon found himself overwhelmed with patients. He appealed to the Commissar at the time and, because he had connections with some of the noble houses, he was eventually granted facilities and funding to establish the Darkbirth Madhouse.

Years later, investigators from the Conciliators discovered that Derrin Darkbirth used his position and the facilities to perform inhuman experiments on some of the truly mad inmates—efforts that were backed by Houses Sadar and Vladaam, although this was never proven. Despite the fact that Darkbirth was sent to prison for his crimes, the madhouse continued under new management.

Conciliators, page 22

House Sadar, page 98

House Vladaam, page 100

Darkbirth Madhouse today holds ninety-two inmates and employs a staff of twenty physickers, assistants, orderlies, and clerks. The administrator of the asylum these days is Kolister Mahaven (human male), a doddering old man well past his prime, both physically and mentally.

Kolister Mahaven has expert stats, page 609

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

Although the staff at the madhouse attempts to treat patients, the institution is first and foremost designed to hold the dangerously insane, not help them become sane. Some people speculate that one in twenty inmates may be possessed by demons or malevolent ghosts.

Darkbirth Madhouse receives funding from the Empire, as well as from private donors, usually those who have a relationship with someone held within.

Scenario: A woman comes to the player characters, claiming to be an escapee from the Darkbirth Madhouse. She accuses one of the physickers there of performing unsanctioned experiments on patients, carrying on the legacy of Derrin Darkbirth. No one else believes her, but

In 672 IA, a powerful cleric of Lothian came to Darkbirth and began using healing spells to cure the inmates. While the cleric helped many of them, he was surprised at how many his spell failed to cure. The benevolent but overconfident priest was assaulted by a mob of inmates and murdered. The administrators no longer allow spells to be cast upon inmates unless they are officially released into the spellcaster's custody.

COMMITTING SOMEONE TO THE MADHOUSE . . . AND GETTING SOMEONE OUT

In some respects, it is frighteningly easy to commit someone to the Darkbirth Madhouse. If anyone brings in an individual who appears mad (raving, obviously hallucinating, catatonic, and so on), the subject is immediately committed and must be held for at least two days. The admitting person(s) need not have any relationship with the subject. If the individual to be committed shows no signs of madness but is brought to the madhouse by a parent or a spouse, once again the subject is committed and held for at least two days.

In order to hold the subject for more than two days, the staff must examine and confirm that an individual is officially insane. Bribes (usually around 500 gp) or other influence placed on the attending physickers can get a sane person committed with ease. After official confirmation, committed individuals are held indefinitely.

Basically, 1,000 gp will get anyone out of the madhouse. The Darkbirth Madhouse is not a prison, and anyone willing to pay this "fee" and take an inmate into their care can do so legally. If an inmate escapes or is broken out of the madhouse, the staff turns over the escapee's identity to the City Watch. The guards have orders to use deadly force in recovering the individual, one way or another.

Persistent explorers can find a passage from the cellars of the Darkbirth Madhouse all the way down to the Prison (page 405) far below the Guildsman District, but this is known to absolutely no one alive today.

she pleads with the PCs to help stop this woman, Dialla Cester, before she torments more patients.

The truth is that Cester is performing experiments in mind control. She controls the mind of the "escapee," whom she sent to lure new victims into her clutches, subjects not only more powerful but sane to begin with. She prepares an elaborate trap and ambush with more mind-controlled patients for when the PCs arrive.

The head of House Shever, Thollos, often visits the Foundry.

At any given time, the Foundry is guarded by no fewer than a dozen Shuul agents (see page 127).

For rumors of secret activities beneath the Foundry, see page 174.

Shuul, page 126

Iron God, page 72

High Priestess of Teun, page 368

Savane, page 127

THE FOUNDRY

Smith Street (#305, J8); see map, page 177

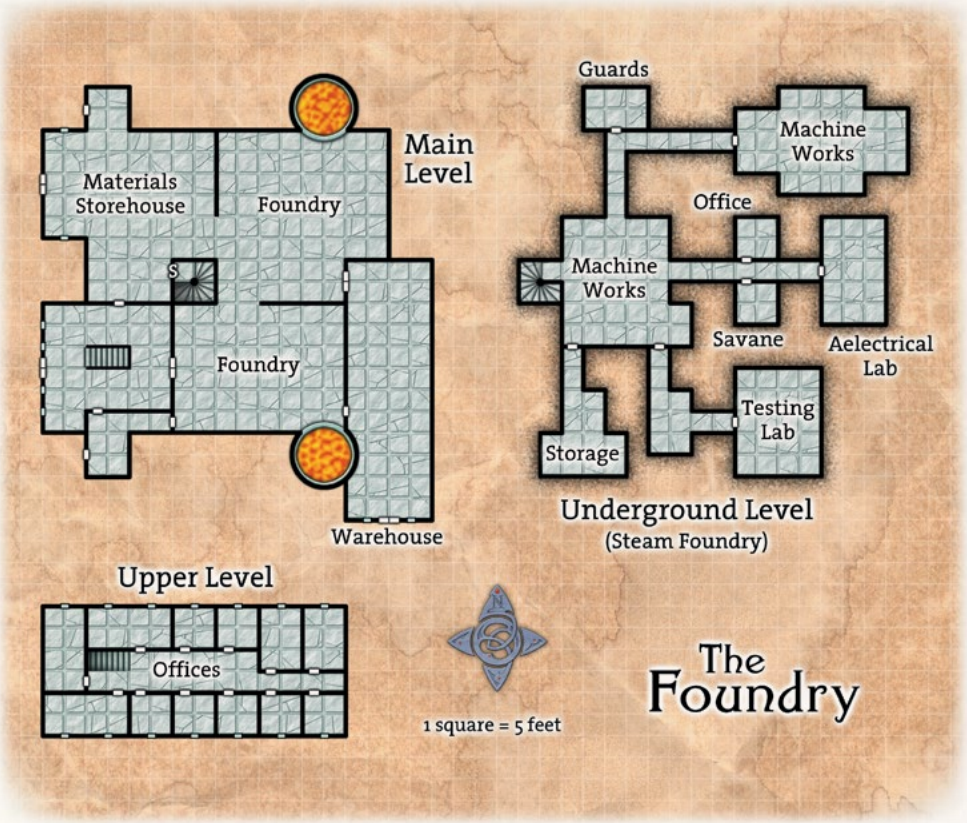
25,000 gp (double that if the Steam Foundry is included)

A stronghold of the Shuul, local dwarves, and worshippers of the Iron God all in one, the Foundry is a central location in the Guildsman District and one of its largest structures. Once, at the height of the Empire and its technology, the Foundry's tower served as a mooring facility for aeroships. Now such vessels are few and far between, although the high-placed skydocks still receive the occasional Shuul craft. In the past five decades, the tower was redeveloped into a structure for working metal, specifically for pouring molten metals of all different kinds into molds. The Foundry is a large place and handles everything from tiny molds for clockwork gears to larger molds for girders, armor, weapons, pipe, chain links, and so forth. Just over one hundred people toil in the Foundry.

But it is much more than it appears. While the main portion of the Foundry produces conventional metal items and the upper level holds administrative offices, a small underground area produces experimental steam-powered machines for the Shuul. Called the Steam Foundry, this level is far more than just a foundry, but a machineworks that assembles metal parts into all manner of devices. The Shuul then test these devices, most of them resulting in spectacular failure. The goal, however, from the inventors' point of view, is to restart the engines of progress and innovation. They created the high priestess of Teun's mechanical conveyance here, for example. Other objects include steam-powered automatons, boats, armor, and even aeroships. The Steam Foundry is a well-guarded secret for now. Savane, leader of the Shuul, spends a great deal of time here.

There also may be other, even more secretive Shuul-sponsored projects going on as well.

Guildsman District Map: Page 171



GRAND GUILDHALL

Lower Rachen Street (#294, I8); see map, page 171 1,000 gp

Located near the center of the district, this large hall was originally built solely for the purpose of multi-guild meetings, which occur when representatives of two or more guilds must discuss business, a dispute, or some other matter. Once each year, all the guilds send representatives to the Grand Guild Assembly, where matters relating to all guilds and to the district are debated, discussed, and decided. These meetings lead some people to think of the Guildsman District as a city within a city, since the assembly seems to rule the district as much as the Commissar governs the city.

When such large-scale meetings are not in session, a single guild can reserve the hall for a large function. For example, sometimes guilds sponsor events—dances, fairs, festivals, craft shows, and so on—for their members. The Grand Guildhall is big enough to accommodate large groups, with two large banquet/meeting halls and a number of side rooms, as well as a full kitchen and storage rooms filled with extra chairs, tables, party decorations, and so on.

Scenario: Members of a guild that has had contact with the player characters invite them as guests to a craft fair held at the Grand Guildhall, to be followed by a banquet and dance. While there, a prominent guild member is murdered and, as outsiders, suspicion falls on the PCs. They must discover the real murderer to prove themselves innocent (he was killed by his wife and her lover).

GUILDHOUSE OF IRON

Iron Street (#285, H8); see map, page 171 14,000 gp

Anyone coming into this building is likely to think it a social club or even a tavern rather than the headquarters of an organization. The Ironworkers' Guild is a powerful group, effectively controlling all the other metalworking guilds (goldsmiths, silversmiths, tinsmiths, and so on) with its money and influence. It is, and always has been, a casual group that disdains formal airs or pretensions. Thus, the main room of its guildhouse is a wide-open chamber filled with tables and chairs. At any given time of day, people sit here, drinking coffee and tea in the morning and ale and beer later in the afternoon or evening, discussing the affairs of the day. It's an excellent place to come for information on virtually any topic pertaining to the city, but nonguild members are unwelcome unless they have a guilder along to vouch for them (and even then, they are watched closely).

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

With an Investigation check, one can learn quite a lot about the Ironworkers:

- *The Ironworkers' Guild is a guild in Ptolus (DC 8).*
- *The Ironworkers' Guild is one of the most powerful guilds in the city (DC 10).*
- *The Ironworkers' and the Masons' Guilds are enemies (DC 12).*
- *The Ironworkers' Guild controls the other metalworking guilds in the city (DC 15).*
- *The Ironworkers' Guild is in league with the Shuul (DC 20).*

Dwarves comprise a significant portion of the Ironworkers' membership. The guild has strong ties to both the Shuul and the Temple of the Iron God.

SWORDS OF PTOLUS

In the Guildsman District not long ago, Spyncer Coil received a vision from Asche, God of Cities, and was moved to forge the three *Swords of Ptolus* (page 644), named *Deceit*, *Insight*, and *Power*. So powerful are these weapons that he was forced to flee to the "safety" of a Pale Dogs refuge in the Warrens (page 380). He kept *Insight* himself and *Power* was stolen; no one knows the whereabouts of the last sword, although many people seek all three. Spyncer is now hopelessly mad.

Veda Medaris has artisan stats, page 606

Veda's heavies and thugs have thug stats.

Spyncer Coil, page 380

Gavel Longdraught has artisan stats, page 606

Torel Sellek has commoner stats.

Healers of the Sacred Heat, page 23

Delline Yashara has druid stats.

Veda Medaris (female human), the head of the guild, has offices in the back; beneath them lies a well-guarded vault with the guild's funds. She keeps a small force of heavies and thugs (male human or half-orc) on hand in case of trouble. Veda knows about Spyncer Coil and the *Swords of Ptolus*. She even knows Spyncer's current whereabouts, and she is the only person who knows where the sword *Deceit* is hidden at the moment. She has not yet determined what to do with this information, however—she doesn't like or trust Spyncer and has half a mind to allow the swords to be lost forever.

HERBALISTS' GUILDHALL

Herbal Lane (#303, J7); see map, page 171 9,000 gp

One of the most pleasing buildings in the district, the Herbalists' Guildhall consists of three tall structures joined by a common wall. This wall surrounds a large open yard that the guild uses as a vast herb garden. The winding ivy pattern frieze on the buildings and surrounding wall gives the place an elvish feel, according to many visitors. Although this is unintentional, elves do make up one-fifth of the guild's membership.

The Herbalists' Guild encompasses not only herbalists but also physickers, dentists, healers, and even barbers. The guild has a strong rivalry with the Healers of the Sacred Heat, who are not members. The guildmaster is Delline Yashara (female half-elf).

This guildhall is not open to the public; a person cannot bring the sick or injured here. Instead, the guildhall houses a large library full of medical texts and related works, and it sponsors various symposiums for its members on new healing techniques and herbal remedies.

Members can purchase herbs in large quantities here at a discount, as well as other equipment used in their arts.

This is a typical small guildhall of the sort found throughout the district.

LONGDRAUGHT BREWERY

Coldheart Street (#299, I8); see map, page 171 1,000 gp

Just another in the list of places responsible for the foul odors of the Guildsman District, the Longdraught Brewery is the largest and best-known brewery in Ptolus. Owned by Gavel Longdraught (male gnome), the brewery employs two dozen workers.

Scenario: Having met and befriended brewery worker Torel Sellek (male human) in a tavern the night previous, the player characters come to the brewery to return a pair of gloves he left behind. When they arrive, they discover that Torel never came to work that day. Gavel tells the PCs where the man lives, and if they go to his apartment, they find his distraught

wife, who says he never came home last night. A bit more investigation reveals that Torel was mugged and killed. It requires either divination magic or serious legwork, but—if they desire—the PCs can track down the mugger and exact vengeance as they see fit. However, the thief belongs to the Longfingers Guild, and crossing them results in ungentle retaliation.

As a rite of passage, the Knights of the Chord used to make new initiates spend the night in the Midden Heaps. After a string of deaths, they ceased this practice.

Longfingers Guild, page 123

MASONS' GUILDHALL

Ring Road (#309, K9); see map, page 171 5,500 gp

This three-story building of dark red brick has sharp corners and a severe appearance. Like its rival, the Ironworkers' Guild, this guild of bricklayers and stoneworkers has a number of dwarves in its ranks. Unlike the Ironworkers', however, the Masons' Guild is a particularly corrupt group, its leadership long associated with organized crime (the Balacazars). This relationship often works to the guild's advantage: people fear them. "Don't cross the Masons," folks say, or, more subtly, "Don't try to break a brick." Members of the Masons' Guild expect bribes and kickbacks in addition to their normal pay, making the affordable-sounding standardized prices for their work not nearly so reasonable.

Rumor has it that the Masons' Guild is poised to go to war with the powerful Ironworkers' Guild (see page 177).

Balacazars, page 102

The guildmaster, Pared Cobart (male human) is a short, ill-tempered man with brown hair and a beard. He employs a veritable army of thugs as guards for his fortresslike guildhall and bodyguards for himself and other high-ranking members. They also act as enforcers to intimidate those unwilling to pay the Masons' expected inducements. Pared pays a percentage of all guild jobs, as well as guild dues, to the Balacazars. While the Masons technically are part of the criminal organization, the crime family never asks the guild for anything more than money.

THE MIDDEN HEAPS

Midden Street (#310, J9); see map, page 180 1,000 gp

This is a great trash dump backed up against the southern city wall. While sewage and a lot of other waste and trash flows into the King's River and thus into the bay, a great deal gets dumped in the surprisingly large wasteyard of the Guildsman District.

Other garbage heaps are located just outside of Ptolus on both the north and south ends of the city, but these are smaller than the Midden Heaps of the Guildsman District. Those outside the city are burned in the spring and autumn, but aside from a few small fires (some inadvertent, some not), the heaps within the city walls are left to rot. Much of the refuse in the Midden Heaps is slag and scoria from the foundries, scrap iron, and other bits of chaff and debris from the manufactories. Thus, while it's an eyesore, the place doesn't reek overmuch of organic waste. (It doesn't really stink a lot worse than the rest of the district.)

Anyone visiting the Midden Heaps comes first to a pair of small wooden buildings that house the scrap merchants. These merchants collect small fees on behalf of the city from people who bring their trash here (these independent contractors often overcharge and skim off the excess). They also sell scrap metal and other junk that someone might want, although those who wander into the heaps to look for scrap do so at their own risk. A broken item costs about one quarter its normal price. Scrap of other kinds normally runs about 5 cp per pound. Choice bits found by the scrap merchants are kept in the small shed east of the office.

The chief scrap merchant is Delloch Boundstone (male dwarf). There's always at least one other scrap agent with him—they come and go frequently (no one stays at the job long). Delloch also, of course, has a guard dog: a hulking Rottweiler with a vicious demeanor.

Delloch Boundstone has spy stats.

Scrap agent has commoner stats.

Hulking Rottweiler has dire wolf stats.

The majority of the Midden Heaps is just what it sounds like: great mounds of scrap, trash, and waste. Many of the heaps rise 20 or even 30 feet, which makes wandering among them something of a labyrinthine experience. A rusted winch-driven crane sits behind one of the buildings. Once used to raise massive hunks of rubbish to the tops of the heaps, it long ago fell into disuse.

It comes as no surprise to anyone in Ptolus that such creatures as ratmen, goblins, and even otyughs (bulky, garbage-eating monsters with three elephantine legs, two spiked tentacles, and a third tentacle with eyes) make their homes among the refuse in the Midden Heaps. They dig their own hidey-holes and tunnels through the piles of waste and usually can get around the place without coming to the surface. Beneath at least one of the oldest, most massive heaps is a hidden entrance down into underground warrens that eventually join up with the sewer system. Near the center of the Midden Heaps lies a pool of oily wastewater, scourings, and runoff. It is full of horribly poisonous contaminants in which dwell a few dangerous oozes—mindless, giant amoeba-like creatures that exist only to eat.

Pared Cobart has artisan stats, page 606

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check can reveal some facts about the Masons' Guild:

- *The Masons' Guild is a guild in Ptolus (DC 8).*
- *The Masons' and Ironworkers' Guilds are enemies (DC 10).*
- *The Masons' Guild is quite corrupt (DC 12).*
- *The Masons work for the Balacazars (DC 21).*

Sewers, page 408

The various oozes are usually gray oozes or ochre jellies.

The humanoids and even the otyughs are smart enough to leave the scrap merchants alone, but they don't hesitate to attack anyone else who comes into the wasteyard. And, of

Scrap golems have flesh golem stats, with AC 13; they can use their action to heal themselves by adding loose, solid, nonliving matter to their bodies, healing 1 hp per pound added (usually about 10 hp per action).

Ularis Gadare, page 120

Shivvel, page 519

Themus Wuur has thug stats.

Mardun Narvesh has veteran stats.

Aggressive bar patrons have thug stats; they have disadvantage on attack rolls if drunk.

Thieves have scout stats.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check can reveal some basic facts about the Skull and Sword:

- *The Skull and Sword is a rough tavern in the Guildsman District (DC 13).*
- *The Back Room is an exclusive sex club in the back of the Skull and Sword (DC 21).*

course, the oozes in the Midden Heaps don't discriminate at all.

Scenario: Someone is using trash from the Midden Heaps to create strange constructs called scrap golems. These things wander out of the wasteyard and menace passersby, then fall apart after a short while. Their creator is a ratman mutant born with the ability to create these golems once per day, but they last for only about thirty minutes. The city is offering a 2,000-gp reward to anyone who will put a stop to the golem attacks, but Ularis Gadare (Kevris Killraven's lieutenant in the Guildsman District) is quietly promising 5,000 gp to anyone who can bring him the creator of the golems alive.

THE SKULL AND SWORD

Iron Street (#293, I7) ★ see map, page 171 725 gp

One of the roughest bars in Ptolus lies on Iron Street, on the edge of Midtown and the Guildsman District. Smoke and the stench of stale ale and sweat welcome patrons to the Skull and Sword. This small place is located below street level; the owner, Themus Wuur (male half-orc) lives above. The bar has two rooms, one below the other.

The taproom is above, where Themus or his only employee Mardun Narvesh (male human) tends the bar. Mardun is a hulking ex-wrestler who competed professionally until he was found to be fixing his matches and retired in disgrace.

The lower room is filled with tables, and curtains cover the walls. Behind one is a concealed door leading into the Back Room (see below).

The Skull and Sword serves no food and precious little beyond hard ale from a pyramid of kegs stacked on the back wall of the taproom. It is well known that shivvel dealers do business at the bar, giving Themus a cut of each transaction and free shivvel to feed his own addiction.

Encounter: Even characters being careful and quiet can find themselves suddenly facing a brawl with 1d6 or so aggressive bar patrons. The patrons may or may not be armed, and may or may not be drunk. If armed and not drunk, the thugs may pick a fight to cover up an attempted theft, with one or two thieves attempting to pick pockets or cut purses during the confusion of the brawl. Themus and Mardun do nothing to prevent or halt bar fights but claim the right to demand payment from

the loser to cover any damages. In the case of a fatality, they claim first right to loot the corpse.

THE BACK ROOM

Behind the Skull and Sword is a sadomasochism club simply called the Back Room. This ill-kept, rank place consists of a single room filled with manacles, chains, and various implements of torture. This is one of the few places in the surface city where one can find dark elves. In fact, the proprietor and Themus's partner is a woman named Ressis Kal (half-dark elf). Ressis is a world-weary, depraved, and decadent individual addicted to a common dark elf depressant called spidereye. Her body is covered with scars from masochistic behavior, and her missing left eye is covered by a patch. She knows Urshanna of Madame Kaethea's House well, although the two do not care for each other.

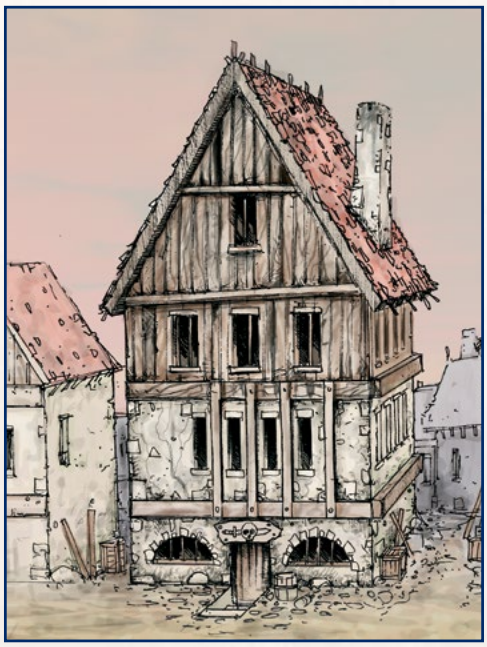
The Back Room is a fairly well-kept secret. Ressis pays a rogue to stay in the bar and watch the hidden door to the club. She always hires particularly canny, discriminating guards who only allow in those they think are "right for the place." Ressis pays them not only in gold but in service as well. Of course, a hefty bribe (an "entrance fee" of around 5 gp) can help get one in.

THE STAR JEWELERS

Storm Street (#296, I7); see map, page 171 50,000 gp

Their name in Dwarvish is Gurhorond, which means "craftsmen of the stars." The Star Jewelers work out of a round, two-story stone structure that stands like an obstinate shoulder among a number of rather typical Guildsman District buildings, making the others look flimsy and ramshackle by comparison. The workshop has an extensive underground level as well.

The Gurhorond are Stonelost dwarves, once a small clan unto themselves in Dwarvenhearth. There are only a dozen Gurhorond dwarves left in the city, and they all live in the Star Jewelers workshop. About half are artisans, and a few are businessmen, surprisingly diplomatic and friendly for dwarves. The rest are guards. The Gurhorond have an excellent reputation in Ptolus as nice folks, good businessmen, and fantastic jewelers. All are loyal members of the



One Man's Garbage...

Some spellcasters make it a regular practice to search the Midden Heaps with a magic-detecting spell. It's well known that magical items sometimes mistakenly end up in the heaps. Often they're damaged and have only a chance of functioning properly each time they are used or activated (the GM selects a percentage chance between 1 and 99). Roll once per day for most constant items. To determine the value of the damaged item, multiply its undamaged value by its chance of properly functioning.

Gurhorond artisans and businessmen have artisan stats (page 606). Gurhorond guards have defender stats (page 607).

Ressis Kal has arcanist stats (page 605) and (despite her dark elf heritage) normal half-elf traits.

Madame Kaethea's House, page 379

During the height of Dwarvenhearth, the Gurhorond dwarves fashioned items of unbelievable beauty and magical power. These included such items as gems that can see through illusions, gems that can create magical lights, jewel-studded helms that conjure fire, floating gems with various strange properties, and many other amazing objects. They even crafted items that today one might consider impossible, such as a throne carved from a single amethyst and armor made of diamond.

Jewelers' Guild, which is a relatively small and insignificant group, as guilds go.

The Gurhorond pay full price for any gem of good quality. Some they send to Kaled Del for metalworkers and jewelers to use. Others they use themselves to fashion great works of art, jewelry, and décor with gold, silver, or platinum settings. The very best gems, however, they give to Harla Glitterstrike (female dwarf), a dwarf mage surprisingly tall for her gender and race. Harla has perfected a unique weaker version of the *futuresight* spell that, when used with a gem of great purity, gives her some insight into the present or future of a random subject. She has no control over these visions.

The shop has a number of mechanical and magical alarms, protections, and traps to deter thieves.

Scenario: In another adventure, the player characters encounter and defeat a group of thieves. Amid the criminals' belongings are detailed plans of the Star Jewelers along with a description of how to rob them. If the party members take it and keep it, even for a short time, Harla learns of them using her *futuresight* spell and sees that they have detailed plans to rob the Star Jewelers. Soon she and a number of the Sisters of Silence show up to apprehend the PCs. After the group gets it all straightened out, Harla learns that the thieves the player characters took the plans from had previously taken them from other thieves. Once her spell reveals this information, Harla contacts the PCs for help in figuring out who the real thieves are and keeping them from the Star Jewelers.

Kaled Del, page 418

Harla Glitterstrike is a diviner who has mage stats.

Futuresight *spell, page 630*

Narya Itlestein has expert stats, page 609

Guilds Versus Independent Craftspeople

For obvious reasons, the various guilds look down on independent craftspeople. Thus, the Goldsmiths' Guild would not look favorably upon a new goldsmith coming into town. This enmity may result in coercion and even violence, depending on the guild. Still, many independent artisans fight hard to stay independent. They don't want another entity setting their prices and governing their business practices—or maybe they just don't want to pay the dues.

Helmut Itlestein, page 363

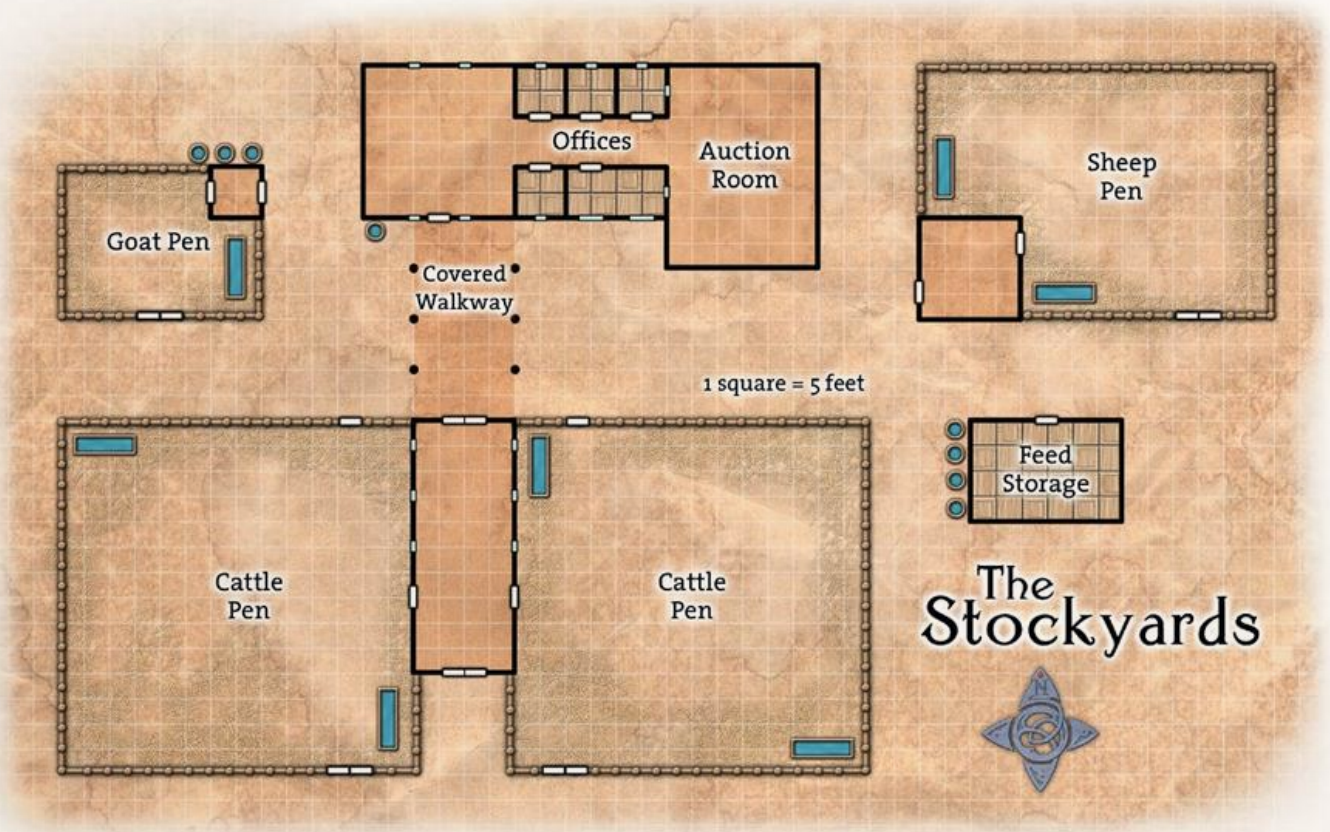
Sisters of Silence, page 127

THE STOCKYARDS

South Street (#289, I8); see map, below

1,800 gp

In a district of bad smells, one of the worst centers upon the Stockyards, where herders bring cattle, sheep, and other livestock to be sold, either to another herder or farmer, or to a buyer from the nearby slaughterhouse. At any given time, the place is filled with workers feeding, caring for, or separating the animals; wranglers bringing in more livestock; and buyers evaluating the stock and haggling over prices. The administrator of the yards is Narya Itlestein (female human), older sister of Watcher of the Skies high priest Helmut Itlestein. She is a severe woman with her hair cropped short around her thin, stern face. A shrewd businesswoman, Narya makes a great deal of profit for herself and her financial backers, but she is cruel to the workers and miserly with



money. She has no connection to or knowledge of her brother's scandalous activities, although she does attend services at his temple.

A number of centaurs work in the Stockyards, herding animals or performing other types of general labor. The most prominent of these aram is Hallidin (male centaur). Hallidin hates Narya and would love to see her ousted somehow. Most of the rest of the hired hands are human, with a few half-orcs; an orc, Ruballa (female orc); and an ogre, Smurd.

Scenario: The Plagueborn, a group of chaos cultists, managed to inject a number of cows coming into the stockyards with a magical virus to contaminate the beef. Mand Scheben—a cleric of Asche, God of Cities—discovered this plot, but too late. He comes to the player characters for help. He will provide them with a dose of antidote for each head of cattle, but the PCs must administer it surreptitiously, so that no one knows about it—even those working in the yards. To avoid a panic, Mand doesn't want the public to know about the potential risk, but he also doesn't want the cultists to know their plan was thwarted, lest they try again. In addition, Mand fears what Narya would do to her employees if she decided to blame them for the virus.

TABBY'S DEN

Stable Lane (#304, J7) ★★ see map, page 171 250 gp

Frequented by ironworkers and other laborers, this small bar serves those who have finished their shift at the Foundry or wherever else they work. Those who are not working-class laborers find no welcome here, but for its intended patrons Tabby's Den is a nice-enough place with decent beer and other drinks—as long as you don't mind the occasional cat hair in your mug. The owner, Tussi Moheath (female human), has a predilection for cats. She owns nine, all of which have free run of the bar. The plastered walls are covered in renderings of tabby cats, painted by Tussi herself.

Encounter: Player characters who come into Tabby's Den get the cold shoulder from the patrons and cool treatment from Tussi unless they are in disguise as common workers. If the PCs flaunt their wealth, ask a lot of questions, or otherwise bother the regular clientele, a few commoners may try to throw them out. Should the player characters start a fight, Tussi doesn't hesitate to summon the Watch. The guards like her a great deal and will take her side in the matter.

Tussi Moheath has commoner stats.

Hallidin the centaur: *45 hp*

Ruballa has thug stats and the Reckless ability of a berserker.

Plagueborn, page 76
Mand Scheben, page 353
Asche, page 71

Squatters present a problem anywhere there are abandoned buildings—and not all squatters are humans, as the goblins below demonstrate.

OTHER LOCALES IN THE GUILDSMAN DISTRICT

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Drapers' Guildhall		Drapers' Row (#307, J8)	Guildmaster Niles Chaman (male human artisan*)	4	—
Glassblowers' Guildhouse		Glass Street (#286, H8)	Guildmaster Caebraeth Willowlight (male elf artisan*)	2	—
Gunlar's Forge		Smith Street (#297, I8)	Gunlar Tobruk (male human artisan*)	2	Front for Uldrick Kord**
Hungry Halfling	★★	Jewelers' Way (#301, J9)	Jinni Stridetaker (female halfling expert*)	5	—
Monastery of Redemption		Lost Lady Street (#308, J9)	Brother Ophan (male human superior monk*)	23	See page 392
Nalaster's Mill		Weaponsmith Row (#290, H9)	Zed Harrock (male human expert*)	5	Lumber mill
St. Daris' Church		Vadarast Street (#306, J8)	Brother Dessenar Prowell (male human priest)	3	Temple of Lothian
The Slaughterhouse		South Street (#288, H8)	Exuni (female centaur veteran)	18	—
Tal Ingersol		Leather Street (#295, I7)	Tal Ingersol (female human expert*)	3	Leatherworker with a booth in the Undercity Market
Textile Workers' Guildhall		Textiles Street (#300, I9)	Guildmaster Dirvan Sargat (male human artisan*)	12	—
Tinsmiths' Guildhall		Smoke Street (#311, K9)	Guildmaster Kellina Styne (female human artisan*)	1	—
Towart's		Blunt Street (#292, I9)	Mikka Towart (female human commoner)	2	Tool shop
Warredin's Mill		Wayfarer's Street (#312, K9)	Alla Mavden (female human artisan*)	9	Flour mill
Weaponsmiths' Guildhall		Weaponsmith Row (#291, H9)	Guildmaster Narvallen Kedderis (male human artisan*)	5	—
Woodworkers' Guildhall		Wood Road (#298, I8)	Guildmaster Falen Jenn (male human artisan*)	5	—

* see Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604
** Uldrick Kord (male human) is the district's Balacazar crime boss; see page 106.

Kevris Killraven, page 119

Sorn, page 129

Stockyards, page 182

Skilled workers have expert stats, page 609

Laborers have commoner stats.

Yahn Runhald has artisan stats, page 606

ULLAR'S SONS' TANNERY

Tannery Street (#287, H8); see map, page 171 950 gp

Ullar Runhald was a skilled leatherworker who came into a great deal of money, although no one knows exactly how. Some say he inherited it, some say he stole it, and some say he found something of great value beneath the city. With his fortune, he built the largest tannery in Ptolus. Just before Ullar died, he changed the name of his business and left it to his four sons, who manage it today. Throughout Ptolus, "Ullar leather" is a term that indicates a quality leather product.

Hides from the Stockyards come to Ullar's Sons' Tannery in carts as heavily laden as their axles will allow. The establishment employs nineteen skilled workers and an equal number of laborers. The Runhald brothers control the influential Leatherworkers' Guild without much dispute.

Scenario: Yahn Runhald, youngest of the brothers, has lost a great deal of gold gambling—much more money than he actually has, in fact. Enforcers from a gambling den owned by Kevris Killraven threaten to burn down the tannery if he doesn't pay. Yahn wants to hire mercenaries to protect the tannery while he comes up with a way to pay his debts. However, the enforcers have brought the Sorn technomages into the situation. Killraven herself likes the idea of burning down Ullar's Sons' Tannery as a show of power and strength. It sends the message that *no one* resists Killraven.

OTHER LOCALES

Although it's not a complete listing by any means, GMs can use the table above to insert additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit the Guildsman District.

MISCELLANEOUS GUILDSMAN DISTRICT NPCs

Adventurers will meet many interesting people in the Guildsman District. Here are two that can be found in various places to make for intriguing encounters or entire adventures.

NALLETH FALCRON

Nalleth Falcron was an orphan given to the Masons' Guild, where she performed competently for years as a minor apprentice for some of the skilled sculptors. Sadly, she showed no promise of becoming a sculptor herself. It would seem that she was doomed to a life of toting heavy stones and barrels of chemicals, and washing tools.

One night, as she cleaned up in a workshop, she dropped a solvent-soaked rag into a bucket of other chemicals. When the rag began to smoke, she dumped the bucket on the floor in a panic. The rag adhered to the stone of the floor in an alchemical process and, without realizing what she had done at first, Nalleth invented an alchemical item called a stone mask.

The creation of the stone mask was no accident. Through a quirk of supernatural fate, Nalleth was possessed by her dead grandfather, Orden, whom she'd never met. Orden had been a powerful sorcerer and alchemist. He was also a homicidal maniac who delighted in the torture and slaying of others. Orden, working through Nalleth, created the stone masks for a distinct purpose. Using one of the masks, Nalleth/Orden sneaks into people's homes in the guise of friends or family and finds victims to capture, torment, and murder. Even when Orden is in control of Nalleth, she is aware of what she—rather, *he*—does.

Since Nalleth has no inherent magical aptitude, Orden cannot use his spells through her. Thus, under Orden's compulsion, she began training in the martial arts to help her deal with her victims more efficiently. She also learned how to stalk and observe her prey in secret, the better to learn details about when and where to strike, and in what guise. When possible, Nalleth robs her victims when she is done with them. She recently used her ill-gotten gains to purchase a second-hand magic shortsword with a long grip (so she can use it in both hands). She prefers this weapon because she can conceal it somewhat under a cloak.

Panic has begun to grip the residents of the Guildsman District as word spreads regarding the rash of murders. The City Watch brought in a diviner, but according to her spells, the murderer is a sorcerer named Orden Falcron, a man long dead. Because Nalleth is an orphan, no one knows that she is a Falcron, so no one has ever made a connection between her and the homicidal sorcerer. Those who know her would sooner expect to see a blue sun in the sky than to suspect her of murder.

Left to believe the culprit is an undead creature, the City Watch has called on the Keepers of the Veil, who have had no luck tracking it down. There is a 1,000-gp bounty on the head of the killer, whom the broadsheets have dubbed the Silent Slayer.

HADRIEN RUNIHAN

Hadrien tells people he meets for the first time that he is the descendant of Abesh Runihan, the famous hero who gives Runihan Square (Delver's Square) its name. While this is true, it's also misleading. Although he appears to be a twentyish human man, Hadrien is in fact Abesh's son, despite the fact that Abesh died well over a century ago. Hadrien is a vampire, cursed with the affliction as the final retaliation of the ghost-lich Kagrisos against his father.

Standing well over 6 feet tall with sandy blond hair and a square jaw, Hadrien can look handsome, but he does not flaunt his appearance. He typically wears a very wide-brimmed hat pulled down low in front of his face and a long leather coat. He continually smokes tobacco from a silver pipe made to look like a Lothianite crucifix, where Lothian's comically large mouth serves as the bowl of the pipe.

Hadrien, a friend of Menon Balacazar, is one of the six vampires of the Covenant of Blood. He hates Malkeen Balacazar and his affiliation with his void vampire bodyguard Na'haras. If given the chance, Hadrien would quickly side with either of Malkeen's sisters against him.

Until such time, he spends his nights in the Guildsman District, performing small tasks for the Balacazars and generally ingratiating himself with the power brokers of the guilds. Currently, he is quietly inquiring about Spyncer Coil's whereabouts.

Keepers of the Veil, page 117
Abesh Runihan and Kagrisos, page 111

Nalleth Falcron has spy stats, with AC 13 and +1 on melee attack and damage rolls; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: leather armor, +1 shortsword, stone masks (2), 21 gp.

Stone mask, page 527

Menon Balacazar, page 103
Covenant of Blood, page 103
Na'haras, page 104
Spyncer Coil, page 380

Hadrien Runihan, page 616

Vampires in the city can take the form of feral dogs rather than wolves. When they use their Children of the Night ability, they summon 1d6 + 1 rat swarms, 1d4 + 1 bat swarms, or 3d6 feral dogs.

During Orden's life, he himself was long possessed by his own grandfather, who also was a bloodthirsty sadist. This strange occurrence has plagued every other generation of the Falcron line for a very long time.

Chapter 10:

MIDTOWN

If Ptolus has a heart (though most people would say that it doesn't), it is Midtown. This is the crossroads of Ptolus, where common folks rub shoulders with the not-so-common, where everyone goes in order to get anywhere else, and where all newcomers to the city inevitably end up first. Midtown is the most cosmopolitan area of what is almost certainly the most cosmopolitan city in the world.

MIDTOWN IN BRIEF

Area: *473 acres*
Population: *About 14,000*
Primary Function: *Residential*
Primary Social Class: *Low to middle*
Delver's Square (H6)
Center Street (H6)

City Council, page 140

The largest district in the city, Midtown is bounded by the King's River on the north. But where the river dips south (at Carver Lane), the border veers north to Golden Elm Way to run along the Necropolis wall. Farther east, Midtown continues right up to the Cliffs of Lost Wishes and the Warrens, and to the south the district ends at Iron Street. The boundary between Midtown and the South Market is rather vague—it amounts to a diagonal line drawn between the north end of Carriage Row and the ramp up to Oldtown. The western border then runs north up along Dalen's Cliffs.

Midtown is twice as big as any other district of Ptolus. Frequent motions have come before the City Council to subdivide it into two separate districts. Holding up the motion's passage, however, is the furious debate among merchants, business owners, and city administrators as to exactly where the new border should go. If the parties ever manage to settle this issue, this division likely will happen.

Perhaps most significantly, Midtown is where the delvers and adventurers live, congregate, make their plans, and return with their treasures.

THE FLAVOR OF MIDTOWN

Midtown may be the most purely "Ptolus" section of town. This is where adventurers come, where a lot of nonhumans live—in essence, this is the hub of the city. "Everything passes through Midtown," the saying goes.

The streets are about 10 feet wide—15 feet wide in a few places, and Center Street, which traverses the entire district on a diagonal, is a full 20 feet wide. Regardless of their width, the streets are almost always crowded with locals going about their business and others just passing through to get to one of the Market wards, the Temple District, the Guildsman District, or Oldtown.

The smell of cooked meals mixes with the odor of garbage and sewage at times, but often the rainwater clears away the nastier refuse. A dog tethered to a hook in the door of a house barks at passersby. Children kick a ball around in front of the adjacent house. Across the street, a vendor with a wooden cart full of apples and pears sells her wares for a few coppers. The streets are full of people carrying things: their washing, freshly bought bread, a child or two, their trash to dump into the river, or a stack of newly printed broadsheets for distribution. And that's just for starters.

Midtown Map: Page 188

RUNNING MIDTOWN

Chances are, the player characters will spend a lot of time in Midtown—perhaps even the majority of their time in Ptolus. Adventurers congregate here, get supplied, sell loot, share information, and depart for the Undercity. Running Midtown likely will become very familiar to you.

Best of all, there are very few restrictions on what you can do with Midtown. Any kind of person—from beggar to noble, from thief to priestess, from powerful mage to savage barbarian—can be found here, if only just passing through.

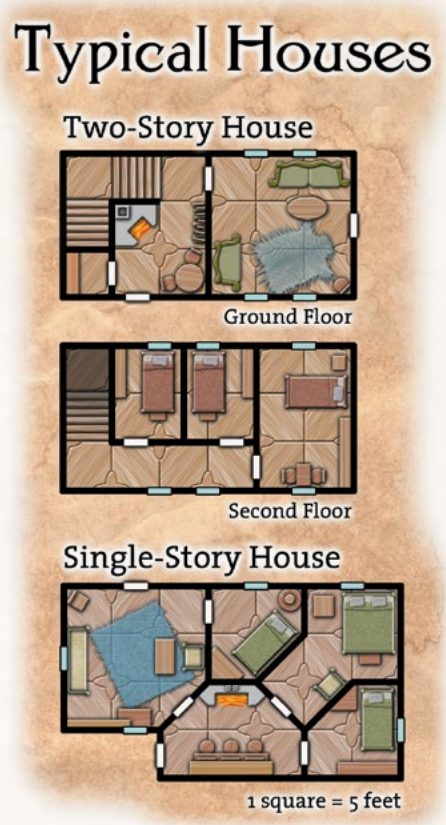
A campaign set in Ptolus can use Midtown from the time the player characters just start out as new adventurers until they reach the pinnacle of their power. If the players seem more interested in exploring dungeons than in the intrigues of the city, Midtown—specifically Delver's Square—can serve as a "mini" version of the city. That is to say, Delver's Square offers just about everything an adventuring group needs: a weapons shop, an armorer, an outfitter's, a tavern, a place to sleep, a place to sell loot, and even a small temple.

When the PCs are in Midtown, particularly in Delver's Square, don't hesitate to toss any kind of strange encounter at them. In many ways, the area around the square is the strangest part of town. Seeing someone riding a flying carpet, strolling along with a troll cohort or a dire bear companion, or surrounded by magical floating gemstones (or all of the above) is not out of the ordinary. A good rule of thumb when running Midtown is to make sure the player characters are not the strangest folks in the district. If one of the players has a minotaur PC, people should be surprised to see the minotaur, but not completely thrown for a loop. A minotaur warrior is certainly no stranger than the local ogre-mage cleric with a collection of *ioun stones*, for example.

PEOPLE OF MIDTOWN

Nonplayer characters in Midtown are more likely to be nonhuman than those encountered in other sections of the city. They are also far more likely to be adventurers, or to have an adventuring or PC-type background—although such characters are still the exception, even here.

People in Midtown seem even more jaded to the supernatural, the monstrous, and the strange than the standard residents of Ptolus.



For other home layouts, see the Rivergate District (page 317).

Delver's Square, page 188

PERSON ON THE STREET

Kord the Culler: Kord is not your typical Stonelost dwarf. Originally from Kaled Del, Kord now spends all his time in Ptolus. His job is to gather supplies not available to the dwarves in their underground community, like green vegetables, paper products, and wood, and send them down to his fellow dwarves beneath the city. He is never too busy to chat, however, and likes to talk about the dwarven community. Kord is always surprised that most people don't even know that Kaled Del exists. If someone shows real interest, he'll offer to lead them there (although other dwarves might not be as welcoming as he is).

Kaled Del, page 418

Ogre-mage cleric: see Urlenius, page 361

Aven Jellel: Aven is a tailor, but she wants to be a delver. This muscular human woman with medium-length brown hair is 5 feet 7 inches tall, and should she encounter obvious delvers on the street while running an errand or delivering garments for a customer, she likely will introduce herself and try to find out who they are and what they're doing. She's not necessarily interested in joining an adventuring party right now (although she would not turn down an offer), but she is looking toward the future and the possibility of getting some training or at least some pointers down the road.

Gaellas Icestar: Gaellas is a courier who does most of her work for Doraedian Mythlord, the master of Iridithil's Home. Gaellas, a female

Doraedian Mythlord, page 197

Iridithil's Home, page 197

MAP KEY

167. Passeon's Meats (page 209)
168. The Open Kitchen (page 209)
169. Sadie's Rest (page 209)
170. Cloud Theater (page 191)
171. Godam Martinelli (page 209)
172. Vaetrus' Wood (page 209)
173. Iridithil's Home (page 197)
174. North Point Restaurant (page 202)
175. Old Goose (page 209)
176. Exotic Stables (page 209)
177. Midtown Dance Hall (page 209)
178. Tillie's Furnishings (page 209)
179. Shar's Music (page 209)
180. Norber's House (page 209)
181. Trumnaught's Academy (page 209)
182. Old Lady Coss' (page 209)
183. Good Eats (page 209)
184. Copper Kettle (page 192)
185. Rat's Nest (page 209)
186. The Griffon (page 196)
187. Delver's Square (page 188)
188. Nubble's Music (page 209)
189. The Goat (page 195)
190. Black Swan (page 191)
191. Row Bathhouse (page 206)
192. Hell's Door (page 209)
193. Onyx Spider (page 203)
194. Sallin's Bakery (page 209)

Elven heritage, page 49

Emerald Hill, page 189

Abesh Runihan and Kagrisos, page 111

St. Gustav's Chapel, page 206

Undercity Market, page 394

halfling, has a strong affinity for her "elven" heritage and enjoys the company of elves even over that of her own species. She has very long black hair and a large scar on the side of her face and neck (she got it from being kicked in the face by a horse). Seen frequently all over town, she typically goes back and forth between Emerald Hill and Oldtown or the Nobles' Quarter. She can be somewhat gruff, simply because she is always hurrying somewhere.

MIDTOWN RUMORS

Ice Madness. A number of mid- to high-power wizards and sorcerers are said to be succumbing to a strange madness that grips them with the need to become colder and colder. Ultimately, they end up killing themselves with spells of cold and ice.

Someone Else's Misfortune. Marta Thone, the widow of an adventurer slain in the Dungeon beneath the city, is interested in selling her husband Niles's gear cheaply. Among his gear is said to be a map or two of unexplored areas.

Down on His Luck. Brother Fabitor Thisk of St. Gustav's Chapel, just off Delver's Square, is having a difficult time convincing his superiors in the Church to keep his temple funded and operational. Many think the little chapel will get shut down if someone doesn't do something to raise at least 1,000 gp.

MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS

Unlike most other districts in the city, one can break down Midtown into different neighborhoods, each with its own name and distinctive feel. None of these neighborhoods are districts unto themselves, although some of them are larger than the Warrens.

DELVER'S SQUARE

Comprising the square itself and the area surrounding it in about a five- or six-block radius, Delver's Square lies near the center of Midtown, on Center Street between Tavern Row and Lower God Row. It serves as a central focus for adventurers who come to the city. Originally called Runihan Square, the place was named after the heroic fighter Abesh Runihan, who slew the evil ghost-lich Kagrisos as it was about to loose a terrible plague upon the city. A 14-foot statue of Runihan stands in the center of the square before a round fountain. Aside from hosting a number of businesses, most of which cater to adventurers, Delver's Square also contains the main entrance to the Undercity Market: a wide staircase right behind the statue.

195. St. Gustav's Chapel (page 206)
196. Saches (page 206)
197. Albester's Breads (page 209)
198. Courier Office (page 209)
199. Avery's Armor (page 190)
200. Ammel's (page 209)
201. Kerrik's (page 209)
202. Cal's Construction (page 209)
203. Full Larder (page 209)
204. Jurrin's Plaza (page 190)
205. Yammer's Boots (page 209)
206. Qualin's Books (page 209)
207. Ged's Cabinets (page 209)
208. Shadow Sendings (page 209)
209. Bookbindery (page 209)
210. Ladris' Fine Foods (page 199)
211. "Empty" House (page 209)
212. Wilian's Keys (page 209)
213. Effahlia's Meatpies (page 209)
214. Larkspur Boarding House (page 209)
215. Lomwell's Office (page 209)
216. Daykeeper's Chapel (page 209)
217. Deymid's Body Art (page 209)
218. Marial Tabbott (page 209)
219. Fish Market (page 193)
220. Havan's Haven (page 196)
221. Terrek Nal's House (page 208)
222. Tenpin Children's Home (page 209)
223. Potions and Elixirs (page 209)

Businesses in the actual Delver's Square (not the entire neighborhood) include the Bull and Bear Armory, Danbury's, Ebbert's Outfitters, the Ghostly Minstrel, Myraeth's Oddities, Potter's Hostel, and Rastor's Weapons. See the map on page 18 and in the packet.

The Delver's Square neighborhood includes the nearby Tavern Row, an infamous street of many bars, inns, and restaurants.

EMERALD HILL

Named for its greater than normal volume of trees, shrubbery, and grassy lawns, the Emerald Hill neighborhood is a favorite among the elves. It is generally considered one of the nicer, safer neighborhoods in Midtown, if not in all of Ptolus. Unlike the rest of the city, here almost all the buildings are uniformly made only of wood (no stone). Most are built in the elven style, with sloping span roofs and an angular or curved layout rather than rectangular. Tree-lined boulevards are common in the area, as are small but verdant parks.

As the city has a total elf population of about seventy-five hundred, all local elves by no means live in this one neighborhood. That said, most of the thousand or so people who do live in Emerald Hill are elves and half-elves.

At the heart of Emerald Hill (at the literal top of the hill) lies a walled compound known as Iridithil's Home. It has a small temple, a number of gardens, and other services, but it primarily offers elves an elaborate inn and restaurant. Here, some of the city's more prominent and influential elves congregate in surroundings free of other species.

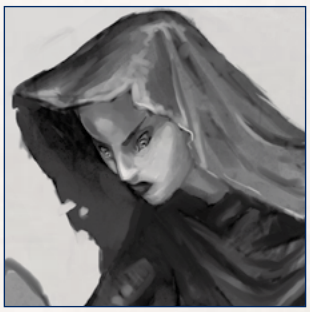
FAIRBRIAR

Once the Fairbriar neighborhood was a community devoted to gnomes and, to a lesser extent, halflings. In the last twenty years, however, enough humans and elves have moved into the neighborhood to change the tenor of the place. Now Fairbriar, located just south of Emerald Hill, is home to about two hundred fifty gnomes, one hundred halflings, two hundred humans, and around one hundred elves.

About half the houses and tenements in this primarily residential area are sized for short folk. The doorways are only 4 to 5 feet high, and the windows stand only 2 feet from the floor.

Fairbriar gets its name from the street that runs through the neighborhood, known for a number of good restaurants and a handful of shops that cater to the needs of smaller folk (clothing, furniture, tools, and so on). Humans

Iridithil's Home, page 197



Emerald Hill contains a popular elf refuge called Iridithil's Home, named for a long-ago elf noted for her hospitality.

For additional store layout options, see the North Market (page 278) and South Market (page 325) districts.

Lately, more and more litorians are leaving the Mane to live in more conventional dwellings in the city, and fewer tribal litorians come here to live. In five or ten years, the Mane may once again become a park.

and elves have moved into the neighborhood in recent years because of its proximity to an excellent school and good eateries. Some of the finest musical instrument shops are found in Fairbriar as well.

KATTERWOOD

A few thousand halflings reside across Ptolus. Of all the nonhuman species, halflings seem least interested in keeping to themselves. They enjoy mixing with other species—particularly elves and humans, whom they quite like. The more clannish halflings, however, live either in Fairbriar or in Katterwood. Populated almost exclusively by halflings and humans, Katterwood is a friendly and welcoming place, often alive with music.

The central square of Katterwood, known as Jurrin's Plaza, is filled with the traditional nomadic pony-wagons that halflings employ as they travel. Most wagons are very old and haven't moved in decades.

LONGBOTTOM

The southern strip of Midtown is named after the neighborhood's longtime nickname. Mostly an extension of the Guildsman District, the Longbottom area is filled with a strange hodgepodge of warehouses and tenements, with a few private homes. In this rough neighborhood, many of the older buildings stand empty and abandoned.

City Watch, page 141

The aram word for distrust is "toloss," pronounced the same way as the name of the city. The centaurs are fond of pointing out this coincidence whenever something in Ptolus displeases them.

Litorian residents include the tough Marath (male, guard stats), who wears an eyepatch; Sanul (male, defender stats, page 607), a bodyguard; and Dessa (female, scout stats), a mercenary monk.

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see the NPC Appendix, page 604.

Avery Tannenboss has artisan stats, page 606

THE MANE

Once a simple but large park not far from Emerald Hill, the Mane is now the primary domain of the litorians of Ptolus. Humans gave the place its "punny" name, but it has stuck; the litorians who live there either don't care or are oblivious to the fact that it was meant to be a joke. (Obviously, in Litorian, "mane" and "main" are not homonyms.)

Standing in the Mane, which is filled with tents and small campsites complete with cookfires, does not feel like standing anywhere else in Ptolus. You can almost forget you are in the middle of a large city.

The folk of the Mane have no sense of land ownership, adopting the more communal aspect of the tribes of the south. Thus, anyone—even a nonlitorian, in theory—can come to the Mane, pick a spot, and call it home. The nearby folk, if treated nicely, might even give the newcomer a bedroll and some food. Nevertheless, most obvious outsiders, specifically nonlitorians with no litorian to vouch for them, may receive only cold, intimidating stares and clear distrust. Not everyone can find a *welcome* home here.

The City Watch does not patrol the Mane—not out of fear of the place, but because there's no need. The litorians take care of their own, keeping the peace and maintaining order. They would not think of turning over a thief to the guards. They would deal with the wrongdoer on their own, and probably quite harshly. Despite the fact that most people avoid the area, the Mane may be one of the safest places in the city for someone looking to avoid trouble and willing to show the other inhabitants some respect.

NARRED

In the centaur tongue, the word for home is "narred." The aram of Ptolus are few in number, except when compared to other cities, and almost all seven hundred or so call this neighborhood home. Not surprisingly, most of the structures here are single story and, according to aram tradition, long and narrow.

MIDTOWN LOCATIONS

Midtown has quite a large number of interesting and varied locations of note.

AVERY'S ARMOR

Fenton Street (#199, H6) see map, page 188 9,950 gp

Avery Tannenboss (male human) is jealous of the Bull and Bear (see below), especially due to the store's prime location in Delver's Square. To make up for the fact that the competition gets

most of the adventurers' business, Avery tries to cater to high-end customers, such as the nobility or wealthy delvers willing to go somewhere else (and pay more) for something special. Only in business for a few years, Avery has yet to attract much of the noble crowd, but he is gaining a reputation as an armor *artiste*. In other words, Avery's Armor is the place to go for intricate scrollwork or a specific decorated motif to adorn one's armor or shield. He also makes armor for odd creatures, like a centaur, tamed beast, or troll, and is willing to work with such materials as mithral and adamantine.

Encounter: Charnoth (male litorian) is in the shop when the player characters arrive, trying to convince Avery to make barding for his brown bear companion, Chrondar. Avery seems nervous about trying to take the bear's measurements.

Charnoth is a ranger with spy stats.

BLACK SWAN

Tavern Row (#190, H6) ★ see map, page 188 350 gp

The sign over the door to this tavern has a faded black swan painted upon it. The inside is dingy, the floor is dirty, the tables are splintered wood, and the walls are bare—yet the clientele doesn't seem to mind one bit. On the contrary, all who pass by on the street can hear raucous singing and laughter coming from inside. This is a jovial place full of drunk or half-drunk dwarves, the tavern's primary patrons. Strangely, the proprietor, Migos Foraeth (male half-elf), is not a dwarf. The Black Swan is known for the drink it's named after, a foul dwarvish concoction that even Migos can't stomach. This tavern is no stranger to the occasional brawl, but most such skirmishes are fairly good natured.

Scenario: All over Midtown, a human named Toman Etherin has posted signs offering a reward for the return of his missing daughter. The notices direct inquiries to the Black Swan. Toman is an acquaintance of Migos, who serves as the go-between between Toman and any would-be rescuers. The girl, fourteen years old, disappeared the day before yesterday near Iron Street. If the PCs follow it up, they eventually discover she's been kidnapped by chaos cultists of the Tolling Bell, who plan on sacrificing her in a ceremony under the city in two days.

BULL AND BEAR ARMORY

Delver's Square (#187, H6) see map, pages 18 and 188 7,950 gp

Brothers Hirus and Sholum Feek (human males), the two blacksmiths who operate the Bull and Bear, don't forge anything fancy. They buy and sell armor brought to them (sometimes after repairing or refitting it), and they create armor harnesses to order. They cannot create magic armor, but more often than not, they've got some basic magical armor (typically studded leather, chain mail, or breastplate) on hand.

Those in need of adventuring parties can post signs like the one to the left in Delver's Square.

Sometimes they have more or better armors as well. On any given day, they generally have a 40 percent chance of having a magical set of any light or medium armor, a 30 percent chance of having a magical shield, a 20 percent chance of having a suit of magical heavy armor, and a 5 percent chance of having something better—either *+2 armor* or something with a special quality. They keep such special wares in a vault in the back of the shop (3-inch-thick steel door with three locks).

Typical magical armors at the Bull and Bear are +1 armor. The rare exceptional armor is probably +2 or perhaps has a special quality like an arrow-catching shield.

Vault locks: *DC 24 Sleight of Hand check*

More than other merchants in Delver's Square, Hirus and Sholum keep to themselves. They've hired a sixteen-year-old, Iltumar Shon (male human), as a clerk. Iltumar longs for adventure. He eagerly listens to the tales of those who come into the shop, if they're willing to tell. His fascination makes him a surprisingly good source of information, although he believes every adventuring tale he's told, even fairly obvious lies or exaggerations.

Iltumar Shon has commoner stats.

CLOUD THEATER

Dragon Street (#170, F6); see map, page 192 630 gp

Although most people think of theatre as something in the purview of only the rich, the Cloud Theater offers drama, musicals, and other entertainment for the middle and lower classes. Liss Satorosh (female human) owns the theater, and Marlow Atrabonc (male human) is her primary director and writer. Marlow originally hails from Dohrinthas and pretends to be much higher class than he really is, something Liss has always been able to see right through. Still, he knows much more about putting on productions than she, and he does have some talent.

In order to open the theater, Liss had to borrow a great deal of gold from a Balacazar-owned moneylender. Because of this—and proving there's more to organized crime than, well, crime—the Balacazars occasionally take an active hand in her productions. For example, Maystra Balacazar fancies her son, Dullin, a talented boy soprano. Recently she forced Marlow to cast him as the star in his next stage production. Not one to argue with a member of the Balacazar family, Marlow has penned a musical centered around Dullin called, imaginatively, *The Boy Who Could Sing*.

Migos Foraeth of the Black Swan is a welcoming sort, a man who remembers his friends but forgets his enemies. Not that he has many enemies—he is well liked by all. Some say that any half-elf who can befriend most of the dwarves in Ptolus must be practically a saint.

Migos Foraeth has commoner stats.

Toman Etherin has commoner stats.

Liss Satorosh has commoner stats.

Marlow Atrabonc has scout stats and knows a few 1st-level bard spells.

Dohrinthas, page 46

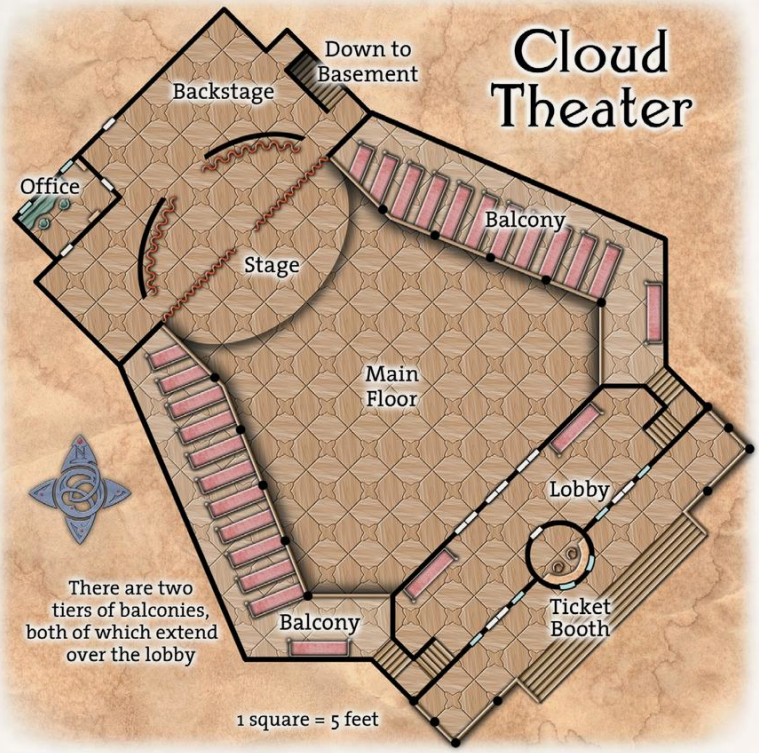
Tolling Bell cult, page 77

Maystra Balacazar, page 104

Hirus and Sholum Feek have artisan stats, page 606

The Feeks and Iltumar appear in The Night of Dissolution, *a Ptolus adventure (see page 11).*

The Boy Who Could Sing *opens Waterdays through Theodays (dark Queensdays and Airdays). Curtain rises at 19th Hour, with a matinee every Theoday at 14th Hour. Admission is 3 cp.*



The middle-aged human women have commoner stats.

Tabor Danbury has expert stats (page 609) and knows a few 1st-level sorcerer spells.

Oron Bridgemaster has commoner stats.

Dullin Balacazar, page 104
Runebearers, page 62
Helmut Itlestein, page 363
Dreaming Apothecary, page 116
Renn Sadar, page 99
Arkhall Vaugn, page 105
Gattara Vladaam, page 102
Inlios Pabovini, page 332
Zairic Westridon, page 337
Myraeth Tuneweaver, page 199
Kaira Swanwing, page 121

People around town joke about how the "wizard bar" (Danbury's) has a dwarf bartender and the "dwarf bar" (the Black Swan) has an elf bartender—half-elf, actually.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

A DC 15 Investigation check reveals that Danbury's is the place to come to contact the Dreaming Apothecary regarding a magic item order.

Longbottom, page 190

Frastis Bek has artisan stats, page 606

Scenario: Dullin Balacazar is a runebearer, although his mother and most others believe his rune to be a strange birthmark. Helmut Itlestein, seeking to kill all runebearer children born in the city, pays a group of thugs to go to the Cloud Theater and kill the boy on opening night. This dim-witted bunch has no idea he is the grandson of the crime lord Menon Balacazar. Word of their intentions reaches Marlow, who hires the player characters to protect the boy, with one condition: they cannot allow the show to be interrupted. Marlow cannot permit this affair to ruin the production, and he certainly can't allow Dullin to be harmed—in either case, he would probably meet a bad end. The PCs may or may not know they are protecting a Balacazar; if there's any chance that it would dissuade them from helping, Marlow will not tell them.

COPPER KETTLE

Center Street (#184, G7) ●●● see map, page 188 ! 2,400 gp

The extremely talented coppersmith Frastis Bek (male human) owns and operates the Copper Kettle. He has a staff of four, including his wife and oldest daughter. Frastis has trouble with his thirteen-year-old son, Garreth, who has joined a small gang of young toughs that hangs around the Longbottom neighborhood. This gang commits small larcenies and gets into frequent brawls.

Encounter: Two middle-aged human women stand outside the Copper Kettle gossiping about Frastis's son. They remark that Frastis needs the help of someone "with a greater backbone than he" to control the boy and put a stop to the gang's activities.

DANBURY'S

Delver's Square (#187, H6) ●●● ★★★ see map, pages 18 and 188 !! 5,200 gp

Danbury's caters to wizards and sorcerers. Most of the customers are mages who come to be with kindred souls. Here they conduct business and trade secrets and spells. An agent handing out tokens for the Dreaming Apothecary is virtually always present, handling paperwork at a table right in the pub.

Tabor Danbury (male human) serves as the proprietor, Oron Bridgemaster (male dwarf) as the bartender. Tabor is in the process of wooing a young lady who works as a server in the Ghostly Minstrel, so ironically he spends as much or more time in that establishment as in his own.

In addition to being a place for mages, Danbury's is known for its artwork. Paintings hang on the walls and small sculptures sit on the bar or in niches in the walls. It is quite the honor for artists to have their work displayed in Danbury's, almost as if the tavern were an upscale art gallery. In the past, Danbury's has even hosted magical artwork in the form of paintings with animated scenes, sculpted clay faces that float about and sing, and busts that transform themselves to look like the person viewing them. Wealthy patrons frequently purchase the artwork, so it's always changing.

The clientele of Danbury's includes such a strange mixture of people as Lord Renn Sadar, Arkhall Vaugn of the Balacazar family, Gattara Vladaam, Inlios Pabovini, Zairic Westridon, Myraeth Tuneweaver, and Kaira Swanwing.

EBBERT'S OUTFITTERS

Delver's Square (#187, H6) ●● see map, pages 18 and 188 ! 20,000 gp

Ebbert Boltcrafter, a rotund, good-natured dwarf, runs a business designed specifically with the adventurer in mind. Those entering his shop will find spools of hundreds and hundreds of feet of rope, barrels and barrels of torches, and tools ranging from a simple spike and mallet set to the most intricate of lockpicks.

Ebbert pushes odd equipment that a new (or even not-so-new) delver might not think to take along, like chalk to mark passageways (he sells chalk in a dozen different colors). He also sells signal whistles along with a short, free list of

easy-to-use codes (two quick blows for danger, one long and one quick to signal that you found something good, and so on) to help a group communicate underground while out of sight of one another. He invented and sells the following items: collapsible 10-foot pole, multiflask, rat harness, trapfinder ball, and wand sheath, as well as clever inventions by other adventurers such as breather masks and dark goggles.

Ebbert sells neither weapons nor armor, and he doesn't buy used merchandise. For these needs, he recommends Rastor's, the Bull and Bear, or Myraeth's Oddities, respectively.

Ebbert lives above the shop with his brother, Tully. Both are former adventurers, but Tully took one too many blows to the head in their last battle. Now he can barely care for himself, so Ebbert watches over both his brother and the shop.

Members of the Delver's Guild enjoy a 10 percent discount at Ebbert's Outfitters.

See chapter 29 for information about new adventuring equipment.

Ebbert Boltcrafter has spy stats.

Tully Boltcrafter has commoner stats due to his permanent injuries. If they were ever cured, he would have spy stats.

Ebbert loves new inventions such as the collapsible 10-foot pole and the spring-loaded wand sheath. He would be thrilled if someone came to him with new, innovative equipment designs and likely would pay handsomely for the exclusive right to sell the equipment in his shop. He'd be particularly happy if he could pay in store credit.

Rastor's Weapons, page 204
Bull and Bear, page 191
Myraeth's Oddities, page 199
Delver's Guild, page 108

FISH MARKET

Seamist Street (#219, M5) see map, page 189 1,050 gp (during the day only)

Located at the top of the cliffs above the Docks, the Fish Market sells seafood caught in the nets of local fishermen that morning and brought up in carts. The daily catch is sold to vendors in other markets and shops, as well as to restaurateurs. Originally, the Fish Market was located in the Docks and called the Fishmonger's Market. In fact, it was the very first commodities market in Ptolus. The current location, more accessible than the old one, is a large building filled with wooden stalls that are occupied on a first-come, first-served basis early every morning. It remains a bustling, crowded place until around noon, after which it becomes quiet. By midafternoon, it's vacant.

Scenario: When the player characters ask around after their pockets are picked, they learn that an unaffiliated thieves' ring uses the Fish Market as a base of operations at night, clearing out before the vendors arrive each morning. The marketplace is big enough and the thieves sneaky enough that, even if the PCs show up to recover what they've lost, finding the pickpockets among the stalls and bins will be tricky.

GHOSTLY MINSTREL

Delver's Square (#187, H6) ★★★ see map, page 195 4,230 gp

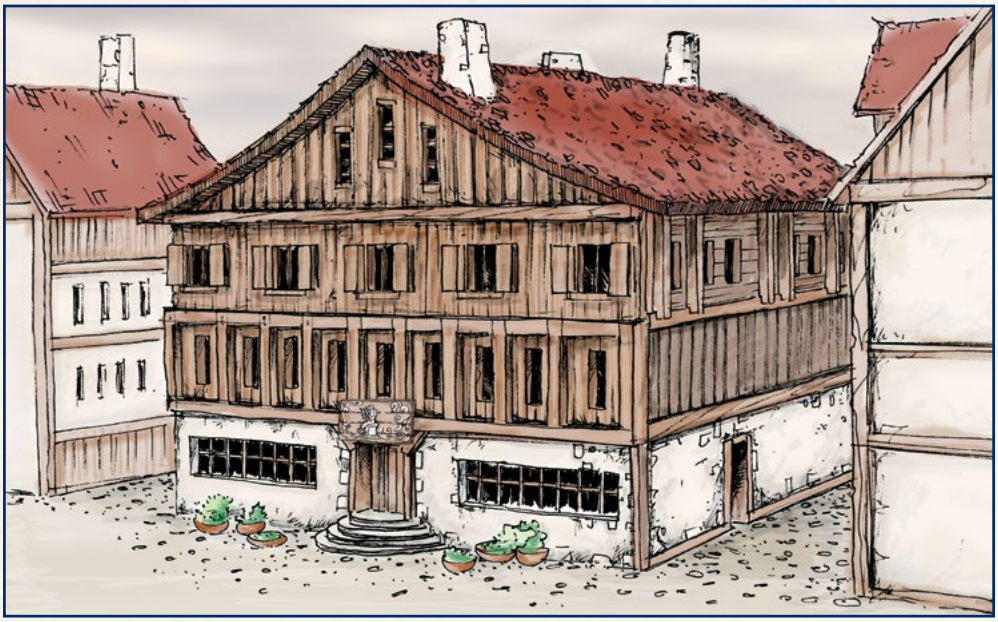
An inn, a pub, and a restaurant all in one, the Ghostly Minstrel is the adventurer's meeting place of choice. It has earned a reputation as the central feature of Delver's Square and the focal point in the world of the delvers who plumb the depths below the city.

The Fishwranglers

"Fishwranglers" is the name given to the people whose sole job it is to transport fresh fish from the nets of fishermen on the Docks to the Fish Market at the top of the Cliffs of Lost Wishes. Ascending the road that snakes up the 500-foot-tall cliffs with a cartful of fish is no simple job. A few fishwranglers use mules to pull their carts, but most, surprisingly enough, use handcarts and push or pull their loads up the winding path themselves. The best and most physically fit fishwranglers can get up the cliffs with a load in under a half hour and go down in less than twenty minutes.

To say someone has the "heart of a fishwrangler" is to say that they are exceptionally fit, with impressive stamina, strength, and speed.

Tarin Ursalatao has performer stats, page 612



On its second and third floors, the inn has a total of thirty guest rooms. A night's stay at the Ghostly Minstrel costs 5 sp, 7 sp, 1 gp, or 2 gp, depending on the room's size and location. Keeping a horse overnight in the stables behind the inn costs an additional 5 sp.

Vard Hillman (human male), the owner of the Ghostly Minstrel, keeps a low profile. Although he is there most days, he spends his time in the kitchen or in his makeshift office in the third-floor storeroom. The faces of the Ghostly Minstrel are Tellith Herdsman (female human), a young woman with reddish-brown hair who works the front desk and manages the inn portion of the establishment, and Zade Kenevan (human male), a bald, skinny, and gruff bartender who remembers virtually everyone who comes in.

Vard Hillman has expert stats, page 609

Tellith Herdsman has commoner stats.

Zade Kenevan has expert stats, page 609

Regulars include such luminaries as Sheva Callister, Daersidian Ringsire, Jevicca Nor, Rastor, Steron Vsool, Urlenius the Star of Navashtrom, Araki Chipestiro, Mand Scheben, and the Runewardens.

Sheva Callister, page 208
Daersidian Ringsire, page 213
Jevicca Nor, page 115
Rastor, page 204
Steron Vsool, page 359
Urlenius, page 361
Araki Chipestiro, page 314
Mand Scheben, page 353
Runewardens, page 542
Keepers of the Veil, page 117

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check can reveal the following about the Ghostly Minstrel:

- *The Ghostly Minstrel is a pub and inn in Delver's Square (DC 11).*
- *The Ghostly Minstrel is the premier watering hole for delvers and adventurers of all kinds (DC 13).*
- *Causing trouble in the Ghostly Minstrel likely will bring down some of the most powerful individuals in Ptolus upon you (DC 15).*
- *A ghostly minstrel actually does haunt the inn (DC 17).*
- *The current roster of common clientele includes those listed above (DC 20).*

In recent weeks, about every other night the taproom has a minstrel named Tarin Ursalatao (male human) performing and entertaining customers. Tarin is an amazing draw, particularly to the female clientele—he has a magnetic sort of charm in addition to his fabulous good looks. The truth of Tarin is that he was once an elf, but was slain and then *reincarnated* as a human. Even as an elf, he was astonishingly charismatic, but now his rugged human good looks mixed with his elvish charm have created a winning combination.

Scenario: The Ghostly Minstrel, as its name suggests, is haunted. Those staying in the inn, particularly on the third floor, report encounters with the spirit of a dead bard pacing the halls and strumming upon a lyre. "The Minstrel," as he's called, is not hostile and never inflicts any harm.

Still, the Keepers of the Veil would like to see the spirit exorcised permanently, despite the fact that Vard, the tavern's owner, does not want the Minstrel chased away or destroyed; he feels the spirit is a sort of patron of the place, providing good fortune, not bad. He might commission the player characters to stop the Keepers of the Veil from dealing with the Minstrel, although the undead-hunting knights would not hesitate to sneak onto the upper floors of the inn to do their duty.

Campaign Use: The Ghostly Minstrel will most likely be a central focus in a Ptolus Campaign. It is a place for the PCs to meet and discuss plans amid similar company. They can arrange meetings here with NPCs—or perhaps meet important and influential characters by happenstance.

Midtown Map: Page 188

The Ghostly Minstrel is the kind of place that will be as important to the characters at the start of their adventuring career as it is to them when they are among the mightiest people in the city. It is a never-ending source of adventure hooks and can become a familiar touchstone for the PCs.

THE GOAT

Tavern Row (#189, G6) ★★ see map, page 188 980 gp

"Trespassers will be killed," reads the sign over the entrance to the Goat. Only a small, crude, and faded painting of a goat on the stone wall next to the door suggests the place's actual name.

The Goat is a small pub on Tavern Row known as a quiet place to get drunk quickly. The drink is hard and moderately priced. There are no minstrels or entertainments here, and raucous behavior is dealt with harshly by the three large and capable bouncers. The all-human staff and regular clientele treat nonhumans particularly coldly.

The Goat's owner and full-time bartender is Larek Brawlen (male human). He's been running the place for almost twenty years. An older man with thin grey hair and a scraggly beard, he is sullen most of the time and cranky if disturbed.

THE GHOSTLY MINSTREL

Vard Hillman, Proprietor -- Delver's Square

Soups, Stews, & Breads

Vegetable Stew ..... 9 copper pennies
With potato dumplings, cabbage, onions, carrots, and garlic. Served with new bread.

Goose Liver and Bean Soup ..... 5 copper pennies

Creamy Mushroom Soup ..... 2 copper pennies

Breadroll with Sage Pork Stuffing ..... 8 copper pennies

Fish

Fresh Milk-Fried Haddock ..... 1 silver shield
Served with lemon pepper sauce and mashed yams.

Pickled Herring on Flatbread ..... 2 silver shields
Served with buttered potatoes.

Meat Dishes

Beef and Vegetable Pasties ..... 2 silver shields
Three pastry shells filled with beef and succulent seasonal vegetables.

Roast Mutton Chops ..... 4 silver shields
Two chops with creamy tomato-basil sauce, served with roasted garlic potatoes.

Grilled Pork Sausage Links ..... 3 silver shields
Spicy, served with onions and peppers.

Poultry

Roast Goose with Raisin Sauce ..... 7 silver shields
Served with potatoes and leeks.

Game Hen with Rosemary Bread Stuffing ..... 2 silver shields
Served with turnips and greens.

Cold Plates

Loaf of bread and cheese ..... 5 copper pennies

Sliced fruit and cheese ..... 4 copper pennies

Cherry-filled honeyed bun ..... 2 copper pennies

Herring and oatmeal ..... 5 copper pennies

Cold roasted beef and raspberry sauce ..... 6 copper pennies

Desserts

Sweet pudding with almonds ..... 8 copper pennies

Slice of blackberry pie ..... 7 copper pennies

Glazed apple slices ..... 6 copper pennies

Dish of sugar dragons ..... 7 copper pennies

You'll find a full-sized Ghostly Minstrel menu in the packet.

For advice on how to behave in places like the Ghostly Minstrel, see A Dozen Rules of Tavern Etiquette on page 205.

Bouncers have thug stats.

Larek Brawlen has expert stats, page 609

There is a rousing, cheerful song that people sing about the Griffon called "The Griffon's Got a Full Mug." This song is sung in the tavern itself, of course, but elsewhere as well—its popularity has even spread outside the walls of Ptolus.

Herbalists' Guildhall, page 178

Yul Havan has expert stats, page 609

Melanope Havan has expert stats, page 609

Onyx Spider, page 203
Ghostly Minstrel, page 193

Nella Schaun has expert stats, page 609

Republicans, page 142
Three Emperors, page 91
City Council, page 140

THE GRIFFON

Tavern Row (#186, H6) ★★★ see map, above 3,870 gp

Another mainstay of Tavern Row, the Griffon is both a tavern and an inn. One can identify this two-story building easily by the large mural of a rearing griffon painted on one wall. The tavern, its kitchen, and a pantry comprise the entire lower floor of the Griffon, while the upper floor has ten rooms to let. The tavern offers food, mainly just whatever is cooking over the fire that night (occasionally a roasting pig or a flank of beef, but usually a big pot of lamb or beef stew) as well as a few other dishes: a plate of bread, cheese and a little fruit, a plate of fried potatoes and onions in gravy, or a cooked meat pie.

The Griffon, which caters to the common folk, enjoys a reputation as a friendly, safe place to drink or eat. It avoids the sinister associations of such places as the Onyx Spider and the adventurous nature of establishments like the Ghostly Minstrel. Nella Schaun (female human) is the manager of the Griffon, but it's owned by a group of silent investment partners. The tavern is full to bursting every night, with most rooms filled as well, so the place earns a good amount of coin.

HAVAN'S HAVEN

Bookman Street (#220, K6) see map, page 189 1,770 gp

Yul Havan (male human) is a barber. In Ptolus, that means he not only cuts hair and shaves beards, but he also administers all sorts of poultices and offers minor cures for such ailments as warts, shingles, and vision problems. His location not far from the Herbalists' Guildhall means that he's always well supplied with remedies.

Yul's great-great-grandfather founded the business more than one hundred fifty years ago, and every generation since has produced a barber to run the Haven. Yul is getting old and has no sons, so he plans on turning his place over to his daughter, Melanope (female human), very soon.

Encounter: A group of local men has gathered here to discuss politics. The prevailing opinion is that the Commissar should declare the city's independence from the Empire.

This is a good opportunity to drop in information or rumors about the republicans, the conflict of the three Emperors, and the rumors that the City Council will soon add a fourth member to what had been, up until now, a tribunal.

Midtown Map: Page 188

IRIDITHIL'S HOME

Emerald Way (#173, G5) ★★★★
see map, below 28,500 gp

Often called the Elven Sanctuary, this compound is for elves only. The master of the house is Doraedian Mythlord, a regal, even-tempered male Shoal elf with long grey hair and intense eyes. The elves of Ptolus look to Doraedian as their *de facto* leader, although no one—least of all Doraedian—would ever really put it like that. He looks after elven concerns in the city, and the elves (and most non-elves) give him the respect he is due as a wise and generous administrator. Doraedian is soft-spoken, generous, fair, and quite noble. Only at the mention of dark elves does his demeanor crack to show true hatred.

Doraedian has a large staff to help him look after the sanctuary and his other concerns in Emerald Hill. Alninai Silvertree (female elf) is his personal assistant and the manager at the Wind's Mystery pub, where she serves as hostess and wine steward. Her sister, Nyphistree, heads the Order of the Bow. Lothao Valinth (male elf) is Doraedian's proxy among the city's Twelve Commanders and a trusted aide. Doraedian's staff also includes a dozen guards (all elves). Two such guards watch over the main gate at all times.

Elves in Ptolus often are considered arrogant and even racist; they are said to look down on all non-elves. While this is an unfair generalization, it is true of many elves who spend a great deal of time in Iridithil's Home. However, it is not true of Doraedian Mythlord or his staff.

One thing that confuses many people, particularly non-elves, is that there is no one here named Iridithil. Iridithil is a legendary Elder Elf known for sheltering the needy and comforting the sick in her forest fortress centuries ago.

Gardens and trees fill the compound, all exemplifying health and punctuated with the occasional statue of an important figure from elven history. All the buildings are made of wood, carefully and finely shaped into traditional swoops and curves unique to elven construction techniques. Each structure in Iridithil's Home has a different name and function.

THE WIND'S MYSTERY

The Wind's Mystery is a large, rather lavish tavern and inn set back from the main gate. The ceiling creates a grand vaulted chamber, the centerpiece of the two-story building. The

Doraedian Mythlord is a Shoal elf with ecclesiastic stats (page 608); alignment chaotic good. In addition to regular equipment suiting an ecclesiastic, he has a thoughtstone.

Emerald Hill, page 189

Alninai Silvertree has artisan stats, page 606

Nyphistree Silvertree, page 199

Lothao Valinth has aristocrat stats, page 606

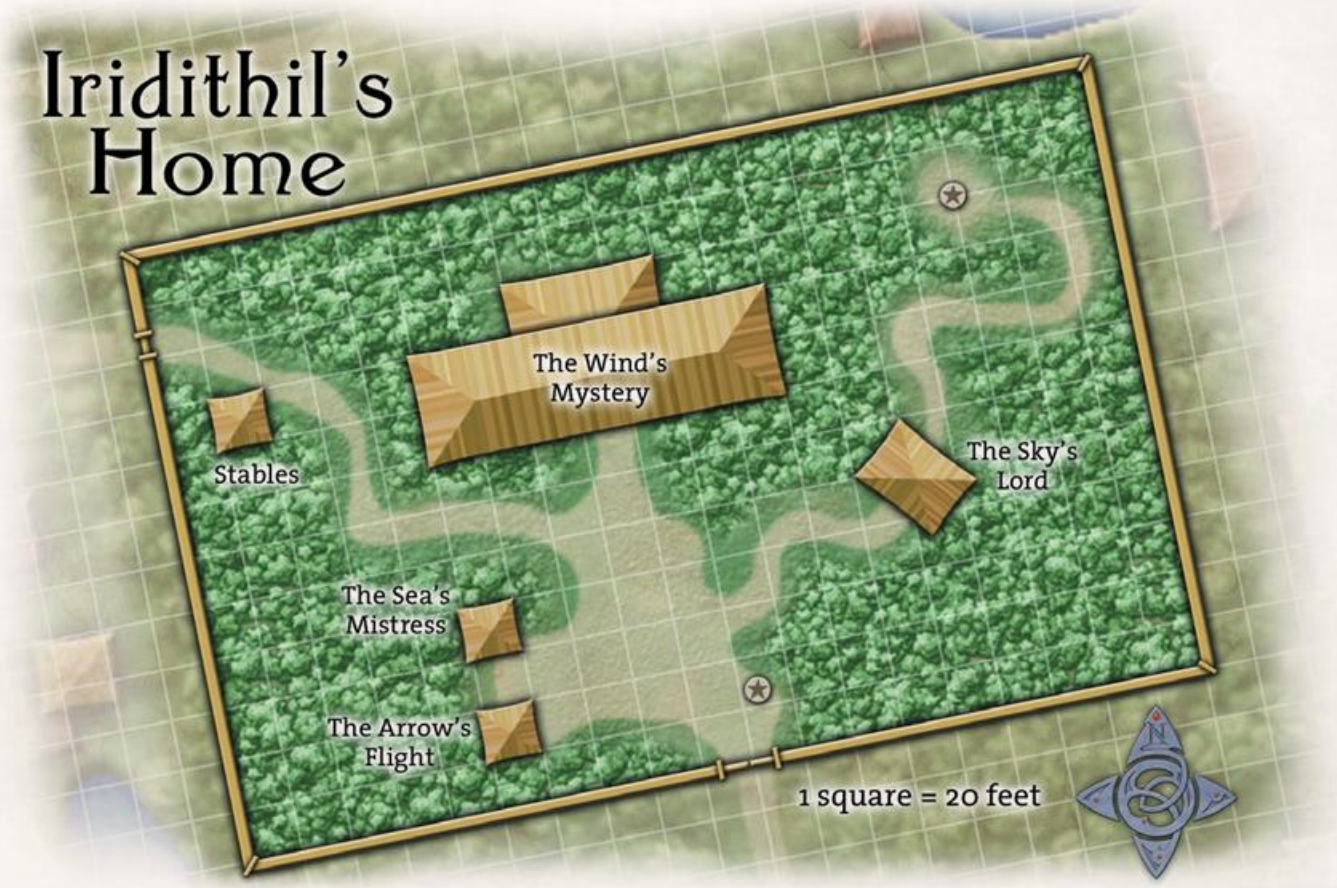
Twelve Commanders, page 140

Staff guards have guard stats.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check can reveal a bit about Iridithil's Home and its residents.

- *Iridithil's Home is an elven sanctuary in Midtown (DC 11).*
- *Doraedian Mythlord is the most respected and influential elf in the city (DC 13).*
- *Non-elves are not particularly welcome in Iridithil's Home (DC 15).*



Zachean, the dark elf vampire currently in Dwarvenhearth (page 429), is an archenemy of Doraedian Mythlord. The two have met in combat more than once.

Celdore Silverwood and Dark Leaf, page 108

Navaen family, page 338

Margaetalis Everwood has commoner stats.

Shaeshin Twinleaf has expert stats, page 609

Zaetra has mage stats.

Pellandar has veteran stats.

For a brief rundown of elven and other deities, see New Gods (page 71) in Chapter 4: Cosmology and Religion.

The members of the Company of the Black Lantern, an all-elf adventuring group, spend their leisure time at Iridithil's Home and elsewhere in Emerald Hill.

Varthis Starborn is a bard with scout stats and knows a few 1st- and 2nd-level bard spells.

Wind's Mystery serves elven wine and dishes, both of which are known for their complicated flavors. The food here is delicately prepared and seasoned. Dishes include duck, venison, pheasant, and a great many soups, some hot and some cold.

Frequent patrons include Margaetalis Everwood (female elf), who delights in gossip and intrigues; Shaeshin Twinleaf (male elf), who likes to try to convince locals that he's the new "ambassador from Dohrinthas"; Zaetra (female Cherubim elf), a close friend of Doraedian's; Pellandar (male elf), a friend of Zaetra's; and Celdore Silverwood of the Dark Leaf organization. Members of the Navaen (Trueflight) family are also regular patrons.

In the back of the Wind's Mystery lie Doraedian's spacious office and living quarters. The upper floor and side wings contain twenty rooms available to let, with half usually filled.

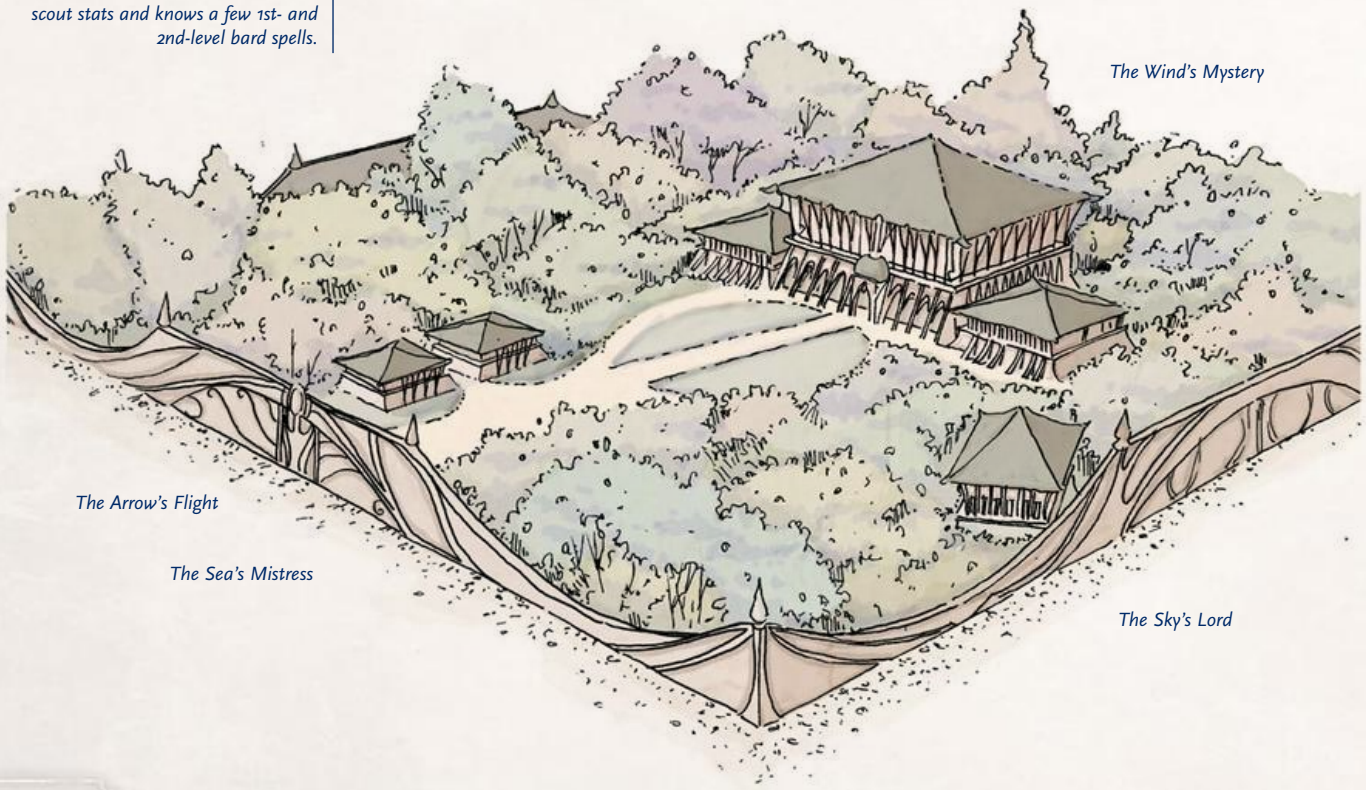
THE SKY'S LORD

This shrine located southeast of the Wind's Mystery is dedicated to not one but all elven gods. These include Celestan, Myliesha, Phoeboul, Sylvanae, Taeshandra, and even the dead god Ardaen. Doraedian serves as the steward of the Sky's Lord, and no one is permitted within without his leave—and usually his presence.

THE SEA'S MISTRESS

Elves may use this special building southwest of the Wind's Mystery for various functions, such as weddings, celebrations, and group meetings. On any typical day, it is used for storage.

Unbeknownst even to Doraedian, a gnome named Varthis Starborn (male gnome) lives here with his toad familiar, hiding amid crates and



barrels. He has found a small hole under the east wall that lets him sneak into the building to sleep. It's not that Varthis couldn't afford to live elsewhere—he just likes it here.

THE ARROW'S FLIGHT

A small building off to the left after one enters Iridithil's Home belongs to a very small organization called the Order of the Bow. The mistress of the order is Nyphistree Silvertree, Alninai's sister and a close friend of Doraedian's. She is tall for an elf, with a stern face and short hair. Her reputation as one of the greatest archers in Palastan is quite deserved. A minor sorcerer, she casts *a shielding spell* before going into any battle.

Nyphistree is a harsh teacher, forcing members of the order to work very hard, particularly at first. She requires members to spend at least one hour each day in archery practice within the compound, regardless of other duties, employment, adventures, illness, and so on. She accepts no excuses and is quick to expel someone from the order if they fail to keep up the training or otherwise disobey her, which makes her extremely lawful for an elf. Still, she is not cruel for the sake of cruelty and seems genuinely kind to those who meet her high expectations.

Members of the Order of the Bow include Siphanon Shatterbright (male elf), Chanticleer Winterwood (male elf), and Laerose Trueflight. The other eight members are all common warriors on par with the City Watch.

Nyphistree Silvertree is a Shoal elf with deadly warrior stats (page 607), with advantage on ranged attacks; alignment lawful good. She can innately cast true strike *three times per day.*

Siphanon Shatterbright has veteran stats.

Chanticleer Winterwood has veteran stats with Stealth +5.

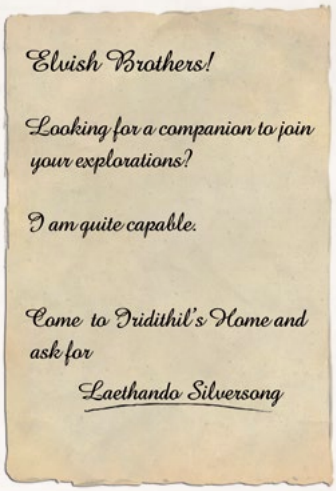
Laerose Trueflight, page 339

LADRIS' FINE FOODS

Alder Street (#210, J6) see map, page 189 455 gp

Deep in the heart of the aram neighborhood known as Narred lies Ladris' Fine Foods. Run by an older centaur named Ladris (male centaur), the shop sells all sorts of foodstuffs: cornmeal, flour, vegetables, and a selection of meat and poultry—some fresh, but most dried or salted.

Despite the name, the shop is not known for its food's quality, but for its owner, its famous client, and the tales they tell. Years ago, Ladris was the cohort of the infamous barbarian Kragas the Bold (male Harrow elf). These two traveled the world in search of adventure but spent most of their time in the caverns below Ptolus fighting dark elves and zaug. In fact, Kragas wears a jerkin that has a zaug face fitted over the front and the back. The barbarian has long black hair and black eyes. His twisted Harrow features make him look as though he is always scowling (maybe he is). Nowadays, he can be found in a chair in Ladris' shop, leaning up against a corner and telling tales. Only some of them are true, and all of them are exaggerated.



The truth is, Kragas is a mean-spirited, bitter individual unable to find contentment in retirement. He's taken up painting, but the things he paints, most people find disturbing. Ladris tries to keep him out of trouble by encouraging him to hang around his shop, which he does most of the time, usually drawing in a few people to hear his stories. Still, if someone rubs Kragas the wrong way, the Harrow elf doesn't hesitate to take out his anger and frustration on them. In fact, some disappearances and unsolved murders in Narred are attributable to Kragas. Ladris' deepest nightmare is that some disreputable person talks his old boss into doing something really awful—which wouldn't be that hard to do with the bored, powerful barbarian.

Ladris has veteran stats.

Kragas the Bold is a Harrow elf with deadly warrior stats (page 607) and the Reckless ability of a berserker; alignment neutral evil.

Narred neighborhood, page 190

Harrow elves, page 53

MYRAETH'S ODDITIES

Delver's Square (#187, H6) (varies); see map, pages 18 and 188 150,000 gp

Myraeth Tuneweaver (male elf) bills his shop as a place to buy and sell the strange trinkets and "oddities" found below the city, but in fact it is much more than that. The shop is, quite literally, *the* place for adventurers to sell what they recover during their exploits below the streets. From brass candlesticks to gemstones to antique spoons, Myraeth will assess and buy virtually anything.

The important thing, however, is that Myraeth buys and sells magic items of all kinds. A visitor to Ptolus might find it odd that this is a unique aspect of his business—one might expect the city to have a dozen such shops. Nevertheless, with the exception of a couple of places that sell potions or scrolls, Myraeth's is the only store of its kind. Why? Because the Dreaming Apothecary, with its connections to the Inverted Pyramid, has made it clear over the years that "bad luck" befalls anyone attempting to sell magic items in Ptolus. They make an exception for Myraeth because of some deal struck decades earlier, and because he only resells used items. Those wishing to buy new, custom-made items must go to the Dreaming Apothecary.

Myraeth Tuneweaver is a Shoal elf diviner with mage stats; alignment neutral good. In addition to his other equipment (which can change based on what is available in his shop), he has a thoughtstone.

Dreaming Apothecary, page 116

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Caverns below Ptolus, page 415

Zaug, page 602

Unlike his more powerful friend Kragas, Ladris the centaur is not evil. Throughout their relationship, he has always tried to counsel the barbarian away from darkness. He succeeds only occasionally, and it is a tribute to their friendship that Kragas never grew annoyed at his cohort's advice—because if he had, Ladris would certainly be dead.

A shop called Potions and Elixirs in the Undercity Market (see chapter 20) and Midtown, as well as various temples (see chapter 17), sell potions and/or scrolls without fear of reprisal from the Dreaming Apothecary (page 116).

Due to his profession, Myraeth Tuneweaver knows virtually every adventurer in Ptolus. Should any danger ever befall the store or Myraeth himself, most of the city's powerful individuals would come immediately to his aid.

Some adventurers make it a weekly—or even daily—ritual to stop by Myraeth's and see what new items he has in stock, as his inventory changes quite frequently.

MYRAETH'S TYPICAL INVENTORY

1 potion of darkvision *(lasts three hours)*

1 potion of resistance *(thunder)*

1 potion of gaseous form

1 spell scroll of alter self

1 spell scroll of heroes' feast

1 spell scroll of fire shield

1 dose of dust of sneezing and choking

1 immovable rod *(only works underwater, discounted to half price)*

1 ring of swimming

2 pinches of Vallis dust *(page 648)*

2 ioun stones *(dull grey, no powers except floating)*

3 various feather tokens

1 figurine of wondrous power *(marble elephant)*

1 belt of stone giant's strength

Various pieces of nonmagical art, Undercity souvenirs, spell components, and bric-a-brac.

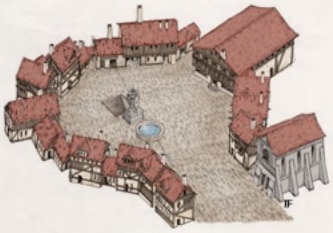
Vallis, page 648

Star Jewelers, page 181

Rastor's Weapons, page 204

Bull and Bear Armory, page 191

Myraeth's Oddities is one of the lynchpins of Delver's Square, with handy access to and from the Undercity.



Myraeth's willingness to buy almost anything, and his ever-changing stock of magic items, makes his shop extremely popular with the local adventurer population. Many of them stop by every day just to see what he's gotten in. This is not just curiosity and idle window-shopping; it also makes for an interesting gauge of how one's fellow adventurers are doing. Myraeth never discloses who is buying or selling what, so as not to reveal anyone's secrets. Life could get dangerous for an adventurer if people knew she showed up often with hoards of gems, for example.

On a typical day, Myraeth's magic item stock might include the items shown in the Myraeth's Typical Inventory sidebar. Use the list to judge what he might have when the PCs visit. His wares include mostly inexpensive, one-use items, or items without obvious value to everyone. Usually, he has at least one or two items of universal appeal, which sell quickly (a belt that increases strength, defensive and aggressive wands, protective rings, and so on). Myraeth depends entirely on what people offer him for sale. His stock rarely includes curative potions, for example, because so few people are willing to sell them.

Myraeth knows what he's doing, and he's been doing it for years. He makes sure to keep various items used as spell components, like pearls worth 100 gp or 100 gp worth of diamond dust, always in stock. He knows a ring that turns the wearer invisible will prove extremely popular, and a jar that produces endless water, much less so. Occasionally, he raises the price of a potentially popular item by 10 or 20 percent and discounts the price of a less popular item anywhere from 10 to 50 percent. Otherwise, use standard pricing.

If people ask Myraeth to look for a specific item, he will. Should that item ever come in, he will hold it for a few days before putting it on sale to the general public, in case the asker comes back looking for it again. The elf will even send a message to potential customers if he knows how to get a hold of them. It's that kind of personal service that has endeared Myraeth to the local adventurers, which is the key to his success.

Myraeth can always sell the gems and jewelry he buys to the dwarves of the Star Jewelers in the Guildsman District for a profit.

The only things Myraeth does not buy are weapons and armor. For these, he recommends Rastor's Weapons and Bull and Bear Armory across the square.

WHAT'S IN STOCK AT MYRAETH'S?

Another way to determine what Myraeth has in stock at any given time is to have a player character ask for a specific item. Assume that any given item has a flat 10 percent chance of being in stock, modified by the following:

- +5 percent if the item has only one use
- +5 percent if the item is not directly attack or defense related, a healing item, or otherwise in universal demand*
- –5 percent if the item's value exceeds 5,000 gp
- –5 percent if the item's value exceeds 20,000 gp
- –4 percent if the item's value exceeds 50,000 gp
- –1 percent if the item's value exceeds 100,000 gp

* GM's discretion; includes such powers as increasing character stats, invisibility, and teleportation

Use all modifiers that apply. Thus, a gem that can see through illusions (with a price of 75,000 gp) has a 1 percent chance of being in stock: 10 percent base chance, +5 percent for not being an attack or defense item, –5 percent for costing more than 5,000 gp, –5 percent for costing more than 20,000 gp, and –4 percent for costing more than 50,000 gp.

Midtown Map: Page 188

SECURITY

Visitors to Myraeth's Oddities are often surprised to see an ogre standing in the middle of the aisles, glaring at customers. This is Kird, Myraeth's bodyguard. Although neither Myraeth nor Kird will reveal the story (Kird talks to no one but Myraeth, without exception), most people believe the elf found the ogre dying in a bad part of town—some say the Warrens, some say Longbottom in Midtown—and nursed him back to health. Ever since, Kird has remained fiercely loyal to Myraeth.

In addition to Kird, Myraeth has worked out an extremely important secret deal with the Sisterhood of Silence. In exchange for his delivering to them a list of everything bought or sold in the shop, including the names and addresses of all buyers and sellers, they place a subtle but important extra watch around his store. In the three decades since he started the business, no one has ever successfully robbed him, and no one has ever caused him harm. (It is worth noting that, without any direct communication with Myraeth, the Goldshield organization also gives Myraeth's Oddities special attention, as they understand the importance of the shop.)

Myraeth stores all the magical wares, as well as the most valuable nonmagical stock, in a vault in the back of the shop. This vault is renowned throughout the city as one of its most impregnable. It negates the magic of almost

Kird the ogre: *59 hp*

Goldshield, page 144

Sisterhood of Silence, page 127

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

A DC 15 Investigation check can provide the following details about Myraeth's Oddities:

- *Myraeth's Oddities in Delver's Square buys and sells magic items (DC 12).*
- *Myraeth does not make items to order (DC 15).*
- *The Dreaming Apothecary would come down hard on Myraeth if he made items to order (DC 20).*
- *Not only does Myraeth store his valuables in an extremely secure vault at night, but stealing from him would bring down the wrath of nearly every adventurer in the city upon the thief (DC 23).*

Fairbriar, page 189

Combination lock: *DC 26 Sleight of Hand check for each*

Disintegration trap: *DC 20 Perception check to notice, DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to disable*

Back room door lock: *DC 24 Sleight of Hand check*

Jebathio Spiritstar is a gnome with assassin stats; alignment chaotic evil

Glitterstone is a gnome with gladiator stats; alignment neutral evil

Cherubar, page 43

Longfingers Guild, page 123

Although they sell illegal drugs, Jebathio and Geraeal, owners of the North Point Restaurant, do not take any kind of drugs themselves and always maintain the appearance of upstanding, well-to-do gnomish gentlemen.

For more on nightsong *and other illegal drugs, see Vices on page 518.*

anything (except perhaps the most ancient and powerful items) and remains immune to the effects of any outside magic short of a god's power or a wish. It has three combination locks, each set to release a disintegration trap on anyone who attempts to open them without the proper combination. Plus, the door to the back room is locked and the entrance is trapped with a special alarm that screams into the outer street "Thief inside!" over and over if an unwanted intruder crosses the threshold. While many thieves take all this as a challenge, most know that stealing from Myraeth would be extremely unpopular. The Longfingers Guild, for one, declares Myraeth's off-limits.

Myraeth does not live in the shop. Instead, he keeps a very nice home in the Rivergate District. Because of the slow but steady success of his business, he is a very wealthy man and ready to retire soon to finally enjoy his fortune. He has operated the store for thirty years and has worked there seven days a week, from open until close, for the last eight years without a break.

NORTH POINT RESTAURANT

Sunrise Street (#174, G6) ★★ see map at right 12,500 gp

Located in the Fairbriar neighborhood, the North Point is a typical eatery serving mostly gnomish dishes. Their specialty is a potato-and-cabbage soup. Jebathio Spiritstar (male gnome) and Geraeal Glitterstone (male gnome) own the restaurant, but they sell much more than food here.

These two gnomes sell a drug called *nightsong*, a magical/alchemical substance derived from a rare plant found only in Cherubar. This substance changes ordinary people into powerful figures at night, able to ignore pain and perform amazing physical feats. While not addictive, the drug inflicts terrible damage on a user's body, burning them out and eventually opening them up to control by an otherwise bodiless evil fey spirit.

Nightsong is an illegal drug, so the gnomes stay watchful in their dealings. Both know that it has some terrible side effects, but only Jebathio understands the full extent of them: that *nightsong* can kill, permanently debilitate, or result in the possession of its users. He doesn't care, but he's not sure how Geraeal will react when he finds out. (Most likely, Geraeal will continue to sell it, but he could be convinced otherwise.)

They charge 800 gp for a dose of *nightsong*, which, considering the benefits, is cheap. For a first use, they charge only 400 gp. They do not tell anyone of the ill effects, but say only that it might cause a little dizziness or something similar.

If these gnomes run into trouble, such as a rival criminal group trying to steal or extort money from them, they will hire up to ten guardians. They also have a friend named Teophia Jewelblade (female gnome) who might help them if they need it.

Urlenius, the Star of Navashtrom, had a friend who died taking *nightsong* and would like to find the dealers of the drug and put them out of business—permanently.

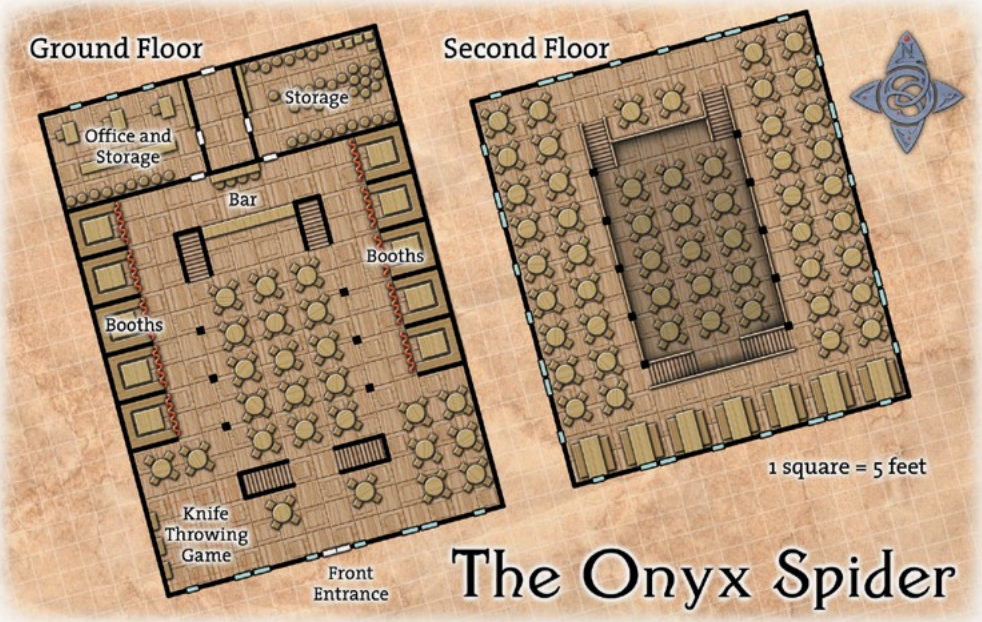
THE ONYX SPIDER

Tavern Row (#193, H7) ★ see map, below 10,000 gp

Notorious for its nefarious patrons, the Onyx Spider isn't a rough bar—it's a dangerous one. That is to say, it's not likely that a patron will find themselves in the middle of a brawl there. But if they say the wrong thing to the wrong person, later someone will find their dead body in the King's River, the poisoned dagger long gone from their back.

The Onyx Spider is owned by the Balacazar family through a number of intermediaries, and Malkeen Balacazar uses the establishment as his personal office and meeting room at least one night a week. He is always accompanied by his vampiric bodyguard, Na'haras. That means some of the vilest criminals and underworld personalities come through this tavern on a regular basis.

The ground floor is one large square room, with a wide balcony running all the way around on the second floor. Both the main floor and the balcony have tables, and along two walls on the main floor are built-in booths with curtains the occupants can draw for further privacy. The bar is in the back and usually manned by Hennick Fellashath or Charan Fellashath (male and female human), a husband-and-wife team. They also can deliver messages to anyone in the Balacazar organization, if need be (although if approached, they deny it, of course).



Urlenius, page 361

Another frequent patron is Rajaz Nillotti, an Uraqi knife fighter. He spends most of his time at the Onyx Spider throwing knives at the target in the corner for money, competing against all takers. Rajaz has the typical swarthy complexion and dark hair of his countryfolk, but he dresses like a local and speaks with only a slight accent. He is more than what he appears, however—he is one of the Imperial Eyes, spying on everyone in the tavern, particularly the Balacazars, on behalf of the Commissar. So far, he has not been found out.

Imperial Eyes, page 144

Balacazars, page 102

Rajaz Nillotti has veteran stats, with Investigation +4, Perception +4, and Stealth +4; alignment chaotic good

Malkeen Balacazar, page 103

Na'haras, page 104

You can't imagine a more nondescript-looking fellow than Hennick Fellashath, with his sandy brown hair, flat face, and dull-eyed expression. His appearance is just a defense mechanism, however. He's found it best in all situations to remain unnoticed and try to give the impression of knowing nothing.

Hennick and Charan Fellashath have scout stats.

Guardians have guard or thug stats.

Teophia Jewelblade has mage stats.

The shakes is a minor communicable disease that causes involuntary twitches, tremors, and fits. It is spread by contact with an infected person. An exposed creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the disease. An infected person has disadvantage on attacks, checks, and saves based on Strength and Dexterity.

Rastor is a litorian with veteran stats, with Arcana +4, Insight +4, Investigation +4, and Perception +4; alignment chaotic good

Basic properties include such things as its bonus to hit and damage.

Fate Weavers, page 111

Barras Noven, a regular at the Onyx Spider, is originally from a small town north of the city on the Whitewind Sea called Carper's Bay. He was run out of town for his misdeeds before he came to Ptolus.

Barras Noven has veteran stats, with AC 19 and +1 on melee attack and damage rolls; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: +1 breastplate, +1 shield, +1 trident, potion of greater healing (2), potion of heroism, 50 feet of rope, grappling hook, 13 gp.

White House, page 310

Winnie Potter has long, thin blond hair and is very skinny. Almost every day, she wears an ankle-length and weather-beaten purple coat—even during the warm days of summer. At times her guests hear her talking to herself, but she is always friendly to those who stay at the inn.

Winnie Potter has expert stats, page 609

In the middle of the main floor, a crystal sphere 3 feet across magically levitates 10 feet off the ground. Embedded in it is a black onyx spider statuette. The original owner, long dead, reportedly brought the statue from Uraq, and now it remains as a curiosity. If stolen, it would be worth 8,000 gp—assuming the thief could find someone foolish enough to buy it.

A few Fate Weaver girls and boys work the room, earning coins however they can. Members of most other organizations give the place a pass, but some adventurers, not wanting to deal with the tumult of the Ghostly Minstrel, come here instead.

For example, a frequent patron at the Spider is Barras Noven, a male human mercenary with a wide black mustache and only a little hair on his head. Barras is tall and muscular with a humorous disposition. He doesn't make jokes, but he finds most things amusing, as if everything were part of a joke that only he was in on. Some people find his manner annoying or even insulting, but Barras is an extremely capable fighter, willing to take on almost any job if the price is right. (His starting price for a one-day job is 250 gp.) Barras is the cousin of Thurman Rees, proprietor of the White House in Oldtown.

POTTER'S

Delver's Square (#187, H6) ★ see map, pages 18 and 188 20 gp

You get what you pay for. Winistar "Winnie" Potter (female human) is the proprietor of this low-rent hostel, catering mostly to down-on-their-luck adventurers and up-and-coming wannabes who have spent what little money they had on equipment. Winnie inherited the place from her father, Delbart, about fourteen years ago. In days long past, Potter's was much more upscale, but time has taken its toll, and adventurers are hard on a place. Winnie herself is only in her mid-thirties, but she appears much older and always tired.

Encounter: Player characters sleeping at Potter's one night share the common room with an adventurer who has the shakes, and all the PCs risk contracting the disease.

RASTOR'S WEAPONS

Delver's Square (#187, H6) (varies); see map, pages 18 and 188 75,000 gp

Rastor is a massive litorian with beads tied into his mane. He is well known in the district for his impeccable honor and incredible dignity, as well as his great skill with weapons. Having worked with them for years, Rastor can look at any armament, heft it, swing it a few times, and tell its basic properties without need of special magic. He can even sense whether there's something else going on with a weapon (such as if it bursts into flame or inflicts extra damage against undead), and can identify a few of those abilities by examination as well. He gives customers

A Dozen Rules of Tavern Etiquette

The player characters are likely to spend a lot of their time in Ptolus in taverns, restaurants, and such places. While all these establishments are different, and activities within them vary greatly depending on the quality of the place and its clientele, a few general rules usually apply. Many of these guidelines carry over to situations outside a tavern as well.

1. Forms of Address. One should address a stranger as "sir" (or "sire"), "miss" (or "ma'am"), or "friend" (if the speaker is uncertain of the stranger's gender). Most people consider it offensive to address others by their species; saying, "Hey, human," or "Whatcha got there, elf?" is rude. Addressing others by their profession is fine, but incorrectly assessing a stranger's vocation can lead to trouble. Thankfully, most members of the various guilds in the city wear symbols. If you are familiar with some of these (being reasonably familiar with local customs usually does the trick), you can address someone as "smith," "tanner," "mage," or so on with accuracy.

2. Prices. Haggling is expected in the North Market and acceptable in the South Market, but not in taverns or restaurants. Pay the price they ask if you want to drink or eat.

3. Tankard Protocol. Turning one's empty mug upside down on the bar or even a table means, "I am tougher than anyone in this room." This is how fights get started.

4. Bar Fights. Fighting is discouraged in most taverns, simply because of the damage it causes to furnishings and the disruption it causes to business. Most taverns have a back alley or a similar unofficially designated place to which a bartender or server will encourage those about to fight to adjourn. "Take it out behind the privy," they might say.

5. Don't Insult the Food. Insulting the fare of an establishment is taken as an insult not only to the proprietor but to all the other patrons as well.

6. Tipping. Gratuities are expected in all taverns and restaurants. Overtipping a server, however, can be taken as an insult to the server or even the other patrons (if they are aware of it). It can also cause jealousies among the employees.

7. Drinking. There are no laws against public drunkenness in Ptolus. There are no limits on how much one can imbibe and no concept of liability for the tavern if a drunk patron commits a crime after being served. However, the City Watch knows very well that inebriated people cause trouble, so they patrol areas around taverns closely, particularly as the night wanes and drunk patrons stagger home.

8. Drugs and Smuggling. While many substances—like most alcoholic beverages, for example—are perfectly legal in Ptolus, some dangerous or mind-altering substances are controlled. A wizard on hallucinogenic drugs can become a danger to the entire city, and highly addictive and/or deadly substances do not serve the common good. And then, of course, there is the subject of taxes. Since alcohol is heavily taxed, some criminals attempt to smuggle it into the city and sell it to disreputable taverns for a larger profit. This is referred to as "thieves' kick."

9. Games of Chance. Gambling itself is not illegal. However, heavy taxes on gambling earnings mean that most people wanting to play games of chance do so on the sly. This is why many of the city's gambling dens are secretive, and most tavern games have very small stakes or involve non-monetary wagers.

10. Brothels. Prostitution, likewise, is not illegal, but most street prostitutes want to avoid paying taxes. There are a number of legal brothels in the city; the owners pay their taxes and are treated mostly like any other merchants.

11. Spells in Bars. Spellcasting is often prohibited in taverns. In virtually all of them (save perhaps Danbury's), anything more powerful than a harmless cantrip or a spell cast by a bard entertainer to improve their performance is considered impolite and ostentatious at best, and offensive or insidious at worst. A divinatory spell cast among strangers is a quick way to start a fight—and leery tavern patrons often assume that a spell without a visible effect must be a privacy-invading divinatory spell.

12. Politics and Religion. Among friends, religion is not a forbidden subject, but it can be a touchy thing to bring up with strangers. Politics, on the other hand, is not a topic people avoid, since there are not a variety of opinions to be held on the subject. One can safely assume that most patrons hold the contradictory beliefs that those in power should remain in power, but that they are corrupt and incompetent. People talk about the latest dishonest, self-serving decision made by the so-called "Council of Coin," but they never suggest ousting the council or replacing members. There is no system in place to do either, and there never has been.

Danbury's, page 192

his assessment of a weapon for no charge. If he cannot identify a weapon, he recommends the customer to Myraeth's Oddities across the square for a magical identification.

Since he buys arms of all kinds, Rastor has a number of exceptional nonmagical weapons and almost always has some magic weapons for sale. While they are used, they're typically in good condition (if not, he offers a discount). Rastor does not make weapons; he only buys and sells used ones.

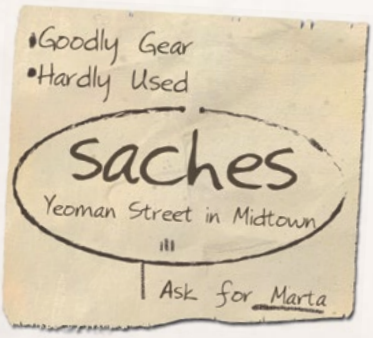
ROW BATHHOUSE

Tavern Row (#191, H7) see map, page 188 150 gp

Eltan and Derron Polon, owners of the Row Bathhouse, are always running to and fro, making sure their customers are well cared for, doing laundry, and handling other tasks. They always look exhausted.

Eltan and Derron Polon have commoner stats.

The proprietors, Eltan and Derron Polon (male and female humans), charge 8 cp for a simple bath at the Row Bathhouse. They offer many other services as well, including laundry (2 cp to clean one outfit), clothes mending (3 cp per article), delousing (2 cp), haircuts (1 sp), and shaves (6 cp). As interest in Dungeon exploration increases, so does business at the Bathhouse.



SACHES

Yeoman Street (#196, H7) see map, page 188 200 gp

Marta Thone has scout stats.

This women's clothing store has a staff of three clerks and two seamstresses. It sells simple, sensible clothing for practical, middle-class women. This mostly includes dresses, smocks, blouses, pants, jackets, and wraps.

Marta Thone (female human) works here as a seamstress. She's middle aged and tough, with medium-length black hair streaked with grey. Marta and her husband were delvers a few years ago, but he died and she retired. She has various bills posted about Midtown offering their equipment for sale at half the normal price. She doesn't have much left, but what she does have, she keeps in a crate at the store.

ST. GUSTAV'S CHAPEL

Center Street (#195, H6) see map, next page 8,500 gp

Brother Fabitor Thisk has ecclesiastic stats (page 608), with no 5th-level spell slot; alignment lawful good

One of two churches of Lothian in Midtown, St. Gustav's is a small chapel run by Brother Fabitor Thisk. It seems dingy and run down compared to other temples in the city, particularly Lothian's. It's hearsay, but the

Midtown Map: Page 188

common wisdom is that St. Gustav's exists to give adventurers a place to go so they don't come to St. Valien's Cathedral. The non-adventuring populace likes it that way, particularly the nobles and wealthy citizens who contribute heavily to St. Valien's coffers.

Brother Fabitor is earnest and well meaning. Moreover, he is extremely sincere in his beliefs and his desire to help those in need. He stands just under 6 feet tall and has long brown hair that he keeps pulled back away from his face most of the time. Like the chapel, Fabitor is usually at least a little disheveled. Keeping up the busy chapel virtually by himself proves a daunting task.

St. Gustav's contributes to the overall Church's coffers through the sale of curative potions and by providing services such as restorations, removing diseases, neutralizing poison, and other healing. Brother Fabitor does all the spellcasting and potion-making himself. A few sisters from the Order of Dayra help during worship services, but frankly those have only a light attendance.

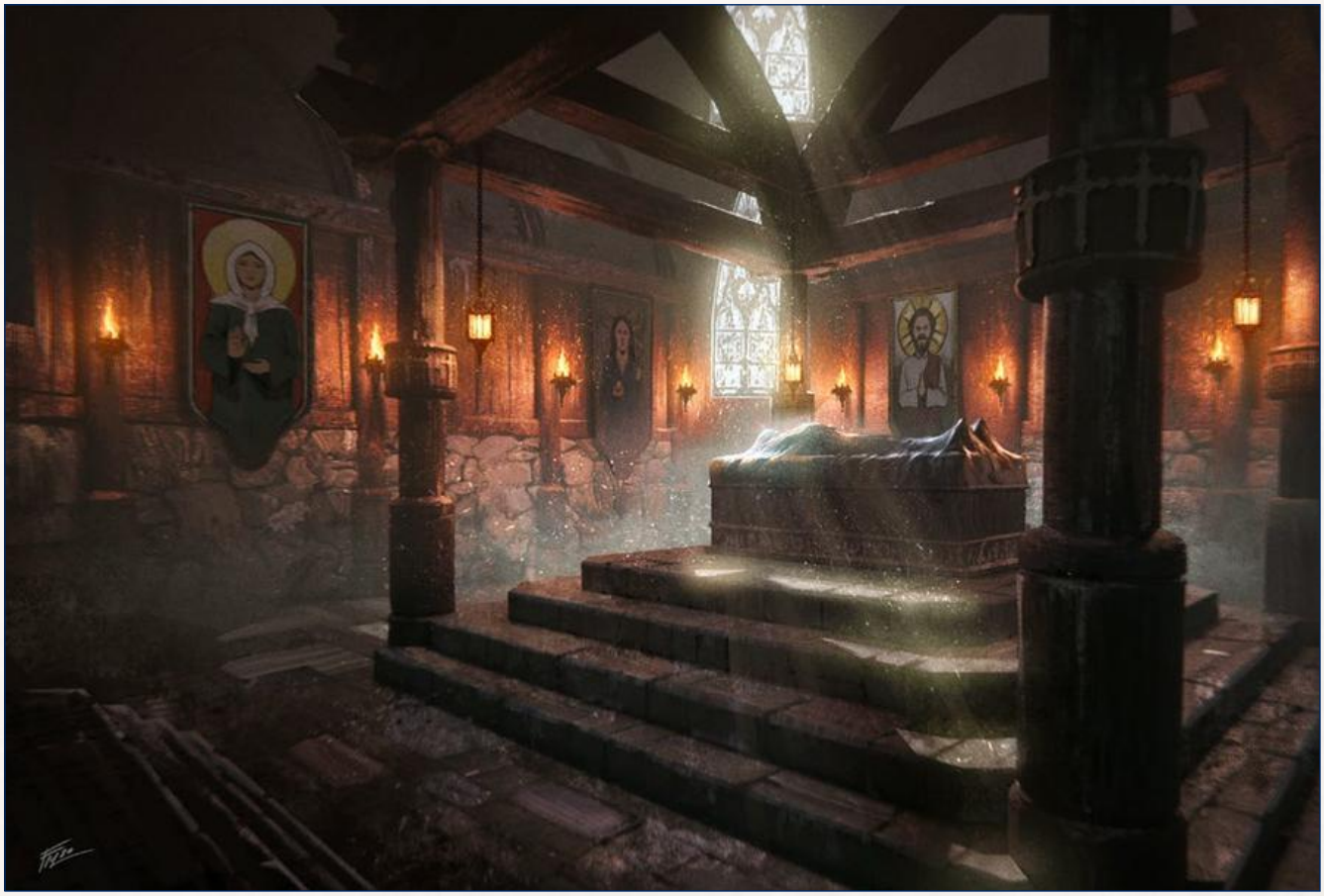
Unscrupulous adventurers have, in the past, taken advantage of Fabitor's good nature. He's learned from these mistakes and now won't grant any spells or items without the proper

St. Valien's Cathedral, page 350

For an adventure hook involving St. Gustav's, see page 188. Brother Fabitor is also an NPC in the adventures in chapter 33.

Brother Fabitor of St. Gustav's Chapel is always extremely busy. Those who visit the chapel, whether it be for potions, healing, or religious matters, usually find someone there ahead of them, requiring them to wait.

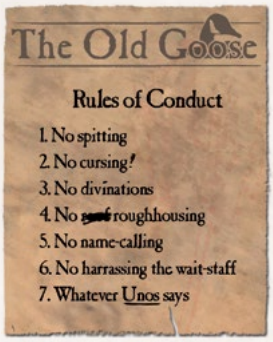
Order of Dayra, page 70



donation first, no matter how good the cause. He offers counseling and prayer intercession on a supplicant's behalf for nothing, however.

Cailan Narrowsigh (female gnome), an older patron, comes to St. Gustav's with great regularity. While Lothian is not popular among the gnomes, Cailan is a devout follower. She comes to the chapel to pray at least once a day and may try to befriend anyone she sees there more than once. Smart visitors will indeed become her friend. Although she doesn't look it, she's incredibly wealthy and is more than willing to donate to a good cause, in particular down-and-out Lothianites.

Cailan Narrowsigh has commoner stats.



The Old Goose (page 209) is a quiet local pub where most of the clientele knows each other.

TERREK NAL'S HOUSE

Park Row (#221, K6); see map, page 188 950 gp

Terrek Nal's House is a simple, two-story abode indistinguishable from those around it and others found throughout the city.

Terrek was a student of Golathan Naddershrike, a human wizard living in the Rivergate District. Golathan fell into a deep despair after his wife's death, and unfortunately took out his rage on his disciple. After months of abuse, Terrek accidentally disrupted one of Golathan's alchemical experiments. In a fit of anger, the wizard cast a curse on him, transforming Terrek into a not-quite-human creature. With anger and resentment equal to that of his cruel master, Terrek slew Golathan.

After committing his crime, Terrek came to the Nal family home, which was left to him after his parents died and his sister married and moved to the country. Here he hides, gripped in fear and despair at what he did and what he has become.

Today, the left half of Terrek's body appears fairly normal. The flesh on the other half, however, seems to have half melted off his skull and bones, then frozen in that position. The right half of his body is glaring red and pink, slick with pus and strange excretions. Terrek emits a foul stench too powerful to cover with perfumes, but heavy clothing, gloves, and a hooded cloak can disguise his horrible appearance. The greatest change, however, is not physical. Terrek now gains sustenance from fear rather than food and drink. He can just barely survive on his own fear, but the hungers that drive him sometimes force him to leave his home under cover of night to stalk the less savory parts of the city and find those susceptible to strong terror. If that doesn't work, he won't hesitate to terrorize a lone individual in order to feed on the fear.

Scenario: Rumors circulate throughout Midtown that a foul subhuman creature stalks the streets and alleyways at night. A wealthy businessman who was attacked three nights ago has put a bounty of 500 gp on the creature's head, describing his assailant as a "twisted man-thing with melted flesh." Player characters using spells or old-fashioned investigative techniques eventually can find Terrek, but how they deal with him—as a predatory street-stalker or a cursed victim of his own hungers—is up to them.

Golathan Naddershrike, page 322

Terrek Nal has arcanist stats (page 605), with aberration type, Perception +3, Stealth +4, advantage on disguise checks, darkvision 60 ft.; alignment neutral evil. He prepares fear *instead of* fly *as a 3rd-level spell.*

OTHER LOCALES

Although it's not a complete listing by any means, GMs can use the table on the next page to insert additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit Midtown.

MISCELLANEOUS MIDTOWN NPCs

Midtown is where some of the city's most interesting residents spend their time. Here are a few who are usually not tied down to a single locale.

SHEVA CALLISTER

A frequent bar patron in Delver's Square, Sheva is one of the city's best-known delvers. She is now retired and living off the treasure she gained in her career. Nevertheless, she knows a lot of information about the Undercity and Dungeon and shares it freely. For example, if someone erroneously refers to all the tunnels beneath the city as "Dwarvenhearth," she's quick to correct them, explaining that Dwarvenhearth itself is still sealed and thus unexplored. Sheva is a member of the Delver's Guild and highly recommends membership to all new adventurers. According to Sheva, most of the people who speak about the areas beneath the city simply do not know what they are talking about.

Sheva is well known for having found the *Crown of Ki-Lias*, an artifact of the Elder Titans. She sold it to a wizard in the Inverted Pyramid. What is less known is that Sheva also found a powerful but evil sword: a *hungersword* with additional potent enhancements. Once she realized what the sword was, she paid the Dreaming Apothecary well to permanently hide it from divinations seeking *hungerswords*.

Having now retired at the age of thirty-one, she has also sold her armor and most of her other gear.

Sheva's closest friend is a ghost named Parnell Alster (male human ghost). Parnell was a companion of hers when she was an adventurer, and the two went on many missions together. Parnell died while they fought a dragon to gain

Sheva Callister has gladiator stats, with +3 on melee attacks and damage, advantage on checks relating to knowledge of the Dungeon; alignment neutral. Equipment: Sheva's sword *(page 643),* ring of protection, *letter of credit from House Khatru (worth 3,000 gp), 980 gp.*

Dungeon, page 385
Dwarvenhearth, page 429
Delver's Guild, page 108
Elder Titans, page 81
Inverted Pyramid, page 114
Hungerswords, page 639
Dreaming Apothecary, page 116

Alster has mage stats with the Ethereal Sight and Incorporeal Movement of a ghost.

Midtown Map: Page 188

OTHER LOCALES IN MIDTOWN

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Albester's Breads		South River Road (#197, I6)	Roman Albester (male human expert*)	2	—
Ammel's		Ash Street (#200, I7)	Ammel Dar (male human spy)	0	General store (secretly a fence for stolen goods)
Bookbindery		Malav Street (#209, J6)	Firath Cleyes (male human expert*)	1	Prints and binds books
Cal's Construction		Rachen Street (#202, H7)	Artor Brinorin (male human assassin)	8	Front for a Vai cell
Courier Office		Center Street (#198, H6)	Nordith Furl (female human artisan*)	8	Produces and distributes broadsheet
Daykeeper's Chapel		Solemn Street (#216, L5)	Sister Arsagra Callinthan (female human priest)	2	Temple of Lothian
Deymid's Body Art		Bridge Street (#217, L5)	Deymid Friar (male human expert*)	0	Tattoo parlor
Effahlia's Meatpies	★★★	Center Street (#213, K5)	Effahlia Hortenburg (female human expert*)	2	—
"Empty" House		Marlite Street (#211, J7)	Duce Tallary (male human thug)	7	Balacazar hideout
Exotic Stables		Sunrise Street (#176, G5)	Nuella Farreach (female elf druid)	3	Stables for exotic beasts and animal companions
Full Larder	★★	Malav Street (#203, I5)	Blathin Skitcher (male human artisan*)	5	—
Ged's Cabinets		Mona Lane (#207, J5)	Ged Morrowlost (male halfling spy)	6	Front for a secret guide service
Godam Martinelli		Farther Street (#171, G6)	Godam Martinelli (male human artisan*)	0	Dreamspeaker
Good Eats	★★	Fairbriar Street (#183, G6)	Frenkel Path (male gnome artisan*)	6	Specializes in gnome and halfling cuisine
Hell's Door		Tavern Row (#192, H7)	Staun Merris (male human spy)	11	Gambling den
Kerrik's	★	Old Mare Street (#201, I7)	Kerrik Tanner (male human scout)	3	Contact point for the Vai and prospective clients
Larkspur Boarding House	★★	Center Street (#214, K5)	Geordi Halfgallon (male halfling expert*)	3	—
Lomwell's Office		Vadarast Street (#215, K5)	Piruss Lomwell (male human spy)	4	Bookie's office
Marial Tabbott		Sailors' Run (#218, L5)	Marial Tabbott (female human artisan*)	1	Architect
Midtown Dance Hall	★★	Tavern Row (#177, G6)	Feston Barrow (male human commoner)	3	—
Norber's House		Frost Street (#180, G6)	Ginith Norber (female gnome mage)	4	Front for a Sorn cell
Nubble's Music		Bell Street (#188, G6)	Nills Nubble (male gnome artisan*)	2	Sells high-quality musical instruments
Old Goose	★★	Tavern Row (#175, G6)	Unos (male centaur thug)	2	—
Old Lady Coss'		Turnback Street (#182, G6)	Coss Nallisir (female tiefling scout)	16	Legal brothel
The Open Kitchen	★★	Fallow Street (#168, F6)	Salicha Watt (female human commoner)	5	—
Passeon's Meats		Blue Street (#167, F5)	Passeon Naurill (male human artisan*)	0	Butcher
Potions and Elixirs		Iron Street (#223, K7)	Buele Nox (male half-elf arcanist*)	4	Stock as on page 397
Qualin's Books		Birch Street (#206, J6)	Qualin Atero (male halfling scout)	1	—
Rat's Nest	★★	Tavern Row (#185, G6)	Caudil Thinflame (male halfling commoner)	1	—
Sadie's Rest		Foundling Street (#169, F6)	Bron Higger (male human commoner)	1	Memorial park
Sallin's Bakery		Dionys Street (#194, H5)	Ulana Erosa (female human expert*)	0	—
Shadow Sendings		Firestone Street (#208, J6)	Rondella Loyath (female human mage)	7	See page 154
Shar's Music		Frost Street (#179, G6)	Shar Unlastia (female halfling performer*)	3	Fine musical instruments
Tenpin Children's Home		Hawk's Run (#222, L6)	Luana Dremain (female half-elf acolyte)	6	Orphanage
Tillie's Furnishings		Fairbriar Street (#178, G6)	Tillie Milkwood (female halfling expert*)	4	"Small" furniture shop
Trumnaught's Academy		Turnback Street (#181, G6)	Lancil Vestman (male halfling artisan*)	12	Respected school
Vaetrus' Wood		Naimal Lane (#172, F5)	Vaetrus Stardream (male elf artisan*)	0	—
Wilian's Keys		Jawline Walk (#212, J5)	Wilian Barrow (male human artisan*)	0	Locksmith
Yammer's Boots		Birch Street (#205, I6)	Delphinius "Yammer" Whestal (male human expert*)	0	Cobbler

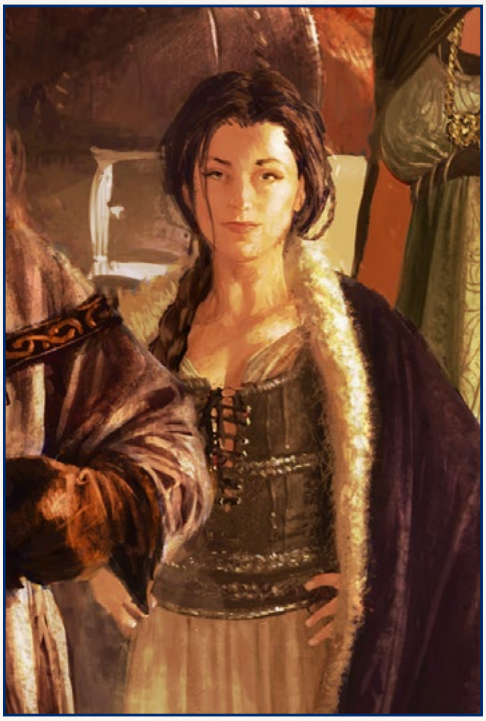
* see Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604

the *Crown of Ki-Lias* and, due to a strange magical property of the crown, he could not be raised from the dead. Nor, however, could he proceed to the afterlife. He remains as a ghost and, thanks to a strange tobacco called ghostweed that he smokes from time to time, he can interact with Sheva and occasionally still go on missions with her (although she is retired . . . really). Parnell had just joined the Inverted Pyramid when he died, and still considers himself a member. What the Inverted Pyramid thinks is another issue.

Campaign Use: Sheva could easily become a source of advice and information or even a kind of mentor for low-level player characters. While brusque and somewhat condescending (often telling younger, inexperienced adventurers to go get a real job rather than getting killed

A typical evening in the taproom of the Ghostly Minstrel in Delver's Square.

Midtown Map: Page 188



under the city), she cares enough about others to warn them of dangers. Her attitude is, "If you're going down there, you might as well do it right."

CARDALIAN

The halfling known as Cardalian is not at all what she appears to be—she is, in fact, a special magical duplicate of a street thief who had the misfortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Created in the Dark Reliquary by the demon Lilith and a Forsaken sorcerer named Surmoil Rallekred, the duplicate was sent out to spy for its masters while the actual Cardalian remains held in the dungeons there.

This magical duplicate functions as Cardalian in every way with the following exceptions:

- She is under the complete psychic domination of Lilith, as if under a powerful mind-control spell that allows the demon to give telepathic commands at unlimited range.
- Any damage, including ability score damage, suffered by the duplicate affects the real Cardalian instead. When the duplicate is on missions, frequently someone is on hand in the Dark Reliquary dungeons to heal the real Cardalian of her wounds. If the real Cardalian dies, the duplicate fades away (but her equipment does not).
- Any enchantment, transmutation, divination, or other effect cast upon the duplicate affects Cardalian instead. Thus, a stunning spell, transformation into a fish, or attempts to drain her soul are redirected to the prisoner halfling. If someone attempts to read the duplicate's mind, they get the thoughts of the captive Cardalian, and a magical attempt to locate her reveals that she is within the Dark Reliquary in the Necropolis, not in Midtown. The only magic that can affect the duplicate requires an outside force or substance. Thus, while a paralysis spell cannot affect the duplicate, one that creates webs or a ball of fire could.
- A successful attempt to dispel magic on the duplicate stuns her for two rounds, but the spell is working against Lilith herself, not the halfling.

Lilith uses the Cardalian duplicate as her eyes and ears in the city outside the Necropolis. She also has proven useful for obtaining items or eliminating troublesome foes on rare occasions. Mostly, however, Lilith has Cardalian keep a low profile. Unless the demon specifically directs her to act otherwise, the duplicate seems gruff, distant, and distracted when around others, sometimes mumbling to herself.

Cardalian never belonged to the Longfingers Guild. However, she knew many thieves who did. A few of these acquaintances noticed a change come over her when she was replaced, but they simply took it to be a new foul mood and have since distanced themselves from her.

GM TIPS

If you know that the PCs will soon go to the Dark Reliquary and may run into the true Cardalian, it would be interesting to have them first encounter her duplicate in the city, so they have a chance to see both sides of what's going on.

Cardalian's duplicate has spy stats; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: studded leather, longsword, longbow, arrows (20), arrow of slaying (elves), potion of invisibility, thieves' tools, 50 feet of silk rope, 34 gp.

Cardalian in the Dark Reliquary, page 239

Lilith, page 110

Forsaken, page 111

Surmoil Rallekred, page 229

THE REAL CARDALIAN

The real Cardalian is held in a cell near the cruciform prison of the Dark Reliquary, guarded at all times by two demons. Inside the stark room, they keep the halfling manacled to the wall.

By means of Lilith's powerful magic, all damage that the duplicate suffers is transferred to the real Cardalian in the cell. When danger threatens the duplicate, one of the demons gives the captive Cardalian healing potions as needed.

Freeing Cardalian from this cell destroys the duplicate. However, the ordeal has driven the real halfling a bit mad. If freed, she may seem fine at first, but after a time she cries out as if struck, even though nothing has happened to her. She has become so used to suffering sudden wounds that she believes they occur even when they do not.

THORRIM KOLVIR

The paladin Thorrim Kolvir (male centaur) is a righteous avenger looking to strike at evil wherever it rears its hideous head. He follows the teachings of Torskal, aram god of just vengeance. Torskal has no temple in Ptolus, and originally Thorrim came here with a cleric named Dalian to start one. However, Dalian was killed in a mugging on the centaurs' second day in the city. Thorrim hunted down and slew her murderers. But his thirst for vengeance is not sated. Deep down, he blames all of Ptolus for Dalian's death, but his sense of morality only allows him to take vengeance on obviously evil people and creatures. He attempted to join the Knights of the Pale, but they rejected him, worried that he was too blinded by his need for revenge and untempered by the virtue of mercy.

Thorrim lives in Narred, but wanders much of Midtown looking for evil or for those about to embark on a mission against evil. Those who join with him may find his lust for killing evil to be worrisome.

In addition, they find him wholly unwilling to attempt subtle means toward a goal or take the fight against evil halfway. For example, if he joins a group trying to get into the temple of a chaos cult to rescue a captive believed to be inside, Thorrim will insist on remaining to slay every cultist.

SOBAC REDWAND

To those in the know, a "Redwand job" is a euphemism for "a well-secured place." Sobac Redwand is a well-known elf thief. Only perhaps the aging Hayman Knapp, Guildmaster Thief of the Longfingers Guild, has greater skill in all of Ptolus. Once a member of that guild, Sobac became bored of the politics and his slow advancement through the ranks despite his far greater natural talents than those of his peers. Sobac is not a violent man; although he carries a few weapons, his philosophy is that if he finds himself with one of them in his hand, things have gone horribly wrong. And frankly, Sobac is too cunning and too experienced to let things go that wrong very often. Most of the time, if he breaks into a place to steal something, no one ever knows he was there. He even has a way around magical defenses: the *dispelling charms* made especially for him by a friend in the Inverted Pyramid.

Finding Sobac is a difficult matter. He rarely makes a public appearance, and even then it is in disguise. Sobac has few friends and a great many enemies. The Longfingers Guild would love to see him put out of business, and although the various criminal syndicates use his

Torskal, page 74
Knights of the Pale, page 121
Narred, page 190

Thorrim Kolvir is a centaur with holy champion stats (page 610), size Large, and speed 50 ft.; alignment lawful good

Sobac Redwand has the typical dark hair of a Shoal elf, but he keeps it trimmed quite short. He does what he can to maintain a low profile, but if one pays attention, one can see Sobac's almost unearthly grace when he moves—every gesture is extraordinarily precise. He has trained himself to have complete control over every muscle.

Sobac Redwand is a Shoal elf with master thief stats (page 612), AC 17; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: +1 studded leather armor, +1 shortsword, *daggers (2)*, cloak of elvenkind, rope of climbing, rope of entanglement, *magical lockpicks (gives advantage on Sleight of Hand checks to open locks)*, thoughtstone, dispelling charm *(3; see page 637)*, *disguise kit, thieves' tools, 64 gp.*

Hayman Knapp, page 123
Inverted Pyramid, page 114

House Sadar, sometimes called the House of Shadows, is looking for the box of shadows. *Lord Renn Sadar spends significant time researching the artifact, brought to Ptolus by Thadeus Koll in 520 IA and given to the celestial Malkuth.*

services, they resent his high fees. Just about every noble house has been the victim of his skills at one time or another. About the only way to contact him is to simply spread the word among the proper channels—a few whispers in the right ears in taverns like the Onyx Spider or the Skull and Sword. Or the PCs could try to contact him through his *thoughtstone*. In any case, Sobac finds the interested party and approaches the characters on his own terms. Sobac knows that interpersonal skills are not his strength, so he keeps encounters brief and attempts to find out what he can about clients and jobs before putting himself in danger.

Currently, there is a 15,000-gp bounty on Sobac Redwand's head, sponsored by House Abanar. Most bounty hunters and adventurers who know of Sobac laugh at the ridiculousness of the low reward.

DAERSIDIAN RINGSIRE AND BRUSSELT AIRMOL

You cannot really say one name without the other: Daersidian Ringsire and Brusselt Airmol. The former is an elf battle mage known for his wyvern mount, Thorntail; the latter, a halfling master thief of great skill. These two partners have made names for themselves by getting involved in affairs that were always a bit over their heads, dealing with powerful and influential people in the city—heads of noble houses, leaders of criminal organizations, and so on. Daersidian and Brusselt have a great many allies throughout the city in all strata of society because of their past exploits. However, when they come to town, they spend most of their time in Delver's Square, and in the Ghostly Minstrel in particular.

The two (three, counting Thorntail) live in a small home in the southern end of the lovely Moonsilver Forest.

Scenario: Thurvan Rashong, a former companion of Daersidian and Brusselt, was corrupted by a magical power conduit called the *box of shadows*. Daersidian and Brusselt are looking for a way to stop him without harming him. Both Thurvan and the box dwell within the Shade Tower, also known as Kadmiel, in Oldtown. (This is far from common knowledge, however.) Daersidian cannot stand the thought of looking upon their former friend as an evil being of shadows, so he and Brusselt hope to find someone else to deal with Thurvan, particularly if lethal force is required to stop him.

While making their way through the Dragonsbirth Mountains, Daersidian and Brusselt were attacked by a clutch of wyverns. They slew the creatures, but immediately afterward they found one strange little wyvern that had been kicked out of the nest because of a deformity. Daersidian took the wyvern and raised it. As it grew, the deformity—an extra pair of legs—gave the creature more of a dragon's appearance rather than that of a typical wyvern. Thorntail, as he named his mount, has remained extremely loyal to the elf ever since.

A DC 22 Investigation check is needed to pass on the information that a person wants to speak with Sobac and that it would be worth his time to pay attention. If this is actually untrue, a DC 25 Deception check might be in order.

Onyx Spider, page 203
Skull and Sword, page 180
Thoughtstone, *page 158*
Delver's Square, page 188
Ghostly Minstrel, page 193
Thurvan Rashong, page 305
Box of shadows, *page 305*
Kadmiel, page 303

Daersidian Ringsire is a Shoal elf with veteran stats, AC 14, +1 on all saves, +1 on melee attacks and damage, and the spellcasting of a mage; alignment neutral. Equipment: +1 greatsword, bracers of defense, thoughtstone, scroll of cone of cold, scroll of fly, scrolls of lightning bolt *(2)*, scroll of wall of force, potion of superior healing, *silver and onyx ring (worth 550 gp), letter of credit from Doraedian Mythlord (worth 1,000 gp), 240 gp.*

Thorntail the wyvern: *110 hp*

Brusselt Airmol is a halfling with assassin stats, AC 16, +1 on melee attacks and damage, no poison; alignment neutral. Equipment: +1 studded leather, +1 longsword, *daggers (12)*, necklace of fireballs, ring of mind shielding, potion of flying, potion of invisibility, potions of superior healing *(2)*, *gold and emerald ring (worth 900 gp), 49 gp, 15 sp.*

Chapter 11:

NECROPOLIS

In many ways, the Necropolis is the least typical district in Ptolus. In fact, it's odd to even call it a district. It has no shops and no homes (with a few strange exceptions). It's really just the city's cemetery. But, as with so many things in Ptolus, there's much more to it than that.

NECROPOLIS IN BRIEF

Area: *65 acres*
Population: *0 (officially)*
Primary Function: *Cemetery*
Primary Social Class: *none*
none
none

Hall of the Valiant, page 221
Dark Reliquary, page 223
Tower of Terephon, page 223

The borders of the Necropolis are very clear—a wall surrounds the entire district. It sits atop a number of small hills at the northeast end of the city, near the cliff edge overlooking the Bay of Ptolus. The sections of the Necropolis are as follows:

- **Darklock Hill**: Central section
- **Bone Hill**: Northeastern section
- **The Quiet**: Northwestern section
- **The Waiting**: Southwestern section
- **The Howling**: Eastern/southeastern section

THE FLAVOR OF THE NECROPOLIS

A chill wind blows through the twisted branches of a shriveled tree. An avenue runs between rows of mausoleums, and gravestones dot the hill beyond. Shadows move out of the corner of your eye, and haunting melodies waft from some distant piper. This is a gloomy, somewhat unnerving area during the day but a terrifying place of real—not imagined—horrors at night.

Like any other section of town, the Necropolis has streets, avenues, and lanes, but they lead only from one gravesite to the next and from one crypt to another. Laws of the city forbid the construction of any buildings within the Necropolis other than crypts, tombs, or mausoleums. However, a few structures existed long before such laws: the Hall of the Valiant, for example, and, of course, the Dark Reliquary. Others, such as the Tower of Terephon, have been built in recent years in defiance of the laws.

RUNNING THE NECROPOLIS

The Necropolis presents challenges to the GM. The minute the player characters are no longer afraid of the Necropolis at night, something has gone terribly wrong. But if the Necropolis is *too* obvious a danger, it can seem at odds with the reality of the city. The best way to handle this disparity is to walk the thin line between too much danger and too little. Another option for resolving this issue is to make the danger seem so great that no one in the city can deal with it; in this case, everyone just heaves a collective sigh of relief that the threat remains confined to the Necropolis.

Player characters should learn early on that, upon hearing of the terrors within the Necropolis, brave young paladins and would-be heroes march in with their swords drawn. Those who enter by day find nothing but mourners and morticians. Those who charge in after dusk are rarely seen again. The time when a few powerful heroes could go in and clear out the Dark Reliquary is long over.

The Necropolis serves two purposes to GMs running a Ptolus Campaign. First and most obvious, it's a place to set adventures. It's like an urban wilderness, but instead of deep, dark forests, there are fields of gravestones. Instead of mysterious canyons, you've got rows of mausoleums and crypts. And instead of wild animals, there are undead and demons. The serene daytime Necropolis provides an interesting contrast with its status at night, when it quickly becomes deadly. If the characters need to accomplish something there, can they get out before the sun sets? If not, can they find shelter for the harrowing night ahead of them?

The second purpose of the Necropolis is more subtle, but a good GM can use it early in the campaign, even before the PCs are powerful enough to consider challenging the place. The Necropolis sets a dark and somewhat dismal backdrop—a sign that something truly terrible is going on in Ptolus, that the darkness is growing in power and boldness. When the player characters first learn about the Necropolis, they'll likely be aghast. But it wasn't always this way, people will tell them. Something is happening…

A FOREBODING HISTORY

For years, the cemetery of this very old city grew. It was always a dour place, but rarely a dire one. A few hundred years ago, the occasional band of bandits would attempt to make the place its lair, from which they could stage assaults on citizens and caravans headed north. They found themselves quickly run out of the place, however.

People wondered about the Dark Reliquary, of course. It was always thought to be a ruin: a temple to death gods or other dark powers. A few adventurers risked its entrance, but many never returned from such forays. Those who did said the place was well and truly haunted. There might even be demons walking its halls! Normally such news would bring a band of holy knights and warriors with torches, but the truth was, whatever lived in the Dark Reliquary never disturbed anyone. Nothing ventured forth from the place to cause any trouble—at least, not that anyone could substantiate. Even the Church of Lothian cautioned its followers, as well as the Commissar and everyone else, to leave the place alone rather than stir up anything that might lie within. Most found the argument persuasive. Why look for trouble and make things worse?

What literally no one knew was that the Dark Reliquary was created by undead and a few living cultists who worshipped and adored death—a group that would one day become known as the Forsaken. The entire process had begun very quietly three centuries ago, masterminded by immortal beings known as the Wintersouled. In those days, the cemetery did not abut the city at all. Ptolus was merely what is today known as Oldtown, with a road that went along the river down to sea level. The cemetery was the last bit north of the river that a traveler would see before going down to sea

Although bigger cities such as Tarsis have even larger necropolises of their own, the Necropolis of Ptolus is infamous. Many people in faraway lands know Ptolus only as "the city with the vast cemetery"—almost as many as know it as "the city next to the big spire of rock."

Forsaken, page 111

Wintersouled, page 223

MAP KEY

125. Hall of the Valiant (page 221)
126. Clasthamus Isle (page 218)
127. Siege Tower (page 222)
128. Crypt Home of Igor Reichstav (page 220)
129. Deathguild Headquarters (page 221)
130. Alchestrin's Tomb (page 218)
131. Tower of Terephon (page 223)
132. Dark Reliquary (page 223)

WHY IS THE NECROPOLIS TOLERATED?

Upon hearing of the terrors of the Necropolis, one of the first questions newcomers ask is why the authorities allow the presence of so many horrors so close to the heart of the city. Why aren't people more alarmed about this? Why doesn't everyone flee from this danger?

The truth is, the danger is fairly confined. The undead and demons living in the Necropolis come out only rarely, and when they do, the various local defenders—the City Watch, the Keepers of the Veil, the Knights of the Pale, and others—deal with them. Everyone knows not to go there at night, and Ptolusites have accepted that. Furthermore, the evil of the place is too strong and is rooted too deeply to confront directly. At least for now.

What worries authorities more is this: If so many undead and demons dwell in the Necropolis, why don't they come out more often? Most people assume it's because they know the city's defenders are too strong for them. Others, however, worry that it means something else—something ever more dire.

Another question newcomers might ask is, "Why do you continue to bury your dead there?" The patient answer is that today, the dead placed in the Necropolis are carefully blessed so they cannot arise as undead. The less patient answer is, "Just where would you like us to bury them? Do you really want to create another Necropolis?"

For Necropolis burial prices, see The Cost of Living on page 502 in Chapter 26: On Being a Resident.

level. No one noticed the Dark Reliquary at first. Perhaps no one wanted to notice it.

As the Necropolis grew, so too did the Dark Reliquary. When demons called the Fallen began to congregate around Ptolus, they forged an alliance with the Forsaken and came to dwell within the Dark Reliquary. Still the demons and undead kept as quiet as they could, for they knew the forces of light in the city could still overwhelm them. The Wintersouled instructed them to bide their time and wait for the Night of Dissolution.

Fallen, page 109

Night of Dissolution, page 62

Some members of the Deathguild make their living as professional mourners for Necropolis funerals.

Starting about fifteen years ago, the sheer number of undead and demons in the Dark Reliquary made them difficult to control. Strife arose in their dark ranks. Some of them prowled the Necropolis at night, seeking victims. Graves were exhumed and corpses, both fresh and years dead, went missing. Word began to spread that the cemetery was not safe after dark. Within just a few years, this became not a whispered bit of advice, but an accepted fact.

Twelve years ago, builders—under the direction of the Commissar—finished the wall around the Necropolis that separated it from the rest of the city. The authorities feared that the undeniably powerful forces in the Necropolis would begin to stalk Ptolusites outside its boundaries. They told the populace the wall was to keep out grave robbers, and that it was those vile folk who dug up the dead and caused trouble in the Necropolis at night. People accepted this lie for a while, but soon it became obvious to all that the place teemed with the undead and the living who worked with them.

Two years later, in 711, the Keepers of the Veil converted an ancient stone manor house into the keep known as the Siege Tower. (This structure predated the Necropolis.) For the last decade, the Keepers have maintained a vigil, warding the city from the things that skulk in the Necropolis. In the last two or three years, however, they have arguably begun to lose that war.

Keepers of the Veil, page 117
Clasthamus Isle, page 218
Siege Tower, page 222
Ghoul paths, page 221

THE NECROPOLIS AT NIGHT

Somber and brooding during the day, the Necropolis is never an enjoyable area for most folk to visit. However, the Necropolis at night is a terrifying place, far worse than even the gang-infested slums of the Warrens.

Ghouls and ghasts roam in packs, looking for sustenance. Shadows flitter about freely, darting from headstone to headstone. Even wraiths rove throughout the grave-ridden hills and crypt-lined paths, unconcerned about the close proximity of the rest of the city.

Common knowledge maintains that one simply does not linger in the Necropolis after dark. As GM, it is your responsibility to make this a true statement. Only the mightiest of living characters who find themselves in the Necropolis at night could hope to deal with the large number of undead drawn to them like moths to a flame. Particularly troublesome intruders might also draw the attention of the Forsaken and even the Fallen. Do not hesitate to launch wave after wave of ghoul assaults and send shadows creeping and wraiths looming out of the darkness. Characters with special abilities against the undead are likely to exhaust those powers with many hours still to go before dawn. Even reasonably powerful characters should be forced to flee—if not out of the Necropolis altogether, then at least to the relative safety of Clasthamus Isle.

The next morning shows no sign of the terrors of the previous night. Destroyed ghouls are simply gone (dragged down into the ghoul paths). Other undead are now just dust.

Necropolis Map: Page 215

PEOPLE OF THE NECROPOLIS

During the day, most people in the Necropolis are mourners at funerals, visitors to the graves of loved ones, or members of the clergy performing various blessings or rites.

At night, the only "people" in the Necropolis are wandering bands of the Forsaken looking for undead to interact with or dead bodies to animate in dark, elaborate rituals. While the Forsaken's headquarters is the Dark Reliquary, most members of the group rarely go there, preferring to wander the Necropolis by night and hide amid the tombs during the day. (A few attempt to live regular lives in the city in contrast to their distasteful activities here.)

PERSON ON THE STREET

Regidal Norn: A human man in his mid-sixties, Regidal visits his wife's grave every week, bringing flowers and small gifts. He has thick grey hair and a mustache, and he is ever so slightly portly. When visiting the Necropolis, Regidal always dresses nicely in a dark jacket with a bright green kerchief tied around his neck. As this routine has continued for the last six years, Regidal knows his way around the Necropolis pretty well. He's never once seen anything frightening or dangerous, although he has noted suspicious bands of younger folk wearing black clothes and white face paint. They don't seem to be here visiting any deceased relatives. (He's referring to the Forsaken.)

Gel Weverly: Gel, a plain-looking human woman in her thirties, works as a professional mourner. She wears a grey dress with a black hooded coat and ties her brown hair in a bun. She's either on her way to a funeral or just leaving one, having been paid by the family of the deceased or some other party interested in making sure the funeral was well attended. Gel weeps and moans throughout the service and makes it clear that the departed soul will be missed. Gel belongs to the Deathguild.

Ossath Hidail: Ossath is a member of the Forsaken. This human male wears a long black cloak with a hood and covers his face with paint to create a deathly pallor. He wears an iron necklace with a small skull charm, and his pierced ears have earrings with iron skulls as well. A low-ranking member of his organization, Ossath wanders aimlessly through the Necropolis, simply dwelling upon the nature of death. Unlike many Forsaken, he seems quite interested in speaking freely with strangers—not that many want to talk to *him*.

NECROPOLIS RUMORS

Rotting in the Sewers. Some people say that sewer channels underneath the Necropolis run to the river and the bay. These were constructed

Not surprisingly, the Necropolis is one of the quietest areas of the city. Sometimes—during the day, of course—people come to the cemetery just to stroll around and enjoy a bit of peace in the isolation. Some call this practice "sightseeing the dead."

Deathguild, page 221

Noble Family Crypts

Each noble family has its own crypt in the Necropolis, most quite lavish and warded against tomb robbers and body snatchers. Still, about half of the families choose not to use their crypts, or do so only rarely. Instead, they bury their dead on the grounds of their estates or in underground family crypts.

For more on Alchestrin when he was alive, see page 263 and the first two installments of Saga of the Blade *in the Ptolus Digital Extras.*

Alchestrin is an undead mage who has all of the abilities, defenses, and weaknesses of a wight (at his peak, he had archmage stats); alignment neutral evil.

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

Wynn Rabinall, page 349

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

Death in Ptolus

Elves typically cremate their dead, and dwarves bury the fallen in crypts deep underground. It's common human practice to bury the dead. Thus, human cities always have cemeteries. Given the age of some cities, including Ptolus, many cemeteries grow to be the size of small cities themselves and thus are given the name "necropolis." Ptolus's Necropolis isn't the largest of its kind in the world, but it is the most dangerous, due to the supernatural elements involved. The Necropolis of Tarsis, for example, might have a few ghoul gangs, but nothing like the legions of undead and demons in the Dark Reliquary. By other cities' standards, this is not the norm. (Refer back to Chapter 4: Cosmology and Religion for more details on how the Fallen came to the Dark Reliquary.)

The dead are taken into the Necropolis during the day. Priests bless the corpses so they cannot rise as undead, although these religious safeguards seem effective only some of the time. The evil that walks in the Necropolis slumbers during the day, either due to the sunlight's power or through a sort of wordless détente reached with the city's protectors.

Dark Reliquary, page 223

Castle Shard, page 263

Quideth is an undead arcanist (page 605) who has all of the abilities, defenses, and weaknesses of a wraith; alignment neutral evil.

Godsday, page 364

Soul magic, page 619

Jabel Shammar, page 465

as the city expanded; the builders presumed that the city, not its cemetery, would spread over the area. Imagining what these old sewer passages might be like today—ghoul-infested waterways choked with rotting corpses, sinister zombie-filled mazes, or far worse—is unnerving, to say the least. Worse, according to the Keepers of the Veil, is the potential for these waterways, which presumably connect to the rest of the city's sewerworks, to carry veritable armies of undead under the streets to strike anywhere in Ptolus.

War Among the Forsaken. Not all the Forsaken are of one mind. Tales of undead fighting undead and of Forsaken cultists and sorcerers betraying each other and foiling each other's plans grow more common of late. No one seems to know what the fighting is all about, or what will happen if one side or the other achieves victory.

NECROPOLIS LOCATIONS

The Necropolis holds many strange locations, some interesting and some terrifying. Note that because the Dark Reliquary is such a vast complex, it is broken out as a separate section in this chapter. All NPCs for the Necropolis appear within this section and the next, rather than broken out at the end of the chapter as in most other districts.

ALCHESTRIN'S TOMB

Darklock Hill (#130, L4); see map, page 215 38,000 gp

Alchestrin was a powerful wizard of antiquity, having lived from 401 BE to 350 BE. His tomb is one of the oldest in the Necropolis, and in life he was one of the masters of Castle Shard.

The entrance to the tomb lies at the apex of a hill, surrounded by standing stones worn with age and covered with moss. At the center of the stone circle, an iron plug 6 feet across and inlaid with bronze serves as the entrance. On the plug, inscribed in Palastani, are these words: "The sun is now my enemy. I retreat forever from its light. The doors to my kingdom shall not open during its reign." This fairly obvious clue suggests that one cannot remove the plug during the day. This is true—nothing less than wish magic can do so.

Alchestrin's Tomb is a large complex that extends deep underground. It is warded by magical traps and guardians, as well as undead defenders. Those who brave its dangers may be well rewarded, however, for it also contains a great many magical treasures, including—hidden away in the deepest, most secret vault—the soul magic spell that allows one to enter Jabel Shammar, the fortress at the top of the Spire.

Alchestrin has become a spellcasting wight whose arcane powers have eroded with time, though he possesses all manner of unique abilities. He dwells within his tomb, wishing never to be disturbed.

Scenario: Years ago, Wynn Rabinall of the Order of the Fist traveled back in time via powerful magic with a companion named Quideth Minnisham. There they encountered and fought the living Alchestrin. In the course of this adventure, Quideth fell in battle, and Wynn was forced to return to the present without her. He has always blamed himself for her death. Only recently did Wynn discover that she did not actually die: Alchestrin imprisoned her soul within a crystal, which reportedly lies within his tomb. Too distraught and guilt-ridden to go himself, Wynn offers to reward the player characters greatly if they will see whether this rumor is true and recover the crystal from the tomb. If they go, the PCs learn that it *was* true, but that long ago the undead Alchestrin used the crystal to create an undead wraith of Quideth. This wraith now dwells with him in the tomb and has never forgiven Wynn for abandoning her. In fact, it is her hatred of him that fuels both her undead power and her now evil alignment. Even if the characters survive and return to Wynn, how can they break this news to him?

CLASTHAMUS ISLE

The Quiet (#126, K3); see map, next page 1,000 gp

Thamus is an old, almost forgotten deity of protection and safety. Long ago, he bequeathed the *Stones of Thamus* to the world as tokens of his power. These stones fell into the possession of a druid named Andach, who placed them on the far end of a bridge that connects a little island to the shore of a very small lake called the Lake of Sorrows within the Necropolis. He named the island Clasthamus, meaning "in the hands of Thamus" in Palastani.

The artifacts of this good god of life make it impossible for any undead or demon to step onto the bridge or the island, or even touch the waters of the lake. However, the *Stones of Thamus* fail for twenty-four hours—from midnight to midnight—on Godsday each year. During that period, the island becomes vulnerable, though Andach defends it ably with all his considerable might.

The small island seems entirely out of place in its mournful surroundings. Andach and his apprentice, Hennam, have turned it into a verdant grove teeming with life. No real paths run through the island, which is thick with

Necropolis Map: Page 215

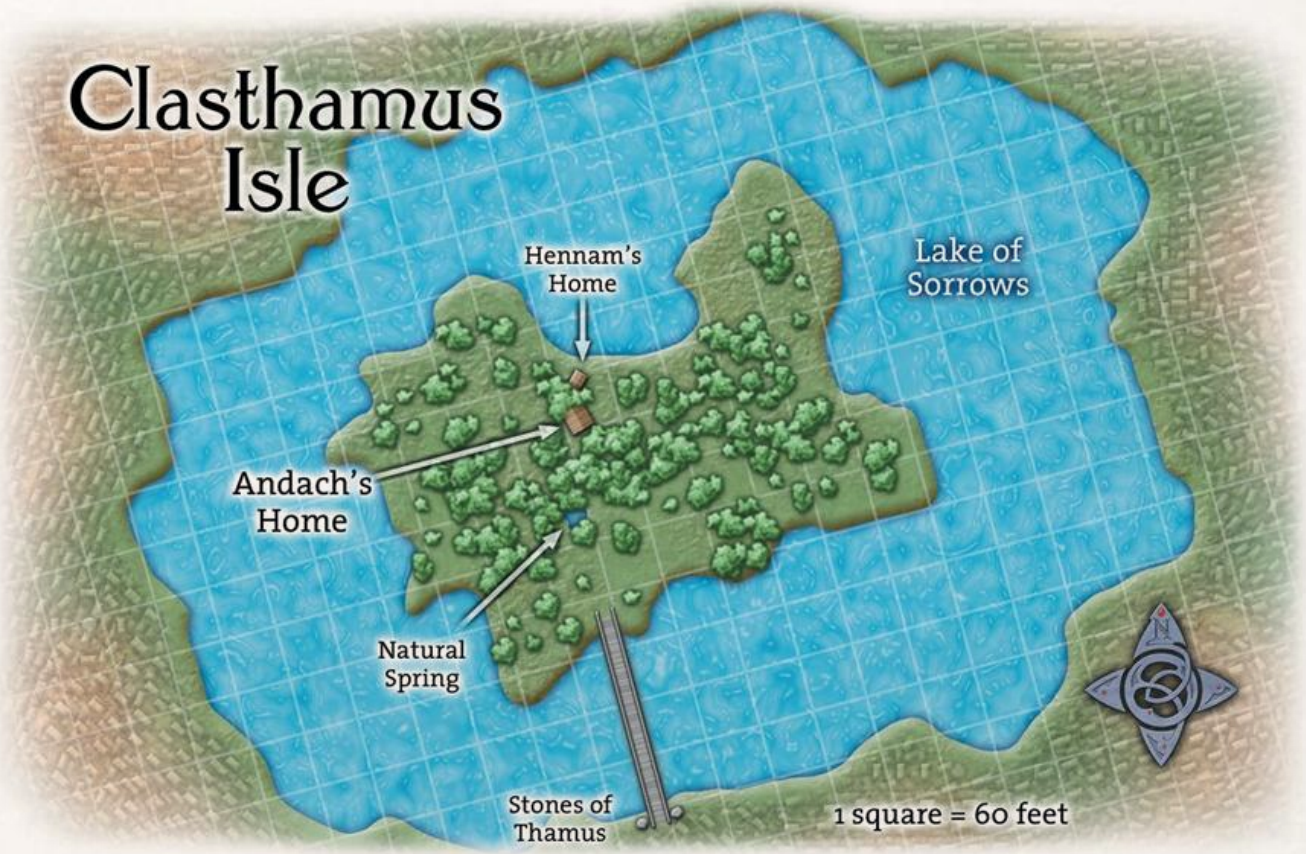
trees and shrubs, although it does have a bit of a clearing in the middle with two crude huts where the druids live. Over the years, Andach has used his magic to awaken human-level sapience in a mountain lion, rattlesnake, falcon, and squirrel, all of whom live on the island amid a surprising number of other creatures. The *awakened* animals help keep a vigil around the perimeter of the island; even though the undead and demons can't come here, they can still send living Forsaken spies or assassins—although after all these years, almost none are brave enough to attempt it anymore. A treant close friend of Andach's also lives on the island.

ANDACH

Andach (male human), the master of Clasthamus Isle, has lived a long life full of adventure. Now he wishes only for peace and tranquility in which to contemplate the nature of the Green. However, his responsibilities have led him to a place none would expect to find a druid, let alone a druid seeking tranquility: the middle of the undead-infested Necropolis. Although he would never tell anyone this, he believes it is his destiny to rid the Necropolis of undead and demons. He won't accomplish his goal by force of arms, he believes, but by spreading the power of the grove he is creating

Hundreds of years ago, Kirstol Dallimothan was alone in the wilds of Palastan when he was beset by a pair of marauding storm giants. Although he drove them off, he was sorely wounded in the process. Eventually he staggered into the grove of a young druid named Andach. The druid tended to his wounds, and the two developed a bond of friendship. Years later, it was Kirstol who convinced Andach to come to Ptolus with the Stones of Thamus. *The two rarely see each other anymore, but each remains always ready to come to the other's aid when needed.*

Andach is a druid with high priest stats (page 610), wild shape as a 20th-level druid, resistance to fire, immunity to poison, Animal Handling +7, Nature +7, Perception +7; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: +3 leather, staff of the woodlands, eyes of the eagle, potions of superior healing *(3)*, scroll of sunbeam, scroll of sunburst.



Although he would never confirm or deny it, some say that Andach the druid is so old and comes from such a long-lived line that his father was a leader in the ancient band of druids called the Circle of Green (page 107).

on the island throughout the district. He is many decades away from attempting this feat—if it is even possible.

The old druid is gruff, blunt, and disinclined to speak at all with those he does not trust. He does not like visitors to the island but, on the other hand, he cannot turn away those in dire need, such as those trapped in the Necropolis at night.

Andach is tall and thin with wild hair. He wears tattered green and brown robes and bears a staff entwined with living vines. He rarely uses his ability to transform into animals, preferring instead to use his spells to deal with threats. His giant bear companion is never far away.

Tactics: He typically has a defensive spell active at all times that gives him hard, bark-like skin. If dealing with a minor threat, he casts one or two storms of ice, but with time to prepare against a serious challenge he summons multiple elementals or calls a storm that batters foes with acid rain, lightning, and hail.

Waking key, page 645

Shigmaa Irretharm, page 250

Uyethicas, page 251

See page 256 for a depiction of the Godsday Battle on Clasthamus Isle.

Gravebloom is an extremely rare plant that grows very few places in the Necropolis: on the graves of those consecrated in the name of Blurrah, Goddess of Comfort in Sadness. For details, see Vices on page 518 in Chapter 28: Crime and the Law.

Andach's giant bear companion has gynosphinx stats, with no spellcasting or legendary actions.

Igor Reichstav has thug stats; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: nice dagger (worth 100 gp), 38 gp, 21 sp, 99 cp.

Moonsilver Forest, page 44

Hennam is very plain featured. Her eyes are bright and her smile is warm.

Hennam has druid stats; alignment neutral good. Equipment: +1 leather, +1 scimitar, potion of greater healing, potion of invisibility

Giant flies have giant vulture stats.

Surmoil Rallekred, page 229

Zastanix, page 227

Godsday, page 364

Corrupt teleport beacons, page 230

Kirstol Dallimothan, page 94

HENNAM

Daughter of an old ally of Andach's in the Moonsilver Forest, Hennam (female half-elf) serves as the druid's apprentice. Originally a hunter and tracker among the elves, Hennam has turned toward the more mystical side of nature with Andach's guidance. He has found her an eager and talented student, and her presence grants the added benefit of freeing him from having to deal with visitors to the island.

Hennam enjoys her time with Andach, but she misses contact with others. When visitors do come to the island, she seems eager for news of the city, Palastan, and almost any other topic. She begs for any information they can provide and is happy to chat, unlike her master.

Despite her warm, welcoming manner, Hennam is not what she appears. Deep within her mind, a Forsaken sorcerer named Surmoil Rallekred has placed an insidious magical domination demonseed that will germinate on the next Godsday night. When this happens, Hennam will fall wholly under Surmoil's control. What's more, the magical seed allows him to create a conduit through which he can place *corrupt teleport beacons*. These beacons, placed across the island, will allow people to teleport there despite the place's normal safeguards and restrictions. Hennam will be forced to do what she can against Andach, despite her actual wishes.

Scenario: Lord Kirstol Dallimothan, an old friend of Andach's, knows the druid must defend the island from constant attack before dawn and after dusk each Godsday. He gets the player characters to go to the island this year to help. On the next Godsday Night, when the demonseed within Hennam germinates and takes control of her, Shigmaa Irretharm, Herald of the Wintersouled, leads the attack on the island with a legion of undead and a few demons. He waits to confront Andach directly before using the *waking key* to summon Uyethicas the Wintersouled.

THE CRYPT HOME OF IGOR REICHSTAV

The Waiting (#128, L4); see map, page 215 0 gp

Not everyone in the Necropolis is dead or undead. Igor Reichstav (male human) is a person who lives in an empty crypt along the southern wall. A gaunt, tall man with sunken eyes and thin, grey-white hair, Igor is at least a little mad, and a drunk besides. Although few know of him, those who do consider him the greatest expert on the Necropolis and the Dark Reliquary outside of the Forsaken and the Fallen. However, because of his unsavory nature, most people assume that Igor is indeed one of the death-worshippers or a consorter with demons (which, technically, he is, but not intentionally). Really, Igor is just a more-than-slightly mad man who lives in a small, empty crypt.

Getting to Igor is an unpleasant experience. Visitors to his home note an inordinate number of giant flies buzzing around the crypt. Drawing closer, one can see the crypt is a black mass of movement: it's covered in swarming flies. Unwelcome visitors close enough to see this mass are attacked by two giant flies.

Igor views the flies, both normal and giant, as friends. It would not be out of the ordinary for visitors to find him covered in crawling, swarming insects when they first meet him. In truth, the flies are fiendish representatives of a flylike demon named Zastanix, who dwells within the Dark Reliquary. Zastanix, one of the Fallen, is in charge of security and defense of the dismal place. For some reason, the demon has taken a liking to Igor, and the two have long conversations some nights, which only adds to Igor's knowledge of forbidden facts about the Dark Reliquary and its inhabitants. Because of Zastanix's friendship, the Forsaken, the Fallen, and the undead leave Igor alone.

Igor distrusts strangers but can be bribed easily—not with money, which is all but useless to him, but with alcohol. A few bottles help convince him to relate any facts he knows. However, the fiendish flies hear everything he says and warn Zastanix.

Necropolis Map: Page 215

Some of the graffiti on defaced graves and tombs in the Necropolis reads as follows: "Summer is over. The shadows grow long. The winter of Death approaches," and "The harvest of Death comes for you."

Igor Reichstav believes that the flies that swarm about his crypt home travel all around the city and even the world, and then return to him to reveal the secrets of what they have seen with their compound eyes. He whispers to them and listens to their buzzing as though he can understand it.

DEATHGUILD HEADQUARTERS

Center Street in the Waiting (#129, L4); see map, page 215 ❗ 5,000 gp

The Deathguild is an organization of morticians, gravediggers, professional mourners, and others involved with the business of interring the dead. This large and surprisingly influential Ptolus organization has at least two hundred fifty members.

Most Deathguilders hate the Forsaken, but they dislike the Keepers of the Veil as well. Ultimately, the guilders ignore the worsening situation in the Necropolis and operate as if things were the same as they were decades ago, when the worst problem was the occasional tomb robber.

Members of the Forsaken often infiltrate the Deathguild, serving as spies or informants. Further, some Ptolusites in professions dealing with the dead secretly revere death and adore the dead a little more than is healthy. These individuals quietly sympathize with the Forsaken, and some even join that unsavory group.

The Deathguild Headquarters is located next to the main gate into the Necropolis, the Center Street gate. The large, two-story structure is built into the Necropolis side of the wall. Some members—guards, mostly—remain inside even at night. The building has powerful anti-undead repulsions and wards.

THE GHOUL PATHS

Throughout the Necropolis; map N/A ❗ 1,000 gp

Just below the ground of much of the Necropolis, narrow burrows created by ghouls wind to and fro beneath the cemetery's graves. These passages are used to remove corpses without anyone on the surface ever being any the wiser. Most ghoul paths measure no more than 3 feet in diameter, requiring the ghouls to crawl.

Ghouls and ghasts dwell in these tunnels, sleeping during the day and scurrying about the surface at night. The tunnels go from grave to grave, but many collapse after a short period, requiring the undead to dig new passages all the time. This havoc makes the ghoul paths a seemingly nonsensical maze. Treasure-minded adventurers report that one can sometimes find coins and other valuables strewn along the subterranean pathways—items lost from corpses dragged away by the ghouls, which do not care for such things.

There are hundreds of ghouls and ghasts in the tunnels.

Ghoul: *24 hp*

Ghast: *40 hp*

HALL OF THE VALIANT

The Quiet (#125, K3); see map, page 215 ❗❗ 50,000 gp

Near the center of the Quiet stands a vast mausoleum containing the remains of some of Ptolus's greatest heroes, leaders, and other honored dead. Those entombed here include dead Commissars, council members, and even one Prince of the Church (Lukas Mikolic), plus

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

Burials in Ptolus

Fifty-four years ago, a new law made it illegal to bury or otherwise inter dead bodies within the city anywhere but the Necropolis. One can still seek a permit to do so, but unless the burial site already exists (such as an extant family crypt), these permits prove very difficult to obtain. Ironically, the law was created to avoid the threat of undead, as well as the spread of disease or contamination into the city's water supply.

Abesh Runihan, page 111
Tacheron Kint, page 348
Gerris Hin, page 308
Sir Beck Von Tibbitz, page 118

such heroes as Abesh Runihan and Tacheron Kint, and notables like the historian Gerris Hin and the former leader of the Keepers of the Veil, Sir Tomas Storocek. The Commissar grants families' requests to bury heroic loved ones here.

The building is a huge, open hall with marble floors and columns lining the walls. Side passages hold small individual crypts. The entire windowless structure stands aboveground, lit by a few high-placed permanent *torchlight* spells.

Iron golem: *207 hp*

An iron golem waits in the middle of the great hall. Its orders are to attack anyone attempting to disturb a sealed crypt. The golem has stood guard here for many years and has proven an effective deterrent.

Further, each individual crypt is trapped, both conventionally and magically. This practice started almost twenty years ago to deter tomb robbers and, even more, the Forsaken and the undead.

THE SIEGE TOWER

Golden Elm Way (#127, K4); see map, below 6,500 gp

Headquarters of the order called the Keepers of the Veil, this small, three-story keep serves as a watchtower to monitor events in the Necropolis and as a staging area to launch missions against the Fallen, the Forsaken, and the undead of the cemetery. The cleric Phadian Gess is the seneschal of the Siege Tower, meaning that she commands the structure and its defense, even though technically the order's leader is Sir Beck Von Tibbitz. Both Phadian and Beck are present at the castle far more often than not.

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

Phadian Gess, page 118

Once a walled manor, the keep now resembles a fortified gatehouse. The ground level of the well-defended structure includes a passage that leads into the Necropolis. The massive iron-bound wooden doors on both ends can be sealed with portcullises; the passage is accessed from above by no fewer than ten murder holes. The fortress is equipped not only with plenty of ranged weapons like bows and crossbows, but also with copious amounts of alchemist's fire and holy water to withstand an attack.

Low-ranking knights have guard stats.

High-ranking knights have knight, mage, holy champion (page 610), or priest stats.

Support personnel have commoner stats.

The castle is manned at all times by some two dozen low-ranking knights. Of these, seventeen are humans, three are dwarves, two litorians, one elf, one halfling, and one centaur. Beyond that, a contingent of around six high-ranking knights is usually on hand as well. About twenty support personnel of varying species are also here. This is not the full organization—it's simply the castle's complement at any given time.

Besides barracks and officers' quarters, the keep also contains a temple, lounges, common area, armory, storeroom, training hall, and offices.

TOWER OF TEREPHON

The Howling (#131, L4); see map, page 215 18,450 gp

Standing like a forlorn battlement rising amid a field of gravestones, the Tower of Terephon is a square stone tower of fairly recent construction. Corpses hang from hooks all around the exterior of the building. Those in the know understand this to be the residence of Terephon (male human), a leader of the Licheloved who is so powerful that he had his undead servants build a tower for him in the Necropolis, in direct defiance of city authorities.

Sometimes the ranks of the Forsaken are shaken by conflict. For example, Terephon opposes the allegiance others have formed with the chaos cults. He does not equate death with destruction and sees the chaos cults as wanting only destruction. If the world is destroyed, Terephon believes, there will be no more death because there will be no more life. For his own sake, he researches the concept of partial undeath—having a "dead" limb, for example, then animating it with necromancy.

The tower has four levels, including an entry/foyer, a laboratory/library, quarters for Terephon and his four wraith-like specter allies, and a rooftop roost for another ally: a nightwing, a huge, shadowy bat-like undead with spells and the power to destroy magic items. Beneath the tower lies a small, round cellar from which a secret passage leads to area 4 in the dungeons below the Dark Reliquary (see page 234).

Scenario: Rumors of conflict among different Forsaken groups reach the Siege Tower. The Knights there ask the player characters to investigate the Tower of Terephon and interview a Forsaken member who may be willing to impart information and even assistance against his fellows. However, when the PCs arrive, they find Terephon hanging, flayed and dead, above the main entrance to the tower. Inside, his murderers—a pair of vampires and a lich—loot the tower. If forced to flee, the undead may inadvertently betray the secret passage into the dungeons beneath the Dark Reliquary.

THE DARK RELIQUARY

In the Howling (#132, M4 on poster map), at the edge of the cliffs overlooking the cold sea below, lies a vast, ominous structure unique in the Necropolis. This dire building, having long blighted the Ptolus landscape, is known as the Dark Reliquary. It is the home of great evil.

THE WINTERSOULED

The mysterious entities who created the Dark Reliquary were some of the oldest undead in the world. Millennia ago, tales say, a creature known as Vladaam, a Vested of the Galchutt, rent the veil between the realm of the living and the realm of the dead—likely in an attempt to breach the borders of the world. This brought a supernatural winter to the entire world and threatened to be the undoing of all life, until a group of self-sacrificing heroes managed to seal the breach. However, the veil has remained rent since that time, allowing foul magic and dark circumstances to usher undead creatures back into the realm of life. Still, for that brief time when the veil was wide open, the undead spirits that passed through possessed much greater power. A few of them, called the Wintersouled, still exist today.

Called by the Galchutt's dire clarion, the Wintersouled gathered near the Spire almost two thousand years ago, waiting invisibly and beyond reach. Eventually, around 420 IA, they saw that the Galchutt soon would stir. They began creating large numbers of undead and fashioned a macabre palace for their "children" while they waited for their masters to awaken. They built the Dark Reliquary atop a secret underground temple of the Galchutt that provides access to chambers where some of the sleeping Lords of Chaos rest.

The Wintersouled spend most of their days and nights in a necromantic slumber deep within the bowels of the Dark Reliquary's dungeons. Even the demons themselves avoid disturbing the sleep of these ancient dead.

THE FALLEN AND THE FORSAKEN

The current inhabitants of the Dark Reliquary are the Fallen and the Forsaken (detailed more fully in Chapter 6: Organizations). The Forsaken, along with their undead companions—the heirs of the Wintersouled—have dwelled within the reliquary for hundreds of years. Two centuries ago, the Fallen arrived in the world and joined their undead allies in the Dark Reliquary. Both groups enjoy the fact that the well-fortified structure lies just at the edge of civilization, far enough away to keep them out of the perception of most Ptolusites.

The two groups coexist in relative harmony, but only because the Forsaken realize that, with the Wintersouled hidden away and asleep, the Fallen enjoy greater power than their undead allies.

Vested of the Galchutt, page 62

Licheloved, page 111

It's a DC 24 Investigation check to recognize the tower and know who lives there.

Terephon has mage stats, with AC 17 from splint mail.

Chaos cults, page 75

Wintersouled, page 223

Specter: *22 hp*

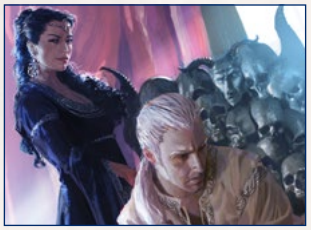
A nightwing has nalfeshnee stats, with the undead type and the spellcasting of a mummy lord, and its touch (or striking it) ruins magic armor and weapons similar to how a rust monster destroys metal equipment.

Secret passage: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Siege Tower, page 222

Vampire: *140 hp*

Lich: *130 hp*



Raguel and Lilith, page 110

Roster of Inhabitants

This section doesn't provide an exhaustive list of all creatures that live in the Dark Reliquary. This is for two reasons. First, the population of the reliquary is extremely fluid. With members of the Fallen and Forsaken coming and going, dying and being replaced by others, it is difficult to track all possible inhabitants. Many of the powerful undead, for example, spend only brief periods in the Dark Reliquary, leaving to roam the Necropolis or even the rest of the city. Second, in order to keep the Fallen and the Forsaken as ongoing concerns in the campaign, it is necessary for the GM to create new members, change the nature of various members, or otherwise manipulate the Dark Reliquary and its inhabitants as needed.

Ptolus Random Encounters, page 552

RAGUEL AND LILITH

Despite the fact that the Forsaken have lived within the Dark Reliquary far longer than the Fallen, the demons' greater power could not be denied. Thus, the clear masters of the place are the demigod Raguel and his hellish lover Lilith. Raguel spends most of his time brooding in his throne room (area 9, page 226). Lilith, on the other hand, takes a much more active role in ordering around the demons, Forsaken, and undead in her lover's name. Behind his back, she forges alliances with chaos cults and other nefarious groups in the city, believing that her path to power lies in serving the Galchutt.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Wandering about the Dark Reliquary is exceedingly dangerous. While moving around in the manor, or entering a room that is not a residence, there is a 10 percent chance of an encounter not listed for the area, unless otherwise described. This means some rooms might hold extra creatures in addition to their listed occupants.

If an encounter is indicated, use the Necropolis column of the Random Encounter Matrix (see Ptolus Random Encounters), but choose only "Night" results (the number after the slash). It's recommended to choose rather than roll to ensure that an encounter is appropriate.

UNHALLOWED GROUND

The entire Dark Reliquary, including the dungeons, is tainted with evil that makes it a supernaturally welcoming place for undead and demons, and an inherently hostile place for non-evil living creatures. This has the following effects:

- Celestials, elementals, and fey can't be conjured within the Dark Reliquary, and if conjured outside of it, they cannot enter. (This doesn't affect celestials, elementals, and fey who permanently reside in Praemal, such as the Malkuth; the ward is against creatures that have only a temporary presence in the world.) These creatures cannot use mind control, fear, or possession abilities within the area, whether cast within or outside of the Dark Reliquary.
- Powerful demons and devils (challenge rating 6 and higher) have the ability to teleport at will within the unhallowed area. This ability works like *teleport*, except it affects only the creature (no passengers) plus about 50 pounds of objects it carries, and the fiend always arrives on target.
- Fiends and undead have advantage on saves to resist Turn Undead attempts.
- All undead in the area are affected by *bless*.

Necropolis Map: Page 215

LAYOUT OF THE MANOR (ABOVE GROUND)

The Dark Reliquary is not a fortress or castle in the traditional sense. It is more a vast gothic mansion with many rooms. Unlike its dungeons, the upper levels are fairly clean—one won't find bits of bone or skulls lying about. The whole structure has a sense of grand albeit somewhat faded opulence.

The Dark Reliquary includes three aboveground levels. Unless otherwise mentioned, the ceiling in all rooms is about 18 feet high. Most areas are dimly lit by braziers, candles, and torches; almost every chamber has a chandelier. The building's outer wall measures 3 feet thick, and the interior walls are half that, all stone. The interior walls generally are covered with plaster and sometimes paneling of dark wood. Doors are made of fairly sturdy wood.

A few exterior rooms on the second level have windows. Most are placed very high—usually about 10 feet off the floor. They are narrow and made of thick glass, and do not open.

The areas described below correspond with the numbered areas on the map below.

1. THE MAIN ENTRANCE

Outside the massive black doors of the Dark Reliquary, four creatures known as the bloodstarved loiter about, looking for the living. Too weak to attack—particularly since most of the living who come to the Dark Reliquary are capable of defending themselves—these masterless vampire spawn beg for blood.

The bloodstarved are considered wholly pathetic, even by the Forsaken. Most of the creatures in the Dark Reliquary wish that they would just hurry up and starve.

Bloodstarved have vampire spawn stats, with disadvantage on attack rolls; they currently have only 27 hp due to their starvation. They don't start regenerating until they've healed at least some damage by biting an opponent.

Doors

Set into a sinister architrave, the elaborate black doors are inhabited by an undead spirit that controls their use and fortifies their strength. The spirit allows the doors to open only for creatures it recognizes and trusts, or if commanded to do so by someone whose authority it recognizes. The spirit cannot be attacked.

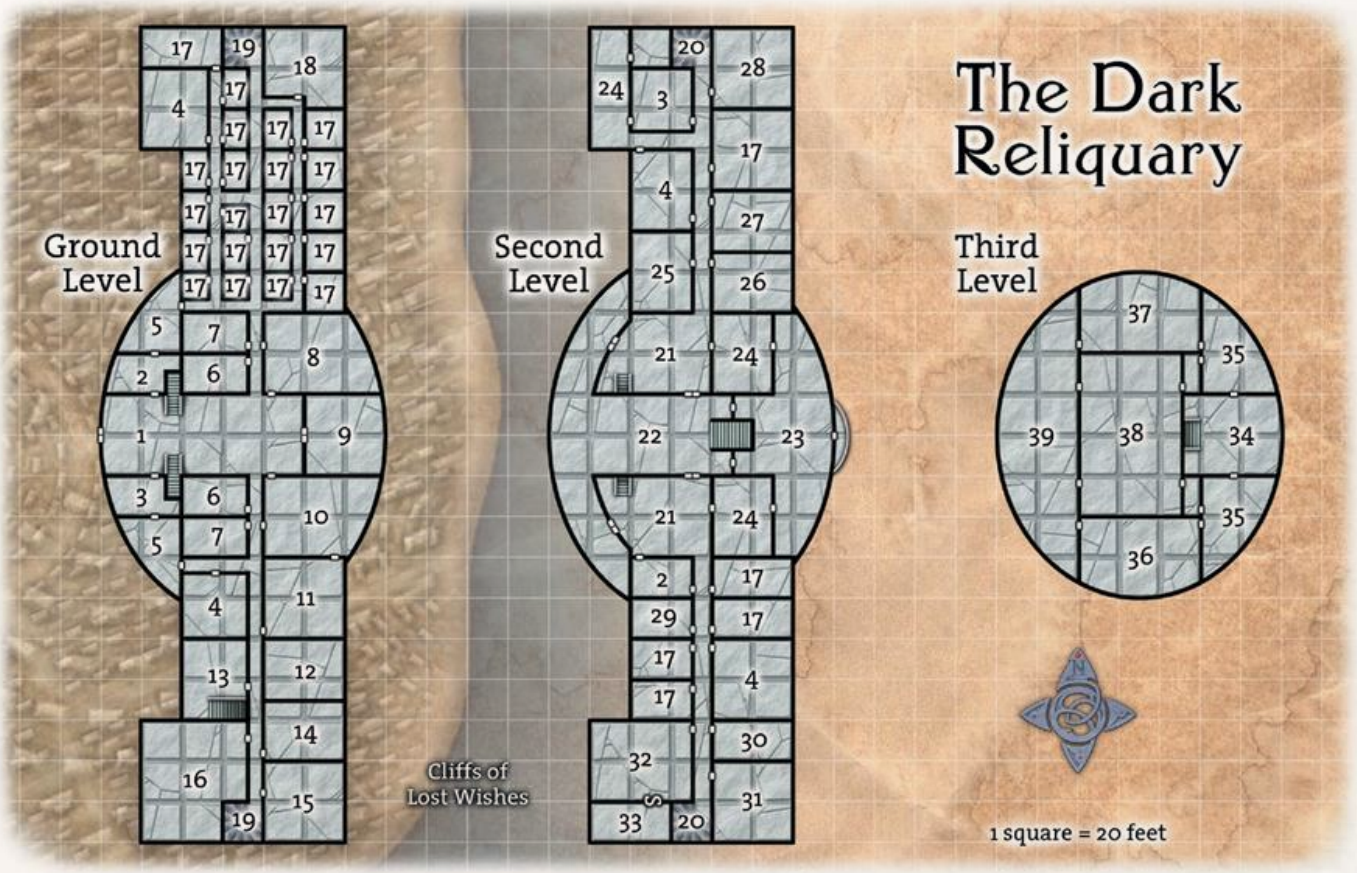
Doorman: An ogre-sized undead creature with an open chest cavity imprisoning stolen souls known as a devourer stands at the main doors at all times. (It consumes imprisoned souls to fuel its magic, but can imprison only one soul at a time.) It wears a black suit of finery with the front open to expose its chest-bound victim. It greets inhabitants with a nod or a bow, announces visitors, and serves as a guard to keep out intruders.

The dungeons are described starting on page 234.

Black doors, undead-fortified: *AC 19, 30 hp, DC 25 Strength check to break. A successful Turn Undead attempt against the door (Wisdom save +7) opens it.*

Fairly sturdy wooden door: *AC 15, 18 hp, DC 15 Strength check to break*

A devourer has efreeti stats, except its abilities inflict cold or necrotic damage instead of fire.



Entry Hall

The Dark Reliquary's main entry hall is a long, lavish chamber with a black and white marble floor and rounded columns running along the north and south walls. Stairs to the north and south lead up to the second floor.

Occupants: On most days, visitors in the main entry see zombie slaves, minor demons and devils, members of the Crimson Court, or others moving about in this room. There is a 95 percent chance that the room is occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter) and a 35 percent chance of another encounter (roll again).

2. FORSAKEN BARRACKS

A room just north of the entry hall on the first floor and another in the south wing on the second floor each house eight Forsaken guards (humans) and their captain (male human), a barbarian. Nine beds furnish each room, with a woven grey rug on the floor underneath. Skulls and other Forsaken-style symbols hang on the wall. Each guard has a locked wooden chest under their bed containing personal gear.

3. UNDEAD BARRACKS

A room just south of the entry hall on the first floor and another in the north wing on the second floor each house eight ghouls and their leaders, two ghasts. The rooms have no furnishings or decorations, just strewn bones and splatters of gore. Each ghast wears a gold or platinum ring worth 100 gp.

4. FALLEN BARRACKS

Four barracks—one in each wing of the Dark Reliquary's first two floors—house Fallen guards. Two of the rooms have gaunt slime-covered assassin demons known as babau, and the other two rooms have shapechanging devils resembling large goblin werewolves called barghests.

The barracks are sparsely furnished, with nests of torn cloth, bones, jagged bits of metal, and dried slices of flesh rather than beds.

5. PARLORS

Chairs, divans, and long couches furnish each of these two rooms on the first floor. Red and black rugs cover the floors, and long tapestries on the walls depict tombs and graveyards.

Occupants: There is a 25 percent chance that a parlor is occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

6. NIGHTMARE STABLES

These two rooms, located on a north/south corridor off the entry hall, are longer than they are wide, and each is quite plain in their décor. They hold no furnishings other than an iron trough and a pair of large beds made of blankets on the floor.

Occupants: Each chamber is home to two horse-like demons of fire and smoke called nightmares. Although equine, these fiends are not treated like animals, but as regular inhabitants of the manor. Few use the creatures as mounts (those who would ride them must obey Raguel's orders about avoiding an overt presence in the city), although presumably one day that might change.

7. STOREROOMS

Storerooms next to the stables on the first floor stock a variety of supplies—mostly dry goods, as the majority of the Dark Reliquary's inhabitants don't require food. The rooms have a few rats and cockroaches, but not many; the minor demons and devils hunt them for fun.

8. THE CRIMSON COURT

This large chamber off the northern corridor from the entry hall holds an ongoing formal party that never seems to end. Minstrels play instruments while a demon tortures living prisoners with such dire precision that their screams and moans accompany the music.

Occupants: At any given time, one can find about thirty-five individuals here, usually succubi (and incubi), babau, barghests, tieflings, and rakshasas, as well as a few vampires, ghouls, and even the occasional ghost. Drinks—often flagons of wine mixed with blood—are served on trays carried by zombies. Lilith herself often lingers in the Crimson Court when she is in the Dark Reliquary.

Most of the occupants, here to dance, socialize, and carry on in a hideous mimicry of the actions of human aristocracy, are not ready for a fight. Few carry weapons, and those who do often bear jeweled or ceremonial blades rather than functional arms. That said, the attendees of the Crimson Court are still extremely dangerous—they are demons, after all.

For more about the Crimson Court, see The Fallen in chapter 6.

9. RAGUEL'S THRONE ROOM

Dominating the vaulted chamber at the far end of the entry hall is a huge throne on a dais near the back wall. White and deep violet curtains cover most of the walls. This is where Raguel, master of the Fallen, spends most of his days.

Nightmare: *70 hp*

Random Encounter, page 552

The Forsaken found here usually paint their faces or wear masks to give themselves skull-like visages.

Locked wooden chest: *DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to open*

Forsaken guards have guard stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: chain mail, shield, spears (2), light crossbow, bolts (12), Forsaken body paint *(see page 638), signal whistle, 12 gp, 25 sp.*

Forsaken captain has berserker stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: +1 studded leather, greatsword, spears (2), potion of greater healing, Forsaken body paint *(see page 638), ivory skull medallion worth 300 gp, 123 gp.*

The shield of light spell *(page 633) is an excellent tool when fighting undead here.*

Ghast: *38 hp*

Succubus or incubus: *69 hp*

Tieflings have cult fanatic stats, plus darkvision, fire resistance, and the ability to cast hellish rebuke *and* darkness *once per day.*

Rakshasa: *107 hp*

Babau have assassin stats, with the fiend type; resistance to cold, fire, and lightning; and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Barghests are fiends with werewolf stats with the Charm ability of a succubus and can cast dimension door *once per day.*

The Fallen, page 109

Many inhabitants of the Dark Reliquary do not get along. The barghest guards, for example, hate the barbazu, who in turn resent the babau.

It is in this throne room that he broods and contemplates his next course of action. Very rarely, Lilith attends him here. Raguel's two personal servants, Ra-Zoblam (male tiefling) and T'bruukr (female tiefling), are often here as well, although sometimes he sends them away so he can think in peace.

10. THE REFECTORY

The large dining hall off the southern corridor from the entry hall is used only occasionally, usually by living members of the Forsaken. Long tables flanked by dozens of wooden chairs line the room.

Occupants: Visitors have a 50 percent chance of finding the refectory occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

11. KITCHEN/LARDER

The southern wing of the first floor houses a large, well-equipped kitchen. A larder in the back of the room holds wrapped, salted meat, including some unmistakably humanoid cuts.

Occupants: There is a 35 percent chance that the kitchen is occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

12. THE MINISTER OF SECURITY

The door to this room, located on the south wing of the first floor, is locked. The chamber is filled with buzzing flies. In the middle of the otherwise empty room stands a hardened (but sticky) mass of organic goo, not unlike an insect hive, but molded into a sort of throne.

Zastanix, Minister of Security

The fiend placed in charge of the Dark Reliquary's security is a crafty and powerful creature named Zastanix. He is a unique fiend, with a bloated body and insect wings. His squat head, positioned toward the front of his girth, has large compound eyes. Zastanix has six legs, two of which end in clawed hands. A large green gem is set into his forehead.

It is the minister of security's job to keep intruders out of the Dark Reliquary and to know about (and foil) all plots against the Fallen and the Forsaken—particularly the leadership. Thus, Zastanix is chief spy as well as military commander. He and his flies keep tabs not only on creatures coming into the Necropolis, but on the other inhabitants of the Dark Reliquary as well. Of all demons besides Lilith, Zastanix has the best relationship with Raguel and may approach him directly on matters of import. Not surprisingly, for this reason, Lilith does not like him, but even she cannot deny his efficiency. He has a strange sense of honor and, unlike other demons, is not at all bloodthirsty. He always does what is best for Dark Reliquary security—he would not, for example, recklessly endanger himself or other inhabitants with a needless battle if there were another solution. He carries a key to this area as well as area 13, and an emerald worth 2,000 gp.

Zastanix is also the confidant of the strange man known as Igor Reichstav, with whom—oddly enough—he seems to share an honest friendship.

13. STAIRS DOWN TO THE DUNGEONS

The door to this room, located in the south wing of the first floor, is locked. This chamber appears to be a large storehouse, full of a strange miscellany of stolen grave-goods: furniture, pottery, statuary, crates of glassware padded with straw, bales of cloth, urns of precious oils, and even a carriage.

There is also a staircase leading down into the dungeons beneath the Dark Reliquary.

14. SHRINE TO MALESKARI

A 9-foot-tall iron idol of Maleskari, God of Shades, stands draped in black cloth at the eastern end of this room in the south wing. The cloth, which matches the black draperies on the walls, the black carpet on the floor, and the black fabric covering the ceiling, is removed only at certain points in rituals and ceremonies dedicated to the dark god. If it is lifted, one can see the idol is a figure in black, spiked plate armor crafted in a baroque style; a skull shows through the helmet's visor.

This shrine has no altar, per se, but rolling up the carpet exposes a 10-foot-square iron plate. This 1-inch-thick plate is bolted to the floor and stained with years and years of blood from its use as a sacrificial area.

Occupants: There is a 25 percent chance that the room is occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

15. ORACLE

Seven coffins, each open and containing a skeletal corpse, are arranged in a circle in a room at the end of the south wing. Each corpse's feet face the center of the circle. Six are human, and one is an elf. In the middle of this circle, hanging from the ceiling on a golden chain, is a human skull with jewels replacing its eyes and teeth.

The corpses are those of learned sages sympathetic to the Forsaken. Members of the organization use necromancy spells to speak with the dead, consulting them on all sorts of matters. They usually speak willingly and freely.

Raguel and Lilith, page 110

Raguel's purpose in the Ptolus Campaign is not as a foe with whom to cross swords in battle. As a semi-divine entity, Raguel may simply leave when in danger before the first blow is struck. It is within his power and certainly befitting his personality to avoid any direct conflict or confrontation.

Igor Reichstav, page 220

Ra-Zoblam has arcanist stats (page 605), with Stealth +4 and sneak attack +2d6.

T'bruukr has spy stats.

Locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Maleskari, page 73

Locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Zastanix has horned devil stats, except he has 180 hp, instead of a tail attack he has a bite, and instead of a fork attack he uses a spiked chain that inflicts an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage. Equipment: flaming spiked chain.

Even by the standards of the Dark Reliquary, both the shrine to Maleskari and the Oracle are cold places with an aura of true dread. Characters who enter these chambers sense a feeling of wrongness that is difficult to describe.

The Hanging Skull: This is the *speaking skull*. With it, someone using death-speaking magic has a chance to speak with the spirit of any dead creature (instead of the spirit of a creature whose corpse is in the room). Using the skull requires an hour-long ritual in which the caster calls out the real name of the dead person to whom they desire to speak. The magic functions as normal, but the spirit being contacted is more likely to resist questioning.

For example, if the caster uses speak with dead, *the corpse's starting attitude might be hostile rather than neutral unless it knew the caster in life, especially the longer it has been dead.*

The *speaking skull* functions only within the oracle chamber. Set in the skull are two large rubies, each worth 1,000 gp, and a dozen tourmalines, each worth 200 gp. The gold chain is worth 220 gp.

Occupants: There is a 25 percent chance that the oracle room is occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

16. LIBRARY

This large first-floor chamber at the end of the south wing contains an impressive collection of books, most of them on topics so distasteful that one would hardly find them elsewhere—necrophilia, necrophagia, black magic, animating the dead, consorting with undead, the nature of demons, spawning new types of half-demons, and so forth.

Occupants: A visitor has a 50 percent chance of finding the library occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

17. RESIDENCE

These rooms scattered throughout the first and second floors serve as bedchambers for one or more members of the Fallen or Forsaken. This could be any type of demon, undead, or living mortal member of the Forsaken. Like the rest of the place, most of the residence chambers are appointed with a gothic sensibility—opulent but macabre and slightly dilapidated.

Occupants: There is a 25 percent chance that a residential room is occupied. Use the Random Encounter Matrix if desired, modifying the results to skew them toward Forsaken members, vampires, or demons. Other than undead mentioned elsewhere, most undead do not keep permanent residence here (nor do they generally need bedchambers).

18. SHRINE TO HEIRAN AND NAREIS

Stacks of skulls, one affixed to the other, obscure the walls of this first-floor room at the end of the north wing. Gigantic female hands made of stone stretch out from the east and west walls, the fingertips just barely touching. From wrist to fingertip, each measures about 20 feet long. These statues are in honor of the Sisters of Death, Heiran and Nareis.

This is equivalent to the unhallowed ground effect of the Dark Reliquary itself (see page 224), but it moves with the darkskull *(so once it leaves an area, that location is no longer unhallowed).*

When someone enters the room, a random skull speaks that person's name and a method of death, such as "suffocation," "stab wound to the heart," "massive blood loss," "consumed in fire," or "head severed." The actual method of death is selected randomly—the skulls have no premonitory abilities—but it is unnerving all the same.

Against the north wall, one skull is black and removable, and it gently thrums with evil energy. This is an item known as a *darkskull*, and it makes the land within 40 feet of it unhallowed ground. Though its powers are redundant to the Dark Reliquary, evil creatures might find use for it elsewhere.

Occupants: There is a 25 percent chance that the room is occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

19. STAIRWELLS UP

The wood-covered floor is polished at the north and south ends of the first floor, and stairs lead up. Paintings on the walls appear to be normal scenes until one looks very closely. Careful inspection reveals a sinister aspect in each one—a child's doll lying next to a small pool of blood in an otherwise pleasant pastoral piece, or the cloven hooves of a pious woman walking into a church. A small built-in closet beneath the stairs stores various tools.

Stairs up from the first floor are in areas 1 and 19. Visitors can find stairs down from the first floor to the first dungeon level in area 13.

Unhallowed ground, page 224

Each residence in the Dark Reliquary has its own distinctive appearance. The individual or individuals that live there have their own unique furnishings and sense of style. Some residences are simply dour or macabre, while others are hideous and grotesque.

Noticing the subtle details of the paintings requires a DC 18 Perception check.

The sixth step from the bottom has a strange symbol etched into the wood. The stairs are haunted, imbued with a ghost. It attempts to possess the first mortal living creature who does not stop on the step with the symbol to whisper a short homage to death. If the possession attempt succeeds, the controlled creature turns on nearby allies, berating them for their beliefs and attacking them physically. If the possession fails, the spirit takes no other actions.

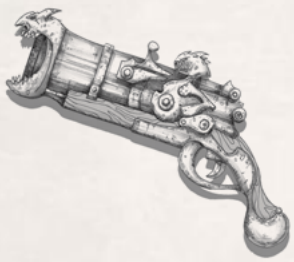
It's a DC 16 Wisdom save to resist the magic jar *that otherwise results in ghostly possession.*

20. STAIRWELLS DOWN

Stairs lead down in these 20-foot-square areas at the north and south ends of the second floor. An ogre-sized, vulture-like demon called a vrock (carrying an *unholy hand cannon*) normally watches over these stairwells. In times of known danger, it is joined by a few more vrocks (who don't have hand cannons) and a toad-demon hezrou. The vrock with the firearm typically moves down the adjoining corridor a bit.

Vrock: *101 hp. The one with the hand cannon has this attack:* ***Unholy Hand Cannon.*** Ranged Weapon Attack: *+6 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target.* Hit: *13 (3d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage against good celestials, dragons, and especially good creatures of other types.*

Hezrou: *134 hp*



Hand cannon, page 522

Heiran and Nareis, page 72

21. GATHERING HALLS

A gathering place for Fallen and Forsaken alike, these twin chambers on the second floor are well appointed in red, gold, and black, although the furnishings—mostly divans, candelabra-topped tables, brass lamps, and overstuffed armchairs—

show a great deal of age and wear. These rooms also have a stairway down that leads to the entry hall on the first floor.

Occupants: Visitors have a 50 percent chance of finding this room occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

22. UPPER HALL

Wide, round white pillars run along the north and south walls of the 40-foot-wide hall above the main entry. At the western end, the upper hall widens to become a chamber overlooking the Necropolis vista. In between the large, clear windows of this overlook, small niches hold alabaster idols carved in the form of various demonic entities. There are ten such statuettes all together, each worth 230 gp.

At the east end of the hall, the only stairs going up on this level—a grand, 20-foot-wide staircase of black stone—ascend to the third floor.

Occupants: There is a 75 percent chance that the room is occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

23. BALCONY OVER THE BAY

Massive stained-glass windows cover the eastern wall of this long chamber just beyond the upper hall. The images in the windows show various "saints of death"—as the Wintersouled sometimes like to call themselves—in life. These images of the incredibly distant past, while meaningless to modern viewers, convey a very somber mood for reasons one can't quite identify.

The floor is lustrous black marble veined with streaks of red.

Occupants: There is a 50 percent chance that the room is occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

24. RARELY USED ROOM

These rooms on the second floor just east of the gathering halls and at the end of the north wing hold ill-kept old furnishings that once were likely quite grand. Cobwebs and dust coat everything.

Occupants: There is a 25 percent chance that the room is occupied (roll for a random Necropolis encounter).

25. ABDUCTORS' CHAMBER

This chamber on the second floor in the north wing is a terrible disorganized mess, with broken furniture and torn scraps of cloth everywhere. The walls are scratched and scarred.

This is the lair of six D'Stradi abductors. These demons work more or less as a unit and are responsible for many of the slaves or victims found in the Dark Reliquary. They prey upon the folk of the Warrens or similar places where people are unlikely to be missed. Occasionally they receive an assignment to abduct specific victims, usually to bring them to the prison (area 16 of dungeon level 1). When not on a mission, these demons keep to themselves here, fighting and wrestling with each other.

Like all the D'Stradi demons, these serve Lilith implicitly.

26. SURMOIL'S CHAMBER

This room on the second floor in the north wing is protected by a locked door.

The chamber looks more like a study than a bedroom—the small bed is hidden behind a wooden folding screen. The rest of the place is filled with bookshelves, a reading desk, and a stuffed howler, from whose quills hang articles of men's clothing.

Surmoil Rallekred

A powerful member of the Forsaken, Surmoil (male human) serves as the chief liaison with the members of the Fallen. In other words, this sorcerer is the main go-between for both groups. He has a good working relationship with Lilith and, in fact, may be one of her lovers behind Raguel's back.

More than many of his fellows, Surmoil has confronted the Keepers of the Veil directly on numerous occasions. He has a special fixation on Phadian Gess. In a previous confrontation, Surmoil controlled her mind until another mage dispelled the enchantment. Surmoil was forced to retreat, but he has never forgotten his unsavory desire for her.

Surmoil is tall, barrel-chested, and square-jawed, with wavy golden hair. He looks more the part of a dashing young hero than a scheming sorcerer. He hates Cynric, the Forsaken's second-in-command (and Cynric hates him); Surmoil assumes that one day he will have to eliminate the petty little man. If push came to shove, he would likely side with Lilith over Shigmaa Urasta, despite his allegiance to the Forsaken.

Tactics: Surmoil would no more enter into melee than turn himself over to the Keepers of the Veil. If in a dangerous situation, he sends his constant companion, the mind-controlled Thorar (male dwarf), into harm's way in his stead while he casts *shield*, *invisibility*, and *mirror image* to defend himself (or just multiple *teleportation* spells to get away if the threat seems truly serious—he puts no value on bravery).

Visitors can find stairs down from the second floor to the first in areas 20 and 21. Stairs ascend to the third floor of the Dark Reliquary at the east end of area 22.

Locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Howler: *A demonic creature that resembles a gaunt dire wolf with a mane of huge quills.*

Unless he knows that he is going to interact with others, Surmoil often wears a bloodstained apron and long, stained gloves. Otherwise, he wears a long grey coat and a wide-brimmed grey hat.

Shigmaa Surmoil Rallekred is a sorcerer with mage stats, plus shigmaa abilities (Second Chance, Call of Death, Necromantic Lore, Reap the Living, and Love of the Dead abilities, page 615); alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: mask of the skull *(page 641)*, potion of flying, spell scroll of animate necrosis *(*animate necrosis, *page 626)*, spell scroll of dominate person, *gold ring with diamonds (worth 1,000 gp), 450 pp, key to areas 26 and 27. Surmoil knows the following sorcerer spells:*

Cantrips (at will): acid splash, chill touch, dancing lights, light, mage hand, minor illusion

1st level (4 slots): charm person, mage armor, silent image

2nd level (3 slots): invisibility, mirror image

3rd level (3 slots): fireball, fly

4th level (3 slots): dimension door, fire shield

5th level (2 slots): cloudkill, dominate person

6th level (1 slot): circle of death

Thorar has thug stats; alignment neutral good. Equipment: plate armor, shield, longsword, light crossbow, bolts (12), 50 feet of rope.

Lilith, page 110

Wintersouled, page 223

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

Phadian Gess, page 118

Cynric Gallow, page 230

Shigmaa Urasta, page 545

Surmoil has placed a demonseed in the mind of Hennam, the young apprentice of Andach the druid; see page 220.

D'Stradi abductor, page 586

A Bevy of Villains

The characters listed in many of these chambers aren't here just to wait in their bedrooms until adventurers come to the Dark Reliquary. Instead, each is presented as a possible antagonist involved in adventures set throughout Ptolus. Shigmaa Cynric, for example, is mixed up in plots all over the city (often involving killing those who cross him or paying others to have them killed). Gegall the nalfeshnee gets the materials he needs for his work by stealing them—often while shapechanged into a humanoid form. And so on.

Locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

It's a DC 20 Investigation check to realize the connection between the names on the list.

Locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Shigmaa Cynric Gallow has veteran stats, knows a few 1st- and 2nd-level wizard spells, and has shigmaa abilities (Second Chance, Call of Death, and Necromantic Lore, page 615); alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: demon armor, +1 shield, wand of magic missiles, spell scroll of darkvision, *acid (1), gold ring (worth 175 gp), 352 gp, key to area 29. Cynric has the following wizard spells prepared (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks):*

Cantrips (at will): light, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost

1st level (4 slots): shield, thunderwave, true strike

2nd level (3 slots): darkness, misty step, see invisibility

Shigmaa Wuntad, page 77

Chaos cults, page 75

Ulti and Ilti, page 231

Lilith, page 110

Clasthamus Isle, page 218

Locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

It's a DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick the locked chest, and a DC 17 Dexterity save to avoid the hidden needle that deals 1 piercing damage and 22 (4d10) poison damage. In addition, the victim must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one hour.

Shigmaa Urasta, page 545

Heiran and Nareis, page 72

DEFENSE OF THE DARK RELIQUARY

Most of the inhabitants of the Dark Reliquary do not respond immediately even if they hear the sounds of battle or cries for help. In the first place, such sounds are not all that uncommon here, and in the second place, the reliquary has a powerful demon (the flylike Zastanix in area 12) and a number of guards (from areas 2, 3, and 4) to take care of trouble. Still, a threat that puts a resident in harm's way or has the potential to do so does draw more attention. Thus, a group of intruders running around amid all the residences on the north wing of the first floor, for example, is unlikely to get much attention except from the guards. But a powerful group of invaders ransacking rooms and killing everything they find is likely to draw everyone who lives in the entire northern wing down upon them.

27. CORRUPT TELEPORT BEACONS

This room on the second floor in the north wing is protected by a locked door.

This chamber stores three crude obelisks of bones and skulls lashed together with rope. These magical objects, dubbed *corrupt teleport beacons*, allow teleportation into an area where it normally is impossible. Each beacon stands almost 18 feet tall and measures 3 to 4 feet across. Of particular use to fiends who have the innate ability to teleport, these massive objects pierce through spells and other protections that block teleportation, allowing creatures of an evil alignment to appear within 20 feet of the beacon without error, mishap, or difficulty.

Surmoil created *corrupt teleport beacons* to breach the defenses of Clasthamus Isle and has already placed some there in secret. The demons are currently discussing where to place these extra beacons.

28. URASTA'S CHAMBER

This room on the second floor at the end of the north wing is protected by a locked door.

This chamber is well appointed but in terrible disarray. Clothing and other items are scattered across the grey rug atop the floor, the bed is unmade, and a clutter of books, tools, and other miscellaneous items covers the two tables. The room also holds two wardrobes, a chest of drawers, and a large iron trunk, although none of them contains anything valuable.

Shigmaa Urasta, the highest-ranking member of the Forsaken, stays here when she visits the Dark Reliquary, although she has a home in Midtown and serves as the high priestess of Heiran and Nareis, the Sisters of Death.

29. CYNRIC'S CHAMBER

This room on the second floor of the south wing is protected with a locked door.

This rather simple, very tidy chamber has a bed, a desk and chair, two small tables, a wardrobe, and a large chest. The wardrobe holds only men's clothing and personal items. The desk is empty except for paper, ink, and pens; one sheet bears a list of names, all crossed off. Investigation confirms that everyone named on this list has little or nothing in common other than that they are all dead.

Cynric Gallow

Cynric (male human) is Urasta's lieutenant, more because no one else wanted the position than because he was qualified. Urasta doesn't care for Cynric, but he respects her and feels that naming him her assistant and effectively second-in-command makes her wiser than most. He only recently took up wizardry, but has found a liking for magical studies. He wasn't willing to give up the demon armor bequeathed to him by Shigmaa Wuntad when the chaos cults and the Forsaken first joined forces a few years ago. Cynric is a bitter, petty man who feels that anyone who wrongs him, no matter how minor the infraction, must die. He is short and balding, and he wears a small mustache.

Cynric works with the night hags Ulti and Ilti in the laboratory in the dungeon (area 32 of dungeon level 2). He hopes to show his worth not only to Urasta but to Lilith as well. He resents the hags, however, and feels as though they take all the credit for his work.

Tactics: Cynric relies on his martial abilities in combat, and attacks with the claws from his demon armor. He may augment his abilities with spells, if appropriate. If he needs offensive magic, he typically relies on his *wand of magic missiles*.

Chest

The locked chest in Cynric's room is rigged with a poison needle trap.

The chest contains a collection of eighteen ornate crystal goblets, each worth 100 gp. Additionally, a couple of magical scrolls are tucked in a leather scroll tube; a cloth bag with the letter "C" embroidered on it holds 372 sp and 289 gp. In a secret compartment in the chest's lid, Cynric keeps his spellbook.

30. THE HAGS' CHAMBER

This chamber on the second floor of the south wing is unfurnished except for two large hammocks made of woven cloth strips and strung from wall to wall. Amid the strips, the

Necropolis Map: Page 215

room's occupants have woven bones, skulls, and shocks of long human hair (sometimes with scalps still attached). Disturbingly, the floor is littered with torn baby clothes and broken dolls, rattles, and the like.

The Hags

Ulti and Ilti, the two evil humanoid entities known as night hags that call this chamber home, are here only rarely—they like to wander about the Dark Reliquary and pry into the affairs of others. Both are more intelligent than typical night hags and are skilled in crafting, magical lore, and understanding the workings of flesh. At the request of Lilith, they've used their intellect and skills to help Shigmaa Urasta develop demon pods for producing new demons. They keep the demon pods in the laboratory in the dungeon (area 32 of level 2).

31. GEGALL THE NALFESHNEE'S CHAMBER

This room at the end of the south wing on the second floor is protected by a locked door.

This chamber is clearly meant for a sizable creature. The very large reclining chair in the middle of the room is surrounded by tables covered in machine parts, tools, and unidentifiable bits of machinery and/or magic. Clocks cover the walls—fifteen in total, each worth around 100 gp. This is the abode of Gegall the nalfeshnee, an ogre-sized burly demon that combines the worst aspects of an ape and a boar. He fancies himself a bit of a scientist, and is skilled at using chaositech and crafting machines. His creation, the Vile Machine, is kept in the dungeon (area 34 of level 2). When working, he sometimes uses a chaositech potion to transform into a human-sized creature to use tools that are too small for his normal form and too complex to replicate for someone his size.

Gegall is usually here. He carries a couple of chaositech void bombs, a chaositech device destabilizer, various tools, and a key to area 31.

32. RAGUEL'S CHAMBER

The door to this large room in the south wing on the second floor is not locked. However, if anyone other than Raguel or Lilith opens the door, a magical trap on the door immediately summons a hezrou, an ogre-sized brutish demon shaped like a humanoid toad. It attacks until the intruder is dead, until it is dead, or until Raguel or Lilith commands it to stop.

This lavishly appointed bedchamber befits the master of the Dark Reliquary—the former master of Hell and a demigod in his own

Gegall, a nalfeshnee: *202 hp*

Ulti has night hag stats, with 90 hp. Equipment: brooch of shielding.

Ilti has night hag stats, with AC 19. Equipment: bracers of defense.

Locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to open*

Magical trap (hezrou-summoning): *DC 22 Arcana or Sleight of Hand check to disable*

Hezrou: *140 hp*

Vile Machine, page 244
Void bombs, page 537
Device destabilizer, page 535

Demon pods, page 243

The night hags Ulti and Ilti not only like to speak in cryptic riddles, but also always finish each other's sentences. Most of the time, however, they just cackle and sneer, showing nothing but contempt for anyone other than themselves.

Random encounter, page 552

Searching the furnishings requires a DC 18 Perception check to find the listed treasures.

Secret sliding door: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

The crystal ball is a crystal ball of mind reading.

A nightwalker has nalfeshnee stats, with the undead type, the spellcasting of a mummy lord, and a gaze attack that paralyzes creatures for one minute.

A nightwing has nalfeshnee stats, with the undead type and the spellcasting of a mummy lord, and its touch (or striking it) ruins magic armor and weapons similar to how a rust monster destroys metal equipment.

More about the Temple of the Fifty-Three Gods of Chance and the chaos temple below Oldtown can be found in The Night of Dissolution *adventure (see page 11).*

Medre, page 233

Wintersouled, page 223

Visitors can find stairs down from the second floor to the first in areas 20 and 21. Stairs ascend to the third floor of the Dark Reliquary at the east end of area 22.

D'Stradi dancer, page 588

Zombie*: 23 hp*

The Forsaken here have commoner stats; alignment chaotic evil.

The curtains make everyone in the room lightly obscured (disadvantage on Perception checks that rely on sight) and give everyone half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws).

Medre Allaconda is likely the most powerful vampire in Ptolus today—a fact of which she is very much aware. Other vampires, like Hadrien Runihan (page 185), must show her the respect that she deserves, as much as it pains them to do so. Occasionally Medre issues commands to other vampires in the city, even ones with whom she has no relationship, and she expects them to do as she wills. They virtually always do.

right—and provides an extremely comfortable abode for Raguel and Lilith. The well-kept room contains a very large canopy bed, a pair of bureaus, a full-length mirror, a table covered in a silk cloth with a silver tea set (worth 1,750 gp), four wooden wardrobes, three chests, and a large marble bathtub flanked by marble statues of nude humans.

None of the furnishings are locked, and searching them reveals the following treasures among the more mundane items: a jeweled comb (140 gp), an ebony box (120 gp) containing a large collection of miscellaneous jewelry (total value of jewelry is 2,000 gp), a gold pen and inkwell set (80 gp), ten crystal bottles of perfume (total value 1,800 gp), ten crystal jars of cosmetics (total value 840 gp), and an ivory box (80 gp) containing three potions.

Secret Door: Behind one wardrobe is a secret sliding door that leads to area 33.

33. LILITH'S SECRET ROOM

This room at the south end of the second floor is mostly empty. A desk pushed up against the western wall rests beside a crystal ball on a golden stand. The stand is worth 175 gp.

In the desk, Lilith keeps a great deal of correspondence and other records. These detail the entire organization (so to speak) of the Forsaken, the Fallen, the chaos cults, and more. They describe, for example, the location of the chambers under the Temple of the Fifty-Three Gods of Chance, the chaos temple below Oldtown, and so on. They also include some of the most detailed descriptions of the Galchutt and their ancient actions that can be found anywhere.

34. HALL OF DANCING DEMONS

The stairs from area 22 on the second floor lead up to this third-floor chamber, which has a 30-foot ceiling.

The lair of the D'Stradi dancers, this open chamber has a raised wooden floor in front of the staircase. From the ceiling, swinging bars dangle from chains at different heights, and the demons leap, swing, and bound upon them almost continually.

If commanded by one of the nearby balors (see areas 38 and 39), they do what they are told. Otherwise, they remain here and cavort.

35. CATHEDRAL OF NIGHT

The ceilings of these large third-floor chambers on either side of the D'Stradi dancers' abode measure 30 feet high. These chambers are dark—the shadows are palpable and weave about unnaturally, even if someone brings in bright light. The rooms also are mostly empty, although the play of the shadows occasionally gives the impression that they are dark temples with pews, an altar, and a massive idol at one end. These images are not real, however (characters do not have to make rolls to realize this—the illusions disappear like fading dreams as soon as they are noticed). The windows here are made of opaque black glass.

Each room is the abode of a powerful kind of shadowy undead. In the north chamber, a 20-foot-tall giant made of pure darkness called a nightwalker reigns, while in the south, a huge, shadowy bat-like undead with the power to destroy magic items called a nightwing makes its lair. In that southern chamber, one large window opens to allow the undead beast to fly out into the night air above the Necropolis.

Both undead will more or less follow the commands of Medre in area 37, and they *may* respond to requests from Urasta, but otherwise they answer only to the Wintersouled. The nightwalker will move to area 37 if particularly challenged, to warn and help defend Medre.

36. THE NECROPHILIUM

The ceiling of this chamber at the south side of the third floor is 30 feet high.

The Necrophilium is almost beyond description. In this horrible place, the necrophiliac Forsaken have orgies with zombies for days on end. There are at least twelve zombies in the room at all times, as well as five of the Forsaken. The room is otherwise empty and open.

37. MEDRE'S CHAMBER

In this room on the north side of the third floor, sheer, gauzy curtains of white fabric hang from the 30-foot ceiling in many layers. In the middle of the room, an ornate wooden coffin padded with white silk rests atop a low table with a white marble top. When the mistress of this chamber is present, she rests in this coffin, but it's not her real coffin.

RANDOM ENCOUNTER REMINDER

Don't forget that, while moving around in the Dark Reliquary or entering a room that is not a residence, a visitor has a 10 percent chance of a random encounter that's not listed in the room's description, unless otherwise described. This means that some areas with detailed encounters may harbor another creature as well. If such a random encounter is indicated, use the matrix to determine its exact nature (Necropolis, night result). Choosing rather than rolling is recommended, to ensure an appropriate encounter.

Medre Allaconda

Medre is a vampire, probably the most powerful in the city. She is a member of the Covenant of Blood and, while she is an ally of the Forsaken, she also works on the sly with the crime lord Menon Balacazar. Although the Forsaken count the Balacazars as allies—or at least associates—they would be displeased to know that Medre is devoted to him and might use the *horn of blood* artifact on his behalf, but not on theirs. If it comes down to it, Medre would side with the Balacazars over the Forsaken. She has no love for the cults of chaos that have become so intertwined with the organization.

Medre is a cleric of Maleskari. Although she uses the shrine in area 14 to worship her dreaded divine master, she also sneaks into the city to visit the temple there, usually traveling as a mist at dusk.

Medre stands only 5 feet and 4 inches tall, but her size belies her strength. Her hair is long and dark, and her manner is condescending. She claims to have been born more than four centuries ago. Her demonic cat Aryla is usually nearby, unless Medre is using it to spy on others.

Coffin: The coffin has a secret compartment at one end that is protected with an explosive magical glyph trap. Inside the compartment are several spell scrolls. Medre's real coffin is hidden and guarded in area 46 of the Dark Reliquary's dungeons (level 2), along with the horn of blood.

Medre Allaconda has vampire stats, with AC 27, 170 hp, +1 and advantage on all saves, the spellcasting of an ecclesiastic (page 608), and the Divine Eminence of an ecclesiastic (necrotic damage instead of radiant damage); alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: +3 plate, +3 shield, unholy warhammer *(see Chapter 35: Magic)*, cloak of protection, *pearl necklace (worth 5,000 gp).*

38. THE CHAPEL OF THE UNCREATED

This central chamber on the third floor has a vaulted ceiling 40 feet high. The walls, floor, and ceiling are black. Two huge blood-red cauldrons stand in the middle of the room, each measuring 10 feet across and 8 feet high. Strange dark mists drift out of the cauldrons and swirl about the floor. Each corner holds an obelisk that stands 20 feet high, draped in red cloth. An acrid, greasy stink hangs in the room, and the air seems to vibrate in an unnerving way.

Reveling in the fact that they were not given life by this world's creator, the Fallen worship their own demonic essence here. Neither Lilith nor Raguel seems entirely in favor of this place, but they allow it to keep the demons (who have been cooped up here for years) happy.

Demonic Essence: The cauldrons hold demon ichors festering with the essence of Hell itself.

Kaladeen

The master of the chapel is a balor named Kaladeen, a great fiery demon that fights with a sword and whip. He would like to lead the Fallen—if he had his way, the demons would fall upon the city of Ptolus like a plague of unholy locusts, slaying and destroying wantonly. He despises the indecision and reservations of Raguel and the schemes and subterfuge of Lilith. Still, he is not in a position to rebel just yet. For now, he attempts to sow subversion among the demons who come to the chapel to pay homage. Besides his sword and whip, Kaladeen has a black diamond on a silver chain (worth 10,000 gp).

Tactics: Even if he hears sounds of combat or shouts of alarm, the balor does not leave the chapel. He teleports away only if he is near death. Should intruders enter the chapel, Kaladeen is extremely straightforward, using his disintegration magic once or twice before growing impatient and wading into melee. He bellows for the dancers in area 34 to come help him (if he believes them to still be alive). Should Falishmal attempt to come in from area 39 to aid him, he orders her away, afraid of looking weak.

Kaladeen has balor stats, plus the ability to cast disintegrate *three times per day (spell save DC 20).*

Covenant of Blood, page 103

Menon Balacazar, page 103

Horn of blood, *page 639*

Chaos cults, page 75

Maleskari, page 73

The sunfire tomb *spell (page 633) is one of the worst punishments one could inflict on a Covenant of Blood vampire.*

Aryla (Medre's familiar) has spy stats.

Glyph of warding, *triggered by contact: DC 18, 20-foot radius, 22 (5d8) thunder damage, half damage on a successful save.*

The scrolls have the following spells: animate dead, divination, locate object, speak with dead *(2).*

Galchutt, page 62

39. CHAMBER OF RIVEN SOULS

The ceiling in this large, curved room at the west side of the third floor measures 30 feet high. It stays intensely, unnaturally cold here (below minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit).

The Chamber of Riven Souls serves as a temple that can be used by virtually any worshipper of any evil-aligned god. Many of the Fallen secretly worship the Galchutt here. Midnight blue curtains cover the walls, and the floor is finely polished black marble.

Riven Souls

The air here teems with spirits that have been sundered in twain. They fly about, just barely seen; they wail and scream, just barely heard. Anyone who dies in this chamber finds their body immediately inhabited by a fragmented portion of a riven soul. The soul-fragment inhabiting the body instantly causes it to heal to halfway to full, then it attacks targets randomly, starting with the nearest one first (the soul-fragment doesn't always do the smartest thing, and may—at the GM's discretion—choose a foolish option or target a foe that isn't even really there). Note that this occurs even if Falishmal (the resident balor) dies here. If a creature dies here twice, the body has suffered so much that the riven souls cannot inhabit it anymore.

The cauldrons affect any demon, devil, or other fiend in this chamber. An affected creature gains advantage on attacks, checks, and saves, and automatically regenerates 10 hp at the start of its turn (dying only if it starts its turn with 0 hp). If the creature already has regeneration, it increases by 10 hp per round while it is here.

Further, anyone dying here risks having their own soul riven, which means it does not go on to the afterlife as normal but is torn to pieces and left to languish here in madness and misery. The creature cannot be brought back to life by any means until the soul is restored through extreme magic.

Falishmal

This chamber is the abode of Falishmal, a mighty balor demon. She is a normal balor with one exception: all of her flames are cold instead of hot. Her body is white, and her aura of cold flames is a milky blue.

Tactics: Unlike Kaladeen, the balor in area 38, Falishmal does not hesitate to leave this chamber if she hears the sounds of fighting or trouble elsewhere on the third floor. She gladly sides with anyone in the Dark Reliquary, although Kaladeen will refuse her help, and Medre (area 37) and the nightshades (area 35) seem rather ambivalent toward working with her.

In battle, she attempts to control the mind of at least one opponent before resorting to melee attacks.

LAYOUT OF DUNGEON LEVEL 1

The dungeons below the Dark Reliquary are the stuff of dread legends. Certainly no one goes there willingly. Area 13 in the manor above offers a staircase leading down into area 1 of the dungeons. The map on the next page illustrates the various areas described here.

Unless stated otherwise, the underground rooms and passages are dark and filled with dust, grime, cobwebs, and patches of black slime. Ceilings are 15 feet high. Here and there, water drips from the ceiling and gathers in tiny pools amid the stones that form the floor. Bones and skulls scattered haphazardly about are common, as are rats and cockroaches. The doors down here are wooden but sturdy and usually bound with brass bands.

1. DARK WARDEN KNIGHTS

This chamber serves as a guard post monitoring everyone who passes between the Dark Reliquary above and the dungeons below. The center of the floor is covered in a round red rug, and ten pairs of swords crossed behind shields hang on the walls here. The shields bear various evil devices: death's heads, black hands, demon faces, and so on.

The Knights: Spirits of ancient evil knights serve as the wardens of this chamber. Five bodiless undead spirits (wraiths) attack any inappropriate creatures passing through. They look like translucent black knights.

The Door Into the Dungeons: The heavy iron door across from the bottom of the staircase is always magically locked by a haunted locking mechanism (a *ghost lock*). Those with magical lore or knowledge of necromancy and spirits can potentially determine a method to get past the door with some study.

Hidden Key: Affixed to the back of one of the shields on the wall hangs the *ghostly key* that opens the door into the dungeons. The key is invisible and its aura is masked from effects that detect magic, so the only way for the PCs to find it is by manually searching the room. The wraiths can use the key to open the door at the behest of anyone they recognize.

2. VESTIBULE

This large chamber beyond the door into the dungeons stands empty; it's used as a mustering area when needed. It feels grimy and damp, and even a casual examination of the floor reveals the occasional bone or gobbet of rotting flesh filled with maggots (these fall off the local zombies as they move about).

If someone shouts a call of alarm, a number of the dungeon's residents—including Drusii, Ooshul, and the various barbazu guards—come here, teleporting in two rounds after they hear an alarm.

3. RAT CHAMBER

This bone- and dung-filled chamber, which branches off to the east from the vestibule, looks and smells like a refuse heap. It has drawn the attention of six giant rats.

4. SECRET PASSAGE TO THE TOWER OF TEREPHON

A chamber that branches off to the west from the vestibule hides a secret door built within a large throne of bones on the north wall. The entire central portion of the throne lifts up, while the sides slide apart to allow access to a 10-foot-wide passage. The winding corridor is just under 1,000 feet long and littered with old bones. It leads to the Tower of Terephon in the Necropolis.

5. GUARD POST

In the west, southwest, and southeast corners of the first dungeon level are guard chambers occupied by two barbazu fiends (low-rank shock troop devils with spiky beards, known as bearded devils) and a pair of two-headed devil dogs. They listen for alarms, wait for sounds of trouble, and watch for intruders. Should they find themselves seriously outmatched, the barbazu blow on horns tipped with human

Heavy iron door: *AC 19, 25 hp, DC 25 Strength check to break. It's a DC 25 Sleight of Hand check to open the* ghost lock. *It's a DC 20 Arcana or Religion check to understand the lock's qualities and how to open it.*

If someone dies in area 39, it's a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw to not have their soul riven.

Finding the hidden ghostly key *requires a DC 25 Perception check.*

Falishmal has balor stats, plus the ability to cast dominate person *three times per day (spell save DC 20); she has resistance to fire and immunity to cold; her death throes, fire aura, and whip inflict cold damage instead of fire damage.*

Drusii, page 242

Ooshul, page 242

See page 227 for a description of the storeroom on the first floor with stairs leading down to the dungeons.

Doors: *AC 15, 18 hp, DC 18 Strength check to break*

Giant rat: *8 hp*

Secret door: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Tower of Terephon, page 223

Barbazu: *52 hp*

Devil dogs have dire wolf stats with two bite attacks each turn; resistance to cold, fire, and lightning; and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks; alignment neutral evil.

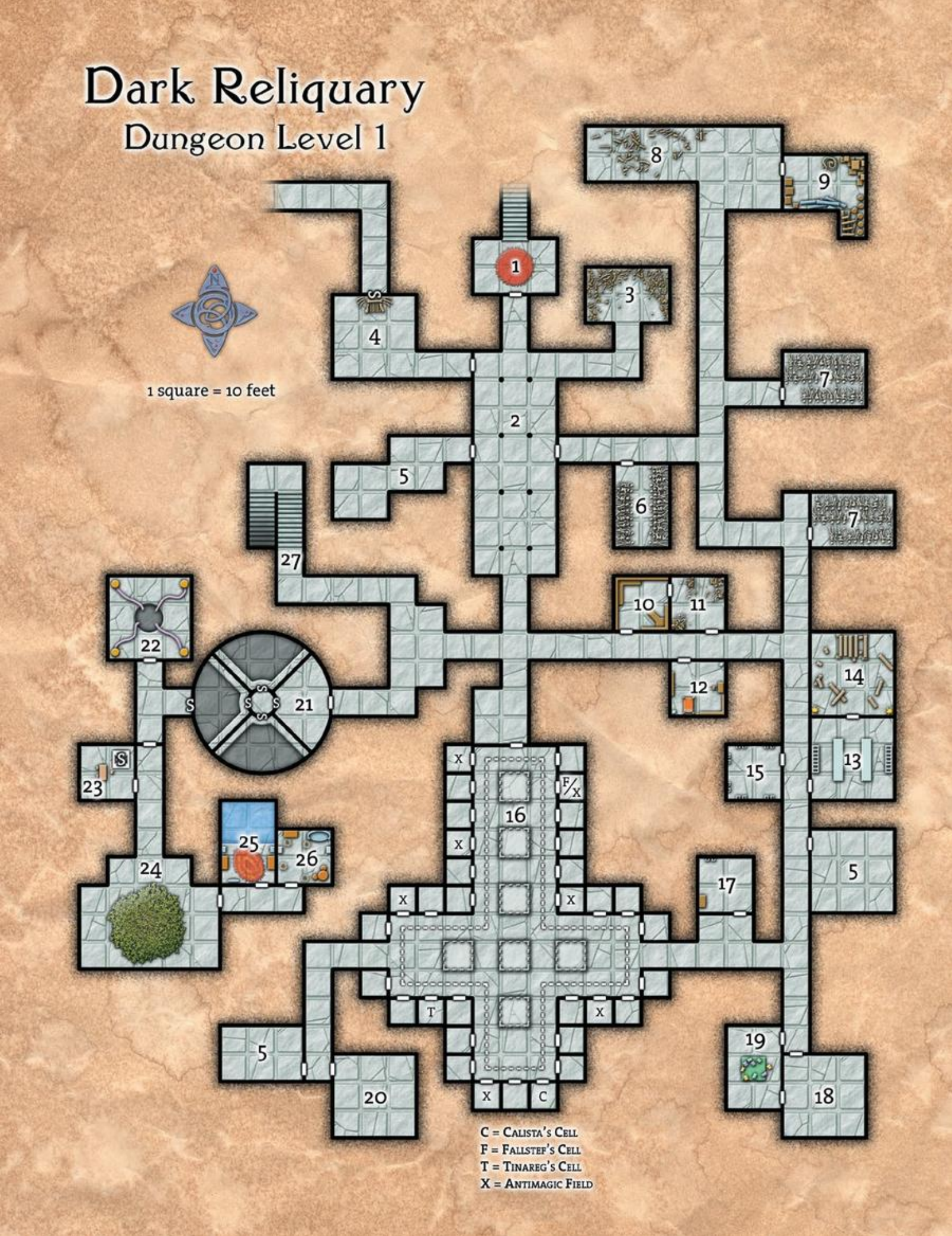
The barbazu guards throughout the dungeons like to take trophies, which means that most of them wear grisly necklaces made of fingers or eyes. Some hang the skulls of fallen foes from their belts or affix them to their shoulders like epaulets.

Wraith: *66 hp*

If the wraiths are destroyed and/or the hidden key is taken, the dungeon residents must exit through one of the secret passages or be trapped in the dungeons until the iron door is destroyed.

Dark Reliquary

Dungeon Level 1



Another guard post like area 5 appears on the dungeon's second level; see the map on page 245.

Ochre jelly: *44 hp*

Area 6 locked door: *DC 21 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Area 11 locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Slimy doom: *An exposed creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract the disease. Each day the creature takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, their Constitution score is reduced by 1d4, and they must make another Constitution save (two saves means the creature has overcome the disease). The target dies if this reduces its Constitution to 0. Finishing a long rest recovers 1 lost point of Constitution.*

It's a DC 20 Perception check to find the treasure in the pile of corpses.

Dragon bile poison: *The creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage and be poisoned for 24 hours. They must repeat the saving throw at the start of their next six turns; for each failed save, the creature takes 3 (1d6) poison damage.*

Area 7 locked door: *DC 21 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Skeleton: *12 hp*

Zombie: *23 hp*

Area 11 locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Searching the clutter: *DC 15 Sleight of Hand check to find things*

Locked iron box: *DC 25 Sleight of Hand check to pick the diabolically clever lock*

The chime is a chime of opening.

The Keylord has cambion stats, plus the Charge, Labyrinthine Recall, and Reckless abilities of a minotaur and the ability to cast contagion, darkness, flame strike, *and* poison spray *(3d12 poison damage) once per day each; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: chain shirt,* unholy greataxe *(see page 645)*

Knifal, page 241

skulls that bellow mournfully, then attack. If hard pressed, they teleport to area 30 on level 2 of the dungeons to get reinforcements.

Remember that since the unhallowed ground effect of the Dark Reliquary gives the barbazus the ability to teleport, they do not need keys to get past locked doors. If they become aware of intruders, they might just teleport about—in and out of various rooms—until they find them.

6. CORPSE STORAGE

Farther south off the vestibule to the east is a locked door. It stays locked mainly to keep out hungry ghouls.

In the room beyond, fairly fresh corpses—some preserved with magic to keep them from decaying, but most not—are stacked like logs in a woodpile. Many of them show signs of having been recently exhumed. These will soon become zombies.

Searching through them exposes the acting character to an infectious disease called slimy doom that turns a living creature's insides to infectious goo. (Infected creatures can infect others by touch, as if the others searched the corpses.) Such a gruesome search yields a silver ring with a topaz (worth 350 gp) and a pair of gold earrings (worth 100 gp).

7. UNDEAD STORAGE

The doors into the two undead storage rooms on the east side of this level are locked, again to keep out the hungry ghouls.

These chambers reek of rotting flesh and death. The northern room holds zombies, while the southern one contains skeletons. Both chambers are jammed with as many undead as can stand within (which turns out to be four dozen in each room). They do nothing until commanded by an evil cleric or similar character, or by a more powerful intelligent undead creature. Even if intruders open the door and begin hacking at the undead, the animated corpses do not defend themselves or even move appreciably as they are slaughtered.

The links of the Keylord's chain shirt are actually tiny keys all woven together. He also wears keys hanging from his belt, the tops of his boots, and even his horns. The vast majority of these keys no longer open any lock. The Keylord is so gruff and so single-mindedly focused on his work—as well as his hatred for Knifal—that he is very difficult to communicate with. He rarely answers questions directly (or at all) and can grow bitter or angry without warning.

8. DISUSED CHAMBER

A yellowish, blob-like creature known as an ochre jelly has oozed its way into the dungeons and currently clings to the ceiling of a rarely used room at the far north end of level 1. The chamber holds only refuse and broken furniture; the ochre jelly hopes to find some prey to drop upon and devour.

9. STOREROOM

This room connected to the disused chamber is full of boxes, barrels, crates, kegs, coils of rope, bales of hay, rolls of cloth, piles of planks, and other miscellaneous goods.

10. THE KEYLORD'S WORKSHOP

Near the center of this level lies a workshop crowded with wooden cabinets and tools. The door to it from area 11 is locked, but the one from the hallway is not. The workshop's spare wall space is covered with wooden boards full of small hooks upon which hang keys of all kinds. The cabinets hold more tools and still more keys. There are clearly more than five hundred keys here.

Hanging in this room is a key to every locked door in levels 1 and 2 of the dungeon. Unfortunately, none of them are labeled, and there are many more keys than locks—most are useless. Two of the useless ones are covered in dragon bile poison just to keep snoops from searching through the Keylord's property.

11. THE KEYLORD'S CHAMBER

Both doors to this room—from the hall and from area 10—are locked.

This cluttered room is a mess of blankets, clothing, food, tools, rags, and junk covering some simple furnishings. This is the home of the Keylord, who, when not in his workshop, is often here asleep amid the muddle. A search of the clutter reveals 18 gp, 19 sp, and a locked iron box engraved with the images of various keys. Inside is a magical metal chime.

The Keylord

The Keylord is a half-demon minotaur who crafts all the keys and locks in the dungeons and maintains copies of all the keys. He changes the locks throughout the Dark Reliquary frequently. Residents of the dungeons commonly have to come to him for the proper key to get into a room they wish to enter (unless they can teleport into the locked area instead). The Keylord hates the half-fiend sorcerer Knifal—the two have always fought for supremacy over the dungeon residents—so those who show that they have slain the sorcerer gain an ally in the

minotaur. The Keylord would, in fact, betray all the secrets of the dungeons he knows (the general layout, including all secret doors, in levels 1 and 2) and even give any needed keys to someone who has slain or is willing to slay Knifal. If given a chance, he proposes the idea to intruders who enter his workshop or private chamber. Otherwise, he defends himself with his axe.

He carries a gold and onyx necklace (worth 2,000 gp), keys to this room and dozens of random keys (many are useless, but one is solid gold and worth 120 gp), and 45 gp. He also carries a pair of crystal spectacles.

12. KNIFAL'S CHAMBER

The room just across the hall from the Keylord's is protected by a locked door.

This is the bedchamber and study of the half-fiend sorcerer Knifal, the Fallen's chief torturer. It has a large bed, stacks of books on the floor, a few strange knickknacks (including animal skulls and a small dragon statuette made of clay) set amid books on sagging wooden bookshelves, and a writing desk with an oil lamp. In the desk are a large supply of paper, parchment, pens, and ink.

One is much more likely to find Knifal in the hungry pit than here.

The Books: Most of the books here are basic reference works about magic and biology and some macabre texts about torture and pain.

Knifal has carved out the middle of one thick book on magic to create a secret cache that contains nine pearls (each worth 100 gp), an emerald (1,200 gp), and a pouch holding 213 pp.

13. OLD ARMORY

This room on the east side of level 1 once served as an armory, but all the weapons have been moved. Hooks and racks remain on the walls, and two long, low tables now rest in the middle of the floor. There are many cobwebs here. A door on the room's north wall leading into area 14 stands open.

14. FORSAKEN WORKERS

The door into this room from the old armory hangs open. A pair of magical torches set in sconces lights the chamber. The ceiling here is 20 feet high.

Tools and planks cover the floor of this room. A partially built wooden structure rises on the north side, and a large iron cart full of bones and skulls rests near the east wall. Two Forsaken carpenters and five zombie workers here are building a large wooden platform that will serve as a two-tiered lair-roost for an undead nightwing. They intend to incorporate the bones in the cart into the structure.

If attacked or threatened, one of the carpenters overturns the cart. Doing so reveals that the bones are actually (currently) animated skeletons. Four skeletons assemble themselves each round and attack for three rounds. On the third round, a troll skeleton forms and attacks. (Undead-affecting abilities affect these creatures only once they've assembled, so this encounter could potentially "waste" many attempts before the full threat is realized.)

15. CELL

The locked door into this room in the southeastern quadrant of this level has a small barred window.

A dead male elf hangs in manacles in the cell, amid many other manacles attached to the walls. The cell is otherwise bare. The elf clearly was tortured and mistreated, but in the end he starved to death. He was a failed victim of the experimental magical process currently used on Cardalian in area 17.

16. THE CRUCIFORM PRISON

This large, cross-shaped area at the southern end of the first level reeks of sweat, offal, and misery. The ceiling in this chamber is 30 feet high; two tiers of 10-foot-square cells ring the perimeter—one at ground level and one about 15 feet up. A barred gate closes off each individual cell. A 5-foot-wide walkway of mesh iron with no railing grants access to the second tier of cells. One can reach the walkway via iron ladders found at every corner.

Seven cages measuring about 10 feet to a side hang on chains from the ceiling in the open center of the cruciform prison. Guards can lower the cages to the ground with winches on the walls, but normally the cages stay at 15 feet above the floor, even with the walkway and the upper tier of cells.

The entire place can hold up to seventy-three prisoners in separate locked cells and cages. A single key opens all of them. Cells marked with an X on the map suppress all magic within them (GMs may choose whether the magic-suppressing cell is on the top or bottom tier.)

At any given time, the residents of the Dark Reliquary hold only six to ten regular prisoners here, in addition to three prisoners of particular note: Calista, Falstef, and Tinareg. Their cells are marked with a C, F, and T, respectively; these are all on the bottom tier of cells. (Falstef's cell suppresses magic as well.)

The cruciform prison is serviced by the stitched zombies from area 20—which is to

Remember: the entire Dark Reliquary, including its foul dungeons, is considered unhallowed ground, benefitting undead and adversely affecting non-evil creatures (see page 224).

The skeletal troll has minotaur skeleton stats.

The crystal spectacles are eyes of minute seeing.

Locked cell door: *DC 21 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Knifal's locked door: *DC 23 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Area 22: The Hungry Pit, see page 240

Secret cache: *DC 21 Perception check to find*

Forsaken carpenters have expert stats (page 609); alignment neutral evil.

Zombie: *23 hp*

Locked cells and cages: *DC 21 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Map of dungeon level 1, page 245

Stitched zombies, page 240

DARK RELIQUARY GUIDE

Aboveground Manor
Main entrance, barracks, stables, throne room, Crimson Court, living areas, shrines, library, gathering halls, D'Stradi demons, Chapel of the Uncreated, Chamber of Riven Souls, and chambers for Zastanix, Surmoil, Cynric, Urasta, Raguel, Lilith, and Medre.

Dungeon Level 1
Guardians, undead storage, Keylord, Knifal, workers, Warhound, reformatory, Drusii, hungry pit, interrogation room, the temptation tree, and the cruciform prison.

Dungeon Level 2
Hall of Debauchery, barracks, devil dogs, laboratory, Hall of Grasping Hands, Arena, wall of flesh, vault, the Mother, the Vile Machine, guardians, Hall of Winter's Touch, Hall Inviolate, and the Sepulcher of the Wintersouled.

Dungeon Level 3
The Temple of the Galchutt, including the pits of shadow, the pit of discorporation, zaug, shaadom, and the Stirring Stone.

D'Stradi dancer, page 588
Drusii, page 242
Raguel, page 110

Callista has commoner stats.

Vallis moon, page 42
Secret schemes of the Elder Gods, page 543

For ways to use Calista in a campaign, see the sidebar in Chapter 31: Campaign Advice (page 543).

Tinareg has scout stats; alignment chaotic neutral. He currently has only 4 hp.

Calista can regain her memories only by exposure to the cask of frozen dreams *and the Dreaming Stone. See Chapter 22: The Caverns and Chapter 25: Jabel Shammar for more information on the secrets that Calista holds.*

Ochremeshk, page 589
Lilith, page 110

Cask of frozen dreams, *page 637*
Seven Jewels of Parnaith, page 485

Falstef has deva stats, except he currently has only 5 hp, has no wings, and cannot fly.

To have heard of Falstef, a character must make a DC 25 History check.

Lords of the Seven Chains, page 64
Malkuth, page 124
Pale Tower, page 305
Wintersouled, page 223

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

One of the player characters in the Ptolus Campaign was named Aliya. Unbeknownst to her, she was the cousin of Calista, a prisoner in the Dark Reliquary. Aliya had an affinity for mirror magic and sometimes saw Calista in mirrors that she gazed into. Eventually, Aliya and her friends, the Runewardens, were able to figure out where Calista was and rescue her from the Cruciform Prison. They brought both Calista and Falstef, a celestial prisoner, to the Pale Tower, and eventually learned all of Calista's secrets. Then, in a later campaign also set in Ptolus, Aliya's player decided to adopt Calista as her next PC. Obviously, she started out with a great animosity toward demons....

say that the zombies (occasionally) feed the prisoners and (very occasionally) clean the area. The barbazu from the guard post to the west (area 5) patrol this room frequently, and a D'Stradi dancer remains in it at all times, usually on the walkway. Drusii often comes here as well.

Calista

In his search for a way to contact his parents, Raguel learned of Calista, a young girl of modest origins living in a village along the southern coast east of Dohrinthas. The Elder Gods sent Calista a vision of their return, along with the return of the Vallis moon. The vision also showed her their secret scheme to rid the world of the Galchutt forever. Then they placed powerful enchantments upon her to make the details of the vision impossible for her to remember and for anyone to gain from her—until the time was right. So powerful was this enchantment that Calista forgot everything about her past.

When Raguel discovered the girl, he had his demons seize her and bring her to the Dark Reliquary, where he attempted to learn from her what he could. As the son of two of the Elder Gods, Raguel knew she had been touched by them, but he learned nothing. In frustration, he gave her to Lilith for safekeeping. Calista was not to be harmed, only watched, to see if they could ever learn anything from her. Lilith prizes the girl more than anything—she considers Calista and her "secrets" her most potent weapon. She knows that, in order to unlock the secrets held in the girl's mind, she must obtain the *cask of frozen dreams*; she has servants scouring the world for it even now. Lilith has no idea that it is already held by a demon in one of the Jewels of Parnaith.

Growing up in the prisons of the Dark Reliquary, Calista (female human) showed her true mettle. Most people who know only the captivity of demons and undead would likely go mad, but Calista believes she must gain her freedom someday. She still has visions, usually of possible rescuers. These sometimes try her sanity, but mostly they give her hope.

Falstef

The angel called Falstef was the first angel to come to the world physically, other than the Creator's initial servants (the Lords of the Seven Chains, for instance). That makes him technically the first of the Malkuth. However, he came to the world long before there was a Pale Tower. Falstef fought against the Wintersouled, and they eventually captured him, holding him in stasis for centuries. Upon the arrival of the Fallen two hundred years ago, the Wintersouled gave the angel to the newcomers as a gift. The demons, using long-practiced techniques from Hell itself, cut off Falstef's wings in such a way that no force can ever allow them to regenerate or regrow.

Today, Falstef languishes in an adamantine-lined cell that suppresses all magic. He is beaten four times daily to keep him from regaining his strength. He knows nothing of Ptolus, having been taken prisoner long before the city was built. The Malkuth in the Pale Tower know of his legend, although not where he is. If he were ever freed, they would reward his liberators greatly (likely with a good-aligned or good-themed magic item worth 8,000 gp to 10,000 gp per rescuer).

Tinareg

Captured by demons working for Lilith, Tinareg was a half-orc warrior from the Plains of Panish southeast of Ptolus. Divinations showed that he held important secrets regarding the demon prince Ochremeshk. He has been here in the Cruciform Prison for months, and so far he has resisted all interrogations—even the magical compulsions. Now the demons have given up on him, assuming that the divinations were wrong.

SUMMONING OCHREMESHK

Ochremeshk is a repulsive, 16-foot-tall humanoid with dark red skin and massive clawed hands. For details and stats, see his entry in Chapter 34: Monsters.

If summoned here using Tinareg's tooth, Ochremeshk begins destroying everything and everyone he sees. Assuming the summoners are smart, they will flee quietly—the demon god's sudden appearance draws the attention of most of the surrounding dungeon inhabitants. Drusii is likely to teleport to the upper levels to summon powerful help to deal with this dangerous threat.

If the player characters summon Ochremeshk and then get away, they find only token resistance to their escape. Their last sight of the demon god is of him engaged with extremely powerful demons and undead—perhaps a nalfeshnee, a balor, and multiple vampires, as well as lesser creatures.

They weren't wrong, just misunderstood. Tinareg's great-grandfather, a surprisingly powerful orc wizard, inscribed a mighty soul magic spell onto one of the half-orc's teeth when he was but a boy. This spell has been passed down through orcish generations since just after the Wars of Fire in ancient Kem, when the demon god Ochremeshk was imprisoned. The spell will free the powerful demon lord. The tooth now resides with Tinareg.

The orcs had always intended to free Ochremeshk when the time was right; if released before the proper mystical conditions arose, the demon prince would appear and slay his liberators and everyone around him, rather than reward them for their efforts. But Tinareg, already venerable when he was kidnapped, is on his last legs and no longer cares whether the time is right. He now waits for a spellcasting prisoner to be brought in so he can pull out his tooth and give it to the newcomer. When he does so, he assures the character that it will enable them to exact revenge on their captors. He won't explain entirely what it does for fear that the person won't use it; he just urges the character to "cast it, and then get away as fast as you can!"

Understanding the effects of the soul magic spell inscribed on Tinareg's tooth requires a DC 25 Arcana check (it is not necessary to understand the spell's effects before casting it).

For more on the workings of soul magic, see Chapter 35: Magic, page 619.

Kem, page 43

17. CARDALIAN'S CELL

This special cell to the east of the cruciform prison is protected by a locked iron door and guarded by two dedicated D'Stradi dancers. They do not have a key to the door, but they do have a key to a chest within the cell. The cell holds Cardalian (female halfling), the subject of a dark experiment of Lilith and Surmoil.

Inside the stark cell, they keep Cardalian manacled to the wall. The only other thing in the room is a locked chest of drawers containing five *potions of healing*.

Lilith, with the help of the Forsaken sorcerer Surmoil, has cast a powerful enchantment upon Cardalian, creating a magical duplicate that is completely under her control. The duplicate serves as her agent in Ptolus. All damage that the duplicate suffers is transferred to the real Cardalian here in the cell. When danger threatens the duplicate, one of the D'Stradi dancers stays here to give Cardalian healing potions as needed. Sometimes Surmoil comes here to monitor the subject himself.

Cardalian

Freeing Cardalian from this cell destroys the duplicate. However, the whole process has driven Cardalian a bit mad. If freed, she may seem fine at first, but after a time she cries out as if struck, even though nothing happens to her. She has become so used to suffering sudden wounds that she believes they occur even when they do not. Soon, her rescuers will see that these hallucinations make her unable to function until she has been cured by powerful magic or has had months of peaceful rest.

For more on Cardalian, see her entry under Miscellaneous Midtown NPCs in Chapter 10 (page 211).

A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Investigation check has heard of Cardalian, but this knowledge probably applies to the duplicate, not to the real Cardalian.

Complex arcane symbols cover the walls, floor, ceiling, and even the manacles in Cardalian's cell. They are etched so finely, however, that it is a DC 15 Perception check to find them at all.

Cardalian has spy stats; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: amulet of health.

Locked iron door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Locked chest of drawers: *DC 21 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

18. THE WARHOUND

This room in the far southeast corner of the first dungeon level is completely bare except for its lone resident. It is the lair of the pride of the Fallen: a unique demon-forged spider-like construct called the Warhound, stolen from Demogorgon himself as they left Hell.

The Fallen use the Warhound to track escaped prisoners before they get out of the Necropolis. The marilith Drusii, in particular, loves the Warhound and values it above most of the other creatures in the dungeons. Unless on a mission, the Warhound is here. It attacks any non-demon that comes into the room without the escort of its keepers. It also obeys all commands of its keepers (see area 19).

The Warhound has ice devil stats with the construct type, AC 22, advantage on attack rolls and saves, the Faultless Tracker ability of an invisible stalker, and a ray attack (60-foot range) that paralyzes a target for one minute if it fails a DC 18 Constitution saving throw (the target can try a new save to break free on each of its turns).

Cardalian, page 211

Drusii, page 242

Surmoil, page 229

GM TIPS

Neither the Warhound nor its keepers will do anything but attack intruders in these two rooms. Thus, if the PCs simply retreat from areas 18 and 19, their foes will not follow them—the Warhound, because it has been commanded to stay in its chamber, and the keepers because defending the Warhound is their only priority.

The Warhound keepers have berserker stats; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: +1 chain shirt, +1 halberd, Forsaken body paint *(see page 638)*, potion of greater healing, potion of heroism, *50 feet of rope, alchemist's fire, 10 gp.*

Aullik has arcanist stats (page 605) with the undead type, 30 hp, and the damage immunities, condition immunities, senses, bite attack, and claw attacks of a ghoul; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: potion of speed, bead of force, potion of greater healing *(heals undead and harms living creatures), stylish leather coat, jeweled collar (worth 300 gp). Aullik knows the following sorcerer spells:*

Cantrips (at will): acid splash, light, mending, prestidigitation

1st level (4 slots): charm person, expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile

2nd level (3 slots): invisibility, mirror image

3rd level (2 slots): lightning bolt, vampiric touch

Aullik the ghoul wears a black leather coat with a red devil's head embroidered on the back.

Central locked secret door: *DC 22 Perception check to find, DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Western secret door: *DC 24 Perception check to find*

Ghast: *35 hp*

Stitched zombies have zombie stats.

The spider swarm has swarm of insects stats (with the swarm of spiders variant).

The stitched zombies react to effects that specifically target undead like normal zombies. However, if the effect destroys the zombie, the living spiders inside it are not destroyed and can still attack.

Stuck iron door: *AC 19, 25 hp, DC 22 Strength check to break*

Dangerous trap: *It is a DC 10 Athletics check to cling to the spiked walls; attempting it inflicts 3 (1d6) piercing damage to the character. It is a DC 24 Strength check to stop the wall from moving. Creatures pushing on the spiked wall automatically take 3 (1d6) piercing damage each round whether or not they succeed in stopping it.*

The acid inflicts 1 acid damage if touched or 3 (1d6) acid damage per round if immersed in it.

Siphon worms have stirge stats, but their blood drain inflicts necrotic damage.

The siphon worms of the hungry pit were brought to Praemal by accident. A nalfeshnee demon among the Fallen was slain in a dispute with Drusii the marilith (page 242). Later, Knifal was examining the corpse and found the siphon worms in the demon's guts, living there like parasites. He found his own use for these terrible creatures.

19. WARHOUND KEEPERS

This room adjoining the Warhound's lair has one extremely large bed with blankets and pillows scattered haphazardly over it and across the room. Skulls, bones, shields, and weapons decorate the walls (all are worthless). A dim, greenish magical light equivalent to a lantern illuminates the room.

The Keepers

As a show of solidarity, the Fallen have agreed to allow powerful Forsaken to watch over and guard the Warhound. These keepers consist of a ghoul sorcerer named Aullik and two living barbarians (female humans) who share an unwholesome relationship with the ghoul. Massive in height, girth, and bulk, the women cover themselves in body paint imagery of skulls and other death symbols. Aullik wears a long black leather coat and a jeweled collar. The barbarians recognize Aullik as their superior and do whatever he says. All three will sacrifice themselves to aid the Warhound in their charge.

Tactics: On a mission, or if aware of trouble in the dungeon, Aullik casts protective and enhancing spells on himself (and on the barbarians, if possible).

20. STITCHED ZOMBIES

This chamber at the south end of the first dungeon level is empty except for a dozen stitched zombies that mill about aimlessly until commanded. These zombies look identical to human commoner zombies except that their eyes, ears, and mouths have been stitched closed.

This is because the zombies are full of spiders. When destroyed, a stitched zombie splits open and a spider swarm spills out to attack.

21. THE REFORMATORY

The iron door into this punishment room on the west side of the dungeon slides down into the floor when opened; a metal crank on the wall next to the door activates it. There is no such crank on the other side, so from that side the door is considered stuck and has to be broken open to allow creatures to pass through it.

The reformatory is a room for tormenting captives, but it also serves as a dangerous trap. Those entering from the east see what appears to be a trapezoid-shaped room with iron walls. The east and west walls look slightly curved; the other walls bear a number of daggerlike, bloodstained spikes. A casual inspection of the room reveals that the stone floor and ceiling look scraped up; the marks run from north to south and back.

This is, in fact, only a portion of a large, round room with a central hub and four "spokes." The spokes are actually the blade-covered walls. One round after anyone enters the room, the iron door slams shut and the hub begins turning counterclockwise. Characters can attempt to prevent it from moving, but doing so requires great strength. After two rounds, the hub rotates one quarter around the room, exposing a pit across the entire floor that is 30 feet deep and lined with spikes. To avoid falling in, characters must cling to the bladed walls for an entire round.

This cycle continues over two more pits before the whole wheel-like structure returns to its original position, and then it keeps turning until the hub is deactivated or until either the door in the east or the secret door in the west opens.

Inside the Hub

A central locked secret door leads into the hub from each of the room's quadrants. A small chamber inside holds a lever that activates and deactivates the turning of the hub, another that covers the pits with sliding iron plates, a third lever that opens the western secret door, and a fourth that opens the door in the east. A ghast in here watches through a peephole and listens for commands. Residents who enter this room may command the ghast to cover the pits, open the doors, and have the hub turn to allow them to get to either door.

22. THE HUNGRY PIT

This square chamber on the west end of the first level contains a large circular pit, 10 feet across, in the middle of the floor. A circular grille of iron bars hangs from the ceiling, suspended from chains, 6 feet over the liquid-filled pit.

Four fleshy tubes extend out of the pit, each leading to a conical device of glass and copper. Each of these devices stands 4 feet high in a different corner of the room. The chamber reeks with a burning, acrid odor, and slime covers the floor.

The Pit

This torture room is called "the hungry pit" by the half-fiend sorcerer Knifal, who uses it more than anyone else. He likes to stand atop the grille over the pit and lower a bound victim down into it. The pit contains a mild acid and ten horrible demon-bred creatures called siphon worms.

The worms latch onto a victim in the pit and begin draining its life energy. The siphon worms' excretions flow into the caustic fluid and are drawn out by the cone-shaped devices that store it.

Conical Devices

Each cone-shaped device draws life force excretions from the siphon worm pit and stores them as liquid energy. Each device holds about 4 ounces of this fluid. See the Liquid Energy Effects box for its uses.

Knifal

One is most likely to find Knifal in this chamber. The half-demon sorcerer is the Dark Reliquary's chief torturer and a figure of great importance in the dungeons. He hates the Keylord due to a longstanding rivalry for positions of power in the dungeons and plots his downfall. He carries three gold rings (worth 80 gp each), ten gems (worth 10 gp each), 34 gp, and the key to his chamber (area 12).

Tactics: When a fight presents itself, after casting his defensive spells (and perhaps using a potion), Knifal enjoys swooping into combat with his dagger. If he faces more than three opponents, he first tries to catch at least some of them in a *web* or *fireball* spell.

23. THE INTERROGATION ROOM

Down the hall south of the hungry pit lies an interrogation room with three chairs and a wooden table. Although it appears fairly innocuous, it is a dire torture chamber. Typically, demons bring prisoners here and attempt to talk to them before resorting to torture.

Sometimes Drusii is found here rather than in her own chamber (area 25 on this level).

Table: The wooden table is not what it appears. At the command of any creature with fiendish blood, the tabletop lifts off its legs and pivots to reveal its underside, on which lies a set of iron manacles to restrain a humanoid creature. Further, the table can move at any angle or around the room as commanded by a fiend.

Secret Compartment: A secret compartment in the floor of the room's northeast corner holds a large iron brazier that lights on command, branding irons, a glass case filled with spiders, a glass case filled with scorpions, and a large glass jug containing acid (thirty flasks' worth).

24. THE TEMPTATION TREE

Strangely out of place, a large deciduous tree grows out of a hole in the stone floor of a chamber down the hall south of the interrogation room. On this unusual tree, large ripe fruit grows at all times, despite the lack of sunlight. The fruit is not immediately identifiable—it seems to have qualities of both pears and apples. Someone familiar with plants can confirm that this is not a natural tree.

LIQUID ENERGY EFFECTS

Each ounce of the extracted fluid can be used for one of the following effects:

- If drunk by or poured onto a wounded creature, it acts as a *potion of greater healing*.
- If used by an unwounded creature who is not a spellcaster, it grants advantage on Strength checks and doubles their carrying capacity for one hour.
- If used by an unwounded creature who is a spellcaster, it provides magical energy equivalent to a 2nd-level spell slot (allowing the creature to cast a spell using that slot without expending their own 2nd-level spell slot).

A successful DC 21 Arcana check allows a character to identify the conical devices and the liquid within.

A character who eats one of the fruits and fails to resist the poison is thrust into a delusional world built upon their own desires for six hours. (Abilities that neutralize the effects of poison end the delusion immediately.) This delusion is an extremely pleasant experience; in it, the character gets everything they've ever dreamed of. Anyone coming out of the delusion could become addicted to it and crave only the fruit and the delusions it brings—crave it above all else, including friends, family, goals, alignment, or any other considerations. A victim who is addicted and forced out of the delusion early becomes enraged and confused for a few rounds, attacking the nearest creature as if that creature had attacked them, all the while demanding more fruit. Only powerful magic able to remove curses or dispel evil (or a similar, more powerful magic) can cure this addiction once it is gained.

The marilith Drusii sometimes orders prisoners to be brought here and thrust toward the tree. Coming within 10 feet of the tree forces a living creature (other than demons and similar fiends) to overcome a compulsive magical effect. Failure means that the victim uncontrollably lusts after one of the fruits and is compelled to eat one. A character who eats a fruit (either by choice, by coercion from the captors, or by magical compulsion) succumbs to the addiction.

Drusii uses the temptation tree's fruit to control certain prisoners.

25. THE MISTRESS OF THE PRISON

This room east of the temptation tree chamber is protected by a locked door. If anyone enters, a magical telepathic alarm alerts Drusii wherever she is, likely bringing her here ready for a fight.

Surmoil helped Knifal create the cone-shaped devices to store the siphon worms' excretions. Knifal gave the shigmaa three captured prisoners in return.

Keylord, page 236

Knifal's quarters are located in area 12 of this dungeon level (see page 237).

Drusii, page 242

Knifal is a sorcerer with cambion stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: dagger of venom, potion of greater healing, potion of heroism, *and a* potion of speed.
He knows the following sorcerer spells (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks):

Cantrips (at will): dancing lights, light, poison spray, ray of frost, shocking grasp

1st level (4 slots): mage armor, shield, thunderwave

2nd level (3 slots): blur, web

3rd level (3 slots): fireball

Secret compartment: *DC 18 Perception check to find*

The unusual tree's fruit isn't natural, as someone who makes a DC 12 Nature check realizes. A successful DC 18 Nature or DC 20 Arcana check allows one to understand the true powers of the tree and fruit. It is a DC 20 Constitution save to resist the poison from eating the fruit, and a DC 20 Wisdom save to avoid becoming addicted to the tree's allure.

Locked door: *DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

This chamber is lavish and opulent. The rear half is a shallow (1 foot deep) pool of water kept warm magically. The half near the door is lit by a golden chandelier; golden-framed paintings of various subjects and styles adorn the walls. There is also a gold-framed silver mirror. A red and gold rug covers the floor. The room also holds two tables (one usually laden with extravagant foods and expensive silver dishes and utensils) and two chests.

A male human, unconscious and nearly naked, lies draped over one chest.

Furnishings

Drusii's chamber holds six golden frames with paintings, plus the mirror, worth 1,000 gp each. One table bears a large silver serving set worth 280 gp.

Both chests are locked. One contains a trio of fancy daggers (two worth 150 gp each, and one bejeweled and worth 300 gp), a decorated urn (50 gp) full of scented oil (worth 100 gp), three pairs of embroidered silk gloves (5 gp each), a *potion of remedy*, ten tindertwigs in a silver box (worth 30 gp), a tanglefoot bag, and a pair of skulls.

The other chest contains high-quality leather whips (100 gp each), a set of manacles, a magnifying glass, three silk scarves (10 gp each), a fine harp (100 gp), and a leather bag with 235 pp, 830 gp, and 560 sp.

Ooshul has assassin stats with the fiend type; a fly speed of 60 feet; resistance to cold, fire, and lightning; and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks. Equipment: ring of resistance *(acid).*

Vargouilles have imp stats. A creature poisoned by a vargouille must also make a DC 15 Constitution save or contract a disease that transforms them into a vargouille over the next 24 hours.

Locked chest: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Stairs up from dungeon level 1 to the first floor of the Dark Reliquary's main building are at the north end of area 1.

Karn Ellosh is tall, muscular, and blond. Although normally clean shaven, the fighter now has stubble on his face. Before his capture, he belonged to the Order of Iron Might and was a frequent combatant in the Arena in Oldtown. If he can be cured of his addiction, he would make a loyal and trustworthy ally in the fight against the demons of the Dark Reliquary.

Karn Ellosh has knight stats; alignment chaotic good. He has no equipment and fights with his bare hands.

Diagnose Karn's ailment: *DC 18 Medicine check*

The Human

The unconscious man is Karn Ellosh, currently in delusional rapture after eating one of the fruits of the temptation tree in area 24; he's likely to stay this way for hours. A character trained in healing can diagnose what is wrong. If someone neutralizes the fruit's poisonous effect on Karn, he awakes enraged and confused, as described in area 24.

Drusii

Drusii, a demon with the upper body of a six-armed human and the lower body of a serpent, serves as mistress of the prison and a close confidant of Lilith. She wears a thin, dark green line of body paint around her throat like a necklace or choker. Her arms, torso, and face are covered in elaborate swirling painted designs. She has keys to all locks in areas 7, 17, and 25 of this level.

Utterly ruthless, bloodthirsty, and power-hungry, Drusii is a creature that none dares cross—not even Dark Reliquary residents who are more powerful than she, because they know she always has contingency plans and secret alliances that elevate her beyond her physical might.

Drusii has marilith stats with 270 hp. Equipment: nine lives stealer *(2 charges left)*, sword of life stealing, +1 longsword *(3)*, +1 whip, ring of evasion.

Lilith, page 110

GM TIPS

Don't forget that the demons living in the Dark Reliquary can teleport themselves around, and thus do not usually walk from place to place.

26. DRUSII'S LIEUTENANT

This room next to Drusii's chamber (area 25) features a reclining couch, a chest of drawers, a table, two chairs, and a stack of poorly kept ledgers. There are also four "nests" on various spots on the floor built from straw, bones, and strips of cloth.

The Fallen creature with the terrible job of being Drusii's direct servant is a gaunt, winged assassin demon named Ooshul. His demanding superior always seems unhappy with him and beats him regularly for never managing to accomplish the impossible number of duties she assigns him.

Ooshul is almost never here, but his pet vargouilles—minor demons that look like demonic heads with wings instead of ears—usually are, and they attack any intruder. Further, as with Drusii's chamber, if anyone other than Ooshul enters this room, a special mental alarm alerts him of that fact, and he will likely teleport here.

The chest of drawers contains miscellaneous tools, many bottles of ink, a few potions, and a leather bag with 120 gp and 35 pp.

27. STAIRS DOWN

Two flights of stairs on the west side of dungeon level 1 lead down to area 28 in dungeon level 2. These steps double back, so the second level is 40 feet lower than the first level.

LAYOUT OF DUNGEON LEVEL 2

Similar in construction to level 1 of the Dark Reliquary's dungeons, level 2 serves four purposes:

- House the Fallen's experiments in developing a way to create more demons quickly
- Provide a location for the Fallen's and Forsaken's vault
- Serve as the site for the Fallen's and Forsaken's grand amusements
- Give the Wintersouled a place for undisturbed peace

This level also provides access to an ancient Galchutt temple far below, a feature built by the Wintersouled but unknown to most of the Dark Reliquary's current inhabitants.

28. HALL OF DEBAUCHERY

The stairs down from dungeon level 1 lead to a long hallway with massive murals on both walls. Each elaborate painting depicts demons, humans (and other humanoids), and even undead partaking in acts of flagrant debauchery. A long and somewhat tattered red carpet runs down the center of the corridor. Doors open off all walls.

29. OLD DORMITORY

Once used to house a number of Forsaken, this chamber north of the Hall of Debauchery is no longer in use. It holds beds—some of them bunk beds—a number of empty wooden lockers, two long tables flanked by wooden benches, a few chairs, and a screened-off latrine in the back corner.

30. BARBAZU BARRACKS

A door at the west end of the Hall of Debauchery opens into demon barracks. The permanent residence for all the barbazu (bearded devils) in the dungeons, this well-kept chamber contains iron beds and chain-link bags to hold possessions. Ten glaives hang on a rack on one wall.

There are currently five barbazu in the room, relaxing on their beds. It takes them only one round to get ready for combat, and they can teleport to any place they are needed. If called, they release the hounds in the adjoining area 31 using a wall-mounted mechanism here.

Remember that they can teleport due to the unhallowed ground effect, so they do not need keys to get past locked doors. If they become aware of intruders, the barbazu might just teleport into and out of various rooms until they find them.

31. DEVIL DOG KENNEL

Both doors into this kennel (from areas 28 and 30) are iron frames with iron bars, allowing one to see through easily. Both doors are latched, although a mechanism in area 30 opens either door or both doors simultaneously. (One also can unlatch them normally.)

The room stinks of feces and dog. Bare except for a few chains bolted to the walls here and there, a couple of grisly stains on the floor, bits of bone, and piles of excrement, this is obviously a kennel. It is the dwelling place of the devil dogs—two-headed fiendish dire wolves—that patrol the dungeons along with the guards. There are currently four hounds here.

32. INCUBATION LABORATORY

This room just north of the Hall of Debauchery is protected by a locked door.

The place has an acidic, organic stench that's hard to identify. A round table near the door holds 1,000 gp worth of alchemical equipment and substances, including three flasks of acid and one of antitoxin. The majority of the room's space is devoted to ten semitransparent organic pods. Each pod is a different size, the largest being 8 feet high and 4 feet across, and the smallest only 3 feet high and 2 feet across. Most are dark green or yellow-brown, although many pods are mottled with a variety of other colors. Through the membranous sacs of six of these egglike structures, one can see creatures growing. Detailed features are difficult to distinguish, but it appears that different types of demons grow inside. Two of the other pods have burst open, and the last two—uniformly grey in color—contain what appear to be dead creatures.

The living vessels are demon pods. If a pod is destroyed, the creature inside slides out amid a burst of ichor and dies twitching.

A door on the laboratory's north end is made of glass in a steel frame.

33. NURSERY

Three glass cubes, each about 8 feet to a side, are pushed against the north wall in this chamber adjacent to the incubation laboratory. Each cube contains a demon.

Nursemaid

A heavily modified skeleton stands in this room. Inside its empty rib cage hang ten glass containers holding liquids of various colors. Tubes run from each of these down the skeleton's arms to its fingers, each of which has been replaced by a syringe. At preset times,

Wintersouled, page 223

Galchutt, page 62

Remember that, unless stated otherwise, the various underground rooms and passages here are dark and filled with dust, grime, cobwebs, and patches of black slime. Ceilings are 15 feet high. Here and there, water drips from the ceiling and gathers in tiny pools amid the stones that form the floor. Bones and skulls, scattered haphazardly about, are common, as are rats and cockroaches. Doors are wooden but sturdy (AC 15, 18 hp, DC 18 Strength check to break) and usually bound with brass bands. Remember also that this level of the Dark Reliquary is unhallowed ground (see page 224).

Devil dogs, page 234

Locked door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Ulti and Ilti, the night hags who live in area 30 of the Dark Reliquary's upper structure, work with Shigmaa Urasta of the Forsaken in this lab. Lately they've been checking in only periodically, as another pod won't be ready to burst for weeks.

Ulti and Ilti, page 231

Shigmaa Urasta, page 545

The Fallen have decided that no matter what happens, having the means to increase their ranks rapidly can only help them. Demons from Hell are reluctant to come to this world in physical form because they can never leave. Thus, the Fallen now work on many different experiments to create more of their own kind (this is the same reason the Galchutt created the rhodintor ages ago). Areas 32, 33, and 34 on the second dungeon level are devoted to this end.

Other Ptolus villains conduct vile laboratory experiments as well. Ghul's Labyrinth and his fortress of Goth Gulgamel contain the foul labs where he created the monsters of the Squirming Horde. Shilukar the dark elf (see Chapter 33: Adventures) has a laboratory below the Guildsman District where he experiments with mutations.

The demon pods have AC 15. The three largest have 27 (5d10) hp, the three smallest have 10 (3d6) hp, and the four middle-sized pods have 18 (4d8) hp. It's a DC 25 Arcana or Religion check to understand what the pods are.

Barbazu: *110 hp*

Locked door: *DC 21 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Treat the area as lightly obscured.

It's a DC 25 Arcana or Investigation check to understand the Vile Machine's purpose. The machine has AC 19 and consists of three Large sections that have 27 (5d10) hp each. A character can attempt a DC 24 Arcana check to determine that the machine doesn't work properly. Destroying one section disables the machine, and destroying two or more completely destroys it.

Gegall, page 231

The nursemaid has mummy stats, but without the mummy's Dreadful Glare ability, and instead of its rotting fist afflicting a target with mummy rot, it injects the target with 1d4 + 1 chemicals from the syringes in its fingers (see the Nursemaid Injections box).

A chaos beast has otyugh stats, but the disease from its attacks stuns the target and makes the target lose its physical cohesion, devolving into a chaos beast over a number of rounds equal to its Wisdom score.

The Vile Machine is mainly a magical device, but Gegall the nalfeshnee has incorporated elements of both chaositech and traditional science into its workings. However, even a master of all three disciplines would have a difficult time marrying their disparate natures—and Gegall is not the master he thinks he is.

Area 5 just north of the Vile Machine is a guard post with two devil dogs and two barbazu, as described for the first dungeon level on page 234.

Lemure: *10 hp*

The deformed hezrou has hezrou stats, with AC 14, 64 hp, Speed 10 ft., and disadvantage on Dexterity-based attacks, saves, and checks.

Bone Arm: Melee Weapon Attack: *+10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or smaller creature.* Hit: *7 (2d6) slashing damage. The target is grappled (DC 15 check to escape) and is restrained until this grapple ends.*

The bodak has medusa stats, except its gaze causes death instead of petrification. The PCs are unlikely to wake it.

NURSEMAID INJECTIONS

A target can make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw to avoid the effect of these poisons (make separate saves for each one).

d10	Chemical's Effect
1–2	One level of exhaustion
3–4	7 (2d6) necrotic damage and target's Strength reduced by 1d4 until they finish a short or long rest
5–6	7 (2d6) psychic damage and target's Intelligence reduced by 1d4 until they finish a short or long rest
7–8	10 (3d6) poison damage and the target is poisoned for one hour
9–10	Target painfully transforms into a dretch over the next four rounds as if by *true polymorph* (the target can't take any actions during this transformation)

it injects the creatures in the cubic containers with chemicals to aid in their transformative process. The chemicals are poisonous to any other creature. The nursemaid attacks anyone who enters the room, endangers the cubes, or attacks it.

The Cubes

The first cube contains a semi-amorphous humanoid minor devil known as a lemure. It emerged from one of the pods in area 32, but it has difficulty with its cohesion. It turns to mist from time to time, reforming a few minutes later. If loosed from the cube, it does not fight in any way.

The second cube contains a horribly deformed demon (a hezrou) on a soggy bed of pillows. It is squat and broad, with sickly pinkish-grey flesh. The creature has stumps for legs and four flipperlike arms. It attacks any creature that opens its cube (other than the nursemaid). If anyone assaults the nursemaid, it bursts out of the cube and attacks. This creature was also created in one of the pods but, as with the lemure in the first cube, it was hardly a successful experiment.

The third cube contains a comatose, hairless, humanoid-shaped undead creature (a bodak). A demon growing in one of the pods died upon "birth" and transformed into this creature. No attempts to rouse it have succeeded.

34. THE VILE MACHINE

The door into this room from the Hall of Debauchery is locked. If anyone enters this room, it triggers a spell that causes an illusory mouth to appear and say, "Stay out of the machine."

This large, very hot, steam-filled chamber holds a single great machine, driven by a steam boiler and enhanced by hellish spells. A large pile of wood is stacked next to the black iron boiler in the room's northeast corner. The machine itself is a monstrosity of iron, wood, and glass tubes filled with oddly colored, bubbling liquids. A wide iron hatch in the western end of the machine provides access to a compartment big enough for an ogre-sized creature to squeeze into.

The purpose of the Vile Machine is to replicate creatures. For example, a vrock gets in the compartment and, twenty-four hours later, it exits and the machine produces a chrysalis from which an identical vrock emerges after about one week. The device is the creation of Gegall, the nalfeshnee.

However, the machine does not work properly. If a creature is placed within the compartment, the machine produces a chaos beast—an amorphous, constantly shapeshifting nightmarish creature made up of limbs, eyes, and mouths—in four rounds. The chaos beast attacks anything and everything it sees.

After seeing the Vile Machine in operation, any character who understands its purpose realizes it isn't working as intended. Attacking the machine can disable or destroy it.

35. HALL OF GRASPING HANDS

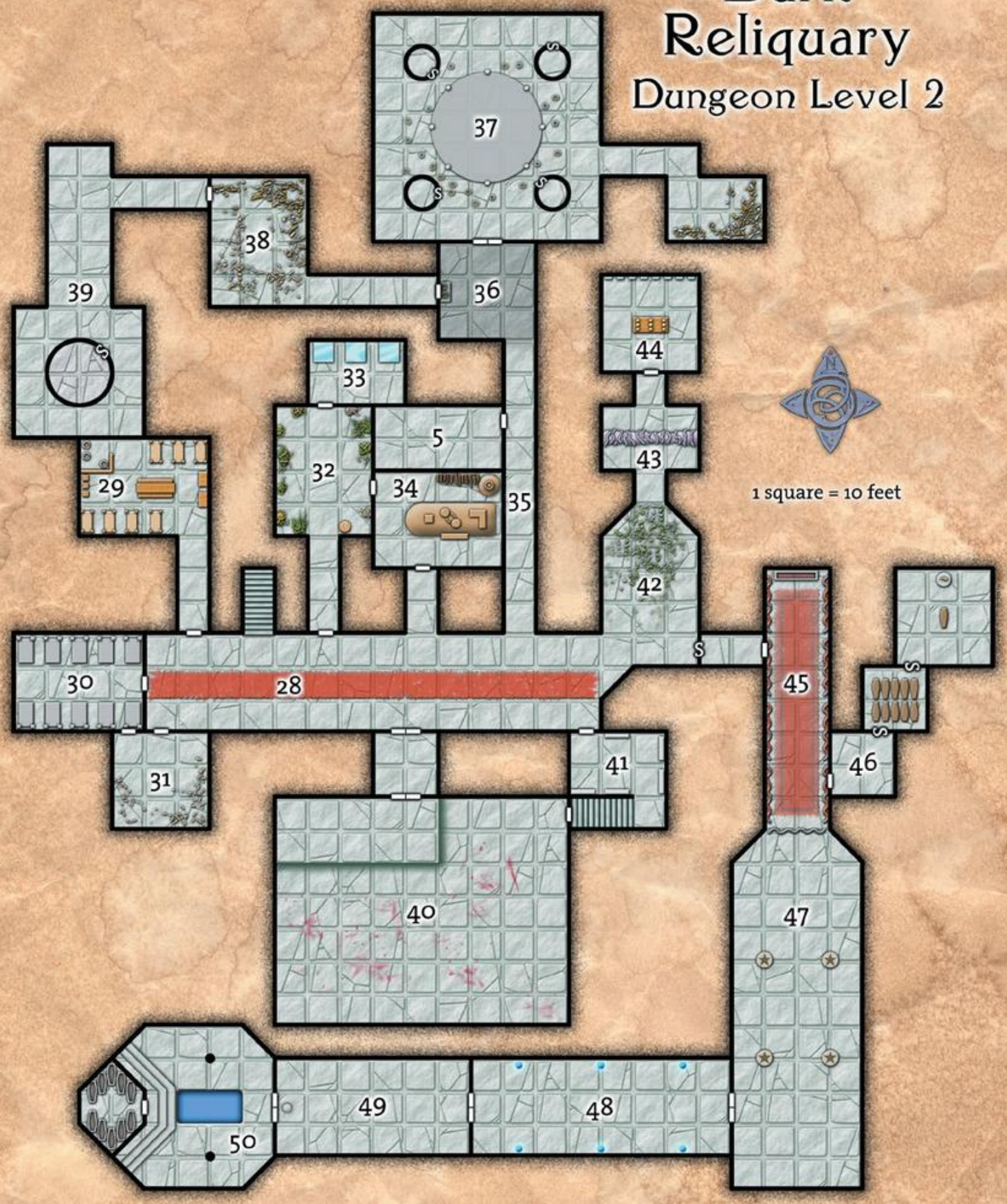
A long, narrow passage runs north and south between the Hall of Debauchery (area 28) and the Mother's chamber (area 37). Innumerable bones decorate the walls on both sides of the southernmost 50 feet of this passage. Should anyone pass through without saying, "I am Fallen" or "I am Forsaken," three bone arms reach out to strike intruders with claws, attacking each creature several times each round they remain in the area. Attacking the arms is futile—there are too many to fight, and more seem to grow magically out of the walls with every step.

36. ANTECHAMBER

This square chamber at the north end of the Hall of Grasping Hands is filled with magical darkness. If the darkness is dispelled, countered, or otherwise negated, it returns in one minute. Three semi-amorphous minor devils (lemures)

Dark Reliquary

Dungeon Level 2



slosh about here, existing only to warn the Mother (area 37) of any approaching danger.

If the demons know that intruders are nearby, the barbazu from the barracks (area 30) and the guard post south of this chamber (area 5) come here to defend the Mother at all costs.

The double doors to the north are made of iron with large slabs of inlaid ebony (each of the two doors is worth 3,000 gp if removed). Both pieces of ebony are inscribed with an Abyssal rune that says "Mother."

A heavy marbletop table is pushed in front of the door to the west, and two barrels of stagnant water sit atop the table.

Secret door: *DC 22 Perception check to find door in each pillar*

It's a DC 24 Arcana check to recognize a soul gem for what it is.

Wintersouled, page 600

D'Stradi annihilator, page 587

37. MOTHER

The ceiling of the Mother's room beyond the antechamber is 30 feet high. The room holds a monstrosity of horrible size and appearance, even by Dark Reliquary standards. This creature, a terribly transformed marilith (a six-armed half-snake demon), is a very recent creation of the incubation laboratory (area 32). She rests on a specially made steel-reinforced wooden platform that stretches nearly from wall to wall and rises 10 feet off the ground. Surrounding her are four massive pillars, each covered in dire-looking writing and runic symbols. Between her and the pillars are boxes, buckets, and platters of food—mostly raw meat and mounds of leafy vegetables.

The Pillars

The four pillars, one near each corner of the room, are the original reasons for this chamber's creation. Each one is hollow with a secret door. Further, each pillar is magical. Gravity does not function within them. Within each gravity-free cylinder, ten black sapphires (worth 1,000 gp each) float at different heights; each is a soul gem, holding the soul of a powerful enemy of the Wintersouled (and, in more recent years, enemies of the Forsaken and Fallen), trapped within these gems after their death. A character can fairly easily crawl up and down the pillars' interior walls to get all the suspended gems if desired. Destroying a soul gem puts the soul inside it to rest, but it does not return the people to life. Only a powerful divination spell might reveal whose soul lies within each gem.

The Guardian and the Spawn

Assigned to watch over the mother is a D'Stradi annihilator. It will not leave her side and fights to the death defending her.

The annihilator makes its lair in this chamber's eastern alcove, a mass of grisly human remains and discarded refuse. Amid the wreckage, characters can find a jeweled comb (worth 150 gp), a silver statuette of a wolf (worth 200 gp), and 32 sp.

Twelve lemures and six dretches squabble and fight in this chamber. It is their job to carry food to the Mother, although such delivery often results in their own demise. For now, the Mother eats most of her own young, so these newborn creatures seem unlikely to live long—but soon they will be replaced by more.

The Mother

Resting on the platform, this horrible wormlike demon is bloated and fat. The Mother's six arms flop about uselessly, and her face—in particular her mouth—seem unusually large. The tip of her tail bears a slime-filled orifice from which it produces demonic spawn. She rests with the end of her tail near the ground. In total, she measures almost 70 feet long.

The Mother requires vast amounts of food. While the Fallen attempt to provide for her, she usually has to resort to eating her own young to sustain herself. Unless threatened directly, all she thinks about is eating and producing spawn. She requires no fertilization or gestation, only food, to create dretches and lemures. To produce a more significant offspring, she must devour an intelligent being and convert its soul into the demon she births.

If attacked, she prefers to use her spray special attack while her children and guardian defend her. She pays no heed to whether her vile, caustic goo harms her allies. Once per day, after eating a living intelligent creature, she can use her action to create a barbazu, babau, vrock, or bone devil.

38. UNUSED ROOM

Toward the north end of the second dungeon level lies a chamber filled with cobwebs, dust, and refuse, including broken furniture and three old rolled-up carpets. It is clear that this room sees little use.

39. THE SECRET PIT OF THE DUNGEON GOD

A larger chamber beyond the unused room appears to be a forgotten shrine to some dark power. All the walls in this room bear chipped and peeling murals of terrible reptilian and insectoid creatures feasting on dead humanoids or sacrificing live humanoids on red altars.

Only after going all the way around the perimeter does an explorer realize that the middle of the room holds a circular area with no obvious access—a secret door allows access to this area, openable with a secret switch. Unless the characters find the switch, they must break down the door to get inside.

The round room within this chamber is an elevator that descends a shaft 400 feet deep. A switch on the wall in here (not hidden) controls the lift. The evil presence at the bottom of the shaft is so great that everyone in the room when the secret door opens is subject to a curse.

Most residents of the Dark Reliquary have no idea that this chamber allows access down to an ancient temple of the Galchutt.

40. THE ARENA

The sets of double doors that lead into the arena from the north are carved to show two great winged fiery demons fighting each other. Four Forsaken guards (as in the Dark Reliquary aboveground area 2) stand watch in the foyer between the two sets of doors when the arena is in use. Otherwise, the entry remains empty.

Blood spatters, broken bits of weaponry and armor, bone and skull fragments, and blackened scorch marks cover the arena's floor and walls. A platform in the northwestern corner of the arena provides spectators with a (relatively) safe place to view the fights here. The main portion of the arena is about 20 feet lower than this platform.

Typically, prisoners or slaves are forced to fight to the death in the arena—either with each other or with some willing member(s) of the Fallen or Forsaken— for the entertainment of the residents. Further, the Fallen prefer to resolve disputes among themselves here; such disputes typically end in the death of one of the contestants.

During a fight, the demons always keep dretches on hand on the platform so the spectators can push, kick, or toss them down into the arena to liven up the fight a bit. Almost all residents of the Dark Reliquary have been found here at one time or another—all except Raguel, that is. From time to time, the Fallen use the arena fights to entertain such guests as chaos cultists or even members of the Balacazar family or House Vladaam.

41. ARENA ARMORY

Scattered all over this plain chamber northeast of the arena are a number of weapons and shields, and a few suits of chainmail and banded mail armor. Some pieces hang on the wall, but others lie about the floor.

The equipment, intended for arena combatants, is maintained (poorly) by a pair of tieflings, both of whom display the marks of

It's a DC 25 Perception check to find the secret stone door and another to find the secret switch. The door is AC 19, 20 hp, DC 22 Strength check to break.

Lemure: *10 hp*

Dretch: *17 hp*

Characters in the room must make a DC 18 Will save; those who fail have disadvantage on saves until the curse is removed.

Temple of the Galchutt, page 251

The Mother has marilith stats, with Gargantuan size, 228 hp, and speed 10 feet. Instead of six longsword attacks, she has the bite attack of a purple worm (including swallowing opponents). She can spray poison from her tail (equivalent to the poison breath of an adult green dragon, but inflicting acid damage instead of poison damage).

Forsaken guards have guard stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: chain mail, shield, spears (2), light crossbow, bolts (12), Forsaken body paint *(see page 638), signal whistle, 12 gp, 25 sp*

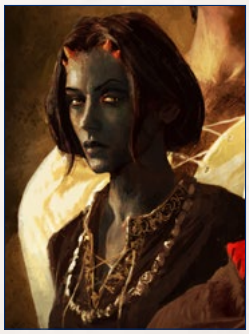
Raguel, page 110

Chaos cults, page 75

Balacazars, page 102

House Vladaam, page 100

In addition to members of the Balacazar and Vladaam families, infamous luminaries such as the Twin Lords Keper of the Vai (page 131), Warden Odsen Rom of the Prison (page 405), Zachean the dark elf vampire (page 434), and the lich Aggah-Shan (page 311) have visited the Dark Reliquary arena.



Navanna Vladaam is a frequent guest at the arena.

Tiefling, page 226

The lightning trap is equivalent to chain lightning*; spell save DC 16, 45 (10d8) lightning damage, or half that amount on a successful save. It is a DC 16 Arcana or Sleight of Hand check to detect or disarm the trap.*

The vrocks guarding the vault despise their duty, but they are terrified of Drusii the marilith (page 242) and even more afraid of the mightier demons in the Dark Reliquary above. So they do as they are told, but nothing more.

Wintersouled, page 223

Vrock: *101 hp. Equipment: One wears a* ring of protection *(increasing its AC to 16) and a gold and amethyst ring (worth 450 gp); the other wears a* ring of evasion.

Secret door: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Heavy iron chain: *AC 19, 10 hp, DC 22 Strength check to break*

Chest #1: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick the lock. A character who touches the handle takes 42 (12d6) poison damage if they fail a DC 19 Constitution save, or half that amount on a successful save.*

Chest #2: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

The wall of flesh is AC 19, has 100 hit points, has resistance to all magical damage and to nonmagical bludgeoning and piercing damage, and recovers 10 hit points every round. Defeating it earns XP as if it were a challenge rating 7 creature.

It's a DC 16 Constitution save to resist the ichor's transformation. The flesh torn away during the first round reduces the character to 0 hit points; the wall gains one-quarter of the character's hit point total as temporary hit points. On the second round, the character dies, and the wall gains another quarter of their hit points. The process of absorption continues for two more rounds until the wall has absorbed all of the dead character's hit points.

Chest #3: *The lock is an* arcane lock*. The fiery explosion is the explosive runes option of* glyph of warding *(DC 16).*

Forsaken body paint*, page 638*

The wall of flesh, while not technically alive, was created by accident when the hags Ulti and Ilti were experimenting on reshaping living tissue. It may at one time have been a creature, perhaps even a human prisoner. Now it is only a dangerous barrier.

Chest #6: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick both locks*

Barbazu: *52 hp*

Vault: *AC 20, 30 hp, DC 26 Strength check to break. The magical lock is an* arcane lock*. It is a DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to open each of the physical locks.*

ill treatment by the other residents. They flee if confronted. Adventurers who capture them find the two easily intimidated; they could reveal many details about dungeon areas 1–3, 5–16, 18–20, 27–31, and 35–38.

Amid the regular weapons here lie a fine longsword and a fine flail (each worth 100 gp).

Stairs from the armory lead down to the arena's battle floor.

42. VAULT GUARDIANS

Feathers and feces cover the floor of this room northeast of the arena. It is otherwise bare of furnishings.

Two vrocks are stationed here at all times to protect area 44. They also end up serving as guardians of the Wintersouled in area 50. If intruders enter, they screech and squawk loudly to alert others. The vrocks fight to the death and do not leave this room, even if they hear sounds of fighting or trouble elsewhere.

Secret Door: There is a secret door at the southeast corner of the room. It is not locked. Searchers who find it also note tiny holes going through it near the bottom (to facilitate the passage of vampires in mist form).

43. THE WALL OF FLESH

Beyond the vrock sentinels in area 42, the vault's other guardian is the dreaded wall of flesh.

Bisecting this room from floor to ceiling is what appears to be a wall of bloated, mottled flesh filled with folds and covered in sores and scars. A demon, undead, or creature wearing *Forsaken body paint* can enter the folds of flesh and crawl through the wall in one round, reaching the other side safely. Other creatures must cut their way through.

Worse, anyone who inflicts a wound on the wall with a melee weapon gets sprayed with ichor that transforms them into stone. The round after a character turns to stone, a large portion of their stone body turns back to flesh; tendrils immediately extend out of the wall toward the refleshed portion, tearing it free of the stone character to make this flesh a part of itself. This process continues for four rounds until the character is utterly torn apart and has joined fully with the wall.

44. THE VAULT

The Fallen and Forsaken keep their most treasured items and the vast portion of their wealth in a vault at the northeast end of the second dungeon level. No kind of teleportation magic functions in this room. It is also sealed off from incorporeal and out-of-phase movement, making it nearly impossible for someone to enter this vault magically.

The door into the square vault is made of 3-inch-thick iron reinforced with narrow strips of mithral and secured with one magic lock (any demon or undead can bypass this with a touch) and four physical locks. The four physical locks are devious in that each must be unlocked at the same time, or the unlocking of one will relock all the ones already opened.

Once past the door, anyone other than a demon or undead who steps into the vault triggers a lightning trap that affects four creatures within 30 feet of each other.

The Chests

A polished table of teakwood stands in the middle of the room. On it sit three golden candelabras worth 130 gp each. The residents store eight chests in niches in the north wall. A person must pull them out of the niches to open them, but each one is connected to the back wall of the niche by a heavy iron chain. Each chest bears the name of the group that owns it, Fallen or Forsaken.

Chest #1 (Fallen): Chest #1 is locked and poisoned. It contains 12,450 gp.

Chest #2 (Forsaken): Chest #2 is locked, and contains 8,900 gp and an iron box that holds a hundred gems worth 10 gp each, a dozen gems worth 50 gp each, and a gold and emerald necklace worth 3,400 gp.

Chest #3 (Fallen): Chest #3 is magically locked and magically trapped. It stores a mace (blessed by Lothian) that has proven inexplicably indestructible.

Chest #4 (Forsaken): This unlocked chest is empty.

Chest #5 (Fallen): This unlocked chest is empty.

Chest #6 (Fallen): Anyone opening locked chest #6 summons a barbazu (bearded devil) that attacks immediately and fights for ten rounds or to the death (or until all other creatures in the room are dead). The chest contains 4,700 gp, a pair of golden bracelets worth 200 gp each, and a pair of diamond-studded silk slippers worth 800 gp each. The lid of the chest also has a deviously hidden, lead-lined secret compartment that contains a miniature chest that can be used to summon another full-sized chest from the Ethereal Plane.

Chest #7 (Forsaken): This unlocked chest contains 4 cp, 1 gp, and the broken clasp of a necklace.

Chest #8 (Forsaken): This unlocked chest is empty.

ETHEREAL CHEST

Once recalled from the Ethereal Plane, this chest, which has no markings, is locked and trapped like chest #3. It contains a *manual of golems* (iron), a *tome of clear thought*, a *tome of leadership and influence*, and a wizard's massive spellbook that contains twenty-nine 3rd-level and twenty-three 4th-level wizard spells. The bottom of the chest has an invisible *spell scroll of wish;* when someone finds it (DC 25 Perception check) and removes it from the chest, the scroll becomes visible.

45. GUARDIANS OF SLEEP

The western door into this room is not locked, but it is intentionally stuck. Breaking it open takes at least one round, giving those within ample chance to react. The door has tiny holes going through it near the bottom to facilitate the passage of vampires in gaseous form.

This chamber is long and narrow. Red and black draperies cover the walls, and a large red and black rug obscures most of the floor. A long metal trough on the north side of the room is covered in bloodstains.

This is the lair of powerful vampires who guard the Wintersouled while they sleep.

The Guardians

Lyrikka and Fellis are two female human vampires who command eight vampire spawn that they created. (All their coffins lie in area 46.) In addition, Drusii gave them a demonic basilisk as a pet after they helped her defeat a group of adventurers who managed to get down into the dungeons and almost free all the prisoners. All the vampires are immune to the creature's gaze attack. In addition, each vampire wears a gold ring with a skull device (worth 100 gp).

Tactics: The basilisk remains to the north of the western door at all times. Four vampire spawn stand guard just south of the door. If intruders come through, Lyrikka and Fellis assume their mist forms and move behind the invaders. The other four vampire spawn move to support whichever flank falters.

46. BACK ROOMS

A door from the vampires' chamber (area 45) into this one has tiny holes in it near the bottom to facilitate the passage of vampires in gaseous form.

The vampire guardians in the adjoining room keep a dozen kidnapped commoners here to feed upon, careful not to drain them completely of blood. These gaunt, sallow folk stay chained to the walls in this otherwise bare chamber, fed only enough to keep them alive and producing blood. All twelve are virtually comatose and incapable of taking independent action until they eat and rest for at least eight hours in better conditions. Eight of these commoners are human, two are elves, one is a dwarf, and one is a halfling.

Secret Chamber: Behind the locked secret door is a small room crowded with ten coffins. These belong to Lyrikka, Fellis, and their spawn.

Double Secret Chamber: In the back of the secret chamber is an identical secret door leading to an even more secret chamber. A trap in the door fills the room with insanity mist poison gas when the door opens.

This room contains the coffin of the vampire Medre Allaconda (see area 37 in the Dark Reliquary structure above). Behind it stands a pedestal that appears to have been carved out of a single red gemstone. It holds a large curved trumpet. This is the *horn of blood*, the item that forged the bonds between the vampires of the Covenant of Blood and the sahuagin in the Bay of Ptolus. An invisible sphere of force 2 feet across surrounds the horn and shocks anyone who touches it.

47. HALL OF DEATH

A black curtain separates area 45 from the hall immediately south of it. All surfaces here are painted black. Four statues stand in this grand corridor, each a horrible, 9-foot-tall skeletal figure wearing baroque armor and bearing wicked weapons. Passing between any two statues triggers a magical trap that emits a banshee-like wail. This occurs every time a creature passes between any two statues, so walking down the middle of the chamber from north to south triggers the trap four times. Skirting the edges of the room allows one to avoid all the traps.

48. HALL OF WINTER'S TOUCH

The double doors into this room at the south end of the second dungeon level are heavy stone portals with huge skulls graven upon them.

Blue flames burn in six iron sconces bolted to the stone walls. These flames give off cold rather than heat and cannot be snuffed like normal flames, but can be dispelled or counteracted with other magical light spells. If removed from this room, the sconces cease to function.

Commoner: *5 hp*

One of the humans in area 46 is a minor noble from House Abanar. If returned to his home in the Nobles' Quarter, the house will give his rescuers a letter of credit for 3,000 gp.

Locked secret door: *DC 22 Perception check to find door, DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick lock*

Insanity mist: *A creature exposed to this poison must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage. They must repeat the saving throw at the start of their next six turns; for each failed save, the creature takes 3 (1d6) psychic damage. It is a DC 20 Perception check to detect the trap and a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to disarm the trap.*

Stuck door: *DC 15 Strength check to break open*

The sphere is equivalent to a wall of force; disintegrate *or any effect that brings down a* wall of force *will destroy the sphere. Touching the sphere inflicts 28 (8d6) lightning damage (no saving throw).*

Horn of blood, *page 639*

Covenant of Blood, page 103

Drusii, page 242

Lyrikka and Fellis have vampire spawn stats, with 100 hp; advantage on attacks, saves, and checks; and the Shapechanger, Misty Escape, Charm, and Children of the Night abilities of a vampire; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: potion of speed.

Vampire spawn: *81 hp*

The demonic basilisk has basilisk stats, with 100 hp; advantage on attacks and saving throws; resistance to cold and fire damage; and resistance to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage; alignment chaotic evil.

All creatures (other than constructs and undead) who hear the trap's deadly wail must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or drop to 0 hit points. On a successful save, the creature takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage. It is a DC 24 Perception check to detect the trap and a DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to disarm it.

As long as at least one of the blue flames is burning, living creatures in the room take 3 (1d6) cold damage and 3 (1d6) necrotic damage each round. This necromantic energy doesn't harm undead creatures, and instead heals them for 3 (1d6) hit points each round.

The vampire guardians Lyrikka and Fellis are both darkly beautiful with black hair and deep black eyes. They are entirely devoted to Medre Allaconda (see page 233) and do whatever the senior vampire says.

Wight: *44 hp, cold resistance, advantage on attack rolls, +2 on damage rolls*

Shigmaa Irretharm has veteran stats, with AC 20; resistance to fire (from his frost brand greataxe*), immunity to cold, necrotic, and death effects; alignment chaotic evil. He makes two greataxe attacks each round:* **Greataxe.** Melee Weapon Attack: *+8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.* Hit: *12 (1d12 + 6) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage. Equipment:* +2 plate, frost brand greataxe, belt of frost giant strength, Forsaken body paint *(see page 638)*

Stone portals: *AC 19, 20 hp, DC 22 Strength check to break*

Waking key, *page 645*

When the paving stones burst upward, everyone in the room must make a DC 15 Acrobatics check or be knocked prone. Creatures within 20 feet of the center of the room who fail a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage, or half that amount on a successful save. Creatures within 10 feet of the center of the room must make a DC 20 Reflex save or fall 30 feet down the hole and take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

The Herald

Although he lives in the Dark Reliquary above, the Herald of the Wintersouled—an ancient but spry man named Irretharm—spends most of his time here in the dungeons. He commands a unit of elite undead warriors to guard the sleep of his dread masters. Decades ago, Irretharm was a simple gravedigger in the Necropolis. One night he stayed too late and was confronted by the Wintersouled, who charmed him with magic that altered his will but also with promises of power and importance. Today he remains loyal to them but to nothing else. He hates all the other inhabitants of the Dark Reliquary.

Irretharm is a tall, gaunt man with sallow features and deceptively great strength. He is full of hate, including a loathing for the "gift" of long life that his Wintersouled masters granted him. He would rather be dead, except he knows that, for now, he serves his lords better alive. Irretharm lunges into battle without fear. He carries a *waking key* (see room 49) and wears a silver ring with a black pearl (worth 3,000 gp).

Undead Soldiers

The wights here attack intruders and otherwise follow Irretharm's commands. They wear breastplates that are grey with bone-white inlay in macabre patterns.

49. THE HALL INVIOLATE

Similar to the previous hall, the doors into the Hall Inviolate are heavy stone portals with huge skulls graven upon them. The grey corridor is empty except that, on the far western end, a grey orb 3 feet in diameter floats in front of the large stone doors that match those on the eastern end.

If the *waking key* is placed within the grey orb, the doors to area 50 open and the Wintersouled begin to awaken. If the orb is not used, one must destroy the doors to open them.

Should anyone move more than 30 feet into this hall without the *waking key*—which no one has done since it was built—the paving stones in the middle of the room burst upward, creating a hole 15 feet across and about 30 feet deep.

The Ghoulworm

Under the Hall Inviolate lies a cave 30 feet deep, 15 feet wide, and 30 feet long. In this cave rests

a creature called the ghoulworm, the Wintersouled's final guardian. It bursts up to attack anyone who trespasses here. The ghoulworm is a gargantuan pale grey worm-like creature with many ghouls living within its gullet. The ghouls are part of its body—in a sense, the ghoulworm is a shell inhabited by a small army of ghouls (fifty total) working as a single composite entity. Creatures swallowed whole are also attacked by a few ghouls in the ghoulworm's gizzard. Those swallowed and slain become ghouls.

When the ghoulworm dies, any ghouls inside it are also slain. Those outside of it continue to fight.

The ghoulworm has purple worm stats, except it has the undead type and, as a bonus action, it can vomit forth 1d4 + 1 ghouls, which attack its foes immediately. Any creature swallowed by the ghoulworm is also attacked each round by 1d3 ghouls in its gullet. Any creature swallowed and killed becomes a ghoul.

Ghoul: *24 hp. They are immune to Turn Undead unless the ghoulworm is affected by the turn attempt.*

50. THE SEPULCHER OF THE WINTERSOULED

The frigid, irregular octagon-shaped chamber at the southwest end of this dungeon level is dimly lit by bluish-white flames. These flames dance lazily up and down the two pillars in the room, which are fashioned to look like stacked skulls. Between the pillars, a shallow pool of icy water stretches between the double doors leading into this room and a set of wide steps that end at another door. At the bottom of the 2-foot-deep pool lie scattered the fabled *pearls of winter's heart*—nineteen black pearls worth 2,000 gp each. Each one is also slightly magical in that it always remains cold to the touch. One cannot remove, mask, or dispel this effect without destroying the pearl.

It's a DC 16 History check to remember hearing of the pearls *and recognize them for what they are.*

This room is below –20 degrees Fahrenheit (this counts as an extreme cold environment).

The Inner Crypt

The wide steps lead up to a stone door marked with a magical symbol. Inside the hexagon-shaped room beyond sit ten open sarcophagi. Four of them are occupied.

Once the Wintersouled were quite numerous. But, just as the waves of the sea erode a cliff face, the waves of time erode a creature's spirit—even when the creature is undead. One by one, over the millennia, the Wintersouled have lost their spiritual cohesion and faded away into nothingness. Today, only four of them remain.

If the characters entered the sepulcher using the *waking key*, the Wintersouled have fully awakened by the time anyone reaches this crypt, and they attack the intruders. Otherwise, the Wintersouled stir only if someone opens the final door into this inner crypt. It takes one full round for them to awaken, and on the round after that they can take only one action.

LAYOUT OF DUNGEON LEVEL 3: TEMPLE OF THE GALCHUTT

Taking the elevator from area 39 on the second dungeon level down 400 feet brings one to the concentrated evil of the Temple of the Galchutt, a place so foul that even the Fallen and Forsaken avoid it instinctively.

The Temple of the Galchutt is so evil that the Turn Undead ability doesn't work here. Furthermore, any spell that heals or any effect that uses positive energy (such as greater restoration *and* heal*) is only 75 percent effective. (For all-or-nothing spells like* greater restoration*, there is a 25 percent chance that the spell doesn't work.)*

This dread temple is more ancient even than the Spire—almost as old as the world itself. Used millennia ago by the servants and worshippers of the Galchutt, it was where the ancient immortal known as Kihomenethoth, the Writhing One, decided to rest as he awaited the Night of Dissolution. His spirit resides within his idol, known as the Stirring Stone.

More than any other Galchutt, Kihomenethoth remains ever so slightly awake and vaguely aware of what occurs in the world around him. He knows the Wintersouled built the Dark Reliquary above him, for example, and that it teems with evil. This evil seeps down to him like a soothing unguent, comforting him and keeping him content. Occasionally he wakens just enough to feel hunger and absorbs a nearby demon or a few powerful undead into his metaphysical being. For this reason, the Fallen and Forsaken avoid even the area around the entrance(s) to the temple.

The symbol is a DC 16 symbol *(death), and the door is locked with an* arcane lock.

Wintersouled, page 223

The four Wintersouled are:

- *Uyethicas: 200 hp. Equipment:* ring of three wishes.
- *Nyathoch: 190 hp. Equipment:* staff of frost.
- *Selestical: 165 hp. Equipment:* cloak of protection.
- *Maloyatas: 165 hp.*

Unless otherwise stated, the ceilings in this level are 30 feet high. Due to damp conditions and calcite deposits, the ground is very slippery.

If characters move across the ground at more than their walking speed, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

Galchutt, page 62

Night of Dissolution, page 62

GM TIPS

It should be clear to the PCs that no one—not even the residents of the first and second dungeon levels—has disturbed any of the chambers in this level in thousands of years.

51. ANCIENT SPIRITS

The long elevator shaft from the second level ends here in a large, round chamber. Although not a natural cavern, the place is so old that calcite deposits dripping down through the stones have formed small stalactites and stalagmites. Time has completely erased any original features of the room.

Three wraiths, hardly recognizable as once having been human due to their hideous deformities, walk in a circle here for all eternity—unless someone disturbs them, in which case they attack. The spirits are the remains of ancient cultists who martyred themselves in the name of their dark gods. Denied any afterlife, they wait. And wait.

Wraith: *66 hp*

52. DARK CORRIDOR

This very long east-west corridor has the shape of a horizontal cylinder 20 feet in diameter. The smooth and cold walls of absolute black feel like ice, but there is no moisture here. Light, even magical light, operates at only one-quarter of its normal strength within the passage. The cold is enough to harm living creatures in the area.

Living creatures in the dark corridor take 1 cold damage each round they spend there.

53. PITS OF SHADOW

Double doors into this large, roundish room open off a north branch from the dark corridor. As in area 51, calcite deposits cover the walls and have made formations on the floor and ceiling. In six places, the floor opens into a dark pit about 10 feet across. Nonmagical light and weak magical light cannot illuminate these pits, and even more powerful magical light has the strength of only a flickering candle. Each pit is approximately 40 feet deep; liquid shadow fills the bottom 10 feet of each one.

The Vengeful Guardian: Anyone who enters, investigates, or casts light into any of the pits calls up the guardian of the chamber, a large, evil snake-like being with a humanoid face known as a naga.

Anyone standing or moving at the edge of the pit must make a DC 13 Acrobatics check or slip into it.

Chaos storage cube, page 535

Liquid shadow, page 647

Zaug, page 602

Zaug: *126 hp. Equipment:* ring of protection, *chaositech void bombs (3).*

Void bomb, page 537

The naga has spirit naga stats. As a bonus action, she can call a greater shadow from a pit (one greater shadow total per pit).

Greater Shadow
A greater shadow is a more powerful version of a typical shadow. It has shadow stats, with 49 hp; has advantage on attacks, saves, and checks; and is challenge rating 4.

54. THE PIT OF DISCORPORATION

This oblong chamber beyond the pits of shadow is bare except for a 5-foot-square metal trapdoor in the floor, covered with corrosion. Opening the trapdoor proves difficult, for the calcite buildup has sealed it. Beneath it stretches a pit 30 feet deep.

The pit stores dire energies and substances in the form of a hungry mist. If anyone opens the trapdoor, the mist rises out of the pit after one round, filling the chamber. The mist slowly begins to tear away at the substance of everyone and everything within it. Once loosed, the mist remains in this room until one of the Galchutt forces it back into the pit of discorporation. No wind or other force can affect the mist. Within the pit, the discorporating essence is more concentrated and dangerous.

(The discorporating mist is a holy substance in the eyes of any chaos cultist. Any object visibly affected by it but not entirely destroyed would be considered an important relic and worth approximately 1,000 gp more than its actual value—but only to a cultist.)

Trapdoor: *DC 20 Strength check to pry open corroded door*

Anything within the hungry mist (including unattended objects) takes 21 (6d6) force damage each round as their bodies disintegrate; creatures that succeed at a DC 20 Constitution save take only half damage that round. Within the pit, the damage increases to 75 (10d6 + 40) force damage each round (save for half that amount each round).

55. THE PIT OF THE LIVING THING

Turning south off the dark corridor is another set of double doors. They open into an enormous and mostly empty cavern, seemingly burned out of the rock by acid. The bowl-shaped floor suggests that something incredibly large once rested here, leaving behind a massive indentation, as a nesting creature might do. The surface of the depression is rippled irregularly, as if the creature that rested here was itself irregularly shaped (like, say, a mass of snaky tendrils). At the lowest point in the bowl yawns a dark pit measuring 20 feet across. Kihomenethoth himself once rested here and called this place his lair, until the Galchutt faded into sleep and his corporeal body dissipated.

The Pit

The pit plunges 80 feet down. Its edges are deceptively curved, smooth, and slick. Normally a creature who slips here might be able to grab hold of the edge, but the edge is too curved and smooth for such an attempt to succeed. At the bottom of the pit sleeps a single living thing next to a chaos storage cube.

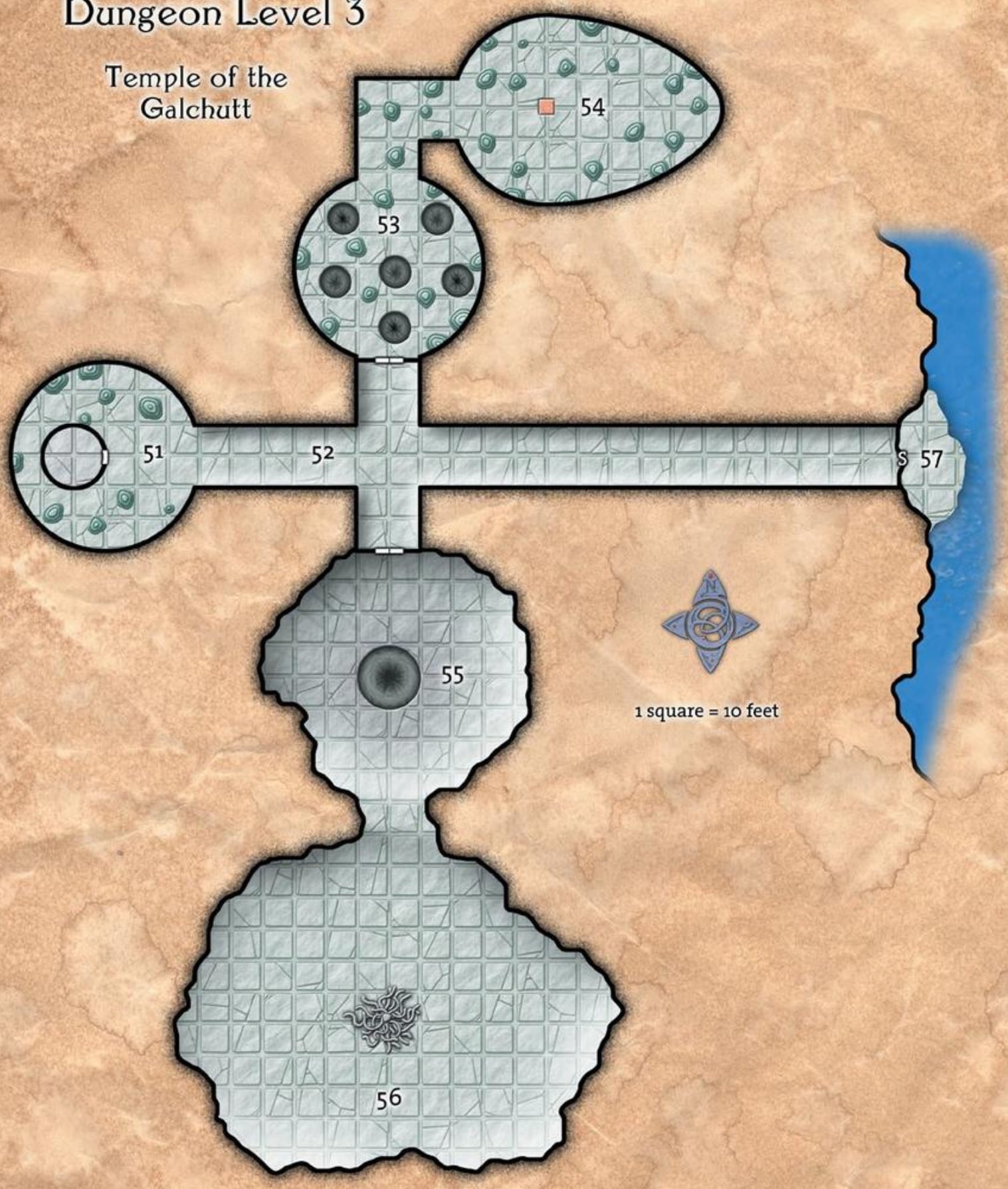
The Living Thing

This zaug, a minor Galchutt, has slept for millennia. More than three rounds of activity in the cavern above—or any activity in the pit itself—awaken it. It is glad to be awake, eager once again to corrupt and defile living flesh.

Should someone fall into the pit, the zaug focuses all its attacks and attention on that victim until the foe dies. If its potential victims stay in the cave above, it floats to the top of the pit and attacks with its spew. While it comes up (it takes two rounds to reach the top), it speaks to the intruders telepathically, sending them detailed descriptions of what they will look like with their skin flayed off and their diseased organs splayed about the bottom of the pit.

Dark Reliquary

Dungeon Level 3



GM TIPS

The emissary of Kihomenethoth is as vile and abhorrent a creature as the PCs are ever likely to have encountered. Awakening and summoning it is a terrible evil, and if the characters who bring it here do not immediately slay it, they should be aware, on a fundamental level, that they have made the world a measurably worse place. Loosing a Galchutt into the world is the sort of thing that can cause a paladin to fall from grace. As horrible as the Fallen and the Forsaken are, it should be clear to the PCs that the shaadom is something far worse.

Night of Dissolution, page 62

Kihomenethoth has ancient red dragon stats, except fiend (Galchutt) type, size Huge, all of his melee attacks are tentacle-like manifestations of darkness, half the damage his melee attacks inflict is force damage, creatures within 50 feet of him at the start of their turn take 10 (3d6) force damage (DC 21 Constitution save for half), unstable reality in his vicinity gives all foes disadvantage on their attacks against him, and he has innate spellcasting with the prepared spell list of an archmage.

Secret door: *DC 25 Perception check to find*

It's a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw to resist the aspect's compulsion.

Among the Galchutt, Kihomenethoth oversaw the mortals who served the Lords of Chaos. Thus, while the other Galchutt sleep with their spirits infused into the earth deep below the Spire, Kihomenethoth's essence lingers closer to the surface here in this ancient temple.

Random encounters, page 552

Shaadom, page 595

56. THE STIRRING STONE

As with the cave before it, one can easily mistake this chamber for a natural cavern; close examination reveals that it was melted out of the rock unnaturally. In this irregularly shaped room, a massive idol rises from the floor almost to the 80-foot ceiling. The idol looks like an obelisk made of writhing serpents or tendrils or both. This is the representation of Kihomenethoth, the Writhing One. Around the idol, bones cover the sunken floor of the cavern. Some appear human, but others are much larger and more monstrous: the remains of ancient inhuman creatures unrecognizable today.

Anyone approaching within 50 feet of the idol stirs something within it: an aspect of Kihomenethoth, which reaches out with incorporeal, invisible tendrils and touches the minds of the trespassers. Those who fail to resist this contact become the unwitting thralls of Kihomenethoth. All they know is that they must return here at some point, when they hear the mental summons of their master. They are further compelled not to tell anyone about this compulsion, nor to attempt to dispel or remove it.

Should someone dare to touch the idol (whether the character resisted the compulsion or not), an emissary of Kihomenethoth—a horrid shaadom—awakens and appears.

THE TEMPLE ON THE NIGHT OF DISSOLUTION

If the Night of Dissolution approaches, Kihomenethoth becomes the first Galchutt to stir. When he does, he calls upon those whose minds he has touched, as described in area 56. They are compelled to come to the temple immediately and appear before the Stirring Stone. When they do so, Kihomenethoth once again assumes physical form, which is hard to describe in words other than to say it "writhes."

It gives its servants commands that help bring the final stages of the chaos cultists' plans to fruition and sends them out into the city, watching events transpire through their eyes. Afterward, Kihomenethoth can appear wherever they go, whenever it wishes.

57. THE DOOR TO THE BAY

At the far eastern end of the dark passage lies an unlocked secret door to a welcome exit from the temple. Well camouflaged from the outside (but easy to spot from the inside) and nestled in a crevice on the Cliffs of Lost Wishes, this cave remains out of sight from the Docks and is too small to be seen by ships—they can't get very close due to massive rocky shoals here. The cave offers an entrance to the temple, as well as to the Dark Reliquary, that's virtually unknown to anyone. The crevice is about 60 feet above the level of the bay.

Even if someone were to find the cave, it is very difficult to locate the secret door leading into the temple.

DARK RELIQUARY SCENARIOS

The Dark Reliquary is designed to provide a setting for not just one, but many adventures. Of course, only the most powerful characters could go in and clean the place out. More likely, the player characters will enter with a specific goal in mind, seeking to get in and out as quickly as possible.

The nature of the Dark Reliquary makes staging a typical adventure in the place very difficult, if not impossible ("typical" in this case meaning that the PCs face encounters that are appropriate for their power level). For example, a group of adventurers could be making its way through the reliquary, facing down groups of shadows, ghouls, and barbazu, only to stumble suddenly into a hezrou demon!

The Random Encounter Matrix in the packet exemplifies this issue with a wide range of challenges. In truth, an adventure in the Dark Reliquary should involve a lot of running away.

Necropolis Map: Page 215

ABDUCTED!

While venturing through the Necropolis on other business, the player characters come under attack by D'Stradi abductors and find themselves brought to the dungeons. Perhaps they were targeted specifically, or perhaps they were just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The PCs may be tortured and interrogated in areas 22 to 24 or forced to fight in the arena (area 40). Eventually, they gain an opportunity to break out—perhaps involving freeing Ochremeshk or a secret escape through the Temple of the Galchutt (or both).

FREE A PRISONER

The player characters are sent to rescue a prisoner in the dungeons of the Dark Reliquary (or decide to go on their own). Perhaps they seek to free a comrade, or maybe it is one of the prisoners detailed in this chapter—Calista or Falstef, for example.

Smart PCs might conduct some research in the library or with the Keepers of the Veil before going in. Doing so might lead them to discover the secret passage from the Tower of Terephon, making getting into the dungeons much easier (though still difficult).

FIND THE SOUL GEM

The demons' Godsday attack on Clasthamus Isle is repelled, but in the ensuing fight, Andach becomes the victim of a soul-binding spell cast by a summoned Wintersouled. Now the player characters must go into the dungeons to find the chamber of the Mother, where the soul gems are kept—and then they must find the correct one, before the entire weight of the Fallen comes down upon them.

SUMMONED BY RAGUEL

When the player characters receive a message from Raguel, delivered by a D'Stradi dancer who teleports in and then out again, they are likely spooked. But in the message, the leader of the Fallen asks for their help in a matter "that could affect the very future of the world."

Raguel has decided that he needs someone to go to the Jewels of Parnaith, specifically the final Jewel, to see whether it offers a way for him to communicate with his parents. However, he may decide not to tell the adventurers that this is what he wants. He may give them another reason for the trip, such as to recover an ancient magical treasure in the final Jewel. (Alternatively, Raguel might summon a group of PCs who have already decided on their own to go to the Jewels of Parnaith.)

The "Abducted!" scenario is best for character levels 5 to 8.

The "Find the Soul Gem" scenario is best for character levels 9 to 12.

Godsday, page 364

Clasthamus Isle, page 218

D'Stradi abductor, page 586

The Mother, page 247

Ochremeshk, page 589

The "Summoned by Raguel" scenario is best for character levels 12 to 15.

The "Free a Prisoner" scenario is best for character levels 7 to 10.

Raguel, page 110

Calista, page 238

Jewels of Parnaith, page 485

Falstef, page 238

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

Tower of Terephon, page 223

Parnaith's mirrored sphere, *page 641*

Lilith, page 110
Demon-sealed box, *page 637*

"The Pearls of Winter's Heart" scenario is best for character levels 14 to 16.

Chamber of Riven Souls, page 233

Longfingers Guild, page 123
Calista, page 238
Malkuth, page 124
Pale Tower, page 305
Dreta Phantas, page 425

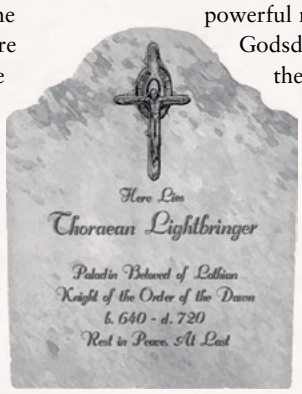
The "Obtain the Cask of Frozen Dreams*" scenario is best for character levels 16 to 19.*

On Godsday, the defenders of Clasthamus Isle gather under the leadership of Andach the druid to repel the demonic forces of the Fallen and the undead troops of the Forsaken.

In any event, he gives them *Parnaith's mirrored sphere*, which will help them get through the Jewels more quickly.

THE PEARLS OF WINTER'S HEART

Greedy player characters learn of the fabled *pearls of winter's heart* that lie in the Sepulcher of the Wintersouled (area 50 of the dungeon's second level). Even more than their great value, the prestige of owning such jewels is tempting, to say the least. Alternatively, one PC, in order to gain the highest rank in the Longfingers Guild or to become high priest of a certain religion, is given a quest to obtain at least one of these fabled gems.



OBTAIN THE *CASK OF FROZEN DREAMS*

Calista is freed from the dungeons, through the actions of the player characters or other heroes. However, she has no memory. The Malkuth take her in, sensing something of great import about the girl. After using mighty divinations to determine why no magic can restore her memories, they determine that she can regain them only through exposure to the *cask of frozen dreams*. Since Calista's rescue, however, Lilith has found the *demon-sealed box* that contains the cask.

The seal means that only a willing demon can open it. Nothing short of a wish (or similarly powerful magic) cast on hallowed ground on Godsday by a spellcaster at the peak of their power will open this box in any other way. Lilith keeps it in the Chamber of Riven Souls in the third floor of the Dark Reliquary's manor.

Getting the cask is no simple task. Such a mission takes the player characters into the very heart of the Dark Reliquary to combat the greatest of the demons there. Even Lilith is sure to involve herself directly in any attempted theft; she may attempt to steal Calista back while the PCs seek the cask. She might even launch an assault on the Pale Tower of the Malkuth.

This adventure may be part of a longer effort to restore the stolen elf city of Dreta Phantas, the Dreaming City, to the surface of the world.

Chapter 12:
NOBLES' QUARTER

The wealthy of the city live atop the highest cliffs in Ptolus. The intrigues among the nobles drive a fair bit of the action in Ptolus, so chapter 12 can prove important, particularly for higher-level groups. Aside from the traditional noble estates, don't miss the very strange Castle Shard and the Holy Palace.

Known as the Nobles' District by those who don't live here and the Nobles' Quarter by those who do, this district resides on a clifftop in the westernmost part of Ptolus. One cannot mistake the fact that the upper classes of Ptolus dwell here, if for no other reason than the district literally rises high above the rest of the city. The cliffs restrict the approach to the Nobles' Quarter, and commoners without business in the district aren't even permitted to enter.

THE FLAVOR OF THE NOBLES' QUARTER

Unless one is flying, there is only one way into the Nobles' Quarter. Passing from Oldtown through the ancient fortress of Dalenguard, up a winding road carved into the Jeweled Cliffs, a traveler walks through a tall stone arch into the most luxurious part of town. A large district, the Nobles' Quarter has bigger and much more expansive buildings than other parts of the city. Most of the noble estates, for example, each command a large acreage with lush green lawns and extensive gardens.

The smell of blooming flowers, well-prepared food, and perfumed flesh wafts delicately throughout the quarter. Buildings are cleaner and better maintained here than elsewhere in the city, and one can see a greater effort paid to incorporating trees, bushes, and other plants (particularly ivy) in the landscape.

Even the streets themselves differ from those in the rest of the city. Here, they are cleaner, wider, and paved with large square stones rather than cobbles. The local architecture varies greatly, including towers, circular buildings, and large edifices with multiple wings, marble columns, and tall windows. Many homes have vast open courtyards or grassy lawns. Botanical and statuary gardens are commonplace, as are fountains. Magically maintained streetlamps light the way at night. Opulence is the order of the day.

Most city residents go their whole lives without ever visiting the Nobles' Quarter. Rumors of its extravagances generate not a little resentment among the middle and lower classes. And, generally speaking, those who live in the Nobles' Quarter are both arrogant and ignorant about the rest of the city. Many of these wealthy or aristocratic types rarely stray from the district, other than to venture occasionally into Oldtown or the Temple District or to leave the city entirely. Their servants go to the markets for them or down to the Docks as needed. Their proxies visit the Guildsman District and go elsewhere to conduct business. Most residents

NOBLES' QUARTER IN BRIEF

Area: *122 acres*
Population: *About 3,000*
Primary Function: *Residential*
Primary Social Class: *High*
Hin Street (C5)
Hin Street (C5)

Dalenguard, page 297

Noble estates, page 272

MAP KEY

1. Zellath Kory's House (page 277)
2. Sadar Estate (page 274)
3. Kath Estate (page 273)
4. Rau Estate (page 274)
5. Sussustel's Winery (page 277)
6. Castle Shard (page 263)
7. Therad Stone's House (page 277)
8. Erthuo Estate (page 273)
9. Nagel Estate (page 274)
10. Dallimothan Estate (page 272)
11. Crown Theater (page 268)
12. Winsome Gallery (page 277)
13. Swordthrower's Club (page 276)
14. Elan's Foods (page 277)
15. Rosegate House (page 275)
16. Imperial Academy of Music (Conservatory) (page 271)
17. Abanar Estate (page 272)
18. Tavatar's Jewelry (page 277)
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23. Aristocrat's Table (page 262)
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26. Buckingham's (page 277)
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28. The Dry Easel (page 277)
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30. Shever Estate (page 274)
31. Khatru Estate (page 274)
32. Holy Palace (page 269)
33. Soaring Idyll (page 276)
34. Dallaster Manor (page 268)
35. Ravenwood (page 277)
36. Vladaam Estate (page 274)

Minor species, page 34
Urlenius, page 361
Noble houses, page 92
Floating apartment building, page 276

of the Nobles' Quarter—particularly the very wealthy or the members of the noble families—would not even know how to find Delver's Square or other common destinations in the rest of the city. They have little idea of what life is like for those so far beneath them.

RUNNING THE NOBLES' QUARTER

If a character passing through Dalenguard to get up to the Nobles' Quarter doesn't seem likely to have proper business in the district, the fortress's guards will stop and question them. "Can we see your papers?" they'll ask. "What's your business up there?"

The guards stop anyone who is shabbily dressed or carrying an inordinate amount of weaponry, or who seems otherwise suspicious. Members of the minor species may be stopped as well, except for well-known individuals (like Urlenius, Star of Navashtrom). Those without good answers to the guards' questions are turned away.

Once a character gets into the Nobles' Quarter, they will notice that the City Watch patrols much more heavily here than in other districts. The guards stop those who look inappropriate or suspicious on the street as well, and they have no compunction about ejecting anyone they consider a potential problem. They do not hassle anyone with legitimate business, and they act particularly courteous to someone related to a noble house.

Describe the Nobles' Quarter to the players as the very epitome of wealth and opulence. Mention how clean everything is. Describe the people on the streets as well dressed, even the servants. Point out the magically floating and rotating apartment building at the south end of the district, visible from pretty far off.

It's worth noting that the Nobles' Quarter has more open space and greenery than anywhere else in the city (except for portions of the Necropolis, ironically). Nevertheless, most such areas are closed off by walls and gates. Many noble estates have rolling hills, entire copses of trees, and lush, sprawling gardens, but they are not accessible to the public.

Except for those who obviously belong here, locals are likely to treat others shabbily; even the servants have something of an attitude. Characters who don't wear expensive clothing get poor service at a restaurant; some establishments might not let them in at all. Nobles' Quarter residents frown on adventurers, unless they are famous, recognizable heroes—those receive a warm welcome.

Most player characters will come to the Nobles' Quarter initially on business with a

PAPERS, PLEASE!

In Ptolus, as in the rest of the Empire, the authorities have the right at any time to give residents orders—whether they are citizens or not, and whether they are committing a crime or not. Characters denied access to the Nobles' Quarter have no recourse other than to try again later. Despite how they might feel or what they might claim, characters do not have the right to go where they please, even if they have good intentions or reputations.

For examples of citizenship and identity papers, see the packet.

wealthy patron or aristocratic employer—even the nobles sometimes have need of a sellsword. Smart characters will clean up before attempting to come here, and those who don't think of it or stubbornly refuse find themselves treated accordingly. Residents take the tradition of house gifts very seriously. Neglecting to bring a gift, at least on the first visit to someone's home, is a major *faux pas* and may lead to a small penalty on all rolls for socially interacting with the owners.

Nobles' Quarter locals expect to be treated with extreme grace, courtesy, and even obsequiousness. This can be difficult for adventurers to pull off, depending on the PCs in question. Players like to be dominant; their characters have incredible powers, skills, and items and . . . well, they're the *players*. Their characters don't like to submit to anyone.

That's why GMs with headstrong players must handle a trip to the Nobles' Quarter carefully. Those who can't play by these rules will simply have to look elsewhere for employment, information, or whatever they came here seeking. No one here makes allowances for an ignorant barbarian who just doesn't know any better or a proud cleric who refuses to recognize anyone as their better. Such characters often find themselves escorted back down into Oldtown. Don't make this seem like a punishment for the player or character. Make it clear that this is simply the way the district is run. Just as it would be inappropriate to go into the Dungeon without a light source or into the Warrens without someone to watch your back, it's inappropriate to enter the Nobles' Quarter acting disrespectful or looking like a peasant—or, even worse, like a dirty adventurer.

On the other hand, don't use a visit to the Nobles' Quarter as a way to humiliate the PCs or make the players mad. If the players are trying to act appropriately (sometimes with gritted teeth),

Members of the City Watch in the Nobles' Quarter know most of the truly important local individuals by sight.

House gifts, page 30

A great many residents of the Nobles' Quarter attend services at the temple of Lothian in the Holy Palace on Crown Street, so they don't even have to venture out amid the common churches of the Temple District.

Carriage travel times, page 154

Thoughtstones, *page 158*
Palastan, page 44

City Council, page 140
Noble houses, page 92

WEALTH AND NOBILITY

Some of the noble houses command a great deal of wealth, but many, surprisingly enough, do not. They own large amounts of property, to be sure, but when it comes to liquid funds, many noble families are forced to borrow against their elegant possessions or even against their own influence and prestige.

Moneylenders happily do business with the nobles, extending them vast lines of credit, just for the opportunity to establish a relationship with them. It's not uncommon for moneylenders to forgive the interest on a debt or even large portions of a debt altogether, in exchange for the gift of a minor but ancient heirloom, a favorable glance toward some issue in the City Council, or perhaps an invitation to bring their family to a party (maybe to help an eligible daughter meet wealthy or noble suitors).

make it clear that many of the people here act haughty and arrogant, but don't overdo it.

Lastly, you can always remind players whose characters are just starting out that they may one day live in the Nobles' Quarter themselves.

GMs can use the Nobles' Quarter in adventures as a measuring stick to demonstrate the player characters' advancement as the game progresses. When they first come to the quarter, they are at best lackeys or, at worst, escorted out. As time passes, their wealth and reputations grow, and soon they find themselves accepted here. Eventually, they advance into the ranks of the elite, and one day they become the people to whom the wealthy and aristocratic come for help, rather than the other way around.

PEOPLE OF THE NOBLES' QUARTER

When visitors arrive in Ptolus and hear that a part of the city is called "the Nobles' Quarter," they often assume the title is not literal. Within the bounds of the Empire, there is no official "noble" class. As in so many other ways, however, Ptolus differs from the rest of the Empire in this respect. The region of Palastan involves a longstanding tradition of hereditary aristocracy. Thus, when the Empire formed, the nobility here retained its social influence, if not its political influence. Later, due to pressures from numerous sides, the noble families even received seats on the City Council. The city's noble houses command power through influence, wealth, and tradition—or a combination of these.

Not everyone in the district is a noble, however. The area is also home to the very wealthy of Ptolus, regardless of how they obtained their wealth—through inheritance, business, or even adventuring. And, of course, many of those who live here only work for the rich. Guards, servants, employees, and service providers make up more than half the district's population.

NPCs for the district appear within the chapter, rather than broken out at the end as in most other districts.

THE UPPER CLASS

The distinctions between the wealthy and the poor in Ptolus are staggering. A wealthy merchant's house in the Nobles' Quarter might be the size of an apartment building in Midtown that houses twelve to fifteen families. These manors have hot and cold running water (heated in boilers and distributed throughout the house via ingenious use of pressure), and many have steam baths, private libraries, and ballrooms.

The wealthy take private carriages everywhere they go, never walking like most people. They enjoy enough leisure time to take up hobbies and sport, while commoners work six days a week or more. Obviously, members of the upper class never perform menial tasks or physical labor—they employ servants for that. Agents and proxies conduct their business for them. Most of the noble houses have their own full-time messengers for communicating with others in the city, although many in the district employ *thoughtstones*.

Magic is far more accessible to the wealthy than to other classes. Special spellcasters, commonly called house mages, use magic to tend to the lawns of the wealthy, freshen and enliven their food, warm their abodes in winter and cool them in summer, and even make their beds softer and more conducive to a restful sleep. Every noble house and most of the wealthiest residents employ full-time house mages. Others make themselves available as needed. House mages never use magic to entertain—they always keep themselves and their spells behind closed doors. Neither do they provide security or defense, as they are not combat casters. Other types of spellcasters perform those duties, using magic to delight upper-class children or entertain at parties (these are often called show mages) or wielding spells to fortify doors, windows, and walls and to repel intruders or attackers (called security mages).

For most in the Nobles' Quarter, it is a small matter to have a cleric cast spells to alleviate unwanted or life-threatening conditions or to heal wounds. Likewise, the upper class

provides the Dreaming Apothecary with a large percentage of its income by commissioning the organization to create magical dishes that keep food warm, animated songbirds of gold and silver, musical instruments that play themselves, paintings that show moving pictures, and other costly trifles.

While many among the wealthy may not know their way around the common sections of Ptolus, they know a great deal more about the world than the average citizen. They pay attention to news of the Empire and often feel attached to it politically, owing to their enviable position in society. Most probably have visited Tarsis or perhaps Dohrinthas. This is less true for members of the noble houses than for other members of the upper class; most of the former look longingly at their history books and dream of what life was like in the days before the Empire (and before the coming of Ghul, of course).

Most of the upper class are human, and virtually all the rest are elves or half-elves. There are wealthy dwarves (and, in fact, noble dwarves) but they do not live here. One can probably count on one's hands the number of halflings and gnomes who dwell in the Nobles' Quarter, and there are no half-orcs, centaurs, lizardfolk, or other such species here except those rare few who work as servants or guards.

PERSON ON THE STREET

Fallon Movacani: A male Shoal elf with a glistening grin, Fallon wears brightly colored clothing of the finest make. He tells people he is an attaché to the ambassador from Dohrinthas, but anyone even a bit savvy knows that's an old dodge used by elven con men (there is no ambassador from Dohrinthas—both that city and Ptolus are part of the same Empire). A con man is what Fallon most certainly is. Currently, he's attempting to convince some older, wealthy women to "loan" him vast amounts of money to pay for a shipment of rare spices he's bringing into the city, but of course there is no such shipment. He's likely on his way to visit one of his marks now, his hands full of forged shipping papers.

Julish Waren: Julish stands over 6 feet tall, but most people believe him to be shorter because he is always stooped, his head thrust forward as he hurries off to the next place he needs to go for his master, Lord Renn of House Sadar. Julish, a human of about forty-five years, has spent his life working for the noble merely out of a sense of duty. Oh, Lord Renn pays him well enough, but Julish never spends any of it. He's likely to have a bulging coin pouch on him—some coin his and some Sadar's, for he manages the noble's accounts—and much more stashed in his rooms at the estate. Those who walk the streets in the Nobles' Quarter have grown used to seeing the man hustling along, usually with a list in his hand and a few packages tucked under his arm.

Dreaming Apothecary, page 116

Lady Mila Stovan: A minor noble of House Abanar, Lady Stovan is a tall and striking human woman with long brown hair. Like so many in Abanar, she bought her way into the house—or, rather, her grandmother did. Mila is most likely on her way to an important function or to assist in the planning of one. A notorious gossip, she claims to know all the secrets of the Nobles' Quarter (whether they are true or not).

Tarsis, page 46
Dohrinthas, page 46

Ghul, page 83

NOBLES' QUARTER RUMORS

House Abbercombe Returns. The eleventh noble house, which for all intents and purposes has not existed for years, may be rising again. Reportedly, one of the lords of the Abbercombe line still lives, and supporters throughout the district and the city would like to see him reestablish the house.

Lord Abbercombe, page 93

Things That Go Bump in the Night. More than one homeowner in the district—particularly those in the central and western portions—claims to have heard ominous booming sounds deep underground over the last few weeks. Some fear they were tremors presaging an earthquake, but they seem too localized for that, and, of course, no quake has come.

Far below the Nobles' Quarter, one can find a colony of Sorn-Ulth and Toruk-Rul, the descendants of Ghul's minions. For details, see page 458.

Renn Sadar, page 99
House Sadar, page 98

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Insight or Investigation check can reveal a bit about this high-class restaurant (pictured above):

- *The Aristocrat's Table is one of the most elegant dining establishments in Ptolus (DC 13).*
- *The Aristocrat's Table serves exotic foods like manticore steaks and maybe even dragon (DC 17).*

House Kath and Devina Kath, page 96

House Rau, page 97

Kalbir Rau, page 98

Castle Shard parties, page 267

Scandal. An unidentified noble of House Kath has been seen coming and going in secret at the estate of House Rau. Is Devina Kath, the married head of House Kath, having an affair with the much younger Kalbir Rau, despite the two houses' relative disdain for each other? Some claim to have seen the two leaving together after a party at Castle Shard.

NOBLES' QUARTER LOCATIONS

Not surprisingly, the Nobles' Quarter has some of the city's most important and interesting locations.

THE ARISTOCRAT'S TABLE

Hin Street (#23, C5) ★★★★
see map, page 258 18,700 gp

This elegant dining establishment understands the needs of its aristocratic and wealthy clients perfectly. The extraordinarily exclusive restaurant boasts an even more exclusive back dining room for those nobles who want privacy even from their upper-class peers. The proprietor of the Aristocrat's Table is Dasani Merriwether (female aasimar).

The interior of the Aristocrat's Table is as opulent as any noble's estate, and the food is always decadent and sumptuous, sometimes prepared and enhanced with magic. Sculptures of colored ice, mountains of caviar, fountains of sweet wines or honey, and platters of delicious hors d'oeuvres brought to the table by swarms of butterflies are not uncommon sights here.

Dasani and her chefs serve an incredible variety, so that each night's offerings differ wildly from the previous one's. The menu might include such "common" dishes as duck glazed with orange sauce, lamb stew, or grilled hummingbird, as well as special dishes like cooked lobsters and crabs that magically remove their own shells or fruit encased in sweet flavored ice that one must break free. They also specialize in preparing exotic dishes, such as manticore steaks, grilled giant centipede, or dragon turtle soup. (Rumors claim that one can occasionally get meals made from the meat of dragons, giants, or other intelligent creatures, but considering Dasani's nature, that's difficult to believe.) Each night the Aristocrat's Table also serves what the chefs call "unexpected delights," such as what appears to be a giant raw egg that contains sugary pastries, or what looks like a grilled whitefish but is filled with beefsteak.

A trip to the Aristocrat's Table is the experience of a lifetime for most people, but it is next to impossible to leave without having spent at least 800 gp. And that assumes one can even get a table, which proves very difficult for

Dasani Merriwether has aristocrat stats, page 606

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

anyone not associated with one of the noble houses or some of the extremely wealthy families.

Encounter: The Prince of the Church stumbles out of the back room, quite drunk, with a few of his aristocratic friends and two very displeased-looking Knights of the Dawn. He says something quite rude to Dasani, and then to the player characters. Responding in kind is extremely dangerous—it would, in fact, be a crime to insult or speak harshly to the prince, let alone threaten him or attempt violence. Both the latter are crimes punishable by death.

Prince of the Church, page 271

Knights of the Dawn, page 70

The Prince's friends have aristocrat stats, page 606

CASTLE SHARD

King's Road (#6, B4); see map, page 267 10,000,000 gp

Considering its reputation for strange events and stranger residents, almost everyone in Ptolus has heard of Castle Shard. Its current lord and lady are Lord Zavere—rumored to have once been a blackguard of the highest order, now reformed—and Lady Rill, said to be a fallen paladin turned sorceress. But the castle is far older than its current residents.

The central portion of the castle was built in the original city of Ptolus approximately ten thousand years ago. The keep served as the seat of power for a noble dynasty of powerful wizards. These wizards spent years on a magical working that eventually drew a huge violet crystal from another plane into the central hall of their tower. The gem, which measured 40 feet high and 30 feet across, was embedded 15 feet into the earth. As the years wore on, the castle grew around the central chamber and eventually took its name from this crystalline shard. When the old city fell into ruin, the mistress of the castle, an extraordinarily powerful mage named Ethylassir, used the power of the crystal to detach the castle from the timestream itself, which effectively sealed the castle and hid it from sight. Time passed much more slowly within its walls than outside.

Not until the reign of Ghul the Skull-King did anyone interact with Castle Shard again. A naga leading an elite cadre of ogres, creatures of Ghul's own sorcerous creation, discovered the castle and managed to enter it, which stabilized the place within the normal flow of time. Ethylassir, still alive, defended her home valiantly, but the breach had caught her unprepared. The evil creatures overcame her and she died, the last of her line.

When the naga attempted to access the power of the shard, the crystal immediately drew the ghost of Ethylassir to it. As a spirit, she was able to do what she could not as a living creature: she slew the intruders. Next, Ethylassir took it upon herself to find a living, corporeal lord for Castle Shard to keep the powerful gem out of the wrong hands. She found a human named Alchestrin living nearby and tutored him in the arts of magic. Alchestrin proved to be a poor choice—his new power corrupted him and made him a wicked master for the castle. He expanded its size even as he looked for a way to use the shard to gain entrance to Jabel Shammar. Backed by the might of the shard, Alchestrin created a soul magic spell that would do just that (see Chapter 25: Jabel Shammar). However, one of his own ogre servants betrayed and killed him before he ever got to cast it.

Jabel Shammar, page 465

Soul magic, page 619

Alchestrin's Tomb is found on Darklock Hill in the Necropolis (see page 218).

Since that time, Ethylassir has chosen the lords of Castle Shard more carefully. Never again has the shard been used for purely evil ends, nor has the castle itself fallen into the hands of unwanted intruders. The ghost mage inhabits the shard itself, having fused her essence with its power forever.

In Saga of the Blade, *Episode 2: A Promise Kept details the story of the visionary ogre who brought down the archmage Alchestrin. See the Ptolus Digital Extras.*

THE POWER OF THE SHARD

Originally summoned from a far distant plane, the huge purple shard contains vast amounts of self-renewing magical energy. What's more, because the energy is alien to this plane, it interacts with the world in strange ways. In theory, if something were to happen and the power of magic were to be suppressed throughout Praemal, the power of the shard would continue. When it first came to this world, it was just an energy source. However, since its fusion with Ethylassir, it has become much more.

Ethylassir's spirit is still very much alive and aware within the castle. She chooses the masters of the castle based on her own capricious whims. After she has learned all that she can about these individuals by using the magic of the crystal for research and spying, she contacts them telepathically. Her choices frequently seem strange to those aware of the process (a very few, to say the least), but other than Alchestrin, they have always proven to be the right ones.

There is always more than one lord of Castle Shard—usually two, but sometimes three or even four. Once chosen, the lords of the castle gain benefits from a connection to the shard itself.

Ghul, page 83

The shard is, in fact, a slice from another world's equivalent of the Vallis moon (see Chapter 2: The World). It is pure magic, but magic from a far distant plane that works differently than the magic does here.

Lord of the Shard Benefits

A Lord of the Shard gains a +5 bonus to AC and advantage on saves against spells and magical effects. A spellcaster lord's spell save DCs increase by +2.

While within Castle Shard, the lord regenerates 10 hit points at the start of their turn if they have at least 1 hit point; five times per day they can choose to gain advantage on any attack, check, or save they are about to roll.

Some spellcaster lords learn how to tap into the energy of the shard to power a spell instead of using their own spell slot. Drawing on the power of the shard requires a Constitution saving throw (DC of 10 + spell level). If successful, the lord doesn't use a spell slot to cast the spell, and attempts to save against or dispel the shard-powered spell have disadvantage.

THE LORDS OF CASTLE SHARD

Despite the assumptions of most who know of them, Lord Zavere and Lady Rill are not romantically linked. (Rill is a Bride of Magic now, with no interest in romantic love. Zavere has dalliances here and there, but they are

Brides of Magic, page 106

few and discreet. Long ago, he was involved with Medre Allaconda, before she became a vampire.) However, Zavere and Rill are as close as lovers in their friendship. In the same way that a husband and wife of many years can operate as a single unit, almost knowing each other's thoughts, so too do Rill and Zavere act within the castle, despite the fact that they are rarely even seen together.

Medre Allaconda, page 232

Brides of Magic, page 106

Rumors that the Iron Mage (page 316) was once a lord of Castle Shard are untrue. He has been known to come to some of their private parties, however.

Iristul Vladaam, page 100

Fate Weavers, page 111

Lady Rill is a sorcerer with archmage stats, AC 22, advantage on all saves against magic, Investigation +9, Persuasion +7, regenerates 10 hit points per round, Lord of the Shard benefits (see page 263); alignment neutral. Equipment: bracers of armor, +1 greatsword, belt of levitation *(as* boots of levitation*), silver raven* figurine of wondrous power, scroll of cone of cold, scroll of meteor swarm, scroll of time stop, thoughtstone, *amethyst worth 1,000 gp.*

Invitations to call at Castle Shard are much sought-after by members of the adventuring community—and everyone else in town, for that matter. Very few people ever get to see the inside of this legendary magical fortress.

Twelve Commanders, page 140

City Council, page 140

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Shivvel, page 519

Lord Zavere has deadly warrior stats (page 607), with AC 27, advantage on saves against magic, Investigation +6, Persuasion +8, regenerates 10 hit points per round, Lord of the Shard benefits (see page 263); alignment neutral. Equipment: +3 plate *(enchanted to look like clothing),* vorpal sword, +3 double pistol, *bullets (12),* ring of protection, potion of fly, potion of heroism, potion of superior healing, thoughtstone, *platinum and diamond ring (worth 5,000 gp), 75 pp.*

Gaen, page 72

Those unknown to the lords of Castle Shard are not admitted inside. Entrance to the castle comes by invitation only.

Zavere

Once a blackguard, Lord Zavere began his career as a bodyguard and enforcer for Iristul Vladaam. He was a dark and depraved individual who killed not just as part of his job, but for sadistic pleasure. One day, when he was sent to kill an enemy of the noble family, he discovered that his target was a Fate Weaver. As he was about to slay the woman, she told him he had ranged far from the proper path of his destiny. Her words rang true. Zavere fled the city on board a ship. When he returned three years later, he was a different man. While still no saint, Zavere had turned his back on his former dark ways. He became a lord of Castle Shard the same day he returned to Ptolus. The members of the Vladaam family still resent Zavere, but they know very well that to challenge a lord of Castle Shard is folly.

Zavere stands 6 feet, 5 inches tall. He is a dangerously handsome man with jet-black hair, a well-kept goatee, and a dark complexion. He wears simple but elegant clothing, such as a black shirt with an upturned collar and black pants. (He often—but not always—wears armor enchanted to look like normal clothing, but no one realizes that.) He carries a thin longsword in a scabbard at his side. Typically, Zavere considers his words carefully before speaking. While not haughty, he has scant patience for those who understand so little of the way the world works that they fail to show respect. Although he spends most of his time at the castle, on the side he does what he can to foil the plans of the Vladaam family. He also has a special hatred for the shivvel trade in the city.

Rill

Lady Rill was once a paladin in the service of Gaen. Although her heart was sincere and her faith strong, she found it harder and harder to resist her true calling—eventually she could no longer deny her innate sorcerous power. Not only did she leave the church of Gaen, but events transpired to cause her to lose her faith. Today she recognizes no gods, but as a Bride of Magic, she almost worships sorcery itself as a kind of quasi-deity. She still retains a surprising amount of skill with a greatsword.

Rill is beautiful, but it is a strange beauty, one that seems almost artificial—as if she were not truly a beautiful woman, but merely the image of one. She has medium-length straight brown hair and bears a jewel set into her forehead. She wears extravagant and often odd clothing, such as gowns that magically shift colors, dresses made from what appear to be living birds fluttering on a two-dimensional plane, or just a semi-transparent mist. (Most of these are intricate illusions.) Much of the time, Lady Rill seems to be in a trance or, at best, appears to be distracted by events occurring on an entirely different level of reality. This makes it extremely difficult to have a conversation with her. When one does seem to reach her, however, she is quite benevolent, albeit blunt and lacking in modesty regarding her own skill or power. She has no time for niceties.

Obviously, some folks find both Zavere and Rill difficult to understand or trust. Their reputations make them out to be strange, aloof, and quite possibly evil people more concerned about themselves than others or the city around them. Zavere, for example, has turned down more than one offer to become one of the Twelve Commanders and even a seat on the City Council. Rill has no desire to join or work with the Inverted Pyramid. With such power at their command, some ask, why do they not use it to do good in the city? The answer is, that's not their job—their job is to oversee and protect the castle and the shard.

OTHER CASTLE RESIDENTS

The masters of the castle may invite anyone they wish to reside within its walls. To be invited to live at Castle Shard is an honor without equal in the city. Sometimes it is bestowed simply on friends. Other times, the offer is part of an agreement or deal. Lastly, sometimes the lords offer it to worthy people who simply need a place to stay, even temporarily.

Surely there is no safer, more comfortable place in all of Ptolus. Guests and residents are

Nobles' Quarter Map: Page 258

considered under the protection of the lords of the castle and, in effect, the castle itself. However, all residents must follow one simple rule: they cannot harm, directly or indirectly, another resident, a guest, or one of the lords. Doing so results in immediate expulsion (in fact, Zavere probably would just slay the individual in question immediately).

The current residents consist of the following people.

Kadmus

When people visit Castle Shard, whether on business with the lords or as guests at one of their infamous parties, Kadmus is there at the entrance to greet them, just as if he had been waiting for them to arrive. He knows their names and seems to have whatever kind of food, beverage, or other need they might require already prepared. He welcomes them with words of astounding graciousness.

Kadmus is a tall human male with thick grey hair, bright blue eyes, and a sincere but modest smile. He is the only servant anyone ever sees in the castle and appears to dote on the lords. He also sees to the needs of all the other residents and guests, no matter what they might be. His ability to remain nonplussed by any action, word, or request seems almost supernatural.

And it is.

Kadmus is, in fact, a creature made entirely of magical force—an extension of the castle and the shard. In a way, he is the embodiment of Ethylassir, the only way she has to interact with the physical world. If attacked, he merely disappears, leaving some suitable guardian creatures, like six basilisks or a pair of djinn, in his place. As long as the castle and the shard remain intact, he cannot be slain.

Mand Scheben

Mand Scheben is not technically a resident of Castle Shard. But even though he doesn't live there, he comes and goes from the castle frequently and remains one of Rill's and Zavere's closest friends.

As a prominent cleric of Asche, the God of Cities, Mand has an enviable handle on all the current events, happenings, births, deaths, and relationships (among both people and groups) in Ptolus. In many ways, he acts as Rill's and Zavere's eyes, ears, and hands in the city. Many people meet Mand before they meet the lords of Castle Shard; this is by design. If the lords need someone to help them with a task, they usually ask Mand to meet with the person beforehand. As such, Mand has the ability to invite guests to Castle Shard, a luxury only Rill and Zavere normally enjoy.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

Zavere and Rill were created to provide a pair of important, influential people with whom the player characters would want to ingratiate themselves but who were not authority figures. In my Ptolus Campaign, these two intrigued the PCs and the players and created interesting situations that posed difficult decisions for the players, who knew they could run to Castle Shard for help but never really knew whether they should. Kadmus the majordomo was also an enigma to them, though a charming one.

Mand Scheben, page 353

Asche, page 71

No reasonable request made of Kadmus is refused, and no requests (reasonable or not) unsettle him. Past guests at Castle Shard have requested of him bottles of dark elven wine, slippers made from angel feathers, and a book about soul magic to read while they waited. All such requests were met quickly and graciously.

GM TIPS

All the inhabitants of Castle Shard are very intelligent. Any of them quickly see through PC attempts to take advantage of them or deceive them. They would react quite harshly to such actions.

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Touching the moat sludge inflicts 2 (1d4) acid damage; immersion inflicts 7 (3d4) acid damage per round.

Moynath Autumnsong is a Shoal elf sorcerer with archmage stats; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: amulet of the magi *(as a* staff of the magi*), ring of* protection*, ring with* ioun stones *(mastery and protection),* carpet of flying*,* thoughtstone*,* invisible charm *(page 640), 22 mage coins (page 146), diamond cloak clasp (worth 3,000 gp), 35 pp.*

Narasha has berserker stats, with speed 40 feet, advantage on saves against magical effects, Perception +2, Performance +6, and Stealth +5; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: +1 shortbow*, arrows (24),* +1 chain shirt*,* potion of hill giant strength*,* potion of vitality*, 50 feet of rope, climber's kit.*

Cherubar Mountains, page 43

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Insight or Investigation check might offer a few details about Castle Shard:

- *Castle Shard is an extremely magical place in the Nobles' Quarter, and several odd people live there (DC 13).*
- *The lords of Castle Shard, Rill and Zavere, throw lavish but strange parties (DC 16).*
- *The shard is a potent source of magical power (DC 20).*
- *Zavere and Rill were chosen to be the lords of Castle Shard by some independent source.*

Moynath Autumnsong

One of the highest-ranking members of the Inverted Pyramid, Moynath is an elf sorcerer known for casting *wish* spells almost at the drop of a hat. Most of those who know him realize this isn't as true as people say, and when he does cast a casual *wish*, he does so purely to impress those around him and further his reputation. Nevertheless, he is an extremely powerful sorcerer with a bevy of magic items, some of which are at least minor artifacts.

Moynath took Rill under his wing years ago, and her ability to put up with his condescending attitude allowed her to get closer to the elf than anyone else has. When Rill's natural talents helped her rise in magical knowledge and power quickly enough to rival her former teacher, Moynath afforded her the respect he gives virtually no one else.

The sorcerer is slight to the point of gauntness—he prefers to drink and smoke rather than eat. A connoisseur of elven wines, Moynath is rarely seen without a clove cigarette in a long black holder.

Narasha

A strange creature who smells like the deep woods and mountain streams, Narasha is one of the rare female satyrs from the wilderness surrounding the Cherubar Mountains far to the west. She once saved Zavere's life in that distant land, after a green dragon had left him for dead. When she came to Ptolus about a year ago, Zavere offered her residence in the castle to repay her, thinking that her visit would be short. She has not yet left. Narasha likes the city, particularly its seamier side, and her late-night libidinous escapades are already becoming street legends. Taller, stronger, and sturdier than most men she encounters, Narasha drinks prodigious amounts of alcohol and starts fights that turn into sexual encounters, often involving multiple partners.

As a resident, Narasha sleeps late and long, often wandering the halls of the castle nude after she wakes. She is lascivious and sometimes downright boorish in her behavior to visitors. While not intentionally rude, she has no sense of privacy or decorum.

Narasha stands just under 7 feet tall, not including her deerlike antlers. Her face is beautiful and her figure shapely, but her legs are more like a goat's than a human's—bent backward, hairy, and ending in hooves rather than feet. Besides her regular equipment, she wears sapphire earrings worth 300 gp.

Outside the Castle

A moat surrounds the castle, but it does not contain water. Instead, it appears to hold a purplish-black sludge. While mostly harmless, this magical residue from the shard could be used as a weapon; it's mildly poisonous and caustic. A wooden drawbridge usually remains down over the moat to provide access to the large entry portals.

Inside the Castle

These numbered areas correspond to the castle map on the next page. Most public and general-purpose rooms are on the lower level, while bedchambers and the castle's impressively large ballroom are on the upper.

1. Entry: It appears to anyone visiting the castle that Kadmus is always here in the entry hall, waiting for visitors. (This is not true, but it seems true.)

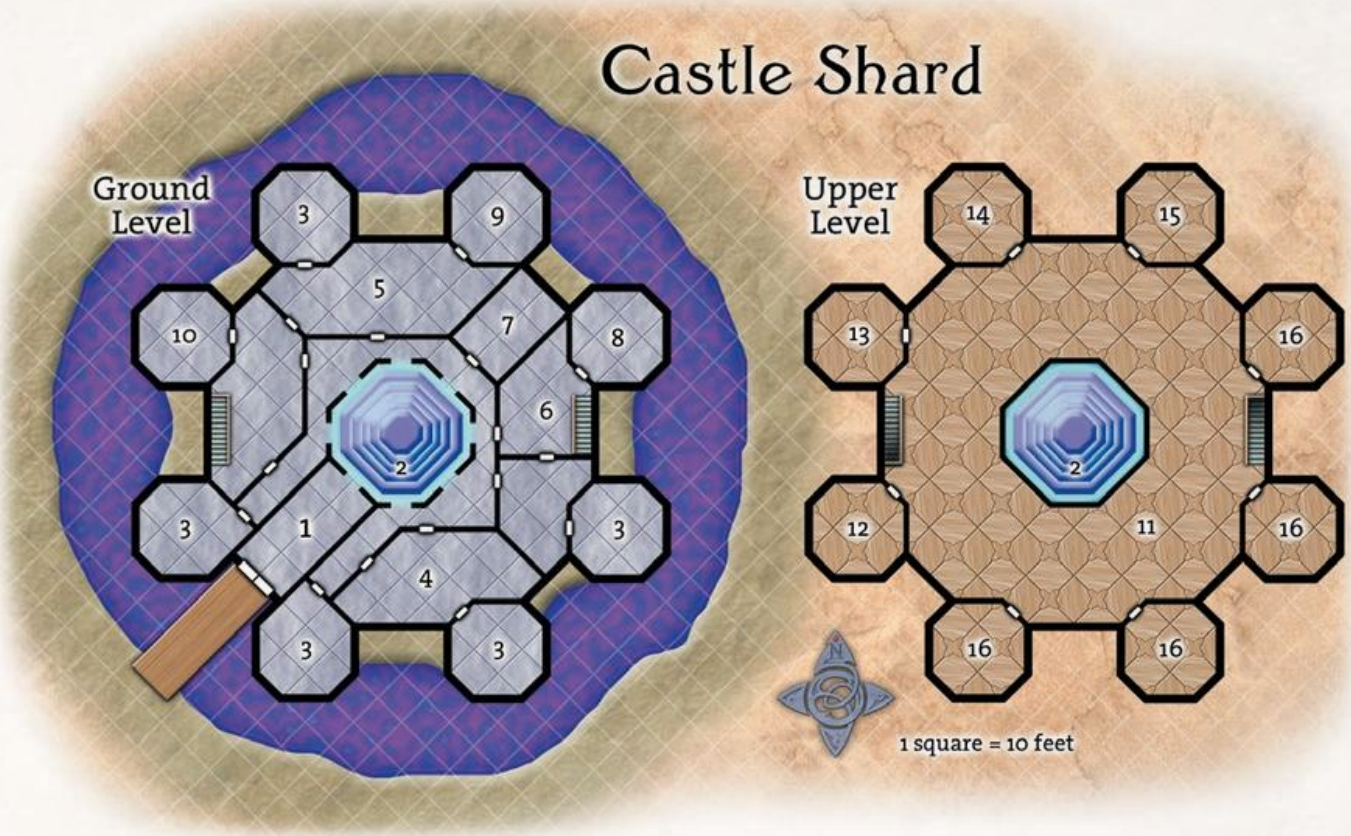
2. Shard Chamber: The central focus of the castle, the Shard Chamber spans the height of both levels. The open roof here is actually covered by a permanent *wall of force*. The shard itself fills the chamber in both height and width. This room is always off limits, even for residents, except for those accompanied by one of the lords. A hallway surrounding the outside of this chamber offers access to many other rooms on the lower level.

3. Sitting Rooms: Throughout the castle are many small chambers well appointed with elegant and comfortable furnishings and tasteful, realistic paintings. Residents use these rooms for relaxation, and guests sit here while waiting for the resident they came to meet.

Castle Defenses

Not surprisingly, Castle Shard is extremely magical. Nothing short of a *wish* allows people to get in other than by using the main door, unless they have received special permission to teleport in. The doors, walls, floors, and ceilings all have AC 19, 20 hp (per 10-foot-square section), and DC 25 Strength check to break. The doors are rarely locked, but those that are require a DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to open. All portions of the castle have resistance to all damage, advantage on saves against magic, and heal 10 damage each round. Thanks to the shard, the whole place is entirely proof against *scrying* and similar intrusive divinations.

Nobles' Quarter Map: Page 258



4. Dining Hall: This large chamber boasts a long table with many seats. Zavere enjoys talking business over a meal and uses this room rather than the meeting room (area 7).

5. Library: The castle holds an extensive collection of esoteric books, most about magic, philosophy, or history, but with at least a small selection on almost any topic. The library features a number of comfortable chairs and divans as well as tables and a large desk.

6. Gallery: This chamber holds many paintings and sculptures, some quite ancient but well preserved. It remains a favorite place for Rill to spend many hours in meditation.

7. Meeting Room: Those summoned to a meeting in the castle are shown to a small room with a table, chairs, and a large collection of maps of the city, Palastan, and the world.

8. Laboratory: This is a large, well-equipped alchemical lab.

9. Office: Zavere uses this elegantly furnished office. A large ebony desk dominates it.

10. Kitchen: This extensive kitchen seems strange only in that it has no attached larder or pantry.

11. Ballroom: When the lords hold one of their infamous parties, they make the extensive second-floor ballroom the central focus. Zavere and Rill often employ bands of minstrels or actors to entertain the guests here.

12. Zavere's Chamber: Zavere keeps his bedchamber extremely tidy and spotless. He has decorated it in a military fashion, with weapons and shields on the walls and two suits of plate armor flanking the door.

13. Rill's Chamber: This rather crowded chamber often seems in disarray. Lady Rill has filled the place with an astonishing amount of clothing, books, spell components, and other strange magical odds and ends.

14. Narasha's Chamber: This room is also a mess. The bed is broken, but Narasha the satyr doesn't care. Flourishing green plants fill the chamber, despite how little natural light it receives. The room smells of musk and wood.

15. Moynath's Chamber: The elf sorcerer's room has a shimmering portal leading to a permanent magically constructed extradimensional mansion of his own creation (approximately 5,000 square feet).

16. Empty Chambers: These four bedchambers are bare now, but when a new guest or resident arrives, they can be appointed as needed.

Castle Shard has no storage chambers, no wine cellars, no larders, and so on, because the castle itself produces whatever is needed magically.

About These Parties . . .

The lords of Castle Shard throw infamous parties, each time trying to outdo their last memorable masque. At one recent party they filled the ballroom with magical birds; if you caught one, it burst into a shower of sugary candies. At another, they managed to negate the pull of gravity throughout the ballroom. A third party was conducted without any light whatsoever in the ballroom. And perhaps most remarkable, at one ball, Lady Rill made enough temporary magical duplicates of herself for every attendee to have their own personal hostess.

This week at the Crown Theater, patrons can enjoy the historical opera "The Emperor's Eidolon," which chronicles a torrid love affair between the second Emperor and a princess of Uraq, during which the Emperor receives frequent visits from his late uncle, Delian Von Tessel, urging him to favor duty over love. The lyric soprano Hildegarde Lissenfeld headlines along with the tenor Vaskil Thustrup. Curtain rises nightly at Twentieth Hour.

House Kath, page 96

Rillis Dallaster has aristocrat stats, page 606

Nora Dallaster has expert stats, page 609

Tillian Dallaster has expert stats, page 609

Spice Market, page 340

Chaos cults, page 75

The Plagueborn, page 76

Mature Theme Warning for Lover's Grip: *Sexuality is a mature theme and not an appropriate or comfortable topic for some players, GMs, or game groups. The existence of a disease that compels a creature to engage in sexual activity is similarly problematic. Before introducing sex or this disease to the campaign, make sure everyone in the group is comfortable with this sort of material.*

For more information about consent when dealing with mature themes in an RPG, read the free Consent in Gaming *PDF at myMCG.info/consent*

Conservatory, page 271

Teyvran Newaster has aristocrat stats, page 606

One of the stars of many Crown Theater productions is Yanalla Kadrein (female human with artisan stats, page 606). She is a beautiful and talented actress and singer, but off the stage, her grandiose ego makes this diva insufferable.

CAMPAIGN USE

The lords of Castle Shard make for more interesting allies than enemies. Early on in the campaign, the player characters might do some odd jobs for them. During this time, Zavere and/or Rill (PCs are unlikely to meet with both at first) will act distant but not rude, particularly if the adventurers do well and show them proper respect. They won't answer any questions about themselves, the castle, or the shard.

Later on, the player characters might get invited to a party or two at the castle. At this stage, the lords still keep them at arm's length but treat them well. Rill and Zavere are quite generous, but they remain cautious as to whom they really trust. However, as time goes on, these two powerful, savvy, and influential people grow to like the characters, which should feel to the players like quite an accomplishment.

During all this, Narasha is likely to make strong advances toward one (or more) of the male PCs. Moynath will be aloof, strange, and perhaps even rude. As their relationship with Castle Shard grows, however, eventually the player characters become as common a sight in the halls as Mand or Narasha. Castle Shard offers them the chance to be a part—even if it's a small part—of something really big and important. While it's probably not a good idea for the PCs to become lords of Castle Shard, they can become allies and eventually close friends with them, which certainly puts them in the ranks of the movers and shakers of the city.

CROWN THEATER

Toolosh Street (#11, B5); see map, page 258 50,000 gp

The largest theater in Ptolus, and certainly the most elegant, the Crown Theater hosts only the grandest plays, operas, and musical entertainments, including orchestral, choral, and virtuoso performances. The theater seats five hundred people and hosts shows of some kind at least four nights a week.

The management of the Crown is tied very closely with the Conservatory. The theater manager is Teyvran Newaster (male human), a man of immense girth and greater wealth. Teyvran is a vicious, cruel, and greedy fellow, always looking to get ahead despite his already prodigious affluence. For example, he posts spies throughout the theater each night, noting who has come with whom, listening in on conversations, and generally attempting to glean information. In this way, he keeps tabs on various infidelities and other interesting personal facts that he can exploit against his unsuspecting wealthy patrons.

Encounter: One night, while attending a performance, an old man spills a drink on one of the player characters during intermission. If the PCs react with rudeness and anger, he apologizes, and little more happens. If they are polite and forgiving, however, the next day they get a delivery of a package. Inside is a box of very expensive cigars (worth 900 gp). The man, Juranan Kath of House Kath (Lady Devina's aging uncle), has tracked the PCs down and sent them a gift by way of apology. They have made a friend and ally that they can use to their advantage later.

DALLASTER MANOR

Crown Street (#34, B7); see map page 258 22,000 gp

This beautiful house has been the home of the wealthy Dallaster family for four generations. The first Dallaster to live here was Kenill Dallaster, who made a small fortune as a spice merchant. Today the family still controls a portion of the spice trade in Ptolus, and the head of the family, Rillis (male human), spends much of his day in the Spice Market in the South Market. Rillis and his wife Nora (female human) have a daughter, Tillian (female human), who is eighteen years old.

Bored, idle, and without moral compunctions, Tillian and a pair of her friends attended a gathering of a chaos cult called the Black Curtain in the back of a restaurant in the Nobles' Quarter simply for a lark. Presumably there to recruit young nobles as members, the "Black Curtain" cultists actually belonged to the Plagueborn, a group with a far more sinister plan: they secretly infected the newcomers with an insidious magical ailment. When young Tillian returned home, she already suffered from a disease called lover's grip (see the sidebar). The next morning, Rillis and Nora found their daughter in the throes of passion with the groundskeeper out on the lawn. Even as they separated the two and dismissed the servant, they noticed that their daughter—who had been somewhat plain—now seemed extremely attractive. But mostly they noticed her strong uncouth desires. Believing their daughter possessed, they locked her in her room and have begun putting out discreet inquiries regarding her condition.

Scenario: The player characters hear about the Dallasters' situation and are brought in to help rid Tillian of the "evil spirit." Once they realize there's no demon to exorcise, they have to figure out what's really wrong with her. Soon they begin hearing tales of similarly altered youths across the Nobles' Quarter.

LOVER'S GRIP

This magical disease is self-aware, intelligent, and cunning. Once it infects a host, it increases the host's sexual drive and makes the character much more attractive, both physically and in terms of personality. Lover's grip is transmitted through sexual contact, so its end goal is to get the host to have sexual intercourse as often as possible. During sexual contact, a potential host must make a DC 15 Constitution save to avoid infection. Once infected, after a twelve-hour incubation period, the host's Charisma increases by 1 per day, to a maximum of 19, and they gain advantage on Persuasion checks. Further, when in the presence of an appropriate mate, the host must attempt a Wisdom save (DC of 10 + the number of days since infection). On a failure, the host attempts to seduce or otherwise encourage the potential mate into a sexual relationship. As a result of this sexual preoccupation, the host becomes extremely pacifistic and will not initiate combat, although they will defend themselves if attacked.

The presence of lover's grip in a host exacts a toll physically as well as in the personality change. The host must make a DC 15 Constitution save each day or gain 1d2 levels of exhaustion. The disease can be removed only by magical means.

Perhaps they can trace it all back to the "Black Curtain" meeting, but even so, can they get to every youth infected, and every one of their paramours (don't forget the groundskeeper), to stop the spread of the plague? The fact that the disease is intelligent and knows when to lay low makes the whole process even harder.

HOLY PALACE

Crown Street (#32, B6); see map page 270 250,000 gp

The Prince of the Church—heir to the Holy Throne—has lived in Ptolus since 657 IA. His original home, the Silver Palace, was built at that time, although it burned down in a fire in 661 IA. The construction of the new palace—a much more lavish home built into the side of the Spire—was finished two years later. The grand, three-story structure can serve as a fortress if need be.

Since the Emperor himself now calls the place home, it has become the Holy Palace (technically, wherever the Holy Emperor lives becomes the Holy Palace). The palace also serves as the headquarters for the Knights of the Dawn, the Holy Emperor's royal guard. These knights not only protect the Emperor and the Prince of the Church, but they also act as enforcers of the Holy Emperor's will—and therefore Lothian's will.

The Holy Palace is warded against those who would use teleportation. Other permanent spells negate invisibility and make the place completely proof against scrying or similar intrusive divinations.

THE HOLY EMPEROR AND THE HOLY PRINCE

Rehoboth Ylestos became Emperor of the Church in 700 IA, in a septicentennial celebration more lavish than any similar ceremony the Empire had ever seen. Like his uncle Palabosh before him, he was a fairly conservative-minded priest in an increasingly liberal Church. He has no great affection for arcane spellcasters nor other religions, which, in a way, makes it all the more surprising that he has lived in Ptolus for the last eleven years.

Holy Emperor Rehoboth has high priest stats (page 610), with AC 13; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: bracers of defense, ring of protection, rod of rulership, thoughtstone, scroll of mass heal, *gold and ivory ring (worth 950 gp).*

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In the original Ptolus Campaign, the Holy Emperor attempted to exercise the power he claimed as the secular Emperor of Tarsis. This behavior led to many conflicts—not with the other claimants to the Lion-Guarded Throne, but with the Commissar. Igor Urnst eventually exiled him from Ptolus following decisions that put the security of the city at great risk. In the wake of his exile, the Church of Lothian in Ptolus was in disarray, with both clergy and laity forced to choose sides.

Holy Emperor, page 269

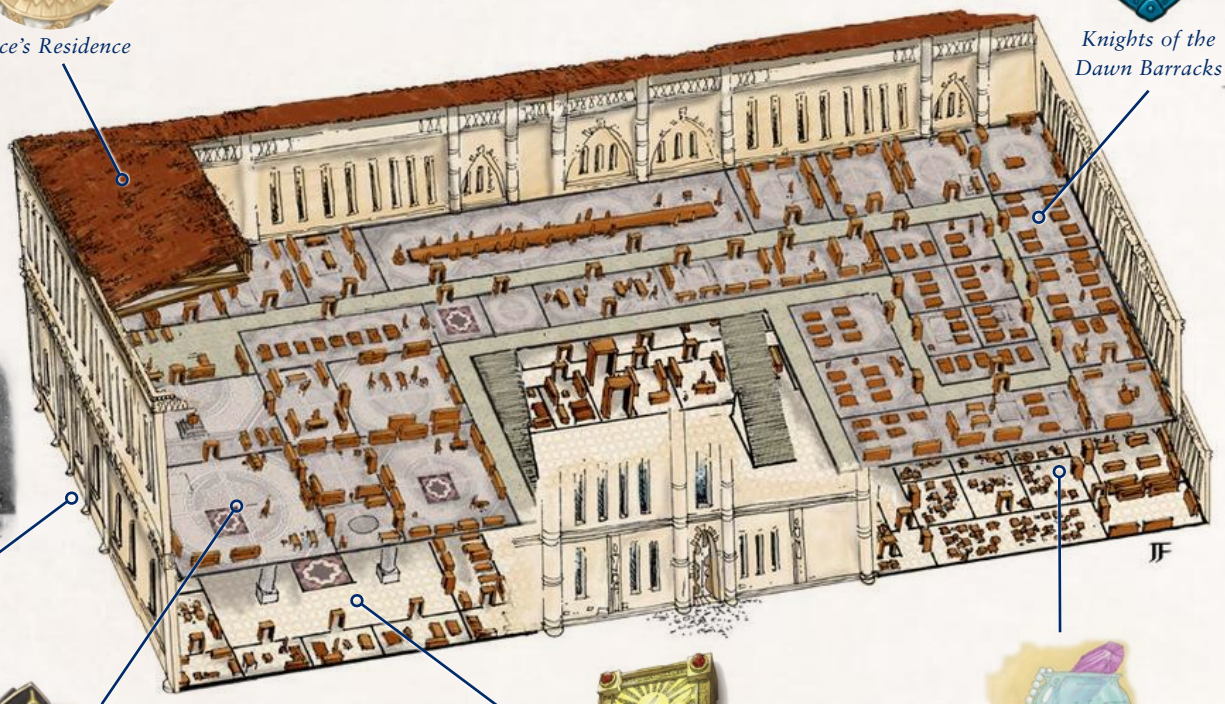
Knights of the Dawn, page 70

The vaults of the Holy Palace hold, among other irreplaceable items, the Hammer of St. Daris, an important holy talisman and relic of the patron saint of justice.

Helmut Itlestein (page 363) hopes one day to kill the Holy Emperor with the staves of Ghul *in his effort to secure independence for Ptolus.*

Prince's Residence

Knights of the Dawn Barracks



Temple

Emperor's Residence

Holy of Holies

Storage/Vaults

Read more about the claimants to the Lion-Guarded Throne on pages 90–91.

Rumors say that Renn Sadar has made a secret deal with the Holy Emperor: in exchange for the support of House Sadar, House Vladaam, and other allies in Rehoboth's bid for the throne, Lothianite priests in Ptolus will always make healing and resurrections available to this faction.

City Council, page 140

Kirian Ylestos has artisan stats (page 606); alignment neutral. Equipment: fine dagger (worth 100 gp), medallion of thoughts, thoughtstone, gold and diamond ring (worth 2,000 gp), letter of credit from the Church of Lothian (worth 2,000 gp), 120 pp, 10 gp.

When the barbarians invaded Tarsis, Rehoboth came to "visit" his son Kirian in Ptolus. Rehoboth himself had, of course, grown up in Ptolus and knew the city well. Giving a Tarsis-based Empire up for dead when Empress Addares XXXIII and XVIII died, he declared himself secular Emperor as well as head of the Church of Lothian and set up his own Imperial court in the Holy Palace. While he has not officially declared Ptolus the new capital of the Empire, people expect the announcement any day. In truth, Rehoboth has been careful not to exert much Imperial power yet. Until he has cemented himself as the rightful Emperor in the minds of those he deems important, he does not want to give anyone the chance to decide not to follow him.

Deep down, Rehoboth is as greedy for power as any man who has held his position, and far more than most. Whether the Holy Emperor is a worthy representative of Lothian may be a valid question. In any case, it is one that some priests of the Church are beginning to whisper to each other. The archbishops in Tarsis and Dohrinthas have denounced Rehoboth (and, in fact, have both declared themselves Holy Emperor in his stead). For the most part, however, the official line of the Church is that indeed Rehoboth is the rightful Emperor and Holy Emperor.

Prince Kirian is a dashing charmer with a quick wit. However, as the next in line to be the Holy Emperor, he has the Church very concerned. And as a member of the City Council in Ptolus, he is a bit of a joke—literally. The Commissar refers to him (privately) as the "Prince of the Clutch," since he's more interested in secreting himself away with a lovely maid than attending important council meetings.

In truth, Kirian does not want to be Holy Emperor and shows no aptitude for priestly duties or clerical spellcasting—a secret well kept by the embarrassed Church elders. His father insists that, given time, he will grow into the position.

Rehoboth loves his son, and Kirian tolerates his father. More than once, Kirian has slipped away altogether with some of his aristocrat

friends or a paramour, but he is always found (his father can cast divination spells that discern the prince's location). Mostly, the young man simply spends his time in fashionable restaurants and elite parties, allowing himself to be seen among charming, available (or not so available) young ladies.

Perhaps not surprisingly, neither the Emperor nor the prince is very skilled in the arts of combat. The Emperor wears protective items given to him by the Church, but he carries no weapons and prepares few offensive spells. (He feels it should not be the place of the Holy Emperor to take a life. He does, however, like spells that allow him to control the actions of others—for their own good, of course.) The prince keeps a dagger in his boot, but that's really more for his own feeling of security than anything else. In truth, neither man goes far without a cadre of Knights of the Dawn to provide protection.

Campaign Use

The question of who is the rightful Emperor may provide an interesting political backdrop for a Ptolus campaign. As the timeline progresses, the Holy Emperor declares Ptolus the new capital of the Empire. Armies of generals loyal to Addares in Dohrinthas march on the city, so the Commissar—though no friend of Rehoboth's—is forced to conscript troops to defend Ptolus.

IMPERIAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC (THE CONSERVATORY)

Jeweled Road (#16, B5); see map, page 258 87,000 gp

The Imperial Academy of Music in Ptolus carries a reputation that extends far outside the city walls. Many consider it the premier school of music in the Empire, perhaps surpassed only by the Imperial Academy of Music in Dohrinthas. House Kath backs the Conservatory and provides tuition for talented students (and sometimes also covers other expenses). Nearly two hundred students attend the academy. Most come from very wealthy families, but House Kath culls a few promising children from various schools around the city.

The chancellor of the Conservatory is, in fact, Lady Devina Kath, head of House Kath. Leading the school in all practical respects, however, is Vice Chancellor Garin Vnata, a thin, prim, and proper human gentleman with a long, narrow nose, a thin mustache, and a balding head.

With the intention of protecting the students, House Kath stations four capable guards (male and female humans) around the entrances to the Conservatory at all times. Garin does not hesitate to use these guards to eject unwanted visitors or to prevent them from entering at all. Visits to the school are discouraged, as it disrupts the students' practicing.

The staff of the Imperial Academy of Music has a close relationship with the Knights of the Chord. In fact, some of the Knights belong to the staff.

Scenario: One of the teachers at the Conservatory, Naeon Ullistri (female elf), is performing experiments with the magical power of music. She draws the inherent energy of all the students' playing or singing at once and attempts to funnel it to create magic items of sonic power. Another teacher finds out what Naeon is doing and steals the first item, a tuning fork. As it is still unfinished, the fork is dangerous and difficult to control. The teacher, Ander Von Yelsin (male human), goes home with it but accidentally activates it.

Naeon goes to Vice Chancellor Garin to explain what's happened, although she doesn't know who stole her tuning fork. Garin contacts the PCs, who—in theory—are "used to handling such vulgar situations." They need to find out who stole the fork and get it back before it detonates in a terrible magical conflagration.

The Prince of the Church

In both physical appearance and personality, the Prince of the Church takes after his mother much more than his father. Kirian's mother, Matilde Ylestos, died when Kirian was very young, before he even came to Ptolus.

It is fairly common knowledge, though not acknowledged officially, that Kirian does not care for his position, his responsibilities, or even his father. Less commonly known is the fact that his religious faith is fairly unimportant to him. Rehoboth regrets his wife's death for many reasons, but perhaps mostly because he feels she would have been a good influence on the headstrong youth.

House Kath and Lady Devina Kath, page 96

Vice Chancellor Garin Vnata has artisan stats, page 606

Conservatory guards have guard stats.

Knights of the Chord, page 120

Naeon Ullistri has mage stats, plus Performance +4.

Ander Von Yelsin has performer stats, page 612

Knights of the Dawn, page 70

Rightful Emperor, page 90

Empress Addares, page 91

The students at the Conservatory are all very respectful to House Kath. However, they love to make jokes at the expense of Vice Chancellor Garin Vnata. While they mock him behind his back, they also set up practical jokes that make him look foolish or put him in embarrassing situations.

The King's Tapestry (above) depicts King Rissathion, the last King of Palastan, slain by Ghul.

House Abanar, page 93

Nila Finch has veteran stats.

Visitors to House Dallimothan (page 94) report that—night or day, without fail—a long buffet table in the entry foyer is covered with trays of the freshest, most delicious pastries and glasses filled with sparkling wines, thanks to the tireless efforts of majordomo Nestlin Ka.

NOBLE ESTATES

Of all the many manors and estates in the Nobles' Quarter, none are as infamous or important as the estates of the noble families. While each estate is unique, they do share a few commonalities. Each has some kind of central manor, keep, or tower located on the estate grounds.

The smallest grounds include only a yard with gardens, but in the larger estates the grounds can feature extensive acreage with gardens, trees, topiary, and carefully manicured walking paths. Estates with large grounds always have at least a couple of outbuildings, usually including a stable, a shed for tools and gardening supplies, and a separate servants' quarters or perhaps a guest house.

All the estates have some kind of surrounding wall or fence to present a significant barrier to entry; the one exception, House Nagel, has only a low, decorative stone wall. Most of these barriers are stone walls about a foot thick and 12 feet high. All of the noble families employ some kind of professional full-time guards, ranging from two at the Nagel estate to one hundred at the Khatru estate.

ABANAR ESTATE

King's Road (#17, C5); see map, page 258 100,000 gp

A large manor house and outbuildings share House Abanar's estate with a vast yard and gardens. These gardens conceal entrances to two underground facilities. The first is a large crypt/vault complex that holds the remains of former members of the house as well as much of the current house's wealth. The second underground structure is a secret chamber with a retractable roof that holds the *Vanished Dream*, House Abanar's flying ship.

The *Vanished Dream*: This schooner flies through the air as effortlessly as a normal ship floats upon the water. Flying it requires a crew of eight, although normal sailing experience is all a crewmember needs to operate the craft. It can carry as many as eighteen other passengers or eight tons of cargo.

Although the Abanar family uses the ship only rarely, it remains a startling enough sight that just about every Ptolusite recalls seeing it overhead at least once or twice. The captain employed by the Abanars is Nila Finch (female human). Rumors claim that the *Vanished Dream* can turn invisible, but it cannot.

DALLIMOTHAN ESTATE

King's Road (#10, B5); see map, page 258 200,000 gp

As noble estates go, the manor of House Dallimothan seems somewhat small. A white stone wall surrounds a verdant, hilly expanse. It's not uncommon to see young couples strolling about the lawn or children playing amid the trees. Only slightly less common is

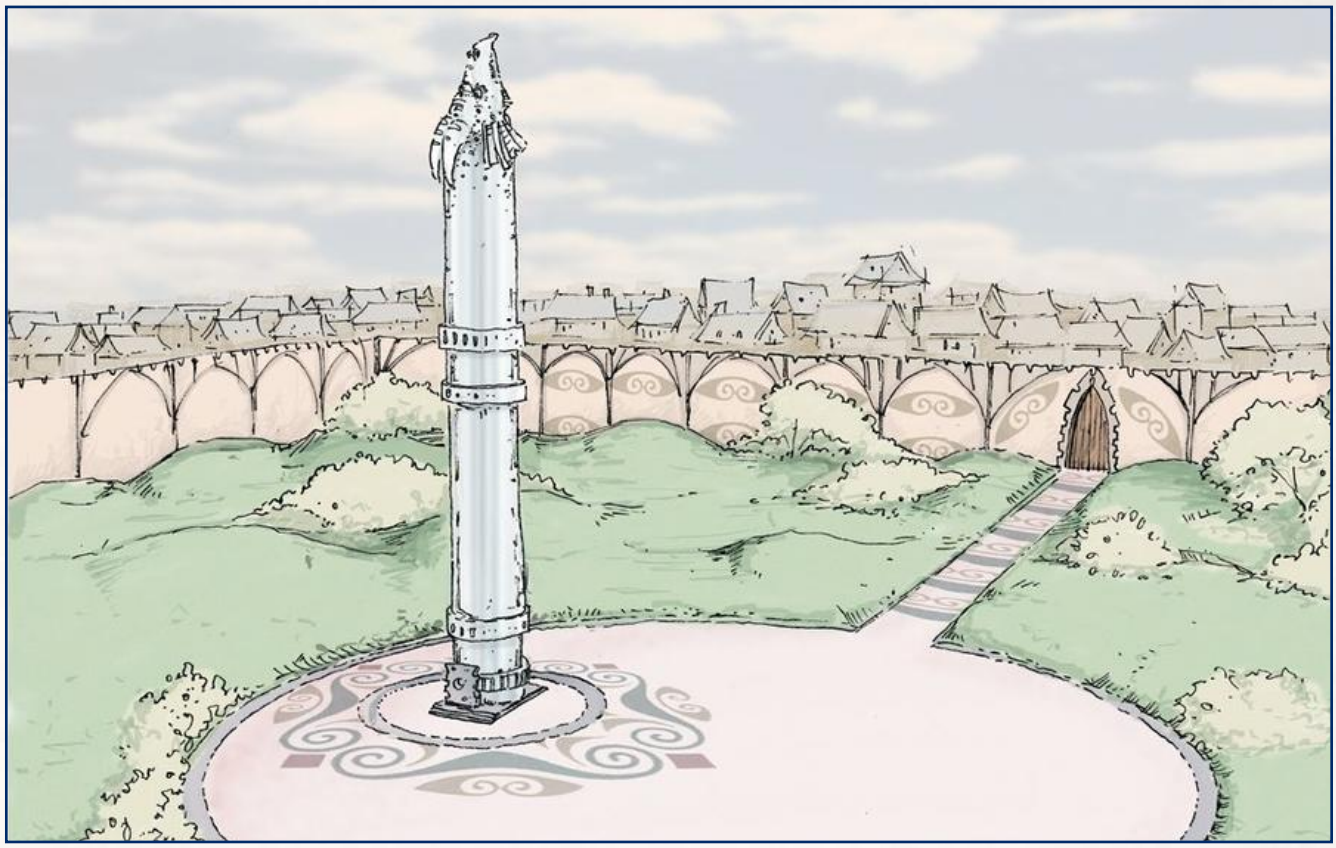
THE INTERIOR OF THE DALLIMOTHAN TOWER

A permanent ward blocks those attempting to teleport into the tower of House Dallimothan, and the entire tower is proof against scrying and similar intrusive divinations. The inside does not conform to the size and shape of the tower in any way—it is far larger on the inside than on the outside, with many strange and interesting rooms. For example, in the library the family keeps the Great Book, which contains the name and details of every dragon that has ever lived or currently lives. The magical book updates itself with new information as needed.

As another example, the tower gives access to an underground chamber called the Dragon Vault, where Lord Dallimothan can conjure the spirits of ancient dragons and all present can inhale their ancient breath and receive various gifts, as befits the current circumstances. This chamber is held in highest reverence, and no one ever goes there except in the most solemn—or most dire—of times.

The tower of House Dallimothan was designed by the aasimar wizard Tirestian around 440 IA. He also designed the Pale Tower, whose interior similarly fails to conform to the size or shape of the exterior. A few people in both places wonder whether the gifted architect created a secret magical link or transport between the two locations.

Nobles' Quarter Map: Page 258



the sight of a metallic dragon—usually of moderate size—walking, talking, or even playing with them.

The only building is a single tower of odd design. It has no door or windows, and the top of it looks like the head of a silver dragon. Those familiar with the Nobles' Quarter know that this is no ordinary tower. The entire structure hinges near its base, so that the "neck" of the dragon lowers the "head" to the ground, whereupon the "mouth" opens to allow entrance.

ERTHUO ESTATE

Three Princes Street (#8, C4); see map, page 258 100,000 gp

The large estate grounds of House Erthuo show a keen eye for architecture that avoids the ostentatious while remaining elegant. A series of elevated walkways and gracefully arched bridges connect a few slender towers, the manor itself, and the Erthuo private library. The lawn's landscaping offers no footpaths through carefully designed rocky expanses, gatherings of shrubbery and trees, and open areas covered in carpets of green grass. The estate's natural beauty is held at arm's length.

The Erthuo family wards the manor house against spells. This extra security may be due to the family's valuable collections of rare books and antiques.

Encounter: Player characters visiting the estate notice two figures skulking around with a spyglass. These are freelance reporters looking for information to sell to the broadsheets regarding the Erthuo family. If the PCs chase off these men, the family members are more likely to be helpful and friendly to the group.

KATH ESTATE

Three Princes Street (#3, C4); see map, page 258 250,000 gp

House Kath is one of the wealthiest of the noble houses, and the estate shows it. The sprawling acreage is filled with gardens, isolated courtyards, and babbling fountains. Aside from the main house and a few support buildings, the estate also has a small amphitheater and—perhaps strangest of all—an artificial stream created by magic to flow in a circle. It winds its way throughout the grounds with a delicate babbling and picturesque beauty.

The manor house is warded against those who would teleport in and remains entirely proof against scrying or similar intrusive divinations.

Above, the Tower of House Dallimothan

Spotting the skulking reporters is a DC 15 Perception check. They both have expert stats (page 609). Chasing them off gives the PCs advantage on Investigation and Persuasion checks when talking with the family members.

House Kath, page 96

House Erthuo, page 95

Anyone trying to teleport into the Erthuo manor house, scry within it, or use similar magical transportation or divination effects inside it must succeed at a DC 20 Constitution saving throw; failure means the attempt fails.

House Sadar, page 98

House Khatru, page 96 (Lord Dorant Khatru, above)

House Nagel, page 97

Synlass Perideth has assassin stats, plus the ability to teleport (up to 40 feet per day, used in 10-foot increments), summon a shadow to serve her twice per day for an hour, and cast silent image *once per day.*

House Shever, page 99

Doraedian Mythlord, page 197

Lady Fransin Nagel, page 97

Odsen Rom, page 405

Shuul, page 126

Thollos Shever, page 99

Sokalahn, page 405

Aelectricity is a near-mystical power generated by the most sophisticated of steam engines and sometimes stored in alchemical batteries. For more details, see Chapter 29: Technology.

House Rau, page 97

House Vladaam, page 100

Ghul, page 83

Urban werewolves, page 101

Bodies sometimes turn up at the bottom of the cliffs below the Vladaam estate, but nothing is ever found linking the deaths to the noble family.

KHATRU ESTATE

Crown Street (#31, B6); see map, page 258 180,000 gp

Perhaps not surprisingly (considering the family's martial background), the estate of House Khatru looks more like a fortress than a home. A high curtain wall complete with towers surrounds the estate. Beyond a fortified bailey, a five-story keep rises like a bastion. Most of Khatru's one hundred private soldiers are stationed here at any given time, in addition to dozens of servants.

NAGEL ESTATE

King's Road (#9, B5); see map, page 258 20,000 gp

One of the simplest of the noble estates, Nagel does not have much in the way of grounds—just a modest yard surrounded by a low stone fence. The house is a two-story brick edifice of solid, elegant construction, but it looks somewhat smaller than the manors of the other noble houses. Only a skeleton crew of servants maintains the estate, but what they lack in numbers they make up for in dedication.

Scenario: Doraedian Mythlord contacts the player characters and asks for a favor. A friend of his needs to go down to the Prison to pick up her husband, who is being released, and he would like her to have some escorts for safety. He doesn't tell them that his friend his Lady Fransin Nagel, and that her husband Kurtlan is being released because she finally managed to raise the gold to bribe the warden, Odsen Rom. (Rom had illegally imprisoned Kurtlan through the machinations of House Sadar.) After Lady Fransin and her husband are reunited and safely on their way home, the PCs can take advantage of their entry into the Prison area and explore Sokalahn's dungeons. Only much later will they learn that it was House Nagel they were helping—and that a noble family now owes them a favor.

RAU ESTATE

King's Road (#4, B4); see map, page 258 130,000 gp

House Rau's estate consists of a grand manor with surrounding grounds, but the house has started showing its age. Beneath the house and grounds lies an elaborate maze of secret passages and chambers. Some are escape tunnels into the sewers or into the cellars of nearby buildings, while others connect with other underground passages dating back to the time of Ghul. House Rau keeps extensive maps of this labyrinth and can use them to reach many different areas beneath the Nobles' Quarter and even down into Oldtown.

SADAR ESTATE

King's Road (#2, B4); see map page 258 250,000 gp

Both the Sadar family and their home are sometimes called the House of Shadows. The estate is covered in thick woods in which one might find deep and narrow ravines. An extensive graveyard is located in a clearing far from the manor house but close to the guest house.

The manor is warded against those who would teleport in, and the entire place remains immune to scrying and similar intrusive divinations.

Scenario: The player characters follow a shadowdancing thief who has stolen something of theirs but lose her at the gate of the Sadar Estate. The thief's name is Synlass Perideth (female elf), but if the PCs ask people at the estate, they claim not to know her. (They are lying. She hides within.)

SHEVER ESTATE

Crown Street (#30, B6); see map, page 258 230,000 gp

The House Shever estate grounds are relatively small, although the manor house is large. A clock tower rises above the roof, and high above that is the aeroship mooring tower: a tall iron structure that looks more like scaffolding surrounding a thick pole. The house's ancient aeroship, always aloft, is tethered here and connects to the scaffold by a gangplank. For many years, the ship was simply decoration—its steam-powered rotors did not function, although its inflated gasbag kept it afloat.

Today, thanks to assistance from the Shuul, it once again functions. Thollos Shever has taken the aeroship to Tarsis and back twice in the last year, a trip that took a scant thirty hours (one way). The aeroship requires a crew of six and can carry eight additional passengers or four tons of cargo.

The house has more than its share of technological conveniences, including aelectrical fans mounted in the ceilings, centralized steam heat, a steam-powered elevator, clockwork mechanical doors, and more.

VLADAAM ESTATE

High Street (#36, B7); see map, page 258 160,000 gp

A fine manor seated at the heart of a large estate, the home of the Vladaam family is infamous for its guard wolves, which are in fact urban werewolves. Beneath the three-story manor house lies a fairly large dungeon for prisoners and a vault for safekeeping family treasures. The estate, located right on the

Jeweled Cliffs, overlooks the lower portions of the city.

ROSEGATE HOUSE

Blazon Street (#15, B5); see map, in packet

8,000 gp

Rosegate House is a small- to medium-sized two-story manor house on a small plot of land. For a map and details of the house, see the Rosegate House sheet in the packet.

Rosegate House exists to become the eventual home of the player characters in the campaign, should they earn the right to live in the Nobles' Quarter—and assuming they wish to. They could earn the house as a reward from a wealthy benefactor (anyone from the Holy Emperor to the Commissar or one of the noble families). Or they could purchase it themselves for approximately 100,000 gp.

THE CRYPT

Not mentioned in the handout is the fact that a secret trapdoor in the dining room leads to a hidden staircase. These steps go down to an ancient crypt with three tombs of people who lived in the house long ago. All doors are made of iron 2 inches thick and locked.

1. Lady Callindis's Tomb

Anyone passing into the area immediately beyond the crypt's door triggers a magical trap that fills the area with hot smoke and burning embers.

The interior of the first tomb is covered in plaster, painted with scenes of the city as it looked about one hundred and thirty years ago. In the middle of all of this is a sarcophagus.

Despite being a powerful wizard necromancer, Lady Callindis could not manage to cheat death completely. She did, however, set up a magical compulsion that affects anyone who lays eyes on her sarcophagus. Affected victims immediately do whatever is necessary to raise Lady Callindis from the dead. As she has been dead for one hundred and thirty-two years, this almost certainly will require powerful restorative magic by a very skilled spellcaster. If none of the affected characters are capable of this, they will have to find someone who is. Affected characters do not willingly submit to magic that could remove or dispel the compulsion. Lady Callindis was buried with 7,000 gp worth of jewelry and her magical staff.

Incendiary cloud *trap, triggered by contact: DC 16, 20-foot radius, 45 (10d8) fire damage, half damage on a successful save. A creature ending its turn in the cloud must save against the trap again. The cloud persists for ten rounds. It is a DC 16 Arcana or Sleight of Hand check to detect or disarm the trap.*

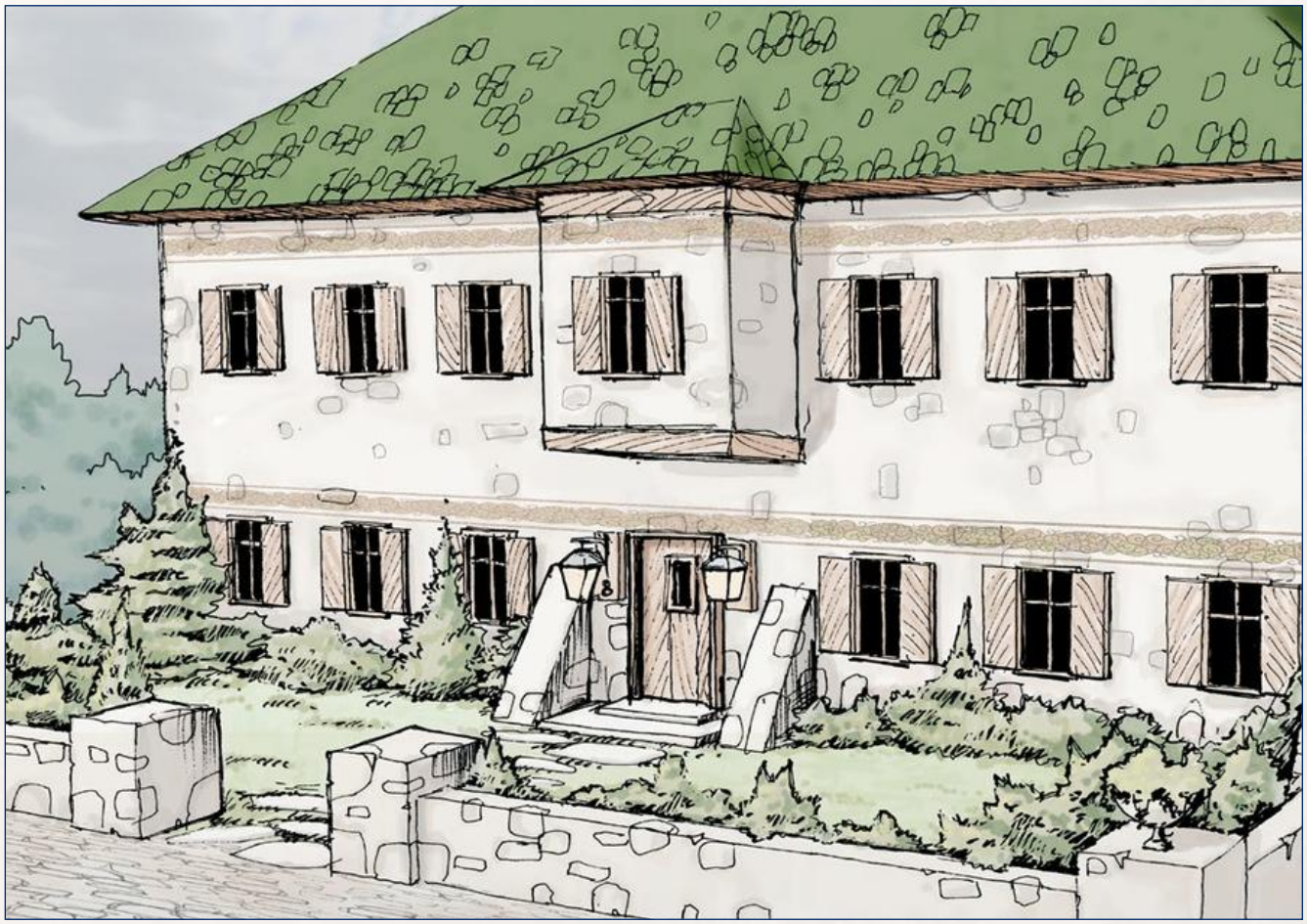
Resisting the magical compulsion embedded in the sarcophagus requires making a DC 16 Wisdom save.

If Lady Callindis is returned to life, she has mage stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: staff of frost.

Secret trapdoor: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Heavy iron door: *AC 19, 25 hp, DC 22 Strength check to break. It is a DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to unlock the door.*

The hidden crypt below Rosegate House continues the overall theme of Ptolus: that there's always something going on beneath the surface, both literally and figuratively.



FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In the original Ptolus Campaign, the player characters were granted Rosegate House by the Holy Emperor after they saved his life from an elaborate assassination plot by Helmut Itlestein. For further details on Rosegate House, see the map and description in the packet.

Pit trap (triggered by weight): *DC 16, everyone within 5 feet of the pit, 35 (10d6) falling (bludgeoning) damage. It is a DC 18 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 16 Sleight of Hand check to disarm it.*

Lord Evanston has vampire stats; his Bite ability can drain blood only from vampires (and if the vampire is brought to 0 hp, it crumbles into dust and dies permanently); he doesn't have the Children of the Night ability, but once per day can cast charm person *(only affects undead, spell save DC 17); alignment neutral. Equipment:* +2 chain mail, +1 shield, +2 battleaxe *(inflicts an additional 7 [2d6] radiant damage against undead),* +1 light crossbow, +1 bolts *(10),* ring of invisibility, cloak of displacement, *wooden stakes (3), onyx ring worth 150 gp.*

The player characters may not realize it at the time, but rousing Evanston and letting him loose in the city would not endanger anyone except vampires. He does not have all the powers of a vampire, but he has some powers that are unique.

Lord Evanston, in life, was a square-shouldered, dark-haired man of average height. In death, he appears gaunt and somewhat jaundiced. He wears a grey tunic over his chainmail, and his cloak is midnight blue. He speaks softly, using few words and minimal expressions. He has been dead for more than a century.

Swordthrower guards have thug stats.

Dread wraiths have wraith stats, with 120 hp and advantage on attacks and saves.

Cherubar, page 43

Allarrete Cangeri has artisan stats, page 606

2. Lord Evanston's Tomb

Immediately in front of the door to the next tomb is a 10-foot-square secret trapdoor that opens if more than 50 pounds is placed upon it. The trapdoor gives way to a pit 100 feet deep.

Thanks to preparations taken by his wife, Lady Callindis, Lord Evanston waits in his tomb in an undead state. However, he appears to all senses (including divination magic that reveals illusions, but not abilities that specifically search for or identify undead) as a living man, asleep atop a stone slab. If touched, he awakens. Although undead, Evanston is not evil. He is also a unique type of undead—one that, once roused, must feed on the blood of vampires.

He does not want his wife to return to life but, if awakened, he fights to retain his own strange existence. If no fighting seems necessary, he flees.

3. Master Nilliad's Tomb

The interior of this final tomb looks like a nursery, the plaster walls decorated with faded paintings of clowns and fanciful dragons. Toys and child-sized furniture fill the room, along with three sarcophagi—one of which is very small.

The son of Lady Callindis and Lord Evanston, Nilliad, died very young. The lad's nurse and the family butler were entombed here with him; both remain as dread wraiths. They attack only if anyone disturbs the small coffin, appearing as spectral versions of themselves in life: a frumpy, portly old woman and a balding old nebbish of a man.

SOARING IDYLL

above Crown Street (#33, B7); see map, page 258 130,000 gp

This large luxury apartment building appears to be a four-story stone structure floating 80 feet above the ground. It floats thanks to powerful spells cast by a trio of wizards forty years ago—they claimed they learned the spell from a cloud giant mage in Cherubar. The building's base measures 200 feet square and 60 feet high. It slowly rotates to provide every tenant with a daily view of the sea.

The Soaring Idyll's owners, a group of wealthy investors, have hired Allarrete Cangeri (female elf) to serve as the manager. She employs a staff of thirty-two to provide maid service, security, and maintenance, as well as groundskeeping in the lavish sculpture and flower garden beneath the building.

More than seventy tenants live in the two dozen spacious, well-appointed flats. A levitating platform brings residents and visitors to the entrance at the bottom of the building. Some tenants, however, use their own spells or specially commissioned magic items to get to and from the ground. Rent in the Soaring Idyll costs 1,000 gp per month; it is one of the most prestigious places in the city to live.

SWORDTHROWER'S CLUB

Longhour Street (#13, C5) ★★★★ see map, below 160,000 gp

Swordthrower's is a social club. Far more than a tavern, it is accessible only to those recognized by the Swordthrower guards at the door (typically human males, marked "G" on the map) or those who come bearing an invitation. These printed invitations are like pass cards—they work as many times as needed, but any employee of the club has the ability to immediately revoke and confiscate them.

The club has two levels. The first serves mainly as a grand entrance, with storage and office space plus guardrooms. There are several guards on duty here at any given time. The second level, reached by a staircase that lowers from the ceiling, contains the club, where minstrels play, dancers dance, and the clientele drinks and mingles. Private rooms in the back are used for confidential meetings, small exclusive parties, and rendezvous with

Nobles' Quarter Map: Page 258

OTHER LOCALES IN THE NOBLES' QUARTER

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Buckingham's		King's Road (#26, C6)	Edina Ferrar (female human aristocrat*)	3	Sells furniture
The Dry Easel		Crown Street (#28, C6)	Paema Coldwhisper (female elf commoner)	0	Art supplies
Elan's Foods		Longhour Street (#14, C5)	Nara Tallendi (female gnome artisan*)	2	Gourmet food
House of Delights		Crown Street (#25, C6)	Salinda Kopp (female half-elf artisan*)	14	Legal brothel
Indigo Services		Hin Street (#20, C5)	Fassere Armond (male human aristocrat*)	20	Servant employment service
The Jade Woman		Crown Street (#29, B6)	Lassa Fedeli (female human aristocrat*)	4	Sells women's clothing
The Jewel	★★★★	King's Road (#22, C6)	Rerold Codwink (male human expert*)	9	—
Kadaver's	★	Jeweled Road (#24, B6)	Kistron Nelabast (male human vampire spawn)	2	Secret bar for criminals
Moleshan's	★★★★	King's Road (#21, C5)	Yorrick Moleshan (male human aristocrat*)	15	—
Nestor's		Hin Street (#27, C6)	Talbot Ferrar (male human aristocrat*)	4	Sells men's clothing
Quist	★★	Hin Street (#19, C5)	Edark Norbel (male human commoner)	1	Caters to servants and workers
Ravenwood	★★★	Crown Street (#35, B7)	Alea Theris (female human expert*)	3	—
Sussustel's Winery	★★★★	King's Road (#5, B4)	Borred Bitterstone (male dwarf artisan*)	14	—
Tavatar's Jewelry		Hin Street (#18, C5)	Tavatar (female centaur artisan*)	1	—
Therad Stone's House		Iris Street (#7, C4)	Therad Stone (male human artisan* with History +8)	0	Sage
The Winsome Gallery		Three Princes Street (#12, C5)	Wylsaen Faechild (male elf expert*)	3	Art gallery
Zellath Kory's House		Three Princes Street (#1, B3)	Zellath Kory (female human arcanist* with Stealth +4)	4	Sorn cell

* see Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604

the expensive prostitutes (all non-licensed and illegal) who work at the club.

Swordthrower's is known as a gathering spot for members of House Abanar. The owner, Yavan Helliscon (male human), is a low-ranking member of the house. Yavan also works for Malasir, an efreeti who serves as Kevris Killraven's head of operations in the quarter. As Swordthrower's is Malasir's main income source, he guards it jealously, appearing there almost every night in human form—a handsome mountain of a man with appetites of all kinds and a terrible temper. Malasir has two assassin henchmen (male Harrow elves) that watch over the place when he is not present.

Korben Trollone uses Swordthrower's as an out-of-the way spot to meet with his mistress, Nallia Feston (female human).

An invitation is required for admission to Swordthrower's.

OTHER LOCALES

Although it's not a complete listing by any means, GMs can use the table above to insert additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit the Nobles' Quarter.

House Abanar, page 93

Harrow elves, page 53

Korben Trollone, page 335

Yavan Helliscon has aristocrat stats, page 606

Malasir has efreeti stats, with 100 hp, and advantage on melee attack rolls and Constitution saves.

Assassin henchmen have assassin stats.

Nallia Feston has commoner stats.

Edina Ferrar, proprietor of Buckingham's, is the sister of Talbot Ferrar, proprietor at Nestor's. Both shops are fully owned by House Abanar.

Chapter 13:

NORTH MARKET

One of two markets in Ptolus, the North Market is known for its open-air stalls more than its workshops. Those interested in the technology of the Empire should check out the Smoke Shop, and shoppers can always take a break and have a drink at the Red Stallion Pub.

NORTH MARKET IN BRIEF

Area: *227 acres*
Population: *About 9,000*
Primary Function: *Commerce*
Primary Social Class: *Low to middle*
Discovery Lane (13)
Labor Street (13)

Many lifelong Ptolus residents call the North Market simply "the Market," while they call the South Market the "South Market." The North Market, which centers more or less around the North Gate, attracts farmers and others from north of town with goods to sell. Ptolus residents themselves conduct a fair bit of commerce here in open markets and shops. One of the busiest commercial areas, Market Street, runs through the heart of the North Market. The district is bounded by the cliffs of Rivergate on the west, the wall of the Necropolis on the east, the city wall on the north, and Golden Elm Way on the south.

THE FLAVOR OF THE NORTH MARKET

The smell of fresh vegetables. The sounds of a crowd, with vendors shouting their sales pitches above the noise. A farmer toting a crate of produce with one hand and holding tightly to his young son with the other—it's the first time the youngster's ever seen the big city. This is the hustle and bustle of the North Market.

The North Market differs from the South in that it is a "market" in a truer sense of the word. Open areas overflow with vendors selling from wagons, carts, tents, and stalls, and small shops cluster together in the district's squares. While the South Market contains many shops where artisans create and sell their wares, little is actually produced in the North Market. A soap seller in the South Market has likely made her soap in the back of the shop, but that's not the case in the North Market.

About 75 percent of the goods sold in the North Market are perishables and food, not craftwork. Generally speaking, if you want a new leather jerkin, you're better off going to the South Market, but if you need flour and milk, the North Market is a better destination.

Although the North Market is a commercial district full of shops and people selling various goods, it is also a fairly major residential area. More and more people have taken to living in the market, even though they might work elsewhere.

RUNNING THE NORTH MARKET

The player characters may not come to the North Market very often, even though the typical resident of Ptolus knows the area like their own neighborhood. This where the common folk buy their food and many other necessities of life, but, frankly, most campaigns don't get into that level of day-to-day detail. When the PCs do go shopping, they're likely to

go to Delver's Square, the Undercity Market, or perhaps the South Market.

To really use the North Market, then, GMs need to set it up as a backdrop for events. It is where the trail the player characters follow leads them, it is where they find the informant, it is where the desired entrance to the Undercity lies.

Describe a trip through the Market during the day as a matter of making one's way through one crowd after another. Vendors and hucksters stand right out in the street to sell their goods. Someone hawks bags of beans right next to someone selling copper jewelry, right next to someone else selling small packages of tea. At night, though, the district grows quiet. Formerly crowded squares become wide-open areas with little or no light.

PEOPLE OF THE NORTH MARKET

"You look like a person with a fine eye. A discerning eye. Take a look at these potatoes. You've never seen such specimens of great size and quality, I'll wager. No, don't go over there. Their food is days old, likely spoiled—you never know what you're biting into there, if you know what I mean. Just five copper pennies for a whole bag. No, no—for you, four bobs, and I'll throw in a pair of these nice round onions. No? Can I interest you in some jewelry?"

The folk of the North Market are interested in making a sale. Some do that by talking fast and smooth, and some do it by providing quality products that bring customers back the next day or next week. A small handful do both.

A lot of non-natives do business in the North Market—mainly farmers with wagonloads of produce, or rural craftspeople looking to sell their wares in the big city. Although Ptolus has a large number of fishermen, some of the folk from nearby villages find it profitable to bring their catch into the city. Rather than take it to the Fish Market in Midtown, they sell it here in the North Market, usually close to the North Gate.

All this means that this is the only part of Ptolus that some people ever see. Thus, one can find taverns, eateries, hostels, brothels, gambling dens, and other simple entertainments that cater to such folk.

NPCs for the district appear within the chapter, rather than broken out at the end as in most other districts.

Delver's Square, page 188
Undercity Market, page 394
Fish Market, page 193

"Some say that you can tell a lot about a people by the food they eat. If this is true, then the folk of Ptolus are a diverse and often spicy lot."
~Tinerias Edren, philosopher

MAP KEY

103. Gatehouse Pub (page 288)
104. Eddarth Stables (page 288)
105. Telenn's Sweetery (page 288)
106. Farmer's Rest (page 288)
107. Verda Marsh's House (page 288)
108. Cloudstone (page 288)
109. Red Stallion Pub (page 285)
110. Wagon Wheel (page 288)
111. Church of the Lawgiver (page 288)
112. Killraven's Tower (page 284)
113. Mitoren's Blades (page 285)
114. Book Wagon (page 281)
115. The Old Muller House (page 288)
116. Catty's (page 288)
117. Lendarick (page 285)
118. Inchin's Butchery (page 288)
119. Juggling Fools (page 288)
120. Adda's Baskets and Tavoh's Bakery (page 288)
121. Smoke Shop (page 286)
122. Nall Hall (page 285)
123. Wondrous Tattoos (page 286)
124. The Zar'at (page 287)

Not everyone in the district is a shopkeep or vendor. For every person selling sacks of flour, there are two who tote the sacks into the Market, clean out the vendor's stall, and perform other tasks. Plus, many people just live in the North Market and don't work there at all.

Despite it being technically illegal in the Empire, some merchants willingly accept barter for goods, trading for something they need or other goods they can sell.

PERSON ON THE STREET

Avros Tylor: Avros, a tall, lanky human man with big ears and a remarkably large nose, is a puppeteer. Typically he's got a wooden marionette in one hand—usually a dragon, a silly chicken, or a mule—and a hand puppet on the other. One of them often depicts a person, like a fussy priest, a mean City Watchman, a surly dwarf, or perhaps even such well-known individuals as the Commissar, one of the nobles, the Iron Mage, or the Prince of the Church. Avros fancies himself a satirist, but mainly he entertains children over whose heads most of his social and political commentary flies unnoticed. They just like to see the silly chicken dance about and hear the funny voices Avros gives to his characters. Avros lives on the coins that are tossed into his hat while he performs on the street. Although he makes a decent living, his money goes into materials to make new puppets, so his clothing is ill-fitting and threadbare, making him appear even more clownish.

Commissar, page 140
Iron Mage, page 316
Prince of the Church, page 270

Nallis Sevensong: It's difficult for a gnome, even one with Nallis's sparkling violet eyes and sing-song voice, to make herself seen and heard in the crowds of the Market as she tries to sell her wares. That's why her cart has a high wooden platform built into it that she can climb upon to stand even higher than the humans around her. Nallis sells small jugs of milk and hunks of cheese for a silver coin each. Her husband buys the milk from farmers south of town and brings it to their home on Liripipe Street, where Nallis puts it in jugs and makes cheese in the cellar. After a few years of working in the Market every day, Nallis has developed a loyal clientele and almost always sells all her wares by noon. She's extremely gregarious and chats warmly with those who come by for as long as they wish.

Farfran Hone: Although he was born missing most of his right arm, Farfran has never let that get in his way. With shaggy brown hair, spectacles, and a beard, this human man dresses very nicely as he makes his way through the Market with a wooden box held in front of him at his waist by straps. The box holds all manner of small objects that he sells for a few coppers or maybe a silver coin: spools of string, needles, buttons, soap, quill pens, chalk, little toys, whistles, small tools, or even an empty flask, a colorfully painted mug, or a pair of stockings.

He also has a handful of more expensive items—rings, bracelets, a razor, a tiny vial of perfume, a small jar of cosmetics, tindertwigs, flint and steel—but even these never go for more than a single gold coin.

North Market Map: Page 279

In addition, his box has an unusual miscellany of items that makes some people wonder who might want them: keys for unknown locks, holy symbols of obscure gods, gears from an old watch, spectacles without any lenses, scraps of miscellaneous cloth, and stranger things.

NORTH MARKET RUMORS

Hell's Merchants. Throughout the Market, a small handful of vendors are actually demons in disguise. They sell what appear to be normal goods, but each item carries with it a curse that brings ill luck (or doom) or an enchantment that forces one to do evil.

Everything Falls Apart. The timber roof covering a popular market square is said to be in dire need of repair and may collapse at any time. Some locals are taking bets as to when it will all come tumbling down.

Killraven's Gambit. The criminals working for Kevris Killraven plan to make a single, sweeping strike in the North Market that will rid the district of Balacazar influence for good. If true, this move likely will leave the district's back alleys awash in blood.

NORTH MARKET LOCATIONS

The North Market includes varied and interesting locations. So many of the merchants here come and go that it may be difficult to find the same one twice. Others are more permanent.

BITH THE RATTER

mobile ●● ! 230 gp

Bith the Ratter (male human) usually parks his wagon along Calabis Street, but he sometimes moves around a bit. A rat catcher with an infamous reputation, Bith (he never uses a surname) is short and stooped with stringy black hair, small eyes, and a long nose. He keeps a pair of small, wiry, and dirty terriers to dig under buildings and chase out his quarry. His wagon, a roofed vehicle with wooden sides, contains many weapons, traps, tools, and poisons to help with his work. It also serves as his home.

Bith is an excellent source of information about the ratmen—their weaknesses, their strengths, their behavior, and even their culture, such as it is. He hates ratmen more than anything: "A rat with the brains of a man—nothing worse in all creation," he has been known to comment. Adventurers who have enjoyed success against these foes in the sewers will find a ready audience for their tales in Bith.

Bith the Ratter has scout stats.

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

Rather than making a roll, the GM can simply require PCs looking for an important bit of information or news to come to Darthalis or another character equally in the know. In fact, the result of an initial attempt to find out more information on the matter may simply be, "Go ask Darthalis Temester."

Kevris Killraven, page 119

Ratmen, page 591

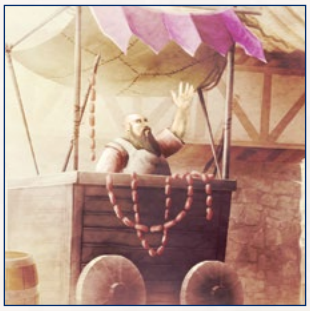
Sewers, page 408

THE BOOK WAGON

Upper God Way (#114, H4) ●● see map, page 279 ! 30 gp

Although it's technically mobile, the Book Wagon hasn't moved in well over four years. The owner, Darthalis Temester (male human), is an information broker of the highest order. Ostensibly selling books, he actually makes it his business to try to know everything about everything in Ptolus. Anyone willing to pay his fee—usually 10 gp, but, depending on the information, it could run as high as 500 gp—can learn something they want to know about the city.

Darthalis dresses nicely in the latest fashions but has an annoyingly self-satisfied manner. Although he never carries a weapon, he has little to fear wherever he goes. Powerful organizations—from the Killraven Crime League to the Knights of the Pale and even the City Watch—rely on him and his network of informants. They would never permit anything to happen to him.



Darthalis Temester has artisan stats (page 606). Paying for information from Darthalis gives a PC advantage on their next roll to learn something about the city (typically a History, Insight, Investigation, or Religion check).

Knights of the Pale, page 121

City Watch, page 141

EATING IN PTOLUS

Since the average Ptolus commoner earns 1 to 3 silver coins per day, most people cannot afford to take meals in a restaurant or pub. They eat at home. Their staple is first and foremost bread, sometimes baked around meat and gravy (or cheese), or with hunks of vegetables and herbs, but usually served plain with cheese or fruit jam. Potatoes and carrots are common fare, as are chickpeas and blackberries.

Pubs and taverns that serve food in addition to drinks are common—in both senses of the word. Normally, a single menu item simmers above the hearthfire: a pot of stew, a haunch of beef or pork on a spit, or a pair of chickens, ducks, or geese. Fish is also common fare. These are served with a smattering of vegetables and a great deal of bread with butter, cheese, or hummus made from chickpeas.

Those who can afford it usually prefer to eat at a restaurant rather than a tavern; the selection and quality of the food is far superior. Some establishments, like the Ghostly Minstrel in Delver's Square, have divided their main room into a restaurant and an alehouse so as to please both types of clientele. A restaurant serves a variety of dishes, but some common favorites are pasties (pastry shells with cooked meat and vegetables inside); potato and chicken dumplings; and roasted or grilled venison, duck, or pork, seasoned with thyme, oregano, paprika, and more. Soups are also popular.

In a restaurant, customers are expected to dress nicely, while pubs and taverns have no such restrictions. Some restaurants require an even higher level of personal presentation. Reserving a table is usually necessary at nicer restaurants, and sometimes requires many days' notice in advance. (Reservations are made easily through couriers.)

Trendy, wealthy, and society-conscious individuals eat out almost every night. This is the chief means of social contact among the aristocrats and upper class—social status can be defined not just by what you eat but where, with whom, and even at what time of day or night. Upper-class restaurants are usually open affairs that allow diners to see who else is eating there that evening and, perhaps more importantly, be seen there themselves. Small restaurants near the entrance to the Nobles' Quarter go in and out of fashion (and thus in and out of business) with each season, while other establishments have been known as bastions of sophistication for decades. Dinner parties at the homes of the wealthy are another mainstay of the elite social scene.

Ghostly Minstrel, page 193
Couriers, page 154

MEALS OF THE DAY

In Ptolus, breakfast is a light meal, usually consisting of bread, cheese, and sometimes cold meats. For a more elaborate breakfast, a chef might fry the bread alongside some eggs or even in a seasoned (often sweetened) egg batter. Grilled bread with cinnamon, cold herring served in a bowl with oatmeal and chopped nuts, or a mixture of berries in cream also make a fine breakfast.

Also light fare, lunch is often a meal that distinguishes one's class; members of the lower classes typically do not eat lunch, but only stop their workday long enough to drink strong coffee or tea. Lunch is usually cold and consists of bread and cheese, cold meats, and fruit or uncooked vegetables (such as carrots and green beans). Only the upper classes typically eat a hot lunch, usually consisting of soup, a mixture of fried fish and potatoes, or hot bread topped with stew or gravy.

Dinner is the main meal of the day, taken usually about an hour before sunset—although later is more fashionable. Many Ptolusites are known to gorge themselves at their nightly meals if they can afford to. A multicourse affair, dinner starts with a selection of fruits and cheeses, then soup, then a main course involving meat or fowl and cooked vegetables, and finally bread (often with warm honey or fruit jam, but sometimes with gravy or a vegetable paste).

Dinner is followed by dessert. Desserts come in many varieties, including fruit and custard pies, caramelized fruits, pastries (most people seem to prefer those dipped in honey as opposed to those rolled in sugar), crunchy flatbreads with sugar or syrup, soft potato pancakes, rolls stuffed with jam, and cakes of all kinds. One popular cake is a thick, rich, moist affair seeping with thickened sweet cream. Hard candy, taffy, and dried fruits are also popular, particularly among those who like to leave after the bread course and take their dessert with them.

FOODS OF SPECIES-SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES

Not surprisingly, each of the common species—humans, elves, dwarves, gnomes, and halflings—has its own food preferences.

Dwarves: Dwarvish food is simple, well cooked (overcooked by some standards), and plentiful. Dwarves almost never snack and generally eat only twice each day, but their morning and evening meals are large. They usually avoid all but the simplest spices and seasonings, like salt or butter. "All that flavor just gets in the way," some dwarves say.

Elves: Despite what most people believe, elves are not vegetarians. Elven food does not differ greatly from a human menu, except in preparation. Elves spend a great deal more time

preparing their meals, with a wide variety of herbs and spices, sauces, glazes, and decorative elements.

The elven palate seems far more discerning than that of a human or a dwarf. Elves generally eat very small portions and would typically rather go hungry than dine on a distasteful or poorly prepared dish. All the elven kin share the same food preferences.

Gnomes: Gnomes have a predilection for sweets that would rot even the sweetest tooth among humans. Evidently, gnomish bodies process sugar differently than other species do, because many gnomes survive almost entirely on what other species would call dessert.

Half-Orcs: Like their orcish relatives, half-orcs like meat and lots of it. They have little patience for courses and often demand all their dinner at once. They like to eat as quickly as possible—half-orcs have incredible metabolisms and can consume huge quantities. For the last six years in a row, the winner of the Godsday Festival eating contest has been a half-orc.

Halflings: Most halflings do not concern themselves overmuch with food. They eat when hungry (which is often) but don't place a lot of importance on it. "One thing's as good as another," a halfling might say. "You're just going to be hungry again later, either way." Due to their rapid metabolisms, the typical halfling eats as much as a human, but spreads it out over the course of the day in smaller, seemingly random, meals.

Minor Species: Centaurs are vegetarians. An aram eats twice as much as a human in a given day. A meal might begin with a wide selection of fruits, and then a mixture of cooked vegetables, followed by bread and more fruit. A huge bowl of washed leaves and grasses sprinkled with oil and vinegar is a delight to an aram.

Litorians are almost entirely carnivorous. They see little point in elaborate food preparation and look upon eating pragmatically. "Eat to live, don't live to eat," is one litorian motto. Most do not care for sweets. The exception comes on litorian feast days, when they eat in great quantities but still do not favor elaborate presentation or preparation.

Owing to their frequent state of poverty, lizardfolk in Ptolus are not picky eaters. Whenever possible, they prefer to dine on fish and other seafood.

The Ghostly Minstrel menu is fairly representative of Ptolus foods.

DRINKS

Ale and Beer: Ale and beer, most brewed in the Guildsman District, are available in every tavern and sometimes from street vendors in the afternoons. Ale and beer (the only difference between the two is the hops in the beer) are never expensive and generally do not vary much in quality unless a cheap tavern-owner has stretched their supply by watering it down. The best of them, according to most drinkers, are the thick, frothy dark ales. Some people, however, prefer the weaker and usually somewhat cheaper varieties. Most taverns do not offer a selection, though.

Cider and Perry: These drinks, made from apples and pears, come in fermented and unfermented form. The unfermented versions are the most common cold drinks in Ptolus. Hard cider and perry are thought of as drinks for the middle class; some even call them "merchant's ale."

Coffee: Relatively new to the Empire, this southern concoction has become quite popular. Dwarves like thick, black coffee almost as much as they like thick, dark ale. Most humans and halflings flavor theirs with cream and/or sugar. Elves generally dislike coffee altogether. Coffee is usually served hot, although iced coffee flavored with thick, sugary cream or maple is a favorite in very expensive restaurants.

Liquor: Ptolusites drink rum, brandy, and whisky in large quantities. Watered rum, called grog, is popular in the Docks. Some people flavor these drinks with fruit, honey, or sugar.

Milk: Milk is rare and generally considered a child's drink.

Tea: Tea has been a staple throughout the continent for a thousand years. Flavored blends of tea and herbal teas are common—in fact, some establishments create their own secret blends and guard the details like the keys to a treasure vault. The elves of the Moonsilver Forest are known for their delicate herbal teas in particular. Tea is flavored with cream, honey, and/or sugar, all of which are fairly common. It is served only hot.

Water: An abundance of underground springs and streams makes fresh water plentiful in the city (water from the King's River is both hard to get to and usually contaminated with sewage). Common folk drink water with their meals.

Wine: Wine is fairly commonplace and ranges from the cheapest of human vintages to the most expensive and elaborate elven wines. In general, elven wines cost at least twice the price of other wines. Wine is so common that one can find light or honey-sweetened breakfast wines, spiced afternoon wines, and full-bodied evening wines. Some taverns sell a mixture of beer and wine, called berserker, which is an acquired taste and usually leaves one with a powerful hangover.

Godsday Festival, page 364

OPTIONAL RULE: HAGGLING

Haggling over price is expected in the North Market. It is often permissible in other parts of town, too, although never in taverns or restaurants. To run a brief haggling encounter, have the merchant start off with a price that's 10 to 100 percent higher than normal. Don't bother with the math, just increase the price by one or two coins—thus, they offer a 1 cp candle for 2 cp, a 4 gp fishing net for 5 gp, and a 10 gp mirror for 12 gp. The merchant talks up the exceptional quality of the specific item, talks down the competition, mentions the item's rarity or other special aspect, describes how difficult it was to obtain or make, gives a sob story about how much they need the money, or compliments the buyer in some way. Or they use a combination of these gambits.

A buyer who doesn't want to pay that price attempts a Persuasion check. An easy success (DC 10) reduces the price to normal, but a difficult one (DC 20) reduces it by 10 to 50 percent off the original price (shave off a coin, although the price is never "free"). The merchant tells the buyer that the reduced price is just for that PC, and notes the character's shrewdness or even their meanness. The buyer can attempt to use Deception instead of Persuasion, reflecting that they tell the merchant a lie, but they must state which price level (DC 10 or 20) they are aiming for, but failure at either level results in the merchant seeing through the lie and not doing business with them at all. The GM may even want to add the merchant's Wisdom or Charisma modifier to the DC (usually 1d3, if not listed).

HEAVENLY BAKED GOODS

mobile 30 gp

Edwina Coll has expert stats, page 609

The aging Edwina Coll owns a cart pulled by her large Great Dane, over which hangs the sign "Heavenly Baked Goods." She's been a fixture in the Market for years, with a reputation for having some of the greatest bread and pastries in the city.

Unbeknownst to her customers and fellow merchants, Edwina is the leader of the Knights of the Secret Sun faction of the Knights of Shadow, a group that seeks to better society at large through enlightenment. She conducts Secret Sun business only at night. A supporter of the Empire—and, in specific, of Emperor Segaci and the Commissar—she ultimately wants to use her organization to move against Holy Emperor Rehoboth.

Knights of Shadow, page 123
Emperor Segaci, page 91
Commissar, page 140
Holy Emperor Rehoboth, page 269

KILLRAVEN'S TOWER

(abandoned); Labor Street (#112, H3)
see map, page 279 10 gp

Killraven, page 119

This old stone tower leans to one side; it appears hardly stable, let alone occupied. Nevertheless, word on the street has it that the tower is the secret entrance to Kevris Killraven's underground stronghold.

Durant, page 119

This is not the case, however, and it never was (those who dig more deeply can find this out). As Killraven likes the misdirection it provides, her troglodyte minion Durant sometimes spends time loitering suspiciously around the abandoned tower. From time to time, she also sends some of her trademark ravens to roost in its eaves.

Killraven's actual headquarters lies beneath Midtown. Very little is known about it.

Kevris Killraven

North Market Map: Page 279

LENDARICK

Pennylost Street (#117, I4) see map, page 279 300 gp

This wooden building looks like little more than a shack. The sign over the door reads simply "Lendarick," which gives no suggestion of what's inside. The sounds of barking might give that away, however.

Lendarick is a dog kennel with a large fenced-in area around back and many individual dog pens. Customers can buy dogs here or kennel their own animals (for 12 sp per month). Pabos Lendarick (male human) is the proprietor. He lives in the house next door with his rather large family.

Pabos loves dogs and all creatures canine, and knows everything there is to know about the animals. He also knows that in labyrinthine goblin lairs below this very district, the vile creatures force wolves to adapt to the dark, dismal Dungeon and serve as trained guardians and mounts. Horrified at the prospect, Pabos offers to pay 50 gp for every living goblin-raised wolf brought to him. No one has ever taken him up on the prospect.

The neighborhood dogs like hanging around Lendarick, as Pabos always has bones or other treats for them.

Pabos Lendarick is a thin man who cannot afford expensive clothing, yet still manages to maintain an impeccable appearance. He has a thin mustache and short brown hair. Although he rarely smiles, he remains a friendly and kind man.

Pabos Lendarick has commoner stats.

MITOREN'S BLADES

Market Street (#113, H3) see map, page 279 900 gp

Kharl Mitoren (male human) sells weapons of all kinds (anything 50 gp or less) out of a permanent wooden stall in a crowded marketplace. Kharl is of average build with sandy brown hair and a clean-shaven face. He is straightforward and honest. He's also a fair judge of weapon quality, although he's no Rastor. Kharl sells only what he has on hand and buys what people are willing to sell to him—he is not a smith. He disdains firearms and looks down on people who use the crude, noisy things.

Scenario: Kharl takes a liking to the player characters when they come to him to do business. He invites them to a festival held in Nall Hall, a building just off Addares Street in a residential part of the district. Nall Hall is a cultural center for people from the northern wasteland of Nall or those who have descended from Nallish folk. There they hold dances, feasts, and festivals to preserve their traditions—but all are welcome.

At the festival, a young woman named Sanne approaches the characters and asks for their help in finding her husband, Sebestin, who joined a group of delvers looking to strike it rich. She knows they were following a map of the Dungeon they bought from someone in the Red Stallion Pub (see below). Sebestin and his comrades are alive but trapped beneath the city; an otyugh has them cornered in a barricaded chamber.

Kharl Mitoren has expert stats, page 609

Yallis Kether and Utha Aryen have commoner stats.

Jurgen Yath has thug stats.

Rastor (page 206) can appraise a weapon and identify any basic magical qualities it may have just by hefting it.

Nall, page 43

Kharl Mitoren has been a bachelor all his life, but not by choice. For years he has loved another vendor in the Market from afar. Her name is Anna Witgaard. When it comes to women, however, Kharl is awkward and shy, so Anna has no idea of his feelings. Observant PCs might catch him looking longingly at her, though, from across the street.

RED STALLION PUB

Diamond Street (#109, G4) ★★ see map, page 279 900 gp

Full of a strange mixture of farmers, laborers, and marketplace merchants, the Red Stallion is the largest, most popular alehouse in the district. Co-owners Yallis Kether (female human) and Utha Aryen (female human) maintain a staff of six to help them with their always busy, always crowded tavern. They serve only light meals, focusing mostly on drink—ale, beer, and hard alcohol. Each night, the Red Stallion holds contests for drinking, singing, and throwing darts. The winners get free drinks the following night.

Encounter: An adventurer named Jurgen Yath (male human) hangs around the pub most nights. He's a capable fighter, good with both a warhammer and a bow, but he's a drunk. Although he belongs to the Delver's Guild and wears his badge proudly, these days he

Delver's Guild officials would revoke Jurgen's membership if they knew he was selling privileged Guild information.

earns the money to pay for his drinks by selling information about the Dungeon rather than delving there himself. Currently he's offering detailed, annotated maps of two newer sections of the Dungeon beneath Midtown for 75 gp each. They are relatively accurate, but he sells the same information and maps to multiple customers, so would-be explorers might run into more fellow delvers than monsters or treasure.

THE SMOKE SHOP

Carver Lane (#121, J4) ●●● see map, page 279 10,000 gp

Crimson Coil, page 75
Imperial University, page 300
Shuul, page 126
Pills, page 526
Aelectrical light, page 528

The Shuul recently opened this small shop with the confusing name (most people expect it to be a tobacconist). Here they sell cutting-edge technological items—spectacles, watches, spyglasses, magnifying lenses, goggles, precision tools, pills of various kinds, and their newest creation: the aelectrical lantern. They also sell all manner of firearms and technological weaponry.

For a full list of the firearms and other devices available at the Smoke Shop, see Chapter 29: Technology (page 521).

The manager of the store is Gunther Edlund (male human), a tall, balding man of advanced years who walks with a cane that is also a sting pistol. At least two other Shuul always remain on duty as well (usually humans, but occasionally a Grailwarden dwarf). All are armed.

Anageo Quigg has arcanist stats, page 605

Gunther Edlund has artisan stats, page 606

Gunther and the others make fairly poor shopkeepers and salesmen. They sometimes drive off customers with their overly technical speech and rather humorless demeanor.

Scenario: Someone has been stealing gunpowder out of the back room of the store. Gunther asks the player characters to help find out who is doing it. As it turns out, members of the Crimson Coil cult stole the powder to make a huge bomb. They want even more, however, and will sneak into the shop again if not stopped. They plan on setting off the bomb in the Imperial University.

WONDROUS TATTOOS

Shell Row (#123, J4) ●●● see map, page 279 500 gp

Anageo Quigg (male gnome), a talented tattoo artist and spellcaster, has combined both his areas of expertise and recently opened a small parlor offering magical tattoos. Sadly, though, Anageo speaks clumsily and often says the wrong thing at the wrong time.

Anageo is desperately in need of money. Business is not good, mainly because people just don't know about his services. He owes a great deal of gold to Killraven's people and receives

frequent visits from one of her underbosses, Durant the troglodyte.

Encounter: Durant is in the shop as the player characters enter, hassling the gnome for the money he owes. Anageo looks pleadingly at the adventurers for help. If they do help him, they may be able to intimidate the troglodyte into leaving, but he'll be back with some muscle (three human males). Durant's not interested in killing anyone, but tossing interfering PCs into the alley would be satisfying. In the meantime, Anageo might try to borrow money from the characters, or at least give them the hard sell on some tattoos.

Durant, page 119

Durant's "muscle" have thug stats.

THE ZAR'AT

Veil Lane (#124, K4); see map, page 279 11,000 gp

The Zar'at is a cluster of homes and buildings occupied by Harrow elves. Almost every Harrow elf in the city lives in the Zar'at, but that's still not a lot (about twenty individuals). These residents mostly just want to be left alone to live their lives. They distrust any outlanders who enter their tiny cul-de-sac and likely would kill an orc who came here as look at them. The Harrow elves would not act so immediately violent with others, although they are moody creatures with unpredictable temperaments. They are not overly concerned with keeping within the bounds of the law, but they remain keenly aware that the Commissar would like nothing more than to come into the Zar'at in force and roust them all out—or put them to the sword.

Harrow elves, page 53

Their leader is a wise but quick-to-anger woman named Karetsan (female Harrow elf). She is tall with long brown hair and wears about 5,000 gp worth of gold jewelry. Karetsan is a former close friend of Karee, who is now a vampire and a member of the Covenant of Blood. The community has disavowed Karee, considering her a betrayer and a hated foe.

Rumors claim that a juvenile male red dragon named Rethicalas lives among the Harrow elves of the Za'rat.

Another prominent resident is the mercenary Sulet (male Harrow elf). This particularly muscular elf ultimately wishes nothing more than to recover a lost artifact of his people, said to lie somewhere in or beneath the city.

Encounter: Sulet and Karetsan are in a heated argument when the player characters arrive. Sulet contends that the humans of the city will do nothing to stop the "rampant plague of vampirism" but allow the Covenant of Blood (and Karee) to do as they like. Karetsan isn't willing to disregard the non-elves in the city just yet. If the PCs take her side or offer to help fight vampires, she'll tell them about Karee and give them whatever information she can. Sulet will not seem at all friendly to them, however.

Karetsan has mage stats.

Sulet has arcanist stats, page 605

Covenant of Blood, page 103

MAGICAL TATTOOS

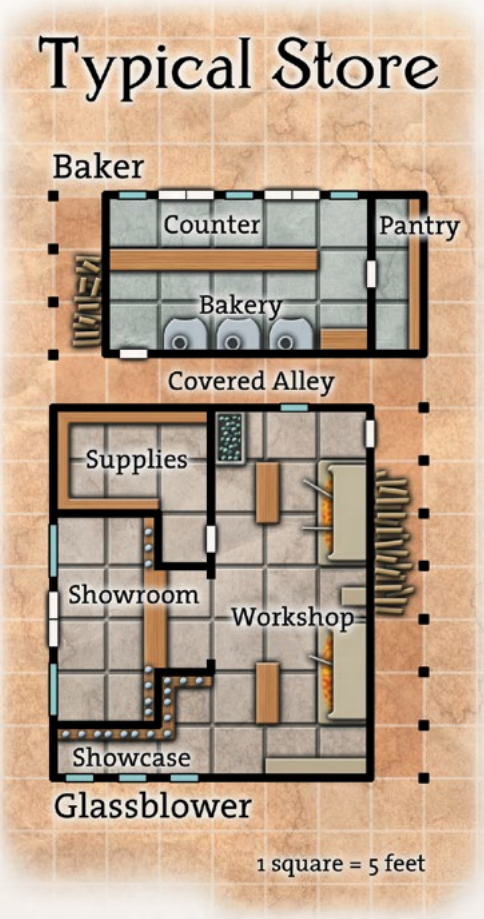
Anageo's tattoos function very much like potions. They store the same kinds of spells as potions, and of the same power level. For a magical tattoo, Anageo charges the same price one would expect to pay for an equivalent potion, plus 50 percent (see magic item pricing).

Magic item pricing, page 635

Activating the tattoo requires an action. A tattoo affects only the tattooed person, just as a potion affects only the drinker. There are no tattoos that function like oils (such as *oil of slipperiness*).

OTHER LOCALES

Although it's not a complete listing by any means, GMs can use the table on the next page to insert additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit the North Market.



KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Insight or Investigation check reveals something about the Zar'at neighborhood:

- *Most of the Harrow elves in Ptolus live in the Zar'at, a single block of the North Market (DC 13).*
- *Karetsan is the leader of the Harrow elves in the city (DC 16).*

OTHER LOCALES IN THE NORTH MARKET

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Adda's Baskets and Tavoh's Bakery		Snake Street (#120, J4)	Adda and Tavoh Narn (female and male human commoners)	0	Adjacent stalls in an open market
Catty's		Market Street (#116, I3)	Katrin "Catty" Salla (female human mage with Stealth +4)	5	Sorn cell base
Church of the Lawgiver		Upper God Way (#111, H2)	Brother Thadeus Bravon (male human priest)	3	Temple of Lothian
Cloudstone		Catbird Street (#108, G3)	Gein Cloudstone (male dwarf artisan*)	1	Weaponsmith
Eddarth Stables		Linger Street (#104, F3)	Barad "Blue" Eddarth (male human expert*)	3	Large stables for travelers
Farmer's Rest		North Gate Road (#106, F3)	Beltram Coverinton (male human commoner)	3	—
Gatehouse Pub		North Gate Road (#103, F3)	Wilsha Rarris (female human expert*)	4	—
Inchin's Butchery		Jasper Street (#118, I4)	Terreth Inchin (male human commoner)	1	—
Juggling Fools		Smooth Street (#119, J3)	Serra Yavan (female human performer*)	0	School for jugglers
The Old Muller House		Ralester Street (#115, I3)	Starol Highwood (male half-elf spy)	4	Balacazar safe house
Telenn's Sweetery		Linger Street (#105, F3)	Strati Telenn (male gnome expert*)	2	Bakery
Verda Marsh's House		Celery Lane (#107, G3)	Verda Marsh (female human commoner)	0	Vai cell base
The Wagon Wheel		Passed Over Rd. (#110, G4)	Nuls Forrestor (male human expert*)	6	Wainwright

* see Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604

Chapter 14:
OLDTOWN

As the name implies, this is the oldest part of the city. Today Oldtown serves as the center for all local administrative needs. You'll find the fortress of Dalenguard here, as well as the Administration Building, the Imperial University, and the City Library. Other intriguing features include Kadmiel, a tower that exists only within its own shadow, and the Inverted Pyramid, the invisible floating headquarters of the most powerful arcanists in the world.

Originally, Oldtown was just "Ptolus." It was a complete city in itself, built around the fortress of Dalenguard. Now the district houses most of the Imperial government buildings and a number of important organizational headquarters as well as a residential district. It covers an entire ridge of the city below the Nobles' Quarter but above the South Market and Midtown. It lies south of the Rivergate District, just across the King's River Gorge. The only way to get there from the east is via an earthen ramp cut into Dalen's Cliffs on the Emperor's Road. Visitors from the north come via the King's River Bridge and the Old City Gate or via the Rivergate Bridge from the Rivergate District.

THE FLAVOR OF OLDTOWN

The tall buildings of Oldtown speak of an earlier age hundreds of years ago, when builders took greater pride in their creations and architects commanded greater skill and knowledge. The old buildings were not just functional—they were grand, with domes, columns, and wide white steps. Walls boast carved reliefs and frescoes depicting events of Imperial history. These structures, raised in the heyday of the Empire of Tarsis, not only represent a different style of building, but they also hearken back to a time when a great deal more money was available for such projects. Statues of granite and marble, now grey with corrosion and age, rise above many streets on pedestals in intersections. Oldtown is laden heavily with history.

In many ways, Oldtown represents the Empire in Ptolus. Most of its buildings are Tarsisan in appearance. In addition, many people come to the district only to interact with the bureaucracy of the government—to get a permit, pay a fine, or speak to an official.

Back when Oldtown encompassed the entire city, Ptolus claimed about ten thousand residents. At that time, more than two hundred years ago, the city could meet every need of its populace within the confines of the district. While the old marketplace is now the site of the Imperial University and the old stockyards are now the site of the Arena, many vestiges of that previous incarnation still remain. For example, a small section of southern Oldtown near Four Fountains Street once served a function similar to Tavern Row in Midtown today. Not far to the east, the town's onetime manufacturing neighborhood contains old tanneries, breweries, and smithies used as residences or warehouses today. The northern end of Oldtown is mainly residential, but the gamut runs from old (in

OLDTOWN IN BRIEF

Area: *264 acres*

Population: *About 10,000*

Primary Function: *Administration/ Residential*

Primary Social Class: *Middle*

Dalenguard Road (D6)

Four Fountains Street (D6)

Imperial University, page 300

Arena, page 292

Tavern Row, page 188

Building styles, page 19

Commissar's Men, page 141

The modern city of Ptolus was officially founded near Dalenguard in 413 IA, although some settlers had lived in the vicinity ever since the fortress was completed four centuries earlier. By 513 IA, the city had spread beyond its original bounds, what is now called Oldtown.

some cases dilapidated) manor homes to crowded tenements full of individual flats. Many of these old homes are now abandoned, but lots of people still call Oldtown home.

RUNNING OLDTOWN

The central area of Oldtown, where most of the government buildings are, is usually busy, but most other neighborhoods are rather sedate. In areas at the south and north ends of the district, some homes and buildings stand vacant. These structures are quite old and might be haunted.

Most occupied Oldtown buildings have been refurbished, although new additions are not always built in the style of the original. Many entire structures are put to different purposes than the ones for which they were originally constructed. For example, some old warehouses near the district's east side have been converted into living spaces.

Oldtown is likely second only to the Nobles' Quarter as the safest area of Ptolus. Criminal gangs are rare here, due to the presence of the military. However, that doesn't mean there's no crime at all. Instead of robbers and cutpurses, criminals here run brothels, gambling dens, or extortion operations.

PEOPLE OF OLDTOWN

The people found in Oldtown are typically natives—visitors to the city rarely come here. Oldtown does not have Midtown's communal feel. The people here seem slightly more reticent and tend to mind their own business.

It's worth noting that the families of most of the Commissar's Men, government officials, and various bureaucrats and diplomats usually live in Oldtown. Further, some of Ptolus's wealthy families live here rather than in the Nobles' Quarter—sometimes because they have always lived in Oldtown, sometimes for other reasons.

PERSON ON THE STREET

Nalla Bantock: This tall, thin human woman has long, straight blond hair and pronounced facial features. Nalla talks loudly and at length about anything. She works as a clerk in the Administration Building and considers herself an expert in Imperial law and in cutting through the bureaucracy inherent in the system. Thus, she's quick with advice for anyone attempting to brave the offices of an Imperial official. Sometimes her advice is good, but much of the time it is not. Nalla is likely on her way to or from work, or on a work-related errand, but she's never in too much of a hurry to talk . . . and talk.

MAP KEY

37. Sartha Nartis' House (page 313)
38. Pale Tower (page 305)
39. The Bladechapel (page 294)
40. Citadel of the Golden Cross (page 294)
41. Secret Hall (page 308)
42. Clock Tower (page 296)
43. Jodan Templehall (page 313)
44. White House (page 310)
45. West Town Mixtures (page 313)
46. The Pointy Hat (page 313)
47. Kadmiel, the Shade Tower (page 303)
48. Tess' Cauldron (page 313)
49. The Games House (page 313)
50. Bellringers' Guild Office (page 294)
51. Bankers' Guildhall (page 313)
52. Shadow Theater (page 310)
53. Sages' Guildhall (page 308)
54. Imperial University (page 300)
55. Administration Building (page 291)
56. Kaira Swanwing's House (page 305)
57. Lyle Bennit's Office (page 313)
58. Delver's Guild Library and Maproom (page 299)
59. Manathah's Traveler's Home (page 313)
60. Dalenguard (page 297)
61. Arena (page 292)
62. Nulene Chard's Office (page 313)
63. Hammersong Vaults (page 299)
64. City Courts (page 295)
65. Gallows Square (page 515)
66. Denoss Firth's Office (page 313)
67. Church of Lothian the Redeemer (page 313)
68. Ander Kellin's Office (page 313)
69. Lady Cardie's (page 313)
70. Citadel of Might (page 295)
71. Skulk Alley (page 310)
72. Menasa's House (page 313)
73. Tower of Science (page 310)
74. City Library (page 295)
75. Finnar's Books (page 313)
76. The Boiling Pot (page 313)
77. Randle's (page 313)
78. Yarrow Street Forum (page 312)

Kaddis: An aram male with broad shoulders and chest, Kaddis pulls a carriage, serving as both driver and steed. He has a bright and cheery attitude and loves his job, which he sees as an opportunity to meet people and see interesting things. He knows a great deal about the entire city and is a good source of local gossip and information.

Eithos Lightborn: This male Shoal elf typically wears a long, open green coat over a blue vest and white shirt. His hair is short and mostly covered by his hat. Eithos lives in Oldtown with his human wife, Marrosa. He works as a mercer selling cloth in the South Market and has devoted much of his energy to fitting into human society. Eithos dresses like a human, talks like a human, and prefers human food and drink (he'll always order ale in a tavern, for example, rather than wine). Sadly, his manner comes across as false—he tries too hard to be liked, particularly by humans. He is either on his way home or to work, or running errands in the district.

OLDTOWN RUMORS

Hungry Ghost. A dangerous ghost supposedly haunts not just one home but a whole neighborhood. It is no harmless spook, either—people have disappeared, sometimes leaving behind bloody remains. Some locals say it's not a ghost at all, but a predator from the Ethereal Plane.

The Commissar's Guns. Despite the reputation these mighty cannons command, some folks whisper that, due to their age and the inability of the Commissar's Men to maintain them properly, most of the guns no longer function and would in fact be very dangerous to use, should the city ever come under attack from without.

Diseased Clock. Rumor has it that a number of those who have spent time in or around the old Clock Tower have taken ill with mysterious diseases. Some say the tower is cursed, while others claim it is full of plague-bearing ratmen.

Monsters for Ptolus? Speculation spreads that the Commissar is once again quietly attempting to find volunteers willing to be transformed into monsters to work with the city's defenders and law enforcement officials.

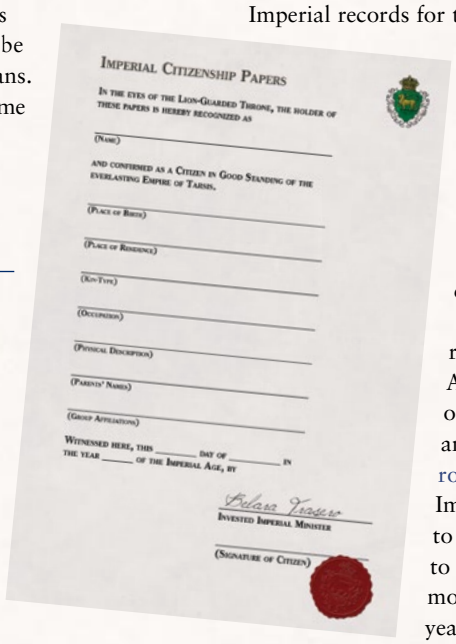
OLDTOWN LOCATIONS

Oldtown boasts a number of important and interesting locations for adventurers to discover in the course of the Ptolus Campaign.

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Dalenguard Road (#55, D6); see map, page 290 12,450 gp

This building holds offices for various city officials and administrative employees: architects, accountants, assayers, auditors, clerks, diplomats, engineers, inspectors, record keepers, scribes, and tax collectors. The Administration Building is the very heart of the byzantine bureaucracy of Imperial government in Ptolus. Most citizens come here only when they need a particular permit or license—a business license, marriage license, firearms license, building permit, and so forth. All Imperial records for the city are kept here as well, so if one needed to find out who owned a particular piece of land, or when a particular citizen died, one could do so here. However, wading through the bureaucracy proves difficult and time consuming.


IMPERIAL CITIZENSHIP PAPERS

IN THE EYES OF THE LION-GUARDED THRONE, THE HOLDER OF THESE PAPERS IS HEREBY RECOGNIZED AS

(NAME)

AND CONFIRMED AS A CITIZEN IN GOOD STANDING OF THE EVERLASTING EMPIRE OF TARSIS.

(PLACE OF BIRTH)

(PLACE OF RESIDENCE)

(KIN-TYPE)

(OCCUPATION)

(PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION)

(PARENTS' NAMES)

(GROUP AFFILIATIONS)

WITNESSED HERE, THIS _____ DAY OF _____ IN THE YEAR _____ OF THE IMPERIAL AGE, BY

INVESTED IMPERIAL MINISTER

(SIGNATURE OF CITIZEN)

To locate specific recorded information at the Administration Building, one must spend a full day and make investigation rolls. Impressive as they are, Imperial records are known to have errors or sometimes to be incomplete. Even after more than seven hundred years of the Empire, it is still difficult to get the common folk to file all the right forms.

MINISTERS

While many of the officials who work at the Administration Building are simple bureaucrats and administrators, they ultimately answer to the seven ministers of the city government. The ministers advise the Commissar and report frequently to the City Council regarding their specific areas. The council appoints ministers to life terms in their positions (unless they step down or are dismissed, which isn't unheard of).

These ministerial positions and the people who currently hold them are as follows:

Minister of Education: Juna Quenan (female human) oversees the various schools and apprenticeship programs in the city.

Beneath the Administration Building, a mighty vault holds city funds to pay all employees, including City Watch personnel. At any given time, it contains approximately 8,000 gp. It is well guarded and fitted with magical seals and alarms.

Ptolusites must visit the Administration Building to apply for licenses and permits (see page 516 for more details).

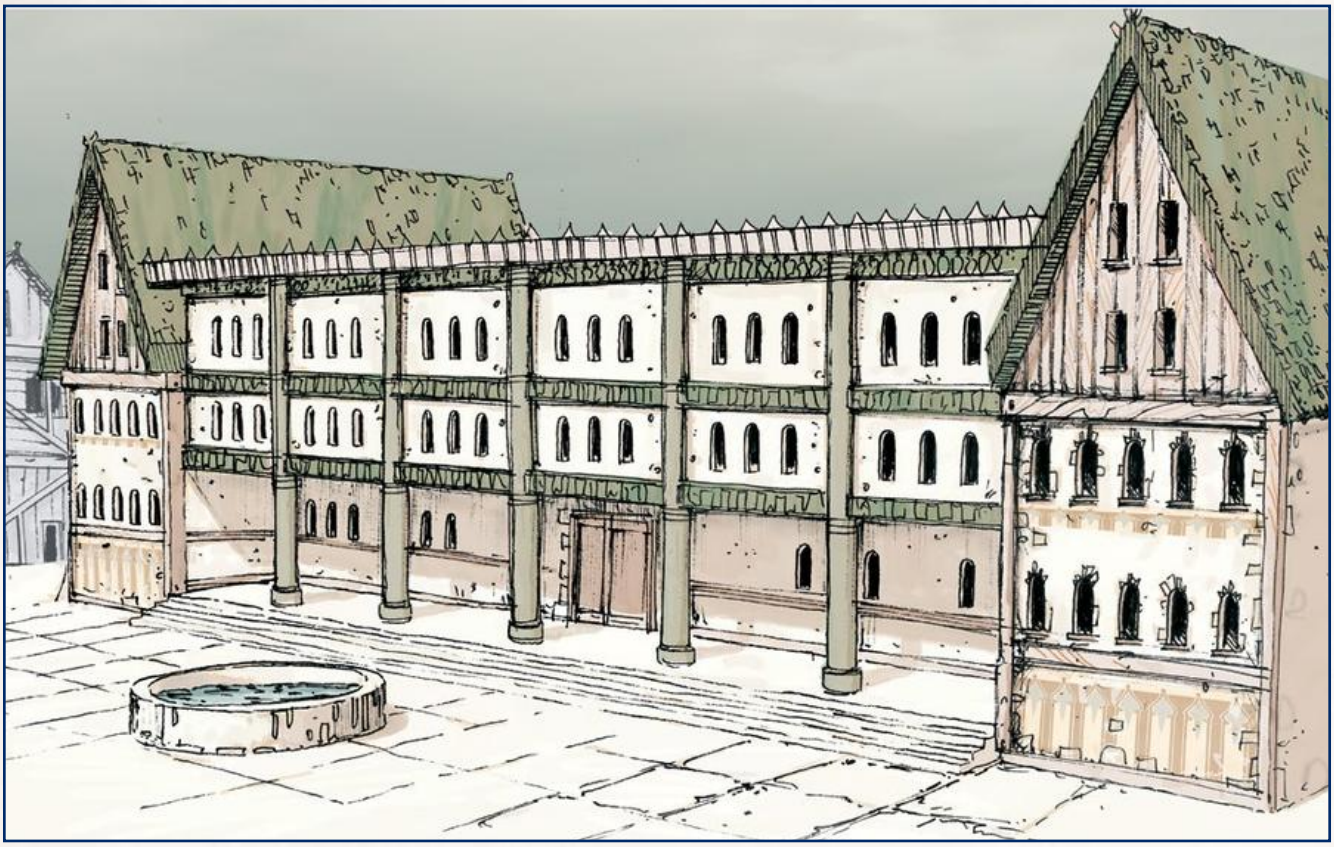
It's a DC 20 Investigation check to find the desired information in the Administration Building. The DC decreases by 1 for every 5 gp worth of bribes paid, but cannot fall below 15.

Commissar's Guns, page 140

City Council, page 140
Clock Tower, page 296
Ratmen, page 591
Commissar, page 140

Juna Quenan has expert stats, page 609

Despite the fact that they are both married and that Mercus is twelve years her senior, Minister of Education Juna Quenan and Minister of Guilds Mercus Niolonthor are embroiled in a torrid love affair that, thanks to local gossip, is becoming less and less of a secret with each passing week.



Mercus Niolonthor has expert stats, page 609

Heffrul Dominarik has expert stats, page 609

Dalenguard, page 297

Nord Steelgrim has artisan stats, page 606

Cabais Fortun has priest stats.

Nillis Regarson has aristocrat stats, page 606

Yarrana Montass has artisan stats, page 606

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

Fire risks, page 144

Sewers, page 408

Trash disposal: see Midden Heaps, page 179

Taxation, page 516

Minister of Guilds: Mercus Niolonthor (male human) works with all guilds and major employers to manage wages and employment issues. He concerns himself mainly with avoiding massive unemployment or worker shortages in key areas.

Minister of Health: Heffrul Dominarik (male human) oversees health care, water and food supplies, and similar issues. He focuses on avoiding major outbreaks of plague rather than on individual issues.

Minister of Public Works: Nord Steelgrim (male dwarf) handles street and traffic maintenance (including bridges), water transport systems, and so forth.

Minister of Religion: Cabais Fortun (male human), a Lothianite priest, oversees all issues involving more than one religion, to avoid disputes or conflicts. This minister determines whether a religion should be allowed in the city. The fact that it is almost always a cleric of Lothian is clearly unfair, but that's the way it is.

Minister of Safety: Nillis Regarson (female human) governs fire risks, unsafe structures, sewer maintenance, trash disposal, and similar utilities.

Minister of Trade: Yarrana Montass (female human) oversees all economic issues, including taxation, and keeps track of imports and exports into the city.

THE ARENA

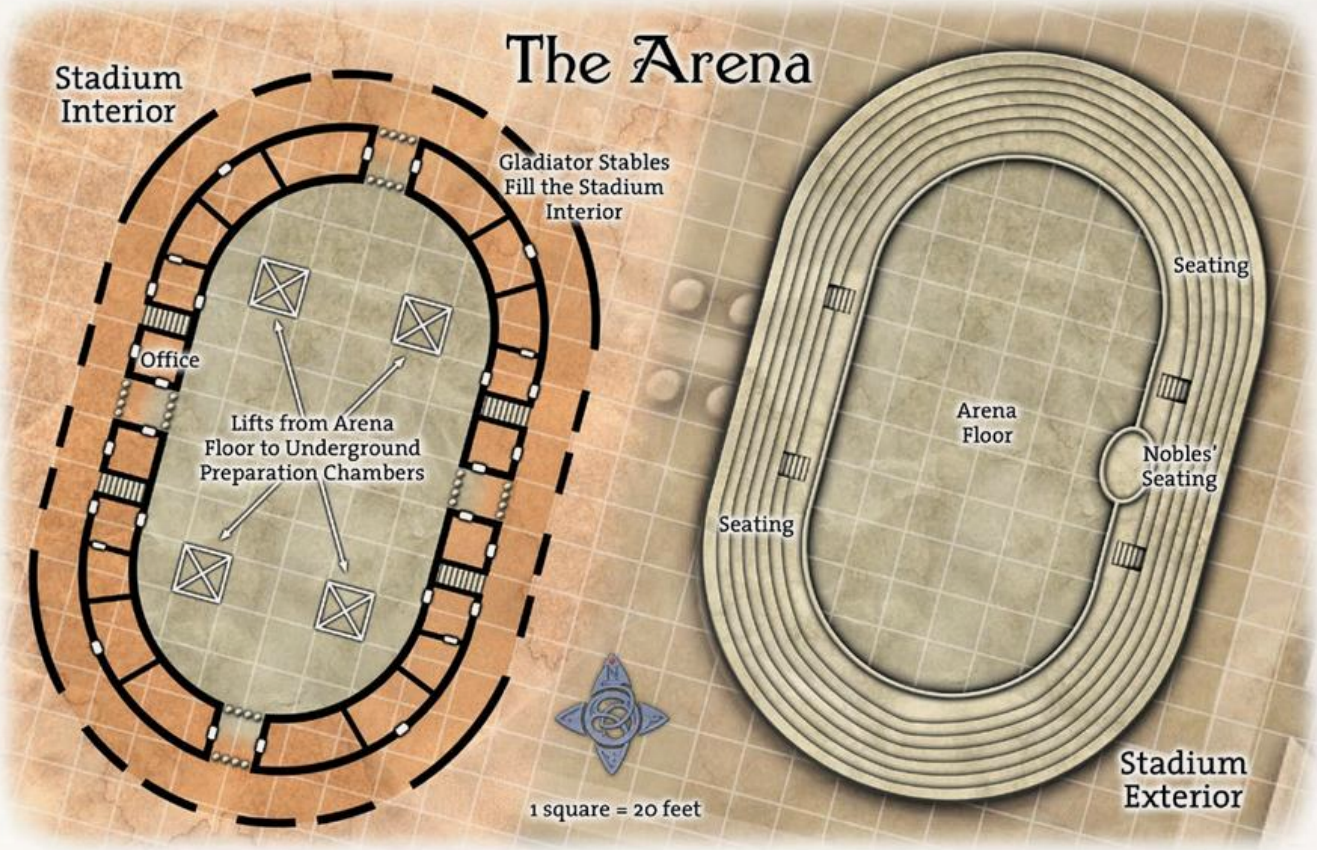
Greycannon Road (#61, D6); see map, page 293 2,800 gp

Ptolus's Arena was built about two hundred years ago, when the city was growing quickly beyond its previous role as a simple port town to support Dalenguard. Originally, the Arena was to host great sporting events and concerts, plays, and operas. Soon after its completion, however, the populace clamored for a different kind of entertainment spectacle: gladiatorial combat.

Once introduced to Ptolus, the sport gave birth to a subculture surrounding the training and promotion of gladiators. Spreading out in a radius around the Arena, one can find training centers, fighter schools, weaponsmiths and armorsmiths (most specializing in repair), and promoters of fights and fighters.

Combat in the Arena is never intentionally to the death; with clerics and healers on hand, it very rarely ends up that way. Traditional fights forbid poison, magic, firearms, and alchemical mixtures. (An Arena mage casts spells to detect magic and poison on each combatant right before the fight begins.) Occasionally, the Arena hosts so-called "spell duels" of mages, but they are rare due to the damage they can inflict. In a few matches, called "All Means" combats, anything is allowed. These contests sometimes

Oldtown Map: Page 290



pit humanoid gladiators against captured monsters such as giant animals, monstrous spiders, or a hydra.

Some of the original vision for the Arena still remains. Many sporting competitions besides combats take place there. A racetrack around the circumference of the Arena allows both foot-race events and horse racing. Other contests of physical prowess, such as hammer throwing, pole vaulting, long jumping, and team sports such as targetball also appear on the bill at the Arena. These comprise about 40 percent of the Arena's activities, with gladiatorial combats making up the other 60 percent. Plays, concerts, and operas have found other venues (see the Cloud Theater in Midtown, the Shadow Theater in Oldtown, and the Crown Theater in the Nobles' Quarter).

Wagering on all the sports held in the Arena is popular and legal, assuming the Empire gets its 10 percent cut. Various criminal organizations also maintain off-the-record betting on the games and fights and sometimes even try to influence or rig them in their favor. Many gladiators, for example, are secretly funded by the Balacazars (or others) to sway a fight one way or another as needed. However, the criminals find the gladiators—particularly the most puissant (and therefore popular) ones—so difficult to control, they often don't bother at the higher levels. The members of the Balacazar organization long ago found it hard to intimidate someone who can singlehandedly take on a legion of enforcers, and it's difficult to bribe someone whose successes have already made them rich and famous. They usually stick with lower-level fighters.

Scenario: A gladiator named Terros Kallind (a human who might have orcish blood somewhere in his lineage, given his facial features) comes to the player characters for help. He's been beaten within an inch of his life, despite the fact that he is a hulking brute and a skilled fighter. He says that someone is trying to kill all the successful gladiators outside the Arena to somehow fix the fights, but he doesn't know who. Clearly the remaining gladiators and their backers are suspects. The PCs have to find out who is doing this and why. Answering the "why" part of the question first is perhaps the best way to learn who is behind the attacks—it might suggest who specifically benefits from them.

Targetball is a highly physical and combative field sport with two teams of nine players. Each team has a ball and a small goal. The object of the game is to get the ball into your team's goal in any way (carrying, throwing, kicking, and so on), while keeping the other team from doing the same. The sport is tricky to watch, because at any given time there can be two different areas of action.

Cloud Theater, page 191
Shadow Theater, page 310
Crown Theater, page 268

Balacazars, page 102

BELLRINGERS' GUILD OFFICE

Emperor's Road (#50, D5) see map, page 290 950 gp

A small, nondescript two-story building, the office of the Bellringers' Guild is managed by a capable woman named Rebeva Autorth (female human). Rebeva appears extremely serious, humorless, and professional at all times—her employees refer to her as "the Authority."

Rebeva Autorth has artisan stats, page 606

Before the advent of the Empire, bellringers were the chief way of dispersing information, but during the last few centuries, the literate and sophisticated citizenry preferred to read the news for themselves. As literacy rates plummet, however, the guild is having newfound success.

The criers of the Bellringers' Guild refuse to enter the Warrens or the Necropolis.

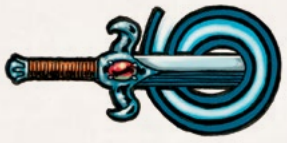
The Bellringers' Guild is hardly a guild at all, but rather a single business with two dozen employees, most of whom are criers: young people willing to run about the city ringing a bell and shouting out news. Rebeva dispatches a crier with a bell to spread whatever information the guild is hired to relate to the public. The main client is the city itself, which uses the criers to spread word of anything from foul weather approaching to new edicts from the Commissar or the City Council. The guild is not responsible for the accuracy or the content of the news it spreads.

THE BLADECHAPEL

Emperor's Road (#39, D4); see map, page 290 15,000 gp (weapons)

Knights of the Golden Cross and Kaira Swanwing, page 121

The Bladechapel is the name of the manor house of Dierna Hillerchaun, leader of the Knights of the Pale and one of the Twelve Commanders. The two-story house is practically a fortress and could easily be made truly defensible if needed. It boasts its own chapel dedicated to Lothian, an impressive martial training facility, and a large armory. In fact, Dierna collects weapons. Thus, the major decorations in every room are shields, crossed swords, and unique or historical weapons carefully mounted and well cared for.



Knights of the Pale, page 121

Twelve Commanders, page 140

Cardilion Brunner (male human) and Dartalius Estalon (male human), both new Knights of the Pale, spend a great deal of time at the Bladechapel. Vestra Totharson (female human), a member of the Order of Dayra and a good friend of Dierna, is often on hand as well. Vestra is the sister of Yavil Totharson, a retired fighter in Rivergate.

Cardilion Brunner has holy champion stats, page 610

Dartalius Estalon has veteran stats.

Vestra Totharson has holy champion stats, page 610

Order of Dayra, page 70

Yavil Totharson, page 322

Encounter: As the player characters wait to speak to Dierna, Prince Ironheart and Brig Stoneheart barge into the Bladechapel to speak to her first, alerting her of a powerful demon that has just appeared atop a tower on Dweomer Street, terrorizing everyone in the area.

Prince Ironheart and Brig Stoneheart, page 122

Dweomer Street, page 309

Sir Beck Von Tibbitz, head of the Keepers of the Veil (see page 118), owns a large home in Oldtown on High Road. At times, his order uses the place as a supplementary barracks, storehouse, and garrison.

CITADEL OF THE GOLDEN CROSS

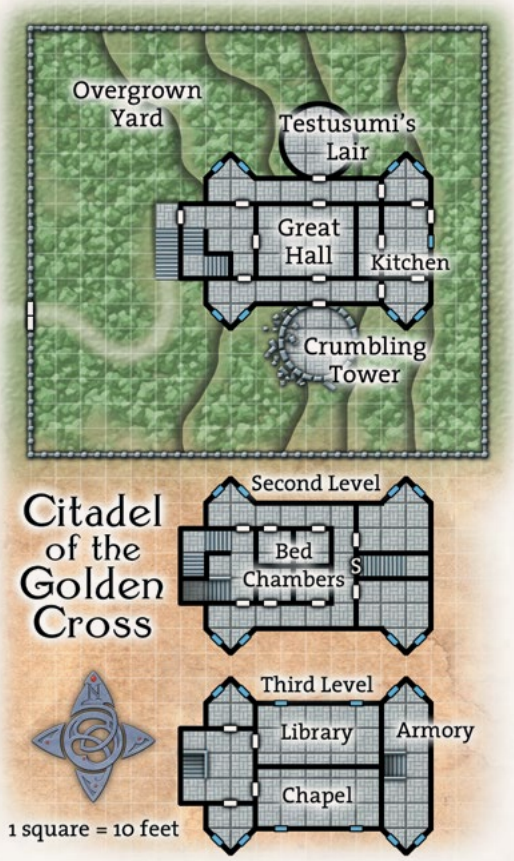
Emperor's Road (#40, D4); see map, below 7,800 gp

Located at the north end of the district, the Citadel of the Golden Cross is an old castle that predates most of Ptolus. It was built right after the Ghulwar by a human who had fought in the conflict. The castle has not been well maintained, and many believe it a ruin, or nearly so. Surrounded by a rusted wrought-iron fence, the citadel is a three-story keep flanked by two towers, one clearly on the verge of collapse. A large golden cross hangs above the iron-studded wooden doors, which are still sturdy.

The leader of the Knights of the Golden Cross, Kaira Swanwing, does not live here. In fact, the order uses the citadel only for meetings, for storage of important relics and tomes, and as a sanctuary for those in need. The only permanent residents are a naga named Testusumi and the fourteen shocker lizards she keeps as pets. Testusumi is technically a member of the order, although she never leaves the citadel and its overgrown yard. She keeps the lizards from harming anyone other than unwanted intruders.

Testusumi has guardian naga stats.

Shocker lizards have flying snake stats, but with no fly speed, and their bite attack inflicts lightning damage instead of poison damage.



Oldtown Map: Page 290

CITADEL OF MIGHT

Four Fountains Street (#70, D7) see map, page 290 4,200 gp

Located not far from the Arena, the Citadel of Might serves as the headquarters of the warriors' guild: the Order of Iron Might. This tall structure resembles a fortress, but this is mostly a façade. The clash of weapons echoes throughout the citadel all day long from the open-air central court where members train. Besides a large armory and its own armorsmiths and weaponsmiths, the Citadel of Might contains lodging (a handful of private rooms and a number of barracks-like offerings) for members and offers simple but hearty meals.

The citadel's entrance serves as a hiring hall for mercenaries, guards, and others looking to sell their sword arms. Employers can find postings of available warriors on the walls, and many would-be mercenaries simply hang about the hall, hoping for employment.

Encounter: The player characters enter the Citadel only to find a massive brawl taking place right in front of them. While they might think it a training exercise at first, it is actually an argument between two mercenary companies that has come to blows. Other members of the order ask the characters to help break up the fight.

Campaign Use: Technically, one does not need to be a warrior to belong to the guild. An entire group could join, for instance, using the hiring hall as a way to hook the characters' "mercenary company" into all sorts of interesting adventures.

CITY COURTS

High Road (#64, D6); see map, page 290 8,500 gp

The courthouse, a large, circular building on a hill, looks quite imposing. Two big statues of a human woman holding the axe of justice flank the steps up to the main entrance. This place usually stays very busy during the day, with those accused of crimes, their advocates, and the Imperial judges coming and going from their various appointments. Most people here dress in their best attire; judges wear blue robes and white sashes. Justice is swift in Ptolus, and the accused rarely have to wait long for a judgment.

The City Watch remains active around the courthouse, bringing prisoners to trial and sometimes taking them off to the Prison. They also look out for those seeking to exact violent revenge on judges (a common problem) for judgments against them or their family members, friends, or associates. Even more quietly, the guards keep watch for those who might attempt to bribe judges.

At any given time, at least one itinerant priest of Lothian (female or male human) is on hand at the City Courts to cast spells that detect or prevent lying, if needed. Likewise, one of three watchful mages (female or male human) patrols the courthouse at all times, watching (and using magical senses) for anyone attempting to use spells to influence a judge. Sometimes the city hires a more powerful wizard to create temporary areas where magic is suppressed, such as in a case where the use of spells is deemed of particular threat.

See Chapter 28: Crime and the Law for more information on the city's legal system.

Encounter: On their way past the City Courts or to the courthouse on other business, the PCs see a well-known minor Balacazar crime boss, such as Ireve Nal or Meither Amost, being escorted out of the building. Even as this happens, assassins working for Killraven attack using poisoned crossbows and bows. It's a hit-and-run attack, and if the PCs interfere and apprehend any of the assailants before they get away, there's a small reward (perhaps 50 gp) as well as some official recognition in it for them. The Commissar looks down on any kind of violence around the courthouse.

CITY LIBRARY

Four Fountains Street (#74, D7); see map, page 290 80,000 gp (books)

This very large three-story building includes wings on two sides that circle around a lovely garden and yard. The library's history tomes are slanted to favor the Empire (the place was funded with Imperial grants, after all), but otherwise it is an excellent resource. Citizens pay 2 sp to get in; noncitizens pay 5 sp. This fee is good for one day.

A dozen librarians and their assistants work in the City Library. The head librarian is Nelinda Kruppet (female gnome), a knowledgeable but somewhat absentminded elderly person. She is constantly coming up with ever more efficient ways of organizing the library's texts, much to the annoyance of those who work under her and the frequent patrons—she's constantly moving things around.

A quiet rivalry exists between the City Library, the Delver's Guild Library, and the Sages' Guild, all of which are headquartered here in Oldtown.

Encounter: A player character walking through a rarely visited area of the stacks at the City Library comes upon a pair of lovers in the throes of passion. Nelinda would not approve!

Order of Iron Might symbol (organization, page 125)

A typical itinerant priest has ecclesiastic stats (page 608). For more on itinerant priests and their responsibilities, see page 68.

A typical watchful mage has mage stats.

Balacazars, page 102

Ireve Nal and Meither Amost, page 106

Killraven's assassins are two humans with spy stats, a half-orc with thug stats, and three humans with guard stats.

Commissar, page 140

Crimes such as murder and treason are punishable by death. Executions, usually hangings, are public events held in a square in Oldtown appropriately called Gallows Square. See Chapter 28: Crime and the Law for more on trials and sentencing.

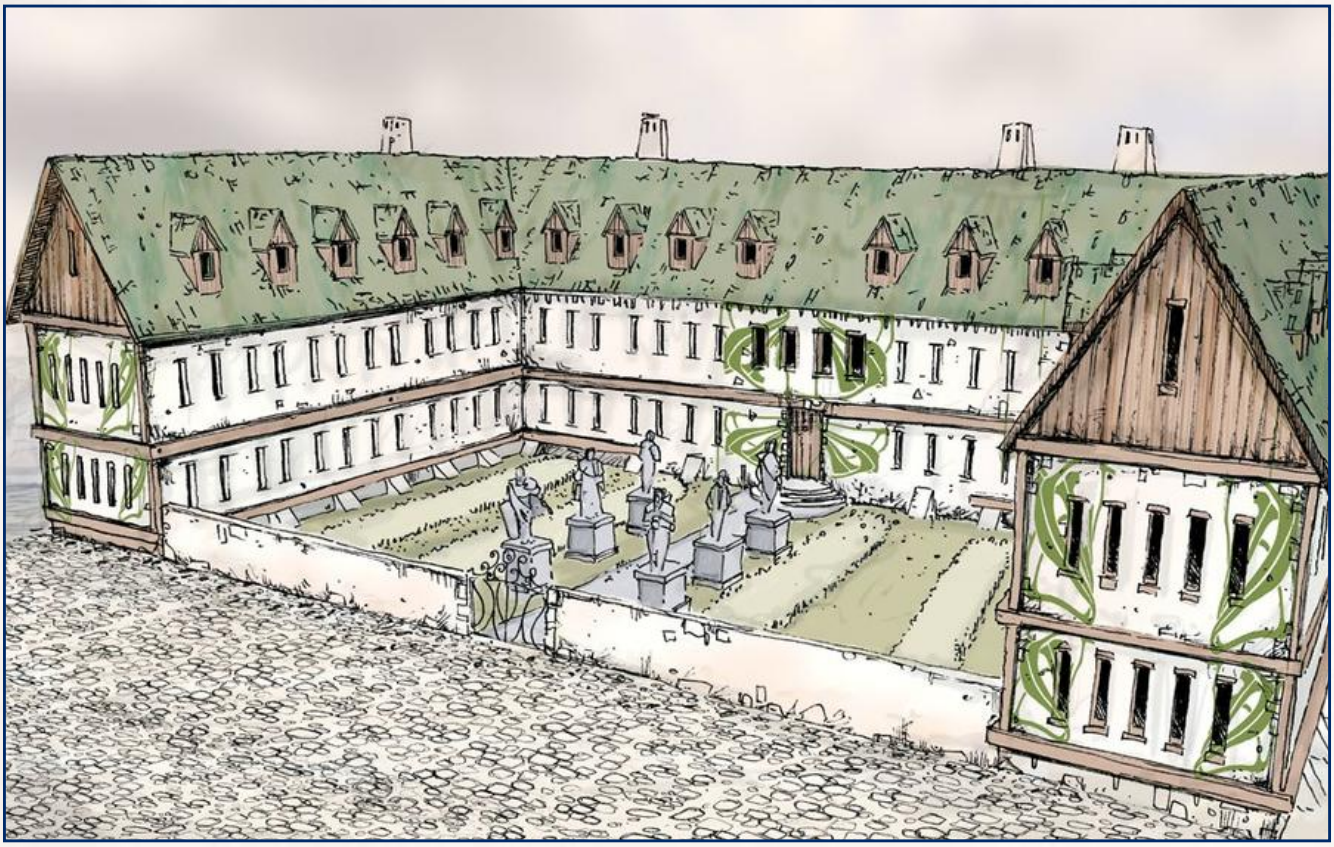
Spending two hours in the library gives the character a +2 bonus on their roll, assuming they are reading up on a subject covered by skills such as History, Medicine, or Religion. This is true even if such rolls are not normally possible without proper skill or training. Spending four hours gives the character advantage on this roll.

Nelinda Kruppet has mage stats.

Delver's Guild Library, page 299

Sages' Guild, page 308

Prison, page 405



The City Library

Campaign Use: Those who make use of the City Library for its intended purpose can make Intelligence checks on any subject.

CLOCK TOWER

Shadow Road (#42, D5); see map, page 290 5 gp

One of the most recognizable structures in the north part of Oldtown, the Clock Tower was built at the height of the Empire almost two hundred years ago and boasts the largest clock in the city. Unfortunately, it hasn't worked in years.

Now the building stands vacant. Rickety wooden stairs lead from a large, empty ground floor chamber up to an equally empty second level. The stairs to the third level, where the clockworks can be found, have collapsed. Now the place is a rat-infested, cobweb-filled testament to an earlier time.

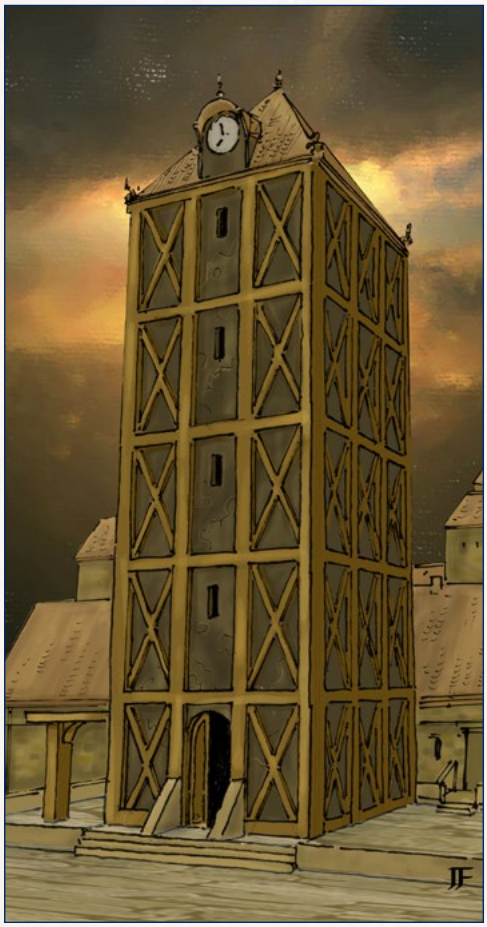
Some say the Clock Tower contains a hidden shrine to the Clockwork Goddess Tevra, but it does not.

A cellar below the Clock Tower leads to a very old family crypt that once lay under a manor house built on the site (the mansion is long gone). The crypt leads to an area called the Buried City, the ancient remains of a settlement ten thousand years old. This area opens into the natural caverns below the city and eventually to the colossal Giant's Staircase.

Giant's Staircase, page 418

Scenario: A massive troll has moved into the old crypts below the Clock Tower, making a once moderately easy means of accessing the

Troll: *100 hp, advantage on attack rolls and saves*



Oldtown Map: Page 290

Giant's Staircase a quite dangerous one. Any adventurers who take care of this troll would earn the gratitude of other delvers and make a bit of a name for themselves in the process.

DALENGUARD

Dalenguard Road (#60, C6) see map, page 298 200,000 gp

This vast fortress was built to withstand an assault far greater than any that has ever threatened it. Fearing the return of Ghul and his Squirming Horde, its designers fashioned a bastion to hold off legions of orcs, monsters, and half-demon things. However, no force was ever marshaled against Dalenguard. And now, more than seven hundred and fifty years later, it sits within the confines of a small metropolis.

Jan Dalen was a great Prustan general in the Ghulwar who fell in battle, the victim of some dire spell. The fortress was named in his honor. According to the philosopher Tinerias Edren, Dalenguard serves as the Pact of Brightfather's Day writ in stone. Although it was built mostly by dwarves, the other species of the pact each contributed to the fortress as well, at least in some ceremonial way. The builders clearly were highly motivated—the massive structure took only three years to complete.

The western portion of Dalenguard butts up against the relatively sheer face of the cliff. Dalenguard's massive walls—25 feet thick and 30 feet tall—extend out from the cliff, forming a large bailey. The walls have room for defenders to walk on top of and even within them. Made of huge, dwarf-cut stone, they are the oldest part of the fortress, yet they hardly show their age. But then, in dwarven terms, seven hundred and fifty years is not old for a wall.

The interior of the fortress holds a number of different buildings as well as a substantial yard for training, drills, and parades. Only one of these buildings is as old as the wall: a keep that rises above the rest of the fortress like a sentinel. Some of the other, newer buildings are wood, some are stone, and some are brick. Some have been built into the wall, while others are free-standing. They serve as barracks, stables, storehouses, training facilities, residences, and a magazine.

Today Dalenguard provides a bottleneck for those attempting to enter the Nobles' Quarter; the only path up to the ridge where the nobles live begins within the fortress on Dalenguard Road. Since no one enters Dalenguard without having their papers checked and their purpose examined, no one gets in or out of the Nobles' Quarter without that same scrutiny—at least, not without magical means.

Dalenguard serves as the garrison for the Commissar's Men, a special battalion of

Ghul and Squirming Horde, page 83

Pact of Brightfather's Day, page 87

Getting Through the Checkpoint

After all these years, surely thieves and others have found ways around the checkpoint at the gates of Dalenguard to get into or out of the Nobles' Quarter, right? Not really. Going over the wall to avoid the gates is possible, but probably not worth the skill and trouble it would take to avoid all the sentries. It's easier at night, or with an invisibility *spell, but it's just as easy to forge some papers and go through the checkpoint in disguise or with a* disguise *spell. The guards typically have only a slightly better than average chance to spot forgeries or disguises, as the tedium of inspecting papers all day takes its toll.*

Commissar's Men, page 141

Commissar Igor Urnst, page 140

approximately three hundred elite Imperial troops. The fortress, however, could easily provide space for five times that number. In truth, three hundred soldiers might have a difficult time adequately defending a fortress this large. However, should the city ever come under attack, the City Watch and other defenders know to fall back to this position. This is also the home of the famous Commissar's Guns, a battery of two dozen huge cannons used in the Gnoll War.

Encounter: As the player characters pass through Dalenguard on their way to or from the Nobles' Quarter (or perhaps on other business), the Commissar himself, accompanied by a retinue of guards, assistants, and scribes, comes out of the main keep. For a brief moment, he makes eye contact with one of the PCs. If the character in question smiles politely or otherwise respectfully acknowledges the Commissar's look, Igor Urnst stops and asks the PCs their names, and chats with them briefly. Showing him anything other than respect in this situation could result in the characters' arrest and a hefty fine.

THE MAIN KEEP

Dalenguard's main keep stands four stories high, with a single tower rising much higher and massive front gates emblazoned with the symbol of Ptolus. Above the doors hangs a massive, functional clock.

This large building holds barracks and military administration offices, including the Commissar's office. The keep also has a large chamber where the City Council meets, with a number of adjoining chambers for supplementary meetings and similar work. The council's chamber is proof against all divination magic, and a permanent spell reveals invisible creatures that might spy on the proceedings.

THE COMMISSAR'S RESIDENCE

The Commissar's Residence is a large manor house within the walls of Dalenguard. The two-story building is made of brick with shuttered windows and a gabled roof with wooden shingles. Two guards stand outside the door at all times. Commissar Igor Urnst dwells here with his family. Magical alarms cover every entry, and a permanent ward prohibits teleporting intruders.

THE HALL OF THE TWELVE

The free-standing Hall of the Twelve is the newly built and opulent meeting hall of the Twelve Commanders of Ptolus. A paved plaza with a fountain stands between the hall and the Main Keep. A permanent ward secures the place against those who would teleport in, another permanent spell keeps out invisible intruders, and the entire building remains proof against scrying or similar intrusive divinations.

DELVER'S GUILD LIBRARY AND MAPROOM

Dalenguard Road (#58, E6); see map, page 290 20,400 gp (books and maps)

Smaller than the City Library, the more exclusive Delver's Guild Library and Maproom occupies a converted tower once owned by a brother and sister duo of half-elf wizards. The cramped rooms are full of books. Most volumes in this library are bound collections of handwritten notes penned by adventurers while exploring and later purchased by the guild.

The library is open only to Delver's Guild members of at least Guildsman rank. Reading and studying are free, but those wishing to copy a map or notes from a book must pay 5 gp per page. (As part of that fee, a librarian will assist in the copying.)

The head librarian is Shad Livbovic (male human), who fills the role of the bookish, thin, bespectacled, and absent-minded bookworm quite nicely. What doesn't fit the stereotype is Shad's adoptive daughter, Benris. At fifteen years old, she is already over 6 feet tall. Scuttlebutt says that delvers found the infant Benris in the Dungeon and gave her to Shad and his wife (who has since passed on). A very few in the know—most of them elves—who have seen Benris about town have guessed that she is likely not human at all, but a Charad Titan foundling. How and why that came to be, no one knows.

Campaign Use: Anyone using the Delver's Guild Library and Maproom may make Intelligence checks.

HAMMERSONG VAULTS

Whipstone Street (#63, D7) see map, page 290; 35,000 gp

Hammersong Vaults, owned by Ollam Hammersong (male dwarf), occupies a small, windowless, all-brick building. Ollam has built various lockboxes and vaults in and below this structure and rents space in them for people to store their valuables.

Each vault is made of 3-inch-thick iron plates and is double-locked. Vaults come in three sizes: small (2 feet square, 10 gp per month), medium (4 feet square, 18 gp per month) and large (10 feet square, 30 gp per month).

Each lockbox is made of iron a half-inch thick. They are all chained to a wall and locked. The lockboxes themselves are kept in a vaultlike room with a 3-inch-thick locked iron door. All lockboxes measure 12 inches by 8 inches by 4 inches. Rent for them is 2 gp per month.

Renters get a key to their vault or lockbox, but not a key into the building; the iron door into Hammersong Vaults has a triple lock. A guard allows renters (or potential renters) into the building after they show proper identification. They disallow admittance to people they consider suspicious.

Ollam employs ten vault guards (humans or dwarves), any five of which are on duty at any given time. Ollam himself is usually here as well; if not, his wife Karsha (female dwarf) is present instead.

Delver's Guild, page 108

Twelve Commanders, page 140

Shad Livbovic has artisan stats, page 606

City Library, page 295

Guildsman-level membership in the Delver's Guild is available to anyone. Dues are 20 gp per year and grant a member access to the guild information, library, maproom, and waystations, plus a 10 percent discount at Ebbert's Outfitters in Delver's Square.

Spending two hours in the Delver's Guild Library gives the character a +2 bonus on their roll, assuming they are reading up on a subject such as local history, monster lore, or the Dungeon. Spending four hours gives the character advantage on this roll.

Ollam Hammerson has veteran stats.

Vault: *DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to pick each lock of a vault*

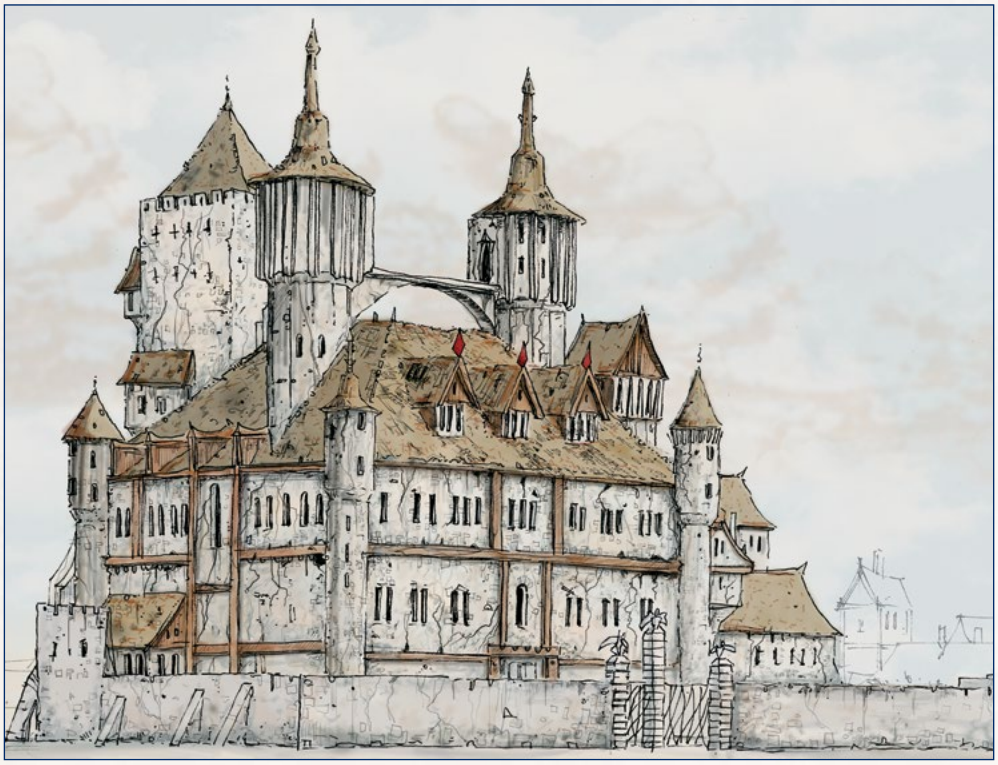
The lockbox lock is DC 22.

Building (triple-locked): *DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to pick each of the three locks on the door into the building*

Ollam's vault guards have guard stats.

Karsha Hammersong has veteran stats.

Hammersong Vaults has never been burgled simply because most thieves who could manage it are more interested in bigger loot. It's assumed—rightly or wrongly—that most people using the vaults don't have anything too valuable to store, or they'd have their own vaults.



IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY

Dalenguard Road (#54, D6); see map, page 290 60,000 gp

According to the decree of Empress Addares XIV in 547 IA, every city in the Empire of at least twenty thousand citizens received 100,000 gp to be put toward the building of an official Imperial University to increase education throughout her lands. At that time, Ptolus barely qualified—in fact, rumor has it that census figures were falsified by then-Commissar Tarbenthis Frome, a corrupt official in the pocket of Maven Balacazar. The university was built quickly, on the site of the old open market, which the city moved to where the North Market lies today.

The university is a grand building with numerous towers. The largest tower is seven stories tall, making it one of the tallest buildings in the district. Nolvaga von Meudel (female human), a Tarsis native, is the chancellor of the university. She is only present about half the time, as she returns to Tarsis frequently. While she is gone, vice chancellor Tharla Tennebaum (female human)—who prefers the title "administrator"—is in charge. As opposed to the middle-aged, arrogant, and effete Nolvaga, the older Tharla seems extremely competent and efficient.

The university offers courses on all manner of subjects, including mathematics, literature, history, and science; the latter includes courses on magic—its esoteric study, not its practice. Most human students range in age from sixteen to twenty-four, although most spend no more than two years in their studies here. There are, of course, wealthy and talented intellectuals who become veritable "professional students," but they are eventually offered teaching positions. Students do not live at the university except under special circumstances.

The teaching staff numbers three dozen, with at least twice that many assistants and support staff. The job of an instructor here is a coveted, well-paying position (around 500 gp per year). About half the teachers live in communal housing at the university, and the rest live elsewhere in the district.

THE TENEBROUS PIT

Deep within the cellars beneath the university lies the Tenebrous Pit, a leftover creation of a lieutenant of Ghul and long forgotten by most. The pit's creator, a Sorn-Ulth sorcerer named Gestellek, tapped into a primordial power source: the evil that has seeped into the earth due to the prolonged presence of the sleeping Galchutt.

The pit is a deep shaft with a spiral stair around the sides leading down into a pool of special liquid shadow. This evil essence transforms anyone who drinks it or immerses themselves in it into a shadow-infused creature. A magical artifact called the *box of shadows* taps into the power of the pit, forming itself into a conduit.

Some three hundred students attend the Imperial University at present. A full course load (four classes) costs 500 gp per year for citizens, and twice that amount for noncitizens.

Nolvaga von Meudel has aristocrat stats, page 606

Tharla Tennebaum has artisan stats, page 606

Shadow-Infused Creature

A creature who drinks the liquid shadow gains advantage and adds double their proficiency bonus on Stealth checks, and can attempt to hide even if they can be seen clearly. In magical areas of shadow, such as in the Shadow of Ptolus, within 100 feet of the Tenebrous Pit, or while holding the shadowstaff, *the creature's hit points increase to maximum.*

A creature who immerses themselves entirely in the pit gains the ability to control their own shadow and, with practice, the shadows of other creatures, as well as undead shadows. Controlling one's own shadow gives a character a shadow minion (identical to the undead monster, although creatures slain by it do not rise as shadows) as an ally, spy, and bodyguard.

To control someone else's shadow or an undead shadow, a character must make the attempt at the start of their turn, and cannot use a bonus action or reaction until the start of their next turn (the character can attempt this once per day). The target can resist this control with a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the character permanently gains control of the shadow. A shadow-infused creature can have a number of shadow minions at the same time equal to their Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma bonus (whichever is highest, minimum 1).

Due to the loss of their essential essence, a target whose shadow has been stolen always subtracts 1d4 from their attack rolls and saving throws (similar to a bane *spell). A* remove curse *or* greater restoration *restores a target's shadow (by stealing it back from the shadow-infused character).*

Ghul, page 83

Galchutt, page 62

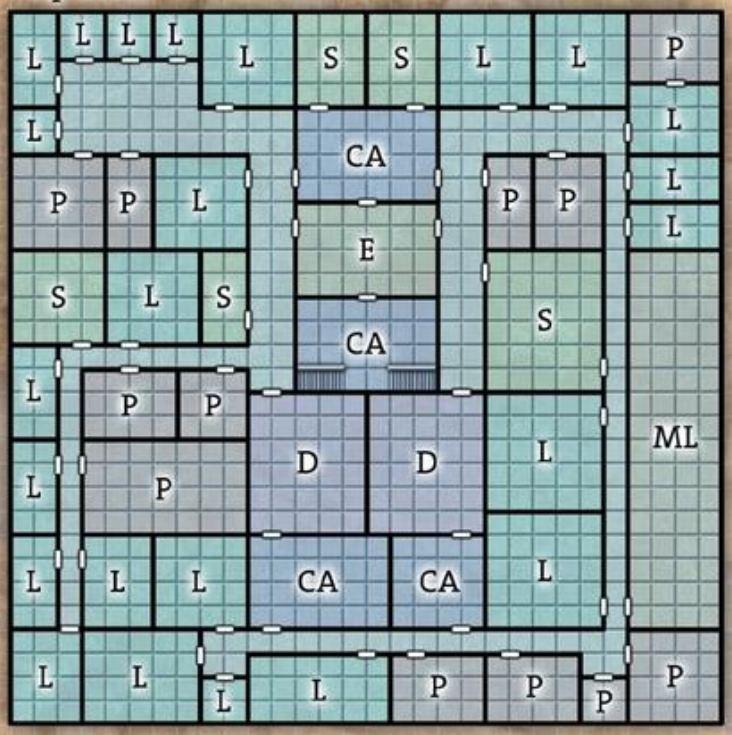
Liquid shadow, page 647

Shadow of Ptolus, page 304

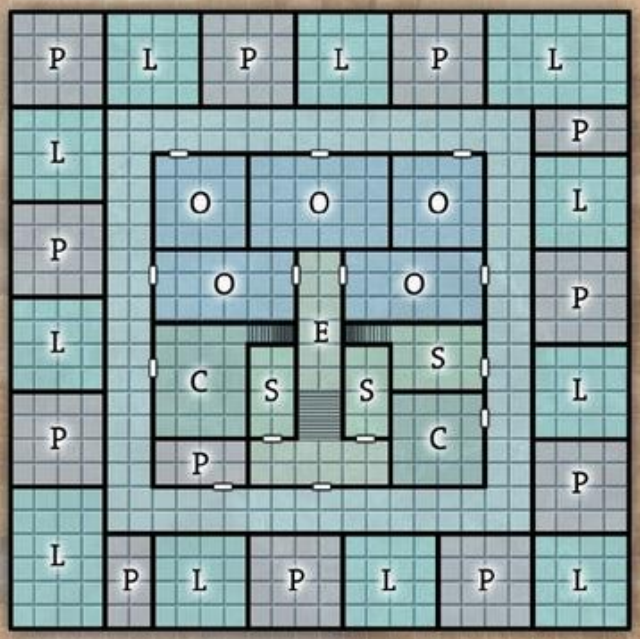
Box of shadows, *page 636*

The Inverted Pyramid

Top Level



Second Level

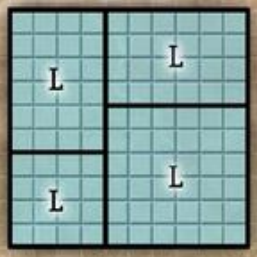


Third Level

Fourth Level

Fifth Level

Sixth Level



Seventh Level

Eighth Level

C = Conjuration Room
CA = Common Area
D = Dining Hall
E = Entrance Room
L = Living Quarters
ML = Main Library
O = Office
P = Private Studies/ Libraries
W = Workshop

1 square = 10 feet

THE INVERTED PYRAMID

special location; see map, page 301 !!!
10,000,000 gp

The Inverted Pyramid is the most famous building that no one's ever seen. Floating invisibly over Oldtown, this structure is literally an upside-down pyramid. It is as old as the organization and a major artifact all its own, with huge chunks of heliothil embedded within its sides to keep it afloat—even if the structure were attacked by antimagic. Since the pyramid once hovered many leagues south of the city, it apparently can fly great distances.

Heliothil, page 646

Inverted Pyramid symbol (the organization, page 114)

The Inverted Pyramid measures about 300 feet to a side, and the interior has enough rooms that every member could live comfortably within (only about one in four members actually does) with a private workshop, in addition to the conjuration rooms, meeting rooms, dining halls, kitchens, studies, storage rooms, offices, and the library.

From within, the outer walls of the Inverted Pyramid are transparent, allowing those inside to look down upon the city. The interior contains meeting halls, private chambers, summoning rooms, and workshops of all kinds. The structure itself, including its interior walls and floors, remains virtually immune to all but the most potent of magics, so magical accidents and mishaps are unlikely to damage the building. (The walls are also good for testing out new spells, since they cannot be harmed by magic.)

Greatest collection, page 116

There are no exterior doors to the Inverted Pyramid. One must use teleportation magic to get inside. Spellcasters without the ability to teleport had better invest in a magic item, or they will find themselves unable to take advantage of most of the benefits of membership.

Membership benefits, page 115
Soul magic, page 619

The interior of the Inverted Pyramid is proof against all divinatory magic; the spells that ward the place are soul magic spells. Only special rooms (including one of the three entrance rooms) allow teleportation or conjuration magic to function from outside. These chambers are deviously warded against unauthorized intrusion and, if need be, guarded by members. Otherwise, such spells still work with respect to the rest of the interior—thus, a mage may teleport from one room to another, or conjure an object from one room to another. Many chambers in the pyramid, in fact, have no doors and require teleportation magic to enter (the walls are immune to magic that creates physical passages and block out-of-phase creatures like ghosts).

Jevicca Nor, Inverted Pyramid Mage, page 115

MAP KEY

All areas shown on the map on the previous page are spotlessly clean. Semi-invisible magical servants, at the beck and call of any member, roam nonprivate areas cleaning, tidying, and running errands. They can bring food, furniture, or mundane supplies at any time.

C: Conjuration Room: Creatures or objects can be conjured into special rooms on the second and third levels from the top and on the very bottom level (but they do not allow entrance for teleporters from the outside).

CA: Common Area: These serve as meeting areas, lounges, conference rooms, or a combination of all three. They are elegantly but sparsely furnished.

D: Dining Hall: The communal dining rooms always include a kitchen, even though the mages often create or conjure their food magically.

E: Entrance Room: Members can teleport into entrance rooms from the outside on the top, second, and third levels of the pyramid.

L: Living Quarters: Although only about twenty-five to thirty members live here full time, many more members take advantage of the living quarters for short stays (for example, not all members are permanent Ptolus residents, so they need a place to stay when they come to town). Most of these chambers are protected by magical alarms and wards tailored to each resident.

ML: Main Library: A large room in the pyramid's top level contains the greatest collection of magical lore and knowledge in the world.

O: Office: Administration duties required by the organization are conducted in offices on the second and fifth levels from the top.

P: Private Studies/Libraries: These small but comfortable places to study new lore are also often warded with magical traps or alarms.

S: Storage Rooms: In the pyramid's storage rooms, one might find anything from food and cloth to spare wands (not yet ensorcelled with magical power) and crates or bottles of strange spell components.

W: Workshop: Although a few workshops are for alchemical creations, most are for crafting magic items. Most of the rooms are custom designed for particular types of items, so there is a room for potions, one for wands, and so on. Typically, a workshop has a couple of magic items stored within it, usually in a safe with a magical lock.

Oldtown Map: Page 290

KADMIEL, THE SHADE TOWER

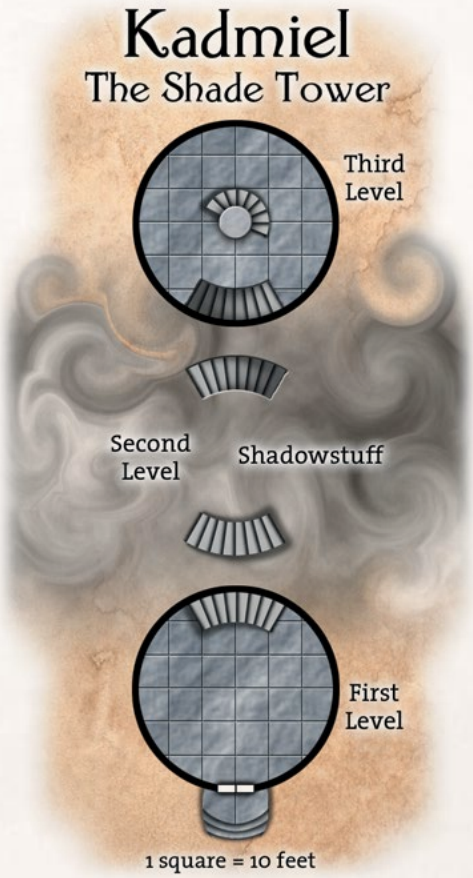
Ridge Road (#47, E5); see map, below
gp varies

Most people do not know the name "Kadmiel," but quite a few residents of Oldtown talk about "the Shade Tower." On bright, moonlit evenings (which are not common in Ptolus), a passerby might spy on the ground a long shadow of a round tower, even though no apparent tower casts the shadow. This shadow is Kadmiel.

Kadmiel exists in what sages call the Shadow of Ptolus (see the sidebar on the next page). It is the only structure of substance in this strange half-world, having been mystically transposed so that only its shadow exists in the real world and only its real form exists in the shadow realm.

Getting to Kadmiel is no easy task, for one can reach it only through the Shadow of Ptolus. Accessing the Shadow of Ptolus is possible only via a handful of methods, or if one has the *box of shadows*.

Hundreds of years ago, Kadmiel—a tower of elven creation—was home to a powerful elf sorcerer whose name is now lost. Seeking to create a magic item to serve as a source of unquenchable power for himself, this sorcerer crafted a box of ithilnaur and enchanted it. Through a misunderstanding of the forces he was dealing with, he tapped into the terrible Tenebrous Pit and inadvertently created the *box of shadows*. The power within the box transformed the sorcerer into a being of pure shadow that eventually disappeared into the darkness (but not before he crafted the *shadowstaff* as well). The box also transposed the sorcerer's tower into the Shadow of Ptolus, creating Kadmiel as it is today.



Over two centuries ago, an adventurer named Thadeus Koll traveled to the Shadow of Ptolus and obtained the *box of shadows*. When he returned to the normal world, he turned the box over to the Malkuth. These angelic beings deemed it best that the box leave the proximity of the Spire altogether, hoping that distance would lessen its power. The Malkuth entrusted the box to a faraway loremaster, but a frost giant named Ymrik eventually stole it. The giant later lost it to a man named Thurvan Rashong, a former companion of Daersidian Ringsire and Brusselt Airmol.

Unfortunately, the box's power quickly corrupted Thurvan. Now he seeks to transform all other living beings into shadows. For the moment, however, he has retreated to Kadmiel, having returned the box to its original resting place. He will remain there until he comes up with a plan to carry out his goal. (Daersidian and Brusselt are looking for a way to stop him without harming him, but they don't know how to get to Kadmiel.)

The interior of the tower is always filled with shadowy light. No power short of a god can make it dimmer or brighter.

The areas described below correspond to the map at left.

FIRST LEVEL: GUARDIANS

The door into Kadmiel is never locked. The ceilings in this level of the tower are 12 feet high. The entry room is empty, although tapestries, crossed swords, and shields decorate the walls. All these items are woven of shadowstuff and have no real substance.

Guardians: Eight hound-like fiends with smooth black coats and sharp teeth called shadow mastiffs usually guard the entrance to the tower from within this chamber.

SECOND LEVEL: TENEBROUS ABODE

This is a place of many secrets. So deep are the shadows on the tower's second level that one can easily get lost or come under the impression that the chamber is much larger than the tower that creates it. In fact, the room seems to go off into infinity, although one can never see more than 10 feet. Within this shadowy expanse, one can find the hidden lairs of some of the tower's

Tenebrous Pit, page 300

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Arcana, History, or Investigation check reveals a few details about the mysterious Kadmiel, the Shade Tower:

- *The Shade Tower is a magical tower that doesn't exist, even though it casts a shadow in Oldtown (DC 18).*
- *The Shade Tower, also known as Kadmiel, exists in a place called the Shadow of Ptolus (DC 22).*
- *Planar magic or the* box of shadows *can get someone to the Shadow of Ptolus (DC 24).*

Malkuth, page 124

Accessing the Shadow of Ptolus

The main spells used for this are demiplane, etherealness, gate, *and* plane shift. *Casting one of these spells with the intent of entering the Shadow of Ptolus transports the caster (and other creatures, if the spell allows it) to that half-world, assuming the caster has careful instructions and casts the spell while standing in the shadow of Kadmiel in the real world. Magic items with similar uses are an* amulet of the planes *or a* cubic gate *(if one of the faces of the cube is attuned to the Shadow of Ptolus).*

Box of shadows, *page 636*

Daersidian Ringsire and Brusselt Airmol, page 213

Ithilnaur, page 647

Shadow mastiffs have shadow demon stats, but cannot fly, and attack with a bite instead of claws. In the Shadow of Ptolus and Kadmiel itself, they have maximum (108) hp and advantage on all saves.

In some ancient texts, the Tenebrous Abode of the Shade Tower is called the Shadow Rift.

The Shadow of Ptolus

The Shadow of Ptolus is a gloomy half-world that may be an alternate Ethereal Plane. It exists, or rather coexists, only in an area about a mile around the Spire. Most likely it originated as a dark reflection created by the residual power of Jabel Shammar, or perhaps the Galchutt. Only shadows exist in this parallel realm—shadows of everyone and everything in the real world. Thus, if one were to travel to the Shadow of Ptolus, one could see indistinct shadows of places in the city and watch as the (silent) shadows of people moved among them.

So Much Shadow

The fact that Ptolus has a Shade Tower, a noble house devoted to shadow (page 98), Shadow Sendings (page 154), the Shadow Theater (page 310), and a box of shadows *(page 636) results from the existence of the Tenebrous Pit below the Imperial University. Its subtle influence over the last millennium has woven its way through many aspects of Ptolus life with extraordinarily few people realizing it.*

Hidden lair: *DC 18 Perception check to find*

Liquid shadow, page 647

The magical trap is a glyph of warding, *triggered by contact: DC 14, 20-foot radius, 22 (5d8) cold damage, half damage on a successful save.*

Mindfire: *A creature who inhales the spores must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or contract the disease. Each day the creature takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage as their brain feels like it's burning; their Intelligence score is reduced by 1d4, and they must make another Constitution save (two saves means the creature has overcome the disease). The target dies if this reduces its Intelligence to 0. Finishing a long rest recovers 1 lost point of Intelligence. An infected creature can infect others by proximity.*

GM TIPS

Whole adventures could be created around the many lairs that lie within the Tenebrous Abode. Some who have come here could have built entire fortresses of solid shadowstuff.

Shadow infused, page 300

Gold Dragonscales, page 333

previous occupants. They appear as substantive cavelike structures among the shadows, but they prove difficult to find, for they are made of somewhat solid shadowstuff that's the same dim grey color as the shadows that surround them.

Getting back to the central area of this level (where the stairs are) is always easy and never takes more than a few minutes, no matter how far one has strayed.

By exploring this area, called the Tenebrous Abode, one can find a number of hidden lairs. Searching through the shadows to find them takes anywhere from a few minutes to a couple of hours each. In addition to simple living conditions (usually a cot or straw sleeping mat as well as some clothing, a few tools, pots, and other various items), a randomly discovered lair might contain the following:

d20	Contents of Lair
1	Sealed pot with a pint of liquid shadow
2	1d6 + 3 shadows that attack immediately
3	Bag with 1d6 × 100 gp
4	Small copper box containing three black pearls worth 1,000 gp each
5	1d4 greater shadows that attack immediately
6	1d3 desiccated corpses
7	A magical trap
8	Spell scroll of a darkness spell
9	Spell scroll of a ghostly horse mount
10	Spell scroll of a disguise spell and an illusion spell
11	Scroll containing some of the history of Kadmiel, including the location of the Tenebrous Pit
12	Scroll with information about the process of becoming shadow infused
13	Spellbook containing 1d6 + 2 random low-power illusion spells
14	*Potion of superior healing*
15	Gold idol of a squat, froglike demon worth 450 gp
16	Magic wand that emits blinding flashes of light
17	Piece of worthless jewelry covered in mindfire spores
18	Magical bag that is larger on the inside than the outside, but eats items placed within it
19	Strange book with unintelligible writing and an evil aura
20	Gold Dragonscales game set worth 500 gp

THIRD LEVEL: THE BOX OF SHADOWS

The heart of the tower Kadmiel is a single chamber, 60 feet across and 80 feet high. In the middle of this room rises a pillar, 10 feet in diameter and 60 feet high. A narrow staircase (only 2 feet wide) circles around the pillar up to its top, where the *box of shadows* rests. From this perch, Thurvan Rashong is likely to greet visitors and opponents, the box firmly in his clutches.

Corrupted by his treasure, Thurvan never willingly gives up the box. Convincing him to leave the tower requires very skilled diplomacy as well as a good reason why. Most likely, Thurvan will use force to protect himself and the box and to rid Kadmiel of intruders. At this point, he has become so in thrall to the box that even his old friends Daersidian Ringsire and Brusselt Airmol won't be able to reason with him.

KAIRA SWANWING'S HOUSE

Becker Street (#56, D6); see map, page 290 2,000 gp

A rather modest, well-kept house sits near the center of Oldtown amid a number of other modest, well-kept homes. This house in particular, however, belongs to the head of the Knights of the Golden Cross, Kaira Swanwing. It is full of caged birds and birds on perches—maybe as many as two dozen of them.

Off the kitchen, a stairway down appears to go into a cellar but instead leads to a black-and-white marbled hall under the house. This hall is appropriate for meetings, feasts, and parties (which Kaira is known for). Off this grand hall lies a secret room where she keeps valuables.

Campaign Use: Kaira could easily become a mentor to PCs, particularly ones just getting their footing as adventurers. She might invite them to her house out of the blue (at least, that's the way it seems to the PCs) and offer to train and advise them. In exchange, she asks them to do tasks for her and the Knights.

THE PALE TOWER

Toner Street (#38, D4); see map, page 306 90,000 gp

Standing in stark contrast to all the structures around it, the Pale Tower rises up more like a marble monument than a building. The windowless round tower is faultlessly white and shines with a brilliance that belies its age. This is the home of the Malkuth, angels now and forever bound to this world.

The inside of the tower does not at all conform to its exterior shape. It houses almost sixty residents and provides numerous living quarters and common areas, as well as a parlor, study, drawing room, dining hall, large kitchen, library, and some rather unique magically enhanced chambers. About half the residents are celestial beings, while most of the rest are either half-celestials or aasimars.

One of the better-known inhabitants of the Pale Tower is the Graven, a stone golem covered in engraved holy symbols. The power of the symbols has granted the Graven a normal level of intelligence. He is quiet, contemplative, and serene, spending most of his time studying holy texts. However, if the tower or its occupants come under threat, he is the first to leap to its defense. He almost never leaves the Pale Tower, but when he does, it is in the company of his friend Glasa Tiaro (female half-celestial).

Box of shadows, *page 636*

Thurvan Rashong has veteran stats; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: The box of shadows, +3 leather armor, +1 quarterstaff, +1 longbow, +1 arrows (20). *He is a shadow-infused creature (see page 300), so here he has 90 hp, Stealth +4 (with advantage), and can attempt to hide even when he is being seen. It's a DC 24 Persuasion check to convince Thurvan to leave Kadmiel.*

Malkuth, page 124

House Sadar, sometimes called the House of Shadows, is looking for the box of shadows. *Lord Renn Sadar spends significant time researching the artifact, but he does not know it has returned to the site of its creation. Renn currently wields the* shadowstaff *and has heard the rumors of the Shade Tower.*

Daersidian Ringsire and Brusselt Airmol, page 213

Kaira Swanwing and the Knights of the Golden Cross, page 121

The key to the box of shadows *is currently at large.*

The Graven has stone golem stats, with Intelligence 10, Charisma 10, Persuasion +5, Religion +5, Perception +5; alignment lawful good. He can speak and understand Common.

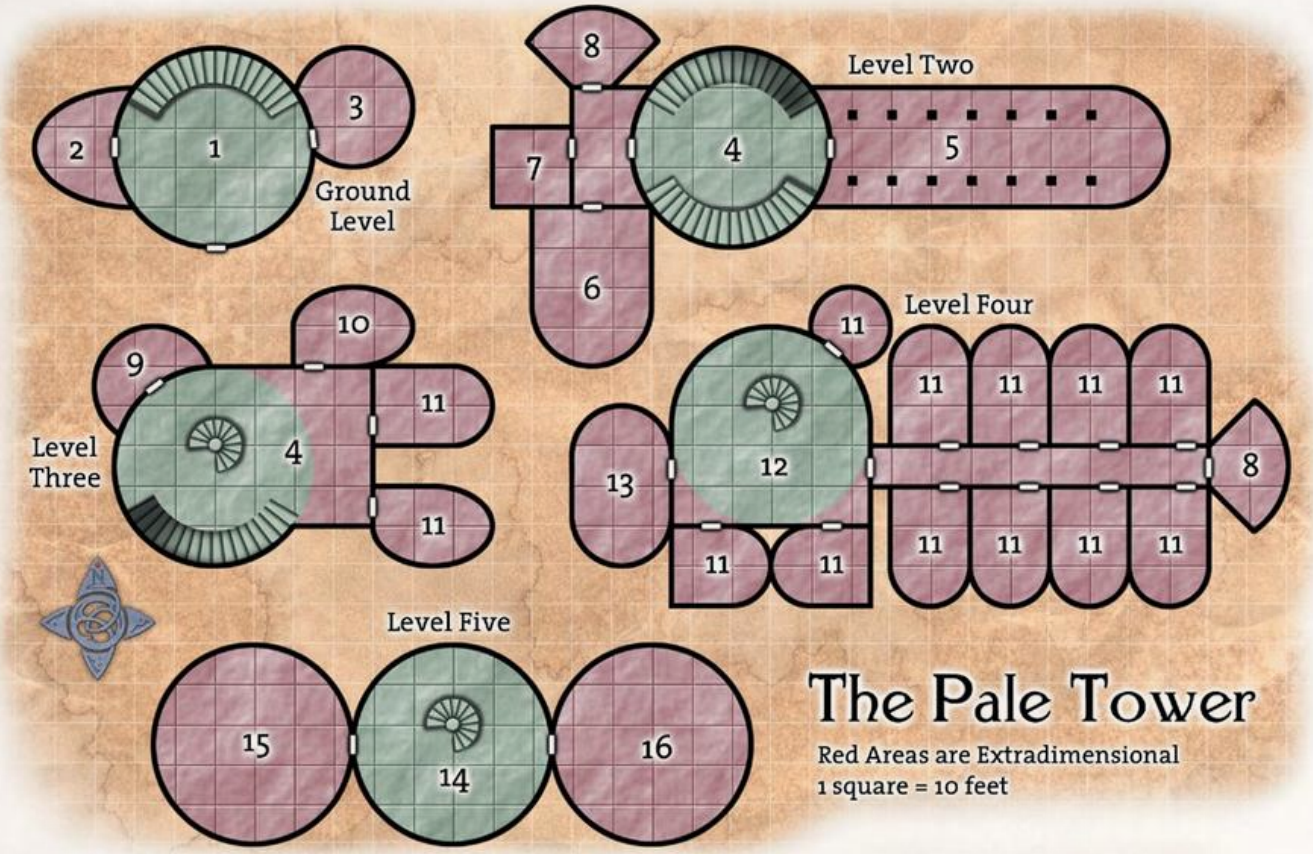
Glasa Tiaro has assassin stats, but with no Assassinate ability; alignment neutral good.

Secret room: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

A Knowledge (local) or Gather Information check uncovers some facts about the Pale Tower and the Malkuth:

- *The Malkuth are celestial creatures living in the world (DC 15).*
- *The Malkuth live in the Pale Tower in Oldtown (DC 18).*
- *Evil cannot enter the Pale Tower (DC 20).*



Observant visitors to the Pale Tower who have also been inside the tower on the estate of House Dallimothan will notice similarities. This is not a coincidence. Both structures were designed by the aasimar wizard Tirestian around 440 IA.

An evil creature in the foyer (or any other part of the Pale Tower) takes 3 (1d6) radiant damage every round, and their attacks, saves, and checks have disadvantage.

Esgilar Masters has champion stats, page 610

GM TIPS

If the player characters come upon evil magic items that they don't know how to dispose of, introduce the Pale Tower as a helpful resource. The Malkuth will be happy to store them for free in their suppression vault (area 10).

Rhoth, page 45

TOWER LAYOUT

The walls of the Pale Tower are stone; the inner walls are 1 foot thick, and the outer walls are 2. The outer walls are further enchanted so that anyone inside can create a window on command. Because of the strange nature of the layout (remember, the interior space does not match the tower's exterior), the perspective one gains from a particular room is only the approximate outer vantage. The window is one-way, allowing someone to see out but not in. These windows do not open and are as sturdy as the wall around them—they are not exits.

All interior doors are wooden and bound in iron. The outer doors are stone and 1 foot thick.

Entering the tower by magic of any kind—whether it be teleportation or magic that temporarily or permanently makes a hole in the wall—is possible only in the foyer (area 1).

Most rooms are austere, with white walls and floors the norm. Occasionally, one sees a wall painted in muted colors with a mural of a heavenly scene. All rooms are magically lit with a warm glow and remain at a steady, comfortable temperature regardless of outside conditions.

The areas described below correspond to the map above.

1. Foyer

It is impossible to enter the Pale Tower in any location other than the foyer, even via teleportation magic. Any evil creature who enters the tower suffers damage and pain every round just for being here. This pain is clearly visible to anyone.

The foyer is empty except for some couches positioned by a curving staircase that leads up. Visitors are welcomed by a host, usually a young aasimar (any gender) wearing a white tunic. This resident offers refreshment to visitors while they wait for the host to fetch the person they have come to see or carry a message to someone in the tower. Nowadays, it is extremely rare that a visitor is allowed to enter any other area of the Pale Tower.

A common visitor is Esgilar Masters (male human), leader of the Order of the Steadfast Heart—an order of knighthood with no representation in Ptolus. Esgilar hails from Rhoth and loves an angel named Evana. Evana, a planetar, does not share his feelings and never sees Esgilar for fear of encouraging him. Esgilar risks his position in his order due to the amount of time he spends at the Pale Tower waiting to express his unrequited love.

2. Drawing Room
The tower's large, comfortable, and stylish drawing room just off the foyer offers many chairs, divans, and small tables. Water and wine served in elegant crystal goblets and pitchers are always available here.

3. Guard Room
On the opposite side of the foyer from the drawing room is a guard room where two devas are stationed at all times. Each has a trumpet that, when blown, is heard throughout the tower.

4. Common Area
Common areas on the second and third floors are mostly open, with long, narrow tapestries on the walls depicting heavenly scenes. In these areas, a visitor might find any one of the Malkuth, such as Mooncry, a beautiful female deva with dark hair cascading down her back past her wings, or Felaer, a male deva with elven features and golden tips on the ends of his white feathers; he carries a double-bladed sword rather than his kind's traditional mace.

5. Grand Hall
This lavish columned ballroom boasts a vaulted ceiling painted with intricate scenes of angels and heavenly locales in pastel colors. The polished white floor is normally bare of furnishings, but at times chairs are brought in so the angelic leaders can address all the Malkuth at once. Long ago, the Malkuth held formal balls here, but that has not happened in at least eighty years.

6. Dining Hall
The Malkuth's dining hall contains three long tables and many comfortable chairs. The ceiling is painted with clouds and birds.

7. Kitchen/Pantry
Adjacent to the dining hall, perhaps surprisingly, lies a typical kitchen with lots of fresh food.

8. Storage
Storage rooms on the second and fourth floors hold a variety of mundane items, ranging from extra chairs to all sorts of tools to old books.

9. Sanctified Arsenal
The 8-inch-thick iron door into this vault on the third floor is always triple locked. This chamber—a very special storage room—holds a number of magic items carefully stored in silk-lined drawers and chests.

Currently, the items stored here include twenty crystal vials containing holy water, three crystal vials containing liquid light, four *potions of superior healing*, two glass jars of ointment that cures wounds or afflictions, a *holy flail*, a candle that prevents creatures in its light from speaking lies, and two spell scrolls each containing a powerful healing spell.

Liquid light, page 647

10. Suppression Vault
The 8-inch-thick iron door into this vault on the third floor is warded against evil and always triple locked.

It is a DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to open each of the three locks on the iron door. Any evil creature that touches it takes 35 (10d6) radiant damage. The vault itself is protected by a forbiddance *spell (radiant damage) against fiends and undead.*

In a way, this chamber is the opposite of the sanctified arsenal (area 9). Sometimes the Malkuth obtain an evil item that cannot be destroyed easily—occasionally people bring them such items, not knowing what else to do with them. The residents of the Pale Tower store these evil items in this suppression vault.

Currently, the items stored include an *unholy* lance, a *talisman of ultimate evil,* two vials of liquid shadow, and a stoppered iron flask imprisoning a hezrou demon.

Deva: *136 hp*

Unholy weapon, *page 645*

Liquid shadow, page 647

Hezrou: *137 hp*

11. Living Quarters
All living quarters in the Pale Tower lie on the third and fourth floors. They range in size, but all are beautiful and comfortable, with all reasonable luxuries (bathtubs, scented wardrobes, and so on).

12. Parlor
Well-appointed and elegant (but not gaudy), the large parlor on the fourth floor seems a comfortable and pleasant place to chat quietly or sip wine, which is just what one will find the Malkuth present doing.

It is not uncommon to find Piraloth (male half-celestial) in the parlor. Unlike many of his kind, Piraloth does not look on his mixed heritage as a blessing, but a curse. He spends most of his days brooding in the Pale Tower.

Piraloth has veteran stats, plus the innate spellcasting of a cambion, resistance to radiant damage, and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

13. Study
Designed for quiet study or reflection, this room on the fourth floor is most often used by people like Tasilicus Rhendron (male human), one of the Pale Tower's few noncelestial residents. He specializes in the magic of mirrors, a brand-new field of magic requiring a great deal of research.

Tasilicus Rhendron has mage stats.

14. Temple of Benevolence
This temple at the center of the tower's top floor is dedicated not to any specific god, but to Good itself. One can revere any good-aligned deity here—or all of them. Some worshippers come here simply to venerate the concept of Good, which the residents call "paying fealty to Heaven."

Iron door: *DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to open each of its three locks*

Aoska of the Malkuth, page 124

King's River Gorge, page 151

Naltegro Suun, page 124

The trapdoor's magical lock is an arcane lock.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check reveals the following details about the Naltegro Suun (page 124):

- *The Naltegro Suun is an organization of elite assassins in Ptolus (DC 15).*
- *Naltegro Suun members are not evil but have their own sense of honor (DC 20).*
- *The Naltegro Suun has a secret meeting hall in or below a tower in the old city wall (DC 24).*

The hidden cohorts have thug stats.

Falstef, a deva and the first of the Malkuth, now languishes in the Dark Reliquary's Cruciform Prison; see page 238.

Relinda Chilithon has artisan stats, page 606

Gerris Hin is one of the most famous sages who ever lived. His studies documented the existence of a buried city beneath Ptolus that was built thousands of years ago.

Vagrants and criminals often use the crumbling shell of the old tower that conceals the Secret Hall as a place to live or hide. These inhabitants frequently examine the trapdoor with curiosity, but, of course, they can never get it open.

The temple has a golden altar, two alabaster fonts of holy water, and a number of bronzewood kneelers. Angelic statues ring the perimeter of the room, and the ceiling has a golden sun painted upon it.

15. Celestial Observatory

In this amazing, magical room on the top floor, it seems as if there are no walls, ceiling, or floor. One simply walks into the "chamber" on a thin strip of solid light and gazes into the beautiful night sky all around, which magnifies the celestial majesty of the heavens. Those with the ability to fly can soar out into the stars and fly among them, always able to return to this doorway. The night sky, however, is just an image created for this chamber—this is not an entrance or an exit from the tower. Nevertheless, the celestial scape here perfectly mirrors the actual sky, so celestial events in the heavens (such as a comet) are mimicked here as well.

16. Cathedral of Heaven

This chamber is very similar to area 15, but the heavens here are lit by the golden sun and filled with billowing clouds.

SAGES' GUILD HEADQUARTERS

Winter Road (#53, D5); see map, page 290 10,000 gp

To someone not in the know, this older building might appear to be a library. It is, in fact, the headquarters of the Sages' Guild. While members of the guild are scattered throughout town, many of them work here, with a well-stocked research library at their disposal and a goodly amount of customer traffic. Aside from offering office space to various sages and a communal library (available to all in the guild, not just those who work here), the building also holds the guild's administrative offices. This includes the office of Relinda Chilithon (female human), the Guildmaster Sage, a surprisingly disorganized and disheveled woman who nonetheless has a winning, charming way about her. Her assistants handle most of the administration—Relinda's talents involve dealing with those outside the guild, which she does wonderfully.

Encounter: When the player characters come to the Sages' Guild looking for information, the entire staff in the building (as well as some of the other guild members from around town) are having a party for Relinda's birthday. A few of the less socially adept sages avoid the party and attempt to continue their work. It's obvious that more than one of the other sages at the party has a bit of a romantic crush on Relinda, who is thoroughly charming.

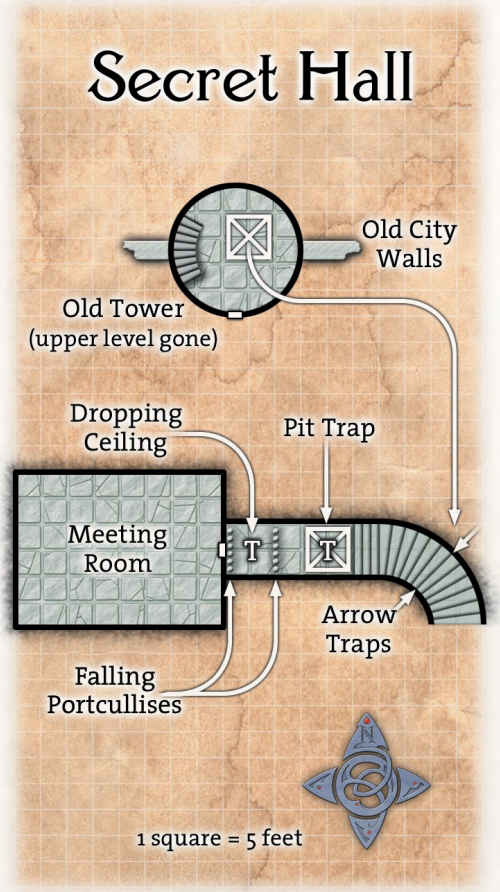
SECRET HALL

near Crossing Street (#41, D4) see map, below 0 gp

The entrance to the Secret Hall is located in the crumbling shell of a tower that forms part of the wall surrounding Oldtown; the tower overlooked the King's River Gorge back in the days when this district formed the entire town.

The secret meeting hall of the Naltegro Suun assassins' guild lies beneath the tower. Members enter via a trapdoor (which is magically locked) on the tower's ground floor that reveals a trap-laden staircase and, at the bottom of that, a trap-filled hallway. When the thirteen assassins are not gathered there, the place is simply an empty, ruined tower. Even the meeting hall below ground is entirely empty—the traps seem to be without point.

While the guild members are present—which occurs only at night, usually on odd-numbered days of the month (and then only once or twice in a given month)—one of the members positions one or two hidden cohorts (usually humans) in the tower to serve as lookouts and a first line of defense.

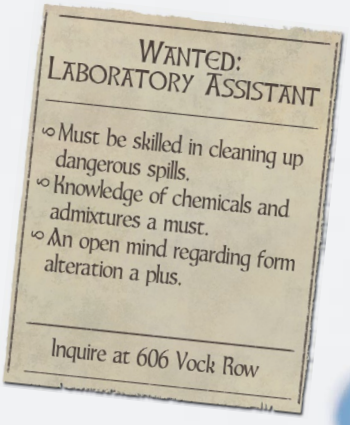


Oldtown Map: Page 290

DWEOMER STREET

Within the heart of Oldtown, the residential area surrounding Vock Row in the northeast part of the district is known by most as Dweomer Street, so named because it is the most fashionable area in town for arcanists to live. The street has become host to a number of towers and rather large homes, many prominently bearing the unique arcane mark that represents each inhabitant as surely as a coat of arms represents a noble house. Most homes are converted to house a laboratory or workshop as well as living quarters. Not surprisingly, Dweomer Street also hosts a number of shops that sell spell components, alchemical substances, laboratory equipment and specialized tools, raw materials for creating magic items, and other unique items that a wizard, warlock, or sorcerer might need. There's even a mage-focused bar and eatery called the Pointy Hat, so named because of the habit (long out of fashion) of old-school wizards to wear tall, pointed hats with moons and stars on them.

Two interesting magic-related sporting events are held in a large, round building on Dweomer Street known as the Games House. The first, called simply "the Mage Game," involves two teams attempting to score points by putting a frictionless ball into the opposing goal, using either physical or magical skill. (Most players use flying spells, although magic that increases running speed or throwing accuracy gets heavy use as well.) The other, newer event is the golem fights. Just as it sounds, this diversion involves magical constructs crafted by local mages battling each other for sport. The Inverted Pyramid sponsors both events. While you can attend either event in person, when a game is in session the Games House becomes one of the most heavily scried places in the city.



Rumors run rampant concerning the strange and mystical qualities of Dweomer Street. The most common is that, due to residual runoff from all the spells cast there—and in particular all the failed potions and alchemical experiments poured down the drains—the sewers beneath Dweomer Street are filled with odd arcane effects and magically mutated creatures. Reportedly, even the ratmen hesitate to tread those sewer runs for fear of being turned into something horrible . . . or encountering some monstrosity that already has.

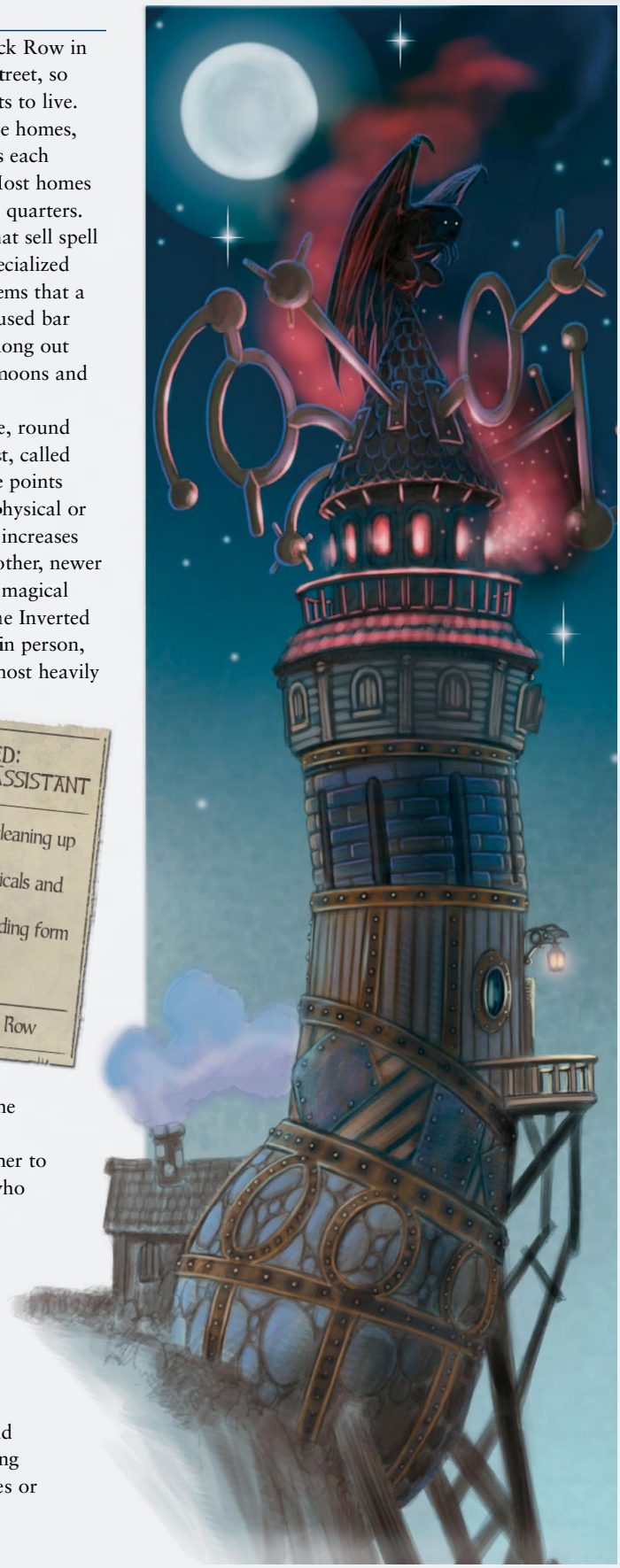
Occasionally, a summoning or experiment goes wrong, and some creature, arcane plague, or transmutational effect is loosed in the neighborhood. The residents of Dweomer Street often band together to deal with the threat, and they may also call certain other mages who specialize in such problems.

Residents also may specialize in particular areas of magic. For instance, Yula Falass (female human) is known as a security specialist: she wards important buildings like the Commissar's home or noble manors for high fees. Then there's Terraeth Whispermoon (male Harrow elf), who uses magic to deal with outbreaks of dangerous diseases, fires, and other threats to the city.

Posted around the neighborhood, one will find various signs and bills (a few magically animated or equipped with sound) advertising laboratory assistants, used wands, and a variety of magical services or opportunities tailored toward spell-users.

Yula Falass has mage stats with an emphasis on abjuration spells.

Terraeth Whispermoon is a sorcerer with mage stats.



Traps: Any weight on the stairs triggers a fusillade of arrows that come out of both sides of the stairway. At the bottom of the stairs is a trapdoor over a spiked pit trap. If anyone steps into the last 10 feet of the passage, portcullises drop to seal that section, and then the falling ceiling triggers, crushing those between the two portcullises.

Fusillade of arrows: *The DC to spot or disarm the trap is 18. Each target on the stairs is attacked by 1d8 arrows, each with a +6 attack bonus. A target that is hit takes 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.*

Spiked pit trap: *The DC to spot or disarm the trap is 18. A creature that steps on the trap must make a DC 18 Dexterity save or fall into the 100-foot-deep pit and land on the spikes for 11 (2d10) piercing damage in addition to the falling damage.*

Portcullises: *AC 19, 10 hp, DC 18 Strength check to break*

Falling ceiling trap: *Any creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Failure means 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a successful save.*

SHADOW THEATER

Shadow Road (#52, D5); see map, page 290 ❗ 5,900 gp

Only very recently opened, this theater is unlike any other. Rather than showing plays with actors, the theater hires "performers" who magically cast animated shadows on a huge white wall to portray an epic story, sometimes with hundreds of characters at once (in large battle scenes), sometimes with amazing effects like flowing rivers or trees blowing in the wind during a storm. The shadow play changes each week. Admission is 1 silver coin.

The performers are all low-level wizards, sorcerers, or bards who use various cantrips and weak spells to create the shadows projected on the wall—sometimes as many as a dozen spells at a time. Carson Herdsman (male human), the father of Tellith of the Ghostly Minstrel, works as the manager here, overseeing the performers and handling the crowds. Carson is, in fact, a terribly inept manager. If the theater succeeds, it will be in spite of him.

Carson Herdsman has commoner stats.

Scenario: Rumors abound that the Shadow Theater is connected to House Sadar, and those in the know wonder whether the magic used in the performances taps into Kadmiel the Shade Tower or the Tenebrous Pit beneath the Imperial University. They whisper that the new theater is part of an insidious plot—perhaps to implant magical suggestions in the minds of the audience? The fact that Renn Sadar has been seen speaking with the manager only validates these rumors. However, they are just rumors. There is nothing sinister about the theater at all, and it has no connection to Sadar or any shadow-magic-related site. Yet.

The truth is that Lord Sadar would like to control the theater, but the owners, a group of wealthy Oldtown residents, will not sell.

Shim has skulk stats (see page 596).

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check tells characters the following about skulks:

- *Strange creatures in Ptolus called skulks keep to the shadows (DC 15).*
- *The skulks use a symbol to mark areas where they sometimes gather (DC 18).*
- *One such marked place is in a particular alley in Oldtown (DC 21).*

SKULK ALLEY

Yarrow Street (#71, D7); see map, page 290 ❗ 0 gp

This is a rather innocuous-looking dead-end alleyway between a pair of office buildings. However, scrawled on the far wall is the skulk symbol. Those who come into the alley and wait by the symbol for at least half an hour are rewarded with a sudden question of "What do you want?" that seems to come out of nowhere.

It is the voice of Shim, a skulk. For a price, he can use his incredible talents to slip into places no one else can go and learn information. Shim will not steal, but he will spy. His price is 100 gp or the equivalent in magic or other goods. There are other skulk meeting points around the city, but few skulks are as willing to deal with non-skulks as Shim.

TOWER OF SCIENCE

Four Fountains Street (#73, D7) see map, page 290 ❗ 940 gp

This building is not yet finished. In fact, it may be at least a year from completion. Still, it seems impressive and looks like no other structure around it. The 30-foot-high iron tower is topped with a framework that doubles its height—the finished tower will be 60 feet high. Shuul agents guard the tower at all times, and workers toil at its construction every day. Overseeing the job is an architect named Dorut Wolfstone (female dwarf).

Dorut Wolfstone has artisan stats, page 606

THE WHITE HOUSE

Fetch Street (#44, E5) ★★★★ see map, next page ❗❗ 154,000 gp

Located in a respectable part of Oldtown, the White House offers some gambling but is primarily a high-end brothel. In both respects, the White House is fully licensed and pays all the proper taxes to keep everything completely legal. It is the most exclusive and lavish establishment of its kind outside of the Nobles' Quarter. The tall, single-story building features white marble facades and massive columns flanking the entrance.

The proprietor of the White House is Thurman Rees (male human). This slight, clean-shaven man with short, dark hair appears flustered all the time. In times of trouble, however, he is deadly with a bow. Thurman is the cousin of the mercenary Barras Noven. The White House employs a dozen prostitutes (four women and eight men, catering to a wide variety of interests), a dozen guards (humans of any gender), a bouncer (male human), and a support staff of ten.

Thurman Rees has veteran stats.

Prostitutes have commoner stats.

White House guards have guard stats.

The White House bouncer has berserker stats.

AGGAH-SHAN

The real owner of the White House is the lich Aggah-Shan, although no one ever sees him here. His lair lies directly below the White House, where he works alongside the newly awakened rhodintor on an enormous chaositech machine. Aggah-Shan has long used magic to keep his criminal operations out of the hands of

Shuul agents, page 126

Ghostly Minstrel, page 193

House Sadar, page 98

Kadmiel, page 303

Tenebrous Pit, page 300

Renn Sadar, page 99

Barras Noven, page 204

Skulk, page 596

Rhodintor, page 594

Chaositech, page 529

Oldtown Map: Page 290

the Balacazars, and recently—with the arrival of Kevris Killraven on the scene—he's succeeded in playing one criminal organization off the other. Specifically, he has stolen a book of names and details of activities belonging to the Balacazar organization; it would be devastating to them if it should fall into Killraven's hands. Using the book as a hostage, he has kept the Balacazars off his back for almost a year.

In the back room of the White House, a secret door leads to stairs down to Aggah-Shan's lair. There, a number of animated undead guardians (mostly wights) and a few monsters and traps guard his possessions. All secret doors in the lair are unlocked. His inner sanctum, where his phylactery lies, is in a room reachable only to someone who teleports there using a special iron chair in the lair. To operate the chair, the user must strap themselves in. During the teleport, carefully positioned spring-blades and spikes sprout out from the chair into the person sitting in it.

In addition to his possessions, Aggah-Shan has a silver necklace with emeralds worth 2,300 gp, a gold and ruby ring worth 1,200 gp, and a pocketwatch.

Balacazars, page 102

Kevris Killraven, page 119

Secret door: *DC 22 Perception check to find this door or any secret doors within the lair*

Wight, page 250

The iron chair's blades and spikes are set so that a skeletal figure (such as Aggah-Shan) sitting in the chair takes no damage (as they pass through the spaces between his bones), but a living creature takes 70 (20d6) piercing damage.

Aggah-Shan has lich stats, with AC 18, 97 hp, and no 8th- or 9th-level spell slots; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: headband of reflected arrows*, amulet of the arcanist*, ring of protection, globe of accord*, spell scroll of fireball *(×2)*, spell scroll of cone of cold. ** see chapter 35*

Aggah-Shan keeps his globe of accord *in his office at the White House. He uses the item to communicate with his lieutenant, Naosh, manager of the Cock Pit (see page 330).*

Mrathrach games, page 331
Cock Pit, page 330

City Council, page 140
Rhodintor, page 594

Vested of the Galchutt, page 62

Helmut Itlestein, page 363
Sorum Dandubal, page 108
House Kath, page 96
Yarek Nagel, page 97
Marcad Shever, page 99
Celdore Silverwood, page 108
Marija Elinek, page 111
Chuster Nogol, page 113
Moynath Autumnsong, page 266
Jevicca Nor, page 115
Dierna Hillerchaun, page 122
Nivae Tamelli, page 120
Kaira Swanwing, page 121

In her secret room in the Dark Reliquary (see page 232), Lilith keeps records that describe the location of the chaos temple below Oldtown. This chaos temple is accessible from a passage leading out of Aggah-Shan's machine chamber. For details on this temple, see The Night of Dissolution, *a Ptolus adventure (see page 11).*

Rhodintor assist in the development of the machine.

THE MACHINE

Aggah-Shan channels the stored chaos from the magical Mrathrach games at the Cock Pit into a huge chaositech machine in his lair beneath the city. The machine, which resembles a big metal tower, measures 250 feet tall and 50 feet wide. It is located in a deep shaft and has interior chambers that allow one access to its inner workings.

The lich's dozen rhodintor allies helped him complete the monstrous device, which he hopes to use soon to resurrect a late Vested of the Galchutt named Mrathrach. The machine is designed to control the powerful creature enough for Aggah-Shan to unleash him upon his enemies: the government, the Shuul, and the Balacazars.

YARROW STREET FORUM

Yarrow Street (#78, D7); see map, page 290 2,300 gp

This structure has a wide plaza around it, filled with statues and well-trimmed trees and hedges. In the spring and summer, flowers bloom in lovingly tended gardens. The building itself appears to be three stories but in fact is only two. The main hall on the lower floor has an extremely high ceiling.

The forum serves many purposes. Groups can pay a small fee (usually 50 gp) to hire the city-owned hall for a day and a night to hold meetings, parties, celebrations, costume balls, and so forth. During any normal day, the surrounding plaza (and the interior of the building when it rains) is a place for public discourse of all kinds; concerned, influential citizens may voice their opinions to members of the City Council. Philosophers and teachers instruct students, or anyone who will listen. Debates sometimes rage over a number of topics.

Important individuals frequenting the forum include Helmut Itlestein, Sorum Dandubal, Tallaeth of House Kath, Yarek Nagel, Marcad Shever, Celdore Silverwood, Marija Elinek, Chuster Nogol, Moynath Autumnsong, Jevicca Nor, Dierna Hillerchaun, Nivae Tamelli, and Kaira Swanwing.

Formal, legal duels are sometimes fought in the forum plaza. However, participants must get special dispensation (basically, a license) from the city to do so.

Encounter: When the player characters arrive at or even pass by the forum, a huge crowd has gathered in the plaza around a tall statue of a past Commissar. The people have come to listen

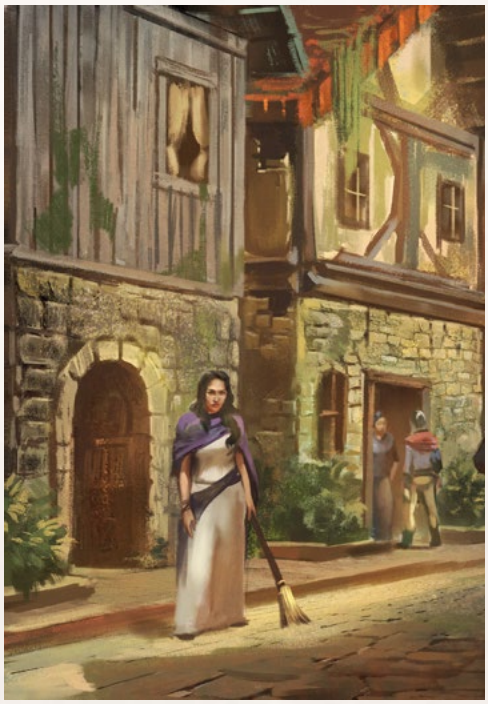
Oldtown Map: Page 290

OTHER LOCALES IN OLDTOWN

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Ander Kellin's Office		Greycannon Road (#68, C7)	Ander Kellin (male human expert*)	0	Appraiser
Bankers' Guild		Palace Road (#51, C5)	Chuster Nogol (male human aristocrat*)	20	—
The Boiling Pot		Four Fountains Street (#76, C8)	Dellam Koll (male human commoner)	8	—
Church of Lothian the Redeemer		Heroes' Way (#67, C7)	Sister Gallis Matricholan (female human ecclesiastic*)	4	Temple of Lothian
Denoss Firth's Office		High Road (#66, E6)	Denoss Firth (male human artisan*)	2	Advocate
Finnar's Books		Resolve Street (#75, C7)	Finnar Greydagger (male dwarf spy)	0	Forgery expert
The Games House		Vock Row (#49, E5)	Helene Melanda (female half-elf arcanist*)	2	Mage Games venue
Jodan Templehall		Tower Road (#43, D5)	Hallusiun Everfar (male elf deadly warrior*)	12	Knights of the Chord headquarters; Jode shrine
Lady Cardie's		Four Fountains Street (#69, D7)	Cardilia Denbroh (female half-elf expert*)	10	Illegal brothel and front for a Vai cell
Lyle Bennit's Office		Dalenguard Road (#57, E6)	Lyle Bennit (male human artisan*)	1	Advocate
Manathah's Traveler's Home		Emperor's Road (#59, E6)	Manathah al-Mari (female human expert*)	0	Boarding house; caters to Uraqis and southerners
Menasa's House		Damad Street (#72, D7)	Menasa Treliss (female human commoner)	0	Boarding house
Nulene Chard's Office		Whipstone Street (#62, D6)	Nulene Chard (female human artisan*)	1	Architect
The Pointy Hat	★★	Vock Row (#46, E5)	Naillis Deverini (male gnome arcanist*)	2	—
Randle's	★★	Four Fountains Street (#77, D7)	Randle Essune (male human commoner)	3	—
Sartha Nartis' House		Flamemoth Way (#37, C4)	Sartha Nartis (female human thug)	6	Balacazar safe house
Tess' Cauldron		Vock Row (#48, E5)	Tess Essani (female human arcanist*)	0	Spell components
West Town Mixtures		Vock Row (#45, E5)	Noaen Farseer (male elf expert*)	1	Alchemical supplies

* see Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604

to a new elf philosopher named Waeven Iosanil (male Shoal elf), who is telling everyone who will listen that the gods are not truly divine, but only powerful entities, not unlike great wyrm dragons or mighty angels. The only true divine being is the world itself, this radical speaker claims. All living creatures, he says, are part of this being and should act accordingly. A cleric of Lothian stands nearby, listening to this speech with a scowl, having summoned the City Watch to arrest Waeven for violating an obscure blasphemy law.



Waevan Iosanil has artisan stats, page 606

OTHER LOCALES

Although it's not a complete listing by any means, GMs can use the table above to insert additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit Oldtown.

MISCELLANEOUS OLDTOWN NPCs

Oldtown provides a home to many of the city's most interesting and influential residents. Here are a few who usually are not tied down to a single locale.

ARAKI CHIPESTIRO

Araki Chipestiro has mage stats, with AC 14 (17 with mage armor*); alignment chaotic evil. Equipment:* bracers of defense, Araki's runeplates *(see Chapter 35: Magic), dagger, bone earring (worthless), bone eyebrow ring (worthless), 12 gp.*

A common sight walking down Dweomer Street, Araki Chipestiro is known by many simply as "the guy with the runes." Over the last two decades, this mage has conducted extensive research into the magic practiced by Palastani wizards long ago and discovered interesting secrets linking body art with innate spell-like powers. Today, Araki is covered with runic tattoos, scars, and body paint. He even has runes carved into his teeth. Usually he wears little clothing, so his runes are fully visible, and they do indeed cover his entire body. These runes work together to grant him magical abilities that he can call upon as if he were casting additional spells.

Balacazars, page 102

A wizard for hire, Araki often finds work on the wrong side of the law. He works frequently for the Balacazars, usually as magical muscle. He is getting a little old for that kind of job (he is around sixty), but he remains exceptionally fit for his age. Araki has a reputation as someone to steer clear of, thanks to his vengeful, vicious streak and the fact that he holds a grudge for a long, long time.

Yearsend baby: see "Special Days in Ptolus" on the reverse of the calendar sheet in the packet

Araki is usually a very depressed individual who takes out his anguish on others. Born a Yearsend baby, he has always been cursed with terrible luck. Although his runes compensate for the normal penalties associated with being born on Yearsend Day, he still never seems to get a break, which makes him very bitter and prone to drink heavily.

Scenario: A fearful and upset woman named Desariana Ballack literally runs into the PCs as they walk down the street. This middle-aged human is on the run from Araki Chipestiro just a few steps behind her, a look of cold vengeance in his eyes. If the PCs appear to protect Desariana, Araki backs off, shooting her a hard stare.

Arkhall Vaugn, page 105

Desariana explains that, nineteen years ago, she and Araki worked for the Balacazars, she as a courier and he as an enforcer. Araki stole a great deal of money from Arkhall Vaugn one night, and Desariana informed on him. She left the organization immediately and has worked an honest trade as a clerk in the Administration Building ever since. Araki suffered greatly at the hands of the family and took years to earn their trust again. After all this time, he finally learned it was Desariana who betrayed him. She begs the PCs for help, and even offers to pay them to protect her (or, if they'd rather, offer them some still-relevant details about the Balacazar family).

Administration Building, page 291

Oldtown Map: Page 290

DERRESH

Aside from perhaps the Twin Lords Keper, Derresh is likely the greatest assassin in Ptolus. His reputation is greater even than those lords of the Vai, whose very existence is known by only a handful. Most people have heard of Derresh. His skills and abilities are infamous, though many doubt the legends are true. But almost no one alive knows or understands the truth of the matter—*alive* being the key word. Derresh slew everyone who knew the real story about him.

Twin Lords Keper, page 131

Derresh, page 614

Thirteen years ago, an elf illusionist on Dweomer Street named Kiseela Starwave experimented with a new type of illusion. Fueled by grief, she was attempting to magically recreate her human husband who had died. But something went wrong. Terribly wrong. The illusion, a sometimes-solid manifestation of magic, gained sentience. But it did not have the mind or soul of her dead husband. It had a will of its own, and Kiseela could not dismiss or dispel it. Before she knew what was happening, the illusion attacked and strangled her.

Eventually, the illusion, calling himself Derresh (the name of Kiseela's husband), found he had a predilection for skulking about, due to his ability to control his own magical form. Further, killing and death fascinated him—just as much as the fact that he was now, somehow, alive. He became an assassin and rapidly gained a reputation as a man who could get at anyone, anywhere.

Dweomer Street, page 309

Although he can look like whatever he wants, typically Derresh adopts the form that Kiseela originally gave him: that of a brown-haired human male with somewhat handsome features. His favorite tactic is to approach his target magically (either incorporeally or with teleportation), surround the target and himself with magical darkness or mist, then use his enhanced senses to find and kill the victim, who is likely helpless and blind—as are any bodyguards. If seriously threatened, or if his surprise is blown and he has to fight his target rather than just kill, he flees. Derresh is very much a coward.

Derresh can often be found loitering on Dweomer Street; strange memory fragments from the original Derresh sometimes lead him there. He has no residence and spends time at the Pointy Hat, where prospective employers usually can find him. His fees are high—they start at 1,000 gp and go as high as 10,000 gp—but most consider him worth it. Derresh is very strange to talk to, however. He is good at pretending to be someone else and saying what people want to hear, but beyond that, his responses to questions and other stimuli seem inappropriate, alien, and inhuman.

Pointy Hat, page 309

THE IRON MAGE

Some speak his name only in whispers, fearing that he can hear whenever it is uttered, although no one knows his *real* name. No one knows what he looks like. Some speculate that "he" is actually a "she." It's impossible to tell, because all anyone ever sees of the Iron Mage is a walking suit of armor of bizarre appearance.

His real name, his true identity, and where he comes from hardly seem consequential in comparison to the question of what the Iron Mage is doing right this moment. He manipulates events on such a wide scale that the effects of his actions sometimes are not felt for many years and are rarely linked to him. The Iron Mage might cast a mind-controlling spell on a bodyguard, and three years later the bodyguard's employer, a council member, casts the deciding vote on a crucial issue the mage is interested in. That's how the Iron Mage operates: two, if not three, steps ahead of everyone else. He is so very intelligent that most smart people in the city can't grasp his level of intellect, let alone his plans and machinations.

First and foremost, the Iron Mage appears interested in amassing magical and historical knowledge, as well as personal magical might. Beyond that, he exhibits a mild concern for the general good, but that's because he needs the city's status quo to continue to get what he wants. He certainly is not cruel, bloodthirsty, or inherently destructive—just very, very arrogant and ultimately self-interested.

No one trusts the Iron Mage. He comes and goes as he pleases, regardless of the wards placed by even the most competent of mages. He obeys no one's bidding but his own and answers to no one. Tales say that he has appeared in the middle of a meeting of the Twelve Commanders (which should not be possible) to speak with someone the commanders were interrogating, as if their concerns were trivial to his own. Since then, Lord Khatru has sworn to kill the Iron Mage on sight "for the good of the city," but the Iron Mage does not seem the least concerned. Surprisingly, even the Inverted Pyramid does not care for him, but that's likely due to simple professional jealousy.

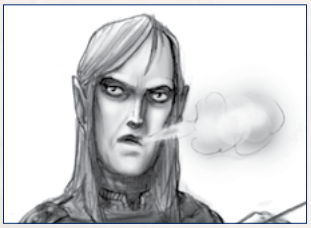
The Iron Mage currently awaits delivery of the Signet of Shallamoth Kindred; *see page 423.*

The Iron Mage has archmage stats, with AC 25, resistance to all damage from magic, critical hits against him are normal hits, advantage on all saves, casts spells without somatic components, able to overcome effects that block magic (such as forbiddance *and* nondetection*) by making an Arcana check against the effect's DC; alignment neutral. Equipment:* amalgam armor of the Iron Mage *(page 635)*, staff of the magi, amulet of proof against detection and location, thoughtstone, *scrolls of various high-level spells, 10 mage coins (in a vault;* *see page 146).*

Lord Khatru, *page 96*
Inverted Pyramid, *page 114*

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In my own Ptolus Campaign, the characters heard about the Iron Mage for years before they ever saw him. When the PCs were very high level, they appeared before the Twelve Commanders (page 140) to discuss an urgent matter. Suddenly, the Iron Mage appeared, despite all the spells that protected the chamber. Such a stunt greatly angered the commanders, who disliked the loose-cannon mage, but it infuriated them more when they realized he had come there to speak to the player characters, not to them.



Moynath Autumnsong, a resident of Castle Shard and master of the Inverted Pyramid, claims to know who the Iron Mage is (and that he once was invited to join the Inverted Pyramid), but the elf sorcerer will not reveal his identity.

Chapter 15:
RIVERGATE DISTRICT

Although primarily a residential district, the Rivergate section of Ptolus described in this chapter still offers many interesting locales to visit. Two of them are the Well of the Shadow Eyes and Finelle's Pleasant Diversions.

The Rivergate District is the residential area of Ptolus where much of the city's middle class (also called the merchant class) resides. Merchants in both market districts dream of retiring to a nice quiet house in Rivergate, which shows not only that people idealize the area, but that most consider the Nobles' Quarter forever out of their reach. (They are, of course, correct.)

THE FLAVOR OF THE RIVERGATE DISTRICT

If Midtown is the most "Ptolus" section of the city, the Rivergate District is the least. If Midtown is all about delvers and adventure, Rivergate is all about commoners, family, and a nice, quiet, comfortable life.

Much of the Rivergate District is divided into little cul-de-sacs called "burrows." These can become quite insular; one starts to think of the other people in the burrow as family, just like those with actual blood ties. Everyone always knows the business of everyone else in the burrow and tends to look upon "outsiders" with suspicion.

Ivy-covered walls, pleasant fountains, and pigeon-covered statues are common here. Things usually seem relatively quiet in Rivergate, particularly at night, when the streets are well-lit but empty.

RUNNING THE RIVERGATE DISTRICT

It's possible to run an entire Ptolus Campaign without the player characters ever having cause to come to Rivergate, particularly those in Dungeon-focused groups. The Rivergate District resembles other cities in the Empire more than the other Ptolus districts do in that it has few adventurer-related services or activities and remains mostly human. That is not to say it's an uninteresting place without the possibility of adventure. It just means that an adventure in the Rivergate District is the exception, not the rule.

Describe Rivergate as the sleepy little residential district that it is. Women hang wash on the line. Children play a game with a ball. Men sweep their stoops. People gather around the neighborhood well to gossip. Virtually no one carries a weapon or wears armor here except the City Watch. The player characters should feel like outsiders in Rivergate. This kind of staid lifestyle has little common ground with an adventurer's ways.

If trouble breaks out in the street, bystanders scream and run off. People are more likely to peek through their curtains than run out to help.

RIVERGATE IN BRIEF

Area: *79 acres*
Population: *About 10,000*
Primary Function: *Residential*
Primary Social Class: *Middle*
Wash Street (E3)
Outer Ring Row (E3)

Surmoil, page 229
Dark Reliquary, page 223
Runewardens, page 542

Visitors to the Rivergate District will note that fountains with statues in the middle of them punctuate the squares at the heart of many burrows.

PEOPLE OF THE RIVERGATE DISTRICT

More than in other parts of the city, the people of the Rivergate District keep to themselves. They're less likely to get involved in a situation they encounter than to scurry home or wherever they were heading—handling trouble is someone else's responsibility. Blatant displays of magic might not frighten them, but such things do make them nervous. A Rivergate inhabitant would rather have a nice evening at home with family and friends than go off on a dangerous adventure. Folk in the district are usually devout in their religious faith and very focused on doing their jobs and raising their children. While you can find a few corner pubs here and there, a Rivergate resident is more likely to enjoy a lively dance at a burrow party with neighbors (such events are common) than a night of carousing.

The Rivergate District is more predominantly human than the rest of Ptolus.

NPCs for the district appear within the chapter, rather than broken out at the end as in most other districts.

PERSON ON THE STREET

Trevan Mees: Trevan is a short, bespectacled man with dark hair, a dark mustache, and usually a bit of dark stubble. He was captured a year ago by Surmoil of the Dark Reliquary. Surmoil controlled Trevan's mind, using him as a slave and intending eventually to perform hideous experiments on him. Just in the nick of time, however, a group of adventurous heroes calling themselves the Runewardens came to the Dark Reliquary to accomplish some other task and found and freed Trevan. Now he walks about town with a new lease on life. There's a spring in his step and a smile on his face. He sees each day as one more that he thought he would never have. Trevan lives in Rivergate but works in the South Market as a bookbinder.

Ferrik Noldstrom: Ferrik is a human of average height and build. He has a reddish-brown goatee; short, straight brown hair; and (usually) large bags under his eyes. He takes great pains to hide the threadbare nature of his clothing.

MAP KEY

79. Linech Cran's Burrow (page 324)
80. The Yellow Wall (page 324)
81. Three-Horned Goat (page 322)
82. Jasmik's Flowers (page 324)
83. Gustiv's Ice (page 324)
84. Well of the Shadow Eyes (page 323)
85. Madam Teesmor (page 324)
86. Center Circle (page 320)
87. Cooper's Store (page 320)
88. Nadar's Pub (page 324)
89. Sunflower Café (page 324)
90. Finelle's Pleasant Diversions (page 321)
91. Derras Fillososh's House (page 324)
92. Darksoul House (page 321)
93. Golathan Naddershrike's House and Laboratory (page 322)
94. Jangave Lesh's Training Hall (page 322)
95. Barbarian Balloonists (page 319)
96. Fate Weavers Headquarters (page 324)
97. Animal Tending (page 324)
98. Chapel of St. Thessina (page 324)
99. Dragon's Tooth Comb (page 324)
100. Orad Finnas' House (page 324)
101. Rulla Finnas' House (page 324)
102. The Waterfall (page 324)

Ferrik is a Yearsend child, which means he is inherently unlucky. This makes his chosen profession of card sharp a particularly poor choice, but that's just the way his life has gone. Ferrik lives in Rivergate with his mother and spends his days attempting to get people involved in various small con games. He carries a deck of cards and a little fold-up table to play a quick variation of a game called Seven Thrones on the street, usually until he is chased away by the City Watch or by a cheated mark who has seen through his tricks.

Lerrisa Kyle: Overweight, with glittering dark eyes and a comely face, Lerrisa has no shortage of would-be suitors. However, this young human woman has no interest in romance. She spends her time in parks and open courtyards studying books about physiology, diseases, and herbs. She wants to be a physicker and help the sick, but first she needs to gain admittance to the Imperial University. Lerrisa doesn't care to be disturbed in her studies.

RIVERGATE RUMORS

Dark Days Ahead. A new chaos cult calling itself the Emerald Eye is spreading throughout the Rivergate District. Its members keep their affiliation secret but announce themselves to each other by hanging a small green plaque somewhere in their house.

Castle From the Future. A few days ago, a small keep appeared in a vacant lot in Rivergate. Although it is brand new, the castle appears old and worn. No one knows anything about it, and no one has seen anyone entering or exiting. All attempts to get inside have failed. Divinations seem to indicate that the castle is from Ptolus's future, sent back to the present for some reason.

On the Lam. A pair of vicious criminals on trial for trafficking in black magic and slaves has escaped from the Watch and fled into Rivergate to hide. They may have broken into a home and taken the inhabitants as hostages. No one knows for sure where they are.

RIVERGATE LOCATIONS

Despite being mostly residential, Rivergate has a few interesting locations for characters to discover.

BARBARIAN BALLOONISTS

Middle Street (#95, F3) ☠☠☠ see map, page 318 7,500 gp

Surely one of the strangest locales in Ptolus, Barbarian Balloonists is run by two halfling barbarians, Ernast Krundar and Fallix Hord (male halflings), who take customers up in their hot-air balloon to hunt birds with bows. Most people point out that this is a poor way to hunt birds, but the two extremely enthusiastic and fun-loving halflings don't care, and they make the trip worth the 75-gp price tag. They also take up people who want to use the balloon for sightseeing or just the experience, but they charge 100 gp for such a service, since it's not nearly as much fun without the hunting.

The office consists of a small shack with a hand-painted, misspelled sign that says

For more details on Yearsend children, see the back of the calendar handout in the packet.

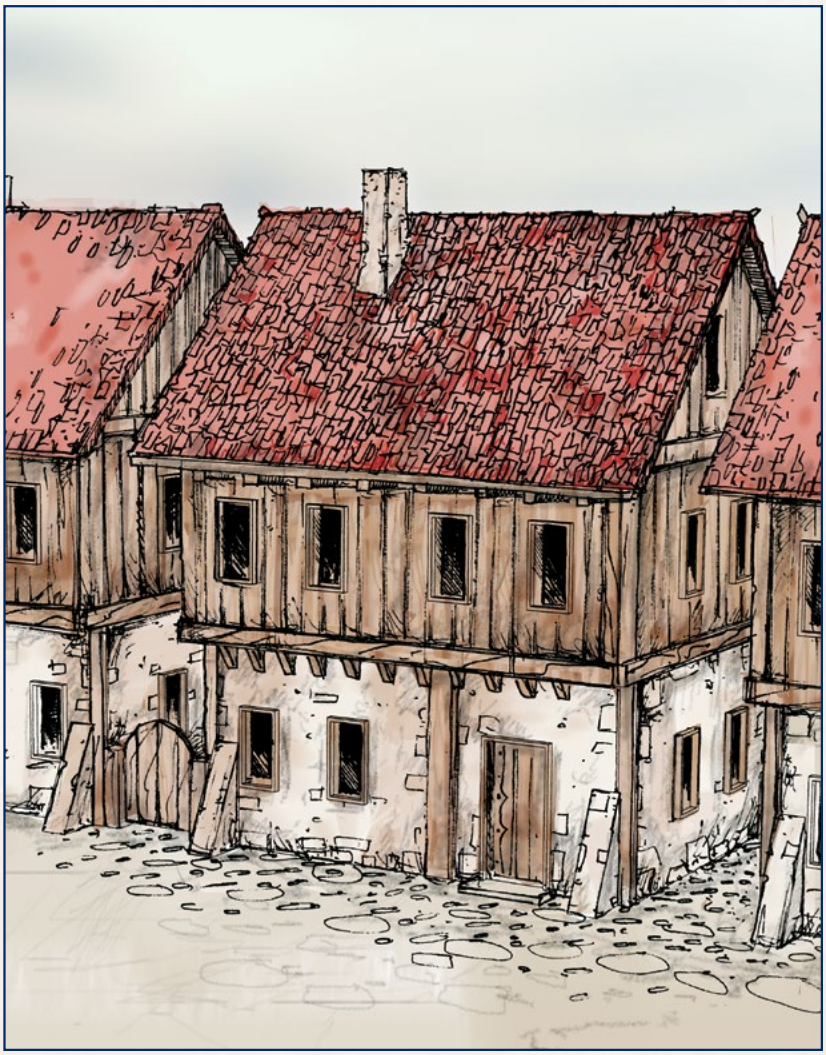
Ernast Krundar and Fallix Hord have berserker stats.

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

Hot-air balloon, page 525

Imperial University, page 300

Chaos cults, page 75



A typical Rivergate house

GM TIPS

Center Circle is a good meeting place. Characters can find it easily, and most people in the city know where it is. It's also a good place to stage encounters between the PCs and common folk.

Secret door: *DC 23 Perception check to find*

Knights of the Chord, page 120
Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

Delver's Guild, page 108

Lyala Cooper has commoner stats.

A few people have suggested that it would be smarter and safer for the Barbarian Balloonist halflings to launch the balloon in an open field far from the city. To this Ernast replies, "But dodgin' all the towers n' whatnot is what's fun!" "Yeah," Fallix adds, "there ain't nothin' to almost hit outside a' town."

Tavern Row, page 188

"Barbaran Balooonits" and an open yard for launching their single balloon. The basket holds up to five human-sized creatures in addition to Ernast and Fallix. Where these two first got hold of a hot-air balloon, no one knows. The balloon itself is a colorful quilt of patchwork cloth that they are constantly repairing.

Seen frequently in the various bars on Tavern Row, Ernast and Fallix brag that one day they're going to take their balloon up to the top of the Spire.

CENTER CIRCLE

Center Circle (#86, F3); see map, page 318 0 gp

At the heart of Rivergate is an open plaza/park called Center Circle. This is the central point from which all major Rivergate streets radiate. In the center of the plaza is a rotunda for parties, festivals, and celebrations. Numerous benches surround the rotunda, allowing it to serve as a stage for amateur theater, oratories, or musical performances. When not in formal use, it is the demesne of playing children during the day and courting teenagers in the evening.

There is a secret door within the steps of the rotunda. This door leads to a complex of chambers once used by an independent criminal gang. Although the gang was defeated by the Knights of the Chord years ago, the subterranean complex remains. As it was built from a section of Ghul's Labyrinth, it has many connections to other portions of the Dungeon beneath Ptolus.

This section of underground areas is connected to those beneath Oldtown via the so-called "Ebony Tube." Spanning the chasm between Rivergate and Oldtown just east of the Middle Street Bridge, this 20-foot-wide, 60-foot-long black cylinder stretches across the divide about 80 feet below the top of the Rivergate side. It is clearly visible from above, if you know where to look, although most people do not know what it is, and even those who do have no idea how to get there. Industrious delvers have attempted to penetrate the tube using brute force and magic, but neither has ever worked. A few claim they have found the entrance on one side or the other but have refused to reveal the secret of getting there, even to the Delver's Guild.

COOPER'S STORE

Wash Street (#87, F3) see map, page 318 1,120 gp

Cooper's is a general store owned by young Lyala Cooper (female human), a blond-haired, tall, thin woman who wears spectacles. This store has been in the Cooper family for generations, having served the local burrows with food and dry goods for more than a century. For much of that time, Cooper's has also been under the control of the Balacazars, who staked Lyala's great-grandfather when he was about to lose the store. The family takes a cut of the store's profits and uses it as an occasional meeting place. However, Lyala wants to sever her criminal ties and run a legitimate business. Of course, Kevris Killraven would like nothing better than to help her, but Lyala doesn't want that kind of help.

Encounter: Two rough-looking, burly human men stand outside of Cooper's store, scaring away customers interested in coming in. They don't physically prevent anyone from entering—they just look menacing. Most people know these men work for the Balacazars and won't cross them.

DARKSOUL HOUSE

Tabor Street (#92, E3); see map, page 318 2,340 gp

You cannot go into the Rivergate District and ask for Darksoul House. No one will know what that means. To the people who live here, the nondescript-looking two-story home is Yavos Nared's house and nothing more. Very, very few know that it is also the base of operations for a Sorn cell.

The Sorn, spellcasters for hire, typically do whatever they're paid to do: use magic to protect a place or person, intimidate others, or even kill. Not all members of the Sorn are entirely evil. But Yavos Nared is. He calls his spacious home Darksoul House because he believes himself to be demon possessed, something of which he seems very proud.

Yavos has always been thin and sickly. His balding head and shriveled skin make him look prematurely aged—he is about fifty-five years old but looks more like seventy. Yavos revels in evil, death, and perversion. In his madness, he tries to look at everything as the opposite of how it should be: that which is kind, altruistic, or caring is bad, and anything spiteful, hurtful, or cruel is good.

The five or six Sorn in his cell come and go—most can't stand to be around him for too long. One exception is the half-dragon Synethys, who has convinced Yavos that he (Synethys) is a half-demon, not a half-dragon. Synethys uses his magical cloak to conceal his true nature. In reality, he is a 6-foot-tall humanoid with blue eyes; yellow, serpentine scales; and a forked tongue. He is slight for a half-dragon, which helps his stealthy nature. An assassin at heart, he likes to use magic to slip up next to his victim and attack with a touch-based spell, tooth, and claw all at once.

Somehow, Yavos and Synethys have managed to keep the nature of Darksoul House a secret.

FINELLE'S PLEASANT DIVERSIONS

Inner Ring Row (#90, F3); see map, page 318 12,300 gp

Finelle Aballes was a great lover of games of all kinds. A wealthy human widow, she created a place where people could play games in a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere. Finelle's Pleasant Diversions is a two-story building, nicely decorated and well kept, with large rooms full of gaming tables and a few small private game rooms. Although gambling does occur here, this is no gambling den, but rather a club of real game experts. For example, one frequent patron is Zalisartaram (female Harrow elf), one of the world's best Dragonscales players. Other games include Ten Bobbers, Horseman (both are games with pieces moved on a grid board), Gempot, Seven Thrones, Sword and Helm, Riverside, and Kutch (a variety of games played with cards divided by suit and number). And there are more besides.

Finelle has passed on, and the current proprietor is her good friend, Merchael Finetooth (male gnome). Membership to the club costs 10 gp per year and gives one free access to the building and the games within. Various tutors are available, usually for a small fee. Merchael also sells drinks and food here, but he is careful never to call it a tavern or restaurant.

Scenario: A rival challenges one of the player characters to a game of Gold Dragonscales. The stakes hold great importance to the PCs—perhaps a key piece of information or a vital treasure. The characters have to learn how to play the ultracomplex game as quickly as possible. Someone recommends Zalisartaram to them as a tutor, and they cram for the contest. They must also try to figure out ways to make sure their opponent doesn't cheat (or, if they're so inclined, figure out ways to cheat on their own).

GM TIPS

If a foe of the PCs needs to hire some magical muscle to deal with them, use Yavos and Synethys. Alternatively, if the PCs need sorcerous help, someone can make the mistake of directing them toward these two.

Synethys fancies himself an expert at the game Dragonscales, but he has been kicked out of Finelle's Pleasant Diversions. Years ago, he also attempted to join House Dallimothan, but they ultimately found him dishonorable and unworthy.

For other Ptolus home layouts, see Midtown (page 187).

Synethys has spy stats and some sorcerer spellcasting, with resistance to lightning; blindsight 10 ft.; darkvision 60 ft.; lightning breath, recharge 5–6, 40-foot line that is 5 feet wide, DC 12 Dexterity save, 16 (3d10) lightning damage, save for half; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: cloak of disguise *(as a* hat of disguise*)*, potion of heroism*; spell scrolls of* invisibility *and* magic missile *(2), pocketwatch, 42 gp. He knows the following spells (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks):*
Cantrips (at will): acid splash, dancing lights, sense spell *(see page 633)*, shocking grasp
1st level (3 slots): expeditious retreat, shield, sleep

One can hire a tutor for almost any game at Finelle's for only 5 sp for the entire afternoon or evening.

Zalisartaram has arcanist stats, page 605

Dragonscales game, page 333

Merchael Finetooth has artisan stats, page 606

Yavos Nared has arcanist stats (page 605), with AC 14 (17 with mage armor*); alignment chaotic evil. Equipment:* bracers of defense, crossbow, bolts *(12)*, potion of greater healing, spell scroll of charm person *and* suggestion, *spectacles, 200 pp, 300 gp.*

Sorn, page 129

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check reveals a few facts about services in the Rivergate District:

- *Need a sage? Look for the sign of the three-horned goat (DC 13).*
- *Need a combat trainer? Look for Jangave Lesh (DC 16).*

The half-orc crime lord Linech has his base of operations in the Rivergate District.

Godsday Festival and Tournament, page 364

Terrek Nal, page 208

The Three-Horned Goat is near the Fountain of the Queen's Swans, a large and particularly beautiful landmark.

Dulson Farber has mage stats, with no spellcasting, and with Insight +6, Investigation +4, Nature +4, and Religion +6. He gains an additional +2 on these skills if given twenty-four hours to research, and also gains advantage if given a week.

Sages' Guild, page 308

Wareth Naddershrike has commoner stats.

GM TIPS

GMs wishing to add realism to their games can require characters to come to a trainer like Jangave when they gain a level (or before) to earn their increased proficiency bonus on attack rolls (if any). Other, more generous GMs might grant a special +1 bonus on melee attack rolls to anyone who trains with Jangave or another like her for at least a year, assuming at least two sessions per week.

Jangave Lesh has veteran stats, with AC 20, +1 on all Strength-based rolls (from her magical gauntlets), advantage on attack rolls; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: gauntlets of ogre power, +2 breastplate, +1 shield, +1 longsword, ring of protection, +1 mace, *daggers (3), 50 feet of silk rope, climber's kit, 329 gp.*

Jangave Lesh is of average height and muscular build. She is quite talkative. Most of her students find that, between her quick moves and constant verbal instructions, they often go an entire lesson without speaking a word themselves.

For PCs wanting to train, Jangave charges 5 gp per character level per session.

Yavil Totharson has veteran stats.

Vestra Totharson, page 294

Dierna Hillerchaun, page 122

GOLATHAN NADDERSHRIKE'S HOUSE AND LABORATORY

Vaddis Street (#93, E3); see map, page 318 1,200 gp

This simple one-story house connects to a weird, crooked stone tower. The owner, Golathan Naddershrike, uses the tower exclusively as a magical laboratory—or, at least, he did when he was alive. Since his murder not long ago, the City Watch has kept the place locked up.

Golathan was killed by a student of his named Terrek Nal, a human living in Midtown. Golathan had fallen into a deep despair after his wife's death and, unfortunately, took out his rage on his disciple. After months of abuse, Terrek accidentally disrupted one of Golathan's alchemical experiments. In a fit of anger, the wizard cast a curse on Terrek, transforming him into a not-quite-human creature. With anger and resentment equal to that of his cruel master, Terrek slew Golathan.

The strange tower and home sits near the edge of the plateau upon which the district is built, at the top of the cliff overlooking the gorge. It is infamous in Rivergate for its bizarre appearance and strange associated phenomena (which worry the neighbors to no end). Unfortunately, since the laboratory is indeed filled with unattended magical experiments, substances, and devices—all barely stable and quite dangerous even when monitored—their worries seem more valid than ever.

Scenario: Wareth Naddershrike (human male), brother to Golathan, hires the player characters to find his sibling's murderer.

JANGAVE LESH'S TRAINING HALL

Outer Ring Row (#94, E3) see map, page 318 4,500 gp

Jangave Lesh (female human) used to get by teaching ordinary commoners to defend themselves against assailants, charging only a few coppers for basic lessons. In recent years, she has gained a reputation among delvers and other adventurers as an excellent combat trainer. Now her prices come in gold coins, not copper, and she lives in a nice Rivergate house with an attached training room complete with a variety of weapons, armors, and such necessities as sparring dummies, wooden and padded versions of weapons, sparring mats, and, of course, first aid materials. Jangave trains any character of any background (whether adventurers or not) if they are less skilled than she is.

Jangave's best friend is Yavil Totharson (male human), a retired soldier. Yavil is the brother of Vestra, a friend and associate of Dierna Hillerchaun of the Knights of the Pale. Although retired, the sixty-four-year-old Yavil still likes to compete in the Godsday Festival and Tournament.

THREE-HORNED GOAT

Tonic Street (#81, E2) see map, page 318 2,550 gp

Above the door of a nondescript house in the middle of the block hangs a sign featuring a goat's head with three horns. Dulson Farber (male human), the man who lives there, doesn't call his house "The Three-Horned Goat," but tells people looking for him to "go to the sign with the three-horned goat."

Dulson works out of his home as a sage, and he's perhaps one of the best-known sages in the city. His knowledge covers primarily history, especially Ptolus history, but he remains well versed in magic lore and various religions as well.

Dulson lives here with his wife, Rose, and their three children. The house is stuffed with books. The friendly and jovial sage doesn't parade his sizable intellect or education unless it's appropriate. He's of average height and thin, with a mustache, spectacles, and reddish hair. He is a member in good standing of the Sages' Guild.

Rivergate District Map: Page 318

Encounter: Dulson's wife, Rose, is secretly a shivvel addict. When the player characters arrive, she is at home and obviously in bad shape physically and mentally. Dulson has been attempting to hide this sordid secret from the outside world and is both embarrassed and alarmed when the PCs witness her obviously drug-addled state.

WELL OF THE SHADOW EYES

off of Middle Street (#84, F2); see map, page 318 72,000 gp

An inconspicuous well, disused and dry, sits in a dead-end Rivergate alley. Wooden planks, warped with age, cover the top to prevent children from falling in. However, this well has a devious secret door at the bottom. Beyond the door lies an underground complex that the elf wizard Aelian Fardream once used as a laboratory for his cloning experiments. The complex, known as Ravenstroke, is magically warded and trapped to prevent intrusion. It has become the base of operations for a creature that calls itself the Shadow Eyes, a genderless clone of Aelian Fardream. The Shadow Eyes—so called because it was "born" deep underground, where its eyes knew only shadow for years—is a powerful wizard like its sire, but it harbors none of Aelian's emotions or morality. In fact, the Shadow Eyes is sarcastic, rude, flippant, and amoral.

A group of delvers once stumbled upon Ravenstroke while exploring some of Ghul's Labyrinth beneath the city. The defenses of the place were too much for them, and the survivors retreated, leaving behind the legendary litorian artifact known as *Father's Warclub*.

Sometimes, the Shadow Eyes comes to the surface, where it assumes the identity of a mage named Vanum Vaal (who calls himself a witch) with a raven familiar. As Vanum, it has established ties with Kevris Killraven. The Shadow Eyes (as itself or Vanum) also has ties to some of the city's more malevolent skulks; many of them work with it, spying and gathering information in various districts. A number of them lair within Ravenstroke.

Tactics: Assume that the Shadow Eyes has cast defensive spells upon itself before entering combat. If it knows it's headed into trouble, it will use magic to create multiple images of itself, and ward itself against fire or lightning.

OTHER LOCALES

Although it's not a complete listing by any means, GMs can use the table on the next page to insert additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit the Rivergate District.

Shivvel addicts, page 519
Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

Kevris Killraven, page 119
Skulks, page 596
Aelian Fardream, page 329
Ravenstroke, page 393

Secret door: *DC 24 Perception check to find*

The Shadow Eyes (a.k.a. "Vanum Vaal") has archmage stats, with no 9th-level spell slot; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: +1 dagger, bead of force, Daern's instant fortress, necklace of adaptation, spell scroll of dimension door, potion of greater healing, *forged Imperial identification papers.*

As its name suggests, the Yellow Wall restaurant (see the Other Locales table) is right next to the City Wall, in a place where the wall is covered with yellow paint. Painting the wall was a crime, but the fine has long since been paid, and city officials have never required that the paint be removed.

OTHER LOCALES IN THE RIVERGATE DISTRICT

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Animal Tending		Off Outer Ring Row (#97, E4)	Anam Baldick (male human artisan*)	0	Animal groomer and healer
Chapel of St. Thessina		Off Outer Ring Row (#98, E4)	Heth Neferul (male human priest)	9	Temple to Lothian, secretly controlled by the Pactlords of the Quaan (see map in *The Banewarrens**)
Derras Fillososh's House		Inner Ring Row (#91, F3)	Derras Fillososh (male human artisan*)	1	Physicker
Dragon's Tooth Comb		Fiber Street (#99, F4)	Mull Rachart (male human expert*)	1	Barber
Fate Weavers Headquarters		Gallat Street (#96, F3)	Marija Elinek (female human artisan*)	6	Secret school for Fate Weaving
Gustiv's Ice		Middle Street (#83, F2)	Gustiv Mann (male human commoner)	3	Sells ice, also delivers
Jasmik's Flowers		Outer Ring Row (#82, E2)	Jasmik (female aram expert*)	0	Florist
Linech Cran's Burrow		Off Wash Street (#79, E2)	Linech Cran (male half-orc, page 565)	8	Office of drug smuggler and Balacazar ally
Madam Teesmor		Inner Ring Row (#85, E3)	Yalla Teesmor (female half-elf commoner)	0	Dreamspeaker
Nadar's Pub	★★	Wash Street (#88, E3)	Nadar Hisk (male human commoner)	4	—
Orad Finnas' House		Fiber Street (#100, F4)	Orad Finnas (male human thug)	8	Killraven League safe house
Rulla Finnas' House		Fiber Street (#101, F4)	Rulla Finnas (female human artisan*)	0	Midwife
Sunflower Café	★★	Middle Street (#89, E3)	Nichallis Fern (female human commoner)	2	—
The Waterfall		Middle Street (#102, F4)	Carther Nartellis (male human commoner)	3	Bathhouse
The Yellow Wall		Off Tonic Street (#80, E2)	Fallaster Nobrand (male human expert*)	8	Popular restaurant

* see Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604
** *The Banewarrens* is a Ptolus adventure; see page 11.

Chapter 16:

SOUTH MARKET

The South Market offers more shops than open markets, as well as a number of commodities markets and workshops. The proprietors of Blackstock Printing hold an interesting secret, and the Golden Tooth offers wares for those with a taste for gold. But there's more in this district than just shops. Check out the gambling den known as the Cock Pit and the hideout of the criminal Korben Trollone.

The South Market is one of two market districts in this highly commercial city. It is also the newest of Ptolus's districts. It stretches from Dalen's Cliffs in the west to Carriage Row in the east. Its southern boundary is the city wall, and its northern one is a rough line drawn from the north end of Carriage Row to the point where the Emperor's Road ascends the earthen ramp up to Oldtown. The northern border separating the South Market from Midtown has been an imprecise distinction since the district came into being.

No one will argue that the heart of the district lies in a large open square called Star Crossing Plaza, where three major streets intersect. A number of important offices, as well as some of the district's premier shops, are located at Star Crossing.

The South Market contains many shops and small marketplaces for people to purchase goods, but it also has a number of commodities markets. Commodities markets are always devoted to one type of good, such as cloth, spices, grain, and so on. While anyone can shop at these markets, they are intended for merchants, exporters, or vendors buying in bulk. The city's only major commodities market not located in the South Market is the Stockyards in the Guildsman District.

The commercial connection between the Guildsman District and the South Market is clear. Many South Market workshops are controlled by the guilds of the Guildsman District.

THE FLAVOR OF THE SOUTH MARKET

Only a large city could support a district like the South Market of Ptolus, with commodities markets, established merchant companies, and permanent shops. It grew naturally in what was once a more residential area called the South End. In those days, the North Market was "the Market."

Things are always on the move in the South Market. Business is brisk, and people—both customers and merchants—crowd the narrow, newly paved streets. The smells of baked goods, cooking vegetables, and spiced meat mix favorably with the other, less pleasant odors of the city. Vendors stand outside their shops, enticing customers in with assurances of low prices and high quality. A man in an apron with a broom chases away raggedy children from a large fruit shop before they can steal apples. Laborers load up a wagon with bales of cloth.

Compared with the other districts, the South Market is fairly safe. Even with such criminal

SOUTH MARKET IN BRIEF

Area: *238 acres*
Population: *About 8,000*
Primary Function: *Commerce*
Primary Social Class: *Middle*
Collins Street (E8)
Dwindle Street (E8)

Stockyards, page 182

Cock Pit, page 330

Optional Rule: Haggling, page 284

Emperor's Road, page 150

MAP KEY

242. Korben Trollone's Office (Edarth's Loans) (page 335)
243. Navaen Bowcraft (page 338)
244. Star Crossing Plaza (page 325)
245. The Starry Night (page 342)
246. Rogue Moon Trading Company (page 339)
247. Narras Ink (page 342)
248. Faraway Scents (page 334)
249. Golden Tooth (page 334)
250. Zel's Poultice Shop (page 342)
251. Winter Lyehouse (page 342)
252. Chon (page 342)
253. Jabber's Shoes (page 342)
254. Exotic Market (page 332)
255. Wood Market (page 342)
256. Tehlas Music (page 342)
257. Reggie's Meats (page 342)
258. Ramoro's Bakery (page 339)
259. Good Rope (page 342)
260. Blue Thread (page 342)
261. Fabric Market (page 334)
262. Mahdoth's Asylum (page 336)
263. St. Chausle's Chapel (page 342)
264. Abrury's Dairy (page 342)
265. Fragrant House (page 342)
266. The Green Mews (page 342)
267. Crystal Baths (page 342)
268. Welcome Inn (page 341)
269. Mystery Pub (page 342)
270. Salora's Pots (page 339)
271. Silver Cup (page 342)
272. Donnel's (page 331)
273. Spice Market (page 340)
274. Indari's Leatherworks (page 342)
275. Warick's (page 342)
276. Maran's Odd Sizes (page 338)
277. Blackstock Printing (page 328)
278. Highshelf Glassworks (page 342)
279. Merchants' Guildhall (page 342)
280. The Smokestack (page 342)
281. The Durambor (page 342)
282. Tirres (page 342)
283. Cock Pit (page 330)
284. South Chandler (page 342)

enterprises as the Cock Pit gambling den, few muggings or attacks happen here. Burglary is the crime of this district, edging out other "victimless" crimes like smuggling, gambling, and prostitution.

While shops and commodities markets make up the majority of the district, as a traveler heads north toward Midtown, the shops become more interspersed with homes. Heading east toward the Guildsman District, one finds as many warehouses and workshops as regular shops. Near the South and Market gates, the district offers restaurants, taverns, inns, stables, bathhouses, and other services one might need after arriving in the city on the Emperor's Road from the south. This list also includes a few brothels, gambling dens, and illegal drug parlors run by the local criminal element.

A TYPICAL SHOP

Some of the shops and offices in the South Market are converted older houses and tenements, but most are fairly new buildings. Either way, the typical shop in the district is a two-story building abutting other shops on two sides, with an open alleyway on a third side, and an entrance into a street on the fourth.

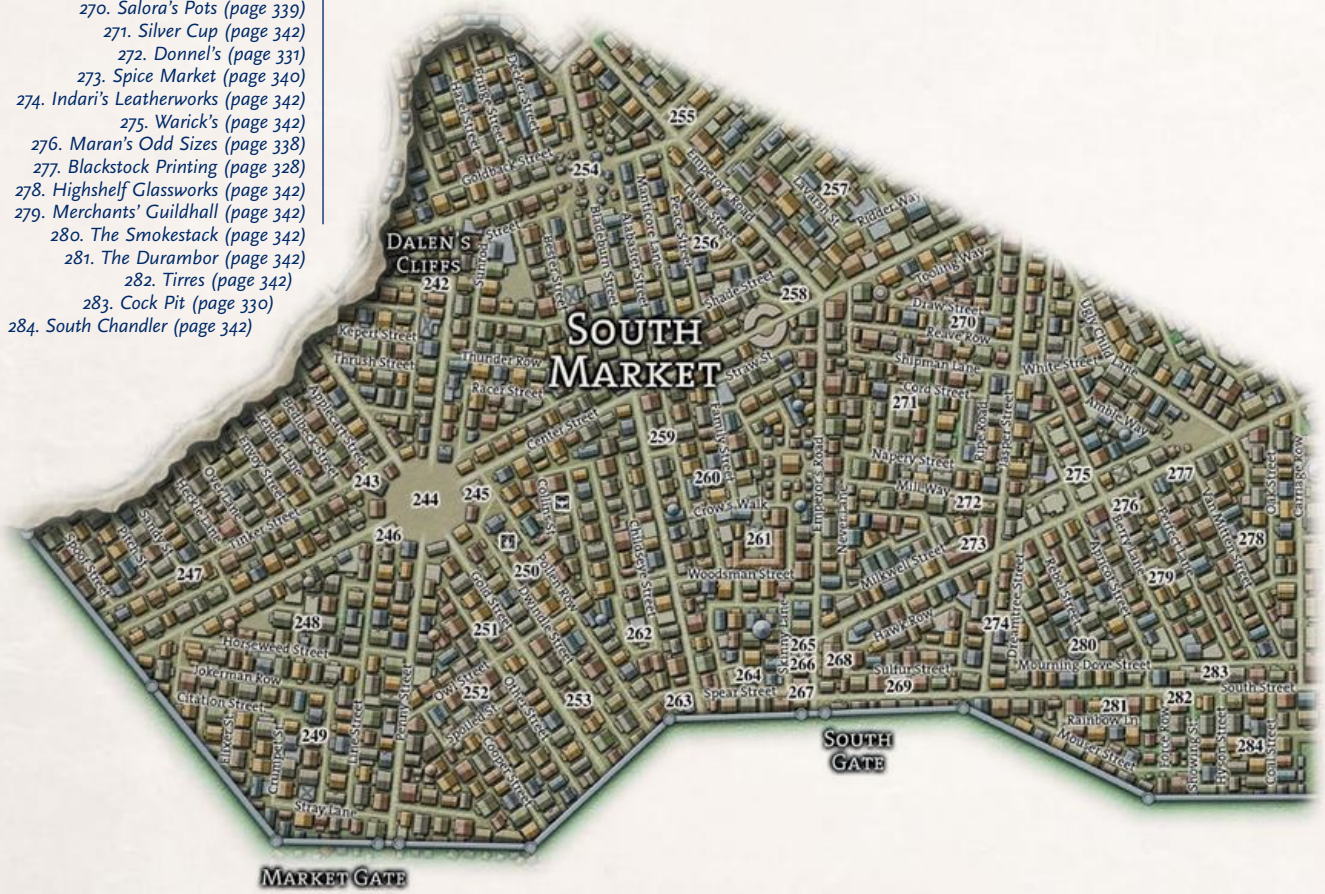
SHOPPING CUSTOMS

Shopkeepers in Ptolus commonly stand in their doorways and talk to passersby to attract customers. These proprietors are typically aggressive, and sometimes even rude. There are always exceptions, however—a few might seem undemonstrative and reserved, allowing their wares to sell themselves. This is particularly true for shops with few direct competitors, such as the city's scarce bookstores and perfume shops.

Haggling is acceptable at shops, but not at restaurants or taverns (for guidelines, see Optional Rule: Haggling in Chapter 13: North Market). Returns and warranties are unheard of, although some shops do guarantee their merchandise. Most shops will buy goods that they deal in at half their normal value, although some shops run by artisans never buy, only sell.

Clerks often wrap purchased goods in cloth and tie the package with string before giving them to the customer to take home.

Most shops and places of business stay open as long as the sun is up, which means that business hours are longer in the summer than in the winter. Most are open seven days a week.



The front room is for working with customers. It typically has a wooden counter or large table covered with goods, behind which the shopkeeper sits. Some shops feature many tables or shelves rather than a counter or main table, and the shopkeeper stands, often near the door to greet customers.

In the typical South Market establishment, the goods sold in the shop are also produced there, in a workshop located directly behind the front room; storerooms or offices are situated farther back. About half the time, the workshop remains open so customers in the shop can see the artisans at work.

The typical second story holds a flat where the proprietor lives.

Most shops in Ptolus are very specialized. It is not uncommon for a shop to sell only rope, only belts, only barrels, or only cheese, for example.

RUNNING THE SOUTH MARKET

Although adventurers can buy pretty much anything they need in Delver's Square or the Undercity Market, they will find a far greater selection of goods, quality, and prices in the South Market. They also may come here for reasons unrelated to commerce—to visit Mahdoth's, the Cock Pit, and so on.

If the player characters come to the South Market during the day, the district is bustling. Stress the crowding in the narrow streets, not only with people but also with carts and wagons. Describe the sounds of folks conducting business and the smells of cooking food, unwashed people, and livestock animals.

Should the PCs visit at night, however, it's just the opposite. The streets seem quiet and virtually empty. None of the shops stay open at night, although lights in upper-story windows demonstrate that the district isn't entirely vacated.

PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH MARKET

Obviously, many of those who live in the South Market are merchants, artisan/merchants, or their employees. These folks are typically middle-class entrepreneurs or workers with little chance of ever striking it rich, yet their position and wealth puts them far above typical laborers in the city.

A few South Market businesses have grown so large that they have formed companies incorporating a number of different merchants, employees, and locations. These merchant companies combine the efforts of all the members to generate greater profits than the combined total of what each one could earn alone. Their large amounts of capital allow them to buy in bulk, hire still more employees, and move their goods throughout the Empire at higher profits. Investors can buy shares in these companies and earn dividends based on profits.

Of course, not all the merchant companies originated in Ptolus. The largest one in the city is a Tarsisan firm called the Rogue Moon Trading Company. Another large company, called the Grand Southern Trading Company, started in Dohrinthas and handles much of the trade between that southern port and Ptolus.

PERSON ON THE STREET

Ladia Reymond: Middle-aged Ladia is of average height and build. The only things striking about her are her curly red hair, which she wears longer than most women her age, and the fact that no one ever sees her without a cigarillo in her mouth. Ladia is an Imperial inspector—her blue sash marks her station. She is arrogant and distracted, consumed with her own importance and her desire to get ahead in life. As an inspector, it's her duty to report on the ability of various merchants and vendors to maintain standards of price, fairness, cleanliness, and work conditions. This means she spends her day checking scales that weigh spices and sticks that measure cloth, scouring storerooms and warehouses to judge the number of rats, assessing the ledgers of moneylenders and bookkeepers, and other miscellaneous duties. Ladia is one of many inspectors assigned to the South Market, and one of the few who are difficult to bribe. When encountered, Ladia is on her way back to her office in the Administration Building in Oldtown to fill out paperwork.

Marean Sevenjewel: With raven-colored hair down to her waist and braided with silver strands tipped with tiny leaf charms, Marean is a striking Shoal elf. She is a cobbler who makes shoes specifically for elves. Her shop is located on Spoiled Street, tucked between two larger shops. Marean keeps to herself much of the time, occasionally visiting Emerald Hill in Midtown but mostly staying in and around her shop—unless she needs to run business errands, which she's doing now. She's probably going to visit the Fabric Market to purchase supplies.

Karel Unter: Sporting a blond goatee and medium-length straight hair, this well-muscled laborer wears a sleeveless shirt and baggy pants. He earns his living unloading wagons and carts in the Wood Market on Emperor's Road. Karel fancies himself a ladies' man and gambler, despite the fact that he rarely has two copper coins to rub together. Most likely he is using a break from work to wander the streets, looking

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

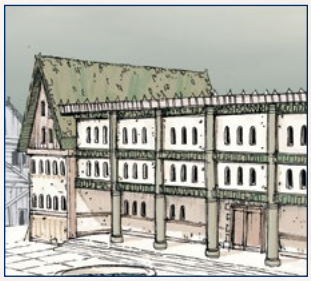
Rogue Moon Trading Company, page 339

Dohrinthas, page 46

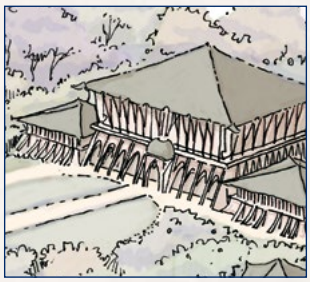
With their still-regular square-cut paving stones, the streets of the fairly new South Market are as smooth and nice as any district in Ptolus—even the Nobles' Quarter.

Delver's Square, page 188
Undercity Market, page 394

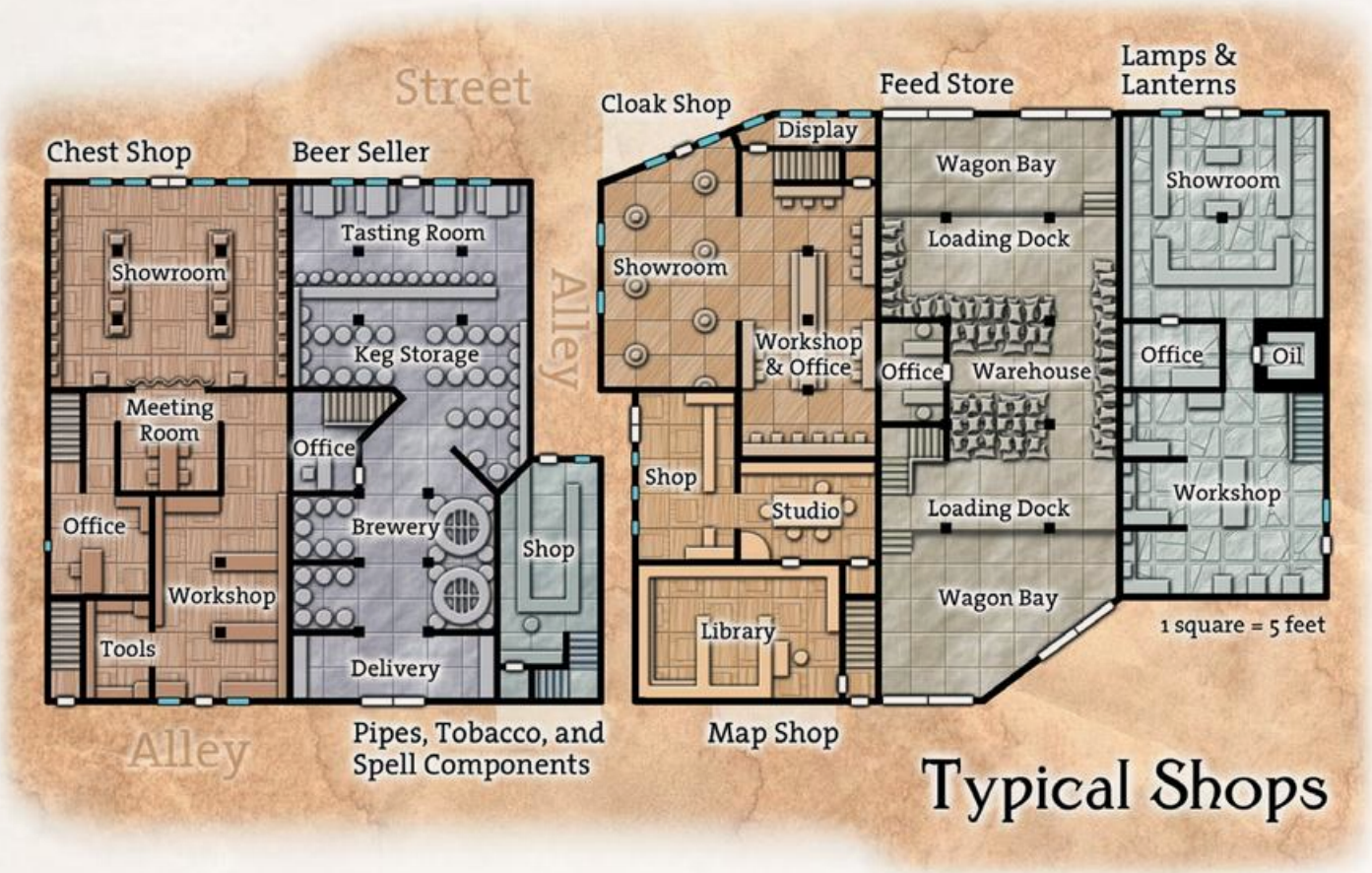
Mahdoth's Asylum, page 336



Administration Building, page 291



Emerald Hill, page 189
Fabric Market, page 334



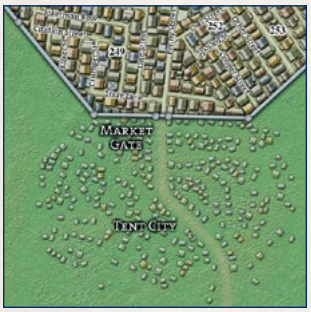
Ratman nest, page 411

House Kath, page 96

Rogue Moon Trading Company, page 339

Ratmen, page 591

Outside the Market Gate south of the South Market lies the so-called Tent City, a haphazard collection of shacks, tents, and people sleeping, cooking, and living out in the open. These folks find Ptolus too confining, or the law inside the walls too limiting. Tent City is a dangerous place, particularly at night. One will find a higher percentage of aram and litorians in this settlement than in the city proper.



for women to impress with his good looks and physique. Karel knows the location of the Cock Pit, as well as a number of much smaller, far less formal gambling dens in the district. He also has knowledge of most of the brothels in the South Market, Oldtown, and Midtown.

SOUTH MARKET RUMORS

The Return. Hallach Fancon was a well-known and well-loved thespian patronized by House Kath who died about eight years ago in a tragic accident. However, people of the South Market have begun to claim they've seen him around some of the nicer clothiers and other shops. House Kath and anyone associated with Fancon insists he is still dead.

Against the Empire. The high-ranking members of the Rogue Moon Trading Company, a merchant company based in Tarsis but with a significant presence in Ptolus, have angered the Imperial government. Rumor has it that the Commissar has received orders to seize all Rogue Moon assets in the city.

Beneath the Streets. Ratman activity grows steadily worse in the South Market, with more and more brazen burglaries of shops and attacks against lone individuals in the night streets. Some say that a ratman nest with a forceful leader lurks just below the streets, but others call it a simple case of overpopulation that has forced the creatures to become more desperate.

SOUTH MARKET LOCATIONS

The South Market boasts a number of varied and interesting campaign locations.

BLACKSTOCK PRINTING

Iron Street (#277, H8); see map, page 326 5,000 gp

Blackstock Printing is a medium-sized freestanding building. Clerks deal with customers in the small room in the front, while printers work in the large print shop in the back. The second floor holds a spacious apartment. Blackstock prints fliers, leaflets, and the occasional short-run book. Most of its clients are South Market businesses looking to advertise. Blackstock is one of the few businesses in the city with a functioning large-scale movable type printing press. Despite the fact that it is run by elves (which is a bit surprising), it seems a normal place.

It is not at all a normal place, however.

South Market Map: Page 326

Aelian Fardream was a powerful elf wizard who lived in Ptolus more than a century ago. Aelian was a loner, single-mindedly devoted to perfecting the magical cloning process. He desired to create a self-perpetuating dynasty of himself as a way of achieving a sort of immortality. And he succeeded—partially.

Aelian's clones were not soulless creatures, but copies of himself with independent thought and minds of their own. They were imperfect copies, however, and possessed only a modicum of the original's magical abilities. They each had their own strange quirks as well, such as aversions to certain colors, objects, or species. Aelian magically imprisoned the clones with spells that would keep them in stasis and protected, then attempted to create a new set without the prior batch's faults. Only one (genderless) clone from the second group survived. It had a soul and all of Aelian's abilities but, unfortunately, it also was sadistic and insane. It slew its creator, then vanished. It recently resurfaced, calling itself "the Shadow Eyes."

Two years ago, a strange magical surge ended the stasis spells affecting the first batch of clones, and they awoke in Aelian's underground laboratory where they had been grown. Coming up into the city, they pieced together at least some of what had happened. With the remnants of the original Aelian's money, the clones purchased Blackstock Printing, in the hopes of making a small fortune for themselves—perhaps enough to pay for magical assistance with the quirks they gained in the cloning process.

The clones have never revealed their true nature to anyone. To the outside world, there is only one Aelian Fardream, and he runs Blackstock Printing. (A historian might remember references to a powerful elf wizard named Aelian Fardream who lived in the area decades earlier, but would likely consider it a coincidence.) Other press workers at the shop keep to themselves in the back room. The clones take turns being Aelian, which can cause some confusion.

There are six clones of Aelian Fardream. (Number One believes that there are more, still held in stasis somewhere.) They refer to themselves simply by number. Each is a moderately capable wizard, but their actions are hindered by their quirks, listed here:

Number One: Freezes in uncontrollable panic at the sight of a bared blade within 15 feet or any sharp object pointed in his direction.

Number Two: Unable to say more than two words at once.

Number Three: Absurdly agreeable; very gullible and suggestible.

Number Four: Unable to acknowledge the existence of dwarves. Ignores everything they say or do, even at his own peril.

Number Five: Refuses to touch objects with both hands at once. One hand must remain free or he falls catatonic.

Number Six: Refuses to cast spells at any target wearing green or that is predominantly green.

Recently, Blackstock has begun printing Helmut Itlestein's seditionist pamphlets in return for large sums of money. One clone, Number Three, sympathizes with Helmut and his cause. The others do it only for the gold.

Scenario: The Shadow Eyes makes a sudden and dramatic appearance in Midtown to slay a group of adventurers that broke into Ravenstroke. Later that day, the player characters overhear an eyewitness say that she had seen the Shadow Eyes before—at a printing shop in the South Market. Should the PCs investigate, they find only "Aelian." If they stake out the place, however, they may notice something odd going on. If ever seriously threatened, the clones will reveal the truth about themselves. In exchange for keeping their secret, they may be able to relate some secrets about the Shadow Eyes or Ravenstroke.

GM TIPS

The clones of Aelian Fardream can be played lightly (for laughs) or seriously (as desperate individuals in a strange situation). An experienced and talented GM might be able to pull off both.

It's a DC 20 History or Investigation check to recognize Aelian Fardream's name and recall that he dabbled in magical cloning.

All the clones have arcanist stats (page 605); alignment neutral. They have the following attack: **Light Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: *+4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target.* Hit: *6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. Each clone has their own unique set of equipment:*

Number One: *light crossbow, +1* bolts *(10, increases attack and damage bonus by +1),* ring of feather falling, potion of speed, *club, antivenom, forged Imperial identification papers, 11 gp.*

Number Two: cloak of protection *(+1 to AC and saves),* spell scroll of dispel magic, potion of greater healing, *dagger, light crossbow, bolts (10), 25 gp.*

Number Three: ring of protection *(+1 to AC and saves),* spell scroll of fireball *(×2),* spell scroll of grease, potion of healing, *dagger, light crossbow, bolts (10), 15 gp.*

Number Four: cloak of elvenkind, wand of magic missiles, potion of greater healing, potion of fire resistance, potion of protection from fire, spell scroll of blur, *dagger, light crossbow, bolts (10), 6 gp.*

Number Five: *fine daggers (2, worth 100 gp each),* wand of web, potion of greater healing, *alchemist's fire, 98 gp.*

Number Six: potion of flying, potion of invisibility, spell scroll of see invisibility, spell scroll of lightning bolt, *dagger, gold ring with intricate etching worth 300 gp, 3 gp, 12 sp.*

The Shadow Eyes, page 323

Helmut Itlestein, page 363

Ravenstroke, page 393

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

It wasn't until one of the PCs snuck into the back room of the printing shop invisibly that the players realized what was going on at Blackstock—that there was more than one Aelian Fardream. Before then, though they watched as different Aelians came and went from the place and even spoke to a number of them, they never understood that he wasn't just a strange, moody person.

THE COCK PIT

South Street (#283, H8); see map, below

80,000 gp (including 30,000 gp in vault)

Although it started as an underground cock-fighting arena (hence its name), the Cock Pit has grown over the last two decades into one of the largest illegal gambling dens in Ptolus. A mysterious figure named Aggah-Shan runs the place. Most outsiders assume that he owes allegiance to Balacazar's organization. This, however, is not the case. Aggah-Shan is a powerful lich and follower of chaos.

Aggah-Shan, page 331

From the outside, the Cock Pit looks like a large warehouse. Though there are no markings or signs on the exterior, its location is well known—even to the authorities. Aggah-Shan pays numerous bribes and sometimes uses mind-control spells cast in secret to keep the City Watch looking the other way.

Inside, the Cock Pit consists of a large area with many gaming tables and a bar; a smaller, more exclusive gambling room with only four tables; and a separate room with an arena pit surrounded by one hundred seats. The establishment also has six private rooms used by the staff prostitutes to service customers, and a comfortable back office used by Naosh (male half-orc), Aggah-Shan's lieutenant and manager of the Cock Pit. The shrewd Naosh is well spoken, well dressed, and well groomed. Naosh is not his real name but an Elvish word for "stylish."

To be admitted to the exclusive back room at the Cock Pit, a character must tell the bartender, "I'm looking for a high-stakes game." This code phrase produces Naosh. A potential player must be able to show that they have at least 500 gp with them and must slip the half-orc at least 10 gp to be allowed into the special game room.

White House, page 310

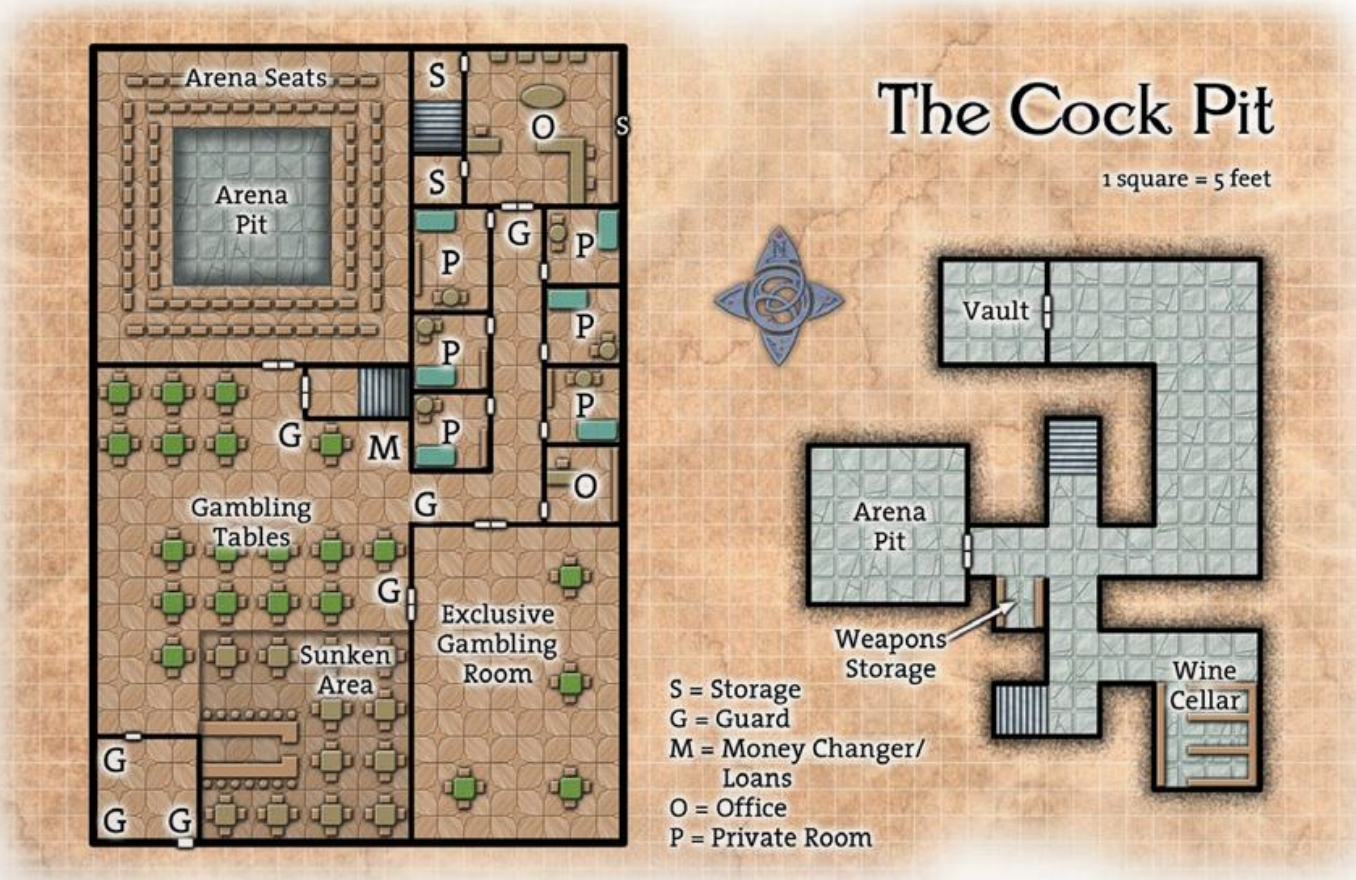
Arena, page 247

Naosh has veteran stats; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: +1 mace, belt of hill giant strength (+2 on all Strength-based rolls), pocketwatch.

Naosh's Tactics: If engaged in combat, Naosh builds his entire strategy around escape, summoning the Cock Pit's considerable complement of guards or even Krag, the minotaur from the arena pit (see below).

The clientele of the Cock Pit is made up of low- and middle-class citizens—commoner laborers, merchants, and craftworkers. These guests number between eighty and one hundred on any given night. A few wealthier high rollers come for the exclusive games in the back room, but even they are small-time operators compared to the gamblers who come to the White House in Oldtown and various exclusive clubs in the Nobles' Quarter. The popular game here is called Mrathrach (see the box on the next page), although all types of dice, card, and tile games are played.

The real draw at the Cock Pit is the small arena pit in the back, and the star of that arena is a minotaur named Krag. Although fights do take place in the Arena in Oldtown, the combat here is far more brutal. Fighters frequently die in the pit, much to the delight of



THE GAME OF MRATHRACH

Named after one of the ancient Vested of the Galchutt, the Game of Mrathrach is a completely random affair based on the results of three large spinners and the positions of various ceramic tiles on a checkered board. Investigation (or another skill relating to the character's knowledge of gambling) reveals that, although the game appears to favor the players, it's actually slanted to favor the house—and absolutely no skill or intelligence is involved. Thus, only the ignorant and uninitiated play. Nevertheless, it has become quite popular at the Cock Pit and the White House in Oldtown. And strangely enough, people seem to win at it more than one would think.

There's more to Mrathrach than just a crooked game. During play, there is a very slight magical effect present. The game is magical, so each time someone plays, it collects a bit of the randomness—a chaotic aura—and stores it. With the randomness slightly diminished, the game sways a bit more in favor of the players, producing a moderate number of winners and thus encouraging people to keep playing.

Aggah-Shan channels the stored chaos into a huge chaositech machine beneath the city. He hopes to use it to resurrect Mrathrach and unleash the powerful creature upon his enemies: the government, the Shuul, and the Balacazars.

Cock Pit owner Aggah-Shan

The Game of Mrathrach favors the house, as a DC 18 Insight or Investigation check reveals.

Galchutt, page 62

Chaositech machine, page 312

the bloodthirsty crowd. The house puts odds on various ranked combatants and takes bets, plus the management has placed a 10,000 gp bonus payout to any fighter who can best Krag in the arena.

While there are no rules against using magic in the pit, arena manager Koth Yurtin (male human) turns away anyone who is clearly only a spellcaster. He fears not only damage to the arena but also that a battle with a mage wouldn't entertain the crowd.

Bloodstained, dented bronze plates line the stone walls of the 30-foot-deep arena pit. A steel mesh covers the top of the pit to keep stray ranged weapons from striking the crowd, although this doesn't always succeed (the mesh has a few holes in it).

Koth Yurtin has artisan stats, page 606

Krag's Tactics: A straightforward combatant, Krag is interested in killing his opponents quickly and gorily. He is a showman, but not overconfident. He seems large and muscular even for a minotaur, and is covered in scars and patches of bare skin where the hair has been pulled, cut, or burned off.

Krag is a minotaur with gladiator stats, and the Charge, Labyrinthine Recall, and Reckless abilities of a minotaur; size Large, AC 20; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: +2 greataxe, +2 plate, potions of greater healing (3), steel horn points (+1 gore damage), javelins (6).

Aggah-Shan also owns an exclusive (and entirely legal) social club called the White House in Oldtown. Those looking for him can leave a message here or there. When Naosh needs to contact him, he uses a *globe of accord* keyed to one his employer owns. If someone wishes to speak with Aggah-Shan, Naosh will attempt to act as a go-between. With the lich's permission, Naosh can set up a "meeting" using the *globe of accord*. For such meetings, Aggah-Shan likely appears cowled, disguised, or masked by illusion. His accent betrays his Uraqi origins, if his name did not do so already.

Below the gambling den is a well-locked and guarded vault that holds the Cock Pit's earnings and funds to pay off winners (generally about 30,000 gp). The lower level also contains a small armory and a wine cellar that mostly holds kegs of ale.

Counting the guards, the dozen prostitutes, and those mentioned by name, the staff of the Cock Pit number fifty or more on most nights.

Prostitutes have expert stats (page 609) with Sleight of Hand +6.

Encounter: As soon as the player characters enter the Cock Pit, one or two of them are approached by prostitutes (humans or elves) who try to become friendly. If the PCs spurn them, either immediately or after they invite the guests into back rooms, each prostitute attempts to pick the pockets of their chosen adventurer. If caught in the act, the prostitutes are grabbed by guards, who hurry over and haul them off. They are not turned over to the authorities, of course—they are beaten for getting caught (the punishment leaves no visible marks), then sent back into the gambling den.

Scenario: Fesamere Balacazar comes to the player characters, posing as a minor noble. She tells them that Aggah-Shan has stolen a book of importance to her family and she needs their help to recover it. She even offers to pay 5,000 gp and help in its recovery (she's going along). The book in question is a ledger detailing contact names, illegal business dealings, shipments, and other vital information—but she tells the PCs it's a magical book. The trail for the book likely starts at the Cock Pit, but may eventually lead to the White House and down below the city.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check can reveal quite a bit about the Cock Pit:

- *The Cock Pit is an illegal gambling den in the South Market (DC 14).*
- *The Cock Pit is owned by a mysterious figure named Aggah-Shan, who is in league with the Balacazars (DC 18).*
- *Naosh is the half-orc manager of the Cock Pit (DC 20).*
- *Aggah-Shan is not in league with the Balacazars (DC 22).*
- *Aggah-Shan is a lich (DC 26).*

At any given time while open for business, the Cock Pit has twenty staff on hand to deal with threats or violence: fourteen human guards, four human thugs, and two dwarf veterans.

Fesamere Balacazar, page 104

Globe of accord, *page 638*

See page 333 for details on gambling games in Ptolus.

Vault: *DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to pick the lock*

DONNEL'S

Mill Way (#272, G8) see map, page 326 800 gp

Falles Donnel started this leatherworker's shop more than forty years ago. The two-story building has a double-gabled rooftop. Uris Donnel (male human), Falles's son, owns and

Uris Donnel has artisan stats, page 606

GM TIPS

Use Inlios Pabovini and the Exotic Market to introduce strange magic items into the campaign. Take items from unexpected sources or create them yourself, but never allow this gnome to sell any standard item.

GAMBLING IN THE SOUTH MARKET

Besides the Cock Pit, the South Market has a number of other gambling venues, all of them substantially lower class and dangerous. At night, many shopkeepers run illegal games in their shops—some even keep special back rooms or subterranean chambers for such activities. Most of these minor games move from place to place to avoid the authorities, so any particular shop might see use only once a week or so. Cheating is commonplace at these games, but the penalty for getting caught is usually extremely violent. These gamblers tend to be common laborers who work in the district or in Midtown, or other individuals of the poorer class.

Esbel Pamorias has expert stats, page 609

Inlios Pabovini has mage stats.

operates the shop and lives above it. Donnel's sells all types of leather goods: bags, belts, straps, boots, gloves, and more. Uris makes items of excellent quality and also buys secondhand items in good shape for half their value.

Uris Donnel, a man of average height and dark hair with a large scar on his left cheek, has posted a sign in Delver's Square advertising maps of areas below the city that he will sell to interested delvers. They were drawn by his deceased sister, Mathella, who was an adventurer. The maps carry a price of 30 gp to 500 gp, depending on the importance his sister gave them. Uris assures buyers that he has only a single copy of each, and he's telling the truth.

Fairbriar, page 189

Delver's Square, page 188

Danbury's, page 192

Although a large district with many buildings, the South Market has the fewest tall buildings in the city.

Dreaming Apothecary, page 116

A typical South Market seamstress's shop. Many dressmakers, tailors, and clothiers locate near the Fabric Market for convenience.

THE EXOTIC MARKET

Bladeburn Street (#254, E7); see map, page 326 20,000 gp

Although technically a commodities market, the Exotic Market feels more like one of the North Market district's marketplaces. Here vendors sell one-of-a-kind items; imports from mysterious, far-off lands; miscellaneous magical trinkets brought in from elsewhere; and even odd, non-livestock animals. The market is a strange jumble of small wooden stalls, temporary tents, a few open-frame buildings, and people selling out of the backs of wagons.

The Exotic Market's management is just as chaotic, and finding someone in charge can prove difficult. The land is owned by a woman named Esbel Pamorias (female human), and the Imperial papers for the market are all registered in her name, but she is never here. Instead, a gnome named Inlios Pabovini (male gnome) seems to run things. Inlios also works as an importer of strange magic items from across Praemal. Years ago, he traveled the world himself, but now he lives in Ptolus with his wife and children; he maintains a home in Fairbriar in Midtown and spends time in Danbury's when off work.

Scenario: A human wizard named Sala Eddaris hires the player characters to watch Inlios. Sala is convinced that the gnome creates some of the items he sells. She would like to make that publicly known and bring the Dreaming Apothecary's wrath down upon him. She's looking for proof. Of course, if Inlios were impinging upon Dreaming Apothecary territory, they wouldn't need Sala to tell them so, but she doesn't know that, and most likely neither do the PCs. While they watch him, if they're careful, they notice that Inlios does business with people who, upon further investigation, turn out to be smugglers sneaking items into the city from foreign lands and attempting to avoid normal import tariffs. (He does not make magic items.)

GAMBLING GAMES

The streets of Ptolus hold many illegal gambling dens—illegal because the Empire taxes gambling earnings at 50 percent. One also will find a few establishments offering legal gambling; they pay taxes on their winnings and force players to do the same. Games of chance and skill are common in taverns, although the stakes are kept small or are non-monetary to avoid taxation.

Card games popular throughout the city include Seven Thrones, Gempot, Sword and Helm, Riverside, and Kutch. One also sees the following dice, board, and other games played around town.

BERTRANT

This exceedingly simple dice game involves the roll of three dice. The players always attempt to get higher than everyone else in the game. Bertrant is enjoyed mostly by those who expect to be drinking heavily while playing and hence do not really need to keep their wits about them.

DRAGONSCALES

A two-person game played with tiles made to look like the scales of a dragon, Dragonscales is unique in that it has so many different versions: one for each type of common dragon. White Dragonscales, the easiest, is a children's game, while Gold Dragonscales is one of the most intricate and complex games in existence. (The order of complexity is as follows: white, black, brass, green, blue, copper, bronze, red, silver, and gold.) Most people play Green or the slightly harder Blue Dragonscales.

At its simplest, Dragonscales is a game of matching tiles. Each tile comes marked with a portion of an Elvish letter or number (in Elvish, the characters can be either). At its most complicated, it is a three-dimensional game of forming complex combinations of tile groupings, including stacked tiles, and moving to counter your opponent's matches.

No one can attempt to play a version more complex than Green Dragonscales without a long introduction to the intricate rules. This usually requires having a background as a gambler. For this game, Intelligence, not Charisma, affects the outcome of the game. Lesser versions of Dragonscales, which one can learn fairly quickly, simply are contests using Intelligence-based rolls.

The most complex games involve many Intelligence-based contests as well as flat Intelligence checks (DC 12, 14, 16, 18, and 20) to form special combinations. The winner is the player who earns more points (minimum of 50; points granted are equal to the DC of the combinations) and wins more contests than their opponent. The game continues until such a winner is determined.

FLIPPING FROG

This game of manual dexterity involves flipping small wooden sticks or dowels into a mug. In a pinch, almost any small objects will do—in fact, nowadays more people play by flipping coins than flipping sticks. Variant coin-play rules grant more points for using larger coins (with the associated larger risk of loss). Players can resolve this game with contests of ranged attack rolls.

KNIFE THROWING

Knife throwing is as simple as it sounds: hurling knives at a target. Usually the target is about 15 feet away from the player; the center ring has AC 18, and the bullseye has AC 22.

KNIGHT AND SQUIRE

In this game, each player rolls two different-colored dice under a cup so they can't be seen, then bets on how close one die-roll is to the other, as well as on the total of both. Rolling double sixes is the best result possible. A variant called King's Court uses three or sometimes four dice, but the premise remains the same.

PEG THE TOM

Common in taverns that frown on traditional gambling games (but don't mind a bit of violent fun), Peg the Tom is played with a knife and a wooden table. A player holds one hand splayed on the table and puts the knife in their other hand. Then, as fast as possible, they stab the table in between each of their fingers and thumb (so there are four stabs). This is called a run. Before the player begins, however, they tell the other players how many runs they can make in succession in a given amount of time. "Five in ten," for example, means five runs in the time it takes for someone to count to ten (each count is about a second). The player who estimates the most counts in the least amount of time then proceeds to try. If they make it—without cutting or nicking their hand—all the other players must buy them a drink. If the player fails, they must buy all the other players a drink.

Each player makes one Dexterity-based dagger melee attack. The "Armor Class" is equal to 10 + (10, divided by the count, × the number of runs attempted). So five runs in a ten count is DC 15 (10 + [10, divided by 10, × 5]). Five runs in a five count is DC 20. A result of 1 always fails and a 20 always succeeds.

THE WHEEL

Found only in the more sophisticated gambling dens (because of the equipment required), this game involves betting on the results of a spinning wheel set on a table or mounted upon a wall. Results are based on number and color, as in roulette.

Yurikin Falahoff has artisan stats (page 606) with Deception +6.

Korben Trollone, page 335

A typical South Market blacksmith's shop

Killraven in the South Market

Kevris Killraven (page 119) has made greater inroads worming her way into the criminal underworld in the South Market than anywhere else in the city. It is likely that she sensed weakness in the Balacazar's hold there (likely due to the independent Aggah-Shan's presence) and took advantage of it. The crime boss in charge of the district in the Balacazar hierarchy, Halgrim Fatherstone (see page 106), is likely on his way out—thanks either to Killraven's people or to his own (in retaliation for failure).

Niaer Daystep has expert stats, page 609

Saeth Watersong has commoner stats.

Hannis Goldtooth has artisan stats, page 606

THE FABRIC MARKET

Woodsman Street (#261, F8); see map, page 326 ❗ 7,000 gp

This commodities market sells fabric of all kinds. Obviously, members of the Textile Workers' Guild spend a lot of time here: seamstresses, tailors, drapers, dyers, and clothiers come to buy fabric for their work, and weavers, spinners, and anyone who produces cloth comes to sell. While the place is not guild headquarters, it might as well be—virtually all textile workers visit this market at some point.

The Fabric Market consists of one open-frame building surrounded by a wide courtyard filled with pavilions. Beneath these roofs, different vendors sell their cloth in huge bales. It is usually quite bustling.

The market manager is Yurikin Falahoff (male human). He has climbed high in the guild hierarchy and is an ally of Korben Trollone, Killraven's associate in the South Market. Yurikin and Korben are friends and have been since they were boys.

Scenario: Yurikin encounters the player characters in a public place, but he makes it look like a chance meeting. He tells them about himself and that he's looking for someone to kill Korben Trollone. He explains that Korben killed his brother, and now he wants revenge—but no one knows that it was his brother, not even Korben. Whether the adventurers agree or not is immaterial. The important thing is that they believe Yurikin secretly hates Korben.

Meanwhile, Korben has something the PCs want (perhaps a particular magic item, some information, or a kidnapped hostage). He sends them a note requesting an exchange for something he wants (probably money). He tells the characters they can name the time and place, as long as it's public. He hopes they'll fall for the ruse and request the Fabric Market. Then hopefully the PCs will use their connection with Yurikin to set up Korben, but in fact Yurikin will use the information to set *them* up. The goal is that, in the end, Korben keeps whatever it is the PCs want and gets whatever he wants from them.

FARAWAY SCENTS

off of Horseweed Street (#248, D8) see map, page 326 ❗ 11,500 gp

Tucked in a narrow side street that seems more like an alleyway, this tiny shop sells nothing but perfume. Bottles of all shapes, sizes, and colors jam the shelves in the main room. Most bottles are unlabeled, and only the shopkeeper, Niaer Daystep (male half-elf), and his assistant, Saeth Watersong (male elf), know what each one holds. Although the shop's name comes from the idea that the two import the perfumes from faraway lands, the truth is that most of what they sell is local. Prices range from 10 gp to 500 gp per bottle.

THE GOLDEN TOOTH

Citation Street (#249, D9); see map, page 326 ❗ 4,000 gp

Hannis Goldtooth (female dwarf) offers her services as a goldsmith in the South Market. She doesn't sell ready-made goods, so thieves who break in will be disappointed. Instead, she operates her workshop here and plies her trade through commissions. This usually amounts to a fair bit of gilding work, and some inlays and engraving. Occasionally, a wealthy customer

South Market Map: Page 326

requests an item such as a ring, an amulet, or a small statue. Such work comes along infrequently, however, since Ptolus is saturated with such objects brought up by delvers.

Hannis is the leader of the Goldsmiths' Guild based in the Guildsman District, but that isn't saying much—it's a fairly small, inconsequential group controlled by the Ironworkers' Guild. The goldsmiths are currently feuding with the Silversmiths' Guild over a slight Hannis made about their guildmaster's skill.

Encounter: The player characters, either coming to see Hannis or just passing by, notice two masked humans approaching the front window of the Golden Tooth with large hammers. If the PCs do not intervene, the men smash the window and the sign in front of the shop. The Silversmiths' Guild hired these thugs to perform this vandalism. They have no intention of hurting anyone and flee if confronted.

KORBEN TROLLONE'S OFFICE (EDARTH'S LOANS)

Penny Street (#242, E7); see map, below 6,500 gp

Korben Trollone operates a criminal organization that covers the entire South Market, with strong ties to Kevris Killraven. Truth be told, he is entirely under her control—he just likes to tell people differently. Korben makes most of his gold collecting protection money from various businesses in the South Market. He also runs a number of the small-time gambling operations in the district, as well as a pair of brothels.

A moneylender's shop called Edarth's Loans serves as a front for Korben's office. Edarth Ovis (male human) appears to work out of a shabby two-room office with a hired guard (male dwarf) to safeguard his funds (approximately 800 gp on any given day). A locked secret door in the back wall gives access to Korben's storeroom; his personal office is underground, in a level accessible via an unlocked trapdoor and a lift down.

The second floor of Edarth's Loans holds an apartment (where Edarth lives) as well as

Korben Trollone has bandit captain stats, with Wisdom 14, Animal Handling +5, and the Colossus Slayer and Multiattack Defense abilities of a hunter-archetype ranger; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: Korben's beastblade *(see page 640), longbow, +1 arrows (10, +1 to attack and damage rolls), arrows (10), studded leather, shield, sapphire ring worth 250 gp, 22 gp. He has the following attack:* **Longbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: *+6 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target.* Hit: *7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.*

Korben has the following ranger spells prepared (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks):

1st level (4 slots): cure wounds, longstrider, speak with animals

2nd level (3 slots): darkvision, protection from poison

Korben is usually accompanied by Midnight, his loyal pet panther: 26 hp with advantage on attacks, saves, and checks.

Edarth Ovis has expert stats, page 609

Edarth's hired dwarf has guard stats.

Secret door: *DC 20 Perception check to find, DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to unlock*

Most of Korben's employees are humans with scout or spy stats.

Nallia Feston has commoner stats.

Swordthrower's, page 276

Dire lion: *as lion (26 hp), with advantage on attacks, saves, and checks.*

Dire apes: *as ape (19 hp), with size Large, and advantage on attacks, saves, and checks.*

Owlbear: *59 hp*

Black bear: *19 hp*

Cockatrice: *27 hp*

Tiger: *37 hp*

Durg the troll: *84 hp, with Intelligence 9*

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check offers a few details about the criminal Korben Trollone:

- *Korben Trollone is a crime boss in the South Market (DC 16).*
- *He is known as "Korben the Keeper" because he keeps many animals and beasts (DC 20).*
- *Korben Trollone works for Kevris Killraven (DC 22).*
- *Korben's office is located behind Edarth's Loans (DC 24).*

back rooms accessible from the hidden chamber on the ground floor. Beneath the building lie subterranean chambers also accessible only from the hidden back room. All these rooms are manned by Korben's employees (humans), who act as guards and office assistants. In total, Korben has twenty-two such employees, but at any given time most are out in the district collecting protection fees or running Korben's other interests.

On the street, Korben is known as "Korben the Keeper" because of his penchant for beasts. His black leopard companion accompanies him unless he is going somewhere public that requires him to be discreet. He also keeps the following creatures in pens underground: a dire lion, two dire apes, an owlbear, a black bear, a cockatrice, and a tiger. The room just outside of Korben's office has levers that operate the portcullises that separate the creatures of his menagerie.

The entire area below ground is decorated with furs, pelts, horns, and stuffed heads of various beasts. Korben fancies himself an animal lover and an accomplished hunter. Normally, the underground part of the offices remains empty except for Korben and his pets. (If present, Korben is there. He keeps regular business hours and does not come in at night.)

Korben's best friend and closest cohort is a troll named Durg. Durg acts as his chief enforcer and, when needed, his bodyguard. Durg is surprisingly smart for a troll and a bit smaller than normal (although still much larger than a human). Sometimes, when Killraven needs someone roughed up or killed, Korben volunteers Durg for the job, for which both he and the troll get a payment from the Crime League and looting rights on the victim.

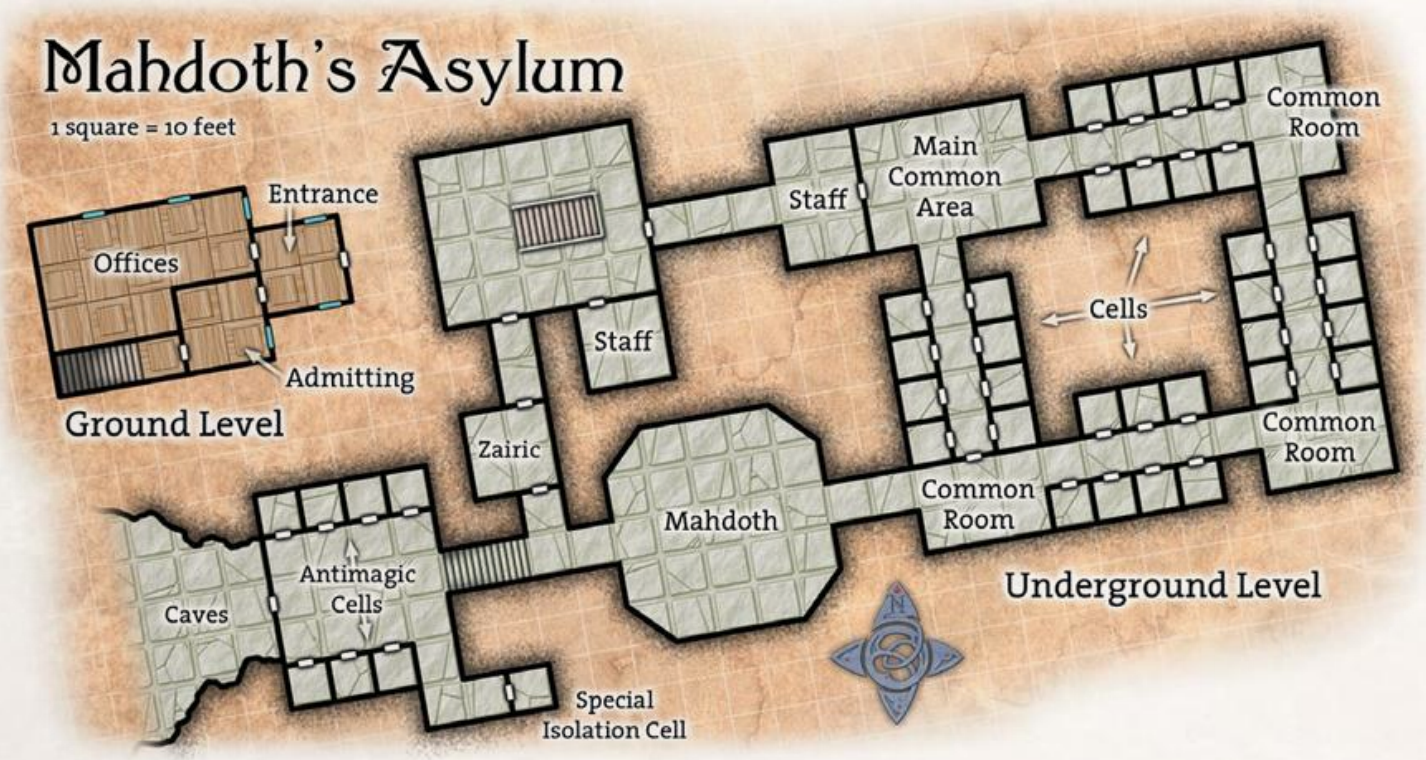
Korben is married and lives with his wife and her mother on Draw Street in the South Market. His mistress, Nallia Feston (female human), lives on Pendulum Street off of Shade Street. He frequents the social club known as Swordthrower's in the Nobles' Quarter with her.

MAHDOTH'S ASYLUM

Childseye Street (#262, F8); see map, below 12,000 gp

Dealing with the mysterious and sometimes reality-bending nature of arcane spellcasting can tax one's mental faculties. Usually, those who cannot pass muster fail in their apprenticeship and take up another vocation. Others, however, get quite far in their studies and personal power before supernatural mental rigors drive them mad. These latter individuals need special care—both for their own sake and for the sake of those around them.

For such unfortunates, there is Mahdoth's Asylum. Mahdoth's is a subterranean facility that contains and cares for insane arcane



spellcasters. Although the facility can handle about forty inmates, generally there are only ever about fifteen in residence.

Mahdoth's is not a sentence. It is not a prison for insane spellcasters; there are no punishments here. The inmates' confinement is not meant to be punitive, but for their own good and the good of others. Unlike the Darkbirth Madhouse, Mahdoth's receives no government funding. As a private facility, Mahdoth's can refuse anyone. Since its establishment long ago, the authorities usually turn over insane arcanist criminals or mad spellcasters detained before causing any serious harm—usually before they have a trial.

The Vast Codex *gives any Imperial representative the authority to terminate any arcane spellcaster proven to be insane. The fact that they occasionally turn over insane arcanists to Mahdoth's is a sign of the Empire's leniency and compassion.*

Darkbirth Madhouse, page 174

Typically, however, the inmates in Mahdoth's are not criminals. They are simply unfortunates who could not handle the magical power they gained or were born with. The intensity of both their madness and their power determines how the asylum deals with them. Those not too far lost to mania nor too magically dangerous enjoy small but comfortable private cells and may socialize with the other inmates during the day. They are allowed only in areas with an ongoing magic-suppressing field that covers all standard cells and common rooms. Those who prove too disruptive (from either dementia or power) stay confined to their cells. A few special cells, secluded from the others in the southwestern portion of the asylum, use a more powerful antimagic ward that cancels all magic.

Brotherhood of Redemption, page 106

Pactlords of the Quaan, page 125

Quaan bone ring, *page 642*

Arcane spellcasters within the magic-suppressing field must make a DC 25 Constitution saving throw to cast or maintain an ongoing spell (this is a concentration roll).

At least one inmate, Deregalis Finorin (male half-elf), is not only confined to a magic-canceling cell but also remains sedated most of the time. His madness leads him to cast powerful spells that summon uncontrolled elementals and fiends every round that he is able to. The staff of Mahdoth's have discovered that if Deregalis is conscious, he somehow manages to do this when he is inside a magic-canceling cell. His existence is one of Mahdoth's best-kept secrets. The public believes the city executed him twenty years ago. He would make a terrifying weapon for the chaos cults, for example, if freed.

Chaos cults, page 75

Serpent Caves, page 419

MAHDOTH AND HIS STAFF

Mahdoth is an unusual globular, three-eyed creature called an ocular tyrant, who happens to be under a powerful compulsion placed upon him many decades ago by a cleric of Ahaar, Lord of the Air. The compulsion forces him to operate the asylum and keep the inmates in check, but relatively unharmed. Over the years, he has grown content with his lot. He has adapted to the idea of drawing a salary from the asylum and using it to purchase food and other goods (through an intermediary—he doesn't go up into the city) rather than hunting, stealing, and destroying. When dealing with inmates, his most potent advantage is his most simple one: an antimagic ray from his large main eye.

A rare creature, Mahdoth looks like a large, floating eye 5 feet across, with four tendrils dangling beneath. Two eyestalks with bulbous eyes at their tips rise from atop his body.

Mahdoth has strong connections with the Brotherhood of Redemption, who like to claim him as a success story, but the truth is, they had nothing to do with his "redemption." In fact, Mahdoth is not—using their terminology—actually redeemed. He formerly belonged to the Pactlords of the Quaan and still wears one of their *bone rings* on an eyestalk. He has managed to break the bonds of the Pact, however, which has earned him the enmity of all the other humanoid-hating Pactlords.

Mahdoth's Asylum receives large donations from the Inverted Pyramid, but that organization exerts no control over the place. The remaining revenues come from private donations, often from the families or estates of the inmates. The ocular tyrant does not deal with these mundane matters, however. The asylum administrator, Urak Nar (human male), contends with the business aspects of the institution.

Rhodintor, page 594

Chaositech, page 529

Mahdoth's primary assistant is Zairic Westridon (male gnome). He wears an amulet that allows him to overcome the magic-suppressing field; he keeps a spare hidden on his person to lend to someone else, if needed. Since most of the inmates are terrified of Mahdoth and Urak is more of a bureaucrat, Zairic interacts directly with the inmates and the four other staff members (human and elf) on behalf of his boss.

Malkuth, page 124

Unlike the Darkbirth Madhouse, the staff of Mahdoth's includes no physickers. No one makes an attempt to cure the inmates here, only to contain them and try to make them comfortable.

Scenario: Mahdoth's lower level connects to a series of natural caves that have never been fully explored. As it turns out, these caves provide direct passage from the Serpent Caves to the surface. A number of chaos cultists with their rhodintor allies attempt to bring chaositech into the city through Mahdoth's. In order to succeed, they use mind-influencing magic on Administrator Urak.

The player characters learn of the shipment, either by reading the time and place on a note held by a chaos cultist they defeat or by hearing of it from a Malkuth agent who asks them to help stop the plan. Mahdoth has no intention of

Urak Nar has experienced monk stats, page 609

Zairic Westridon has mage stats.

Antimagic wards are equivalent to a permanent antimagic field.

Deregalis Finorin is a sorcerer with archmage stats. Each round, he uses his highest available spell slot to summon an elemental or fiend with a CR equal to the level of the spell slot used.

The four other asylum staff members have artisan stats, page 606

Mahdoth has erinyes stats, with type aberration, and Large size; his Longbow attacks are eye beams that inflict force damage; his Longsword attack is a tentacle slam that inflicts psychic damage. Instead of Parry, at will he can create a 150-foot cone of antimagic field.

INSANE ARCANISTS

Madmen often accomplish tasks in their lunacy that no sane person can replicate, and it is no different with wizards and sorcerers than with common folk. Wizards without spellbooks cast spells they did not prepare. Sorcerers unleash more spells than they should be able to. Warlocks call upon pacts with beings that supposedly no longer exist. All three produce magical effects that are not spells at all. Somehow, their disassociation with reality allows them greater access to powers as yet not understood.

One of the most common arcanist maladies is an addiction to magic. These poor souls become so enamored of the feel of magic running through their metaphysical form that they crave spellcasting, magic item use, and so on. They get a bit of what they need just from being around spellcasting or being the target of a spell. Without this dose of magic, they become either violent or catatonic. However, if they do get a touch of magic, some can absorb the spell's power and use it themselves—often in a violent, destructive, and spectacular display.

letting adventurers come into the asylum to fight cultists, though; he insists that if any cultists do show up, he will deal with them.

Thus, in order to stop the cultists, the PCs must somehow break *into* the asylum to confront them, or wait for them outside and risk an underhanded maneuver from the cultists, such as using a spell to create a temporary passage from Mahdoth's into the sewers—which is exactly what they will do. And woe to the city if, while in the asylum, the cultists stumble upon the mad summoner Deregalis Finorin. . . .

MARAN'S ODD SIZES

Berry Lane (#276, G8) see map, page 326 350 gp

Maran Desiduo (female gnome) is a clothier and expert seamstress who owns her own shop. She specializes in clothing and accessories for creatures of nonhumanoid shape, such as centaurs; those with special needs, like lizardfolk (who need clothing that allows for a tail); and those particularly larger or smaller than a typical human, dwarf, or elf. While plenty of clothiers in Midtown cater to halflings and gnomes in their respective neighborhoods, only Maran regularly carries clothing for ogres, goblins, fae folk, and even those who can change their shape but want to continue wearing clothing.

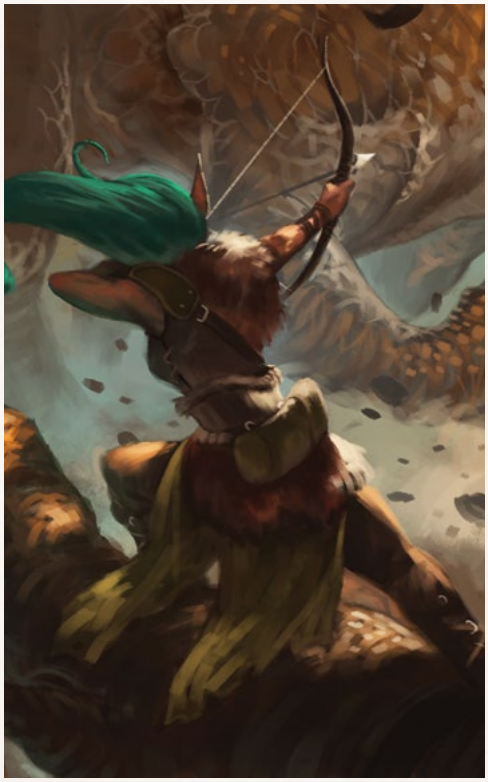
Maran, an overweight gnome with reddish hair and full lips, has many interesting stories to tell. Like the time a ranger commissioned her to craft a leather harness for his wolf companion, or when an intelligent bear came in looking for clothing, or the adventurers who brought in a small but surprisingly intelligent owlbear for a fitting. Maran has connections with the Brotherhood of Redemption and knows most of the prominent "monstrous" residents of Ptolus, like Urlenius, Durant the troglodyte, Udalaag of the Runewardens, and even Mahdoth, to name a few. And of course the Knight of the Pale Brig Stoneheart and the "tall girl" Benris Hu-Charad Livbovic are also customers.

Maran's husband Feligg (male gnome) and adult daughter Giva (female gnome) also work in the shop. The building has two stories; Maran uses the upper level as a workshop and fitting room. The family lives in the Fairbriar neighborhood of Midtown.

NAVAEN BOWCRAFT

Star Crossing Plaza (#243, E8) see map, page 326 1,850 gp

The Navaen family ("Trueflight" in Common) has been bowyers for generations—elven generations. The current head of the family, Naequant Navaen (female elf), runs this shop, which sells bows and arrows of all kinds. The



Feligg Desiduo has commoner stats.

Giva Desiduo has commoner stats.

Fairbriar, page 189

Naequant Navaen has artisan stats, page 606

Maran Desiduo has expert stats, page 609

Brotherhood of Redemption, page 106

Urlenius, page 361

Durant, page 119

Udalaag, page 542

Mahdoth, page 337

Brig Stoneheart, page 122

wares are all made in the forest north of Ptolus ("No bow or arrow of any worth could actually be made in a city," Naequant likes to say) and shipped here, so special orders take an extra week, sometimes more.

The bows and arrows are carefully displayed within the large shop. The place smells of oiled wood, and a massive elven woven carpet of blue and green covers the floor.

Although Naequant is a master bowyer, she is no archer. That would be her brother, Laerose Trueflight (male elf), an adventurer who hangs around the shop when he doesn't have a mission or quest. The two live above the store in a well-appointed flat. Their uncle, Dadian (male elf), handles most of the trips back and forth to the Moonsilver Forest, but when in Ptolus he also stays in the rooms above the shop.

All the family members are well known at Iridithil's Home; Laerose is a member of the Order of the Bow. Naequant and Nyphistree Silvertree are close friends.

Encounter: While shopping at Navaen Bowcraft, the player characters overhear two adventurers talking about an ancient cache of treasure beneath a residential section of Midtown. If the PCs approach the adventurers and establish a rapport with them, or listen surreptitiously, they can learn that the group has no plans to try to get at it because of its close proximity to a Pit of Insanity.

RAMORO'S BAKERY

Center Street (#258, F7) see map, page 326 150 gp

Ramoro Udelis (male human) and his wife Carlatia (female human) run a bakery in the South Market. A freestanding structure, Ramoro's has a bit of a yard around it, as it once was an upscale house. Now the building is very old and ill kept. Despite its appearance, the proprietors offer excellent baked goods. In warm weather Ramoro sets out tables for patrons to sit at while they enjoy their pastries, frosted or jellied rolls, or honey, fruit, and nut breads. At these times, the bakery offers coffee and tea as well. Most of the year, however, it's just a takeaway bakery.

Ramoro and Carlatia always seem embroiled in some kind of argument.

Encounter: Ramoro's brother Pauthan (human male) is a pickpocket who, on nice days, "works" among the bakery's customers. If someone catches him in the act, Ramoro intervenes, asking the customer for his family's forgiveness. While Carlatia leads Pauthan away by the ear, Ramoro offers the victim free bread and rolls for a month to compensate.

ROGUE MOON TRADING COMPANY OFFICES

Star Crossing Plaza (#246, E8) see map, page 326 20,000 gp.

The largest merchant company in Ptolus operates out of a three-story building in the middle of the South Market. Some people call it "the Star of the South Market," implying that Star Crossing Plaza gets its name from the office (which it does not).

In any event, vast amounts of money—both coin and paper transactions—pass through this building. The lower level is used almost exclusively as a hiring hall, where the company interviews and hires merchants, laborers, caravan drivers, and guards. The upper two levels contain offices for the bookkeepers and staff members who manage transaction records and shipment information.

The Rogue Moon Trading Company doesn't produce or sell anything directly. It buys large stocks of goods in one city, then sells them where they are needed. It buys and sells in the Ptolus commodities markets for the most part, although large businesses work with the trading company directly. Rogue Moon has buyers and agents looking for business in every commodities market in Ptolus.

Tamora Rigan (female human) runs the office here, answerable only to the board of directors in Tarsis. She belongs to House Abanar, as her family has for a few generations. Her close friend, Tashari Lin (female human), is one of the main stockholders in the Rogue Moon Trading Company, and one can often find her in the offices. Tashari is the ex-wife of Linech Cran, a drug smuggler allied with the Balacazar family.

Scenario: A steady stream of merchant caravans owned and operated by Rogue Moon travel back and forth between Ptolus and Tarsis along the Emperor's Road. For those interested in getting out of town for a time, the trading company is always looking for drivers and guards for these caravans.

SALORA'S POTS

Draw Street (#270, G7) see map, page 326 720 gp

Salora Hail (female human) owns and operates a pottery shop where she sells her own creations. Her pottery has a distinctive style, usually with an ornate blue and white pattern, that has grown quite popular in the city.

Salora is middle-aged, although she looks younger, with long brown hair and a thin face. Most would call her a gossip or a busybody—but say what you will, she is a treasure trove of information, particularly regarding the South

Laerose Trueflight has veteran stats.

Dadian has spy stats.

Moonsilver Forest, page 44
Iridithil's Home, page 197
Order of the Bow, page 199
Nyphistree Silvertree, page 199

Tamora Rigan and Tashari Lin have aristocrat stats, page 606

Pits of Insanity, page 387
House Abanar, page 93

Linech Cran, page 563
Balacazars, page 102
Emperor's Road, page 155

Ramoro and Carlatia Udelis have expert stats, page 609

Salora Hail has artisan stats (page 606). In regard to Ptolus gossip and knowledge, she has History +6 and Investigation +6, and advantage on information relating to the South Market.

Pauthan has scout stats, with Sleight of Hand +4.

Korben Trollone, page 335
Cock Pit, page 330

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check tells characters the following about Salora, a local potter:

- *Salora Hail of Salora's Pots is extremely knowledgeable about the South Market and the city in general (DC 15).*

Market. She knows virtually everyone in the district, where they live and work, and what they've been doing lately. She knows not only about the crime boss Korben Trollone, but about his extramarital affair as well. She knows the location of the Cock Pit, and what you have to say and whom you have to bribe to get into the exclusive back room. She knows everything. However, Salora shares information only with customers. If you want to know something, you have to buy some of her very nice yet overpriced pottery.

SPICE MARKET

Jasper Street (#273, G8); see map, page 326 20,000 gp

The Spice Market is a popular commodities market frequented by individual customers as well as merchants, restaurateurs, and others. Merchant caravans from throughout the south travel to this marketplace to sell their wares.

The Spice Market is a long, single-story wooden building open on one end and filled with stalls for vendors to store and sell their goods. Because some spices are so precious, many vendors here employ guards.

The market sells salt, saffron, coriander, thyme, garlic, sage, tarragon, aniseed, basil, cumin, turmeric, cloves, sugar, cinnamon, marjoram, and other spices. One also can purchase teas and coffee beans here.

Spice merchants from the south sometimes use their identities and wares as a cover to smuggle illegal drugs into Ptolus. City Watch members and Imperial customs inspectors look out for such activities, but there is too much traffic for them to adequately monitor it all. Laithe Silksong (female elf), an independent criminal, manages much of the drug traffic through the Spice Market, buying the contraband from incoming merchants and selling it into the city through her contacts in the major criminal organizations. She also sells certain drugs, such as gravebloom from the Necropolis and shivvel from the Whitewind Islands.

Encounter: A foe of the player characters leads them on a chase through the Spice Market. Merchants, vendors, customers, guards, and porters hauling crates and sacks all might get in the way, not to mention the barrels and sacks, some open on tables. Upset containers of spices create spice clouds (lasting one round) that hinder sight (like fog or mist).

Laithe Silksong has assassin stats.
Spice guards usually have guard or thug stats.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check reveals some facts about the Spice Market:

- *The Spice Market is in the South Market district (DC 12).*
- *People smuggle illegal drugs into the city through the Spice Market (DC 16).*
- *Laithe Silksong handles most of the drug traffic in the Spice Market (DC 22).*

Gravebloom, page 518
Shivvel, page 519
Whitewind Islands, page 519

Local Expressions

Ptolus has many unique colloquialisms. Here are a few of the expressions one might hear, whether in the South Market or any of the city's districts.

"A deal with the Rau." (a cheat or swindle)

"Every month is Rain in Ptolus."

"Don't try to break a brick." (subtle reference to the criminal Masons' Guild)

"Everything passes through Midtown."

"He's got the heart of a fish-wrangler." (someone is fit, hardy, strong, and quick)

"A Redwand job." (reference to the thief Sobac Redwand; euphemism for a well-secured place)

"Eat to live, don't live to eat." (litorian motto)

"Demons of darkness!" (exclamation referring to Ghul-created demons)

"Don't lose stripe." (don't lose your nerve)

"By the four sacraments!" (reference to the four sacraments of Lothian; see page 71)

South Market Map: Page 326

THE WELCOME INN

Emperor's Road (#268, F8) ★★ see map, page 326 1,000 gp

One of a handful of taverns and inns situated around the South Gate, the Welcome Inn is the largest establishment where travelers just arrived from the south can find lodging, a drink, and a meal. The inn is a long, two-story brick building that originally served as a small monastery many years ago. The owners are Markus and Valene Schuk (male and female human), a friendly older couple about to retire and leave the business to their daughters, Rona and Illene (female human). Unfortunately, the Schuk family owes a great deal of money to Edarth Ovis (and thus Korben Trollone) for a time six years ago when they had to hire mercenaries to deal with goblins that had tunneled up into their cellar from the Undercity. Korben plans to foreclose on the family and take control of the inn so he can turn it into a front for a large gambling den that he believes can one day rival the Cock Pit.

Scenario: While gathering information about another topic, the player characters learn that the Schuks have been dealing with the Balacazars—specifically, with Halgrim Fatherstone, the organization's crime boss in the South Market. Investigation proves that these simple folk are not criminals but desperately in need of allies against Korben. If the PCs help the Schuks get out of debt to Korben the Keeper, the family won't have to work with the Balacazars. However, Korben doesn't want the debt paid off; he wants to own the inn.

Markus, Valene, Rona, and Illene Schuk have commoner stats.

Balacazars, page 102

Halgrim Fatherstone, see page 106

OTHER LOCALES

Although it's not a complete listing by any means, GMs can use the table on the next page to insert additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit the South Market.

MISCELLANEOUS SOUTH MARKET NPCs

One can meet many interesting figures wandering the streets of the South Market. Presented here is the most infamous—and the most interesting—one.

THE WANDERING SMITH

The mysterious figure known as the Wandering Smith is rumored to be just this side of immortal. His abilities far surpass those of a normal man, and he's certainly the greatest smith alive—perhaps the greatest ever to have lived. Most tales place his birth at almost a thousand years ago, well before the founding of the Empire. Reportedly, he fought against the forces of evil in the Ghulwar, under a different name.

What very few know is that the Wandering Smith, once a normal man, has been infused with the power of an aspect (or avatar) of the Iron God, a deity as mysterious as the Smith himself. One day more than a thousand years ago, the Prustan man—whose name even he has forgotten—encountered the Iron God's physical manifestation, which had been grievously wounded in a battle with the avatar of the evil god Maleskari. The man offered to help the Iron God's aspect, and the avatar fused itself with him in order to save its own life. Thus the Wandering Smith was born.

As his name implies, the Wandering Smith only occasionally shows up in Ptolus. When he does, he spends time in the South Market, visiting smithies and workshops. His actions can seem capricious. Sometimes he bestows an item of great value and amazing craftsmanship to a person he's never met (the item is always perfect for the recipient), and other times he merely sells items he has crafted to any willing customers. Such items can always be sold for at least 110 percent of their value, as many folks will pay a premium for an item he has crafted. Frequently, such items are deemed virtually indestructible.

Iron God, page 72

Maleskari, page 73

The Wandering Smith has deadly warrior stats (page 607), with immunity to poison and disease, resistance to all nonmagical damage, regeneration 10, and the ability to craft metal items (including metal magic items); alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: +3 maul *(deals triple damage against inanimate objects),* +3 studded leather, ring of protection, potions of superior healing *(2),* bag of holding, *smith's tools, healer's kit, 50 gold bars worth 200 gp each.*
His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
1/day each: alter self, detect magic, find the path, legend lore, locate creature, teleport

Ghulwar, page 431

OTHER LOCALES IN THE SOUTH MARKET

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Abrury's Dairy		Spear Street (#264, F8)	Gaulla Winsome (female human commoner)	3	—
The Blue Thread		Family Street (#260, F8)	Deda Norris (female human commoner)	4	High-class clothier
Chon		Owl Street (#252, F8)	Chon Guidin (male human commoner)	2	Clothier/tailor
Crystal Baths		Emperor's Road (#267, F8)	Niles Saphar (male human commoner)	6	Bathhouse for travelers
The Durambor		South Street (#281, G8)	Dralton Stoneshine (male dwarf artisan*)	10	Grailwarden gem buyers
Fragrant House	★★★	Emperor's Road (#265, F8)	Daenlos Lostlove (male half-elf expert*)	4	Restaurant for travelers
Good Rope		Alabaster Street (#259, F8)	Thyra Stonehelm** (female dwarf expert*)	2	Makes and sells hemp rope
The Green Mews		Emperor's Road (#266, F8)	Jakom Mullar (male human commoner)	4	Large stables for travelers
Highshelf Glassworks		Van Mitten Street (#278, H8)	Dallin Understone (male dwarf artisan*)	5	Glassmaker
Indari's Leatherworks		Jasper Street (#274, G8)	Indari (female centaur)	3	—
Jabber's Shoes		Gold Street (#253, E8)	Scalla Hovar (female human commoner)	1	Cobbler
Merchants' Guildhall		Berry Lane (#279, G8)	Jellica Whiteblade (female halfling expert*)	10	New guildhouse
The Mystery Pub	★★	South Street (#269, F8)	Dellis Favro (male human arcanist*)	5	Tavern known for elaborate, bizarre, and magical games and entertainments
Narras Ink		Tinker Street (#247, D8)	Filo Narras (male human spy)	1	Makes and sells ink, and sells pens and paper as well; front for a Sorn cell
Reggie's Meats		Lavarsh Street (#257, F7)	Reggithar Noth (male human commoner)	2	Smokehouse
St. Chausle's Chapel		Bladeburn Street (#263, F8)	Brother Narval Lumas (male human priest)	2	Temple of Lothian
Silver Cup		Cord Street (#271, F7)	Baldasin Kaverom (male human artisan*)	6	Silversmith
The Smokestack		Rebel Street (#280, G8)	Narvalan Tull (male human commoner)	1	Tobacconist
The South Chandler		Coal Street (#284, H9)	Rendich Schun (male human expert*)	3	Candle shop
The Starry Night		Star Crossing Plaza (#245, F8)	Yallathin Stone (male human artisan*)	12	Very large, well-known restaurant
Tehlas Music		Peace Street (#256, F7)	Abbal Tehlas (female human performer*)	0	Musical instrument shop
Tirres		Force Row (#282, G8)	Tirres (male centaur artisan*)	1	Weaponsmith with booth in Undercity Market
Warick's		Apricot Street (#275, G8)	Warick Nigalis (male halfling commoner)	1	Poor cobbler; front for an illegal brothel
Winter Lyehouse		Gold Street (#251, E8)	Harris Fulk (male human commoner)	2	Soap shop
Wood Market		Emperor's Road (#255, F6)	Hyla Sparrow (female human expert*)	12	—
Zel's Poultice Shop		Pollen Row (#250, E8)	Zel North (male human artisan*)	1	Apothecary

* see Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604
** Proprietor is an information source for all things pertaining to dwarves in the city.

Chapter 17:

TEMPLE DISTRICT

Teeming with churches, shrines, and the headquarters of various religious orders, the Temple District is a strange hodgepodge of good and evil. The dangerous and hidden Temple of the Rat God is found here, as is the Priory of Introspection and St. Valien's Cathedral. Those interested in some strange disappearances in town may want to check out the Temple of the Ebon Hand cult.

The Temple District is a relatively small section of Ptolus centered around worship and religious faith. It is bounded by the King's River to the south, North Gate Road to the west, Carver Lane to the east, and Golden Elm Way to the north. Some folks claim that it extends all the way to the Necropolis wall in the east—and certainly the area east of Carver Lane focuses on burial needs and other religious-related matters—but officially, that is a part of Midtown.

THE FLAVOR OF THE TEMPLE DISTRICT

In many ways, the Temple District is the most exotic of all the districts of Ptolus. The strange music and chants of rites to unknown gods waft through the incense-laden air. Couriers bearing holy writs brush past self-flagellating monks and street preachers hoping to bring salvation to the unconverted. Almost on a daily basis, one religion or another hosts a procession, parade, festival, or other public spectacle.

As its name suggests, the Temple District comprises mostly temples. On the famous Street of a Million Gods that runs through the district, virtually every building is a church of some kind. And other streets hold plenty of temples as well—in fact, some of the largest and most prominent ones, such as St. Valien's Cathedral and the Priory of Introspection, are situated elsewhere in the district.

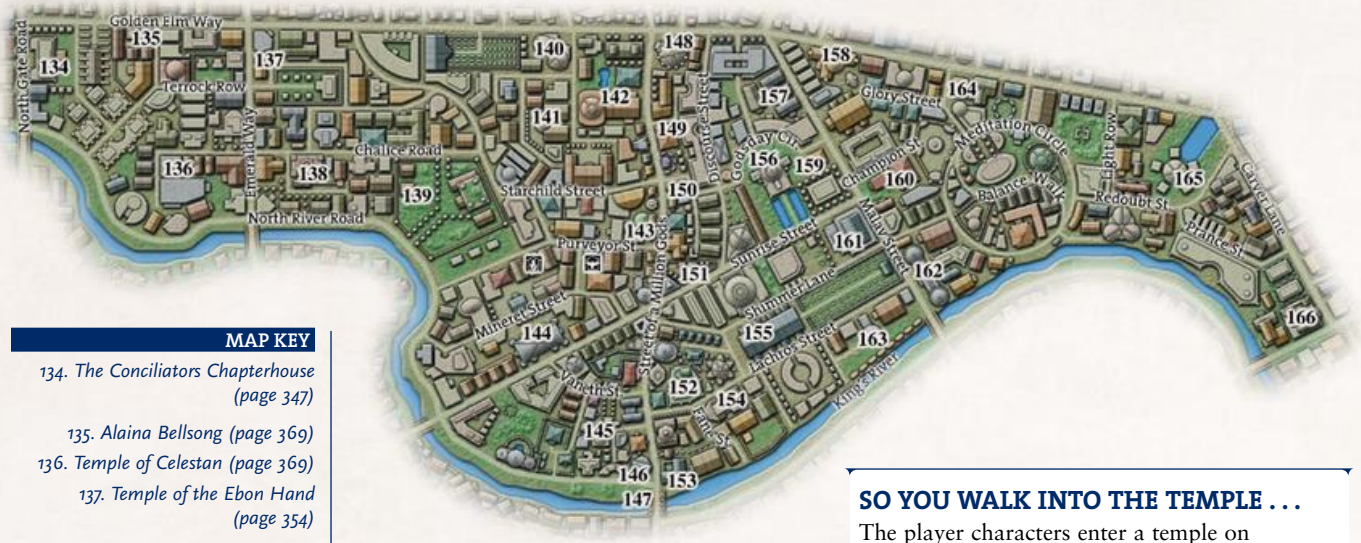
While ambling through the streets here, one can't help wondering what the definition of a temple actually is. Although most people would characterize it as a building dedicated to the worship of a god, some temples do not fit that description. These places, usually monasteries, focus instead on an ideal, belief, or concept. For example, the aforementioned Priory of Introspection is dedicated to the nature and value of the female psyche.

But of course, not every single building in the Temple District is a temple. Some are locations like the Hall of Heroes, where statues of famous adventurers are displayed together. Some are religious support facilities, like priestly dormitories or small markets for temple personnel. There are homes for priests, other temple workers, and regular citizens—especially the more religious-minded of them. There are also religious shops that sell holy symbols, holy water, sacred oil, incense, prayer beads, and so on. Tombstone carvers and makers of crystal vessels set up shop in the district as well. Finally, one will find the sorts of buildings any district requires: a Watchhouse, Firehouse, and the like.

TEMPLE DISTRICT IN BRIEF

Area: *110 acres*
Population: *About 8,000*
Primary Function: *Religious*
Primary Social Class: *Middle*
Purveyor Street (H4)
Purveyor Street (H4)

St. Valien's Cathedral, page 350
Priory of Introspection, page 349
Hall of Heroes, page 347



MAP KEY

134. The Conciliators Chapterhouse (page 347)
135. Alaina Bellsong (page 369)
136. Temple of Celestan (page 369)
137. Temple of the Ebon Hand (page 354)
138. Temple of Teun (page 367)
139. Temple of Melann (page 369)
140. Temple of Phoeboul (page 369)
141. Temple of the Iron God (page 369)
142. Temple Observatory of the Watcher of the Skies (page 362)
143. Taggert's (page 353)
144. Temple of Inurath (page 369)
145. Temple of Gaen (page 359)
146. Temple of Ynchabolos (page 369)
147. Blessed Bridge (page 346)
148. Celestial Conclave (page 346)
149. Temple of Asche (page 353)
150. Temple of the Fifty-Three Gods of Chance (page 369)
151. Order of the Fist (page 348)
152. Temple of Ahaar (page 353)
153. Temple of the Rat God (page 363)
154. Temple of Navashtrom (page 361)
155. Hall of Heroes (page 347)
156. St. Valien's Cathedral (page 350)
157. Mustek's Shop (page 369)
158. Temple of Kharos (page 369)
159. Stormwrought Campanile (page 352)
160. Priory of Introspection (page 349)
161. Temple of Mocharum (page 369)
162. Temple of Excellence (page 358)
163. Temple of the Frog (page 369)
164. Denthon's (page 369)
165. Shrine of the Oracle (page 350)
166. House of the Sacred Heat (page 348)

RUNNING THE TEMPLE DISTRICT

The key to running the Temple District is this: when a player asks, "Is there a temple to a god of X?" you reply, "Yes."

Now, obviously, you don't want this to get too silly. Don't put a god of raspberry tarts or a goddess of haircuts here. But people worship dozens and dozens of gods in Ptolus—far more than are catalogued in this book. A god of vengeance? Absolutely. A deity devoted to flowers? Sure. A god of flying? Yes, although you might say that the deity is actually the patron of all things in the air, or the god of winged beasts.

While running this district, feel free to throw in any strange religious details you would like. Priests of Gaen can't step into more than seven shadows between sunrise and sunset. Followers of Blurrah avoid men wearing blue shoes. Every third week of the month, the high priest of Mirresh must walk around the temple five times in the nude. These are the kinds of details that dictate activities, conflict, and—most importantly—memorable encounters in the Temple District.

Most likely, the players will immediately consider the Temple District just "the place to go get healed." It's your job to make it more than that. The district holds adventures aplenty involving opposing religions (rivalries that can resemble gang wars in ferocity), evil cults, lost relics, the specifics of strange rituals, and much more.

SO YOU WALK INTO THE TEMPLE . . .

The player characters enter a temple on business, possibly to get healed or restored, or to have some condition removed. What do they see? What's going on inside? What do the priests busy themselves with all day long? Here are some ideas:

Cleaning: Acolytes and servants clean the temple interior and the holy relics.

Dancing: While someone beats a large drum, a number of dancers perform an elaborate rite.

Decorating: The temple staff works to change the building's trappings and other decorations for an event or upcoming holy day.

Divination: One or more priests use spells and prayer to gain important esoteric information.

Funeral: A corpse is prepared physically and spiritually for the afterlife, while the living pay their respects.

Instruction: A priest teaches a large group of the faithful some of the tenets of the religion's dogma.

Planning: The temple staff attends a meeting to prepare for an upcoming event.

Prayer: All the priests are deep in prayerful meditation.

Religious Rite: A priest conducts a small or private ritual involving sacraments and personal attention.

Religious Service: Priests conduct ceremonies and give sermons to an assembled congregation.

Sacrifice: Priests sacrifice goods or even an animal to their deity.

Singing: A choir of singers or chanters performs hymns praising the religion's patron.

Wedding: Two people are being joined in a large, public religious ceremony of vows and rituals.

Nothing: The priests of the temple are out promoting the faith or helping the unfortunate, leaving only a few acolytes behind.

PEOPLE OF THE TEMPLE DISTRICT

The Temple District may be the true melting pot of Ptolus. From the mightiest aristocrat to the lowliest ditch-digger, people come here to pay fealty to their gods. One can run into literally anyone here.

Most of the folks in the Temple District at any given time don't actually live here. The small residential neighborhoods tucked here and there in the district generally provide housing for temple workers and occasionally priests.

The people of the Temple District have formed a strange amalgam culture, despite the fact that most of them have differing outlooks, beliefs, and worldviews. Their divergent dogmas notwithstanding, they at least share in common a general sense of spirituality and faith. They all focus on the ideas of higher powers and belief systems. Most seem surprisingly respectful of each others' faiths.

That said, conflicts of ideology or religion do occur. When clerics of one particular god walk down the street, they might avoid the clerics of another specific faith, lest an argument or fight break out. Sometimes, they avoid the other clerics because their faith demands it—to walk down the same street as the followers of an enemy god would be tantamount to blasphemy.

PERSON ON THE STREET

Harrek Neer: His wide face, square jaw, and flat-topped haircut combine to make Harrek Neer's head seem an almost perfect rectangle. Of average height for a human but with a thick build, he is an imposing fellow. Harrek works as a jack of all trades in the district. Priests and others (usually of nonlawful deities) come to him to have problems solved, anything from water pooling in the church basement or waifs sneaking coins out of the collection box to a rival religion appearing too successful—and thus in need of an idol defacement or the release of a few rats into an important ceremony. Harrek wears a long leather coat with many pockets, each holding a different tool or piece of equipment for his various tasks. He's likely on his way to deal with some problem or another.

Lallae Skyblue: This female elf wears her black hair long, as is traditional for followers of Ardaen. Ardaen, once an elvish god of light, was slain by the evil Gorgoth-Lol in a terrible battle thousands of years ago. Lallae keeps up the shrine built to Ardaen's memory. She calls herself a priestess, but unkind folk around her call her a cleaning woman, since all she does is polish the altar and keep the shrine lovely. Lallae seems perpetually sad, knowing that her life's calling is to serve a god slain millennia before she was born. She dreams of the day when her god returns from the dead, although truthfully there is no reason to believe that will ever happen. If encountered on the street, Lallae probably is on her way to or from the shrine.

Torus Blackstone: A follower of Teun, the Mother of All Machines, this Grailwarden dwarf keeps his black beard trimmed and his hair kept equally short. Torus dabbles in magic but earns his living as a mason—he wears his guild badge proudly. The extremely devout dwarf visits the temple of his goddess at least three times a week.

BUYING TEMPLE GOODS

Some characters will come to the Temple District to purchase goods. Holy water is available at virtually any temple for a donation of 25 gp per vial. Quantities are nearly limitless.

Potions and scrolls of divine spells are available too, but the selection depends on the specific temple and the relationship of the character to that temple. More items are available to the faithful in need than to some random adventurer, for example. Selling potions—and to a lesser extent, scrolls—is the main way temples earn money in Ptolus. Even though they call the payment a donation, it's a very businesslike enterprise.

Sometimes a cleric offers a potion or scroll to a follower of the faith who has done great work simply for the cost of creating it.

Healing potions and scrolls remain the most commonly available items by far.

TEMPLE DISTRICT RUMORS

Holy War. The followers of Danace, Master of the Thousand Pains, diametrically oppose those who serve Hannan, the Lord of the Sun. The high priest of Danace recently hired Vai assassins to kill a high-ranking priest of Hannan. Outraged at the slaying, the clerics of Hannan are gathering the martially inclined among their faithful (along with some hired mercenaries) to raze the temple of Danace, calling it an abomination. They ignore the City Watch's threats to interfere in such an overtly violent retributive action.

Protection Money. The Balacazars make a small fortune every year collecting protection money from the smaller temples in the district, with the implied threat of desecration or destruction to temples that do not comply.

"This so-called 'temple district' is an abomination before Lothian. The mere fact that it has row upon row of temples to non-Lothian gods shows that the citizens' faith has strayed to all manner of idolatry and demonic reverence. If I could, I'd burn the whole place."

~Brother Barclay Norrison

Even the Blessed Bridge across the King's River here has small shrines built upon and into it.

Teun, page 73

"There are temples to more gods here than one can catalog. Gods, it would seem, breed faster than rats in Ptolus."

~Kevris Killraven

Danace, page 72

Hannan, page 72

Vai assassins, page 131

Ardaen, page 71

Gorgoth-Lol, page 72

Balacazars, page 102

Legends say that a person who learns the name of every god that exists will gain special enlightenment.

Coming to Get Healed

Most of the time, there is no cleric standing in the vestibule of a temple ready to hand out healing spells to anyone with 10 gp. Remember that divine spells are gifts from a deity, and the faithful will treat them as such. Although there are no game rules requiring it, most priests bring someone seeking spellcasting into their sanctuary to a holy spot (on a raised dais, by the altar, or the like). They might light special candles or play sacred music while casting their spells. They might even ask recipients to swear an oath to the god or confess their sins. The clerics take the process very seriously, even if the recipients do not.

TEMPLE DISTRICT LOCATIONS

The Temple District has a number of varied and interesting locations for player characters to explore.

CELESTIAL CONCLAVE

Street of a Million Gods (#148, H4); see map, below 4,400 gp

Columns surround this round, white monopteron. The outside looks fairly plain, but the structure's interior contains a great hall that displays every known holy (and unholy) symbol. A vast library of major sacred texts and books on religion fills the rest of the temple.

The priests of the Celestial Conclave revere not a single god but the act of worship itself. They favor no one deity over another, nor do they worship any of them. They are a religion of religion. Priests here study with reverence the rites, beliefs, and tenets of every faith they can discover. The concept of religious faith and the act of worship are holy to them.

This makes the priests of the Conclave the greatest experts on the world's religions and cults. Their collection of religious texts is second to none. Moreover, for a small donation to their temple—usually only a single gold coin—they allow anyone to peruse their library or consult

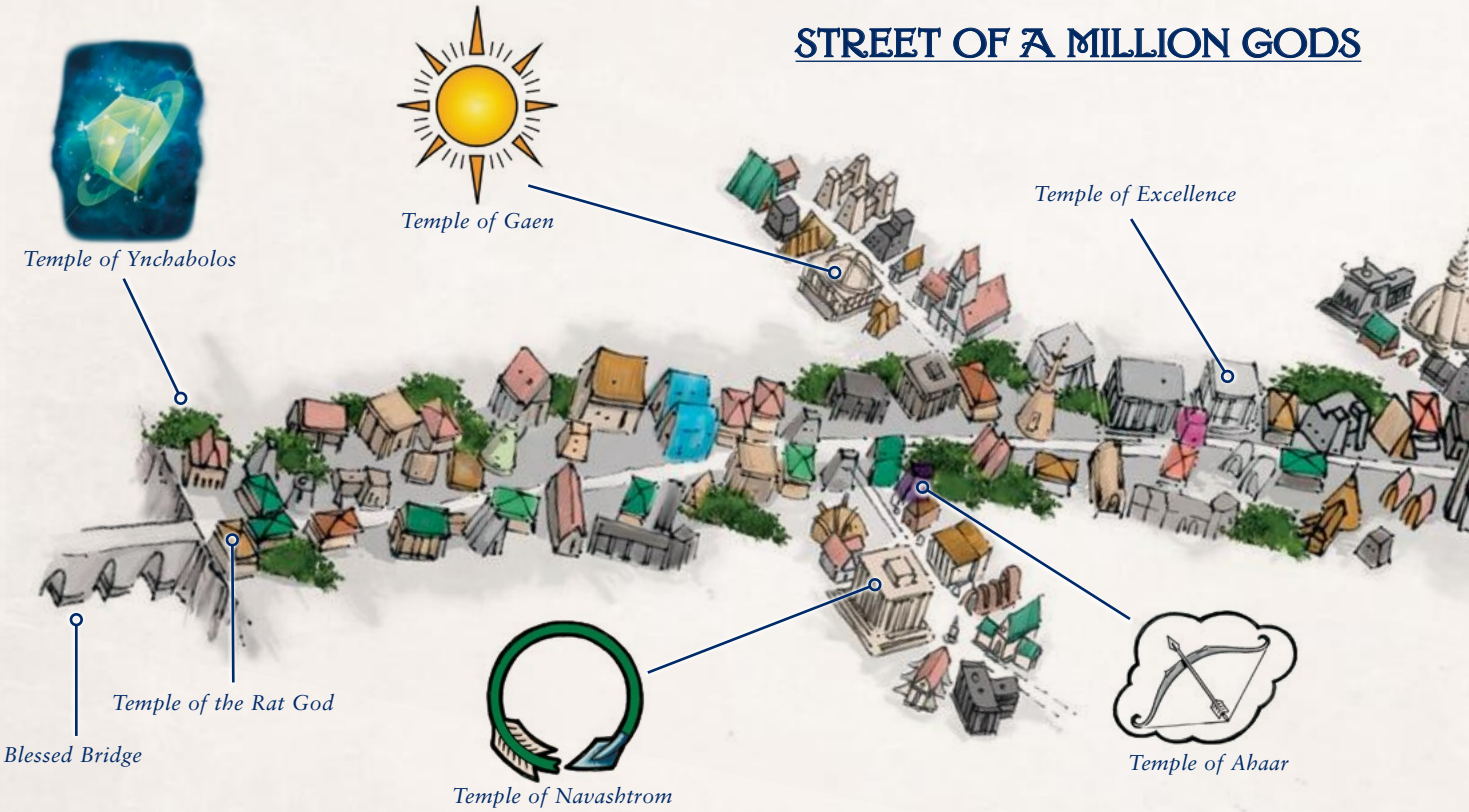
with them on religious questions. While they refuse to comment on matters of understanding, they are happy to discuss matters of fact. For example, they will not venture to guess why Lothian allows accidents to happen to good people or why the followers of Kran, Goddess of Faults, devote themselves to such a distasteful and petty deity. They will, however, explain what the *Book of St. Yessid* says about Lothian's will, or what the rituals of the devotees of Kran are like.

Liessa Vergan (female human) is the high priestess of the Conclave. She appears muscular and fit, with a shaved head and a silver torc.

Liessa Vergan has priest stats, with History +4 and Religion +6.

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

STREET OF A MILLION GODS



She wears a long grey coat over a black shirt and white pants. Liessa is extremely intelligent, well spoken, and friendly.

The Celestial Conclave is a church unique to Ptolus. It has the blessing, if not the full understanding, of just about every temple in the city.

Encounter: When the player characters arrive at the Celestial Conclave, Liessa Vergan is already speaking with a Cherubim elf named Winteril. Winteril recounts ancient Cherubim legends of a dead god, or many dead gods, beneath Ptolus and wants to know more. Liessa knows nothing of such gods, but she promises to find out what she can. Winteril doesn't realize it, but he's referring to the sleeping Galchutt, not a group of dead gods (the legend has become distorted over time).

CONCILIATOR CHAPTERHOUSE

North Gate Road (#134, F4); see map, page 344 11,000 gp

This two-story structure on the western end of the district looks like a library or minor government building, except for the Lothianite crucifix above the main doors. It is, in fact, the headquarters of the Conciliators, a church organization with its roots in the Edict of Deviltry.

Nonmembers, even clerics of Lothian, are not permitted within the chapterhouse except by invitation. The building consists mostly of offices and meeting rooms, with a few billets for members to use when needed. Below the building in two subterranean levels are holding cells and torture rooms once used to extract confessions and conversions from infidels.

HALL OF HEROES

Shimmer Lane (#155, I5) see map, page 344 10,000 gp

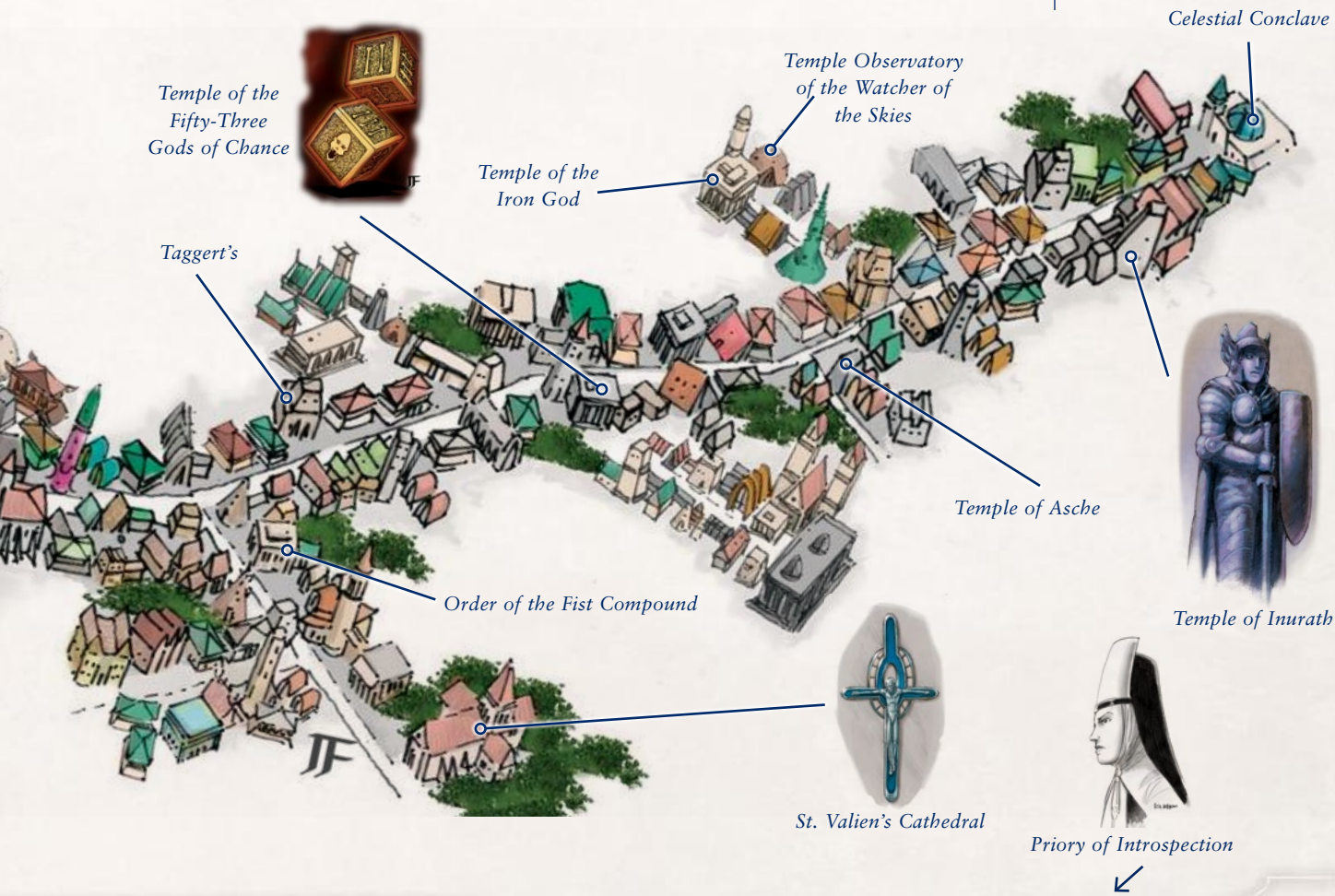
This long rectangular building stands open on three sides, its impressive vaulted stone roof supported by marble columns. The hall houses a series of life-size marble statues of heroes important to Ptolus or the Empire at large. Each of the statues includes a bronze nameplate. Heroes honored here include the following:

- Abesh Runihan, a broad-shouldered male human warrior with a sword and shield who defeated the ghost-lich Kagrisos and saved the city from a plague.
- Brusk, slayer of the tarrasque, a massive male half-orc warrior with a greataxe.
- Delian Von Tessel, the first Emperor, a tall, thin human male with a scepter and longsword.

Galchutt, page 62

Rumor has it that Commissar Igor Urnst will be added to the Hall of Heroes sometime soon.

Conciliators, page 71



The Great Seven are the slayers of Ghul (see page 85).

Eslathagos Malkith, page 79

Shadow of Ptolus, page 304

Ahaar, page 71

- Dionys, one of the Great Seven, a male human warrior-druid with a scythe-sword.
- Eriskal, one of the Great Seven, a female elf rogue with a rapier and a dagger.
- Kam, one of the Great Seven, a stern male halfling monk with clenched fists.
- Maeritha Moonrise, a hard-featured female elf wizard with a thin wooden staff; she was one of the slayers of Eslathagos Malkith.
- Runshallot, one of the Great Seven, a bald, stout male human cleric of Gaen with a shield and mace.
- Saerth, one of the Great Seven, a short male elf wizard-rogue with a small dragon familiar.
- Tacheron Kint, a barrel-chested male human warrior with a longsword and a shortsword. This famed explorer is best known for rescuing lost children from the Shadow of Ptolus.
- Thoy Champous, a male human paladin of Ahaar with an intricately carved elven bow. He is renowned for imprisoning nightwalkers (a kind of undead giant) below Oldtown.
- Uthegos, one of the Great Seven, a male dwarf warrior with a dwarven waraxe.
- Yllistro, one of the Great Seven, a male half-elf sorcerer-ranger with a longbow.
- Zachary Hedron, a tall and noble-looking male human warrior who gave his life rescuing dozens of people from burning buildings in the Great Fire of 701 IA.

Order of the Fist, page 24

All members of the Order of the Fist must tithe 10 percent of their earnings to the order.

The building has room for the addition of more statues. Sponsored by the Delver's Guild, the hall also receives grants from the Commissar, on the condition that Emperor Von Tessel be included (he is). Some dismiss the hall as merely a political landmark, but others come here to pay their respects or help teach history to their children.

HOUSE OF THE SACRED HEAT

Center Street (#166, J5); see map, page 344 8,000 gp

Healers of the Sacred Heat, page 23

The Healers of the Sacred Heat maintain their eternal holy flame in a building that looks like a two-story keep. They believe in the divine healing power of fire, although their faith does not involve worship, per se, nor do they revere any god. They do not think of themselves as priests (or their headquarters as a temple), but as healers with a greater understanding of fire than others.

Serving the needs of Ptolusites who cannot afford to pay a temple hundreds of gold coins to heal a wound or deal with an illness, the Healers of the Sacred Heat use holy fire to deal with injury, disease, and afflictions of all kinds.

For a donation of only 5 gp, they use a painful but effective magical application of fire to alleviate boils, warts, moles, blemishes, and other skin marks; sprains, muscle or ligament aches, arthritis, rheumatism, and even broken bones; asthma, allergies, gout, sexually transmitted diseases; and virtually any other minor ailment. Recurring problems (such as arthritis) or very serious ones (like broken bones or diseased organs) require multiple or ongoing treatments. And conditions like curses, blindness, deafness, life-draining effects, and any sort of magically inflicted disabilities are beyond them. Basically, the healers here cope with trivial and mundane ailments, not those more common among adventurers. Their clientele are average middle-class citizens.

Scenario: The player characters are helping to locate a young man snatched by slavers. While investigating, they learn of a woman—the girlfriend of a high-ranking slaver—who may know where the group took the fellow. Even though she keeps a low profile, the PCs learn that she comes to the Healers of the Sacred Heat once a month to deal with a recurring boil. After staking out the House of the Sacred Heat, they can follow her and find out where she goes, or confront and question her right there.

ORDER OF THE FIST COMPOUND

Street of a Million Gods (#151, H5); see map page 347 1,100 gp

The only entrance into this compound always stays locked. Entry is the first requirement for those wishing to join—candidates must climb or leap over the 18-foot stone wall surrounding the open courtyard where the members of the order practice combat training and other skills from sunrise to sunset.

All members of the Order of the Fist must tithe 10 percent of their earnings to the order.

The Order of the Fist is based around a very simple, straightforward philosophy: decide what you want, and take it. While at the outset this idea seems selfish and greedy, a student of the order soon finds that it is much more than it appears. The Order of the Fist teaches its members to set personal goals beyond the mundane (wealth, power, sex), then allow nothing to stand in the way of those goals. For example, a member might decide to rid Ptolus of all demons because one on a rampage killed their mother. The order teaches its students to look below the surface to find out what they really want.

The compound is austere, bare of any décor or luxury. The members do keep a large supply of mundane equipment for their own use.

The leader of the order is Wynn Rabinall, a handsome, powerful man with smoldering eyes and dark features. Wynn is a man of great sadness, having lost his lover on a past adventure, but he buries his pain in his devotion to the order. He spends most of his time here, training with the other members.

The order's other prominent student is the human monk Aliya Al-Mari of the Runewardens. At any given time, membership is less than a dozen people. However, they are some of the most prominent and powerful monks in the city.

PRIORY OF INTROSPECTION

Malav Street (#160, I4); see map, page 350 30,000 gp

The Priory of Introspection, headquarters of the Sisterhood of Silence, is a walled compound of simple but elegant design. Inside, the Sisterhood maintains fabulous gardens within the courtyard and atop the roof of the main sanctuary. As one might expect, this is a very quiet place where even non-members feel compelled to whisper.

Visitors enter the priory through the Great Hall, a monumental structure designed to instill awe and humility in all. Columns like redwood trees rise up on either side of the marble hall, which is virtually unadorned but always immaculately clean. Many side passages branch off from the Great Hall.

The hall ends in huge doors that give way to the audience chamber of the Mother Superior. This dim chamber is almost as vast as the Great Hall that precedes it and, if anything, appears more spartan. At the far end stands a round marble dais whose rear half is concealed by a wooden screen. From here, the Mother Superior sits out of the view of anyone in the chamber save her eunuch Speaker. He stands to one side of the screen so he can see both the Mother Superior and the visitors who have come to "speak" with her.

When the eunuch speaks, he never refers to himself, only "we." Occasionally he refers to "the Mother Superior," but always in the third person and never with a pronoun.

An audience with the Mother Superior as described above is available only by appointment. The Sisterhood often refuses requests without explanation. To make an appointment or other request of the Sisterhood, visitors can come to the Great Hall and speak with the eunuch on duty.

Aside from the Great Hall and the audience chamber, the rest of the two-story priory is forbidden to outsiders. Here the Sisters relax, train, study, eat, and sleep. As there are approximately one hundred fifty Sisters at any given time, and all of them live in the priory, the compound is rather large.

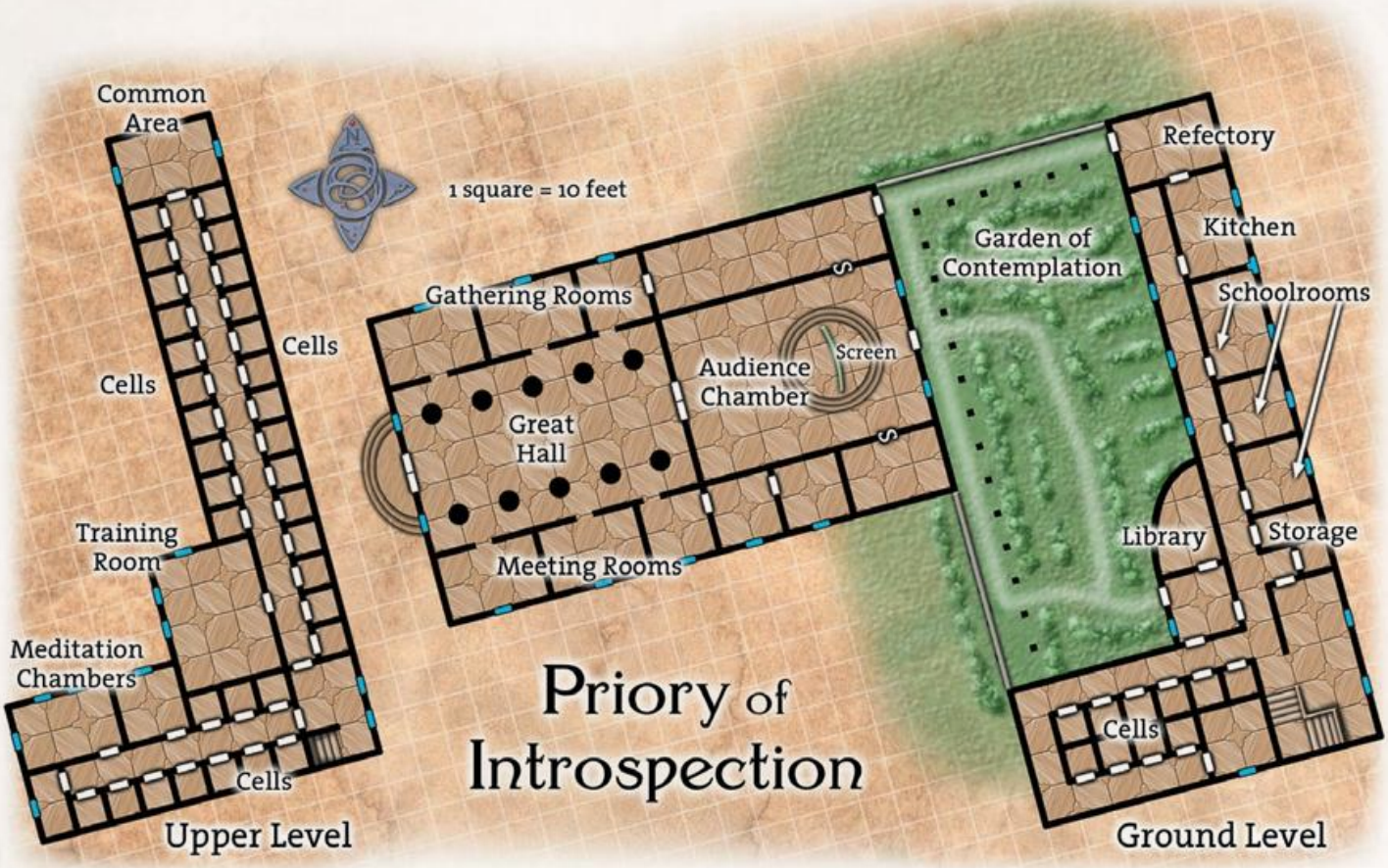
Mother Superior, page 128

To the surprise of many, the Mother Superior stays in quarters no different than those of the youngest novice.

Wynn Rabinall has deadly warrior stats (see page 607), with unarmed strikes instead of longsword attacks, sling attacks instead of longbow attacks, and the Ki points (20), Slow Fall (100 hp), Stunning Strike, Ki-Empowered Strikes, Evasion, Stillness of Mind, Purity of Body, Tranquility, Quivering Palm, and Wholeness of Body (60 hp) abilities of a 20th-level monk; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: +1 sling, *sling bullets (20),* ring of protection, bracers of defense, belt of hill giant strength, ring of telekinesis, boots of striding and springing, potions of superior healing *(3), 15 sp.*

The Runewardens, page 542

Sisterhood of Silence, page 127



Urthon Aedar, page 130

SHRINE OF THE ORACLE

Redoubt Street (#165, J5); see map, page 344 7,200 gp

A domed tower flanked by obelisks, the Shrine of the Oracle rises up before a reflecting pool in a grassy yard. This shrine is the home of the Brotherhood of the Oracle, a spiritual group interested in foretelling the future. The Oracle is a woman from a line of oracles, always the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter in the same family lineage.

Galchutt, page 62

Nayvras has artisan stats, see page 606

Today, that woman is Nayvras (female human). She is plain, with shoulder-length brown hair and small eyes. She also seems very quiet, hardly saying anything except when she prophesies. Her constant companions are her two golden retriever dogs. The Brotherhood dotes on her and caters to her every whim, but she neither takes advantage of the attention nor resents it—she hardly seems to notice it, in fact.

It is said that Nayvras's heart is directly tied to the land around her, so that when something happens of import—good or bad—she feels it in her chest, even if she doesn't know the details. At other times, she has prophetic sending dreams of the type described by elven legends when Dreta Phantas still lay on the surface.

Scenario: Nayvras is deathly afraid of the Urthon Aedar. She doesn't know who or what they are, but her dreams have told her that they mean her harm. The Brotherhood of the Oracle employs the player characters to investigate these strange armored enigmas and find out what they mean to do.

The Urthon Aedar do, in fact, intend to kill Nayvras, because they know that her connection with the land will result in her eventual corruption and possession by the Galchutt as they awaken.

ST. VALIEN'S CATHEDRAL

Sunrise Street (#156, I4); see map, page 352 200,000 gp

Although just one of nine churches in Ptolus dedicated to Lothian, St. Valien's is the largest and most well known. It is designed in the traditional Lothianite fashion, which is to say an elaborate, baroque structure with intricate iconography and ornamentation that almost threatens to collapse the building with the weight of its significance. Gilded angelic figures adorn every lintel, alcove, and archway, while bas reliefs of winged lions guard every hallway and door. Graven images of saints and figures

The city's nine Lothianite churches are St. Valien's Cathedral (Temple District), St. Gustav's Chapel at Delver's Square (Midtown), Daykeeper's Chapel (Midtown), St. Daris' Church (Guildsman District), Church of the Lawgiver (North Market), Church of Lothian the Redeemer (Oldtown), St. Chausle's Chapel (South Market), Chapel of St. Thessina (Rivergate), and the temple in the Holy Palace (Nobles' Quarter).

Dreta Phantas, page 425

Temple District Map: Page 344

of Lothianite significance cover almost every surface, including the ornately carved pews in the sanctuary.

The cathedral boasts a staff of twenty priests (most of the acolyte rank) and a like number of servants and support staff. Eight knights of the Order of the Dawn, the Church's order of holy warriors, stand duty in the cathedral or the surrounding grounds at all times. The sanctuary (when including the balconies) can hold a congregation of twelve hundred of the faithful at one time.

St. Valien's maintains a strict policy of no weapons or armor allowed within the cathedral, except as worn or wielded by Knights of the Dawn. The cathedral's staff looks down upon adventurers and does what it can to keep them out of St. Valien's—even going so far as to fund St. Gustav's in Delver's Square, so adventurers will attend services or seek aid there.

Church attendants usually turn away the wounded or those in need of clerical aid from the doors of St. Valien's, explaining that the cathedral is not the place for such things, but a holy locale devoted solely to worshipping Lothian. The only exception is the holy rite where someone dead is returned to life, conducted on Theoday each week by Adlam Theobold (male human), the archbishop of the cathedral. He celebrates the rite by appointment only and, even as expensive as the spell is, the

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation or Religion check can reveal a bit about the cathedral:

- *St. Valien's is the largest church of Lothian in the city (DC 12).*
- *Adventurers and similar folk are not welcome at St. Valien's. Weapons are not permitted inside, except by Church knights (DC 15).*
- *Although old, St. Valien's archbishop Adlam Theobold is the most powerful cleric in Ptolus (DC 18).*

Order of the Dawn, page 70

St. Gustav's Chapel, page 206

Adlam Theobold has two 6th-level and two 7th-level spell slots, and one 8th-level and one 9th-level spell slot, but otherwise is a noncombatant very old man.

Adlam Theobold and Combat

Even though Archbishop Adlam Theobold is the most powerful cleric in the city, the idea of presenting combat stats for him is a bit ridiculous. He is elderly, wears no armor or protective items, wields no weapons, and never prepares spells of a combative nature. Battle has nothing to do with him, in his view; it is not why Lothian put him in the world.

Marved Sallin is a sorcerer with mage stats, Insight +6, and Persuasion +6.

Marved's assistants have commoner stats.

waiting list is usually at least three weeks long at any given time.

Adlam Theobold is an incredibly old man who requires two assistants (usually members of the Order of Dayra) to get around or even stand. If not for the presence of the Holy Emperor and the Prince of the Church in Ptolus, he would be the highest-ranking Church official in the city.

Order of Dayra, page 70
Holy Emperor, page 269
Prince of the Church, page 270

STORMWROUGHT CAMPANILE

Malav Street (#159, I4); see map, page 344 1,250 gp

The Stormwrought Campanile stands almost 100 feet high, overlooking most of the Temple District. This freestanding belltower tolls for a number of different religions, each of which pay the small staff of the campanile to call their faithful to prayer, to mark holy days and holy hours, and to announce other religious events.

The campanile holds a multitude of bells and can produce incredible variations of music and sounds. Marved Sallin (male human), the tower's self-titled campanologist, has devoted his life to the study of bellringing. He employs a staff of three to four assistants (human).

The Stormwrought Campanile gets its name from the days of the completion of its construction. Terrible storms came in off the Bay of Ptolus for days, which led some to call the belltower cursed. The builders, however, said the tower wasn't cursed—it was immune to curses, because even the fiercest storms couldn't delay its completion. Today, some folk come to the Stormwrought Campanile looking for shelter when they fear bad omens, ill luck, storms, or evil magic. Marved makes sure they are always welcome.

However, Marved is not just the kindly bellringer. He also heads a small Sorn cell, which meets here in the campanile. Hidden throughout the tower are secret caches of their equipment, loot, and magic items. There are six other Sorn sorcerers who are members of the cell; all are sorcerers of moderate skill except for one, Roema Ashenwood (female elf).

Sorn, page 129

Secret cache: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Sorn sorcerers have arcanist (see page 605) or mage stats.

Roema Ashenwood is a sorcerer with mage stats and primarily knows spells focusing on combat, stealth, and defense.

TAGGERT'S

Street of a Million Gods (#143, H5) ★★★ see map, page 347 2,700 gp

The tavern that is a temple, or the temple that is a tavern—either way, Taggert's serves drinks to patrons and pays homage to Ollom, God of the Keg. For some, this a favorite spot in the Temple District: a place to relax and forget about the competing faiths all around, or the stress of attempting to serve one's god and one's congregation at the same time. For others, however, the place is a sacrilege, where even something as simple as drinking a mug of ale becomes a ritual dedicated to a god they do not revere.

Taggert, a follower of Ollom who built the temple/tavern over one hundred fifty years ago, left the establishment to his daughter who, in turn, left it to her son, the current owner. His name is Pevan Shamus (male human), a tall, good-looking man in his early forties. Like his grandfather and mother, Pevan is a devout follower of Ollom. He accompanies every round of drinks with a short prayer of thanks to the provider of alcohol, which Ollom's followers credit for the dawn of civilization and the difference between intelligent people and beasts.

Ollom, page 73

Taggert's serves a variety of ales and beers and a small selection of spirits, but no wine.

Pevan Shamus has priest stats.

TEMPLE OF AHAAR

Street of a Million Gods (#152, H5); see map, page 346 6,300 gp

The temple to the God of the Air, Ahaar, is the kind of place people walk past on the Street of a Million Gods every day without thinking twice. Something brews within the temple, however, which could have a significant impact on the whole district soon.

A cleric of Ahaar, Bermund Thorn (male human), has grown tired of paying protection money to the Balacazar crime family to keep his temple (and himself) from harm. He wants to organize the priests and attendants of the various small temples in the district to stand as a united front against the crime lord when his men come around looking for gold to extort. Bermund seeks whatever assistance he can get, from wherever he can get it; he sees adventurers as a good bet—they often are both powerful and unaffiliated.

Bermund has a number of priests interested, but no one will commit to his cause without some sign of strength. Thus, even more audaciously, he plans a major strike against a Balacazar-owned brothel/gambling den in the Temple District. He'd like to get the help of believers in his cause, but hired mercenaries will suffice.

A short man with curly black hair, Bermund typically wears a blue vest over his white shirt.

Bermund Thorn has priest stats, with one 4th-level spell slot.

Balacazars, page 102

TEMPLE OF ASCHE

Street of a Million Gods (#149, H4); see map, page 347 52,500 gp

An impressive building befitting the God of Cities, the Temple of Asche is marked by two imposing telamon statue-columns at its entrance. The worship of Asche is one of the most popular non-Lothian religions in the city, favored by delvers and adventurers because of the lack of a strict dogma.

Mand Scheben (male human), one of the high-ranking members of the clergy of Asche, is the temple's most public face. A friend and confidant of the lords of Castle Shard, Mand is a likely candidate for the next seat on the City Council. He is in his late thirties with brown hair, a clean-shaven face, and a winning, crooked smile. He has a real way with people, which makes him hard not to like. His charm is only further bolstered by his sincerity. He wears a friendship band engraved with "Castle Shard" and has 360 gp in a purse.

Mand Scheben has ecclesiastic stats (see page 608), with Persuasion +6; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: +1 rapier, bracers of defense, ring of protection, circlet of blasting, spell scroll of antimagic field, spell scroll of greater restoration, potion of flying, *spectacles, 361 gp.*

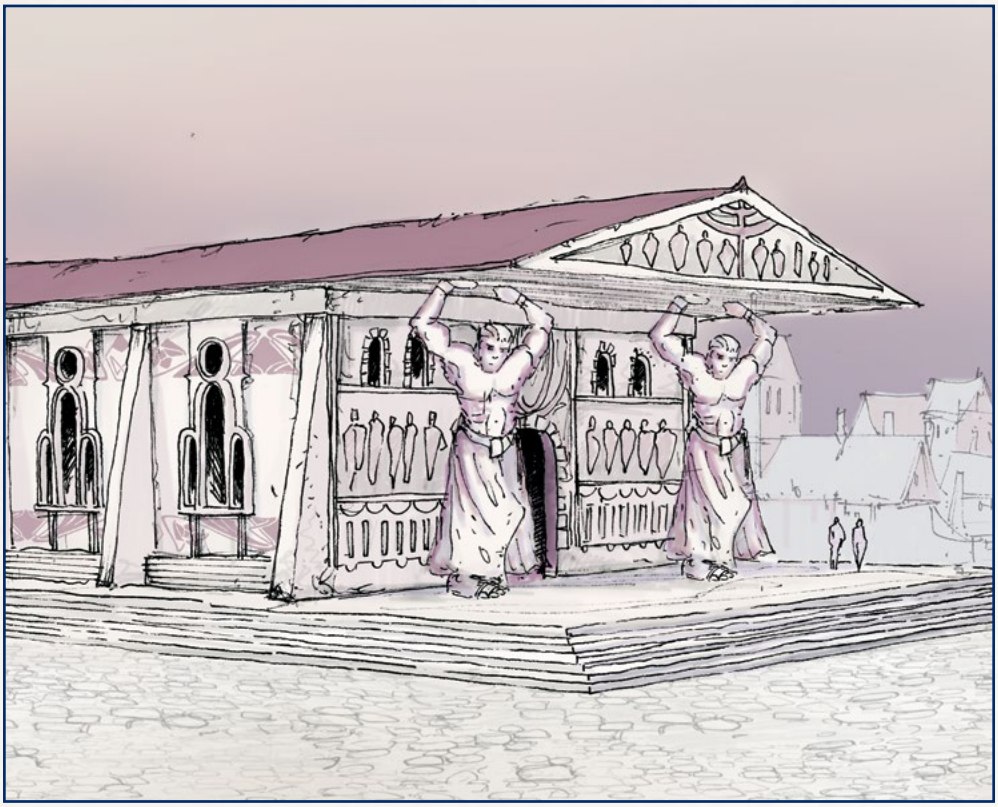
Castle Shard, page 263

City Council, page 140

Friendship band, page 29

This statue graces the Cult of the Ebon Hand's main sanctuary; see page 354.

All clerics of Ahaar (page 71, symbol above) have a medallion magically implanted just under the skin between their shoulder blades, marking them permanently as followers of their god.



Asche, God of Cities, is usually depicted as a handsome and sophisticated man wearing fine clothes and carrying a walking stick. The two figures shown to the right holding up the roof of his temple are known as "Asche's Porters," his loyal and semidivine servants.

Ebon Hand priests have cult fanatic stats, with AC 18; alignment chaotic evil. Each has a gift of deformity (see list in area 9), which affects their stats as described there and also gives them disadvantage on Animal Handling, Deception, and Persuasion checks. Equipment: morningstar, chain mail, shield, light crossbow, bolts (12), potion of invisibility, *ebony unholy symbol worth 25 gp, 35 gp. They have the following cleric spells prepared: Cantrips (at will):* guidance, mending, resistance *1st level (4 slots):* bane, cure wounds, disguise self, sanctuary *2nd level (3 slots):* hold person, mirror image

Ebon Hand guards have cultist stats, with AC 16; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: spear, chain mail, shortbow, arrows (12), potion of healing, *50 feet of rope, 10 gp.*

TEMPLE OF THE EBON HAND

Terrock Row (#137, G4); see map, next page ❗ 28,000 gp

On the verge of being banned in the city, the Cult of the Ebon Hand is said to harbor degenerates and encourage wrongdoings of the highest order. If city authorities knew of the plots being hatched in its darkened halls, they would certainly ban the cult, jail its clergy, and most likely raze its building. While it pretends to be a neutral and inoffensive faith, the Cult of the Ebon Hand is, in fact, a chaos cult set to plague the city and ultimately serve the Galchutt.

Cultists of the Ebon Hand revere mutation and deformity. If a member is not deformed naturally (many are), they seek mutation or mutilation. The cultists refer to mutation as "the touch of the Ebon Hand." They have no distinctive garb but usually bear some black hand symbol: a tattoo, a charm, a small embroidery on their clothes, and so on. And of course, many of them are physically deformed in some way, ranging from a prominent birthmark to a withered leg to ritual scarring. Priests of the Ebon Hand wear black and red—in particular, black gloves—and must undergo an initiation ritual involving a magical maze of chaotic energy. Those who survive gain a special gift of deformity.

The Cult of the Ebon Hand is kidnapping young people (mainly humans) and using a powerful magical ritual to transform them into what they call "children of the hand." The children of the hand become monstrous in power and appearance, with distinctive green and black mottled skin and entirely black clawed hands. Their bodies are covered with pus-filled sores, and they wear a permanent grimace of agony upon their visage.

Of all the cults of chaos, this is one of the most insidious because it is the most resilient. The cultists are quick to flee if discovered and appear ready to abandon their chapel at a moment's notice and move to a new location. Enemies of the Cult of the Ebon Hand liken its members to cockroaches. However, in Ptolus, the authorities have yet to discover their true evil.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation or Religion check might offer a few details about the Cult of the Ebon Hand.

- *The Ebon Hand is a cult in the Temple District (DC 15).*
- *The Ebon Hand is most likely an evil religion; some suspect its members commit crimes, including kidnapping and murder (DC 18).*
- *The Ebon Hand is a chaos cult almost certainly responsible for terrible acts of violence (DC 23).*
- *The leader of the Ebon Hand cult is named Malleck (DC 25).*
- *Attacking the Ebon Hand cult is likely to just chase the cultists away, only to have them resurface somewhere else as another chaos cult (DC 26).*

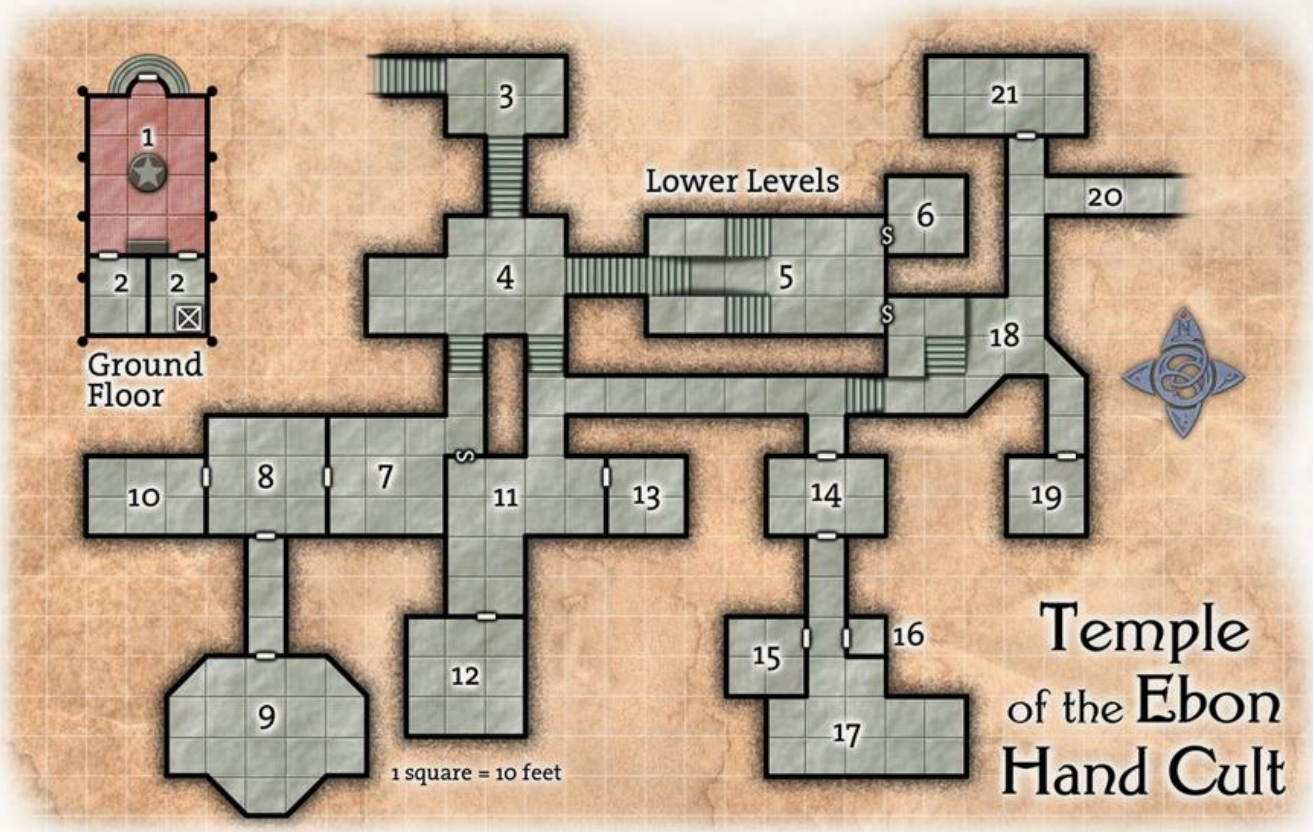
Typical wood door: *AC 15, 18 hp, DC 15 Strength check to break*

Cult of the Ebon Hand, page 76
Galchutt, page 62
Gift of deformity, page 357
Chaos cults, page 75

EBON HAND TEMPLE LAYOUT

Most of the Ebon Hand temple's area lies underground beneath a simple sanctuary. The areas described below correspond to those marked on the map on page 355. Unless otherwise mentioned, all doors are wooden and have typical characteristics. Rooms are dimly lit by candles, torches in sconces, or both. Priests or guards mentioned are those typical of the Ebon Hand, unless described otherwise.

Temple District Map: Page 344



1. Main Sanctuary

The wood-paneled walls of the main sanctuary are painted black with narrow red and black stained-glass windows. Red carpet covers the floor. Dominating the chamber is a huge sculpture of a black stone hand with fingers pointed up. Each digit sports a black candle set into fingertip niches. The cultists keep these candles lit at all times. In the rear portion of the room stands a black wood cabinet filled with musical instruments and bronze braziers used during ceremonies. The doors into the back rooms are made of wood, painted red and bound in bronze.

During ceremonies, there are usually five or six Ebon Hand priests here with around a dozen cultists (mostly humans).

2. Back Rooms

The clergy use the two rooms behind the sanctuary for storage and as offices. They are poorly and haphazardly decorated and mostly in a shambles. The eastern room has a wooden hidden trapdoor that leads to the temple's large subterranean complex.

Typically, one can find three guards and a single priest in the back rooms.

3. Guardians

This underground chamber appears unremarkable. The north wall bears a red tapestry with an image of a black hand. The floor is covered with a round black rug. The tapestry and the carpet are magically animate objects, attacking any noncultists who enter the room.

4. Commons

This large open room down a short staircase from the guardians contains three tables and a few benches and chairs. On each table is a stone idol of a black hand (each worth 35 gp). Two guards relax in the commons at any given time.

5. Ritual Chamber

This dread chamber down a staircase from the commons is the heart of the temple. The staircase in the western portion of the room is flanked by large ledges, each reached from the chamber floor by a short flight of stairs. The walls and floor are black-and-red swirled marble. Candles burn in sconces on all the walls.

Usually, visitors will find Malleck (male human)—the Ebon Hand high priest—and a pair of typical priests monitoring the transformation of a chained-up young victim

The animated objects have rug of smothering stats.

A typical member of the Ebon Hand has acolyte or cultist stats.

Hidden trapdoor: *DC 20 Perception check to find*

Malleck Javimal has priest stats, with AC 16, 42 hp, Constitution 19, and his Divine Eminence ability inflicts acid damage instead of radiant damage; alignment chaotic evil. His gift of deformity gives him discolored flesh, a high Constitution, and disadvantage on Animal Handling, Deception, and Persuasion checks. Equipment: +1 morningstar, *breastplate, shield, light crossbow, bolts (12),* potion of flying, potion of hill giant strength, spell scroll of flame strike, *ebony unholy symbol (worth 25 gp), ebony headdress (200 gp), 55 gp. He has the following cleric spells prepared:*
Cantrips (at will): guidance, mending, resistance
1st level (4 slots): cure wounds, disguise self, sanctuary
2nd level (3 slots): enhance ability, mirror image
3rd level (2 slots): nondetection, spirit guardians

The Cult of the Ebon Hand (page 76) is the most visible of all the cults of chaos in the city. Since the vast majority of people don't understand the cult's goals or practices, they don't object to its presence in the Temple District. If the cult is exposed as kidnappers and murderers, the authorities will drive it out of the temple, forcing it to relocate in secret.

Child of the hand, page 358

The secret door in the armory (area 7) is a pivoting weapons rack. Once searchers find it, they can tell that it is used frequently.

Armory secret door: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

It is a DC 22 Perception check to find either chaos chamber secret door. door. Both are trapped with a glyph of warding, *triggered by contact: DC 18, 20-foot radius, 22 (5d8) acid damage, half damage on a successful save.*

Stone secret door: *AC 17, 18 hp, DC 22 Strength check to break. It is sealed by an* arcane lock *that opens at the touch of any Ebon Hand priest.*

The magical trap is similar to maze. *Unlike a standard* maze *spell, the creature must make a Wisdom check, not an Intelligence check, to get out. For each minute spent within the maze, the creature gains one level of exhaustion.*

The magical candle is a candle of invocation *(chaotic evil).*

The two vials are potions of vitality.

Should a fight erupt in the lower levels of the temple, drop the cult's guard captain Frein Avathon (see area 13) into the middle of things. She gives orders to her minions and confronts the intruders directly.

EVIL RELIGIONS AND THE AUTHORITIES

Occasionally, the Commissar or the City Council bans a particular religion based on its extreme antisocial dogma. For example, worship of the god Destor, a god of destiny and chance, was banned in the city approximately sixty years ago for its focus on ensuring that calamity happened to others so it did not happen to you. This happened specifically after a number of fires in the city were traced directly back to the followers of Destor.

However, such banning remains rare. Some gods of obviously evil outlook (like Maleskari) or distasteful practices (like Danace) are permitted without restriction. Such evil cults enjoy no special right to perform religious acts that would break the law, but the practice of their faith otherwise is not forbidden—much to the dismay of many citizens, as well as some of the good or lawful religions in the city.

Many people believe that the Commissar is far more tolerant of such faiths than the Church hierarchy would like, which has led to tensions and political strife in the past.

into a troll-like child of the hand. Malleck is a dark man with mottled grey skin streaked with serpentine green. The powerfully built priest wears an ebony headdress and seems arrogant and overbearing. Nevertheless, if the lesser priests are slain, or if he suffers enough damage, he flees into area 18 through a secret door in the southeastern corner of the room; the door slides open magically to his touch (he doesn't have to use an action to open it) and closes immediately behind him.

The kidnap victim held here is halfway through the transformation, screaming in unyielding agony. His skin blisters with pulsing green and black sores and is covered in blood and pus.

Malleck has keys to area 19 (and the chest therein) on his person.

Tactics: If he knows foes are coming, Malleck stands against the east wall, while the lesser priests stand on the ledges above the stairs in the west.

Secret Doors: The eastern wall has two secret doors made of stone.

6. Secret Room

Malleck uses the secret room at the northeast corner of the ritual chamber as his personal retreat and storeroom, although any priest can enter it. It contains a padded chair, a table, and three brass candelabra (each worth 20 gp). On the table, Malleck keeps a magical candle and a pair of potions; he gives them to new applicants he likes before they enter the chaos maze in area 9. A small silver box (worth 85 gp) on the table holds the keys to the doors into area 9 and an extra ebony unholy symbol (worth 25 gp).

7. Armory

Weapons and armor cover the walls of this chamber that is down some stairs south of the commons. Twenty spears, five longbows, ten shields, six morningstars, and four suits of chain mail hang on hooks and pegs or in wooden racks. Two barrels, one holding one hundred arrows and another with one hundred crossbow bolts, stand along the north wall.

Secret Door: The secret door on the armory's eastern side leads into area 11. It does not have a lock.

8. Sacrificial Chamber

In the center of this chamber adjacent to the armory lies a large stone slab. This altar is stained with the blood of many living sacrifices and bears the painted image of a large black hand atop it. Black chains, also stained with dried blood, hang from the ceiling above the slab, where sacrifices are attached during the unholy rites conducted here.

9. Chaos Chamber

The chaos chamber lies down a short hall from the sacrificial chamber. The doors at either end of the hall between the two rooms are locked and magically trapped.

The Maze: The floor of the strangely shaped room is grey stone carved with an intricate mazelike pattern—it seems to shift and move as one looks at it. This magical pattern is used in the cult's rites of indoctrination.

Any creature entering this room is affected by a magical trap that transfers them into an extradimensional labyrinth of swirling, chaotic colors and lights. The spell lasts no longer than ten minutes, but often by that time, the only thing to emerge is a corpse.

Those who survive the ordeal and in their hearts truly wish to serve chaos instantly become clerics of the Ebon Hand. Further, each one immediately receives a gift of deformity, determined randomly. Those who survive but are not true in their hearts merely escape the extradimensional labyrinth and can never enter it again, gaining no gifts.

Gifts of Deformity: A surviving creature with a true heart comes out of the maze scarred and somewhat deformed:

d10	Deformity
1	*Bulging muscles; no hair:* Strength increases to 19.
2	*Wrinkled or discolored flesh:* Constitution increases to 19.
3	*Oozing pustules:* Inflict disease by touch 3/day as if using *contagion*.
4	*Additional eye: Detect magic* and *see invisibility* at will; advantage on Perception checks.
5	*Elongated tongue:* Gain a tongue melee attack that inflicts 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage or can be used to grapple (with advantage).
6	*Withered arm:* Gain a freezing touch melee attack that inflicts 3 (1d6) cold damage and 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.
7	*Melted/Scarred face:* Shoot a blast of light from eyes 3/day as if using *scorching ray*.
8	*Scarred flesh:* Maximum hp increases by 10; creature's AC can't be less than 16, regardless of what kind of armor it is wearing.
9	*Hoofed feet:* Walking speed increases by 10 feet; creature has advantage on Athletics checks to climb and jump.
10	*Snoutlike mouth:* Acid spittle 4/day as if using *Mel's acid arrow*.

Determine the nature of the deformity randomly using the table. In addition, the mutated creature gains disadvantage on Animal Handling, Deception, and Persuasion checks (unless it successfully hides its appearance with a disguise or spell).

10. Gricks

The cultists keep two gricks (human-sized serpentine creatures with beaks and tentacles) in the room west of the sacrificial chamber, and they are not very well fed. The room is littered with bone fragments and bloodstains, but little else.

Grick: *27 hp*

11. Barracks

The barracks (down some stairs south of the commons area) holds twenty bunks and a few tables, chairs, and storage chests full of personal items and miscellaneous gear (combs, shaving kits, and so on).

At any given time, six guards are here. Unless they have had some warning, half are relaxing.

Ebon Hand guard, page 354

Secret Door: The secret door in the room's northwest corner leads into area 7. It does not have a lock.

Secret door: *DC 20 Perception check to find*

12. Priests' Chamber

The priests' chamber beyond the barracks holds eight bunks and a few tables, chairs, and storage chests full of personal items and miscellaneous gear (combs, shaving kits, and so on).

There are two priests here at any given time. They come running to the sounds of combat (such as in the barracks) after three rounds.

13. Commander's Chamber

The commander's chamber adjoining the barracks contains a bed, a table, a pair of chairs, a chest of drawers, a wardrobe, and a sparring mat. A shelf holds a brass lamp (worth 20 gp).

On the table is a crystal decanter (worth 50 gp) and a map of the entire complex, including the secret doors.

Frein Avathon (female human), Malleck's chief ally, commands the Ebon Hand temple guard. She is likely here in her chamber, although if the temple is under attack, she will be in the middle of things, giving orders to her minions and confronting the intruders directly.

Tall and lithe, Frein wears red and black plate armor and a red cape with a black hand embroidered on it. She is shrewd and cunning—too much so to fall into the trap of foolhardy overconfidence.

Frein Avathon is not a loyal cultist. She is here because she likes Malleck, and because the priest pays her well from the cult's coffers. She is bloodthirsty and cruel, but the rites of the Ebon Hand are nothing more than that to her. She's not easily fooled and won't hesitate to leave a fight she cannot win. If the temple appears to be on the verge of falling, Frein flees, using the secret entrance that Malleck showed her (area 20). If she gets away, the characters might encounter her again in the service of some other evil religion or another equally malevolent master.

Frein Avathon has thug stats, with AC 18, 42 hp, +1 to melee attacks and damage; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: +1 greataxe, plate, longbow, arrows (12), 93 gp.

14. Guard Room

Four guards are stationed in this chamber at all times. The room has a table with chairs, upon which the guards keep a beer keg and mugs, as well as some dice for gaming. The walls have knife-throwing targets and some graffiti.

One of the guards has the keys to areas 15 and 16 to the south.

15. Prison

The chamber down the hall from the guard room has an iron door with a heavy lock. Within the otherwise starkly empty room lie three abused abductees (humans). The poor victims are incapable of any action other than leaving (with assistance).

Iron door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick the lock*

The abductees have commoner stats.

The transformed child of the hand could be restored to normalcy with an especially powerful healing, restoration, or a wish spell.

The child of the hand has troll stats.

Once the magical ritual is completed, the character can change up to two existing character traits (usually granted by their species, class, background, or feats) from the following categories: weapon proficiencies, tool proficiencies, skill proficiencies, or languages (the GM may allow retraining of other character choices). For example, a half-elf who chose proficiency in Arcana and Medicine as their skill versatility choices could pay for the magical ritual and change those proficiencies to Acrobatics and Perception. A bard could retrain two of the skills they chose as their class proficiencies. A character with the acolyte background could retrain one or both of the language choices granted by their background.

Gallel Brownstone has ecclesiastic stats, page 608

It is a DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to open the chest's lock. The poison needle trap is triggered by opening the chest without its key (which Malleck carries); the creature opening the chest takes 1 piercing damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage, and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution save or be poisoned for one hour. It is a DC 20 Investigation check to spot the trap and a DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to disable it.

16. Cell

This room across the hall from the prison has an iron door with a heavy lock (as area 15). Inside is a transformed child of the hand insane with rage. It attacks anyone it encounters whom it can get its claws upon. It stands almost 9 feet tall, and its skin is a mottled black and green, covered with oozing sores.

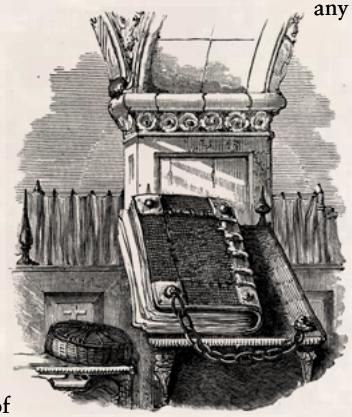
17. Dungeon

This large room at the end of the hall beyond the prison has ten pairs of manacles hanging from spots on the walls. It also holds wooden stocks, a rack, an iron maiden, and a large iron cage, as well as a small coal oven for heating tongs and irons.

A single guard usually works in the dungeon. Two young abductees (as area 15) stand chained to the walls.

18. Sunken Area

Beyond the secret door in the southeast corner of the ritual chamber (area 5) lies a sunken area. The northwest section of this room is 10 feet lower than the rest of it. This sunken area has a few padded chairs, a table with a silver candelabrum (worth 15 gp), and a silver platter with six silver goblets (worth 80 gp as a set). Wooden bookshelves offer a variety of texts on religion, history, magic, and other esoteric subjects. The secret door from area 5 opens into this area from behind a bookcase.



Stairs in the southwestern corner of the area lead up. The higher area in the eastern half of the room contains a few more bookcases and a long, low table covered with books.

19. High Priest's Chamber

Malleck's personal chamber contains a large bed, two wardrobes, a bathing tub, a wooden table and four chairs, and a large locked and trapped chest. The wardrobes hold clothing and personal belongings of little value.

Chest: The chest contains three bags, each of which holds 600 gp. Lying along the bottom of the chest is a map drawn on dirty, torn parchment. This map shows paths through the underground caverns that join this temple with other, more secretive subterranean refuges and temples of chaos cultists.

20. Secret Exit

This passage at the east end of the temple complex leads off into the undercity. Those who know where they are going (or who have Malleck's map from the chest in area 19) can use the passage to find the secret underground bases and temples of other chaos cults.

21. Guard Room

Four guards are stationed in this chamber at all times. The room has chairs and a table, upon which the guards keep a beer keg and mugs, as well as some dice for gaming. The walls have knife-throwing targets and some graffiti.

Scenario

The player characters find an advertisement placed by someone looking for "a powerful, well-rounded group of heroes." It turns out that the Temple District's captain of the watch posted the ad. He seeks volunteers to infiltrate the Ebon Hand cult to see whether there is any truth to rumors of wrongdoing and kidnapping. To get into the areas below the sanctuary, at least one character will have to feign interest in joining the priesthood. They don't know it ahead of time, but that will mean dealing with Malleck directly and undergoing the test of the chaos chamber (area 9).

TEMPLE OF EXCELLENCE

Street of a Million Gods (#162, H5); see map, page 346 9,400 gp

The Temple of Excellence is a squarish structure made of imported marble. Those who worship here revere the concept of excellence: the idea that intelligent creatures can excel at whatever they put their minds to. It is a religion of mortals, not gods.

The significant thing about the Temple of Excellence is that the priests here possess the means to magically retrain a character, though it is a complex, daylong ritual, for which the temple clergy requires a donation of 1,000 gp (in advance).

The high priest of the Temple of Excellence is a man named Gallel Brownstone (male halfling). Although he doesn't worship a traditional deity, he can still cast spells as a standard cleric; his spells come from his own sizable faith in himself and others. The faith's followers are few in number but devout.

The Temple of Excellence is also the only place one is likely to find a litorian in the entire

Temple District Map: Page 344

district. Litorians do not share traditional views on worship, but they can understand the ideal of striving for excellence.

Encounter: When the PCs arrive at the temple, two human women are arguing with one of the priests. They take umbrage at the fact that the temple requires such a steep donation and want to pay less. The exchange goes on and on, and the priest, who is trying to be politic, is obviously at his wit's end.

TEMPLE OF GAEN

off the Street of a Million Gods (#145, H5); see map, page 360 54,000 gp

Gaen, Goddess of Light, is the second most popular deity in the city (after Lothian). Finding the Temple of Gaen is a simple task, for its silver and crystal dome glows like the sun. Within, a monumental idol of the goddess stands with hands raised toward the noon sky. The faithful must walk beneath the statue to enter the sanctuary, where the sunlight is focused by the crystalline dome into a beam that bathes a golden sphere at the heart of the temple. Services are held in the main sanctuary and in twin chapels on either side of the great statue.

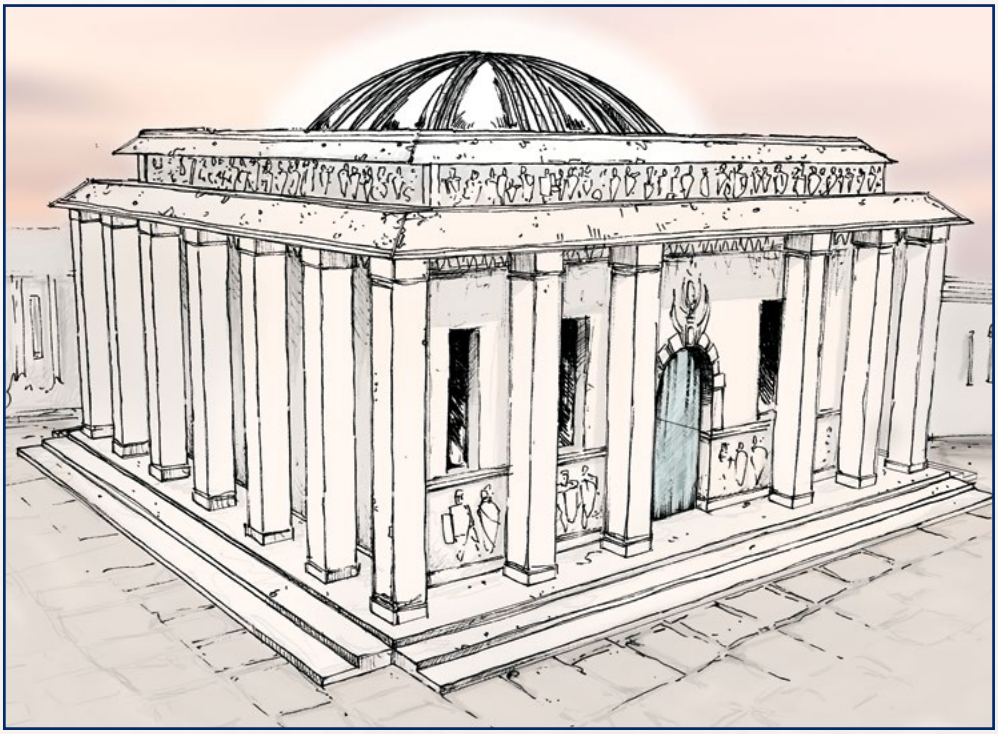
THE HIGH PRIESTS

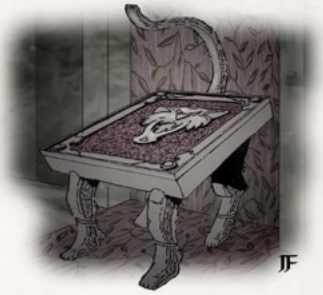
The high priests of Gaen are Melior Kalen and Barit Calomar (male humans). These two, along with their ally Steron Vsool, are some of the city's greatest forces for goodness and order. When brought to bear, their holy might cannot be denied, and the forces of darkness—such as the residents of the Dark Reliquary—fear them more than just about anything else. However, Melior and Barit are too modest to believe they could take on such darkness. They see themselves as nurturers and facilitators more than achievers. It's not that they are cowards—far from it. They simply underestimate themselves. When the forces of Gaen take steps to help others fight against evil, their actions usually amount to rescue missions.

Many people believe that Melior and Barit are twins, but the truth is they're not even related. In a strange magical transformation resulting from a battle against the priests of Father Claw many years ago, the two were fused into a single entity. The effect was eventually dispelled, but as a result each looks like an identical amalgam of their two former appearances. Perhaps surprisingly, they are fairly attractive in their new form. They are thin but muscular, with short, sandy brown hair and blue-grey eyes. They typically wear golden robes over their armor, with conspicuously large holy symbols around their necks.

THE PALADIN

When it comes to fighting evil, Steron Vsool is far more proactive than his friends. He is well known throughout town as a hero and a champion of good. He is a square-jawed, handsome man, but the most remarkable thing





Dark Reliquary, page 223

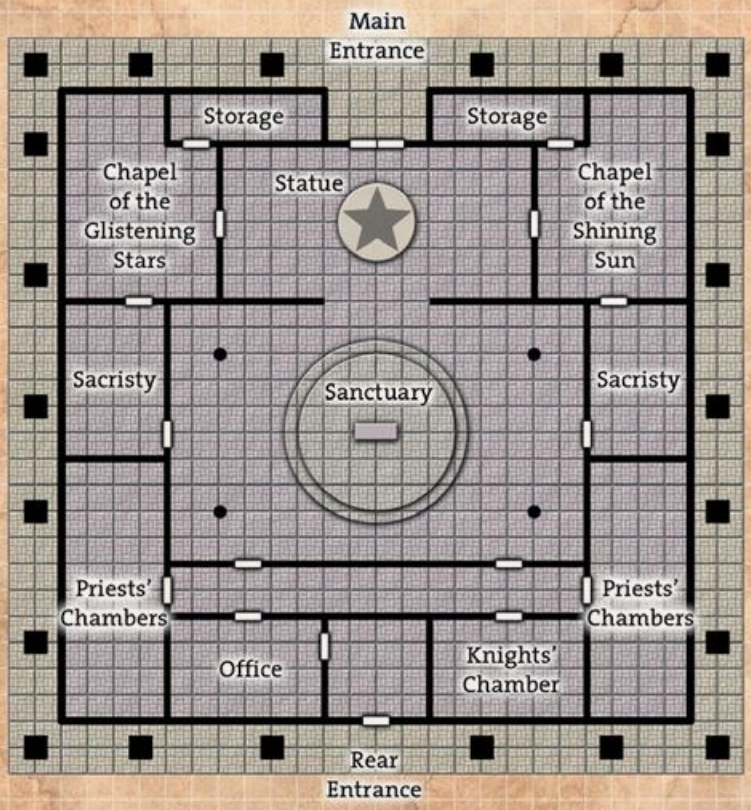
Gaen, page 72

Father Claw, page 72

Steron Vsool has holy paragon stats (page 611), with AC 24, permanent heartglow *(page 630); alignment lawful good. Equipment:* +2 plate, +2 shield, mace of disruption, necklace of prayer beads, potion of superior healing, thoughtstone, *gold ring worth 150 gp, 535 gp.*

Melior Kalen and Barit Calomar have high priest stats (see page 610), with AC 26; alignment lawful good. Equipment: mace of disruption, +3 plate, +3 shield, pearl of power, necklace of prayer beads, radiant holy symbol of Gaen *(see page 642)*, potion of superior healing, spell scroll of raise dead, thoughtstone, *gold ring worth 150 gp, 535 gp.*

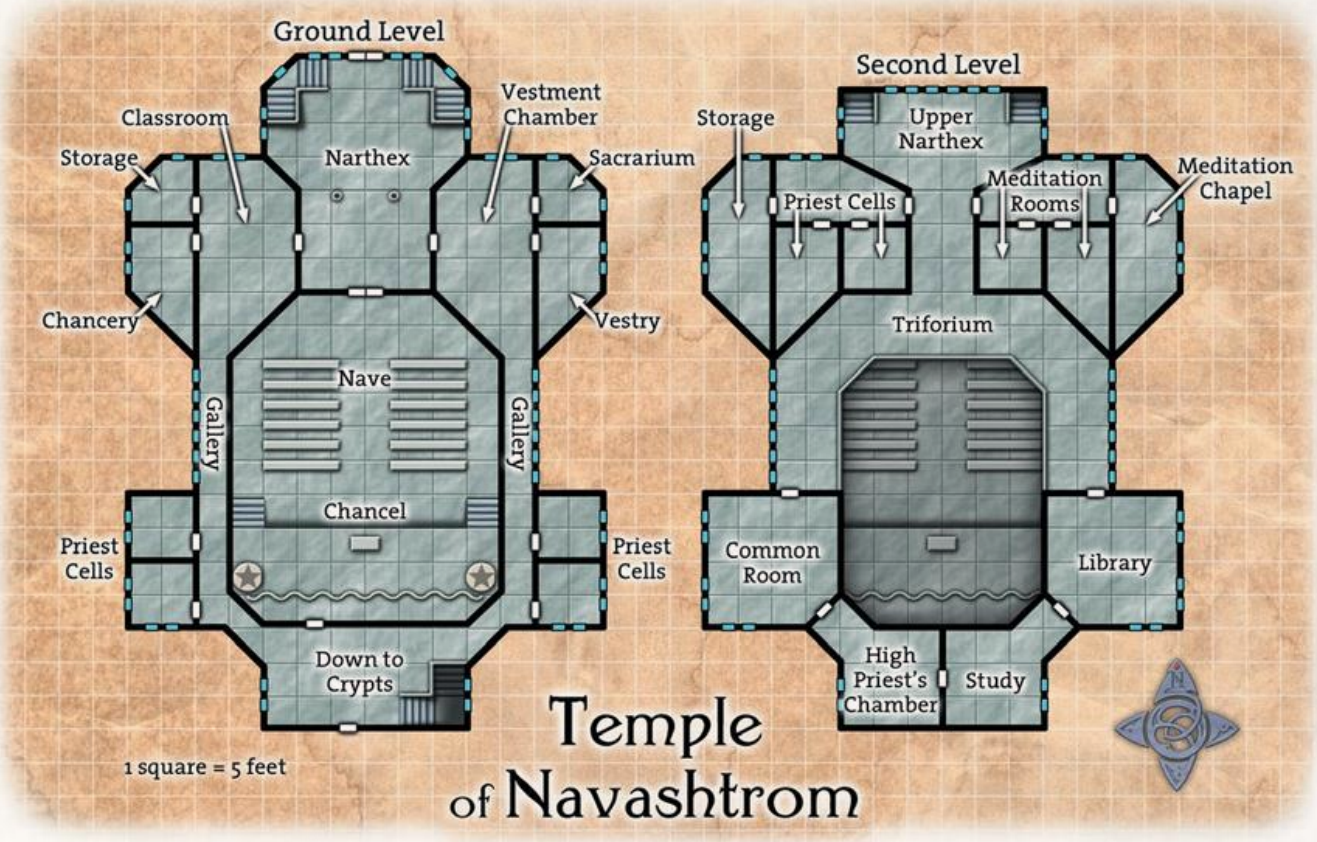
Temple of Gaen



TRUE RESURRECTION IN PTOLUS

Four clerics in Ptolus are powerful enough to return to life, free of all ailments and curses, those who have been dead even for a few hundred years, and even if no body remains (as long as the creature's name is known). These four are Barit Calomar, Melior Kalen (both of the Temple of Gaen), Maeda Von Rustal (of the Temple of Teun), and the Lothianite Adlam Theobold (of St. Valien's Cathedral). Archbishop Theobold casts the spell only on worshippers of Lothian, and only on Theodays. There is generally a waiting list. The priests of Gaen cast the spell only on good characters and those who clearly have an important unfinished task in the service of the city, the land, or the forces of good. High Priestess Maeda casts the spell on anyone with the money, but she charges 30,000 gp—and she never casts it more than once per day.

Temple District Map: Page 344



about him is that within his torso his heart shines like a brilliant jewel so strongly that people can see it right through his massive chest and armor.

Steron is not the close-minded, obsessed paladin that some might assume him to be. In fact, he is quite tolerant of others and has many friends all around the city. He counts Jevicca Nor and Sheva Callister among his friends, for example, and some say that even the Iron Mage treats Steron with friendly respect. Steron believes that he can accomplish more by influencing people through friendly example than by preaching or lecturing; that philosophy requires him to be out among the people. It hardly seems a normal night at the Ghostly Minstrel in Delver's Square without Steron making an appearance and enjoying a mug of ale or a glass of wine.

TEMPLE OF NAVASHTROM

Lachros Street (#154, H5); see map, above ★★ 23,800 gp

Navashtrom is a god of harmony—harmony through strength. His temple in Ptolus is a stout structure with many small windows. The wood-paneled temple interior is simple but well kept and always extremely clean. Aran Boturr (male human) is the high priest, although he is neither the most powerful nor the best-known representative of Navashtrom in Ptolus. Tellian Riverborn, one of the Company of the Black Lantern and a cleric of Navashtrom, is the most powerful local cleric of the faith. He prefers to remain outside the church hierarchy, however, having no proper training, experience, or talent in managing a large temple or its congregation.

THE STAR OF NAVASHTROM

Urlenius is known as the "Star of Navashtrom." The deity has chosen him to bless above others for some reason. This blessing comes with a responsibility, though, and the ogre mage often receives visions. One recent vision guided him to a new threat to the city: an ancient species of demons called rhodintor has awakened.

Urlenius belongs to the Brotherhood of Redemption, which converted him from his former evil ways. He has nothing but good things to say about them and thinks of himself as their ambassador—living proof that they do good.

Urlenius is polite but blunt, because human society is confusing. He can get boisterous and seems a bit egotistical and showy. He loves to be the center of attention and tells wonderfully exuberant and grandiose stories that entertain Ghostly Minstrel patrons for evenings at a time.

Company of the Black Lantern, page 548

Jevicca Nor, page 115

Sheva Callister, page 208

Iron Mage, page 316

Ghostly Minstrel, page 193

Brotherhood of Redemption, page 106

Rhodintor, page 594

Urlenius has oni stats, with AC 18, +1 on melee attacks and damage, can't be surprised, and the spellcasting of a priest; alignment neutral good. Equipment: +1 halberd, +1 chain mail, *longbow, arrows (20); four* ioun stones *(awareness, leadership, protection, reserve), pair of gold bracers (worth 50 gp each), gold ring (worth 100 gp), 39 gp, 44 sp. His reserve* ioun stone *usually stores a* cure wounds *spell (cast with a 2nd-level spell slot).*

Aran Boturr has ecclesiastic stats (page 608); alignment neutral good.

Secret door: *DC 20 Search check to find*

Goth Gulgamel, page 452

Jabel Shammar, page 465

In distant Ren Tehoth lies a place called the Borning Stone, significant to the religion of Navashtrom and his sister, Tardeshou, goddess of truth. The head of both churches is a female half-elf cleric named Reinym Ghar, the Great Warder.

Helmut's older sister, Narya Itlestein, works as the administrator of the Stockyards in the Guildsman District (page 182). She attends services at her brother's temple.

Seeking to kill all runebearer children born in the city, Helmut Itlestein has recently paid a group of thugs to slay the young star of the musical The Boy Who Could Sing *at the Cloud Theater in Midtown. He failed to mention that the runebearer boy, Dullin, is the grandson of crime lord Menon Balacazar.*

The Star of Navashtrom is good-naturedly self-aggrandizing. Everyone in town seems to know him, and they all realize that half the things he says about his exploits are exaggerations at best, but he tells a story so entertainingly that they still like to listen. And besides, he is quite generous, both with his ale-money and with his praise. To be a friend of Urlenius is to be made to feel like a prince. "Ah, my friend! So good to see the finest swordsman in all the western lands again. Come, everyone, let me tell you of the time this excellent swordsman and I took on the great mindworm of Hellsdark Hall with nothing but pruning shears and an iron skillet. . . . "

TEMPLE OBSERVATORY OF THE WATCHER OF THE SKIES

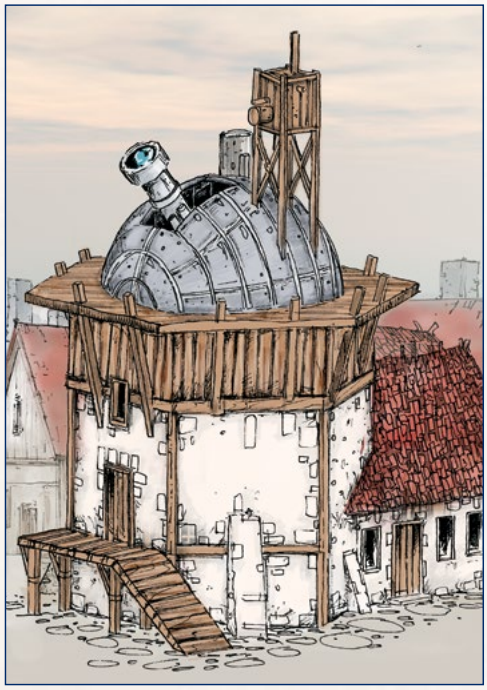
Street of a Million Gods (#142, H4); see map, next page 52,400 gp

The most distinctive portion of this temple is the cylindrical observatory with its giant telescope, used to observe significant events and omens in the skies, particularly the night sky. Extremely proud of the marvel that is their telescope, the priests give demonstrations and tours to people interested in it (proselytizing as they do). Besides the observatory itself, the facilities include a meditation room, library, and housing for its six clerics. The high priest's spacious chambers are connected to his office by an unlocked secret door. And secrecy is very important to him.

The telescope is almost two hundred years old, but it has been cared for with loving and lavish attention. It is both technological and magical. With it, one can peer into the night sky and see objects and events invisible to the naked eye (planets, other planet's moons, comets, planetoids, and—occasionally—strange, nigh-unknowable creatures that fly through these outer regions with affairs of their own). Observers can also use it to interpret how these heavenly bodies relate to events, and even future events, in the world.

Of late, the telescope has occasionally been trained—during sunlit hours, on clear days—upon Goth Gulgamel and even Jabel Shammar. The telescope is warded with many spells and magical alarms alerting the clerics of the temple if anyone unauthorized disturbs or endangers it in any way.

Encounter: An impoverished young woman with three small children in tow prays for guidance in the temple, hoping that she can be shown a better future that will raise her above her miserable present. As the player characters enter, she asks one of the priests of the temple for a few copper coins to buy food for her children, and the priest makes a big show in front of the PCs of giving her a silver coin.



Temple District Map: Page 344

THE HIGH PRIEST

The current high priest of the Watcher of the Skies is Helmut Itlestein, also known for being the head of the republican movement. Some Ptolusites consider Helmut the most dangerous man in the city. Long ago, he began seeing signs and portents in the sky that led him to believe Ptolus was in danger. Helmut loves Ptolus and believes it should be an independent city-state with an elected government.

After lengthy studies of the stars, he ascertained that children would be born with certain runes upon them, like the runebearers of old. These children are harbingers of the doom that is coming, and he will do whatever it takes to stop them. Even if it means slaying these children. Even if it means obtaining powerful artifacts of evil. Even if it means slaying the Commissar, the Holy Emperor, and whoever else stands in his way, and taking control of Ptolus by force. "I would ally myself with Raguel himself if I thought it would save the city," he has been quoted as saying.

Helmut is neutral in alignment, but the *staves of Ghul* he owns are slowly turning him to evil. Accompanying him at all times is a magical armored construct (a shield guardian) ready to cast a healing spell on Helmut if he drops unconscious (or if he commands the guardian to cast it).

Campaign Use

Helmut Itlestein is set up as a campaign "villain." He presents an interesting challenge to the player characters because he is not evil, or even selfish. He has only the city's best interests at heart and honestly loves Ptolus and its people more than anything. He is even right, after a fashion—the children being born with runes are related to a coming time of great change and possibly doom (see *The Night of Dissolution* adventure; see page 11).

TEMPLE OF THE RAT GOD

Street of a Million Gods (#153, H5); see map, page 366 1,100 gp

Tucked away amid a number of other very small temples literally built one atop another, the Temple of the Rat God appears to be nothing more than a nondescript door leading to the half-basement level of one of the adjoining temples.

Those few who have even heard of the Rat God know him to be a cruel, petty, and bloody deity venerated by those who revere vindictiveness, selfishness, and spite. He also is a god of pestilence, filth, and disease. It comes as no surprise to anyone that many of the followers of the Rat God are, in fact, ratmen. To protect themselves, these ratmen either pose

Watcher of the Skies, page 74

Republican movement, page 142

Runebearers, page 62

Staves of Ghul, page 643

The names of all the runebearer children in Ptolus at the present time are Corrent Apathi, Darata Chornim, Dullin Balacazar, and Tarthia Kor.

Shield guardian: *142 hp*

Helmut's second-in-command is Unosh Teversan (male half-elf priest), but he does not share the high priest's political views.

Helmut Itlestein has ecclesiastic stats (see page 608), with AC 23, +4 on melee attacks and damage (from belt), and one 6th-level spell slot (he usually has true seeing *prepared for that level); alignment neutral. Equipment:* +3 plate, staves of Ghul, belt of hill giant strength, *shield guardian amulet, 100 pp, 255 gp.*

Ratmen, page 591

THE GODSDAY FESTIVAL AND TOURNAMENT

There's no more important day on the Ptolus calendar than the Fifth of Rain: Godsday, a celebration of all gods and everything they have provided to mortals, including the bounties of food, family, prosperity, the gift of life, and even such things as safety, rest in the afterlife, and creation itself. Even irreligious individuals enjoy the festivities and see the value of counting one's blessings (no matter where they come from). In fact, Godsday has less to do with religious faith and observance and more with giving thanks.

Thus, despite its name, Godsday is not a true religious observance for most people. Few religions declare it a holy day—the Church of Lothian once actually denounced the celebration as an observance of devils. Today, forces in the Church are pushing to make it a holy day, but the Church hierarchy still harbors too many conservatives for such a thing to happen.

Travelers come from the small communities outside the city to partake in the festivities, while many people have the day free from work; others, such as tavern owners, restaurateurs, and so forth, are busier than ever. The festival is so large that most Ptolus inns fill up quickly. Locals take in boarders to help accommodate all the visitors to the city (and to earn a few silver coins). Some vendors increase their prices, particularly in areas frequented by out-of-towners, but most seem content to keep their prices fair and simply enjoy the influx of additional customers ready to spend cash. Restaurants, taverns, and pubs overflow on Godsday and the night before; visitors normally arrive a day early, since the festivities begin at dawn.

THE GODSDAY TOURNAMENT

The day is filled with parties, family reunions, and feasts, but the most important event is the Godsday Tournament. While other communities throughout the Empire observe Godsday, the tournament is unique to the city of Ptolus. Originally developed by the noble houses (in homage to an even older tradition that pitted them against one another in a series of athletic events), the Godsday Tournament is now open to all. The noble houses usually sponsor various participants, and many of them consider multiple trophies such a point of pride and prestige that they spend liberal amounts of gold to ensure their wins. The tournament is held in an area known as the Tournament Field north of the city wall.

EVENTS

Many tournament events take place throughout the day, in many different categories. The events include the following:

Athletic Events
Hundred-yard race
Half-mile race
One-mile race
Archery
Balance beam
Hammer toss
High jump
Javelin throw
Long jump
Rope climb
Weightlifting

Combat Events
Beast fights
Jousting
Single combat
Team combat
Spell challenges

Artistic Events
Cooking competition
Dance competition
Eating competition
Song competition
Spell artistry
Tale-telling competition

ATHLETIC EVENTS

Most events in the tournament are sport-related: races, feats of strength, and so on. These test the abilities of the contestants, but each involves skill as much as strength, speed, and agility.

Races: All sorts of racing competitions are offered, including the hundred-yard race, the half-mile race, and the one-mile race. Quick characters are likely to do better in the shorter races, while those with more stamina will have a better showing in the longer events.

Archery: The archery competition involves making ranged attacks with a bow of the contestant's choosing, although magical bows and arrows are not allowed. The targets are relatively easy at first, but become harder and harder to hit until all contestants but one are eliminated.

Other Events: The javelin throw, weightlifting, and hammer toss events rely on brute strength, though someone with skill in a particular event will of course have an edge.

Prizes: Prizes for all athletic events are 10 gp for first place, 2 gp for second place, and 5 sp for third. The one exception is the archery contest, which also includes an especially fine bow (worth 100 gp), a quiver of twelve perfectly straight arrows, and a single magical arrow for the winner (donated by a sponsoring local bowyer and/or fletcher).

COMBAT EVENTS

Some of the most popular events at the tournament are the combat events, usually called ringfights. These contests come in four different types: single combat, team combat, beast fights, and spell challenges. (Jousts, another form of combat event, are considered separate from the ringfights.) As the name suggests, each combat takes place in a ring delineated by ropes strung from 3-foot-high stakes on the grassy field. For single combats, the ring has a diameter of 20 feet. For all other types of ringfight, the diameter measures 60 feet.

Rules: None of the fights are to the death. A judge determines the fight's end and victor, although usually this is evident—most fights go until someone is unconscious or concedes. Nothing that could put spectators at risk is allowed, so fights are expected to be primarily melee affairs; officials frown upon spells with area effects. Harming a spectator can lead to arrest by the City Watch, as can using undue force in a fight (continuing to attack an unconscious opponent, for example).

There are no restrictions on tactics, although generally the judges look very unfavorably on those who use poison and those who use spells in ringfights other than spell challenges. Magical and other assistance from outside sources is not allowed, and

The prize arrow is a +1 arrow.

spells capable of detecting magic and other investigative measures are used if any activities arouse suspicions.

Team combats involve pairs of combatants working together and fighting in the ring at the same time. Spell challenges are combats staged between two spellcasters, and only magic is allowed—no weapons. Beast fights pit one humanoid combatant against a monster that has been magically charmed to keep it from running amok or killing its opponent.

All ringfights come in three categories: novice, experienced, and expert. Combatants rate themselves and enter whichever category they wish, but those obviously fighting well below their appropriate category are likely to lose face and get heckled for being cowards.

Prizes: Prizes for the ringfights (other than beast fights) are awarded for winning each round, with a champion's purse awarded to the winner of the final match. The number of entrants determines the number of rounds, but usually there are five or six rounds total. Beast fights are always for the champion's purse, as there are no elimination rounds.

Clerics and vendors hawking healing potions frequent the fights to help those wounded in the contests, either for a donation or for profit (some would argue that there is little difference).

ARTISTIC EVENTS

The artistic events in the Godsday Tournament are popular, particularly among those disinclined toward the more physical contests.

Magic: Spellcasters of all kinds come out for the popular spectator event of spell artistry, in which each contestant creates a flashy display of spellcasting.

When the event started twenty-two years ago, most casters used simple magic designed to create simple visual effects, but it didn't take long for more adept mages to use illusion spells to create amazing images and moving shows. Others with a flair for the dramatic use spells that produce fire or lightning to create shocking displays of sight and sound. (The more powerful the spell, the more it is likely to impress the judges.)

The Dreaming Apothecary (see the Inverted Pyramid in Chapter 6: Organizations) sponsors a special 1,000-gp prize for the winner, although the money must be put toward an item to be made.

Performances: The song, dance, and tale-telling competitions are popular entertainments, usually held in the evening before a large crowd. Contestants compete before judges. Prizes for the music-related events are sponsored by the Conservatory (see Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter) and amount to 500 gp for the winner and 100 gp for two runners-up, applied to tuition at the school. Prizes for the tale-telling competition are 10 gp for the winner and 3 gp for the two runners-up.

Food Events: The cooking competition breaks down into a number of different events, including beverages, appetizers, soups, main courses, and desserts. The winner of each event gets a gold-plated trophy worth 5 gp.

The eating competition is hardly artistic, but it does draw a crowd. Contestants are forced to eat large amounts of various kinds of food very quickly. The one who eats the most in five minutes is the winner, for a prize of 10 gp. This competition requires stamina from all the participants.

GAMBLING

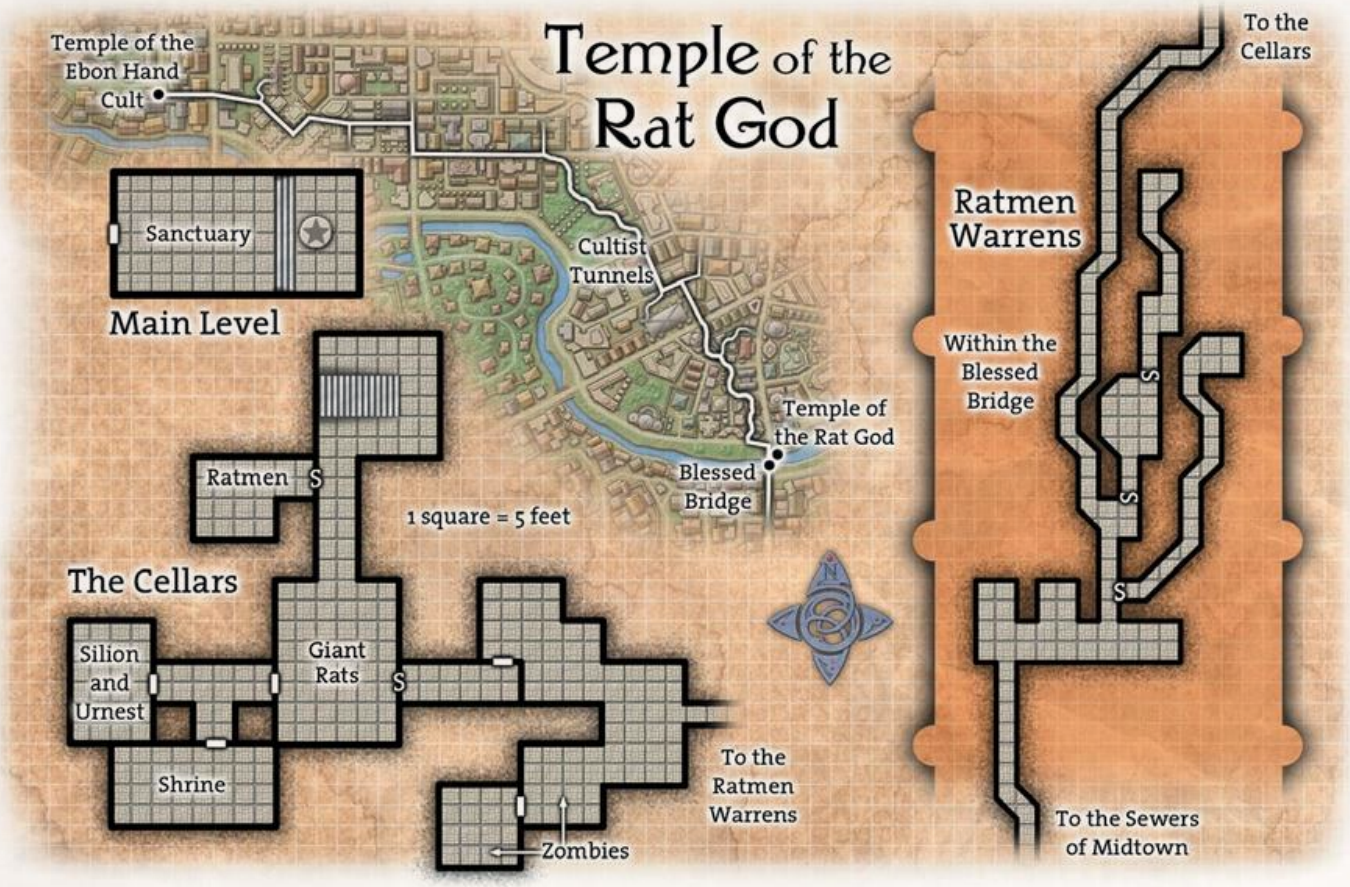
Wagering on tournament events is extremely common, both formally at the various betting stalls (where odds are given) and informally among spectators and even participants.

OTHER TOURNAMENT ATTRACTIONS

Even those not taking part in the competition can entertain themselves with games of skill and chance (such as ring tosses or dart throwing), food from all manner of vendors (pies, custards, cakes, honeyed rolls, cooked meats, dried meats, fruit, candy, and more), and performers of all kinds (jugglers, comedians, singers, actors, dancers, and so forth). Games and food range in price from a copper or two to perhaps a silver piece, while the entertainers simply hope for donations.

RINGFIGHT PRIZES

	Entry Fee	Prize Each Round	Champion's Purse	Champion's Levels	Typical Beast
Novice	5 sp	5 sp	5 gp	1–2	Wolf or boar
Experienced	5 gp	5 gp	50 gp	2–5	Giant scorpion or owlbear
Expert	50 gp	50 gp	500 gp	5–8	Bulette or giant crocodile



Secret door: *DC 20 Perception check to find*

Ratling: *9 hp; see page 592*

Giant rats: *7 hp*

Galchutt, page 62

as humans (heavily cloaked in voluminous garments) or never leave the temple by way of the streets.

But the secrets of this temple go deeper than just the presence of the ratmen. In truth, there is no Rat God at all. This hidden temple is a front for the veneration of Abhoth, one of the Galchutt. Its adherents and clerics are chaos cultists conducting vile, bloody rites. Abhoth, also known as the Source of All Uncleanliness, or just "the Rat God," is associated with chaos, evil, and destruction.

The areas below correspond to the Temple of the Rat God map.

THE SANCTUARY

The main sanctuary features a large statue of an upright rat holding out its front legs like hands, greedily, wearing a vicious and bloodthirsty sneer. Scrawled on the walls are crude, graffiti-like markings that say such things as "Beauty in plague," "Love is greed," and "The solace of filth."

Cackling fever is the same as the disease that some giant rats carry.

Secret door: *DC 18 Perception check to find*

Blessed Bridge, page 346

The statue in the sanctuary secretly slides to one side to reveal a staircase going down to underground chambers.

Statue: *DC 18 Perception check to find the secret entrance underneath*

THE CELLARS

The staircase beneath the statue of the Rat God goes down to the cellars. A room behind a secret door adjacent to the stairs is the lair of four ratlings. They can watch out into the hallway via a peephole.

Down a hallway to the south lies the nest of five trained giant rats. Refuse and rotting garbage fills the large room. The hungry giant rats will come to the aid of the ratlings to the north or to Silion and Urnest (see below).

To the southwest of the giant rats' nest is a shrine to Abhoth. On the southeast wall is a vast mural of the slimy, tentacled Galchutt, and an altar in the center looks more like a large iron basin filled with garbage and slime. Characters who enter this chamber are subject to cackling fever.

To the southeast of the nest is a secret door that eventually leads to passages within the Blessed Bridge.

SILION AND URNEST

The heads of the Temple of the Rat God are Silion Ankismar (the Priestess of the Rat) and her husband, Urnest. Silion is a wanton, lascivious woman who wears an ornate breastplate and little else. Her husband, a

Temple District Map: Page 344

wererat, enjoys the company of the giant rats that scurry about the temple and the ratmen who hide here more than that of humans, including his wife.

Their room northwest of the shrine is a chaotic jumble of garbage and filth. Within an iron box under their bed are various papers. One mentions the Ebon Hand cult, specifically the transformed "children of the hand" held there. (Finding this note may move the player characters to investigate that temple as well.)

UNDER (INTO) THE BRIDGE

The temple's underlevels connect to a narrow passage that extends into and through the Blessed Bridge, which spans the King's River. Within the bridge, near its underside, are tiny, secret rooms. The chaos cultists who work with the Rat God's clergy hide here when they need to lie low.

The entrance to the passages is guarded by eight zombies covered in diseased filth.

The warrens under the bridge have many secret door entrances, mostly sliding stone blocks hidden behind trash. There are at least six ratlings and a ratlord down there at all times.

SCENARIO

In their digging beneath the city, the ratmen discovered an ancient chaositech device and brought it to the Temple of the Rat God. The device is some kind of humanoid construct that no longer functions. Temple clergy put the word out on the street that they are looking for someone with machinery skills. The player characters, learning of this, can use the opportunity as an opening (even if they have to fake it) to infiltrate the temple and take it down from within.

TEMPLE OF TEUN

Chalice Road (#138, G4); see map, page 368 78,500 gp

Two large gears adorn the front of the Temple of the Mother of All Machines. Inside, the place smells of oil and metal, and the noise of churning gears and pumping pistons drowns out most other sounds. These smells and noises are holy to Teun, and the temple interior is basically one large machine that exists only for her greater glory—the complicated set of gears, pulleys, belts, and steam engines ultimately do nothing but work.

Ebon Hand cult, page 76

While the papers under Silion and Urnest's bed might lead the PCs to the Temple of the Ebon Hand cult, they are not enough to interest the City Watch. The guards know how easily such things can be faked.

Silion Ankismar has cultist stats, with AC 18, and +1 on melee attacks and damage; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: +1 mace, breastplate, shield, light crossbow, bolts (10), dagger, spell scroll of inflict wounds, gold earrings worth 25 gp, 10 gp.

Urnest Ankismar (wererat): *33 hp*

Zombie: *22 hp; a creature struck by the zombie must make a DC 10 Constitution save or contract the disease carried by some giant rats.*

Secret door: *DC 20 Perception check to find any secret door in the warrens*

Ratling: *9 hp; see page 592*

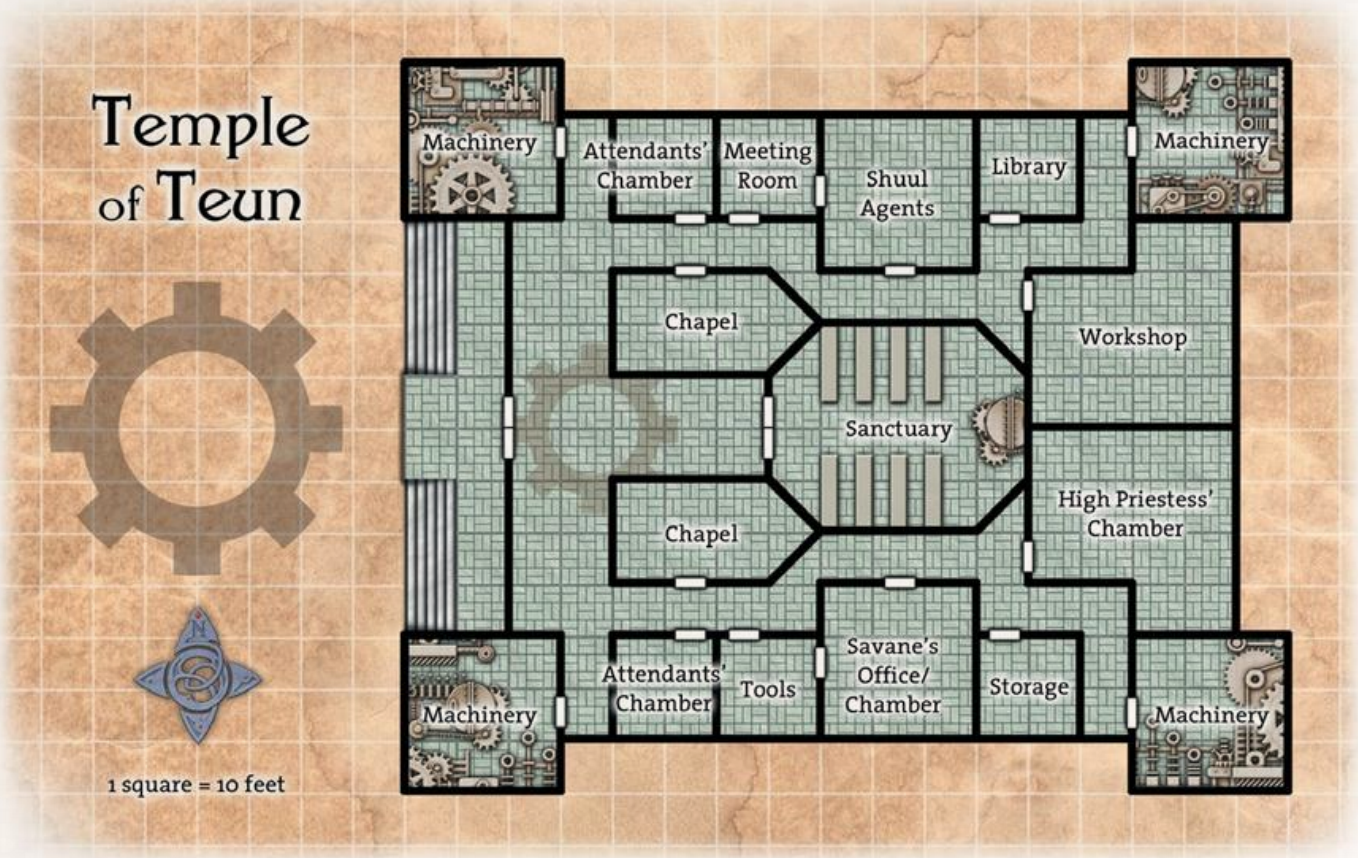
Ratlord: *30 hp; see page 592*

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check reveals something about the Rat God temple:

- *The Temple of the Rat God is a foul chapel somewhere in the Temple District (DC 18).*
- *The Temple of the Rat God is near the north end of the Blessed Bridge (DC 20).*
- *The Temple of the Rat God is filled with evil people and ratmen, doing gods-know-what (DC 22).*

Teun, page 73



Teunian dwarves have artisan stats, page 606

Shuul, page 126

Tower of Science, page 310

Savane, page 127

Despite decades of declining membership, the faithful of Teun hope to see increased attention to their goddess, thanks to the support of the Shuul and their secret benefactor, Emperor Segaci (see page 91).

A valuable magic item—an enchanted vehicle that resembles a large metallic lobster—that was stolen from the temple some time ago now sits in a secret vault within the Longfingers Guild headquarters (page 123).

Only women may be clerics of Teun, Mother of All Machines. Males, usually dwarves, serve as attendants at services and watch over the Machine in the temple.

High Priestess Maeda Von Rustal has high priest stats (see page 610), with disadvantage on all Strength-, Dexterity-, and Constitution-based rolls due to age and infirmity; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: necklace of prayer beads, thoughtstone, pearl of power, *pill* (potion of darkvision), *medium steam cart (page 525), healer's kit, pocketwatch, spectacles, magnetic compass, bejeweled holy symbol worth 1,200 gp.*

Shuul agents, page 127

The temple is attended by a number of dwarves distinctive from the rest of their kind in their appearance and dress. They weave small steel gears into their greying black beards and their long hair. They cover their dark clothing with a leather apron full of pockets holding small tools, and they wear goggles over their eyes.

The Shuul use the Temple of Teun as their base of operations until the Tower of Science in Oldtown is completed. This means a dozen or so Shuul agents work within the temple at any given time, and Savane is often here as well. The Shuul's presence here is not common knowledge.

The high priestess of Teun—not just in Ptolus, but in the entire world—is an ancient, decrepit woman named Maeda Von Rustal. She can no longer get around easily on her own, but she has a steam-powered wheelchair (really more of a cart) with room for equipment or even another person. If she must engage in combat, she uses her spells exclusively.

As one of the most powerful clerics in the city, and the most powerful cleric in the worldwide religious hierarchy of the temple of Teun, Maeda Von Rustal is an extremely influential woman. As such, she is afforded many idiosyncrasies. For instance, Maeda never has anything positive to say about anyone or anything—even, in many cases, the goddess Teun herself. She refers to her deity the way others might refer to a friend they have had all their lives, and of whom they know everything, both good and bad.

The high priestess seemingly could find a grey cloud in any silver lining. Like someone's ill-natured grand-aunt, the old woman continually complains about her health and her need for her powered wheeled cart. She seems particularly belligerent to the dwarves who attend her. However, despite her goading, they virtually never speak at all.

Encounter: As the player characters approach the temple, the doors open. Coming out of the temple, three Shuul agents—shaved heads, black leather coats, goggles, and all—sneer at the group, almost as one. They seem in a hurry to get somewhere and have little time to dawdle, no matter what the PCs decide to do.

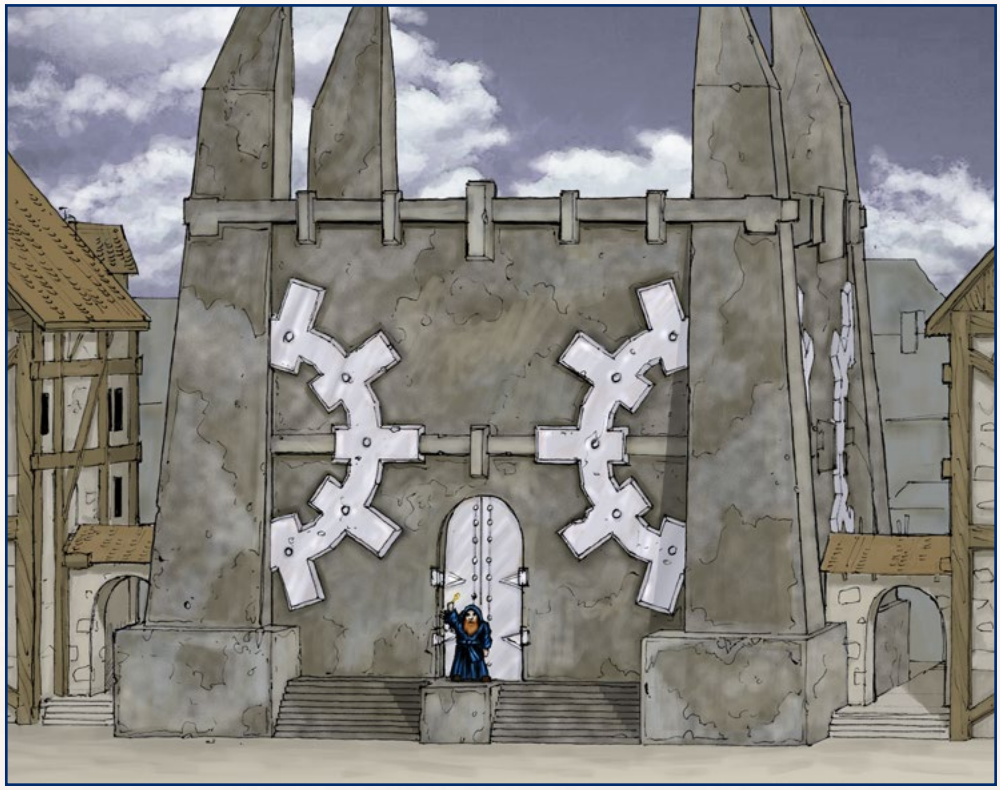
OTHER LOCALES

Although it's not a complete listing by any means, GMs can use the table on the next page to insert additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit the Temple District.

OTHER LOCALES IN THE TEMPLE DISTRICT

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Alaina Bellsong		Golden Elm Way (#135, G4)	Alaina Bellsong (female halfling expert*)	0	Dreamspeaker
Denthon's		Golden Elm Way (#164, I4)	Roland Denthon (male human commoner)	3	Coffin maker
Mustek's Shop		Malav Street (#157, I4)	Kavral Mustek (male human commoner)	1	Sells religious tracts and paraphernalia
Striknos'		Lost Street (F4)	Striknos (female half-orc commoner)	11	Illegal brothel, gambling den, and drug parlor
Temple of Celestan		Chalice Road (#136, G4)	Ranael Silverstroke (male elf ecclesiastic*)	12	—
Temple of the Fifty-Three Gods of Chance		Street of a Million Gods (#150, H4)	Jewel Nabbascor (female human ecclesiastic*)	13	Chaos temple below; see *The Night of Dissolution*, a Ptolus adventure (see page 11).
Temple of the Frog		Lachros Street (#163, I5)	None	0	Abandoned ruin
Temple of Inurath		Sunrise Street (#144, H5)	Anais Abendroth (female human ecclesiastic*)	7	—
Temple of the Iron God		Runic Street (#141, H4)	Werden Barras (male human ecclesiastic*)	5	—
Temple of Kharos		Glory Street (#158, I4)	Barclay Keel (male human ecclesiastic*)	4	—
Temple of Melann		Chalice Road (#139, H4)	Matthias Fenta (male human ecclesiastic*)	5	—
Temple of Mocharum		Malav Street (#161, I5)	Urthain Lawstone (male dwarf ecclesiastic*)	10	—
Temple of Phoeboul		Runic Street (#140, H4)	Avalia Riversong (female elf ecclesiastic*)	6	—
Temple of Ynchabolos		Street of a Million Gods (#146, H5)	Rentan Yager (male human ecclesiastic*)	3	—

* see Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604



KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation or Religion check reveals a few details about Teun and her temple:

- *Teun is the Mother of All Machines (DC 15).*
- *Maeda Von Rustal, the high priestess of Teun, is one of the most powerful clerics in the city (DC 20).*
- *Savane of the Shuul can often be found at the Temple of Teun (DC 22).*
- *The Shuul use the Temple of Teun as a base of operations (DC 25).*

Niveral, page 73

Shibata has priest stats, with AC 15; the Charge, Labyrinthine Recall, and Reckless abilities of a minotaur; and the greataxe and gore attacks of a minotaur; alignment neutral. Equipment: +1 breastplate, *large* +1 quarterstaff, *flasks of holy water (3), healer's kit, gold holy symbol worth 500 gp, a pair of gold bracers worth 500 gp each, 543 gp.*

In her secret room in the Dark Reliquary (see page 232), Lilith keeps records that describe the location of chambers devoted to the cults of chaos beneath the Temple of the Fifty-Three Gods of Chance. For details on this secret temple, see The Night of Dissolution *adventure (see page 11).*

Talenta the deva: *136 hp*

Pale Tower, page 305

Malkuth, page 124

Anyone exposed to the viral goodness must make a DC 18 Wisdom save or their alignment permanently changes to good.

MISCELLANEOUS TEMPLE DISTRICT NPCs

The Temple District teems with interesting individuals. These are only a sample.

SHIBATA

Shibata is a minotaur priest of Niveral, God of Secrets. Although there is a temple of Niveral on the Street of a Million Gods, Shibata rarely goes there, and when he does it is just a quick pilgrimage. The clerics of the temple (mostly humans) have always made him feel uncomfortable and unwelcome.

Life in the city is not easy for Shibata. Prejudice and distrust are part of his daily life. A few other minotaurs live in Ptolus, but Shibata does not socialize with them. He doesn't socialize with anyone. Instead, he haunts libraries and wanders the streets of the Temple District alone, searching for strange and obscure secrets of little meaning to anyone but him. Although he doesn't have extensive knowledge in any particular area, his pursuit of secrets grants him a small chance of knowing just about anything. If a character befriends him—always a difficult task—the priest could become a source for all kinds of information.

One of the purviews of the god Niveral is the so-called Five Lost Lores: five secrets of vast mystical power. They are so secret, in fact, that of the five, only the name of one is known: the Lore of the First Fire. This primordial flame, if it can be mastered, is not destructive but a flame of creation that reflects the power Praemus used to forge the world.

TALENTA

Talenta is a rogue angel who was forced to leave the Pale Tower because the Malkuth disagreed with her ideas. She seeks to eliminate evil in the world and has devised the means to carry out her plan. She came to the world with her magical creation only about a decade ago, and now she is ready to use it.

While in the Celestial Realms, Talenta created viral goodness: a magical "plague" that spreads via contact. Those infected find their alignment changed to good, if it is not good already. Other angels abhor the idea of using an outside force to compel creatures to be good against their will, but Talenta sees it as the only way.

Some of the Malkuth search for Talenta to stop her from carrying out her plan, but they are too late. She has released the viral goodness in the Temple District and now waits, hiding in the shadows, to see what happens next.

Temple District Map: Page 344

TIEL LAWLEY

Tiel Lawley is a well-known sight in the Temple District. He is known for his winning smile and boyish good looks, but also for the incredible number of weapons he carries on his person at any one time. Tiel professes to be a priest of battle—not a priest of the god of battle, or even of a god of war, but a priest of Battle itself. He also describes himself as a devotee of martial training, as though it were a religious path, not merely a field of study. Still, Tiel is not bloodthirsty. He does not revel in death: he revels in the fight. He is more than willing to offer quarter to those he defeats, assuring them that there is no shame or dire consequence for accepting it. He might even offer his opponents tips once the fight is over.

The young battle enthusiast sometimes volunteers to accompany adventurers on missions involving combat (as long as they do not break any major laws). Tiel requests no payment or share of the subsequent loot; he firmly denies being a mercenary and says that he fights for the glory and honor of the battle itself. To take or earn money for doing so would be to sully its perfect nature.

While Tiel may seem like a godsend to some in need of a strong, skilled warrior at their side, those who accept his offer should be warned: he never avoids or backs down from a fight. If he finds someone with greater martial skill than his own, Tiel may defer to that person, even at the expense of his companions.

Tiel Lawley has gladiator stats, with AC 17 and the spellcasting of a priest; alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: +1 chainmail, +1 battleaxe, +1 flail, *greatsword, shortsword, longsword, daggers (10),* periapt of wound closure, potion of speed, friendship band *(page 29; inscribed with "Order of Iron Might"), 18 pp, 18 gp.*

IMPORTING GODS FROM OTHER SETTINGS

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, it's easy to create new gods and place them in Ptolus. It's even easier to bring them over from other settings, whether it's one that you have created or one that has been published elsewhere.

Don't worry about two gods being too similar. As Ptolus represents the amalgam of so many cultures, one can easily imagine two or even three fire gods, multiple war gods, and so on, all having their own space on the Street of a Million Gods. These deities with similar portfolios might be natural allies or they might be jealous rivals, often depending more on their alignment than on anything else.

Chapter 18:

WARRENS

The smallest district in Ptolus is also the worst. The Warrens holds the city's slums, a place as lawless and dangerous as one might fear. Although you'll find no addresses or street names here, you might stumble upon the home of Jirraith, a crime lord with no appearance, and the headquarters of the Eight Shadows.

WARRENS IN BRIEF

Area: *13 acres*
Population: *About 2,000*
Primary Function: *Residential*
Primary Social Class: *Low*
None
None

Undercity, page 394
Banewarrens, page 389

When newcomers to the city hear people talk about "the Warrens," they likely think the term refers to the Undercity, or even a specific portion of the Undercity. Those well schooled in history might even think it a reference to the Banewarrens. These assumptions are incorrect, although more than one person has commented that the Warrens district "might as well be under the city" due to the tunnel-like feel of the place.

THE FLAVOR OF THE WARRENS

The Warrens is the darkest, the poorest, and in some ways the most dangerous portion of Ptolus. It is also the smallest of the districts, no larger than some neighborhoods elsewhere in the city. The district is bordered by Salt Street to the west, the Cliffs of Lost Wishes to the east, and Seamist Street to the north; it peters out a block or two north of Curtain Street to the south. Despite its small size, however, this slum differs enough from the rest of the city to merit its own distinction.

The Warrens is a maze of ramshackle wood and stone buildings with crudely constructed additions made of poor quality wood. Many tenements were once buildings with other purposes—originally this wasn't a heavily residential district. Some doorways are nothing more than a piece of fabric or a wooden barricade. Windows are infrequent, and those that exist never have glass left in them. Many are boarded up. A few have iron or wooden bars over them.

The streets of the Warrens are as narrow as streets get in Ptolus, some only 5 or 6 feet across—a very narrow alleyway in the rest of the city—and most no more than 10 to 15 feet across. What's more, throughout much of the slums, people have constructed rough building additions that stretch across a roadway from one building to another. Thus, many streets of single-story buildings now have second stories reaching over the street. This turns the streets into tunnels that are dangerously dark even during the day and help give the Warrens its name and nature. These top levels frequently collapse onto the street below due to low-quality materials (boards stolen from fencing, rusted nails pulled out of other buildings, and so on) and unskilled, haphazard construction methods.

The Warrens stink of human waste, filth, and open cookfires. The sewers beneath the district, never built to accommodate so dense a population, have long since become plugged and frequently overflow.

Many residents of the Warrens keep dogs for protection against assailants and the slum's surprisingly aggressive rats and giant rats. Many of those who live here walk around armed in some fashion. Most seem shabbily dressed and ill-mannered, but not all are evil by any means.

The crowded, dirty living conditions and the lack of money to pay for any kind of medical care makes the Warrens a breeding ground for disease. Conventional illnesses and death-dealing plagues run rampant here, far worse than elsewhere in the city. Those afflicted, too weak to earn money any other way, sit or stand along the side of the streets and beg. Of course, there is probably no worse place to expect handouts or charity than in the Warrens. Those who can do so beg in other portions of the city, but many of the diseased cannot make it that far.

Like disease, fire threatens the Warrens to a greater degree than the other districts of Ptolus. Makeshift housing built from discarded timbers flares like tindertwigs, given the opportunity. And without the City Watch or Fire Brigade—the Warrens has no Watchhouse or Firehouse—fighting fires becomes much harder, if not impossible. More than once, a potent blaze has taken out a large section of the slum. It never takes long for new, cheap buildings to replace those that burned away, however.

The Warrens hosts some extremely cheap and low-class brothels as well as a few drinking-houses without names or signs (almost no places of business in the Warrens have signs).

RUNNING THE WARRENS

Describe the Warrens as the worst, darkest slum the player characters have ever seen. Every building shows a crumbling façade, leans heavily to one side, or resembles nothing more than a firetrap, overcrowded with squatting families living a life of poverty. Every vacant lot teems with homeless indigents and aimless beggars. Wooden fences get stripped for firewood or building material. Flagstones pried up from the streets go to build walls.

Most likely, PCs who come to the Warrens do so reluctantly, as outsiders. Even if they have established reputations for themselves in the city, the Warrens has its own outlook—the adventurers will just seem like rubes to most of these folk. Thus, the PCs might get jumped by a band of muggers or assaulted by a cutpurse.

Player characters in the Warrens are probably there looking for someone or something. They'll see the place as a dangerous territory to make their way through and get back out again with haste—and that's not a bad thing.

MAP KEY

313. Lackie's (page 378)
314. The Eight Shadows (page 377)
315. Addata Renalt's Home (page 381)
316. Jirraith's Lair (page 378)
317. Chapel of the Final Resolution (page 376)
318. Besson Cral's Home (page 381)
319. Madame Kaethea's House (page 379)
320. Desthi Nawta's Home (page 381)
321. Nul's (page 381)
322. Stoneday Shop (page 381)
323. Pale Dog Safe House (page 380)
324. Vistor Krun's Home (page 381)

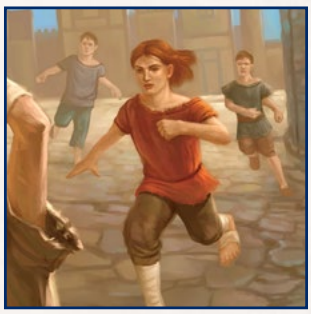
It's fairly common knowledge that the City Watch does not patrol the Warrens or even answer calls from here. The Commissar's Men will go in, but only in large numbers, and only to deal with a situation that threatens other districts, such as a large fire or a particularly bad riot. Otherwise, the Warrens remains basically an island of lawlessness in the city.

This is not to say that the Warrens runs amok in anarchy. Rather, the gangs of the district impose their own kind of rule, which amounts to capricious despotism and administration by terror and intimidation. In other words, interacting with NPCs in the Warrens has a very different feel than elsewhere in Ptolus. The player characters need to get by on their own strength, skill, or smooth words—there is no threat of law or order here. Before they go in, characters should know that foolishness or foolhardiness can get them killed, with no consequences for the murderers. PCs unwilling to interact with and most likely negotiate with criminals will have a very difficult time here.

GETTING AROUND IN THE WARRENS

More than any other district in Ptolus, the Warrens offers the biggest challenge to visitors. And it's not crime or danger. The Warrens is quite literally a maze without street names or addresses. Children too young to join a gang but old enough to fend for themselves on the streets serve as touts (guides) for visitors, usually for 3 to 5 coppers, depending on how far the customers want to go. A tout isn't likely

City Watch, page 141
Fire Brigade, page 144
Fighting fires, page 552
Commissar's Men, page 141



Chapter 20: The Undercity, page 394

Menon Balacazar, page 103

Kevris Killraven, page 119

Two groups in Ptolus work tirelessly to help the impoverished in the Warrens. The first is the Order of Dayra (page 70). Members of the order run soup kitchens around the edges of the slum and shelter the homeless and orphaned who need their help. The other group is the Knights of the Golden Cross (page 120), who receive special funding for this project from the Churches of Gaen, Navashtrom, and other good-aligned deities. The representatives of the knights attempt to help the youth of the Warrens stay out of—or get out of—the criminal gangs that virtually run the district. These benefactors help their young charges escape the Warrens and find employment.

to warn clients if the area they want to visit is particularly dangerous. In such a case, the tout simply won't go the entire distance, but stops where they think it's relatively safe and gives directions for the rest of the way.

Life for touts is rough, because gangs and individual muggers and cutpurses know that these kids usually carry some cash. Sometimes a predatory thug will follow a guide and their charges with the intention to rob the tout after the visitors are gone. Well-organized thugs will then report the location of the newcomers to a gang for a cut of what they get when they find and assault the visitors.

PEOPLE OF THE WARRENS

During the day, the streets are crowded with people of all species and genders. A high percentage of the inhabitants are unemployed. Many others are beggars. Still more are thieves, muggers, or other criminal types. Warrens residents with honest jobs usually work elsewhere—such as on the Docks or as manual laborers in the Guildsman District—and such work is rarely steady.

A few people manage to run businesses in the Warrens selling food or other necessities. Almost without exception, these businesses survive only thanks to the protection of a powerful criminal gang.

The people here are often cold, sick, bitter, and wary of strangers. Most harbor a real contempt for the city leaders and their representatives. They view crime lords in a far more sympathetic light than people who live elsewhere in the city would.

As previously mentioned, the Warrens are home not only to the destitute and the homeless, but also to the unwanted: orcs, lizardfolk, goblins, ogres, dark elves, and other creatures who somehow found their way into Ptolus and were unwilling to live under the city. Conversely, even the poorest dwarves or elves are unlikely to dwell in the Warrens.

It's too easy to make the people of the Warrens into wide-eyed waifs, helpless beggars, or crude thugs. Just like anyone in Ptolus, these people have their own complicated histories, intrigues, and politics. And they're not all slum-dwellers originally. Some might be in the Warrens to hide, either from the law or from a powerful organization. The crone who looks like an impoverished washerwoman and the man who appears to be a brain-addled drunk might be powerful adventurers in disguise or down on their luck.

Menon Balacazar holds the Warrens in the palm of his hand. His criminal rival, Kevris Killraven, holds little sway here, but then she and her organization have made virtually no attempt to gain any kind of foothold. It speaks to the differences between the two criminal organizations that the Balacazars use and exploit the Warrens while Killraven ignores the place and sets her sights higher.

NPCs for the district appear within the chapter, rather than broken out at the end as in most other districts.

PERSON ON THE STREET

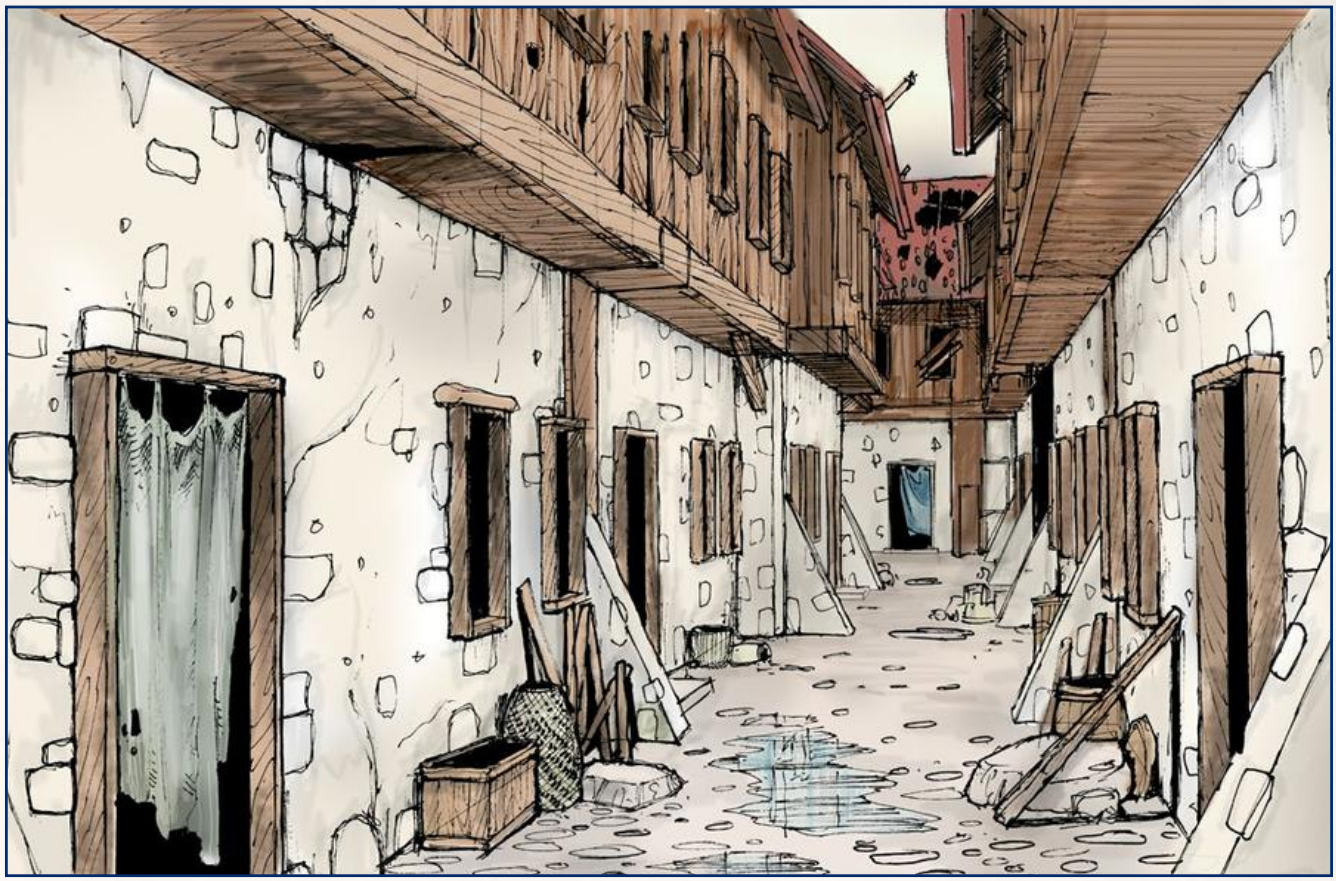
Mina: This young human girl may be mistaken for a boy at first, given her rough appearance, wiry build, and short hair. Mina pretends to fear strangers and perhaps acts a bit slow, but if she's given a few coppers, she shows her true colors: she's extremely lucid, frank, and even a bit condescending. She knows her way around the Warrens incredibly well, understands the territories of the various gangs, and can find all the important locations. She steals when she has to in order to eat. She's likely on her way back to the old storehouse that a few families call

HISTORY OF THE WARRENS

Slums are almost never created intentionally, and this is true of the Warrens as well. This, the most dilapidated and ill-kept portion of Ptolus, was once just the northern part of the Guildsman District, overlooking the Docks. As the Necropolis grew in size and dire presence, the neighborhoods nearest it became less desirable places to live or work. In the north part of the Guildsman District, many homes were abandoned, and the city's most impoverished and undesirable residents moved in as squatters.

The population of the Warrens grew quickly. The Commissar's Men attempted to clear out the squatters a few times in the early days of the neighborhood (around 620 to 630 IA), but that only enabled landlords to move in and legally take possession of large sections of the district, charging rent to the same impoverished people who were previously squatting. In the years since then, the landlords have all been subsumed by organized crime. In recent decades, powerful crime lords like the Balacazar family (which still controls much of the Warrens) have realized the value of allowing the extremely impoverished to live for free in unsafe or unwanted buildings. Thus, many of the Warrens' residents are once again effectively squatters.

Warrens Map: Page 373



home (as squatters) to see whether her father is sober. If he's not, she'll remain on the streets.

Tagg: A surprisingly fresh-faced half-elf youth, Tagg dresses shabbily in lots of layers—he can't afford armor, so he wears as many shirts and cloaks as he can to protect himself. Tagg carries a long dagger that he made himself from a strip of sharpened metal with a cloth-wrapped haft, and is quick to pull it out if he thinks he's being threatened. Tagg belongs to a small gang called the Narrow Street Boys, and he's likely off to meet up with his fellow gang members to commit some minor crime.

Ursah Renner: This human woman in her fifties is extremely ugly—she's clearly had a hard life, as shown by her missing teeth, scars, hunched back, and limp. She may have some orc blood in her lineage. Ursah is likely carrying home a sack of flour she purchased to make the bread she sells out of her tiny flat. She pays rent to one of the local connected landlords, which also serves as protection money to keep the gangs away. She's honest, and she hates all the crime in the area, but she does what she has to do to survive. Her husband disappeared mysteriously years ago, and her children either died or have left.

WARRENS RUMORS

Without broadsheets or criers in the Warrens (almost none find their way here), rumor is the only way of disseminating information.

The Vai Need Money. The Vai recently invested a great deal of cash in a failed assassination attempt on a noble. Now they need money desperately and are looking to sell some of their low-profile contracts to freelancers—or to the potential victims themselves, thus allowing them to buy their way out of a death mark. If this is true, it will greatly hurt the organization's reputation.

The Urban Dragon. A black dragon has taken up residence in the Warrens and is attempting to form her own band of thugs, guards, and spies. Because she pays well, the dragon is attracting some local gang members, including even some Pale Dogs.

The Temple of Destor. Destor, an illegal god, once had a temple on the cliff's edge in what is now the Warrens. Although the surface structure was razed, some powerful relics supposedly remain below the site in a hidden underground level of the temple.

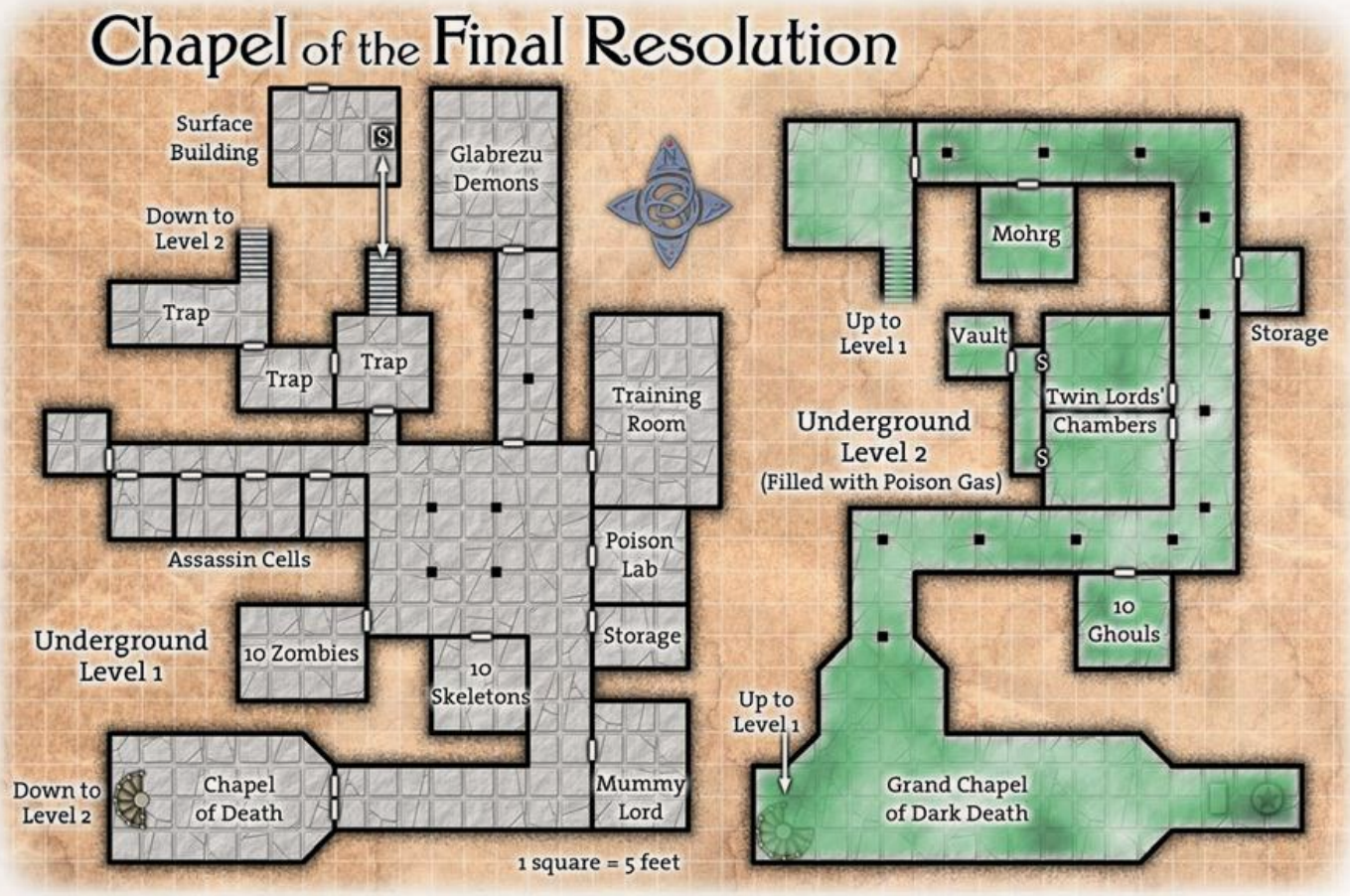
Vai, page 131

For information on how to read the callout stat blocks, see page 604.

Pale Dogs, page 126

Destor, page 72

The symbol of Destor, God of Ill Luck, is a lightning bolt. It represents the lightning that you would rather see strike your neighbor's house than your own.



Twin Lords Keper, page 131

Vai assassins, page 131

A creature that tries to use divination magic to find the Chapel of the Final Resolution must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or their heart stops; they drop to 0 hit points and automatically fail their first death saving throw.

Iron golem: *210 hp*

Glabrezu demon: *157 hp*

The Vai assassin has spy stats, with the Assassinate ability of an assassin; see page 131.

The mohrg has flesh golem stats, with the undead type.

A creature that breathes the gas must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw each round or take 7 (2d6) poison damage and be poisoned for one hour.

WARRENS LOCATIONS

The locales in this chapter are just a few of the interesting or important places in the Warrens. Because the tangled streets here have no names, these locations do not include specific addresses.

CHAPEL OF THE FINAL RESOLUTION

(#317, L7) see map, above 50,000 gp

The headquarters of the Vai assassins consists of a freestanding wooden structure in the Warrens that no one seems to know anything about. It leads down to a vast underground temple complex that's surrounded by a deadly, trap-filled maze containing secret doors and various tricks to confound, fool, or slay intruders. No unwanted visitor has ever found the Chapel of the Final Resolution and attempted to break in. Perhaps this is because the place is well hidden deep below the district, or perhaps it's because of the many safeguards and traps. But more likely, it is thanks to the fearsome reputation of the Vai themselves.

Operating in tiny, isolated cells or as individual assassins, most members of the Vai rarely come to the Chapel of the Final Resolution. This also helps keep its location secret.

The interior of the chapel remains immune to any kind of divinatory effect. No one can scry, detect, or magically find any location, creatures, or objects within it. So mighty is this effect, established through powerful manipulation of countermagic and necromantic energy, that anyone attempting a divinatory effect to find the chapel, or anything or anyone within it, might suddenly drop dead.

Thanks to this powerful protection, an assassin who slays a victim of importance usually comes to the chapel to lie low for at least two weeks. Aside from the Twin Lords Keper, there are normally a few Vai assassins in the chapel. However, it has a number of other guardians, including one iron golem, a towering goat-headed demon with four arms (two of which end in massive pincers) called a glabrezu, an undead skeleton with visibly writhing intestines and a prehensile tongue called a mohrg, and about three dozen minor undead.

The lowest level of the chapel is filled with toxic gas. The Lords Keper have rendered themselves immune to it over time, and it does not concern the fiends and undead noted above, so they are the only ones to tread the unlit halls and worship in the Grand Chapel of Dark Death.

Warrens Map: Page 373

Messages travel to and from the chapel via secret courier: a ratcatcher named Rintha (female half-fiend halfling) who brings coded missives (hidden in illusory writing), usually while in the guise of an invisible rat or insect. Rintha spends most of her time going between the Chapel of the Final Resolution and Kerrik's in Midtown, the contact point where prospective clients can get in touch with the Vai.

Rintha has cambion stats, with the spellcasting ability of an arcanist (page 605).

Kerrik's, page 209

THE EIGHT SHADOWS

(#314, L7); see map, page 373 7,500 gp

Although they would like people to think otherwise, the Eight Shadows are not shadows in the undead sense. And, despite their name, they have no affiliation with House Sadar or the Knights of Shadow. Instead, they are all wizards in the employ of Menon Balacazar who operate out of the Warrens. They also own and operate a shivvel den and brothel that caters to some of the more depraved and violent desires of its despicable clientele. Drug addicts themselves, the Eight Shadows are consumed by vile drives and wicked needs. Their establishment, also called the Eight Shadows, traffics in the occasional slave or evil magic item as well.

House Sadar, page 98

Knights of Shadow, page 123

Menon Balacazar, page 103

Shivvel, page 519

Located within a nondescript dilapidated building in the Warrens, the Eight Shadows den of iniquity is a winding, mazelike place filled with secret rooms and passages. The air here is thick with the cloying smoke of various drugs and the screams of those in pain or pleasure (or both).

The Eight Shadows take their name from the Lothianite belief that sins come in eight categories: sins against a stranger, against a friend, against a family member, against the land or nature, against one's species, against the Holy Emperor, against Lothian, and against oneself. These eight sins are also called the Eight Shadows.

The Eight Shadows serve as spies, enforcers, and assassins for their employer, in addition to dealing the vices he sells. They virtually never work directly with the Pale Dogs—in fact, Balacazar often uses these groups to check and balance each other in the district. It is not uncommon for the two bands to oppose one another.

If any of the Eight Shadows die, they are replaced with new recruits so there are always eight wizards.

Encounter: Following a pickpocket who snatched a coin pouch from one of their belts, the player characters enter the lair of the Eight Shadows. They immediately encounter a number of guards (male human or orc). If the PCs can avoid a violent encounter with these brutes (a bribe would be in order), they can search the place for the thief. While they search, they see Filas Nevish, a master in the Bankers' Guild, engaging in bawdy acts and drug use. Fearing potential blackmail, Nevish might send someone to follow the PCs and do them in.

The Eight Shadows make liberal use of minor mind-controlling magic spells to get what they need and to get themselves out of dangerous situations. The fact that this magic is illegal does not bother them in the slightest.

Scenario: Menon Balacazar dispatches the Eight Shadows to the Docks to take valuable cargo from an elven ship named *Elesmere*. The cargo, to be delivered to Doraedian Mythlord, consists of Charad Titan relics found on a small island in the Whitewind Sea.

The PCs come upon the attack on the ship by accident, are working for Doraedian to safeguard the cargo, or are hired to recover the relics after they are stolen. The last of the three options will involve some investigation to identify the Eight Shadows and find their lair.

The Eight Shadows have arcanist stats (page 605); alignment neutral evil. Equipment: wand of magic missiles, cloak of protection *(+1 to AC and saves)*, spell scrolls of blur *and* invisibility, potion of greater healing, *fine dagger worth 100 gp, silver cloak clasp worth 250 gp, 800 gp worth of drugs or other illicit goods, 450 gp. They typically have the following wizard spells prepared:*
Cantrips (at will): dancing lights, friends, mage hand, minor illusion
1st level (4 slots): charm person, disguise self, mage armor
2nd level (3 slots): detect thoughts, knock, Mel's acid arrow
3rd level (2 slots): haste, lightning bolt

Eight Shadows lair guards have guard or thug stats.

Doraedian Mythlord, page 197

Charad Titans, page 81

JIRRAITH'S LAIR

(#316, L7) see map, page 373 3,000 gp

Gangs control the Warrens. The more prominent among them have the backing of various members of the criminal hierarchy. The largest of them all is a gang called the Pale Dogs, led by a mysterious man known only as Jirraith.

Jirraith's "headquarters" is the top floor of an average-looking tenement. He has no bodyguards at home, although he keeps a gibbering mouther—a monstrous mound of flesh studded with eyes and babbling mouths (he's conditioned himself to be immune to the gibbering). Even his closest lieutenants don't know Jirraith's true nature, although most suspect that he is, at the very least, a master of disguise. In truth, Jirraith is a creature able to take on any disguise he desires; he's a doppelganger.

Jirraith comes and goes from his lair in different guises all the time, giving anyone paying attention the impression that a number of different people frequent the place. As a doppelganger, he can read the thoughts of those around him and uses this power to establish his identity and thus his authority when needed. Basically, he tells underlings things about themselves that no one else should know. The Pale Dogs call this "the Jirraith whisper."

Not far away lives a dark-haired, muscular aram named Tarkus (male centaur) who is also a member of the Pale Dogs. Tarkus serves as a frequent messenger for Jirraith, who comes to him with orders and instructions to pass along to the other gang members. Tarkus has a good deal more integrity and honor than his fellow Pale Dogs and can even be compassionate at times. Still, he's not stupid and may be willing to take a bribe.

A small gang of young toughs that call themselves the Gutterkings patrol the streets around Jirraith's lair. The Gutterkings are led by a youth named Scrud (male human), who is all bravado and not much wisdom. He is slightly below average in height, with unkempt black hair and bushy eyebrows. The unfortunately named youth has lived a very hard life already and is used to being treated poorly. He bullies and intimidates anyone who lets him. Scrud is loyal to Jirraith, however, and makes sure he gets a warning if strangers start poking around the area.

Jirraith keeps Scrud and the Gutterkings well paid and independent of the Pale Dogs, just in case anyone within his own organization should try to usurp or betray him.

Tactics: In a dangerous situation, Jirraith attempts to flee by becoming invisible, taking on a new form, returning to visibility, and blending into a crowd somewhere. If he must fight, he assumes his real form and uses his fists. He also carries a lot of cash to use for bribes. A very defensive thinker, Jirraith never puts himself at risk, either of discovery or of physical danger.

Scenario: A broadsheet (the *Undergrounder*) publishes an article declaring that one of the player characters is actually the mysterious criminal known as Jirraith who leads the Pale Dogs. The PCs can attempt to get revenge, but the damage to their reputation has been done. The only way to disprove the story is to publicly expose the identity of the man themselves. Of course, doing so also will be valuable to other people (Kevris Killraven, the Shuul, and the Commissar, to name a few), so the adventurers could earn some allies out of this if they handle things correctly.

LACKIE'S

(#313, L6); see map, page 373; 350 gp

Lackie is a male Harrow elf whose real name is Lakimos. Lackie's is one of the small handful of unmarked pubs in the Warrens. Those who don't know it's there simply aren't welcome. The clientele are somber, looking to get drunk quietly and without disturbance or annoyance. Lackie, as he's called, sees to it that they get what they're after. The drink is strong, but not as strong as his bodyguards (male and female humans), who also serve as bouncers and keep the peace. The patrons of the place don't care that Lackie is a Harrow elf. Any newcomer who makes an issue of it usually doesn't leave the pub alive.

Secretly, Lackie also goes by another name: the Beggar King. More than one hundred beggars in Ptolus meet once a week in the large abandoned warehouse behind Lackie's, where the elf gleans information from them about the city in general and orders them to look out for particular things or to frequent certain places. They all give him a 10 percent cut of their take. In exchange, he provides them with occasional protection and organization to help them earn the biggest takes.

However, what Lakimos really wants is information about members of the forces of chaos in or below the city. His army of beggars keeps an eye out for the telltale signs of the involvement of these Galchutt minions (as only their king could explain), even if they do not know what they truly are looking for.

Lakimos is a friend and ally of Karetsan in the Zar'at in the North Market.

Scenario: The player characters suspect they are being followed. Perceptive characters can

Pale Dogs, page 126

Broadsheets, page 157

Kevris Killraven, page 119

Shuul, page 126

Commissar, page 140

Jirraith has assassin stats, with immunity to charm, Deception +6, Insight +3, darkvision 60 ft., and the Shapechanger, Surprise Attack, and Read Thoughts abilities of a doppelganger; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: +1 shortbow, *arrows (20),* ring of invisibility, *giant scorpion venom (4 doses), 90 pp, 340 gp.*

Gibbering mouther: *67 hp*

Lakimos ("Lackie") the Beggar King has assassin stats, with the spellcasting of an arcanist (see page 605); alignment neutral evil. Equipment: +1 greatsword, boots of elvenkind, spell scroll of dispel magic, wand of magic missiles, potion of flying, potion of greater healing, *239 gp, 434 sp. He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components, 1/day each:* detect magic, enhance ability, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation.

He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): light, message, ray of frost, shocking grasp

1st level (4 slots): charm person, feather fall, shield

2nd level (3 slots): invisibility, mirror image

3rd level (2 slots): lightning bolt, nondetection

Lackie's bodyguards have thug stats.

Tarkus is a centaur with spy stats, size Large, monstrosity type, and speed 50 ft.

Although few outside the Warrens have heard of Lakimos (or Lackie), most people have heard of the Beggar King. He is a feared, mysterious figure, and because no one knows anything about him, people spread all sorts of elaborate rumors about his nature and intentions. Some believe him to be a diseased beggar himself; others think him a ghost; still others imagine he is a strange, otherworldly being who only rarely takes human guise.

Telltale signs of the presence of creatures of chaos, according to the Beggar King's instructions, include strange odors, ordinary people not behaving normally, secretive cults, odd diseases, mutations, and weird devices that shouldn't work (but do).

Scrud has scout stats.

Elder Brood, page 602

Galchutt, page 62

Zar'at, page 287

see that, indeed, someone is watching them. If they confront the watcher, they find only a meek beggar, who apologizes. If the PCs follow him, however, he inadvertently leads them to Lackie's. It seems that their current activities are about to run the PCs unknowingly afoul of creatures of chaos; the Beggar King's subjects have noticed some of the telltale signs in an area the player characters have frequented. Someone the PCs have interacted with in recent weeks secretly works for the zaug. Lakimos offers the group 5,000 gp worth of gems for the individual's head.

MADAME KAETHEA'S HOUSE

(#319, L7); see map, page 380 6,000 gp

To a native, the name "Madame Kaethea's House" rings false. "Kaethea" is pretty clearly an Elvish name, but the title "Madame" is certainly human. A few might assume that the woman, if she exists, is a half-elf. In fact, she is not. "Madame Kaethea" is actually a dark elf priestess named Urshanna (female dark elf) and, to those in the know, her house is the Dark Elf Refuge.

Although one might guess orcs or ogres, the only species whose very presence in Ptolus breaks the law is dark elves. Thus, any dark elf in the surface city has to lie low and keep to the shadows. In Ptolus, no shadows are deeper than the ones in the Warrens.

Madame Kaethea's House serves as a hiding place as well as a common meeting point for dark elves in the city. At any given time six dark elves are here, besides Urshanna. Most are disguised (magically or mundanely) as Shoal elves. Other types of elves find little welcome here, although the dark elves hiding in this place hesitate to use violence against other elves, not willing to risk unwanted attention from the authorities.

Urshanna not only harbors dark elves, but also keeps tabs on all of her kind in and around the city, including beneath it. It is difficult to imagine any dark elf activities in Ptolus of which she remains unaware. Urshanna was a member of the dark elf noble house Yurganth who lived in Nluguran. She is well acquainted with the dark elf Shilukar, as well as the various dark elves in the caverns below the city. Most of her information comes from the dark elves who frequent her house, some of whom she pays to keep her informed, even to the point of betraying their own allies—they are, after all, dark elves. Because of this knowledge, she also has a great many details of events in the city in general, particularly those dealing with the

underworld (both the criminal underworld and the literal subterranean areas beneath Ptolus).

Urshanna serves Gorgoth-Lol, the Dark Mistress of Spiders and a Vested of the Galchutt. A temple to the goddess lies beneath a secret trapdoor on the first floor of the house.

Tactics: Urshanna likes to appear unarmed and unarmored, wearing her mithral chain shirt under a loose-fitting blouse and keeping her poisoned magic dagger hidden in a spring-loaded sheath in her sleeve. However, she avoids combat if at all possible. If she comes to harm, the culprits would certainly earn the enmity of all dark elves in the city. Though dark elves do not normally have much in the way of loyalty or respect for each other, they all know the valuable role Urshanna provides and that, without her, they would be far worse off.

Scenario: A dark elf named Tissakal murders someone close to the player characters. To find her, they need to talk to the dark elves in this refuge, including Urshanna. She knows Tissakal's whereabouts, but to get this information, the PCs will have to do something for her in return. The dark elf cleric is smart enough not to demand something that they will not give. So she sends them on an errand to "recover" an amulet sacred to Gorgoth-Lol from the thieves who stole it out of a temple deep beneath the city.

The thieves—Sorn sorcerers in the employ of Kevris Killraven—live in Midtown. Urshanna

Esme, the "Rag Lady," is a valuable minion of the Beggar King. Her patchwork clothing lets her easily pretend to be a pile of discarded rags. She often lurks in places where she can overhear things, learning secrets for her boss and her own agenda.

Esme has spy stats.

Zaug, page 602

Urshanna lives in Ptolus because she was exiled from her home city of Nluguran in the dark elf caverns. Living in the city is dangerous for her, but at least she enjoys the respect of all the dark elves that she harbors—respect she could not get among her own kind deep underground.

Secret trapdoor: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

An Investigation check can offer a few details about dark elves in the city:

- *There are dark elves below Ptolus (DC 10).*
- *There are dark elves hiding in Ptolus (DC 12).*
- *Dark elves, by their very species, are illegal in Ptolus and are killed or incarcerated on sight (DC 15).*
- *Dark elves occasionally find shelter in the Warrens (DC 20).*
- *A half-elf named Madame Kaethea knows a lot about dark elves in the city (DC 22).*
- *Madame Kaethea is actually a dark elf named Urshanna (DC 25).*

Urshanna is a dark elf with ecclesiastic stats (page 608); alignment neutral evil. Equipment: +1 dagger (spring-loaded sheath), mithral chain shirt, ring of protection, spell scroll of cure wounds (×3, 4th-level spell slot), wyvern stinger poison (3 doses), silver spider brooch worth 350 gp, 12 gp. She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): guidance, mending, resistance, thaumaturgy

1st level (4 slots): command, cure wounds, inflict wounds, protection from evil and good

2nd level (3 slots): enhance ability, hold person, silence

3rd level (3 slots): bestow curse, dispel magic, spirit guardians

4th level (3 slots): freedom of movement

5th level (1 slot): scrying

Nluguran, page 425

Shilukar, page 579

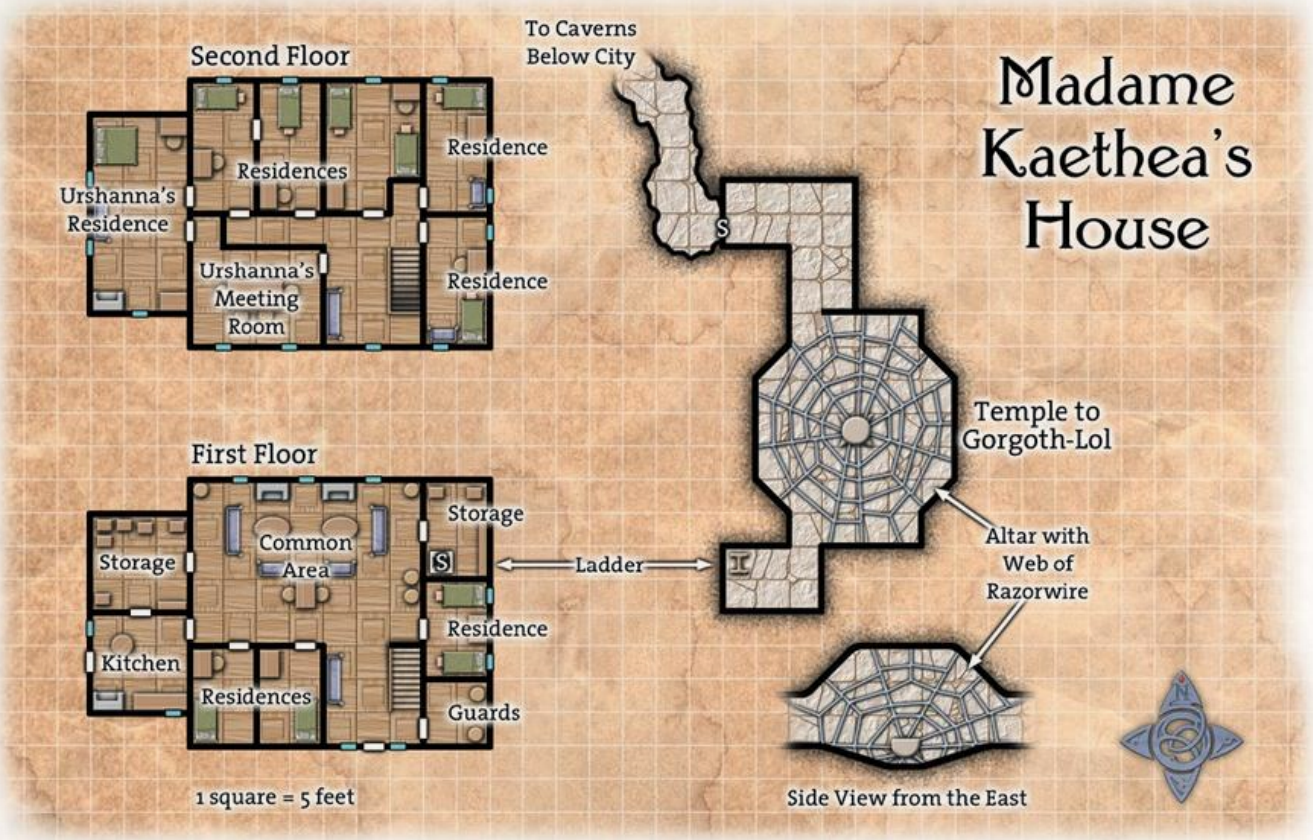
Dark elf caverns, page 424

Gorgoth-Lol, page 72

Vested of the Galchutt, page 62

Sorn, page 129

Kevris Killraven, page 119



For typical Pale Dog stats and other information about the gang, see Pale Dogs in Chapter 6: Organizations (page 126).

assumes the player characters will have no problem stealing from evil sorcerers who work for a crime lord (if this is clearly not the case, she will try for something else).

PALE DOG SAFE HOUSE

(#323, L7); see map, page 373 5 gp

Spyncer Coil has artisan stats (page 606); alignment neutral. Equipment: Insight *(see* Swords of Ptolus, *page 178), ruby ring worth 1,200 gp, and 134 gp.*

Spyncer Coil (male human) has never been much of anything. A longtime member of the Ironworkers' Guild but a mediocre blacksmith at best, he fumbled his way through life, rewarding his occasional successes with drink and drowning the sorrows of his more frequent failures with the same.

Then, about three years ago, Spyncer had a vision. He believes the vision came from Asche, the god of cities. Asche told Spyncer to create three swords that would be tied to the city of Ptolus itself. These weapons, called the *Swords of Ptolus*, could be fashioned only through a singular ritual, which Asche taught to Spyncer in the vision.

Asche, page 71

Swords of Ptolus, page 178

Darkbirth Madhouse, page 174

Kevris Killraven, page 119

The divine vision proved too much for him, though, and he found himself in the Darkbirth Madhouse for almost a year. After his release, he wandered the streets until providence brought him into contact with Kalbert Nom, a well-respected weaponsmith known for his unique and high-quality magic blades. When Spyncer told Kalbert about his vision, Kalbert realized the ritual he described was real and that the two of them, working together, could pull it off—with a little help. The help they got came from some magically skilled (and somewhat sinister) skulks, who gathered the magical substances needed.

They toiled for two years to create three swords: *Deceit*, *Insight*, and *Power*. But Spyncer's mind remained unstable. Once the job was completed, he murdered Kalbert Nom and fled with the swords. He turned for help to an old acquaintance named Lirion Voss, who hid him away in his home in the Warrens. However, in the time since the two last knew each other, Lirion had joined the Pale Dogs. Spyncer thought he could trust Lirion, but he was wrong. Lirion told his fellow gang members that he had a crazy man with some great treasure in his house. The gang now must decide what to do with the information. Killing Spyncer and taking whatever he has seems like the smart thing to most of them, but a few in their number wisely know that Spyncer could mean more than that.

They're right. Divinatory warnings and prophecies have alerted many interested parties to the existence of the three *Swords of Ptolus*. They range from criminals such as Kevris

Warrens Map: Page 373

Killraven to nobles like the members of House Khatru—even heroes like Kaira Swanwing and the Knights of the Golden Cross would like to get hold of the swords. Many of them have begun looking for the heretofore unknown Spyncer Coil.

Today, Spyncer seems coherent only occasionally. Other times he babbles strange, disjointed thoughts regarding Asche, Ptolus, magical swords, and stranger things. He carries one of the swords, *Insight*, with him. He has hidden *Power* and *Deceit*, although unbeknownst to him, the evil skulks that helped him forge the weapons have found and stolen *Power*. *Deceit*, by its very nature, will never be found. Only Spyncer and Veda Medaris of the Ironworkers' Guild know where it is. Veda knows Spyncer's entire sordid tale but harbors a deep resentment for the murder of Kalbert Nom.

Lirion Voss doesn't have much of a house (just a couple of bedrooms and a living area, heated only by the cookfire), and normally one wouldn't consider the Warrens a safe place. But the neighborhood's dangerous reputation is the very thing keeping Spyncer's enemies from finding him—no one has supposed the ruffians and street gangs of the Warrens would hide the source of such a treasure. However, the house has only mundane protection: three Pale Dogs remain on the premises at all times to watch over the crazed swordmaker. The place is not magically proof against intruders or scrying, so one might guess it's only a matter of time before those seeking the swords catch up with Spyncer Coil.

Scenario: One of the many groups looking for Spyncer hires the player characters but won't tell them why they want him found. The PCs can follow the trail from the Ironworkers' Guild to the magical forge owned by Kalbert (and they find Kalbert's body) to this "safe house," where the Pale Dogs are about to turn Spyncer over to the Balacazars. Something this important could get the characters in over their heads—the Eight Shadows, for example, might be involved to ensure that Spyncer and the swords end up in Menon Balacazar's hands. Mand Scheben and the Temple of Asche could become allies to help the PCs keep this possible prophet of the God of Cities out of evil hands.

OTHER LOCALES

Although it's not a complete listing by any means, GMs can use the table below to insert a variety of additional locations as needed into their Ptolus Campaigns when PCs visit the Warrens. Addresses are not offered, as streets in the Warrens have no names.

Guildhouse of Iron, page 177

Typical Pale Dog, page 126

Balacazars, page 102

House Khatru, page 96

Kaira Swanwing and the Knights of the Golden Cross, page 121

Eight Shadows, page 377

Mand Scheben, page 353

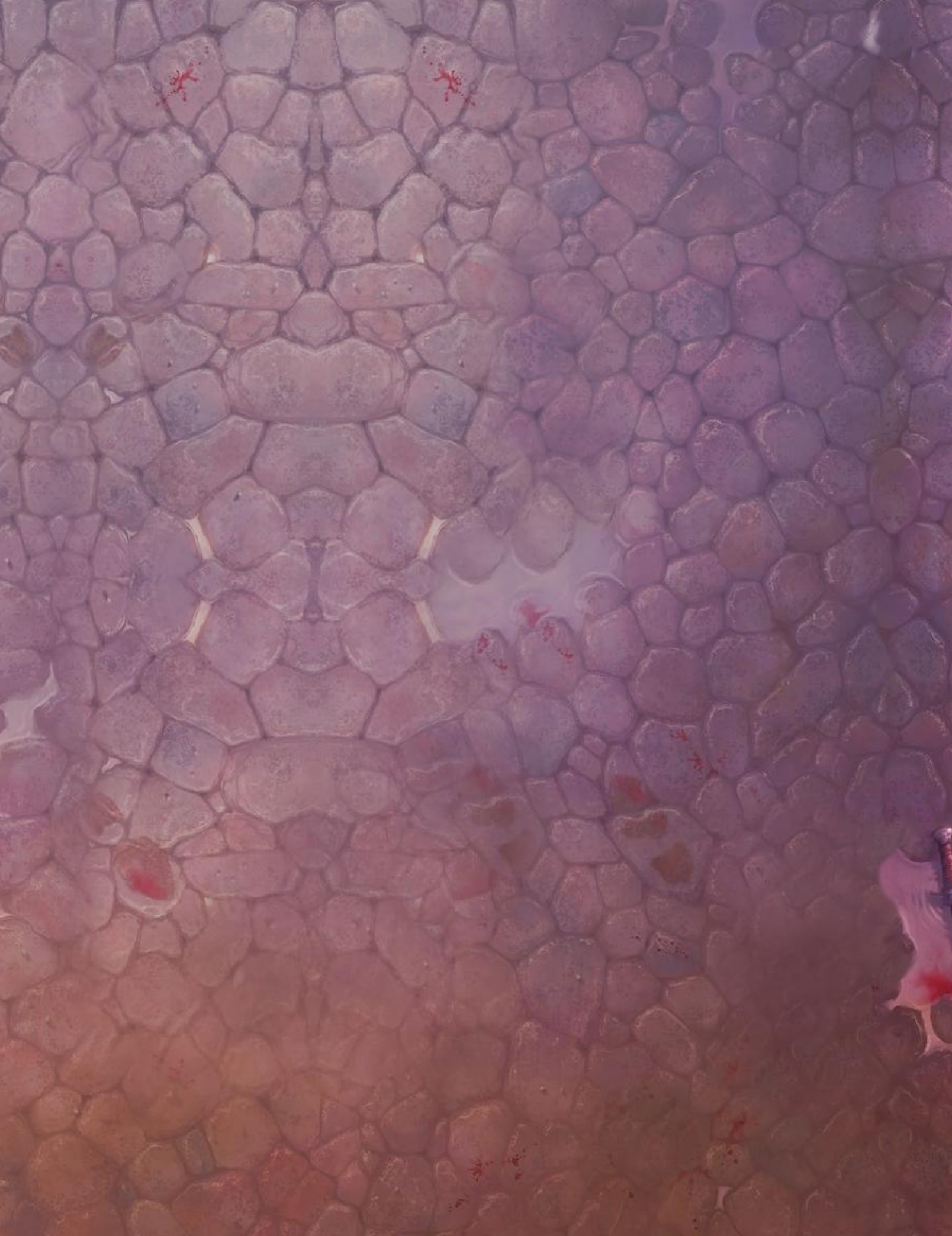
FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

The player characters in my Ptolus Campaign found Spyncer Coil before some of the darker forces looking for him could do so. Not knowing what else to do with the crazy fellow, they took him to their friend Mand Scheben of the Temple of Asche, who helped convince the lords of Castle Shard (page 263) to provide him with sanctuary. One of the player characters even wound up with the sword Insight.

OTHER LOCALES IN THE WARRENS

Name	Type	Location	Proprietor	Staff	Notes
Addata Renalt's Home		#315, L7	Addata Renalt (female human spy)	1	Forgery service
Besson Cral's Home		#318, L7	Besson Cral (male half-orc thug)	5	Drug den controlled by Pale Dogs
Desthi Nawta's Home		#320, L7	Desthi Nawta (female human expert*)	9	Illegal brothel
Nul's		#321, L7	The Bartender (male human thug)	0	Owner of this place never gives out his name
Stoneday Shop		#322, L7	Nalis Errund (female human commoner)	2	General store protected by the Balacazars
Vistor Krun's Home		#324, L7	Vistor Krun (male halfling spy)	3	Drug den

* see Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604



PART IV:
BELOW THE CITY

As exciting as the surface of Ptolus can be, many adventurers find what goes on beneath the city streets to be of even greater interest. Whether it's a section of Ghul's Labyrinth, a natural cavern, an area of Dwarvenhearth, or some unrelated subterranean location, most of the city's inhabitants call such places collectively "the Dungeon." Many of the adventures in a typical Ptolus Campaign take place below the city in one of the many disparate areas covered in the following chapters.

Part IV offers a brief introduction to the areas beneath the city, focusing mainly on what is known as Ghul's Labyrinth: the network of passages and chambers created long ago by the dark lord Ghul. Subsequent chapters discuss an unofficial underground territory of Ptolus called the Undercity. Although these regions are not located near each other and serve very different purposes, folk lump them together in conversation for the sake of convenience. And it would be a mistake to overlook the city's sewers as a significant under-realms location—both subterranean inhabitants and delvers from the surface use the sewers to get around underground. This section of the book also covers Dwarvenhearth, an ancient city so infamous that many people think it comprises the entire Dungeon. Sealed for many centuries, these dwarven halls teem with great treasures as well as guardians and traps. The same can be said for much of the Caverns, an extensive network of natural passages and caves running below the city of Ptolus. These Caverns hold many dread secrets, from the fortresses of the dark elves to the ancient demesne of the Galchutt's servants.

Players should not read these chapters. The information in part IV is best left for the player characters to discover firsthand.

Chapter 19: What's Down There? 384
Chapter 20: The Undercity 394
Chapter 21: The Sewers 408
Chapter 22: The Caverns 415
Chapter 23: Dwarvenhearth. 429

Chapter 19:

WHAT'S DOWN THERE?

Beneath Ptolus lie vast chambers, caverns, and tunnels. In fact, there are whole cities of dwarven and dark elven creation below the surface. But how can this be? And why here? There are many reasons, and there is one reason. . . .

"Dungeons" are not a common concept in the rest of the world. In most places, dungeons are holes in the ground in the lowest level of a castle where prisoners are thrown, but they are not vast labyrinths filled with treasure and monsters. The concept is unique to Ptolus.

The so-called "Dungeon" has many portions: natural caverns, the infamous expanse of Dwarvenhearth, the even older Banewarrens, the extensive Labyrinth of Ghul, various crypts and independent underground complexes, and even the sewers. And then there's the Undercity Market and environs, which is almost like another district of the surface Ptolus. All have their own reason for being, their own creation stories, and their own particulars.

Banewarrens, page 389
Labyrinth of Ghul, page 390
Undercity Market, page 394

But the one reason, the ultimate explanation for why they are all here—the Banewarrens, the monster-infested underground Labyrinth, the dark elven grottos, the zaug caverns, and even the vast Spire itself—is the Galchutt.

Galchutt, page 62

THE DRAW OF THE REALM BELOW

Unbeknownst to him, Danar Rotansin—who became the Dread One, who built Jabel Shammar and the Banewarrens and caused the Spire's creation—was drawn here by the subconscious, subtle, seductive power of the Galchutt. Ghul, the Skull-King who built Goth Gulgamel and the vast Labyrinth that radiates out from below the Spire, was brought here because of the legacy of the Dread One, whom he sought to imitate. Even the dwarves who built Dwarvenhearth were tricked into coming here and digging deep.

Danar Rotansin, page 79
Night of Dissolution, page 62
Ghul, page 83
Charad Titans, page 81

The Galchutt wanted to be found. They wanted creatures near them to seduce and control even as they slumbered deep below the ground. Their powerful essence worked on the subconscious minds of nearby creatures, and they created servants—those who would follow their empathic suggestions; those who would worship them as gods. Most such servants do not understand the forces that work upon them and are not even aware that the Galchutt exist.

But the presence of the Galchutt serves as a clarion call for every evil beast, chaotic creature, and malevolent monster. Subtly, slowly, the lure has worked on the instincts of monstrous beings. Without knowing why, a disproportionately large percentage of the world's evil creatures has gathered around or beneath the Spire, drawn by the power of the Galchutt. And as the Galchutt begin to stir and the dreaded Night of Dissolution approaches, the sympathetic pull of their essence only grows stronger. Even nonevil creatures with savage natures, like owlbears and rust monsters, gather here in greater numbers than anywhere else.

The Elder Elves recognized that an evil attraction surrounded the Spire. They saw it affect some of the Charad Titans, and they avoided the area. The dwarves, on the other hand, did not believe the legends of evil surrounding the Spire.

They built Dwarvenhearth in its very shadow due to the prevalence of valuable ores. In fact, they grew to believe that the area was not unholy but *holy*, a place promised to them in their own ancient prophecies. And they still believe that to this day, never guessing that the subconscious power of the Galchutt encouraged them to delve deep into the earth and awaken things that lay sleeping there.

As the Galchutt stir, some people believe the pull of evil creatures toward the Spire and the regions beneath it is stronger than ever. Perhaps it is that very pull that plays upon the greed of adventurers, influencing them to venture below the city and disturb what lies beneath.

UNDERCITY VS. DUNGEON

As stated above, it's dangerous to lump everything that's below the city together into a single category. These areas are as different from each other as the Nobles' Quarter is from the Warrens. However, the biggest differences lie between the areas deemed "Undercity" and those deemed "Dungeon."

The Undercity is not a discrete place surrounded by neat borders. Instead, it is a collection of all the areas below Ptolus that most closely resemble the aboveground city. Businesses operate here, folks pass through—some people even make their homes here. The popular Undercity Market in these levels caters to delvers and even offers a Dark Market for shadier pursuits. One can find city institutions (the Prison), organizational headquarters (Delver's Guild, Longfingers thieves' guild), and more in the Undercity. These levels—some near the surface, some quite deep—are accessed from the surface via public passages, such as the wide staircase in the middle of Delver's Square in Midtown.

The Undercity also serves as the doorway to the Dungeon: wild areas ripe for exploration and rife with danger. One is liable to find certain features and phenomena throughout the Dungeon that one does not see in the Undercity, such as the Pits of Insanity and chambers of Ghul's Labyrinth. (These are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.)

The Dungeon includes several different types of environment:

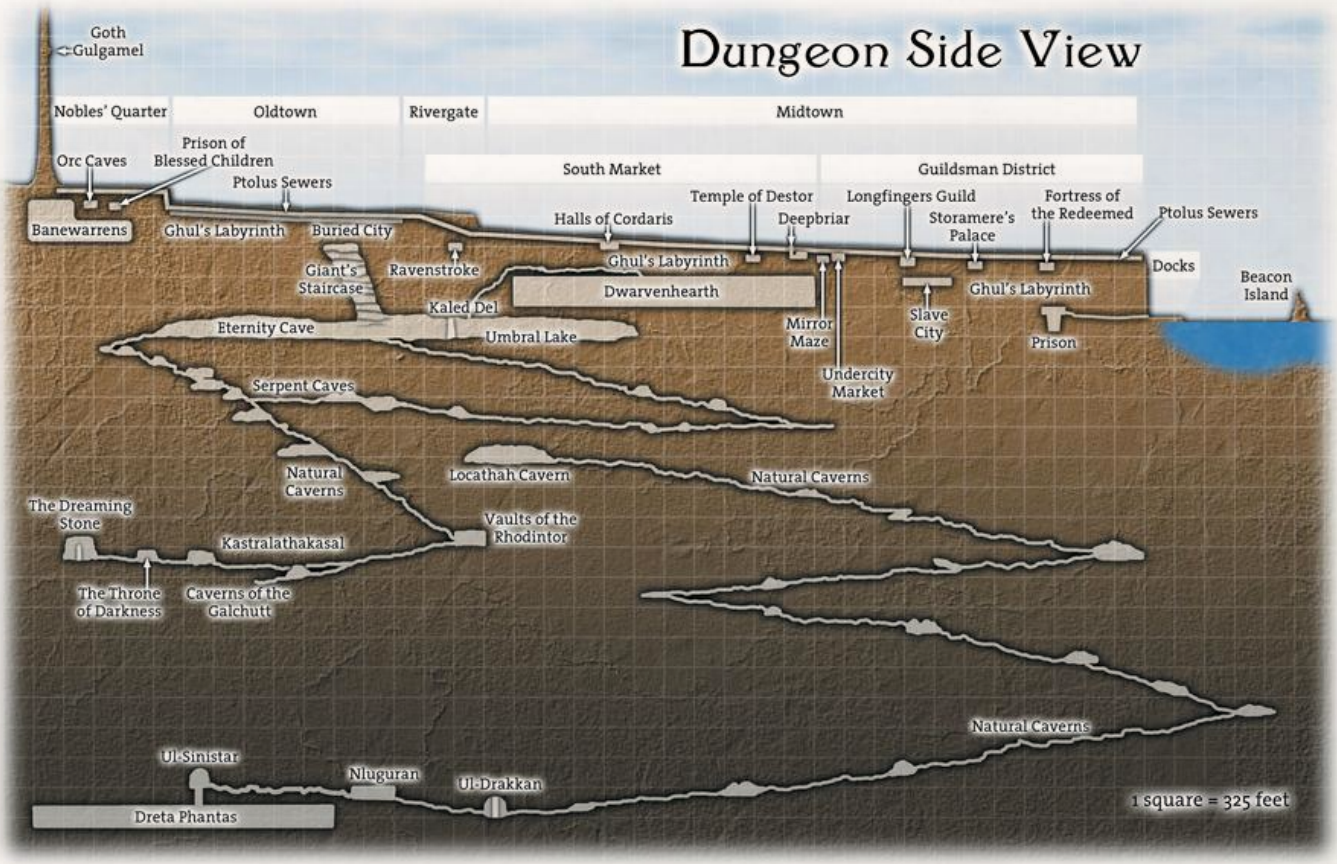
- The sewer tunnels, which lie closest to the surface and can connect delvers quickly with other Dungeon areas.
- The caverns, deep natural cave complexes that are home to dwarves, dark elves, and monsters.
- Dwarvenhearth, ancestral stronghold of the Stonemight dwarves, abandoned for centuries.

If the Undercity is the settled subterranean areas below Ptolus, how does one refer to the wilder areas down there? Some erroneously call them all Dwarvenhearth or the Banewarrens, but those names refer to specific underground areas, not to the entire belowground world. Some use "the Realms below" or "the Labyrinth." Others just say "below the city." The fastest growing term, though, is simply "the Dungeon."

GM TIPS

If you want some of the locations on the map below to remain a secret from the PCs, don't give players the Dungeon cross-section map (found in the packet).

While the Dungeon Side View map may make certain subterranean locations appear quite close together, the distances are vaster than they look. Locations that appear near each other on an east-west axis may be quite distant on a north-south axis. And even nearby locales can feel far away due to the rigors of underground travel and the many switchbacks in the paths between sites.



The natural caverns extend throughout the landscape, and thus go much farther than just the borders of Ptolus. Likewise, Ghul's Labyrinth extends, at least in places, out beyond the bounds of the city.

IT'S ALL CONNECTED

One very important fact to relate to the players is that many underground areas are connected. A dungeon adventure could exist partially in the cellars of an old manor house and partially in a section of Ghul's Labyrinth, which the cellars' original builders broke into inadvertently. Many such connections exist below the city, with one type of underground construction or natural cavern spilling into another. One assumes most connections were unintentional—a construction crew is digging along when suddenly they break into an existing subterranean space. Much of the time, builders would seal up such connections, assuming they were unwanted. Some connections are sealed with a locked door, but others might be completely bricked up. Intrepid delvers carry picks and other digging tools for just such an occasion.

USING THE UNDERLEVELS IN THE CAMPAIGN

Ptolus is designed to allow you to run a campaign that incorporates urban intrigue adventures with exploratory dungeon-style adventures.

Some groups may prefer to run explore-the-dungeon adventures independent of anything going on in the city. The Undercity Market is as close as the characters wish to come to civilization. In such a campaign, the player characters go below the city, perhaps with an explicit goal in mind, or perhaps just with the idea of exploring and finding treasure. They might be interested in a specific area, such as the catacombs below a temple or the underground lair of an aboleth. Or they might simply want to wander around and see what's down there.

Balacazars, page 102

Other groups integrate urban scenarios with dungeon adventures. A feud with one of the Balacazar crime bosses might lead the PCs to attack their office, only to discover that their actual lair lies beneath the office building in a multilevel underground complex filled with traps and guards. Raiding the subterranean temple of a chaos cult could lead the adventurers into further intrigue when covert cultists in the city exact revenge by framing them for a crime they did not commit. The only thing that will sway a dwarf smith the PCs negotiate with is a brooch stolen from their family by dark elves, so the characters must travel deep underground to retrieve it for them.

Chaos cults, page 75

Dungeon adventures can be part of any Ptolus Campaign, to a lesser or greater degree.

SMALL DUNGEONS

One way to run a Ptolus campaign using the realm beneath the city is to do so sparingly, in small doses. While investigating a Balacazar safe house in Midtown, the player characters find that the cellars below the house extend farther out into a complex of ten secret rooms used for storing loot and keeping prisoners. On another adventure, the PCs explore the crypts below a church in the Temple District, rooting out some unruly ghosts. The entire crypt area involves eight different tombs and the passages that connect them. In the course of a different scenario, the adventurers find that a vampire has holed up within an orphanage in the Guildsman District. When they go in, they discover that the vampire has used the dominated children to dig down into the Labyrinth below the orphanage so they can take a handful of those ancient chambers of Ghul's minions for their lair.

Over the course of a "small dungeons" campaign, the player characters learn to expect that many locations have extensive underground components. The players may never truly understand the vastness of the subterranean regions, but they will never grow weary in the middle of a long dungeon crawl either. This option is best for groups that are interested in the goings-on in Ptolus itself, desiring only the occasional foray below the streets as part of their urban adventures.

THE LARGEST DUNGEON

If the GM and players love big dungeon crawl adventures, Ptolus offers that as well. Counting everything—from the Banewarrens to the natural caverns, from Ghul's Labyrinth to Dwarvenhearth, and all the other subterranean areas below the city—there are countless miles of corridors, chambers, and passages to explore. The different types of subterranean locations mean that a dungeon-focused game has an almost limitless amount of variety. There's even the Undercity Market for your resupply needs. In such a campaign, the player characters might use the surface of Ptolus primarily as a place to heal, rest, and identify and sell their loot.

VERTICAL THINKING

The only way that so much can exist in such a small area is that the Dungeon below Ptolus delves down vertically as well as horizontally. One could set two Dungeon adventures practically on top of each other with no link between them, either conceptually or physically. Many Ptolus Dungeon areas do not spread out very far laterally, but involve many levels, one atop the next.

PITS OF INSANITY

The Pits of Insanity are a phenomenon found throughout all Dungeon areas beneath Ptolus (except, perhaps, for the magically sealed Banewarrens) and even in the interior of the Spire. The pits are pools of raw chaos spun off from the Entropy Sphere in the Spire near Goth Gulgamel. They first appeared thirteen hundred years ago, when Sokalahn the half-demon lich used his power to destroy one of the sphere's Gates of Delirium.

Adventurers in the Dungeon often find these chaos pools at the bottom of pits—over time, the pools slowly sink into the bedrock, eating their way through the rock by annihilating the nearby matter on a particle level. However, sometimes the pits are sunk into a wall, and other times they appear as spheres floating in midair. The roiling chaos looks like a thick, greyish goo that shines with every color imaginable—a horrible riot of hues. GMs should feel free to place the pits wherever they like during adventures in the Dungeon.

The Pits of Insanity gain their name from the mind-warping way in which the raw chaos randomly changes matter. People can tell they're near a Pit of Insanity due to the obvious changes the chaos makes to everything nearby. Rock walls become glass, metal, or unmelting ice. Furnishings become unrecognizable as their shape, color, and consistency changes. Clouds of inappropriate vapors or inexplicable puddles are everywhere. Local inhabitants become twisted mockeries of their former selves.

Proximity may bring about strange and horrible changes (see sections hereafter), while direct contact with a Pit of Insanity and its raw chaos proves even more dangerous.

CHANGES TO INANIMATE MATTER

While direct contact with the raw chaos in a Pit of Insanity is deadly, the pits' real infamy comes from the slower transformations they inflict on the things around them. Objects (or portions of objects, as appropriate) have a 10 percent chance of alteration after spending one hour within 100 feet of a pit. After that, there is a 5 percent chance of alteration after twenty-four hours spent within 100 feet, a 5 percent chance after one month, and a 5 percent chance after one year, with a 5 percent chance each year after that. (These percentage chances are not cumulative.) An object can be transformed more than once.

GMs may not want to roll for every single stone or loose copper piece within 100 feet of a pit. Instead, assume that after one hour, 10 percent of all objects are affected; after twenty-four hours, 5 percent more are affected,

and so on. You choose which nearby objects to affect. For example, in the thirteen hundred years since a particular pit's creation, the stone floor near it changed to rough glass, although portions of it have evaporated into vapor. The walls are covered in poisonous goo; various small portions of wall have turned to gold, paper, and leather. About a year ago, some adventurers died nearby, and 20 to 25 percent of their gear, as well as their corpses, has changed: a backpack has turned to lead, a sword has turned to hard stone and warped into a corkscrew shape, a boot is now silver and three times its normal size, a breastplate has grown misshapen metal tendrils, and one of the skulls has become wood. Much of the rest of the party has liquefied or vaporized and is long lost.

Generally, these alterations can be reversed or repaired only by using especially powerful magic able to bend reality, or spells specifically designed to change an object's shape.

When something is altered, half the time its material changes, and the other half of the time its shape or texture changes.

Banewarrens, page 389

Entropy Sphere, page 463

Sokalahn, page 405

Gates of Delirium, page 463

A Pit of Insanity could be found almost anywhere below Ptolus, but they occur with greater frequency the closer one gets to the Spire.

About eight thousand years ago, the Dread One Eslathagos Malkith created a magical vortex of chaos within the Spire called the Entropy Sphere. He configured magical portals called the Gates of Delirium to regulate its power so that he could utilize it freely.

In 651 IA, Yrkyth Vladaam created the Enigma Engine, a monstrosity of technology and magic, which he hoped would tap into the power of the Entropy Sphere by regulating the Gates of Delirium from a distance. He failed, but the Enigma Engine still exists somewhere in the caverns under the city.

Raw chaos: *An object that touches the raw chaos takes 10 (3d6) force damage. A creature that touches the raw chaos must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw and a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the Constitution save fails, the creature takes 22 (4d10) force damage. If the Wisdom save fails, they take 22 (4d10) psychic damage. Continued contact results in the object or creature taking this damage each round; a creature gets to make two saves every round to avoid the damage, but the save DCs increase by +1 for each consecutive round of contact. After three consecutive rounds, a creature must make a DC 20 Wisdom save or be permanently affected by* confusion *(this can be cured or dispelled normally).*

A character can avoid the influence of the Pit of Insanity's proximity with a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw; the DC increases by +1 for every previous save (whether successful or not) against a Pit of Insanity.

Cautious delvers can learn about the effects and warning signs of the Pits of Insanity in the Delver's Guild Library (page 299) before they head down. In fact, both there and at the City Library (page 295) one can find a recently written text by dwarven explorer Utgardt Bronzehelm titled "The Pits of Insanity: Chaos Shows Its True Nature." This work provides many details of the phenomenon, most of them accurate.

Material Changes

d100	Material
01–05	Wood
06–10	Iron
11–13	Gold
14–16	Silver
17–19	Brass
20–22	Copper
23–25	Lead
26–30	Leather
31–35	Cloth
36–40	Paper
41–50	Hard stone
51–55	Brittle stone
56–60	Glass
61–62	Ice (10% chance of being unmelting)
63–64	Ooze/paste
65	Wax
66–70	Water
71–73	Oil
74	Blood
75	Bone
76–78	Acid
79	Poisonous liquid
80–86	Inert vapor
87–90	Poisonous vapor
91	Lava
92–93	Food (bread, meat, soup, etc.)
94–00	Roll twice

Shape/Texture Changes

d100	Shape/Texture
01–15	Surface becomes smooth as glass
16–30	Surface becomes rough and jagged
31–35	Surface is spiky
36–45	Enlarges (×2d10 in size)
46–55	Shrinks (d100% of original size)
56–70	Warps
71–80	Grows appendage/extension/ addition (d100% of original size)
81–85	Liquifies
86–89	Shape changes entirely
90–00	Roll twice

CHANGES TO CREATURES

Living creatures have a chance to be affected after spending time within 100 feet of a Pit of Insanity, as follows:

- After one hour
- Another after twenty-four hours
- Another after one month
- One more for every full year

Time need not be consecutive, but GMs should keep track of totals for each character. Generally, these alterations can be reversed or repaired only by using especially powerful magic able to bend reality or call on divine intervention, or spells specifically designed to heal especially grievous physical harm in a creature.

d100	Alteration
01–15	Skin changes color
16–25	Hair changes color
26–30	Skin changes texture
31–35	One or two limbs are twisted and useless
36–40	One or two limbs are enlarged (Strength permanently increases by 2, but Dexterity permanently decreases by 2)
41–50	Enlarges (increase one size)
51–60	Shrinks (decrease one size)
61–65	Grows one or two additional, useless limbs
66–70	Grows one or two additional, usable limbs
71–73	Loses one or more eyes
74–76	Gains one or more eyes
77–80	Portion of creature turns to inanimate matter (roll on Material Changes table; this inflicts 10d6 necrotic damage)
81–85	Portion of creature liquifies, vaporizes, or alters into untenable shape (this inflicts 20d6 necrotic damage)
86–90	Creature transforms into an entirely different creature at random
91–00	Roll again twice

THE BANEWARRENS

In the deep recesses of time, the champion of light Danar Rotansin gathered all the evil he could find and stored it away, locking it up tight so it would never again worry the world. He placed these evil "banes" below his tower, Mosul Pearl. He hid them in deep catacombs behind powerful magical seals, not to mention crafty traps and powerful guardians, in case anyone should attempt to break in.

The story of how one of these evil banes, the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, corrupted Danar and transformed him into Eslathagos Malkith, the Dread One, is well known. When this transformation took place, his Banewarrens changed as well.

BUILDING THE WARRENS

The Banewarrens consists of a series of Outer Vaults that ring what is now the Spire—remember, these halls were built before the Spire existed. Within their perimeter lie the Inner Vaults. However, the very worst of the banes Danar placed in a chamber called Tremoc Korin, the Baneheart. The Baneheart lay directly beneath the tower of Mosul Pearl. In time, the earth itself rejected the evil within the Baneheart and thrust it away in a major geological upheaval that created the Spire with the fortress at its top.

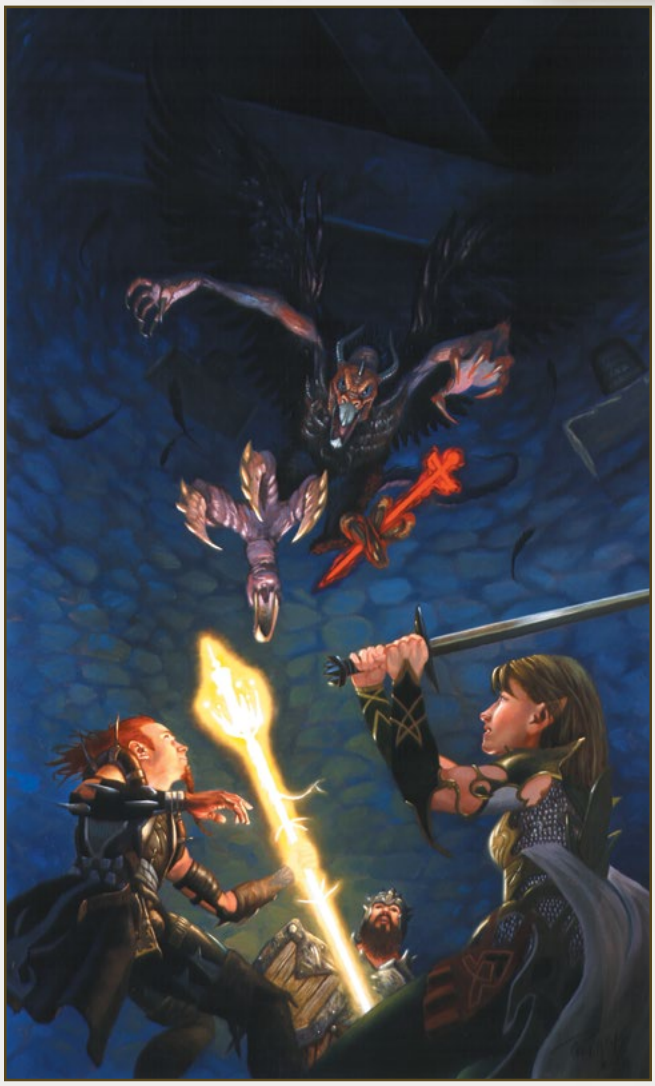
The good Danar used this opportunity to reconstruct Tremoc Korin and place the banes farther apart from each other. Today, the Baneheart occupies most of the interior of the Spire in a 3,000-foot shaft filled with balconies and adjoining individual vaults.

In an ingenious stroke of magical engineering, Danar built the Banewarrens in a compartmentalized fashion, so that the breach of a section would not compromise the rest of the facility. He sealed each section individually using magical machines called *warding generators* and separated by what are known as *sealed doors*. At the time, only he could open any of these doors. Today, an artifact known as the *Banewarrens key*, made from the Dread One's own hand, can open any of the sealed doors. The key lies in the vaults of House Vladaam, although the current members of that family do not recognize its significance.

AFTER THE FALL

After becoming the Dread One, the dark lord used his power to try to break free of the world (see Praemal as a Prison Plane, page 63). Despite all his might, he failed, although his attempts to reach other worlds did create an extradimensional space in the Spire called the Dread One's Path (see page 495). From this area he trolled other worlds to attract even more evil items. Among them was the *antithesis stone*, a bane that corrupted others, turning good into evil and light into darkness. He used it to transform many of his former friends and allies into malevolent forces.

Although creating the Banewarrens had been Danar's obsession, others aided his efforts. These included a silver dragon named Saggarintys, a planetar angel named Bastion, and a solar angel named Averon. Today, Saggarintys the Silver King lies imprisoned in the Banewarrens, while both Averon and Bastion were corrupted to darkness (now known as Dark Averon and the Malificite, respectively).



For more on the *antithesis stone*, Bastion (now called the Malificite), and Saggarintys, see *The Banewarrens* adventure (see page 11). Dark Averon is described on page 489 of this book.

EXPLORERS, BEWARE!

Exploring the Banewarrens is extremely dangerous and difficult. If it is ever unsealed, ambitious evil characters may seek to enter and loot the vaults for items they can use. Heroic characters might enter with the hopes of resealing the Banewarrens. At the top of the Baneheart lies a chamber containing a magic item known as the *sealing rod*, which would allow them to do just that.

The Banewarrens contain such infamous items and artifacts as the *darkstar pendant*, the *diabolis configurator*, the *Black Grail*, the *Phylactery of Forsaken Souls*, and the *Sword of Lies*. Moreover, it holds magical diseases such as *cartagra*, the affliction of souls, and *necrophagon*, which the Plagueborn chaos cult would love to get their hands on. Lastly, it harbors terrible creatures, such as the last of the winter harridans and the thought stalker.

All these threats and more are detailed in *The Banewarrens* adventure.

SPELLCASTING NEAR A PIT OF INSANITY

Casting spells within 100 feet of a Pit of Insanity is risky. To successfully cast a spell, the caster must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 15 + the level of the spell being cast. If this check fails, roll for a change to the spell effect. Some results have multiple entries—choose the first one that applies.

d100	Change to the Effect
01–20	Spell target(s) or those within the area also have to save against a Pit of Insanity alteration (see the Alteration table).
21–50	An area-affecting spell has a random area and shape within range. A targeted spell with a range greater than touch affects a random target(s) within range. A touch spell affects the caster (unless the caster was the intended target; see the next result). A spell that affects only the caster affects a random target within 30 feet, if any exists.
51–70	Damage-inflicting spells heal instead of harm. Effects become their opposites, if applicable (for example, a spell that gives advantage on Dexterity checks instead gives disadvantage on Dexterity checks). Effects are transformed, if possible (*flesh to stone* transforms things into material other than stone, etc.). Spell has no effect.
71–85	Spell energy goes wild, becoming a random spell of the same level and class spell list, keeping the same target if possible.
86–00	Spell energy surges uncontrollably, exploding in a 50-foot sphere centered on the caster and inflicting 42 (12d6) force damage (Dexterity save for half damage, using the caster's spell DC).

Squirming Horde, page 85

Alteration table, page 388

Banewarrens, page 389

Symbol of Ghul, page 83

Sorn-Ulth, page 599

In effect, Ghul's Labyrinth is the default dungeon beneath Ptolus. Its passages and chambers honeycomb the entire Dungeon area. When in doubt, it is safe to assume they were once a part of the Labyrinth.

GHUL'S LABYRINTH

The key to understanding the Dungeon and why it is so extensive and interconnected is Ghul's Labyrinth.

When Ghul, the Skull-King, built Goth Gulgamel, he forced his servants and slaves to toil for years carving out a network of chambers and passages that spread from the Spire to the bay. He did this for three reasons.

1. To find a place through which he could enter the Banewarrens (he never did).
2. To create a way to assault Dwarvenhearth (this goal he achieved, although Dwarvenhearth was sealed before his forces could gain entry).
3. Most importantly, to create space for his Squirming Horde. Within the network of tunnels, halls, and rooms he housed and supplied his army. He also built vast laboratories and breeding pits to create new monstrosities to add to their ranks.

Although Ghul is long dead and his armies destroyed or scattered, his Labyrinth remains. Some passages have collapsed, but most hold firm and offer an artificial honeycomb of open areas beneath the city. These catacombs connect to the natural caverns belowground in many places, as well as to Dwarvenhearth entrances and even the edges of the Banewarrens. Other underground construction created in more recent times—from crypts to cellars to the sewers—often connect to the Labyrinth.

This network of tunnels and rooms has a unique ecology all its own. While similar to the caverns around them, Labyrinth areas are inhabited mostly by creatures that can cope with doors: usually by opening them, but occasionally by destroying or otherwise bypassing them. Ghul's Labyrinth is also occupied by creatures born in those chambers (or their descendants)—monsters he cooked up in his magical laboratories and festering chemical pits. Lastly, crafty Sorn-Ulth placed traps in portions of Ghul's Labyrinth and left them behind for others to discover. Some current inhabitants have learned to utilize these traps, either relying on them for defense of their lairs or learning to deactivate and/or reset them as needed.

This section contains information you need to design your own portions of the Labyrinth, as well as sample locales you can use immediately.

THE DOORS

Visitors to Ghul's Labyrinth have noticed two very different and unusual types of doors, beyond the more normal wooden and iron-banded variety. Feel free to scatter them throughout areas of the Labyrinth that you develop on your own.

BLUESTEEL DOORS

Occasionally, delvers report coming upon strange "bluesteel" doors, so named because they are made of steel with a distinct bluish tint. These doors, found only in Ghul's Labyrinth, are sealed and particularly sturdy; one cannot open them by normal magical means, such as spells designed to unlock locked doors. They have no lock to pick. Instead, each door opens only to a specific word. Sometimes, those who search can find the keyword hidden in a nearby relief carved in the wall or scrawled upon a stone. Other times, they must discover it through separate investigation or divination. Typically, bluesteel doors protect important areas such as labs, storehouses, and the current or former private chambers of powerful commanders.

GLASS AND BRONZE DOORS

Rarer even than bluesteel, doors made of glass bound with bronze also appear throughout the Labyrinth. These doors are fragile, but woe to those who destroy one. Ancient sorcerers laced them with dark magic that curses anyone who destroys them. The effect of the curse differs each time, but sample results might include permanently rendering the victim blind, unconscious, speechless, afraid of everything, and so forth; treat all such effects as curses. Removing one of these curses requires the use of a spell designed to relieve such maladies, cast on the victim on sanctified ground (such as in a chapel, temple, or similar location).

These doors usually divide major sections of the Labyrinth, although such distinctions are now lost. Today, it's almost as common to find a broken glass and bronze door as an intact one.

THE LABS

Common throughout the Labyrinth, these laboratories contain strange arcana, pits of unknown admixtures, and fluctuating energy fields with all manner of unusual effects. And that's just for starters. Ghul and his servants experimented with all types of magic (although they focused on spells that transformed or created monsters for the Squirming Horde). They used some of these labs to craft magic items, a few of which may be stored here, still unused. In other labs they created and tested new spells, the details of which delvers can find here in handwritten notebooks.

Of course, many labs have been plundered or destroyed over the centuries. In some cases, this only makes things worse—magical effects have been loosed, chemicals spilled, or arcane machines damaged, with inadvertent and dangerous results to those who come too close.

STOREHOUSES

One odd quirk that makes the Labyrinth more hospitable than other parts of the Dungeon is that Ghul used magic to seal and preserve the vast storehouses he built to maintain his armies here. Thus, a wandering band of orcs or a pair of marauding chimeras might come upon a huge chamber full of still-fresh food. Not surprisingly, since resources are plentiful, such places become lairs and encourage breeding.

Not all storehouses hold food. Some contain gear such as rope, spikes, bags, clothing, backpacks, and so on. Others are armories, and a rare few hold magic items. These latter storehouses are always trapped and sealed, and a golem (or a similar permanent, low-maintenance guardian) monitors some of them.

In one lab, someone shattered a glass vat of magical chemicals, spilling the liquid over the stones of the floor and walls of the chamber. The arcane magic of the experiment turned each stone into a quasi-living thing and gave each a mouth that bites at any creature that draws near. Characters who pass through the chamber incur 2d6 + 10 bite attacks (attack bonus +10), which inflict 3 (1d6) piercing damage each.

Bluesteel door: *AC 19, 25 hp, DC 25 Strength check to break*

Glass and bronze door: *AC 10, 10 hp, DC 12 Strength check to break. Resisting the door's curse requires a DC 22 Wisdom save.*

LOCATIONS WITHIN THE LABYRINTH

The passages of Ghul's Labyrinth wind about for miles and occupy many layers beneath Ptolus. Within them, others have created significant locations of their own over the years, using the extant tunnels and rooms but fashioning additions as needed. Most of these "renovated" locales are now sealed off from the rest of the Labyrinth and accessible via their own entrances.

Areas of Ghul's Labyrinth beneath Oldtown incorporate some sections of an ancient city that once stood where Ptolus stands today.

Described below is a sampling of the many underground locations that utilize Ghul's Labyrinth. For a guide to the format of these locales and the icons used here, see District Neighborhoods/Locations.

District Neighborhoods/Locations, page 160

FORTRESS OF THE REDEEMED

below the Guildsman District; see map, page 385

The Fortress of the Redeemed is the headquarters of the Brotherhood of Redemption. While it has a direct entrance on the surface through a small converted house in the Guildsman District, the fortress itself lies underground in a series of chambers and passages created by Ghul's servants long ago.

Brotherhood of Redemption, page 106

Today, the Fortress of the Redeemed is sealed off from the rest of Ghul's Labyrinth by thick brick walls. Large holding cells of all sizes comprise most of the fortress. These hold a variety of intelligent creatures—trolls, ogres, nagas, doppelgangers, and so on—captured and brought to the Brothers for redemption. The rest of the fortress consists of a small living area for the dozen or so Brothers and their support personnel, and the chambers used for redeeming creatures via magical and psychological processes. This is a dangerous and time-intensive task. To the uninitiated, these rooms might be mistaken for torture chambers, although the process never involves physical pain.

Velator Timerian has arcanist stats, page 605

A room in Ghul's Labyrinth that connects to many other areas below Ptolus features a mural depicting Ghul leading his monstrous troops into battle. This mural radiates strong magic. It transports anyone who deliberately walks into it to the Chamber of Cold in Goth Gulgamel (page 456), 1,500 feet directly above; that matching chamber has a similar-looking mural. One can use the mural in that room to return here; the transport effect is two-way.

HALLS OF CORDARIS

below the South Market; see map, page 385

Many thousands of years ago, a human woman named Cordaris came upon a remarkable secret in the lands south of Ptolus, near the Pit of Mrathrach. She called her find "the Legacy" and built a tower to protect it. The nearby Ornu-Nom orc communities believed the Legacy was a demon or curse and assailed the tower again and again. Eventually, they succeeded in destroying the tower, but not before those who carried on Cordaris's work—members of a group called the Order of the Legacy—spirited the Legacy away.

Blessed children, page 583

Pit of Mrathrach, page 78

Ornu-Nom orcs, page 34

Around five hundred years ago, they came to Ptolus and tunneled down into a portion of Ghul's Labyrinth. Securing a large section below the South Market, they sealed off three levels and modified what was already there to suit their needs. They called this complex the Halls of Cordaris after the Legacy's discoverer.

While the first two levels of Cordaris are fairly standard Dungeon areas, in the third level the order built an enormous pit. Rising up out of the pit is a winged angel of female form. Standing more than 200 feet tall, this gargantuan statue is hollow and filled with chambers. Hidden inside it is the Legacy.

The leader of the Order of the Legacy is always called the Velator. The Velator is assisted by another called the Reliquarian. Today, however, the order has fallen on hard times. Membership has dropped to only about eight individuals. Velator Timerian (male human) is mentally ill, believing he can tap the power of the Legacy directly with sonic-based effects. (To this end, he is building a huge magical pipe organ, as well as collecting monstrous creatures that use sound as a weapon.) The order has abandoned much of the upper levels, although many traps and wards remain in place to keep out intruders.

Worse still, the Ornu-Nom orcs have finally tracked the order to Ptolus and, with the aid of tenuous allies with unknown agendas, a large band of Ornu-Nom has sneaked into the city to plan a raid on Cordaris.

PRISON OF THE BLESSED CHILDREN

below the Nobles' Quarter; see map, page 385

Beneath the Jeweled Cliffs lies a terrible place where Ghul trapped a multitude of unborn souls within bubblelike spheres of varying sizes in a long hall. He used some of these blessed children in terrible arcane experiments and drained others of their energy to power magic items he created. To free the blessed children, one must destroy the bubbles that hold them.

The complex surrounding the prison hall is still guarded by traps and monsters held in stasis until awakened by the presence of intruders. Those who reach the central hall find that each prison sphere has a separate means of destruction—and releases a different effect once destroyed. For example, a visitor might destroy one bubble by speaking a key phrase, but when it pops, it turns to poisonous mist. Another must be doused in holy water, but it inflicts a terrible curse upon anyone doing so. Still another can be burst by the touch of silver; doing so not only frees the blessed child but also summons a devil that attacks immediately.

RAVENSTROKE

below Rivergate; see map, page 385

The elf wizard Aelian Fardream used a section of the Labyrinth as a laboratory to work on his cloning experiments. His complex there, known as Ravenstroke, remains magically warded and trapped to prevent intrusion. It has become the base of operations of a genderless clone of Aelian—a creature calling itself the Shadow Eyes. The Shadow Eyes, so named because it was "born" deep underground where for years its eyes knew only shadow, is a powerful wizard like its sire, but it harbors none of his emotions or morality.

Today Ravenstroke is occupied primarily by malevolent skulks that serve the Shadow Eyes. The complex has four levels and is in general more vertical than horizontal; it features many pits, shafts, and ledges surrounding them.

SLAVE CITY

below Midtown (southeast); see map, page 385

Centuries ago, two human sisters named Karanosin and Karalada, both sorcerers, built themselves a subterranean fortress. They called themselves the Silver Sisters and, among other exploits, fought great battles against the followers and priests of Father Claw, who were active in the Ptolus area in those days. (Like so many before them, they also sought entrance to the Banewarrens and even Jabel Shammar.) Eventually, the sisters passed on, leaving their underground citadel empty.

A few years ago, a nymph (a beautiful fey creature that guards sacred places of nature) named Moondros escaped from her life of slavery under the yoke of a cruel human man. Wandering through unoccupied sections of Ghul's Labyrinth below the city, she found the fortress of the Silver Sisters and discovered that, among other things, the building and all within it were protected by powerful spells that made them difficult to locate via divination. Realizing the opportunity it afforded, Moondros used her spells and magical abilities to help other escaped slaves reach the fortress, which soon became known as the Slave City. Its location is well guarded, for both slavers and slave-owners would like to find the escapees. Today, Moondros allows others to help rescue slaves while she focuses on providing for the residents of the Slave City.

Ssethenus (male lizardfolk), a former slave himself, seeks to overthrow Moondros and take control of the Slave City. Eyvind (male human), a fugitive but not a former slave, plans to help Ssethenus and co-rule the place with him after they have magically influenced enough of the other slaves to foment a rebellion.

Not surprisingly, the former slaves of the Slave City belong to a number of different species: humans, elves, dwarves, lizardfolk, orcs, goblins, and more.

STORAMERE'S PALACE

below the Guildsman District; see map; page 385

Deep below the city lies a gateway to a small section of the Ethereal Sea. Those passing through it find themselves on a bridge to an Ethereal Island. Storamere, a black dragon of great power, built a palace of solidified acid walls upon the island before he died long ago. His ghost still haunts the area around the gate, and within his ethereal palace he takes on a form similar to the one he had in life.

The entrance to Storamere's Palace lies beneath the city, but the place itself is on the Ethereal Sea.

TEMPLE OF DESTOR

below Midtown; see map, page 385

The worship of Destor was made illegal in Ptolus about sixty years ago. At that time, devotees of this minor god fled underground and built a temple within Ghul's Labyrinth.

Destor is a god of misfortune. Those who revere him rely on his power to divert bad luck from themselves and onto others. After people living near Destorites had their homes burned down in freak accidents, choked on their food, and lost children under the hooves of rampaging horses, influential citizens managed to rid the town of his worshippers altogether.

With the temple so difficult to reach, Destor lost virtually all of his faithful in the decades following the ban. Today, no one uses the temple at all, although the god would like to see the place restored to the surface so his following may once again thrive.

Rumor has it that Destor himself lives in this temple, inside a tiny pyramidlike structure. Destor takes the form of a human man only 6 inches tall. For a god, his power is incredibly weak, but he *is* a god. Thus, he still has impressive might—if not impressive size. He spends almost all of his time asleep.

Aelian Fardream, page 329
Shadow Eyes, page 323
Skulks, page 596
Ethereal Sea, page 66

Banewarrens, page 389
Jabel Shammar, page 465

Whether the charges against the followers of Destor (page 72) were coincidences, exaggerations, or lies remains a point of contention to this day.

Throughout much of Ghul's Labyrinth, the Delver's Guild maintains waystations stocked with food and simple supplies accessible by members of Guildsman level and above (see page 108).

Moondros has dryad stats, but without the treebound limitation.

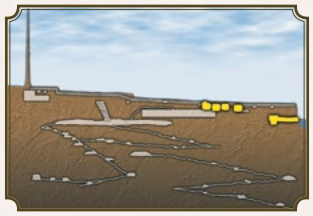
Ssethenus has thug stats.

Eyvind has arcanist stats (page 605) and usually has charm person *and* suggestion *prepared.*

Chapter 20:

THE UNDERCITY

Sometimes the terminology a Ptolus native uses can confuse a newcomer. For example, everyone knows there are ancient subterranean passages beneath the city, and many refer to something called the "Undercity," but these two concepts are not necessarily the same thing.



Locator Map

Mahdoth's Asylum, page 336

The grand masters of the Delver's Guild envision a future Ptolus that includes as much territory below as above the surface. They dream of one day clearing and securing large sections of the subterranean regions of the city to create an official Undercity district.

Fairbriar, page 189

Watchhouses, page 142

Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

To a native, "Undercity" means the parts of Ptolus that happen to lie underground. In other words, the Undercity consists of locations below the city—like the Prison and the Undercity Market—that are relatively safe and "settled" by surface folk. The name refers only to locations that are wholly underground; so, for example, the Longfingers Guild headquarters is a part of the Undercity, but Mahdoth's Asylum is not.

THE NATURE OF THE UNDERCITY

The Undercity is almost like its own district—and if the Delver's Guild gets its way, it will be one day. For now, that idea seems a bit far-fetched, but the flourishing Undercity Market proves that at least some folks are willing to adapt to a subterranean lifestyle.

In many ways, Ptolusites look on the areas beneath the city as a wilderness. The Undercity comprises those portions of the wilderness that people have claimed and settled.

As opposed to other areas beneath Ptolus, the Undercity seems relatively clean. The key word, however, is "relatively." Areas beneath the ground are still areas beneath the ground, and that means they are damp, grimy, cold, and dark. Most places down here are lit by torches in sconces or hanging lanterns. Torches magically treated to burn for years are common, too.

Staircases in certain public squares lead down to the Undercity, and some large buildings also have known access points. As time passes, more and more businesses and residents are moving to the Undercity to escape the high rents and crowded conditions of the surface. Many of these businesses cater to species such as dwarves and gnomes, who enjoy spending time underground. The gnomes of Fairbriar are clearing out a residential area called Deepbriar beneath their Midtown neighborhood. The city has not established a subterranean Watchhouse, though, so policing these areas is up to the residents.

UNDERCITY MARKET

The Delver's Guild established the Undercity Market only a few years ago. The master delvers saw it as a launching point for expeditions into the Dungeon. They found a likely underground chamber, cleared and cleaned the place, and sealed off unwanted passages. Of course, they ensured that some major pathways connecting to both the city sewers and Ghul's Labyrinth were available to those headed off to explore or reach other underground sites. The Undercity Market consists of the Great Hall—a vast

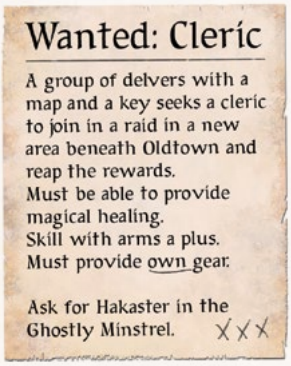
chamber used in a similar fashion to the open areas of the North Market—and a number of side chambers that serve as more permanent shops and similar locations.

The Undercity Market is interesting because the goods sold here are aimed almost exclusively at delvers and adventurers. Torches, rope, mining picks, weapons, alchemical items, and so on are the order of the day for shoppers.

The entrance to the Undercity Market is a wide staircase leading down from Delver's Square in Midtown. Originally, the entire area was the lair of Kagrisos, the Ghost-Lich, carved out of the earth by magic. The Great Hall was his personal chamber, which he had filled with undead guardians to protect himself and his various treasures. Kagrisos hated the living with every flicker of undead life force within him and set about to destroy the city above with a magical plague. He was stopped by the hero Abesh Runihan, a statue of whom stands guard over the entrance to the market in the square above.

Despite the lack of sunlight, Undercity Market shops stay open approximately the same hours as surface stores and marketplaces (from sunup to sundown). The following are some of the more permanent locations visitors will find in the Undercity Market.

For a guide to the format of these locale descriptions and the icons used here, see District Neighborhoods/Locations.



DELVER'S GUILD OFFICE

Undercity Market; see map, page 396 3,550 gp

The Delver's Guild's main office, where members interact with guild representatives, is located just off the surface entrance to the Undercity Market.

Gorti Jurgen (female human) is the guild's chief representative in the office. Gorti is a pleasant, attractive, middle-aged woman with short blond hair. She dresses smartly and always carries a pad of paper and an ink pen. Gorti greets every member and potential member, every situation and problem, with a smile and indefatigable optimism. She and her staff handle new memberships, member questions and concerns, and other administrative details. Gorti answers directly to the Guildmaster Delver.

In addition to the offices of Gorti and her fifteen staff members, this location also features the guild's Gathering Hall. Members may spend as much time in this open hall as they like, interacting with other members. Light refreshments are served all day long. The purpose of the hall is to allow delvers to connect with each other to work together on missions. While a few would-be delvers looking for a mission hang around here at any given time, the room is mostly used to post notices. These posted bills either announce the availability of a delver (or group of delvers) or advertise positions open for delvers to go on a specific mission (posted by a potential patron) or join a group preparing for one.

GREAT HALL VENDORS

Undercity Market see map, page 396 25,000 gp

Sometimes retiring delvers or the relatives of a slain adventurer set up a table in the Undercity Market's Great Hall to sell used equipment, maps, and so forth. Sometimes such sales even include minor magic items. Most sell for 75 percent of normal value—any less, and they could just sell them to a shop for half value; any more, and the buyer might as well purchase the gear new.

Likewise, merchants sometimes set up a temporary table or booth to sell a limited quantity of goods. This could be a vendor who comes to Ptolus only occasionally, or one who usually sells their wares elsewhere (such as the North Market).

The following section describes the regular vendors found in the Great Hall. Most set up nicely decorated tables and booths to attract customers. They have well-staked claims on their locations, so their customers always know where to find them. Most do not have signs or names for their businesses but simply use their own names.

The descriptions of these Undercity vendors omit prices for common adventuring items such as swords, torches, backpacks, and so on; GMs should use the standard prices for these items.

ARCANE SCRIBE

Neridoc Bittersong (male gnome) sits at a simple, scroll-covered table under a simple, hand-lettered sign that says "Arcane Scribe." He sells his magical wares all day and scribes more all night; see magic item pricing for his rates. At any given time, he has five arcane spell scrolls of low- to mid-power spells. He can craft a customer a custom arcane scroll of similar power, assuming the request is for a relatively common spell, taking the normal amount of time to do so.

In its effort to impose a salvage tax on treasure that delvers find on their adventures, the Imperial government has recently installed a tax assayer's table in the Undercity Market. Delvers are instructed to register all of their finds and pay a 10 percent tax. See Taxes in Chapter 28: Crime and the Law (page 511).

Delver's Square, page 188

Kagrisos, page 111

Abesh Runihan, page 111

District Neighborhoods/Locations, page 160

For more details about the Delver's Guild, including membership information, see page 108.

Gorti Jurgen has artisan stats (page 606), with sneak attack +1d6.

Neridoc Bittersong has mage stats.

Magic item pricing, page 635

On a weekly basis, Gorti sends teams of Associate Guildsmen (junior members) to restock the waystations that dot Ghul's Labyrinth (see page 390).

Low- to mid-power spells include spells of level 0 to 5.

Buying the gear of a retiring or dead adventurer can be a great way for a starting character to get equipment cheap. Many delvers refer to missions in the Dungeon as "raids."

This thin, bespectacled gnome with angular features talks extremely fast and at great length. He has few friends and attempts to engage customers or would-be customers in conversation just for some social contact. Unfortunately, he doesn't have anything to talk about other than arcane spells.

Derrence Springdart has commoner stats.

DERRENCE SPRINGDART

Derrence (male halfling) sells heatless magical torches that he claims will "burn for years, maybe forever" in a heavily decorated booth. His wife, Mellintha, is a sorcerer who stays at home and creates the torches. The two live very comfortably on the sale of these simple but useful items. Derrence is pleasant but quiet. He has brown hair and always wears a long green coat, no matter the season or weather.

Jinsa Hammerblight has artisan stats, page 606

Iernis Poetaen has commoner stats.

IERNIS POETAEN

Iernis Poetaen (female elf) sells mapping equipment. Her wares include knotted strings of various lengths (the knots indicating 1 foot or 6 inches, depending), vellum, parchment, quills, ink, chalk, sextants, slide rules, and other marking and measuring tools.

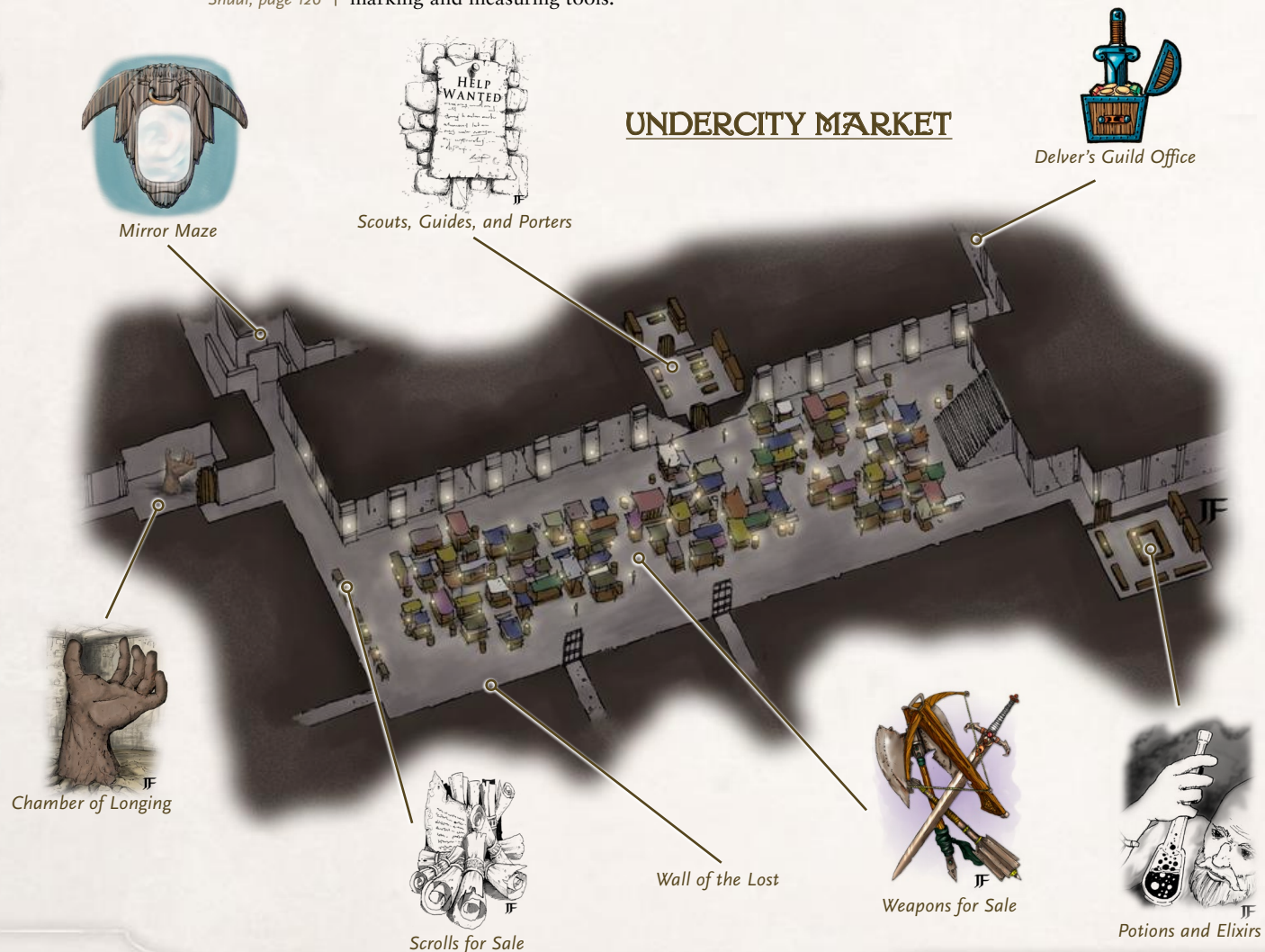
Iernis's Sample Items	Price
Knotted string	1 cp per foot
Sextant	75 gp
Slide rule	25 gp
Yardstick	3 sp
Vellum (one sheet)	1 gp
Parchment (one sheet)	1 sp
Quills	2 cp
Ink	10 gp
Chalk (one piece)	1 cp

Firearm pricing (dragon pistols, dragon rifles, and double pistols), page 522

Shuul, page 126

JINSA HAMMERBLIGHT

Jinsa (female dwarf) is a retired warrior who sells firearms. She also buys and repairs them. Much of her stock is old but well maintained—mostly dragon pistols and dragon rifles, with a few stingers and double pistols. Jinsa is a stout Stonelost dwarf with golden hair worn in braids. She has no ties to the Shuul. In fact, she has been dealing in firearms since before that organization's arrival in Ptolus.



NANN KRAKOSH

Nann (female human) makes and sells travel rations. She also has created a hearty vegetable bread called longbread; a single small loaf sustains a character for one day. It costs twice the normal amount for rations, but weighs only half a pound (about 1/4 the normal weight).

Nann Krakosh has commoner stats.

SIGN OF THE SHOVEL

Two vendors sit under a large canvas banner painted with the image of a shovel. They sell digging equipment of all types. Kurnor Steelaxe (male dwarf) is a Stonelost dwarf with a dirty countenance. His partner is called Nowen the Horse (human male), a man of Nallish heritage; he has a thick blond beard and head of hair, stands almost 7 feet tall, and weighs almost 400 pounds. Nowen doesn't say much.

Kurnor Steelaxe has commoner stats.

Nowen the Horse has thug stats.

SINGRIOSH NOTORISON

The fiendish heritage of Singriosh Notorison (female tiefling) is difficult to mistake. Her eyes are bright yellow and her skin is dark, almost blue. She does her best to resist the urges of her bloodline, and those who know her agree that she can be trusted—more or less.

Singriosh sells all sorts of daggers, knives, punching daggers, and so forth. She also has a number of decorative sheaths, including concealed sheaths useful to characters wanting to hide such weapons. These concealed sheaths cost 6 to 10 gp.

Singriosh Notorison has thug stats.

Using a concealed sheath gives the wearer advantage on checks to conceal the weapon on their person.

TAL INGERSOL

Tal (female human) is an artisan with a workshop in the Guildsman District. She and her three apprentices make all types of leather goods and sell them here in the Undercity Market. Tal is a short woman with red hair and green eyes. She also takes orders here at her booth for special items.

Tal Ingersol has artisan stats, page 606

TIRRES

Tirres (male centaur) is an aram weaponsmith with a workshop in the South Market. He has found, however, that he sells more here in the Undercity Market than he does out of his workshop. Tirres and his assistant, Nara Nayson (female human), bring all sorts of weaponry down into the Great Hall each day. Tirres also makes weapons to order. He makes an extended-range heavy crossbow with more range, for which he charges only 10 percent more than the normal price.

Tirres is a centaur with artisan stats, page 606

Nara Nayson has commoner stats.

Extended-range heavy crossbow, range 125/500

URSAON'S USED

Ursaon Brightfall (male half-elf) is a pawnbroker. He covers several tables with his wares, as well as three full chests underneath them. He sells a bizarre selection: some junk, some wondrous finds, and even a bit of magic now and again. He has a keen eye and never sells anything for less than full value. Stolen goods have a way of ending up in Ursaon's possession, but no one's ever been able to prove that he bought them knowing they were stolen (or that he stole them himself).

Ursaon Brightfall has spy stats.

VATUR

There are not many lizardfolk merchants in Ptolus. In fact, Vatur (male lizardfolk) may be the only one. Actually, he is not a merchant but a craftsperson who specializes in repairing damaged equipment of any sort. Vatur can fix weapons, leather goods (from boots to bags to armor), rope, and so on, as well as more complex things like climber's kits or delicate tools. He can repair only minor damage to armor, however.

Vatur speaks very poor Common. He slurs his words together and usually forgets to use definite articles like "the" and "a." He never uses adjectives.

Vatur has artisan stats, page 606

WALL OF THE LOST

The wives, husbands, partners, friends, and family members of missing delvers post notices here in the Great Hall containing descriptions of their loved ones and the general area of the Dungeon they were last known to be exploring. Some less scrupulous folk use the postings to try to figure out where they might find dead adventurers to loot, but this undertaking is as dangerous as it is immoral.

Magic item pricing, page 635

POTIONS AND ELIXIRS

Undercity Market ●●● see map, page 396 57,800 gp

The tables and shelves of this well-stocked, well-lit shop are covered with vials of all shapes and sizes. The proprietors offer all standard potions at market price, and they carry holy water and some herbal mixtures as well.

Herbal Mixture	Price	Notes
Disease resistance	10 gp	Offers +1 bonus on Fortitude saves vs. disease for 24 hours
Hair removal	3 sp	—
Hair restorative	5 gp	Must use daily
Healing ointment/ wound cleanser	10 gp	Reroll all Hit Dice spent to heal for the next day
Skin dyes	1 gp	Counteracts disadvantage on relevant disguise checks for one day

The fact that Quivor Nox of Potions and Elixirs is an old man but his elven wife of fifty years, Tyonaeth Glittersprite, is still quite young by elf standards has, sadly, made the man bitter. The couple has run Potions and Elixirs for many years and has three adult half-elf children. Their shop's surface location (run by their children) is in Midtown some distance from Delver's Square.

Tyonaeth Glittersprite is a sorcerer with arcanist stats (page 605). Quivor Nox has arcanist stats.

Potions and Elixirs is operated by Tyonaeth Glittersprite (female elf) and Quivor Nox (male human). Tyonaeth appears young and vital, but her husband Quivor is an old man with a white beard. She has a raven familiar, and he has a ferret.

Considering the value of their stock, the shop employs two guards. One, Larsh (male human), wears full plate and uses a huge flail. The other is a charmed troll named Dorg (male troll), who also wears plate armor and wields a greatsword sized for him.

Larsh has thug stats.

Dorg the Troll: *110 hp, with the following attack:* **Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.* Hit: *18 (4d6 + 4) slashing damage.*

SCOUTS, GUIDES, AND PORTERS

Undercity Market see map, page 396 720 gp

Vladimir and Taltos Urnst have artisan stats, page 606

Travinor Rem has assassin stats.

Travinor Rem (male human) runs this establishment, which offers hirelings trained to assist in exploration, particularly exploration of subterranean areas. Travinor stands over 6 feet tall, with broad shoulders, sparkling blue eyes, carefully styled black hair, and a clean-shaven square jaw.

Travinor is far more than he appears, however—this shopkeeper is a key figure in the criminal underworld. Just after the Delver's Guild created the Undercity Market, he saw opportunity and created the Dark Market (see hereafter): a sinister shadow of the normal market, where customers conduct illegal transactions in secret. Scouts, Guides, and Porters contains a secret door that provides the only entrance into the Dark Market.

Kagrisos, page 111

Ebon Hand temple, page 354

Travinor keeps four guards—three human and one half-orc—on hand at all times (in the guise of being "scouts" available for hire). To be sure, however, Travinor does indeed hire out real guides to adventurers to provide a believable cover for his operation.

Secret door: *DC 22 Perception check*

Travinor's guards have thug stats.

URNST, ALCHEMIST

Undercity Market 5,200 gp

Vladimir and Taltos Urnst (male humans) claim to be distant cousins of the Commissar, and both of these older men speak with thick Prustan accents. Each brother has a thick white beard and spectacles, but Vladimir is enormously fat and Taltos is very thin. Neither appears to have seen the sun in years. Together they make all kinds of alchemical mixtures and items, including a few unique to their shop, as listed in the table below.

The price for a fiend slave amulet is the creature's CR squared, multiplied by 500 gp.

Alchemical Item	Price	Notes
Alchemical compass	450 gp	Always points north
Eye cusps	50 gp	Advantage on saves against blinding light effects
Food-freshening powder	1 gp	Makes one day's worth of stale or spoiled food edible
Tracking powder	50 gp	Advantage on tracking checks for one day
Trollbane powder	10 gp	Smell-based Perception checks are impossible for ten minutes in a 100-square-foot area
Water purifying tablet	1 gp	Makes one day's worth of contaminated water drinkable

CHAMBER OF LONGING

near Undercity Market; see map, page 396 0 gp

Not far from the Undercity Market, this mysterious underground room has a giant stone statue of a claw near its center. The origin of the Chamber of Longing and even the meaning of its name are unknown, although it was probably created by Kagrisos the Ghost-Lich. Some claim it resembles a chamber beneath the Temple of the Fifty-Three Gods of Chance; others call it a match with a statue in the sanctuary of the Ebon Hand temple. Regardless, the chamber is a frequent meeting place and landmark for delvers.

BALACAZAR FIEND SLAVES

One commodity traded in the Dark Market is fiendish slaves bound to magical amulets that compel them to obey the owner. These amulets contain the essence of the fiend or some important fraction thereof. The Balacazar family forged its criminal empire by creating and selling these amulets and continues the practice. The fiends, forced to come into this world from Hell against their will, are immediately bound to the amulet, then secreted away in some secret chamber of the Balacazar estate until the amulet is sold. At that time, the new owners can call the fiends to them at will and give them whatever command they wish.

If an amulet's owner ever allows it to fall into the hands of the fiend bound to it, the fiend can steal back its rightful essence and become free to act as it wishes—which usually starts with killing the amulet's owner in some horrible, painful fashion. This also happens if the amulet is destroyed. If the fiend is slain, the amulet becomes worthless.

DARK MARKET

near Undercity Market see map, page 396 90,000 gp

The Dark Market is a secret area near the Undercity Market devoted to the sale of poisons, slaves, drugs, and illegal magic (mind-controlling, disintegrating, and so on); the hiring of banned services (mostly thieves and assassins, but also muscle); and other shady transactions. Customers who know the password enter through a secret door in a shop called Scouts, Guides, and Porters run by Travinor Rem.

Like the Undercity Market, the Dark Market is basically a large open room with people selling wares from tables. Unlike the main market, however, this place has few regular merchants. Vendors come and go as needed or as circumstances warrant. Further, since some people sell their own services, visitors here will see more people simply milling about than elsewhere in the Undercity Market.

Due to the Dark Market's very nature, no one trusts anyone here. Merchandise is always closely inspected, as are payments. At any given time, the market might offer the following:

- A man selling various poisons from a booth filled with strange pots and containers.
- A woman selling shivvel and shivvel pipes while sitting on a pillow on the floor.
- A male elf with a bundle of spell scrolls (all scribed with spells allowing various degrees of mental influence over a victim) leaning against the wall.
- A priestess of Maleskari with two zombie bodyguards selling scrolls scribed with spells able to detect and provide some protection from good creatures, spells able to animate the dead, spells that can desecrate hallowed ground, and worse.
- A Balacazar agent hawking fiend slaves (see sidebar on page 398).
- A tiefling selling tiny demons that have been formed into *unholy ammunition* for dragon pistols and rifles, and a demon pistol (made from a real hezrou demon) that creates and spits out its own demonic ammunition (essentially a *rapid-fire dragon pistol* that never runs out of *unholy ammunition*).
- The ever-present slave market (see hereafter).

SLAVE MARKET

A group of slavers calling themselves the Ennin have a secret base in an old warehouse on the Docks but maintain a slave market here. Malegoch Krill (male half-fiend) and Ritter Ratagan (male human) are the leaders of the Ennin. Malegoch is an obese, midnight-blue-skinned creature with

Maleskari, page 73

Kevris Killraven (page 119) lives in the Undercity below Midtown.

To gain entrance to the Dark Market, you must give Travinor 50 gp and the name of someone the proprietor knows who will vouch for you (if you yourself are unknown to him; he knows all the major crime figures in the city, and most of the minor ones). You also must provide a password, which changes regularly but is always passed along to the heads of the city's various criminal organizations.

Unholy ammunition, *page 645*
Dragon pistols and rifles, page 522
Rapid-fire dragon pistol, *page 642*

Ennin, page 165
Malegoch Krill is a sorcerer with cambion stats and the spellcasting ability of a mage.

Shivvel, page 519
Ritter Ratagan has veteran stats.

It is not at all unusual for vendors and clients alike to walk about the Dark Market in disguise or with their faces masked.

Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

Nastriss is a lizardfolk with veteran stats and AC 22; alignment lawful evil. Instead of a longsword, he has the following attack: **Scimitar.** Melee Weapon Attack: *+6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.* Hit: *7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands. Equipment:* +1 plate, +1 shield, +1 scimitar, potion of hill giant strength, *wyvern poison (5 doses), 9 gp.*

GM TIPS

If you want the headquarters' location to remain a mystery to your PCs, don't give players the Dungeon cross-section map (found in the packet).

Longfingers Guild, page 123

Clock Tower, page 296

Hayman Knapp, page 123

The mercenary guards prefer to use their ranged weapons, moving to keep out of melee range of opponents, but if cornered they use their swords.

"Bandit" mercenaries have thug or scout stats. Equipment: arrows or bolts (5) that are enchanted to inflict an additional 3 (1d6) fire damage if they hit, potion of healing.

The mercenaries hired to guard the guild headquarters know that if they were ever to reveal its location, they likely would find a dagger in their back or a dose of poison in a meal. This fear keeps them loyal.

Pit trap: *It is a DC 15 Dexterity save to avoid falling through the trapdoor into the 70-foot-deep pit. Anyone who falls in takes falling damage plus 11 (2d10) piercing damage from the spikes. It is a DC 22 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 18 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

Fairly sturdy wood door: *AC 15, 18 hp, DC 15 Strength check to break, DC 20 Perception check to find a secret door, DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to pick a locked door*

Guild thieves have access to all the gear and weapons stored here. They must, however, sign out anything they take. Anyone seen to be taking undue advantage of the equipment will be fined. Some of the experienced thieves try to convince the newer members that it's a test—you're supposed to steal as much gear as you can. This, of course, is a lie, but it frequently gets gullible new members in trouble.

Qualin's Books, page 209

a wide face and a massive necklace of human skulls; he only rarely comes here. Ritter is an overweight but hardy combatant who wears a black hood when he is in the Dark Market. Ritter often works as the auctioneer, selling slaves on a small wooden stage.

Whether Ritter is here or not, his assarai slave-soldier Nastriss (male lizardfolk) always is, watching over the "merchandise" and keeping others away. More than anyone else, Nastriss has become a constant presence in the Dark Market, almost as if he were the guardian of the place.

LONGFINGERS GUILD HEADQUARTERS

below Midtown; see map, page 403
145,000 gp (including 119,000 gp in the vaults)

This sprawling underground complex is the heart of the Longfingers Guild of thieves. It's where the members train, meet, and store their loot. Many of them live here as well.

The headquarters is full of traps, in part to keep out intruders—but only in part. The other reason is to help train the membership. Sometimes guild leaders add new traps or move old ones just to keep the thieves on their toes. Members are continually being tested; the Longfingers Guild motto "A relaxed thief is a dead thief" holds true even in their headquarters and homes. Thieves are instructed all the time to break into each others' quarters or try to get into the guild's vaults.

Aging Guildmaster Thief Hayman Knapp has paid dearly to have the headquarters permanently ensorcelled to keep out magical spying and other pesky divinations that might reveal its location or the location of a thief inside, lying low after a job. No divination spells can penetrate the complex's perimeter.

HEADQUARTERS LAYOUT

The areas described below correspond to those marked on the map on page 403. Unless otherwise described, all doors are made of sturdy wood reinforced with iron. Some are secret, others are locked, and a few are probably both (as noted). Plaster covers the walls, and the whole area stays very neat—cleaning is a duty of the neophyte members.

1. MAIN ENTRANCE

The entrance to the guild headquarters is in the sewers, near a sewer grate in front of a bookstore called Qualin's Books on Birch Street in Midtown. However, all members are instructed never to use that entrance into the sewers—they're supposed to approach their base using other entrances. The bookshop owner watches the Qualin's entrance; the guild pays him to use a magical alarm that alerts the guards in area 2 when someone enters the sewer via his grate.

Once in the sewers, one can find a secret door that leads to the actual Longfingers entrance. Beyond it lie some abandoned chambers and passages, once part of Ghul's Labyrinth. One passage leads to the guild's main entry chamber. This room has been made to look like a dead end, but successful searching might reveal three secret doors into the rest of the complex and the arrow slits in the walls here.

If the guild members know a foe is approaching, at least six of them go into the secret rooms adjoining the entry chamber and use the hidden arrow slits to attack intruders with surprise from cover.

2. GUARDS/PHONY LAIR

The rooms beyond the main entrance were created to look like the entirety of a bandit lair, in the hopes of fooling anyone who makes it this far. They are furnished crudely with some phony loot heaped in piles here and there, food for the "bandits," beds and personal gear in the east room, and even a fake map stashed under a bed suggesting that the Longfingers Guild headquarters is under the Clock Tower in Oldtown. A secret door in the south wall leads to the true headquarters.

Guards: The guild hired the four mercenaries (any gender humans) here to defend the main entrance. Their barracks is area 6. While here, they pose as bandits.

3. TRAP

In the hall leading out of the phony lair lies a pit trap. The thieves can set it so that any weight of more than 10 pounds triggers it, or so that only weights of more than 400 pounds trigger it (if guild members want to catch multiple foes in it).

4. GEAR STORAGE

The door to this room off the hall from the main entrance is locked. Inside is a supply of miscellaneous gear (chalk, mirrors, whistles, bags, backpacks, and so forth), plus the following equipment:

- 10 sets of thieves' tools
- 5 disguise kits
- 1 healer's kit
- 800 feet of silk rope
- 6 grappling hooks
- 120 crossbow bolts
- 200 sling bullets

- 20 suits of studded leather armor (10 each of size Medium and Small)
- 6 suits of masterwork studded leather armor (3 each of size Medium and Small)
- 10 shortswords (5 each of size Medium and Small)
- 12 light crossbows
- 20 slings
- 20 tindertwigs
- 4 flasks of alchemist's fire
- 3 flasks of antitoxin
- 2 sunrods

5. COMMON AREA

A long blue rug runs down the middle of an open area near the center of the complex, and miscellaneous tapestries of little worth or significance hang on the walls. A few chairs, divans, and end tables lightly furnish the large room. Typically up to three guild members are here, resting and perhaps reading.

6. BARRACKS

The Longfingers Guild employs a handful of human mercenaries to guard its headquarters. When on duty, they stand watch in areas 2, 12, and 22. When off duty, they usually remain in one of these two barracks rooms.

The rooms are furnished like typical billets, each with space for ten guards. The barracks are a disheveled mess, with clothes and gear everywhere, weapons lying about dangerously, and targets on the walls amid scrawled graffiti and lewd, crudely painted pictures.

7. GUILD MEMBER QUARTERS

The doors to these rooms near the northern and southern ends of the complex are locked, secured by the individual inhabitants.

The guild members who live in the headquarters each have their own rooms. Only about one in four of these is occupied at any given time. Usually the guild members are training or relaxing in other areas, practicing their trade, or conducting other business up in the city.

The members furnish their rooms according to their own taste—some are spare, some crammed full of stuff, some tidy, some a shambles. Most hold little in the way of valuables.

Most of the guild members are typical, but at any given time, at least two senior Longfingers guild members (any gender humans) are on hand in the headquarters. These rogues have authority over all other members and command some respect. Their quarters are the same as other members', however.

An elf sorcerer/rogue named Chelsean Featherhair is kept on retainer here and uses one of these quarters as well. Rather than treating her as magical firepower, the guild uses her more as an information gatherer, a spy, and an envoy to interact with other organizations.

8. NEOPHYTE QUARTERS

These small rooms at the far north end of the complex are used for members-in-training, called neophytes. The chambers are spartan and temporary. Neophytes typically only sleep there. Otherwise, they are either out in the city, cleaning the headquarters, hanging around the common area (area 5), training in area 12, or studying in area 21.

9. STORAGE

These rooms near the center and at the north end of the headquarters store mundane items the guild members need: foodstuffs, dry goods, blankets, extra furniture, and so forth.

10. THREE-STAGE TRAP

In the middle of the western entrance to this corridor on the north end of the complex lies a pit trap as shown on the map. Once someone triggers it, a 10-foot-square section of the ceiling begins to drop, taking a full round to do so. Although it's easy enough to avoid, the solid ceiling block seals off the corridor and the pit. Anyone in the pit is trapped, and anyone who attempts to save them is endangered. Once sealed, the pit fills with burnt othur fumes.

11. MEETING HALL

Designed for meetings, classes, demonstrations, and other gatherings, this room near the northeast corner of the complex is alternately filled with chairs, chairs and tables, or nothing. More often than not, no one is here.

12. TRAINING ROOM

The ceiling of this room in the northeast corner of the headquarters is 30 feet high, which allows the thieves to practice climbing. In fact, different areas of the north wall are covered in different substances—plaster, oil, and so forth—to create different challenges. The room also has mannequins with tiny bells hanging all over them for pocket-picking practice. Next to the south wall is a table covered in locks and sample mechanisms that members can practice disabling.

Chelsean Featherhair is a sorcerer with mage stats, Stealth +5, and spells such as assess creature *(page 626),* charm person, dispel magic, invisibility, *and* scrying; *alignment neutral evil. Equipment: shortsword, light crossbow, bolts (12),* wand of lightning bolts, *50 feet of silk rope, thieves' tools, 150 gp.*

Chelsean Featherhair dyes her long hair silver. She is extremely self-serving and does whatever she has to to achieve her goals. She does not hesitate to use her sexuality as a tool on her spying and information-gathering missions. Chelsean typically uses defensive spells and, if in danger, her first action is usually to cast an invisibility spell. She would much rather stay in her guild-provided quarters and use scrying to gather information than engage in activities that might put her in real danger.

Neophyte guild members have scout stats, or commoner or guard stats with Stealth +2.

A typical Longfingers guild member has spy stats.

Mercenaries have thug or scout stats.

Pit trap: *It is a DC 15 Dexterity save to avoid falling through the trapdoor into the 100-foot-deep pit. Anyone who falls in takes falling damage. It is a DC 22 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 18 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

Dropping ceiling: *Anyone under the slowly dropping ceiling must make a DC 5 Dexterity save or be crushed for 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage. It is a DC 20 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 16 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

Burnt othur fumes: *Gas fills the pit after the ceiling drops; creatures in the pit take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage each round for five rounds, or half that amount with a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw.*

A typical senior Longfingers guild member has assassin stats; alignment neutral.

Anyone thinking about joining the Longfingers Guild first must find the guild headquarters. This task involves either a lot of exploration below the city or a good deal of networking above. Obviously, most members of the guild are rogues, but not all of them are.

The Longfingers Guild enjoys a long association with House Rau (page 97) and traditionally receives many commissions from them. In exchange, the guild offers the house a monthly percentage of its take.

Winter wolves: *75 hp*

Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

Secret stone door: *AC 19, 20 hp, DC 22 Strength check to break, DC 24 Perception check to find, DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to unlock.*

Arrow slits: *DC 24 Perception check to find*

Secret vault door: *DC 26 Perception check to find the door, DC 27 Sleight of Hand check to open each of the three locks (which must be opened all at once for the door to open).*

House Nagel, page 97

Hayman Knapp, page 123

The iron treasure chest contains a dozen potions of greater healing, *a quiver with twenty +1* crossbow bolts, *another quiver with ten of the guild's crossbow bolts that inflict an additional 3 (1d6) fire damage, and an* apparatus of the crab *stolen from the Temple of Teun (page 367).*

Poisoned blade trap: *Any creature within 5 feet of the false door must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage; those damaged by the blade also take 35 (10d6) poison damage, or half that amount with a successful DC 20 Constitution save.*

Chelsean, page 401

Locked secret door: *AC 19, 20 hp, DC 22 Strength check to break, DC 24 Perception check to find the door or its lock, DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to unlock.*

Smashing floor trap: *Anyone on the floor plate must make a DC 20 Dexterity save or be crushed for 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage and covered in dark red powder. It is a DC 20 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 18 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

A hellwasp swarm has swarm of poisonous snakes stats, with a flying speed of 30 feet and resistance to fire; creatures killed by the swarm become infested with hellwasps and rise as zombies under the control of the swarm.

Poison needle trap: *A character manipulating the lock must make a DC 17 Dexterity save to avoid the hidden needle that deals 1 piercing damage and 22 (4d10) poison damage. In addition, the victim must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one hour.*

One or two typical guild members and two or three neophytes are here at any given time.

The room features two secret doors, which lead to a secret exit.

Guards: There are always three guards (as in area 2) stationed in the training room. However, they frequently spend their time in the adjoining secret chamber to the south, watching area 13.

13. SECRET EXIT

The passage leading east out of the complex connects with a section of Ghul's Labyrinth not entirely explored. However, the senior guild members know a path through it that emerges into the cellar of a private home in Midtown. The owners of the house don't even know about the exit.

Both secret doors are atypical of the doors otherwise found in the headquarters; they're made of stone and harder to find and unlock. The arrow slits aren't obvious either.

The area in front of the western secret door is trapped with a wide, hidden pit, which operates much like the spiked pit trap in area 3.

14. GUILDMASTER'S QUARTERS

The locked door to this large room near the center of the complex has a special combination lock, which, if known, bypasses the need to pick the lock.

This is Guildmaster Thief Hayman Knapp's chamber. Its opulent furnishings include a sunken bath behind a folding screen, a huge canopy bed, a private dining area with a silver service set, and multiple wardrobes and chests filled with clothing (including many noble's outfits and a number of disguises). The room contains at least 3,000 gp worth of goods. If Hayman is here, it means he is relaxing or sleeping. As it is unlikely that he would be caught unawares if the headquarters has been infiltrated, he is probably near the vaults (areas 17 to 20), ready to defend them with the senior guild members and Chelsean.

15. TRAP

At the corner of this passage lies a smashing floor trap, instigated by a 10-foot-square pressure plate. When more than 10 pounds is placed upon it, the plate suddenly thrusts up toward the ceiling with great force, then comes immediately back down again. As it lowers, the plate covers everyone within 10 feet in dark red powder. At the same time, the secret door 60 feet to the south opens, releasing insect-like fiends with huge stingers known as a hellwasp swarm. The wasps attack only those coated in powder, then return to their hive in the secret room beyond the door. (Neophyte guild members must feed the wasps, an extremely undesirable duty.)

16. GUARDIANS

Near the vaults (areas 17 to 20) Hayman Knapp keeps a pair of massive, snow-white wolves with pale blue eyes (winter wolves) as guardians and pets. They are intelligent, though, so he would never call them that to their faces. They attack anyone they do not recognize, unless the intruder is accompanied by a senior member.

The wolves are a mated pair, and the female wolf is about to have a litter. In this area they have straw mats to sleep on and a large bronze bowl where they are fed generously.

17. SECRET VAULT

The secret vault door into this small chamber is cunningly hidden and difficult to penetrate even if found.

Only Hayman and a few other high-ranking guild members know this room exists. They use it to hold stolen goods of great value. Currently, it contains the crest of House Nagel, an ancient nonmagical relic of great significance to the house. It's worth at least 50,000 gp—not that House Nagel has that kind of money.

18. ANOTHER SECRET VAULT

The secret door into this vault on the east side of the complex is similar to the one in area 17 but is double-locked rather than triple-locked.

This secret vault safely stores items of magic, both stolen and those owned by the guild. Currently, the vault contains an iron treasure chest.

19. OUTER VAULT

The "iron door" between areas 16 and 19 is not only trapped, it's false. If anyone attempts to open it or even touches it, a poisoned blade swings out of it.

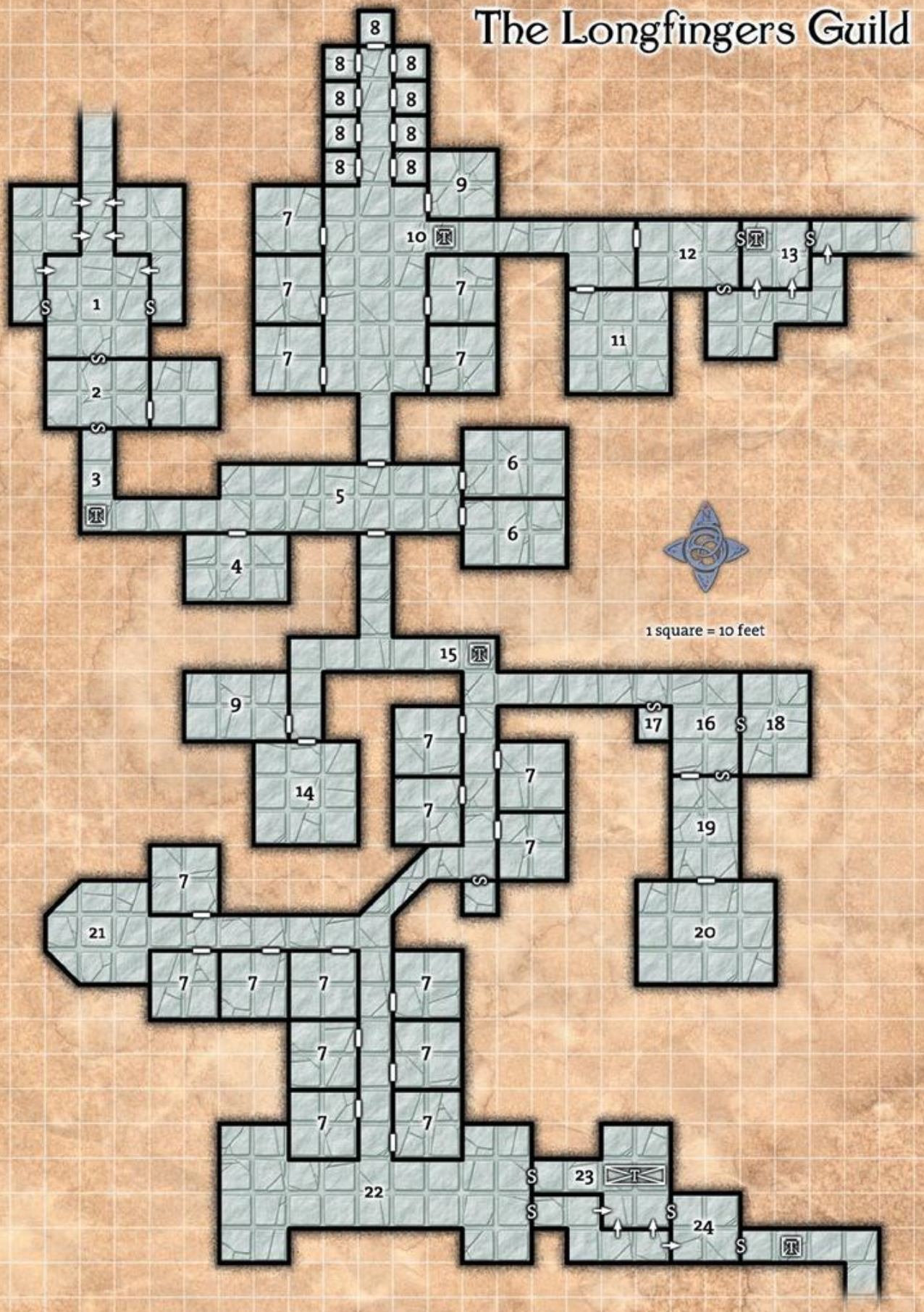
There is a locked secret door leading into area 19, with a deviously hidden lock.

The outer vault beyond contains large and valuable objects that the members have stolen—paintings, statues, and so forth. There is approximately 6,000 gp worth of large, heavy art objects here.

20. MAIN VAULT

This vault door exactly resembles the one in area 17. It's triple-locked and constructed so that an intruder must open all three locks at once, or they cannot be opened at all. Each lock is also trapped with a poison needle.

The Longfingers Guild



Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

The Longfingers Guild need not necessarily be foes to the player characters. As long as the PCs are not particularly lawful, they might find that members of the guild make very useful allies—some of the party members might even like to join. Although most people say that the glory days of the guild are behind them, the Longfingers are still an excellent source of information and a great help if the PCs need to infiltrate someplace in the city. The headquarters itself is a very good place to hide out when needed as well.

Chelsean, page 401

Sorn, page 129

Barrage of poisoned darts: *Each target in the hallway is attacked by 1d8 darts (+5 ranged attack). Creatures hit take 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage and 7 (2d6) poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 13 Constitution save. It is a DC 22 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 18 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

People say that Sobac Redwand (page 212) plans one day to infiltrate the Longfingers Guild headquarters—he knows the place fairly well, since he once was a member. According to the tale, he aims to steal the treasure from the guild's vault. The truth is, Sobac has considered the idea but does not feel that the loot is worth the trouble. He does not know about the existence of the two secret vaults, however. If he did, he might very well change his mind.

Crushing ceiling trap: *Anyone in the room takes 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage, or half that amount with a successful DC 20 Dexterity save. It is a DC 20 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 16 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

Portcullis: *AC 19, 10 hp, DC 18 Strength check to break or lift*

House Nagel, page 97

Temple of Teun, page 367

Various chests and coffers in the main vault hold the guild's treasury, which amounts to 1,000 pp, 20,000 gp, 50,000 sp, and 20,000 gp worth of gems and jewelry. That's the good news.

The bad news is that every fifth coin and every single piece of jewelry is enchanted. If the proper word (changed every month) is not spoken when the item is removed from the vault, the thief can be scried automatically by anyone who tries, simply by looking for "the thief of the Longfingers vault." Chelsean or any hired sorcerer (such as one from the Sorn) could help the guild members get their revenge for the theft, as well as get the guild's money back. The enchantment can be removed with magic designed to remove curses or break enchantments.

21. CLASSROOM

This room on the west side of the complex appears to be a traditional classroom furnished with chairs and desks. The walls hold chalkboards as well as hanging blueprints and maps. Here the thieves learn the basics of casing a location, breaking into various places, and, most importantly, how to plan a job.

22. TRAINING ROOM

Thieves use this large room at the south end of the headquarters to train in fighting techniques. They practice both melee and ranged attacks using targets of various sizes against the western wall. Usually one or two typical guild members (see area 7) and two or three neophyte members (see area 8) train here at any given time. Three guards (as in area 2) are always stationed in the training room. However, they frequently spend their time in the secret room to the southeast, watching area 23.

23. CRUSHING TRAP

Beyond the northern secret door in the training room is a short hall leading into an open chamber. Anyone who steps on the rectangular area in the center of the room triggers a pressure plate in the floor, part of the crushing ceiling trap. When activated, the trap closes and locks the secret door and drops a portcullis at the eastern end of the hall. Then the ceiling lowers, crushing anyone in the main room.

A secret locked door can potentially be found on the eastern wall.

24. ANOTHER SECRET EXIT

A passage out of the southeast corner of the Longfingers Guild headquarters leads into a section of Ghul's Labyrinth not entirely explored. However, all members other than the neophytes know a path through it that leads into the sewers. It is hidden from the outside by a secret door.

Two secret locked doors are here; one connects to the room with the crushing trap (area 23) and the other leads out of the complex.

Anyone who steps into the area marked on the map beyond the eastern secret door sets off the barrage of poisoned darts trap, which fires from holes in the wall to the east. (If trespassers are heading toward the headquarters, the darts come at them from behind.)

LONGFINGERS SCENARIOS

Using the Longfingers Guild headquarters can be a tricky proposition. In theory, a group of experienced player characters could handle a raid on the place (they would do well to have a skilled rogue with them), but encounters with the senior guild members would be dangerous and Hayman would be especially dangerous.

So missions into the headquarters should take place when Hayman and probably Chelsean are absent, or the missions should focus on subterfuge rather than force. Sneaking into and out of the thieves' guild is no easy task, but, if accomplished, it would be quite the badge of honor!

Of course, the guild might be an ally of the PCs rather than a foe. In that case, an adventure using the headquarters becomes very different (see Defend the Headquarters, hereafter).

FIND THE THIEVES' GUILD

A secretive patron commissions the player characters to find the Longfingers Guild headquarters for them. All they know is that it lies beneath the city somewhere. A likely plan would involve the PCs locating a guild member in the city (a trick in itself) and following the member down into the sewers. If the thief catches on, however, they are likely to lead PCs astray or straight into a trap.

RECOVER THE STOLEN GOODS

At the behest of the previous owner, the player characters must recover the stolen crest of House Nagel (see area 17), the Temple of Teun's stolen property (see area 18), or anything else you want to put in the guild's vaults. This is a standard dungeon-style raiding mission, albeit a difficult one.

DEFEND THE HEADQUARTERS

Guildmaster Thief Hayman Knapp hires the player characters to help defend the headquarters from the forces of Kevris Killraven, who wants to put the guild out of business and take the site for her own. The PCs must work alongside the thieves and plan a defense that utilizes the place's traps. Killraven's forces include rogues, warriors, Sorn sorcerers, possibly a few Shuul mercenaries, and some monstrous creatures, such as ogres, nagas, and perhaps even a dragon.

MIRROR MAZE

below Midtown; see map, page 396 0 gp

This strange place was created magically by the ghost-lich Kagrisos, who patterned it after a chamber within Jabel Shammar. Rediscovered when the Empire was putting in the local sewer system, the Mirror Maze became one of the very first Undercity landmarks.

This maze is made entirely of mirrored steel, and any section of it renews itself in two rounds if damaged. On the far side of the maze are three major passageways of Ghul's Labyrinth that lead to many sites—some explored, others not. Sometimes delvers use the ability to navigate through the maze as a sort of rite of passage.

THE PRISON

below the Guildsman District; see map, page 407 11,000 gp

Known as the Pit by common people (and especially criminals), the Prison lies far beneath the Guildsman District. One can reach the Prison only by a boat leaving the Docks and entering through a cave in the Cliffs of Lost Wishes overlooking the bay. Once through the entrance, one must still traverse guarded subterranean waterways to get to the Prison itself.

Warden Odsen Rom (male tiefling) is as corrupt and vile as anyone in Ptolus: sadistic, selfish, and intentionally cruel. Further, he maintains a long tradition of ransoming prisoners to their families or friends. With each prisoner's sentence comes a secret ransom on their head. No crime is so great that one cannot buy most convicts free, although some have no ransom for political reasons—they have too much attention on them to let them out. Often, a share of the ransom goes to someone responsible for the prisoner's incarceration, which is why people sometimes have their enemies imprisoned rather than assassinated.

Of course, many prisoners were never sentenced by the courts. Both the Commissar and the Prince of the Church have the unwritten authority to incarcerate prisoners without any trial at all. A large bribe to the warden can get

Hayman Knapp, page 123
Kevris Killraven, page 119

Shuul, page 126

From time to time, the Fallen of the Necropolis invite Prison Warden Odsen Rom to attend bloody combats in the Dark Reliquary arena (page 247).

Warden Odsen Rom is a tiefling with veteran stats.

Kagrisos, page 111
Jabel Shammar, page 465

The wizard Tasilicus Rhendron of the Pale Tower (page 305) believes there is far more to the Mirror Maze than it would appear. He thinks some significant magical aspect of the locale remains undiscovered.

Commissar, page 140
Prince of the Church, page 270

Entropy Sphere and Gates of Delirium, page 463

Pits of Insanity, page 387

AROUND THE PRISON

The path through the Cliffs of Lost Wishes leading to the Prison is filled with side passages, most of which have never been explored fully. They head off into areas of Ghul's Labyrinth, specifically an area used long ago by a creature named Sokalahn. This half-demon wizard sought a way into the Banewarrens—specifically to find an artifact called the *Black Grail*. It was Sokalahn who damaged the Gates of Delirium of the Entropy Sphere, which led to the formation of the Pits of Insanity. Eventually, Sokalahn chose to become a lich, understanding that his quest and the research it required would take more than a normal lifetime. Decades later, he gave up and retreated into his well-protected lair filled with magical traps and guardians.

Long ago, Ghul's servants got around this area of the Labyrinth using artificial underground waterways that emptied into the Bay of Ptolus. Those same waterways wind through the area of the Prison and Sokalahn's lair. The region teems with the sort of life that thrives on dampness and the absence of common species. This includes slimes and oozes, chokers (halfling-sized humanoids with rubbery skin and hands like starfish), fishlike humanoids called locathah, and others. Whole communities of goblins are said to dwell in this region, led by bugbears and armed with a few discovered remnants of ancient chaositech. Such inhabitants avoid the actual Prison area, except for the mindless or stupid among them, who end up clashing with the guards. In fact, the goblins attempt to physically seal off passages that lead to the Prison (Odsen's staff doesn't mind that at all).

The underground rivers flowing to the bay originate in natural caverns, some inhabited by dark elves. Hearing the tales of Sokalahn (erroneously presumed dead), a group of these dark elves lust after a way into the Banewarrens and soon plan to search the area for clues as to what methods of entry the ancient wizard tried. If the Prison staff catches word of dark elves in the area, they go on high alert. The warden might even try to recruit some delvers to come in and root them out.

Persistent explorers can find a way from the Prison up into the surface city through the cellars of the Darkbirth Madhouse in the Guildsman District, but this is known to absolutely no one alive today.

someone imprisoned here as well. Every once in a while, a noble house sends an enemy to "disappear" into the darkest recesses of the Prison, hopefully never to return.

No one knows that Warden Rom is a tiefling. He looks perfectly human, except that his eyes blink side to side instead of up and down. Unbeknownst to most, including the Church, he employs fiends in the torture halls deep in the Prison. Odsen reports directly to the Commissar, but Igor Urnst never comes down here, and the warden rarely goes to the surface.

Igor Urnst, page 140

The warden Rom is not above using fiends like this demon in his torture chambers.

Dark Reliquary, page 223
Goth Gulgamel, page 452

PRISON GUARDS

Prison guards come in two varieties. First are the low-duty guards (any gender humans). These are your standard swords-for-hire, not much different than a typical member of the City Watch. They guard the entrance from the sea from the local goblins, bugbears, and others, and patrol the paths around the actual Prison—either in boats on the underground waterways or along the walkways that crisscross the area (see the map on the opposite page).

Low-duty guards have guard stats.

These guards work in shifts, usually three days on and four days off. During time off, they return to the city by boat (a supply boat comes every day to the Prison). Technically, all the guards are employed by the city and under the command of the Commissar. However, they have their own badges that differ from those worn by the Watch or the Commissar's Men.

Prison-duty guards have thug stats.

The Prison-duty guards are those who work in the Prison itself. These are an extremely rough lot, including humans (any gender) as well as a great many orcs, half-orcs, and ogres—even a few trolls and a hill giant. The warden employs many of these guards directly, keeping their existence secret from his employer (although it's not certain the Commissar would care if he did know). One Prison-duty guard serves as the warden's bodyguard while he's at the Prison.

PRISON LAYOUT

A curtain wall not unlike a castle wall surrounds the waterway approach to the Prison. Guards patrol this wall and man the gate within it. Beyond the wall lies the Prison itself: a deep shaft that plunges into ever-greater darkness. A wooden ramp spirals down the interior of the shaft, connecting passages that radiate out from the central hub like the spokes of a wheel. These passages lead to cells, guard quarters, storerooms, and other facilities. A winch-controlled lift offers a faster way up and down the shaft; an ogre provides the power to move the wooden platform up and down.

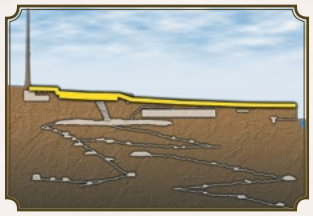
The bottom of the shaft is spoken of only in shaky whispers. Here, fiendish "interrogators" torment prisoners, usually for no other reason than their own (or Warden Rom's) delight. This nightmarish place is the equal of something one might expect to find beneath the Dark Reliquary or within Goth Gulgamel.

The Prison and Surroundings
Winch with Platform
Ogre
Guards
Gate
10' Drop
To Cells
Guards
1' Drop
Guards
1' Drop
10' Drop
Sokalahn's Ancient Hall
10' Drop
20' Drop
Locathahs
10' Drop
1' Drop
Gray Ooze
Goblins
Locathahs
Goblins
Bugbears
Goblin Barricades
Goblins
Barracks
Guards
Bugbears
1' Drop
Guard House
Cliffs of Lost Wishes
1 square = 10 feet

Chapter 21:

THE SEWERS

Like most large imperial cities, Ptolus has an extensive and well-maintained sewer system, thanks to the advancements of the technological Prust and their Grailwarden dwarf allies. Most homes in Ptolus have running water and indoor plumbing, including privies that pump in water via hand pumps and drain it away into the city sewers.



Locator Map

Ratling, page 592

King's River and King's River Gorge, page 151

Around 450 IA, sewer workers were among the first to spread stories of the vast underground structures beneath Ptolus.

Sometimes ratmen string nets across the sewers to catch lost items or potentially useful discarded trash.

The sewers are well designed and sturdily built, with carefully cut stones and arched supports to keep the tunnels from collapsing. The Empire, particularly at its height, was very proficient at such engineering and building.

THE NATURE OF THE SEWERS

The largest sewer tunnels measure about 16 feet wide. A channel 10 feet wide flows through the middle of the tunnel, with a 3-foot ledge on either side that stays dry—in theory (in reality, even these walkways are under a foot or two of water after a heavy rain). The channel is 10 feet deep. The ceilings in these main tunnels are about 8 feet high, except where a sewer grate offers access to the surface, at which point the ceiling is about 15 feet high. At some intersections, stone bridges about 2 feet wide arch a couple of feet above the level of walkways, enabling one to get from one side to the other while still allowing the water and sewage to flow beneath.

A middle-sized sewer tunnel measures about 10 feet wide. Here the central channel is 6 feet wide and 6 feet deep, with only 2-foot-wide walkways. The current of the flowing water is sometimes stronger in these tunnels than in larger ones.

The smallest sewer tunnels are merely drainage conduits about 2.5 feet in diameter. They typically hold only a trickle of water, except during a heavy rain. These are large enough for a human to crawl through very uncomfortably with some risk of getting stuck. A smaller creature (a halfling, a giant rat, or a ratling) risks no chance of getting stuck.

The sewers come out on the Cliffs of Lost Wishes by the Bay of Ptolus, along the steep ravine walls flanking the King's River, and in the King's River Gorge. In these exits, a main sewer tunnel protrudes about 3 feet out of the rock wall and ends in an iron grate, through which the sewage flows.

SEWAGE

More than anything, the sewers in Ptolus are used to drain rainwater from the streets, alleys, and buildings. The folk of Ptolus dump old cooking water, wash water, and garbage of all sorts into the sewers, including rotten food, spoiled ale, waste from manufactories, dyes from textile mills, alchemical waste, and dead animals. And, of course, the waste from privies and chamber pots all over the city goes into the sewers as well.

The fact that the sewers dump this unholy admixture into the King's River makes it

What's Down There? Map: Page 385

abundantly clear why no one uses the river as a source of drinking water.

LAYOUT OF THE SEWERS

Every section of town has a sewer system beneath it—even the Necropolis. Almost three centuries ago, a forward-thinking Commissar planned and built a gridlike sewer system for Ptolus that extended from the boundaries of the city (now Oldtown) all the way to the bay. This was a time when the Empire was heavy with gold and a willing workforce, and the Commissar dreamed that the city would one day fill the entire area.

And he was right.

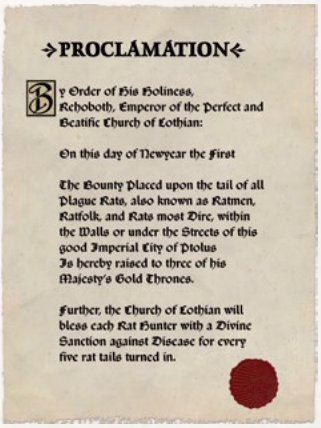
However, Oldtown had a very rough sewer system of its own even before that time. When the new system was created, it used some of the older tunnels and abandoned others. Thus, Oldtown has a secondary set of tunnels beneath it, all smaller and far more poorly constructed than the more modern ones. Most of them go nowhere; they stand full of stagnant water and centuries of compost. Unused tunnels were sealed originally, but the workers didn't manage to find all the entrances and drains. To this day, some drains still lead from Oldtown buildings down into the old sewer rather than the new. And in places, the existence of the new tunnels has caused the older ones to collapse in on them, creating a mess of rubble, water, and poorly draining muck.

The sewers beneath the Nobles' Quarter and Rivergate all run into the King's River Gorge in two different systems independent from that of the rest of the city. From Oldtown, the drainage runs both into the gorge and down through almost vertical channels into the main Ptolus sewer lines.

The sewers of every other district form one interconnected system in a basic grid pattern. The main tunnels usually run about 400 feet apart, with the medium tunnels more or less equidistant between them and the drainage conduits going where they need to go in a more haphazard network. Of course, there are always exceptions.

UNDERGROUND CONNECTIONS

Anyone with even a passing knowledge of Ptolus history would expect that, when the sewers were built, the workers likely came upon all sorts of other subterranean passages—from Ghul's Labyrinth to Dwarvenhearth passages to natural caverns, old crypts, and more. Such an assumption would be correct. During the creation of the sewers, such areas were normally sealed off and the sewer tunnels detoured around them. The Church did what it could to suppress rumors about the extensiveness of



→PROCLAMATION←

By Order of His Holiness, Rehoboth, Emperor of the Perfect and Beatific Church of Lothian:

On this day of Newyear the First

The Bounty Placed upon the tail of all Plague Rats, also known as Ratmen, Ratfolk, and Rats most Dire, within the Walls or under the Streets of this good Imperial City of Ptolus Is hereby raised to three of his Majesty's Gold Thrones.

Further, the Church of Lothian will bless each Rat Hunter with a Divine Sanction against Disease for every five rat tails turned in.

The Church of Lothian has recently issued a proclamation offering a bounty of 3 gp for the tail of any ratman or giant rat brought in. See the full text among the sheets in the packet.

The government doesn't like delvers going down into the sewers and refuses to disclose any official maps of the system. The Delver's Guild (page 108) has most of the sewer system fairly well mapped, however. (Of course, these maps do not necessarily show secret areas that are connected to the sewers but not part of them.)

Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390
Dwarvenhearth, page 429

Delvers rarely attempt to enter the sewers beneath the Warrens. Never built to accommodate so dense a population, the sewers under this district have long since become plugged and frequently overflow.

Ratman, page 591

GM TIPS

The result on the random encounter table indicating "adventurers" could be anything the GM wishes, from evil delvers that will attack the PCs to good-aligned characters hunting ratmen for bounties or even well-known adventurers or friends the party has met above in the city. Since the sewers are such a common starting point for getting to so many different underground locations, the possibilities are nearly endless.

System Monitor, page 411

Dweomer Street, page 309

It's a DC 21 Strength check to pry up a sewer grate.

By and large, ratmen don't have names. When they have to refer to each other, they simply describe the role they play in the nest, such as "leader" or "hunter." They also answer to situational descriptors, such as "you" and "his brother."

the existing underground systems to discourage people from investigating dangerous areas.

After the sewers were finished, various creatures and people tunneled through sewer channel walls to get to these other areas or to create new subterranean features. Some criminals, for example, built hidden lairs in underground chambers accessed via secret doors off the sewer tunnels. Ratmen living in the sewers broke into adjacent areas to build their nests. Others just used the sewers as a means to get into otherwise inaccessible areas. In the last few years, delvers have begun smashing through sewer tunnel walls to find a way into Dwarvenhearth or to explore unknown areas of Ghul's Labyrinth.

USING THE SEWERS

In a way, the sewers of Ptolus serve the same role under the city as the streets do on the surface: they are a (somewhat) regular and (fairly) easily traversable means of getting to a desired location. Many Dungeon adventures below Ptolus start with a trip down through the sewers.

When in doubt about where to place an underground location, put the entrance off a sewer tunnel. But don't forget that the sewers are home to all sorts of creatures and strangeness. The sewers beneath Dweomer Street in Oldtown, for example, are said to be filled with weird magical effects and mutated creatures, due to the runoff from magical experiments and alchemical workings.

Sewer entrances in the streets and alleys of Ptolus are covered with iron grates. Prying up one of these sewer grates requires some effort. (The same applies to removing the grates from a sewer tunnel exit point in the cliffs, gorge, or riverside.) Damaging the grates is a crime, so if the Watch catches anyone prying them up, they will arrest the would-be delvers.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

If desired, check for an encounter once per trip through the sewer system, or once per day, whichever is more often. GMs may wish to create special once-in-a-campaign encounters with surprising but appropriate creatures such as ghouls, aboleths (powerful psychic eel-like creatures), a sea hag, or something else. Various aquatic or semi-aquatic creatures could adapt to sewer life, including alligators, a chuul (lobster-like, semi-sentient creations of the aboleths), or a water naga.

d100	Encounter
01–65	No encounter
66–69	1d4 + 1 System Monitor workers
70	1d4 + 1 System Monitor rat hunters
71–72	1d2 rat swarms
73–74	1d6 giant rats
75–76	Ratmen (1d4 ratlings)
77	Ratmen (1d8 ratlings + 1d2 ratlords)
78	Ratmen (1d4 ratlords)
79	Ratmen (1d4 ratlords + 1d2 ratbrutes)
80	Ratmen (1d3 ratbrutes)
81	1d8 bandits/criminals (rogues or warriors, 1d4 level)
82	1d3 wererats
83	Adventurers

WATER FLOW

During dry periods, the water in the sewers moves very slowly. It is almost entirely wastewater and raw sewage. The water in the central channel of a large or medium tunnel is 2 to 4 feet deep, and the drainage conduits are merely damp, punctuated by piles of garbage and organic waste. The sewers stink horribly during these dry times, both in the tunnels and on the surface near the grates.

During or after a rain, the sewers flow heavily with runoff and rainwater. Water rises to the top of the central channels, and the drainage conduits flow with 6 to 12 inches of water. After a particularly heavy rain (or after many days of rain), the sewer channels overflow, filling the entire tunnel with water—sometimes up to 3 feet over the top of the walkways. Conduits remain more than half full of rapidly rushing water.

Clogs in the sewers are common, and one of the duties of the System Monitors is finding and clearing such blockages to prevent wastewater from flowing back into the city, a dire occurrence which unfortunately happens from time to time.

Characters wading through running water in a sewer must make DC 10 Acrobatics checks each round or slip and fall in, at which point they must make Athletics checks to swim. Characters crawling through a drainage conduit with rushing water must make a DC 12 Athletics check each round or be swept along with the water. Once a character is so swept, a DC 15 Dexterity save is required to stop their movement.

84–85	Green slime
86–87	1d8 goblins
88	1d2 chokers (use goblin stats, with a starfish-hand grapple attack that works like the Web Garrote ability of an ettercap)
89	1d2 giant fire beetles
90–91	Grey ooze
92–93	Ochre jelly
94	Gibbering mouther
95–97	Otyugh
98	Gelatinous cube
99	Black pudding
00	Any random subterranean monster that arrives from a connection to a natural cavern or other area

SYSTEM MONITORS

A special group working for the city government to maintain the sewers has been given the somewhat lofty title of "System Monitors," referring to the fact that they patrol and watch over the sewer system. First and foremost, the System Monitors watch for and clear clogged tunnels and repair collapsed or damaged areas. They are typically people armed with an array of tools and poles, as well as weapons to defend themselves.

The "rat problem," as they call it, has become such an issue that a subgroup within the System Monitors has formed. They call themselves rat hunters.

RAT HUNTERS

Rat hunters (any gender humans) are usually former mercenaries, hunters, or City Watch members who have chosen to work for the System Monitors. They supplement their income with bounties paid on ratmen (and giant rat) tails. Currently, the bounty is set at 3 gp per tail.

A RATMAN NEST

in the sewers (GM's discretion)

One of the more common encounter areas within the sewers is a ratman nest. The nest described below is a typical ratman lair, suitable for GMs to place wherever needed in the sewers. There may be literally dozens of such nests below Ptolus. Most of the creatures encountered in a nest are, unsurprisingly, some variety of ratmen, which have full stats in Chapter 34: Monsters.

NEST LAYOUT

The areas below correspond to the map on page 413. Unless otherwise noted, the ceilings here are about 8 feet high. Most of the place is filled with garbage and waste. In areas that lie under a sewer tunnel, as shown on the map, a number of leaks send streams and rivulets pouring down from above. Most of the water gathers in the cesspool (area 7).

1. LOOKOUTS

Four ratlings keep a lookout at this sewer tunnel intersection to watch for approaching enemies or intruders. They hide in the shadows and even in the water. The lookouts all can whistle a special signal to alert the sentry at the entrance (area 2), who then scurries back into the nest. These rats avoid direct confrontation, but they might try to follow intruders into the nest to attack from the rear while their foes are already preoccupied.

2. RUBBLE-FILLED ENTRANCE

It appears that a portion of the sewer wall has collapsed. Behind it, a pile of rubble slopes down about 10 feet over a distance of 30 feet. Characters descending or ascending this rubble slope might slip and fall prone.

A single ratling waits here to listen for warnings from the lookouts in area 1 and to look for intruders itself. In the event of danger, it runs to area 3 to get help and alert the nest if it can.

3. GUARDS

Six ratlings positioned in the area adjacent to the rubble-strewn entrance (area 2) serve as guards at all times. They attack any intruders that come their way, screeching for help as soon as they do. If four of them die, the other two will run to area 4. One of the guards has a festering bomb. All of them use a weak poison on their blades.

4. RATS!

Refuse and waste fill this room southeast of the main entrance, impeding movement and other physical activities in the chamber.

Six giant rats dig around in the garbage here. They obey the commands of any ratman and come if called by the guards in area 3.

Treasure: Unbeknownst to the rats or ratmen, amid the trash here is a silver medallion with small diamonds set into it, worth 340 gp.

5. TRIPWIRE TRAP

The ratmen have rigged a crude tripwire trap in the passage beyond the entrance. It is set off by a tripwire hidden amid the trash (see the area marked on the map). Triggering it causes two poisoned arrows to fire down the corridor from the south wall of this chamber.

In the sewers, adventurers might chance upon small temples of the Plagueborn chaos cult. Such a temple may include a dozen members of varying species and stats at any given time. For more details on the cult itself, see Chaos Cults (page 75).

All rats and giant rats carry vile diseases they spread with their bites.

In addition to such foes as rat hunters and adventurers, the ratmen fear the approach of a marauding otyugh, a goblin raiding party, and various dangerous slimes or oozes.

It is a DC 12 Acrobatics check to climb the slope without falling down.

Some judges sentence criminals to a labor term spent clearing clogged sewers in lieu of imprisonment. For other punishments, see Chapter 28: Crime and the Law.

A typical rat hunter has scout stats; alignment neutral good. Equipment: rat hide armor (page 527), dragon rifle (page 522), ammunition (20 rounds), potion of invisibility, tanglefoot bag (2), 13 gp.

Festering bomb, page 593

A creature that fails a DC 11 Constitution save against the poison takes 3 (1d6) poison damage and is poisoned for one hour.

A character must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check each round they're in the room or their physical actions gain disadvantage for one round. Characters who fail the check on a round they move instead fall prone.

Giant rat: *7 hp*

It's a DC 20 Perception check to find the medallion by searching the trash.

If the player characters come to this ratman nest and clear it out, killing or driving off every single creature that lives here, it's likely that, within a month, the place once again will be swarming with the vermin.

Tripwire trap: *The arrows target two random creatures in the path of the trap (+5 ranged attack). Creatures hit take 3 (1d6) piercing damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 12 Constitution save. It is a DC 15 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 10 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

Secret exit: *DC 18 Perception check to notice it from the sewer tunnel side, where it's not obvious.*

Steps at the end of the western passage lead up to a secret exit back into the sewer tunnels. The door is obvious from the nest side, but not from the other side.

6. VERY LARGE GIANT RAT

The ratmen of this nest have been breeding a very large giant rat, which they believe to be semi-divine. Its lair lies just south of the room with the tripwire.

This massive giant rat is now the size of a pony. Its three ratling handlers stay with it at all times and fight to the death defending the creature.

The very large giant rat has panther stats, with the Pack Tactics ability of a giant rat. Its bite carries disease like other giant rats in this place.

It's a DC 15 Dexterity save to avoid falling into the 20-foot-deep pit.

Medium or taller creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls and Dexterity saves because of the low ceiling.

A creature other than a ratman must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check each round they're in the room or their physical actions gain disadvantage for one round. Characters who fail the check on a round they move instead fall prone.

Galchutt, page 62

The ratman priestess of Abhoth has ratlord stats (page 592), with 27 hp. Equipment: potions of healing *(4),* spell scroll of animate dead, *pearl earring worth 75 gp, 13 gp. She has following cleric spells prepared (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks):*

Cantrips (at will): guidance, resistance, spare the dying

1st level (3 slots): bless, cure wounds, shield of faith

Creatures who make use of the filthy water have resistance against fire.

Dragon pistol, page 522

It's a DC 18 Perception check to find the scroll cases.

The spell scroll has the spirit guardians *spell.*

Temple of the Rat God, page 363

7. THE CESSPOOL

The cesspool is one of the central areas in the ratmen's nest.

Low Ceiling: This, the largest chamber in the nest, has a low ceiling (4 feet high), making it difficult for human-sized and larger creatures to act normally. Because the ratlords have spent a great deal of time here, they have adapted to the low ceiling and run on all fours; they suffer no height penalties.

Wet Trash: Sopping wet refuse and waste fill this chamber, making it slippery and hard for non-ratmen to maneuver here without falling.

Pool: Rivulets of sewer water run into the middle of the room, and a few leaks in the ceiling drip down into the befouled water as well. This has created a long, narrow, and smelly cesspool that overflows a 3-foot depression in the chamber's floor. The ability to dive or duck into the pool, the overflow water, or the wet trash gives the ratmen here some protection against attacks using fire.

Lounging around the cesspool are ten ratlings and two ratlords. If attacked, the ratlords use their dragon pistols, keeping to the back. The ratlings charge forward, along with two rat swarms that obey the ratmen's commands.

If the characters slay more than half of the ratmen, the survivors flee to areas 8 or 11. The rat swarms fight to the death.

8. THE INNER NEST

Through passages leading east from the cesspool lies a refuse-filled chamber where the ratmen keep their young.

The refuse and waste fill this room to a height of almost 3 feet, imposing the same penalties for low ceilings and wet refuse on creatures (other than rats or ratmen) as in area 7.

Amid the heaps of refuse and raw sewage in this chamber dwell nine ratlings and twelve of their young. If attacked, they make a fighting withdrawal back to the shrine (area 11).

9. RATLING NEST

Individual nests are located throughout the lair, separated from passageways by curtains.

The refuse that fills this room imposes the same penalties for wet refuse on creatures (other than rats or ratmen) as in area 7.

Four ratlings make their nest here in a chamber filled with garbage and waste. They are likely to flee if attacked, preferring to fight alongside more of their kind.

10. TRASH-COVERED PIT

A wide pit south of the inner nest (area 8) is covered with a grate made of old planks spaced 2 or 3 feet apart, then covered in layers of trash. Any creature entering the area who doesn't know about the pit is likely to stumble into it and fall, unless they react quickly enough to leap back and completely avoid falling into the pit.

The ratmen seem eager to take advantage of intruders trapped here. They can cross the pit safely, as they know where the planks are.

11. THE PRIESTESS AND THE SHRINE

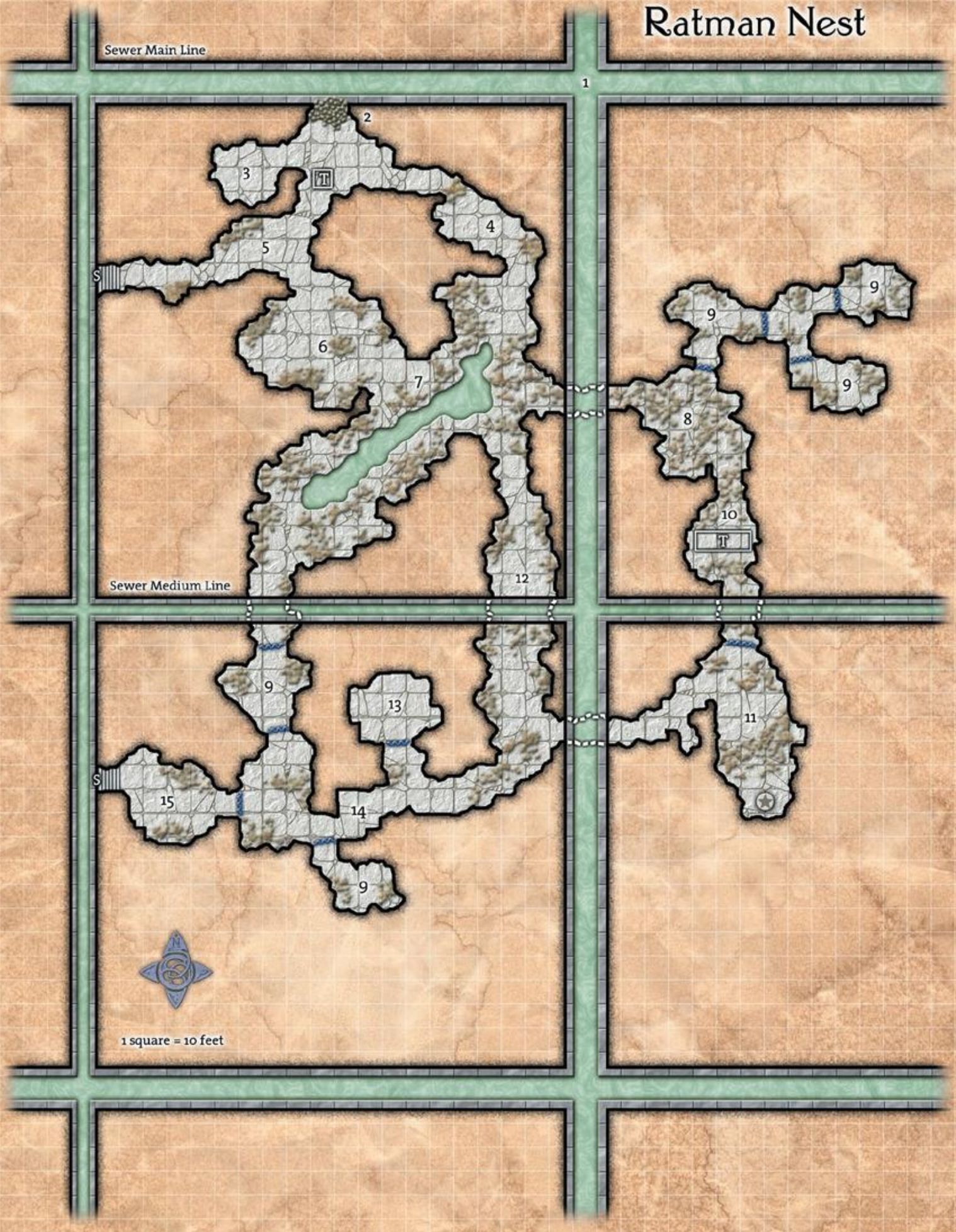
The shrine south of the trash-covered pit is devoted to the Rat God (a "proxy" of their real god, the Galchutt entity known as Abhoth). A crude statue rises above the rest of the trash. The 7-foot-tall structure is made of bits of paper, cloth, and other trash pasted together with sewage that has dried and hardened. The ratmen priestess lives here.

Refuse and waste fill this room to a height of almost 3 feet, imposing the same penalties for low ceilings and wet refuse on creatures (other than rats or ratmen) as in area 7.

Tactics: The priestess seems small for a ratlord. Her tactics involve stealthily burrowing through the refuse to reach wounded ratmen and then healing or stabilizing them with her spells or potions.

If no ratmen have retreated to this area, she likely moves out, preferring to fight foes in areas 7 or 8—possibly with some animated undead on her side, thanks to her scroll.

Treasure: Beneath the statue lie three hidden scroll cases. One has a spell scroll, another contains 140 gp and 329 sp, and the third holds a map showing the secret areas beneath the Temple of the Rat God and a mysteriously scrawled note referring to "Abhoth, Source of All Uncleanliness, who slumbers deep below with the others."


Ratman Nest
Sewer Main Line
Sewer Medium Line
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
9
9
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
9
1 square = 10 feet

As lowly and cowardly as ratmen are, they still consider themselves superior to goblins. Frequently they capture goblins to use as slaves.

Sickly goblins: *2 hp, 3 hp, 3 hp, 4 hp, 4 hp, 4 hp, 4 hp, 5 hp; any foe who takes damage from a goblin's weapon must make a DC 10 Constitution save or contract the disease transmitted by giant rats.*

Ratman, ratbrute, page 591

Ratmen become more problematic for the city in two instances. The first is when, for whatever reason, life becomes harder for the ratmen and food grows scarce. This situation forces them to become bolder and raid the surface. In the second instance, the ratmen become too numerous; their greater numbers give them a confidence to overcome their normal fear of the surface and those who live there. The latter situation is true at the moment and becomes more so every day.

Temple of the Rat God, page 363

The Nest Master has ratlord stats, with AC 15, and +3 on all Dexterity-based rolls. Equipment: potions of healing *(2)*

Ratbrute, see page 593. Equipment: potion of hill giant strength, potion of flying.

Forsaken, page 111

Vai, page 131

Swarm of rats: *24 hp*

It is a DC 20 Perception check to find the secret door from the sewer tunnel side.

Galchutt, page 62

12. EMPTY NEST

This room in the central area of the nest south of the cesspool is empty except for trash.

Refuse and waste fill this room to a height of almost 3 feet, imposing the same penalties for low ceilings and wet refuse on creatures (other than rats or ratmen) as in area 7.

13. THE SLAVE WARRIORS

Although relatively free of trash, the floor of this room in the southern portion of the nest is covered in an inch of stagnant water. It stinks of decay.

Goblin Slaves: The ratmen have taken eight goblins prisoner and made them into warrior slaves. The goblins are all obviously sick, covered in sweat and tiny, oozing pox. They take no actions unless directed by their master (see area 14). Without him, they just stay here in their lair.

If the nest comes under attack, the slavemaster (area 14) takes his warriors to area 12 and waits for intruders. The goblins have only their weapons and armor—no treasure or other gear. They've smeared their weapons with their saliva and pus.

14. THE SLAVEMASTER

Not far from the goblin lair (area 13) sleeps their master, a hulking ratbrute. (Unless he is otherwise alerted, assume he's always asleep.) If the nest comes under attack, he takes his slave warriors (see above) to area 12 and waits for intruders. He carries three pairs of manacles in addition to his normal weapons and gear.

15. THE NEST MASTER

Behind a tattered curtain hanging in the southwestern corner of the nest are the quarters of the Nest Master and his hulking bodyguard ratbrute. Dangling from the ceiling by strings are dozens of bones and skulls at various heights. The room contains two nestlike beds of trash and shredded cloth and a huge locked chest.

The Nest Master is an albino ratlord with a shaved head that shows a tattoo of a knife. He wears a gold amulet around his neck (worth 200 gp). In addition to his ratbrute companion, the Nest Master is always accompanied by a rat swarm that obeys his commands.

Steps lead up to a secret exit in the western wall. The door is obvious from the nest side, but is hidden from casual scrutiny on the opposite side.

Tactics: These two go where the fighting is, so one is likely to encounter them in areas 8 or 12, standing alongside other defenders. Due to the ratbrute's size, they won't fight in area 7 but will go through that area. Both fight to the death—they know that retreat or surrender would cause their fellows to see them as weak and kill them in their sleep. If the situation demands it, the Nest Master will command the slavemaster (area 14) to bring his slaves to this area or the adjoining chamber to the east to help him and his ratbrute bodyguard make a last stand.

Treasure: The ratmen keep the nest's hoard here in a massive chest. Inside, adventurers can find 4,822 cp, 2,349 sp, 745 gp, nine gems worth about 50 gp each, a gold idol of Lothian worth 275 gp, and a silver ring with an opal worth 300 gp.

RATMEN SCENARIOS

You can use this ratman nest in many ways; three ideas are described below. Feel free to place it anywhere in the sewers that serves your campaign.

Rat Hunt: The player characters simply go after the bounty on rat tails. At 3 gp each, there's about 200 gp worth of rat tails in this nest alone (plus the other treasure).

Free the Prisoners: The ratmen in this nest have kidnapped three people, intending to sacrifice them to their horrid god. The prisoners are chained to the walls in area 11. The ratman priestess intends to sacrifice one of them herself and sell the other two to her allies in the Temple of the Rat God.

Alternatively, perhaps the player characters have just cleared out the Temple of the Rat God and discovered that some prisoners they freed from there originally came from a larger prisoner pool in this nest.

Hiding Out: The trail of chaos cultists, Forsaken enemies, or even a Vai assassin on the run leads to this nest. The enemies the PCs are chasing have made an alliance with the rats, although the ratmen will not give their lives foolishly to defend these outsiders. This scenario is useful for establishing the unifying force for evil that grows beneath the city among such groups as the Forsaken, the chaos cultists, the Vai, and so on—all thanks ultimately to the Galchutt.

What's Down There? Map: Page 385

Chapter 22:
THE CAVERNS

Before Dwarvenhearth, before the Banewarrens, before the Spire itself rose from the ground, the area beneath what is now the city of Ptolus was honeycombed with natural caverns, created by the flowing water of extensive subterranean rivers toward the sea.

These caverns lie far deeper below the ground than Ghul's Labyrinth, the Undercity, and the sewers. Many creatures make the caverns their home, including dark elves, rhodintor, underground-dwelling locathahs, dwarves, and evil nagas of all types. And in the darkest levels of all, the Galchutt lie sleeping.

RUNNING THE CAVERNS

Running adventures in natural caverns can be tricky, because it's easy to think of them as being just like dungeons but with uneven walls. But everything about natural caves is uneven—the floor and the ceiling as well as the walls. Sometimes tripping or slipping becomes a concern in certain caves if characters are doing anything other than moving through slowly. The "cavern floor" might be just a series of rounded boulders of varying heights or slabs of stone cast about at differing angles, often slick with dampness and slime.

The most straightforward way to get to the caverns is via the Giant's Staircase, though entrances also link up in many places throughout Ghul's Labyrinth. It's hard to know exactly where one type of dungeon area stops and the caverns start—many delvers find themselves in the caverns accidentally after passing through a mysterious hole in a sewer tunnel wall or down a channel from the Labyrinth. Other adventurers might come here purposely in response to specific adventure hooks tied to one of the cavern areas discussed later in this chapter.

This chapter details some of the more infamous locations in the caverns, starting with the ones closest to the surface and ending with the deepest, most remote locales. Unlike the locations in earlier chapters, most of these caverns are not individual encounter areas but entirely new adventure locations for you to expand upon according to the specifics of your campaign. For a guide to the format of the descriptions and the icons used in the sections that follow, please see District Neighborhoods/Locations.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

GMs should use the caverns deep below Ptolus as an opportunity to stage encounters with unintelligent, unorganized monsters simply prowling for a meal. In the caverns, you don't have to worry about whether a manticore can open doors or deal with traps, because doors and traps are extremely rare.

Although the kinds of subterranean encounters you can have are nearly endless, use the following encounter table if you need to generate an encounter quickly.

Locator Map

Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

Rhodintor, page 594

Galchutt, page 62

A passage from the lower levels of the Temple of the Ebon Hand (see page 354) leads into the natural caverns and provides access to the secret underground bases and temples of other chaos cults.

District Neighborhoods/Locations, page 160

On some cavern floors, Acrobatics checks (usually DC 15) are required to avoid falling prone.

Giant's Staircase, page 418

Very few troglodytes live in the area beneath Ptolus, so despite the fact that they are a common subterranean monster in the game, you won't find them on this encounter list.

Zaug, page 602

D'Stradi annihilator, page 587

RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

d100	Encounter
01–50	No encounter
51–55	Slippery rocks near dangerous fall (DC 15 Acrobatics check or fall 1d3 × 10 feet)
56–57	Cave-in (creatures in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or be crushed for 22 [4d10] bludgeoning damage and be buried until they can dig free)
58–60	2d6 giant bats
61–64	1d3 swarms of bats
65–66	1d3 giant spiders
67–68	1 grey ooze
69–70	1 ochre jelly
71	1d4 ogres
72	1d3 rust monsters
73	2d6 grimlocks
74	1d4 + 1 subterranean locathahs
75	1d2 cloakers
76–77	1d2 basilisks
78	1 behir
79	1d4 minotaurs
80	1d4 ankhegs
81–82	1d4 trolls
83	1 medusa
84	1d3 manticores
85	1 gorgon
86	1 chimera
87–88	1d4 stone giants
89	1 black pudding
90–91	1d3 ettins
92	1 zaug
93	1 D'Stradi annihilator
94–95	1d4 + 2 adventurers (typically with assassin, mage, priest, or veteran stats, random species)
96–98	1d4 + 2 dwarves (typically with veteran stats)
99–00	1d4 + 2 dark elves (plus one leader who is an elite warrior, mage, or priestess)

The Eternity Cave
1 square = 150 feet
Giant's Staircase
Ruined Tower
Kaled Del
(Within Great Column)
1 square = 20 feet
To Dwarvenhearth
Ard Chorend
(Dwarven Bridge)
Great Columns
To Serpent Caves and Other Caverns
Ard Jotac
(Dwarven Bridge)
Umbral Lake
Tridam Island
Tridam Island
Cave Entrance
1 square = 40 feet

CAVERNS GUIDE

Giant's Staircase/Eternity Cave
Umbral Lake, Kaled Del, and tunnels to the surface and Dwarvenhearth.

Serpent Caves
Mazelike caverns of the Children of Mrathrach: evil nagas of all kinds who worship Father Claw.

Locathah Cavern
Vast cave called Glaugsgulgus with shrine to the Sea Mother as well as to the God of the Open Sea and the Lord of Caverns.

Vaults of the Rhodintor
Great collections of chaositech items, and both sleeping and meditating rhodintor.

Caverns of the Galchutt
Kastralathakasal, Throne of Darkness, and the Dreaming Stone.

Dark Elf Caverns
Ul-Drakkan and Ul-Sinistar fortresses, city of Nluguran, and Dreta Phantas.

Umbral Lake, page 419

Serpent Caves, page 419

Grand Entrance to Dwarvenhearth, page 443

Clock Tower, page 296

At the very bottom of the Giant's Staircase lies a small ruined tower, standing watch at the entrance of the Eternity Cave. This tower, built by the dwarves, now stands empty.

Dwarvenhearth's fall, page 431

Although members of the two overclans usually get along on the surface, Grailwarden dwarves are not made to feel welcome in Kaled Del.

A dwarf named Yorrid Glitterfist represents Kaled Del as one of the Commissar's Twelve Commanders (page 140).

The Stonelost dwarf Kord the Culler spends his time procuring vital surface items for Kaled Del (page 187).

Lord Terrik Clanstone has veteran stats.

THE GIANT'S STAIRCASE AND ETERNITY CAVE

Caverns below Oldtown; see map, page 417

The Giant's Staircase is the name given to a huge cavern below Oldtown characterized by ever-descending terraces—huge "steps" that only a giant could take—that lead down to an even larger cavern. The dwarves call this mammoth cavern Erdek Ard, but everyone else knows it as the Eternity Cave.

The giant stairs themselves measure 250 feet wide and 1,200 feet long. Below, the enormous Erdek Ard is over 3,000 feet wide and almost a mile long; the mysterious Umbral Lake fills most of the southern half. Within the vast cavern stands the "city" of the Stonelost dwarves, Kaled Del. To the west, passages lead off to the mysterious Serpent Caves as well as down deep to the dark elf realms. To the northeast, tunnels connect to the Grand Entrance of Dwarvenhearth. Clearly, this area serves delvers as the gateway to the caverns.

Many different passages lead down to the Giant's Staircase, but the most common one links up with the cellars below the Clock Tower in Oldtown. This passage leads down through an area known as the Buried City, the ancient remains of a much older city (also called Ptolus), built here some ten thousand years ago.

KALED DEL

Within Eternity Cave, two massive natural columns rise almost 200 feet to the cavern ceiling. The eastern one, Kaled Del, is honeycombed with chambers and passages crafted by the Stonelost dwarves. It serves as home for more than four hundred. Within Kaled Del, the dwarves work tirelessly at forges and in workshops, mainly to keep their minds off of the legacy that they lost when Dwarvenhearth fell to Ghul's forces. Originally, Kaled Del was built to act as a watchtower to keep vigil over one of the remaining relatively accessible entrances to the ancient dwarven city. That duty has become much more vital in the last few years, as explorers once again search for a way into Dwarvenhearth.

The folk of Kaled Del are not as self-sufficient as their ancestors in Dwarvenhearth were. They rely on Ptolus, trading gems and forged items for food, wood, paper, cloth, and other goods.

Lord Terrik Clanstone (male Stonelost dwarf) leads the dwarves of Kaled Del. In fact, most Stonelost dwarves recognize him as their lord; they do not use the word "king" since the diaspora from Dwarvenhearth. Lord Clanstone

occasionally meets in the surface city with Commissar Igor Urnst.

Terrik's son, Soren (male Stonelost dwarf), lives in Ptolus following a falling-out with his father. Many dwarves call Soren the "wayward prince," but never to his face. Soren is not a typical dwarf—he's more jovial, quicker to smile. And he's an individualist. Handsome (even by human standards), Soren keeps his beard and hair short. He enjoys a good joke and a good smoke. He spends his time in the city in the Black Swan or wandering about Oldtown, but avoiding Delver's Square and adventurers in general. He wants to be left alone, not recruited into some crazy quest; he avoids quests because he knows that if he learns of a worthy one, he's likely to undertake it. He will return to Kaled Del only under the most extreme circumstances. If he did, however, he would find himself treated like royalty, the prodigal son returned.

Commissar, page 140

Soren Clanstone has veteran stats, with AC 20, +1 to hit and damage with melee attacks; alignment neutral good. Equipment: +2 plate, +1 greataxe, *dragon pistol, ammunition (10 rounds),* potion of greater healing, *climber's kit, pocketwatch, 50 feet of rope, hammer, iron spikes (4), 520 gp.*

Dragon pistol, page 522

Jabel Shammar, page 465

Eslathagos Malkith, page 79

Black Swan, page 191

UMBRAL LAKE

A vast, dark lake occupies the southern half of the Eternity Cave. Its cold, still waters reach a depth of well over 200 feet in places, and in those shadowy depths dwell creatures of terrifying form and might. A brood of aboleths and their skum slaves call the Umbral Lake's depths home. These are direct descendants of the aboleths first created in Jabel Shammar—some of them are old enough to remember their dread sires and the reign of Eslathagos Malkith. It is also the domain of a pair of dragon turtles, a few water naga, some chuuls, and a small tribe of subterranean locathahs.

In the middle of the lake is an island called Tridam. A stony peak rises from the center of the island, and within a cavern on the peak lies the entrance to a stronghold created and controlled by the Pactlords of the Quaan. The entrance is guarded by a pair of iron golems with massive iron wings. It proves difficult to approach Tridam without warning those in the stronghold, as they have allies among both the aboleths and the locathahs. Other than the Quaan itself, the Tridam Island base is the greatest stronghold of the Pactlords.

Pactlords of the Quaan, page 125 (and read more in The Banewarrens *adventure; see page 11)*

Iron golem: *210 hp, with fly speed 40 feet*

The Eternity Cave is so large that much of Umbral Lake does not lie beneath Ptolus at all, but deep under the open fields south of the city.

SERPENT CAVES

Caverns; see map, below

Terrible legends of snakelike creatures of antiquity surround the area beneath Ptolus known as the Serpent Caves. The dwarves avoid these caverns at all costs, and dark elves do as

House Dallimothan, page 94

Mrathrach, page 331

Father Claw, page 72

Many of the nagas living here are spirit nagas, but there are also aquatic varieties (water nagas) and a few unique nagas as well, all of them evil.

A passage from the lowest level of Mahdoth's Asylum in the South Market (see page 336) connects directly to a series of natural caves that eventually lead to the Serpent Caves.

Locathah superficially resemble sahuagin, but have merfolk stats, with humanoid (sahuagin) type.

King Slugashulg has ecclesiastic stats, page 608

Dark elves, page 59

Kaled Del, page 418

Galchutt, page 62

GM TIPS

As you expand on these caverns for use in your own Ptolus Campaign, remember to scatter Pits of Insanity throughout the areas, as described in Chapter 19: What's Down There? (see page 384).

Occasionally, an onyx idol of the Serpentine Lord as depicted by the Children of Mrathrach turns up in a North Market bazaar. Locals believe these idols bring bad luck, curses, or even the attention of inhabitants of the dreaded Serpent Caves, so most vendors attempt to sell them to out-of-towners quickly and cheaply.

Read more about chaositech starting on page 529.

well, if possible. Even people on the surface know that the name "the Serpent Caves" describes a place inhabited by nightmarish terrors.

The legends are based on fact; occupying the Serpent Caves are dozens and dozens of nagas (malevolent serpent creatures with humanlike faces). They call themselves the Children of Mrathrach, after one of the ancient Vested of the Galchutt. Today, they revere the Serpentine Lord, a god known to others as Father Claw. Rather than picturing him as a massive black dragon, however, the Children of Mrathrach depict the Serpentine Lord as a massive black snake with the arms, legs, and faces of the humans he has devoured reaching out from inside of his scaled flesh.

Within the winding, mazelike network of the Serpent Caves, more than one hundred evil nagas of all types breed and sleep in dark pits filled with warm, befouled water. They leave only rarely to hunt—like many snakes, they do not need to eat often. Their lightless temples are filled with their hissed prayers, and their secret dens pulse with the quiet incantations of their unique manner of sorcery. Hundreds of normal snakes inhabit these caverns along with the various species of naga. The caverns also are home to such creatures as trolls and medusas.

Not only do the Children of Mrathrach prey upon the dwarves of Kaled Del, nearby dark elves, and other creatures, they sometimes slip up into Ptolus and abduct humans to include in their horrid breeding practices. These nagas believe they must introduce new human blood into their gene pool now and again to strengthen their species.

Some chaos cultists mistakenly believe that the evil nagas, because of their ancient connection to Mrathrach, have a link to the Galchutt. This is not the case. The inhabitants of the Serpent Caves have no particular agenda beyond their own survival.

Scenario: The members of House Dallimothan, ever enemies of Father Claw—whom they call the Destroyer—hire the player characters to investigate the Serpent Caves to seek the truth behind the legends of his worshippers living there. The PCs must deal with the nagas, their many snakes, and other allies, including trolls and medusas.

LOCATHAH CAVERN

Caverns; see map page 385

A saltwater river runs through the locathah cavern from deep undersea caves. This is unusual, as most underground rivers beneath Ptolus are freshwater and flow to the sea. The predatory and territorial sahuagin drove these locathahs from the surface many thousands of years ago. They eventually settled in this vast cavern (more than 800 feet long), which they call Glaugsgulgus.

About five hundred fishlike humanoids called locathahs live here under the rule of King Slugashulg (male locathah). They maintain a tenuous trade alliance with the dark elves, so it is not strange to see a few dark elf merchants in this cavern. In general, the locathahs are neither expansionist nor warlike. Instead, they seem content to dwell quietly in their city made of strange buildings of coral and shells brought from the sea. Between the odd edifices lie pools connected by subsurface channels, which the locathahs use to get around. Visitors to the cavern remark most often on its relative silence. The residents communicate as much by scent as by sound, and they value silence greatly.

The central hub of the city is a huge shrine to the goddess known only as the Sea Mother, although the locathahs dedicate other temples in Glaugsgulgus to Juranis, God of the Open Sea, and Unnom, Lord of Caverns. They are

CACHES OF CHAOSITECH

Throughout the natural caverns beneath Ptolus, the Galchutt and their servants secreted away stashes of chaositech devices, tools, and even some inscriptions that detail their function and repair. Primarily, they hid the chaositech away to use when they awakened as the Night of Dissolution approached. However, they also made secret caches that others could find and use as well. These contain six or seven random items, usually with an overall value of 10d10 × 1,000 gp.

Since every use of chaositech gives the Galchutt more power and tends to corrupt the users—or even allow them to be controlled—the caches are not that well hidden.

A DC 20 Perception check for searching this area reveals a secret door in an otherwise natural-looking cave or tunnel wall. A forbiddance effect, warding against celestials, protects the small, hidden cave that stores the items. The difficulty in finding a cache lies in knowing where to look in the first place. Since dark elves and other subterranean species prowl about far more than surface dwellers, they have found the most chaositech.

an extremely devout, religious folk; an outsider who defiles a shrine, even in a minor way, will find the entire city of locathahs falling upon him with murder in their piscine hearts. Otherwise, it is possible for careful, quiet surface dwellers to enter and wander the dark, wet paths of Glaugsgulgus.

Many of the locathahs of Glaugsgulgus are neutral in alignment, although some are neutral evil.

Scenario: The deep-dwelling locathahs are keepers of great lore, particularly extremely ancient history. A member of the Sages' Guild hires the player characters to accompany (and guard) them as they travel to this cavern to confer with locathahs about historical esoterica. Once there, assuming the group manages to use diplomacy and care to get in, some dark elf merchants (who are also spies, of course) believe that the PCs are actually envoys of some surface-world concern seeking to establish an alliance with the locathahs. They attempt to assassinate the player characters or—failing that—frame them for a temple desecration.

VAULTS OF THE RHODINTOR

Caverns; see map page 385 III

Still deeper in the caverns we reach the Vaults of the Rhodintor. The only creations of beings bent solely on destruction, the rhodintor slept when their Galchutt masters did millennia ago. However, through elaborate design, these so-called earthbound demons have begun to awaken now, to prepare the way for the Lords of Chaos. The Vaults of the Rhodintor are sealed caverns where the demons have slept for so many centuries. They are also vast storehouses of chaositech—the greatest accumulation of the dread items in the world.

Today, hundreds of rhodintor still sleep their dreamless sleep, while only a few score are awake. A few have made their way up into the city or the regions directly below it, including those working with the lich Aggah-Shan on his Machine. The demons seem eager to spread chaositech and aid the various chaos cults by bringing them together and instructing those that don't yet understand that they actually serve the ancient Natharl'nacna.

Those who are awake but remain in the vault complex gather in circular chambers with the names of various Galchutt inscribed in

Rhodintor, page 594

Sages' Guild, page 308

Aggah-Shan, page 310

Chaos cults, page 75

Natharl'nacna is the word for "Galchutt" in Elder Elvish.

Below the Dark Reliquary far to the east of these caverns lies the Temple of the Galchutt (see page 251). While his brethren slumber in their isolated cavern lairs, the creature known as Kihomenethoth has embedded his essence in the Temple of the Galchutt near his Wintersouled and demon servants.

blood-red runes on the floor. The demons meditate upon their masters and the day when they will be free of the prison world in which they dwell. The residents can open these well-sealed vaults easily from within. Chaositech-based traps accompany magical wards to keep out intruders or awaken additional rhodintor to deal with them.

CAVERNS OF THE GALCHUTT

The deepest portions of the Caverns of the Galchutt are the tomblike chambers where the Lords of Chaos have sealed themselves to await the time when they can finally get free of this world. These low caverns are inaccessible both physically and magically—the essences of the Galchutt inhabit deep places in the earth. But above these unreachable depths lies another set of caves connected to the Vaults of the Rhodintor. Within these upper complexes, some of the Galchutt's current and former servants still toil in ancient occupations, awaiting the terrible night when their masters awaken.

Serpent Caves, page 419

Signet of Shallamoth Kindred, page 423

Dungeon side view map, page 385

Despite what the Dungeon side view map might suggest, traveling physically to these upper caverns proves extremely difficult. Doors sealed by potent lore lie between the zaug stronghold of Kastralathakasal and the Vaults of the Rhodintor, and traveling even farther to the Throne of Darkness is not feasible without using teleportation.

Zaug, page 602

Jabel Shammar, page 465
Elder Brood, page 602

KASTRALATHAKASAL

Caverns of the Galchutt; see map page 385

With the Galchutt asleep, the primary inhabitants of the caverns above their inert essences are zaug and members of the Elder Brood. The zaug here have long kept to themselves, with only a rare agent infiltrating the dark elves (using magical disguises) or coming to the surface. The vast millennia that the Galchutt have slept have allowed the zaug to create Kastralathakasal, a stronghold of alien metals and living, organic components.

Harrow elves, page 53
Elder Elves of Theridae, page 30

Like the Galchutt who created them, zaug are older than the world itself. In fact, their kind has spread throughout many worlds. It is said that in the days of Ghul, they helped the Skull-King create the Harrow elves from the Elder Elves of Theridae. Some Harrow elves in Ptolus now hunt the zaug. They want to know where these creatures of chaos dwell, having scoured the world and narrowed down their targets' location to "somewhere below the Spire."

Most zaug long ago rebelled against their masters' goals of ultimate chaos and destruction. The greedy zaug of Kastralathakasal wish to rule the world, not destroy it. In modern times, they content themselves with perfecting the art of spreading disease and filth to their own ends. They use captured slaves to breed cattlelike food sources and experimental fodder. They also use dark science to create more and more powerful servants.

Members of the zaug species that remain loyal to the Galchutt live apart from those of Kastralathakasal, usually in small, insular conclaves.

THRONE OF DARKNESS

Caverns of the Galchutt; see map page 385

The Throne of Darkness is a Galchutt stronghold buried deep below the surface, almost directly under the Spire. One can reach it via a torturous path from the Serpent Caves, but more easily via an artifact called the *Signet of Shallamoth Kindred*. This signet transports any who look upon it to a teleportation matrix called the Tourbillion inside the Throne of Darkness.

When the Galchutt were awake, the Throne of Darkness served as the seat of their power. Shallamoth Kindred, greatest of the Galchutt, sat in the throne in the center of this vast fortress. It is a place of ineffable evil, comparable to that of Jabel Shammar itself. However, the Galchutt never invested themselves in this place the way the Dread One invested himself in his stronghold. In fact, the Galchutt did what they could to mask their evil presence when they exiled themselves to their sleep. Thus, the evil here is more subtle—those corrupted by its dark taint might not know it for a long time afterward.

Today, the Throne of Darkness fortress is inhabited by the ghosts of those who served Shallamoth Kindred so long ago. One also will find creatures half of flesh and half of living chaos, ooze, and other abominable substances, spawned from the lingering essence of the Galchutt. Lastly, some of the Elder Brood—obaan and sscree—remain here as guardians.

From inside the Tourbillion chamber, one can teleport anywhere in the world—even into places shielded against teleportation. This teleportation matrix is activated by magical mirrors that are currently hidden in other areas of the Throne of Darkness for safekeeping. To use the transport, characters first must bring all the mirrors to the room. Then the travelers stand on a circle in the center of the chamber and envision their destination. It appears in all the mirrors and, with a flash, the travelers appear there.

Scenario: Agents hired by the Iron Mage have discovered the *Signet of Shallamoth Kindred* on an island in the Whitewind Sea and are transporting it, locked in an iron chest, back to the city by ship. Jevicca Nor knows that the Iron Mage is bringing something into the city, but not what. She hires the player characters to go to the Docks and discover what the Iron Mage is transporting. However, if the PCs get close enough to see the signet, it will transport them instantly to the Tourbillion. In order to get back, they must learn how the Tourbillion works, which involves exploring the ancient Throne of Darkness stronghold to find the mirrors needed to get back to the city.

THE DREAMING STONE

Caverns of the Galchutt; see map page 385

In a vast cavern that connects to the Throne of Darkness, an ashen tower rises out of a silt-and-ash-laden lake more than 200 feet across. This 80-foot tower houses an enormous clear crystal that itself measures 50 feet high and 10 feet across. A network of black iron supports holds the crystal within the open tower. The crystal is known as the Dreaming Stone. It once was one of the most important features within Dreta Phantas, the Dreaming City. Within the stone lies every dream still to be dreamed. Touching the stone draws one's mind (but not one's body) into it, where a character can attempt to access an answer regarding the future; however, it's almost certain that only the most powerful minds can experience the hazards of this event without breaking.

When the dark elves stole the Elder Elven city of Dreta Phantas away from the surface world, they captured the Dreaming Stone as well. Their mistress, Gorgoth-Lol, gave the stone to her fellow Vested of the Galchutt, Thoggidrum. She did this as a gesture of alliance to Thoggidrum, but also in the hopes that his natural penchant for destruction would eradicate it in time (it did not—the elven magic girding the stone was greater than she thought). Thoggidrum, a creature of decay and disintegration, placed his new prize within the ashen tower here in his cavern. He eventually fell victim to his own fetishes and began to discorporate, particularly once the Galchutt went into hibernation. Only a portion of his essence still remains (see hereafter).

Gorgoth-Lol, page 72

Vested of the Galchutt, page 62

During their millennia of slumber, the Galchutt have dissolved their physical forms, merging their aspects with their subterranean surroundings. When their time comes to rise, they may regather their forms to themselves—or they may not, for their power transcends mere physical shells.

The silty lake never gets deeper than 3 feet, so most creatures can simply walk through it to the tower. However, crossing the lake is like wading through thick soup. Here and there, fissures allow hot gases to bubble up from under the viscous water. These fissures fill the cavern with smoke and ash. In some places, the emerging gases carry a bit of magma; these deposits eventually form smoking cinder cones that rise up just above the water.

The cavern of Thoggidrum is inhabited by belkers (elemental fiendish-looking flying creatures of air and smoke) and rasts (ravenous spider-like elementals of ash and cinder) that hungrily attack anything that enters in a frenzied swarm—they frequently must leave the cavern to find prey. At least a dozen of each type of creature inhabit the cavern at any time.

The tower itself is guarded by Oracthon, a black dragon that constitutes the remaining essence of Thoggidrum. The dragon spends his time sleeping atop the tower, although a large fight in the cavern or someone disturbing the Dreaming Stone will wake him.

One must use the Dreaming Stone to restore Dreta Phantas to its original place in the world. It also would help Calista regain her memories, if used along with the *cask of frozen dreams*. Moving the stone requires extremely powerful magic, though, such as a *wish* spell cast from the tower just as the supports are destroyed.

Iron Mage, page 316

Jevicca Nor, page 115

For a related scenario, see "Delivery for the Iron Mage" on page 164.

A belker has air elemental stats, plus half the damage it inflicts is necrotic damage; can use a bonus action to change to or from a gaseous form that harms creatures like dust of sneezing and choking *(it can spend up to twenty rounds per day in gaseous form); alignment neutral evil.*

A rast has giant spider stats, with size Medium, fly speed 60, fire immunity, no Web ability, a bite that drains blood like a stirge, and a gaze attack (DC 13 Wisdom save, 30-foot range) that paralyzes foes for 1d6 rounds.

Oracthon, ancient black dragon: *367 hp; breath weapon inflicts force damage instead of acid; creatures killed by the breath weapon are disintegrated.*

Restoring Dreta Phantas, page 427

Calista, page 543

Cask of frozen dreams, *page 637*

A successful DC 25 Wisdom save gives the character a truthful answer to one question about the future from the Dreaming Stone. A character who fails their save must make a second Wisdom saving throw (DC 27) or act as if under a permanent confusion *spell.*

Dreta Phantas, page 425

DARK ELF CAVERNS

Dwarvenhearth, page 429

Since the dwarves abandoned Dwarvenhearth, the dark elves have become the real masters of the caverns below Ptolus. Experienced adventurers learn to expect their traps, ambushes, and patrols throughout the natural underground regions. Of course, it isn't specifically Ptolus that the dark elves are interested in. Many hope to gain entrance to the Banewarrens, while others want chaositech. Still others simply believe that living beneath Ptolus provides good opportunities to strike against their enemies: the elves and, to a lesser extent, the Stonelost dwarves.

Dreta Phantas, page 425

Chaositech, page 529

The dark elf community below Ptolus consists of two fortresses—Ul-Drakkan and Ul-Sinistar—that flank the large city of Nluguran in caverns above the stolen city of Dreta Phantas.

UL-DRAKKAN

Dark elf caverns; see map, below

Ul-Drakkan, the Citadel of the Lizard, is the first of two major dark elf fortresses beneath Ptolus. Located within a large cavern, the fortress was built inside three natural stone columns or "towers," which are joined at middle levels by artificial bridges. Ballistas in the towers help defend the fortress, and nearby caverns hold barracks for goblin troops as well as captured slaves. House Vrama controls Ul-Drakkan, home to about one hundred fifty residents. The ruler of the house, Alevolenz (female dark elf), lives here and has done much to restore her house from a sorry state to something that approaches its former glory. She wishes to unite the dark elf houses in a war against the surface elves and plans many direct attacks against important elven locations in Ptolus (specifically in Emerald Hill). With them, she hopes to draw retaliatory attacks that will galvanize the dark elves into unification under her. She also instructs her servants to recover any hidden caches of chaositech they find in the subterranean realms; they call these weapons *avalashax*, which means, literally, "impossibles."

Raenashal has ecclesiastic stats (page 608), with two 6th- and 7th-level spell slots.

Shakkar has gladiator stats.

Vissuine has mage stats, with two 6th- and 7th-level spell slots.

Taliestha and Chorian have assassin stats.

Kohoath the Betrayer, page 131

Urthon Aedar, page 130

Alevolenz has ecclesiastic stats (page 608), with two 6th-level spell slots. Her conjoined twin is a sorcerer with mage stats, but cannot take actions other than to cast spells.

Alevolenz's secret is that she has a conjoined twin. She is able to hide it beneath her clothing, but the creature is intelligent—in fact, it is a sorcerer of equal power level. Raised by a secret cabal of zaug loyal to the Lords of Chaos, she works toward their ends, although even she does not truly realize that her current plot plays into the Galchutt's hands. (A powerful union of dark elves, using chaositech, will help spread the chaos needed to bring upon the Night of Dissolution.) This same cabal of zaug has infiltrated Ul-Sinistar.

Read more on the dark elves on pages 59 and 434.

Emerald Hill, page 189

The elven deity Phoeboul, God of Dreams (chaotic neutral), is the patron of Dreta Phantas, the Dreaming City.

The Dark Elvish word for a surface elf is strikkesh, *usually spoken with vehement derision.*

Zaug, page 602

Night of Dissolution, page 62

UL-SINISTAR

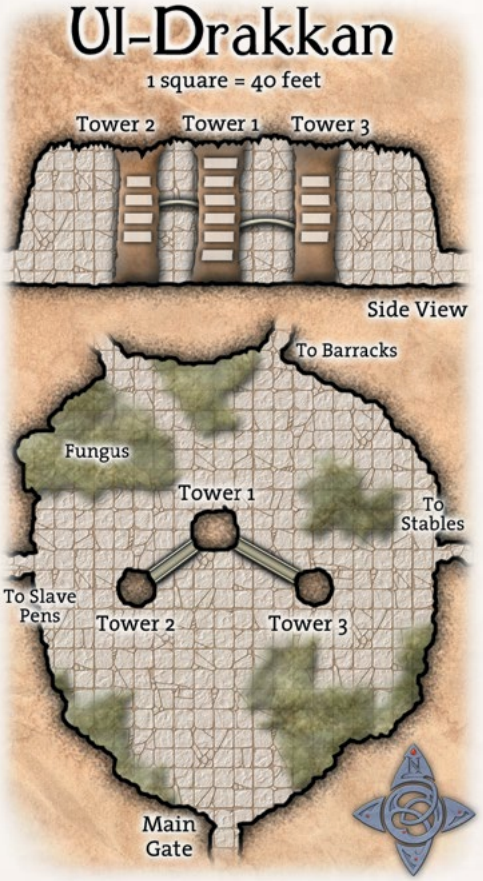
Dark elf caverns; see map, page 426

Ul-Sinistar, the Citadel of the Spider, is the other major fortress in the dark elf caverns. It is controlled by House Yurganth and consists of two stone keeps joined by a stone bridge that spans a massive, unnatural lake of lava. Ul-Sinistar is joined by a tunnel to Dreta Phantas, the captured Dreaming City, and serves as a magical anchor to hold the city in place.

Raenashal (female dark elf) is the mistress of Ul-Sinistar and its two hundred residents. She commands a retinue of powerful, well-equipped servants and bodyguards, as well as a handful of demon servitors. Her circle of allies includes Shakkar (male dark elf), Vissuine (male dark elf), and Taliestha and Chorian (female dark elves).

The dark elves have laid siege to Dreta Phantas for thousands of years but have been unable to pass through the magical wards to get to the city's heart. They have long since stopped attempting to gain entrance and simply hold the city captive.

A zaug has infiltrated Ul-Sinistar in disguise and has risen high in the ranks, posing as a sorcerer named Starachele. He spearheads the attempts to conquer Dreta Phantas but, once inside, he plans to hand over the city to the zaug and to his ally, Kohoath the Betrayer, once one of the Urthon Aedar.



DARK ELF HOUSES

The dark elves of the various settlements in the caverns separate themselves into factional houses, each ruled by a single leader. Most dark elves pledge allegiance to one house or another. Occasionally an individual may switch allegiances, but a reputation for switching houses is a quick way to get killed for being untrustworthy (even for a dark elf). Most of the time, a dark elf is born into an allegiance with a house and never wavers from it. In an evil society, you need what allies you can manage, and the mutual protection network that dark elf houses provide is one good way to stay alive in this incredibly dangerous culture.

Dark elves wear pins with their house symbol, showing their allegiance. Although they are supposed to wear these pins openly, not all do. The following list names most of the key dark elf houses:

Vrama. Vrama is a powerful house that has risen quickly from a lowly position thanks to its current ruler, Alevolenz. Long centuries past, before the clan fell out of favor, Vrama was considered a great house, and its people were the chosen of Gorgoth-Lol. Even the name "vrama" means "true dark elf," or more literally "true child of the Spider Queen." Vrama's symbol is a skull-shaped mushroom with a sword thrust into its top.

Yurganth. Yurganth is a rival of House Vrama. Although there is no open conflict between the two, all dark elves know that a sign of weakness by either house will bring a swift attack from the other. The symbol of House Yurganth is a skull with spider legs.

Leisarn. A house neutral to both Vrama and Yurganth, Leisarn concerns itself mostly with issues far from the regions below Ptolus. Their members are seen here only rarely, usually spying. Leisarn's symbol is a curved knife against a spiderweb background.

Thess. This minor house owes fealty to House Vrama. The symbol of House Thess is a leering demon face on a background of reptilian scales.

Far below the Nobles' Quarter, one can find a colony of Sorn-Ulth and Toruk-Rul, the descendants of Ghul's minions. For details, see page 598.

The dark elf vampire Zachean (page 435) woke the rhodintor (page 594) when he wandered through the vaults looking for a secret path into Dwarvenhearth.

The poison dark elves use is called sintrin (DC 13 Constitution save), which makes a creature poisoned for an hour, or unconscious for an hour if they fail the save by 5 or more. Each dark elf of House Vrama was raised imbibing small doses of sintrin, so they all enjoy a complete immunity to it.

Typical Vrama guards and soldiers have dark elf (monster) stats: 13 hp; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: sintrin poison (5 doses), Vrama house pin, 13 gp.

A cabal of male sorcerers led by a blue dragon named Uthlachiman the Elder is attempting to build a *lance of endless night* in Ul-Sinistar. Although pretending to aid in this endeavor, "Starachele" actually works to sabotage their efforts. While using this weapon to extinguish the sun would cause chaos and woe, even that unimaginably foul deed isn't big enough to free his Galchutt masters.

Lance of endless night, *page 640*

NLUGURAN

Dark elf caverns; see map, page 385

Nluguran, a dark elf city of three thousand inhabitants, lies sheltered between its two flanking fortresses. Although merely a town by surface standards, this is a very large community by underrealm standards. Erediana (female dark elf) rules Nluguran and House Thess as well. She pretends to be fair to dark elves of all houses but remains completely under the sway of Alevolenz of House Vrama.

To an outsider, Nluguran looks like a very small community in a large cave. This is only the entrance to the city, however. In reality, the settlement extends for hundreds of feet in every direction from this cave. Well-guarded tunnels connect edifices built into the cavern floor, walls, and ceiling with deeper chambers. From the native's perspective, the structures in the cave are not entire buildings, just the entrances to vast complexes of passages and rooms.

Nluguran is a maze of depravity and decadence. The degenerate and wanton dark elves who live here occupy their days and nights with debauchery and vice that would make some of the most wicked surface-dwellers turn their heads away in disgust. Because dark elf society encourages the recruitment of the most competent to roles as warriors, fighters, clerics, wizards, or sorcerers in important outposts, the dark elves in Nluguran are the ones left behind—commoners, mostly, with a few rogues to prey upon them with abandon.

At the very heart of Nluguran lies the temple-palace of Ul-Rassadin, the home of the dark elf nobles and leaders. Here, every chamber is also a shrine dedicated to Gorgoth-Lol and minor deities. From a surface-dweller's point of view, the underground complex of Ul-Rassadin seems entirely separate from the other passages and rooms of Nluguran—or perhaps a surface-dweller would not be able to distinguish where Ul-Rassadin begins and ends at all.

Gorgoth-Lol, page 72

Erediana has priest stats, plus the spellcasting ability of a mage.

DRETA PHANTAS

Dark elf caverns; see map, page 426

Dreta Phantas was once the central city of the Elder Elves, their crowning achievement. In the language of the Elder Elves, Dreta Phantas means "the Dreaming City," and it once existed along the Whitewind coast north of what is now the Moonsilver Forest. Back then, thousands of years ago, the region was called Theridae. In

Recently the elves of House Yurganth gained a Dwarvenhearth key (see page 433) and began exploring the ancient city under the leadership of the vampire Zachean (page 435).

Moonsilver Forest, page 44

Galchutt, page 62

Night of Dissolution, page 62

Kohoath the Betrayer, page 131

Dreaming Stone, page 423
Cask of frozen dreams, *page 637*
Urthon Aedar, page 130
Ul-Sinistar, page 424

The tower of Koth does not, in fact, give access to other worlds. However, it does enable dream communication with distant planes and realms. Ghul sought the dream tower of Koth for himself in 74 BE, but he failed to wrest Dreta Phantas from the dark elves' grasp.

Lilith of the Dark Reliquary has servants scouring the world for the cask of frozen dreams, *as she hopes to use it to unlock the memories of her prisoner, Calista. See page 238.*

Vallis moon, page 42
Seven Jewels of Parnaith, page 485
Seven Chains, page 64
Entropy Sphere, page 463

their most daring act of aggression against their surface kin, the dark elves stole the entire city using incredible magic provided by Gorgoth-Lol. It now rests below Ul-Sinistar in a cavern that measures 2,600 feet from east to west and about 850 feet from north to south.

When it was built, Dreta Phantas was home to approximately eight thousand Solarr and Lunas elves. The city's power relied on two mighty artifacts: the Dreaming Stone and the *cask of frozen dreams*. Both these objects must be returned to Dreta Phantas before it can return to its rightful place on the surface. And even then, it is bound to remain here until the fortress of Ul-Sinistar, which acts as a magical anchor, is entirely eradicated.

The leader of Dreta Phantas was known as the Dream King. This elf spent his entire adult life asleep, using mystical powers to visit and watch over his subjects while they themselves slept. He ruled from Koth, the dream tower, which was fabled to guard a path to the many worlds.

The city's central plaza harbors great mystical power. The Elder Elves built it to hold "the soul of the world" (as described in Chapter 4: Cosmology and Religion), believing the Vallis moon and the Seven Chains to be destroyed forever. They were incorrect about this fact—the vital moon and chains are not destroyed—but the Galchutt were fooled as well. Through Gorgoth-Lol, the Lords of Chaos attempted to get into Dreta Phantas and destroy the soul of the world, seeking to bring on the Night of Dissolution early. Even now, creatures loyal to the Galchutt (a cabal of zaug and the former Urthon Aedar, Kohoath the Betrayer) still seek a way into the imprisoned city, despite the dark elves' complacency.

The Dream King remains asleep in Dreta Phantas, protected by the loyal Urthon Aedar. The Urthon Aedar use the inviolate heart of the Dreaming City as their base of operations, both because it is so secluded and secure, and to repel every attempt to take the city. So far, the city's natural wards still hold, even after millennia. It lies quietly in a large cavern adjoining Ul-Sinistar.

Likewise, the Dream King still wields the power to convey "sending dreams" to anyone. He may use this ability to send subtle clues to powerful heroes in the city above, slowly manipulating them to want to recover the *cask of frozen dreams* (held by the demon lord Savvan in a *demon-sealed box* in Av, one of the Seven Jewels of Parnaith) and the Dreaming Stone from Thoggidrum. Or perhaps he simply calls them to find their way here via the Entropy Sphere in the Spire, so that they can aid him.

RESTORING DRETA PHANTAS

The greatest treasure ever made by elves, the Dreaming City of Dreta Phantas, lies in the hands of their mortal enemies, the dark elves. Perhaps the best use of Dreta Phantas in your game is to set the player characters upon the task of restoring the stolen city to the surface world once more. This quest involves many individual adventures within, above, and below Ptolus.

Dreams sent by the Dream King over a period of time make the player characters aware of Dreta Phantas and make them feel drawn to the place.

To get there, they learn they must find the Urthon Aedar and penetrate Goth Gulgamel to get to the area of the Spire that holds the ancient Entropy Sphere. Any Urthon Aedar can shape the energy of the sphere into a portal that leads directly into the center of the Dreaming City. (PCs who know of the Tourbillion's transport function might choose that route instead; see page 422.)

Once inside the city, the PCs learn that the Urthon Aedar believe they guard the soul of the world. This is not true, strictly speaking; the soul of the world still resides (unbeknownst to everyone in and around Ptolus) in the Vallis moon guarded by the Lords of the Seven Chains. However, if the Seven Chains ever were broken, the soul of the world would transfer to Dreta Phantas for safekeeping. The Galchutt want to destroy the Dreaming City and the soul of the world to finally be free.

Dreta Phantas and its treasure are not safe in the clutches of the dark elves, who one day will manage to penetrate the weakened city. To safeguard it, the PCs must restore Dreta Phantas to the surface of the world—and to do that, they need to reunite the Dreaming Stone and the *cask of frozen dreams* in the heart of Dreta Phantas. They can find the Dreaming Stone in Thoggidrum's cavern and the cask in the hands of Savvan the demon lord in the Jewels of Parnaith. Once the cask and stone are reunited in Dreta Phantas, the Elder Elves will be able to magically return their city to the area around the north end of the Moonsilver Forest where it belongs.

The final step in helping to return the Dreaming City to the surface is to destroy the fortress of Ul-Sinistar and the magical anchor it harbors that keeps the elven city in place below ground.

Once Dreta Phantas is returned to the surface, elves from all over the world respond to its return and step forward to join the Urthon Aedar in protecting it. These legions can keep it from once again falling into the clutches of their enemies and better protect it against the will of the Natharl'nacna.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In the original Ptolus Campaign, after finding their way to Dreta Phantas via the Entropy Sphere and allying themselves with the Urthon Aedar, the PCs traveled to Ul-Sinistar to stop the creation of the lance of endless night. *During the battle, they turned "Starachele," the zaug agent in Ul-Sinistar, to stone and brought him to Dreta Phantas. Unfortunately, Kohoath the Betrayer was able to use the minion's body as a beacon to finally create a spell of teleportation that would pierce the wards protecting the heart of the city. He then proceeded to launch an invasion that even the player characters could not stop.*

Thoggidrum's cavern, page 423

What's Down There? Map: Page 385

Chapter 23:
DWARVENHEARTH

Dwarvenhearth is a vast underground city, once the home of ten thousand Stonemight dwarves. It covers an area larger than most of the districts in the surface city and contains multiple levels. The entire complex comprises many thousands of chambers and passages, ranging from small, 20-foot-square storehouses to open plazas hundreds of feet wide to the gargantuan Cathedral Cavern, more than a thousand feet long.

This chapter offers a short overview of Dwarvenhearth and its history, provides a general idea of its scope, and details a number of specific locations within it. This is, in effect, a guidebook for crafting Dwarvenhearth adventures.

HISTORY OF DWARVENHEARTH

Almost three thousand years ago, a confederation of dwarven clans settled in the area near the Spire, attracted by the region's mineral wealth and the proximity of the sea and other resources. They began delving deep to mine the ores here and built a vast fortress-city at the heart of their mines. They called this city Dwarvenhearth and pledged to make it a bastion for all dwarvenkind—a center of dwarven culture, art, and craft. Although most of Dwarvenhearth was built within a dozen years of the dwarves' arrival, it took nearly a century to finish. When complete, its grand halls and sweeping plazas had no equal. Most of the city lay underground, but portions extended up to the surface. (The connections to the surface no longer exist.)

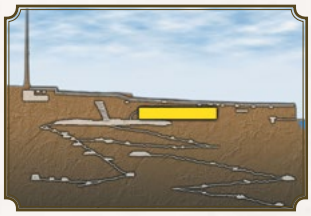
Although Dwarvenhearth technically lay within the Elder Elven kingdom of Theridae, the dwarves did not recognize any authority of the elf kings and queens of that land. The elves, in turn, avoided the area of the Spire due to its "evil aura"—the legends they had of the Charad Titans, who found only darkness and corruption there.

The first pair of Dwarvenhearth kings—Derrick Stonefist, the Day King, and Hathol Hammersmith, the Night King—rose to power soon after the city's builders put the finishing touches on their creation. Derrick and Hathol founded lineages that would rule Dwarvenhearth throughout most of its existence.

A GOLDEN AGE

Approximately five hundred years after the dwarves first arrived, dark elves came to the area. Although this event displeased the dwarves greatly, up to this point they had had no direct conflict with the subterranean elves. The dark elves had recently waged war against their surface brethren and stolen the elven city of Dreta Phantas. Unbeknownst to the dwarves at the time, the dark elves had placed Dreta Phantas far below Dwarvenhearth.

After this war, the elves of Theridae left the area and humans began to arrive. Perhaps this was a coincidence, but the humans might have sensed that the elven diaspora left a vacuum they could fill. Unlike the elves, the humans took pains to establish friendly relations with



Locator Map

Charad Titans, page 81
Day King, page 431
Night King, page 431

Dreta Phantas, page 425

The Dwarvish word for their own species is Haurdir, which translates to "the Stalwart Kings of Order."

Dark elves sent in bugbear slaves to fight the Stonemight dwarves.

Wintersouled, page 223

the dwarves of Dwarvenhearth. After many decades of leery distrust on the part of the dwarves, treaties enabled them to trade openly with the humans. However, the dwarves demanded that the humans not build within close proximity to Dwarvenhearth, to which their new allies agreed.

The following nine centuries were the golden times for Dwarvenhearth. The city and its people prospered, and gold, silver, mithral, and gemstones flowed in steady streams from the dwarven mines. Around 1,200 BE, evil spirits and undead led by the creatures known as the Wintersouled began to plague the dwarves occasionally, but they fended off these incursions, which thankfully were fairly rare.

BLACK GRAIL QUEST

Sokalahn, page 405

Banewarrens, page 389

Grail Keep, page 48

The decline of Dwarvenhearth began six hundred years later with the arrival of an evil human/demon hybrid named Sokalahn. This wizard sought an artifact held within the Banewarrens: the *Black Grail*, an item that dwarven legends spoke of as well. This artifact was forged along with the *White Grail* by ancient Grailwarden dwarves, who kept it safe in Grail Keep far to the east. But it was almost their undoing due to its powerful mind-control abilities and evil bent.

The dwarves had to decide what to do as the demon wizard built a subterranean fortress less than a mile from Dwarvenhearth. Unfortunately, the Day King of the time, Bared Stonefist, chose isolationism, watching but avoiding Sokalahn in the hopes that he would in turn ignore or avoid them.

About eight thousand years ago, Eslathagos Malkith created a magical vortex of chaos within the Spire called the Entropy Sphere. The Dread One configured magical portals called the Gates of Delirium to regulate its power so that he could utilize it freely. (See page 463.)

Pits of Insanity, page 387

Erebaccus, page 435

Sokalahn's attempts to breach the sealed Banewarrens led him to shatter one of the Gates of Delirium. This act caused the vortex of power known as the Entropy Sphere to spin off pools of chaotic energy called Pits of Insanity throughout the underrealms. These eddies of warping power infested Dwarvenhearth, twisting small pockets of the city as well as the dwarves living there. Dwarves exposed and changed by the Pits of Insanity became known as the Erebaccus, or "the Unhinged."

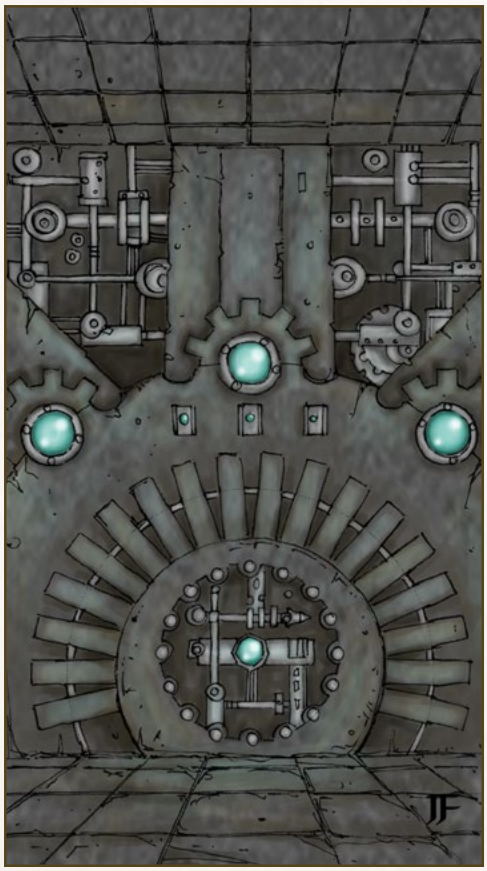
After failing to obtain the coveted *Black Grail,* Sokalahn retreated into his lichdom and ceased to plague Dwarvenhearth any further.

DARK ELF WARS

Just over a century and a half later, the dark elves' power had grown to the point where their agents began penetrating into dwarven territory. Such incursions led to open warfare between the dwarves of Dwarvenhearth and the dark elves. The war lasted for seven years, ending with the dwarven victory of Cabled Rock under General Barris Deeperstone. The victory carried with it a terrible toll, however, for many outlying subterranean Stonemight dwarf settlements and mines beyond Dwarvenhearth were sacked and ruined, and more than a thousand dwarves would never return to their homes.

About eighty years later, in 351 BE, the second of the great dark elf wars began. The dwarves had had little time to recover from the previous conflict, but the dark elves came back stronger than ever, as they utilized bugbear battle slaves extensively. This war lasted eight bitter years. During this time, all of Dwarvenhearth focused on the war effort and the annihilation of the dark elves. Mining stopped, and all miners found themselves conscripted into the Day King's or Night King's army.

During the early stages of this conflict, a dwarven spy organization called the Dorud Allum—originally created to keep their eyes on Sokalahn (who had by now disappeared)—noticed strange activity on the Spire. Someone was building a fortress halfway up its side. The Dorud Allum investigated and, after braving many terrible dangers, brought back to their lords word of the builder: a being called Ghul, the Half God, also known as the Skull-King,



What's Down There? Map: Page 385

DWARVENHEARTH CULTURE

For the more than one thousand years that Dwarvenhearth flourished, the dwarves who lived there developed their own unique culture, including facets that no longer exist among the Stonelost and seemingly never did among the Grailwarden dwarves. For example, the dwarves of Dwarvenhearth had the capacity for strong emotion typically not found among dwarves today. They possessed a greater love for song and food than others of their kind. They even had an affinity for magic—both divine and arcane—that is unequaled by modern dwarves. Sometimes these more fervent passions are attributed to the fact that the dwarves of Dwarvenhearth believed they truly lived within a sacred place.

Other traits of the Dwarvenhearth dwarves are worth noting as well. For example, boasts and exacting delineations of one's talents and accomplishments were quite an important part of Dwarvenhearth life, particularly claims of the greatness of one's family or clan. This wasn't considered boorish or arrogant.

The dwarves equated recklessness and chaos with evil.

Lastly, mental power was as respected as much as physical power—they lauded intellect as well as might.

The guilt of the Stonelost dwarves over the abandonment of their sacred city remains strong even today. They consider themselves unworthy of Dwarvenhearth and await some event that might allow them to redeem themselves as a people. Most non-Stonelost do not understand this severe self-recrimination and assure the Stonelost of their worthiness. The dwarves usually reply, "You have to be dwarf to understand."

who claimed to be the resurrected son of Eslathagos Malkith. Ghul had created a new kind of minion to build his new fortress, which he named Goth Gulgamel. The dwarves judged that the war with the dark elves was too costly for them to do anything about Ghul directly. Instead, they sealed off all portions of their city that extended to the surface.

Eslathagos Malkith, page 79

Goth Gulgamel, page 452

THE GHULWAR

The second dark elf war ended in 343 BE. The dwarves claimed victory, for Dwarvenhearth itself remained intact and unplundered, its walls and gates still sealed. Just thirteen years later, though, the war-weary dwarves faced an even greater challenge. The newly marshaled armies of Ghul, set to invade all the surrounding lands, started with Dwarvenhearth. They advanced on the Stonemight city from the extensive underground network of passages and chambers that the Skull-King's servants had made to serve as barracks, storehouses, and laboratories.

In the famous Battle of the Grand Gate, the dwarven defenders held off the first massive assault of orcs, goblins, ogres, trolls, monsters, and demons, thanks in great part to Kaval Stardelve, one of the last Day Kings, and probably one of the greatest. Using a mighty artifact called the *Platinum Cestus*, given to him by the Forge-God Morachon, King Stardelve felled the enemy in great numbers and sent the rest running in terror. The effort, however, cost King Stardelve his life.

With the Day King dead and Ghul's army quickly regrouping, the dwarves knew they would not win the next battle. Rather than allow Ghul into Dwarvenhearth, their sacred home, the dwarves used their unmatched stonecunning to seal the city. And rather than allow their people to die off trapped within, they abandoned their beloved abode and scattered themselves across the surface world. And thus the Stonemight became Stonelost.

Centuries later, after the ultimate defeat of Ghul—thanks in no small part to the dwarven armies that fought alongside the humans and elves—some of the Stonelost dwarves settled within the tower of Kaled Del to watch over Dwarvenhearth from afar. They still do not believe they are worthy to reenter their ancestral home, but they will fight to prevent others from committing such sacrilege.

Kaled Del, page 418

DWARVENHEARTH AT ITS HEIGHT

Around 700 BE, almost ten thousand dwarves lived in Dwarvenhearth, making it the largest single dwarf community known to have existed. Its mines boasted an output of thousands of tons of valuable ores each year, and the cavern farms produced almost enough for the community to be entirely self-sufficient.

The Gurhorond, a name that literally means "craftsmen of the stars," was a small clan of dwarves that lived in Dwarvenhearth, specializing in jewelcraft. Today, the last remnants of the clan can be found in the workshop called The Star Jewelers in the Guildsman District (page 181).

Network of passages: see Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

Cavern farms, page 433

DAY KINGS AND NIGHT KINGS

The Stonemight dwarves of Dwarvenhearth kept a meticulous measure of time and carefully attended the passage of days and nights, despite the fact that within the confines of their city such concepts were purely academic. At any given time, the dwarves had two rulers, called the Day King and the Night King. These rulers each commanded a twelve-hour period of each day, but despite their separation, they were truly co-regents. They usually did not work against each other's intents or seek to undo each other's rulings.

The Day King and Night King each ruled from a separate palace in different portions of the city—the Day King's Palace was in the upper regions, while the Night King's Palace lay in the deepest sections of the city. They only rarely saw each other face to face, although yearly meetings took place on the solstices at dusk.

Platinum Cestus, *page 642*

Morachon, page 73

Day King's Palace, page 448

Night King's Palace, page 448

Traditionally, the Day Kings were exuberant by dwarven standards. They wore gold, white, and even red, and the Palace of Day was filled with brightly lit halls splashed with banners depicting dwarven glories. The Day Kings were people of action and desire. Driven to excel, the Day Kings were popular among their subjects.

The Night Kings often were a dark and grim lot. Their attire and the décor of their palace were black, their demeanors dour. The Court of Night was always somber, quiet and, in the minds of many, an unnerving or at least depressing place. But such, it seemed, was the nature of the office. The Night Kings were given to deep melancholies and long periods of silent brooding. The tradition of a dreary Night King lasted throughout the history of Dwarvenhearth.

Skarls, page 439

DWARF CLANS

The dwarves of Dwarvenhearth were divided into four major clans: boar, flame, silver thorn, and stoneblood. The clans were competitive but cooperative—and never hostile to each other. Although every clan had its own warriors, wizards, priests, merchants, crafters, and so on, they each specialized in different areas. Each clan was an extended family that included hundreds of individual families.

The members of the Boar Clan were known as the greatest warriors and strove to be the most stalwart and devoted of all Stonemight dwarves. They fashioned their helms to resemble boar's heads and carried a boar's head device on their shields and armor as well. Boar's head symbols mark the entrances to Dwarvenhearth homes and other areas controlled by the Boar Clan. Clan members kept trained boars and giant boars in their dwellings. Some of the more prestigious warriors of this clan even rode huge boars into battle.

The Flame Clan were scholars and wizards who focused on rune magic. This was the smallest of the clans and produced few leaders. They used a stylized flame symbol worn on their armor and clothing, as well as to mark their homes, libraries, and studies. The Flame Clan created the skarls still found in Dwarvenhearth.

The Silver Thorn Clan were priests, philosophers, artisans, and, quite often, administrators and leaders. A silver blade, often curved, served as their symbol.

The Stoneblood Clan was the largest clan, even larger than the Boar Clan. These folk were crafters, merchants, and workers of all kinds. Their symbol was a stylized gemstone.

CAVERN FARMS

At its height, Dwarvenhearth produced most of its own food in fungi farms within natural caverns around the underground city. The dwarves also kept herds of subterranean creatures raised for meat, fur, and milk. These animals included, for instance, large subterranean lizards, cattle, and swine, as well as creatures such as giant beetles and monstrous centipedes.

Throughout most of its history, Dwarvenhearth also had exits up to the surface from which dwarf foragers and hunters could procure various foodstuffs to supplement this otherwise entirely subterranean diet.

The cavern farms were not a part of Dwarvenhearth proper and thus were not sealed with the rest of the complex. Occasionally, explorers discover relics or other evidence of these farms in the now-wild caves below Ptolus.

MINDFORGE DWARVES

The Mindforge was not a clan, but an organization within Dwarvenhearth. They were a group of dwarves who held the philosophy that "The mind is the most precious metal of all. It must be tempered very carefully and worked very precisely." They valued not just knowledge but raw intelligence—the ability to solve problems, innovate, and produc new ideas. Others often called them "puzzle-dwarves," because they always seemed preoccupied with puzzles.

The smartest of Dwarvenhearth joined the Mindforge to develop their mental faculties and exercise their talents. Most lived in the tower of Kaled Menar, found in the Cavern of Night.

ADVENTURING IN DWARVENHEARTH

As interesting as Dwarvenhearth was in the past, it's more important to focus on its present. Finding a way into Dwarvenhearth is the goal of many—perhaps even most—of the delvers and adventurers of Ptolus, for the legends of the wealth within these halls have only grown since the time of the Stonelost diaspora.

GETTING IN

Delvers can get into Dwarvenhearth in one of three ways.

1. Finding a Key. Dwarvenhearth keys look like bronze gearwheels about 4 inches across with a single Dwarvish rune inscribed upon them. Most are held—closely—by various important Stonelost dwarves. At least one or two are lost. As many as two dozen are likely to exist.

2. Breaking Down a Door. Unlike, say, the Banewarrens, which are magically sealed and impossible to breach using conventional means, Dwarvenhearth's seals use only a subtle application of earth-based magic, which has faded over time. Thus, simply breaking down a door leading into Dwarvenhearth is possible—possible, but difficult. Outer doors leading into the city look like huge gearwheels that open by rolling aside on cannily built tracks. These doors are made of steel up to 3 feet thick, laced with mithral or adamantine. Each has as many as ten different locking mechanisms, and if any one opening attempt fails, they all reset.

3. Tunneling in or Finding a Hole. Just as one might break down a Dwarvenhearth door, one could also tunnel through a wall composed of Dwarvenhearth stone, which is tougher than regular stone walls thanks to the dwarves'

Dwarven Spellcasters

Despite the traditional stereotypes of dwarves who eschew magic, many wizards and clerics lived in Dwarvenhearth. These scholarly individuals credited their power to their knowledge and study as much as to their skill or religious devotion. In fact, the Stonemight dwarves seemed to make little distinction between wizards and clerics, referring to both as delchordis, *or "miracle workers."*

The dwarves had few sorcerers, rangers, or druids, and not many bards and paladins.

Banewarrens, page 389

Dwarvenhearth entrance door: *AC 22, 1,000 hp, damage threshold 100 hp. Each of the locks is a DC 26 Sleight of Hand check to open; failing a check resets all the locks. Dwarven earth magic makes the doors and locks immune to spells and effects of 4th level or less.*

Kaled Menar, page 448

Dwarvenhearth stone wall: *AC 22, 3,000 hp, damage threshold 100 hp*

Rumor has it that Malkeen Balacazar (page 103) has recently obtained a Dwarvenhearth key and seeks to sell it to the highest bidder.

USING THE MINDFORGE

The Mindforge dwarves exist so that you, the GM, can insert strange but fun puzzle encounters that are hard to justify in a "realistic" campaign. The Mindforge guarded their domain, as well as other areas, with traps and barriers that one could avoid or bypass only by means of complex puzzles. Some typical Mindforge puzzles include the following:

The Puzzle of Drumbeats: An explorer comes to a sealed door with a number of buttons on it. If the explorer listens at the door, a beating drum is heard. If the explorer listens closely, they notice a rhythmic pattern to the drumbeats. The beats and rests indicate which buttons the explorer should press on the door to open it.

The Puzzle of the Rune-Names: The floor of a room is tiled in a pattern of square stones labeled with runes. Stepping onto some stones triggers poisoned darts to fly at anyone who enters the room. Other stones seem safe. The trick is to put the name for each rune in order of the length of the word, then step on the stones in the order of shortest to longest. Thus, "Ka" comes before "Dur," which comes before "Soth," and so on.

The Puzzle of the Pictures: A long hallway is trapped with a series of different hazards. Before each trap is a mural painted on the wall of the corridor, and within each mural lies a hidden image. Speaking the name of each hidden object—"axe," "horse," and so on—deactivates each trap.

mastery of stonecraft. All outer walls are at least 10 feet thick. Intrepid explorers also might find a hole already made by someone or something else. For example, a tunnel near the Gear Gate leads to a hole in the wall made by ankhegs.

DANGERS

Dwarvenhearth may have been sealed for many centuries, but to call it entirely abandoned would be incorrect. Inhabitants still remain within, as well as traps and other dangers.

CONSTRUCTS

The dwarves of Dwarvenhearth loved constructs of all kinds. Adventurers exploring the subterranean city will encounter golems, animated objects, and two new special kinds of golem: the cannon golem and the rune golem.

Cannon Golem: A cannon golem has shield guardian stats, with no Bound, Shield, or Spell Storing abilities. It has a self-loading small cannon embedded into one of its arms, which it can use to make the following attack in place of a fist attack: **Small Cannon (Recharge 4–6).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (4d6 – 1) bludgeoning damage.

Rune Golem: This stone golem has a magical Dwarvish rune of fire on one hand and a rune of cold on the other. Carved across the tops of its fingers, the runes are completed only when the golem clenches its hand into a fist.

A rune golem has stone golem stats, plus one of its slam attacks inflicts an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage, and the other an additional 7 (2d6) cold damage.

THE DARAGIN

Every culture has its dark side, and in Dwarvenhearth they were known as the Daragin: evil dwarves. Most of the Daragin—a name meaning "the Forsworn," because they had abandoned dwarven ways, dedication, and honor—fled Dwarvenhearth with the others. But some stayed behind, not fully realizing that getting out of the sealed city would be as difficult as getting in. Ever since, these Daragin have lived in small bands within the empty city, their numbers dwindling with the passage of time. Like the Erebaccus, whom they hate, the Daragin live off the remnants of the city's former inhabitants, breaking into storehouses for supplies.

The most prominent remaining group of Daragin in Dwarvenhearth are known as the Naragul, "the Dancers," a name that connotes chaos and recklessness among dwarves (who are not, typically, likely to dance).

Daragin like setting traps and ambushes. Most of the time, they target the Erebaccus, but they're just as happy to attack a group of adventurers that has made its way in. Unlike the Erebaccus, though, many Daragin want to leave the city. Rather than attacking intruders, they may follow them and try to learn how they got in.

Daragin culture, such as it is, centers around betrayal, depravity, and violence. Their leaders are not necessarily the strongest, but the sneakiest. However, oddly enough, the Daragin follow a code that prohibits them from killing each other. They fight, but not to the death. One Daragin does not *kill* another to defeat the loser—instead, they humiliate the loser.

DARK ELVES

Only very recently did the elves of House Yurganth gain a Dwarvenhearth key and enter the ancient city. The vampire Zachean leads the dark elves exploring Dwarvenhearth. Zachean, who spent most of his unlife attempting to gain entrance into the dwarven city, is infamous for having woken the rhodintor in the vaults beyond the Serpent Caves, believing the vaults offered a secret passage into Dwarvenhearth (they didn't).

Zachean has forged an alliance with the Forsaken in the city above but is a rival and enemy of the Covenant of Blood. He and elven leader Doraedian Mythlord are bitter enemies. In fact, Doraedian slew Zachean many decades ago, but dark elf sorcery brought him back as a vampire. Zachean was very old when he died—he fought in the second war his kind waged against the dwarves.

The dark elf vampire seeks the Tomb of King Stardelve so he can obtain the *Platinum Cestus*

THE HOUNDS

The Daragin worship the demon gods, such as Demogorgon, Ochremeshk, and Orcus. They also revere a group of demonic entities known collectively as the Hounds. The Hounds came to this world at the behest of Demogorgon to slay as many beings as they could, for the soul of anyone who dies in the maw of a Hound goes to sustain the personal essence of the demon that created the Hound. The Hounds were great foes of the dwarves in ancient times, and great dwarven heroes slew many of them. A few still roam the world, seeking souls.

The Stonemight dwarves once captured a Hound called Starsochin and imprisoned her somewhere in Dwarvenhearth. The Daragin would love to find the prison and free her. (It lies beneath the Palace of the Night King.)

Hounds resemble huge black dogs with six clawed legs and four glowing green eyes.

Hounds have barbed devil stats; alignment chaotic evil. Each of its four eyes creates a different ray (cold, fire, force, or lightning), with stats equivalent to a barbed devil's Hurl Flame ability; the Hound can fire one ray as a bonus action, and each eye can be fired once every four rounds.

Palace of the Night King, page 448

Small cannon, page 524

Just as most surface elves feel the need to attack dark elves on sight, most dwarves—particularly Stonelost dwarves—find it very hard to suffer the presence of a Daragin.

A typical Daragin has spy stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: potion of climbing, potions of invisibility *(2), thieves' tools, climber's kit, 44 gp.*

A Daragin champion has assassin stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: +1 double pistol, *ammunition (20 rounds),* boots of striding and springing, brooch of shielding, potion of greater healing, potion of heroism, potion of invisibility, *thieves' tools, climber's kit, diamond ring worth 600 gp, 178 gp. They have a bound shadow companion (this shadow cannot create more shadows).*

Double pistol, page 522

House Yurganth, page 425

Vaults of the Rhodintor, page 421

Forsaken, page 111

Erebaccus, page 435

Covenant of Blood, page 103

Doraedian Mythlord, page 197

A dwarf player character probably will not wish to enter Dwarvenhearth without an extremely good reason, as doing so is tantamount to sacrilege against everything dwarves hold holy. That said, if a group of adventurers is determined to go, their dwarf friend might consider it better to accompany them rather than let them go in unescorted, so as to limit the amount of damage they inflict within the sacred walls.

Tomb of King Stardelve, page 444

Platinum Cestus, *page 642*

artifact. With it, he hopes to take control of the entire city, enabling dark elf forces to occupy it; he would rule as the new Night King (with no Day King).

On his current mission, Zachean leads the following retainers:

- Fifteen typical dark elf soldiers.
- A priestess of Gorgoth-Lol named Erixala (female dark elf).
- A ranger named Assart (male dark elf).

Zachean always visibly wears a silver House Yurganth pin worth 50 gp.

The dark elves in Dwarvenhearth also have made arrangements with a deep-dwelling band of stone giants to help them in their endeavor. Mainly, the stone giants serve as a rear guard, making sure that no one else entering the city reaches the dark elves while they explore.

Zachean has vampire stats, with AC 18 and the spellcasting of a mage; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: bracers of defense, *hand crossbow,* +1 bolts *(12), sintrin poison (12 doses), 25 pp.*

In addition to his immediate retinue, Zachean has placed a male dark elf (arcanist stats, page 605) as a liaison with a small band of stone giants in the caverns just outside of Dwarvenhearth. Zachean will use these stone giant allies as reserves, should he come under threat.

Dark elf soldiers, page 425

Erixala has ecclesiastic stats (page 608), with two 5th-level spell slots.

Assart has assassin stats, with advantage on attack rolls against dwarves and elves. He specializes in using poison, as well as two crossbows at once.

The poison that dark elves use is called sintrin (DC 13 Constitution save), which makes a creature poisoned for an hour, or unconscious for an hour if they fail the save by 5 or more.

A dwarf who learns that there are dark elves within Dwarvenhearth suddenly has very good reason to enter its sacred halls—to drive out the damnable elves and prevent any more from reentering.

DWARVEN TRAPS

The traps of Dwarvenhearth are legendary and certainly count as a persistent danger to anyone exploring the ancient city. Most of the traps are keyed to entrances into the city and secondary entrances into various areas of importance—meeting halls, libraries, storehouses, courts, vaults, and so forth. Still, sometimes the dwarves placed traps where an intruder would least expect them. Many were created in the city's later days, when the idea of evacuation had become a real prospect to the inhabitants. Thus, some were traps left behind not to ward important places, but simply to harass and confound those who might enter the city after the dwarves left.

The traps of Dwarvenhearth are notoriously difficult to find and disable. Areas frequented by spellcasters often have magical, rune-based traps, but these are the exceptions—most traps here are mechanical. Almost all of them have a hidden lock bypass, but these cannot be located before the trap itself is found.

Here are some example traps you can use:

Pit trap: Trapdoor in floor opens, dropping creatures on or next to it into a 30-foot-deep pit if they fail a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. DC 18 Perception check to find, DC 18 Sleight of Hand check to disable.

Wall scythe trap: A blade slices out from a wall, attacking a nearby creature with a +5 attack bonus, inflicting 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage. DC 20 Perception check to find, DC 18 Sleight of Hand check to disable.

Alchemist's fire pit: Trapdoor in floor opens, dropping creatures on or next to it into a 20-foot-deep pit if they fail a DC 15 Dexterity save. A creature falling into the pit will break the glass floor, igniting the alchemist's fire underneath and releasing more upon the areas adjacent to the pit. DC 18 Perception check to find, DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to disable.

Wyvern arrow trap: An arrow coated in wyvern poison fires from a concealed hole, attacking a creature within 100 feet with a +7 attack bonus, inflicting 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage. If hit, the target must make a DC 15 Constitution save, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. DC 22 Perception check to find, DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to disable.

Dropping ceiling trap: One round after being triggered, the ceiling in an area (typically a 10-foot square) slams down to the floor. Creatures take 42 (12d6) bludgeoning damage, or none if they make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw to move out of the area.

THE EREBACCUS

The Erebaccus are also known as "the Unhinged." The sad truth is, not every dwarf left Dwarvenhearth. Some stayed behind on purpose, and some (such as criminals) were left behind, either accidentally or intentionally. Most of those who found themselves trapped within the sealed city suffered mentally for this imprisonment. Others were afflicted by exposure to the Pits of Insanity. These dwarven remnants and their descendants survive by pillaging Dwarvenhearth storehouses, moving about the subterranean city in small nomadic bands. Among themselves, they feud and make war, but they hate others—like the Daragin and the Soulless—even more. They attack any creatures they see, screaming in battle with wild abandon.

Most Erebaccus do not speak Common.

Erebaccus are never clerics, as they have forgotten the importance of their dwarven gods.

Erebaccus typically wear rags and clothing that's been partially shredded by their own ravings. Their hair and beards are unkempt and wild or—unthinkably—completely shaved off.

A typical Erebaccus has thug stats, with AC 11 and the Reckless ability of a berserker; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: leather armor, +1 battleaxe, *javelins (3),* potion of greater healing, potion of hill giant strength, *31 gp.*

An Erebaccus leader is a sorcerer with arcanist stats (page 605), relying on spells like color spray, Mel's acid arrow, *and* mirror image; *alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: heavy mace,* wand of magic missiles, *gold necklace (120 gp), 34 gp.*

HIISTICHES

Known as "fear bugs" among the Erebaccus and Daragin, hiistiches are terrible swarms of insect creatures. They once were one of the banes trapped in the Banewarrens, but Sokalahn loosed them in his attempts to obtain the *Black Grail*. They now are found throughout Dwarvenhearth, preying mainly on

Pits of Insanity, page 387
Daragin, page 434
Soulless, page 436
Banewarrens, page 389
Sokalahn, page 405

A hiistich swarm has swarm of poisonous snakes stats, with the fiend type, a flying speed of 30 feet, resistance to fire, magical fear effects on the swarm heal it 10 hp per spell level, the swarm's bite attack can inflict psychic damage (instead of piercing and poison), a creature brought to 0 hp by this psychic damage permanently gains the frightened condition (they're afraid of everything*).*

A Servant of the Axe has thug stats, with AC 18 and +1 to attack and damage rolls with its melee weapon. Equipment: plate, +1 battleaxe.

Thundersong, *page 645*

Bastions, page 439

Rumor speaks of hidden tunnels within Dwarvenhearth that swarm with hiistiches and lead into unsealed portions of the Banewarrens.

Like so many of the evils in the world, the hiistiches' existence can be traced back to the Galchutt. In the early days of the world, these horrors were spawned from spilled Galchutt blood during the wars that the Lords of Chaos fought among themselves.

Ghulwar, page 31

Yurabbos, Goddess of Supreme Devotion, page 74

The Soulless were created in the Chamber of Day Into Night off the Cathedral Cavern (see page 448). Each rune there holds the soul of one guardian.

GM TIPS

The very existence of the Soulless is the ultimate example of unswerving dwarven fidelity and the lengths to which dwarves will go in order to accomplish what they feel is right. In encounters with the Soulless, don't forget that they have immunities like undead, they never show fear, and they never tire. One cannot hope to reason with them.

A typical Soulless guardian has veteran stats; immunity to necrotic and poison damage; immunity to the charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, and poisoned conditions; +1 to attack and damage rolls with their melee weapon. Equipment: masterwork breastplate, masterwork shield, +1 battleaxe, *masterwork heavy crossbow, bolts (20), silver bracers worth 100 gp each.*

Masterwork items, page 438

the Erebaccus and Daragin, but also on other inhabitants or intruders, rare though they are.

Hiistiches feed on fear. They attack creatures but rarely to kill—only to cause fear and revulsion, which sustains them. Thus, the damage they inflict usually isn't physical (though they can inflict normal damage if desired).

A hiistich encounter can come in three forms. The first is a simple cloudlike swarm of green-and-black insects. The goal of such a swarm is to inflict enough psychic damage to reduce its victims to 0 hit points, which in this case represents a state of perpetual terror, ended only when the victims finally starve to death.

The second type of hiistich encounter, much rarer, is when a swarm takes on the form of an ogre- or elephant-sized physical creature of almost any sort. The hive mind of such a swarm takes on a real, singular identity, so the individual hiistiches all act in concert. The swarm still looks like a mass of horrid insects, but it has the general shape and size of the mimicked creature. It uses the mimicked creature's size and other physical characteristics, including attacks. When the swarm loses half its hit points, it reverts to a standard swarm form.

The third and rarest type of hiistich encounter involves a hive that has managed to reduce a victim to a state of perpetual terror. Rather than allowing it to waste away and die, the swarm nurtures the victim by forcing it to consume hiistiches. This act, requiring torturous months, eventually makes the creature into a slave of the swarm, known as a *ptan pa*. The creature's mind returns to it over time, and the hiistiches cease attacking and poisoning it. No longer is the swarm a source of nourishment; the enslaved creature now must serve the hiistiches' needs—attack their enemies, defend the swarm, scout for victims, and so forth.

The hiistiches also use their *ptan pa* as a breeding ground, implanting slave bodies with hundreds of eggs that hatch into larvae. *Ptan pa* look like normal specimens of their kind, but their visages are permanently contorted into grimaces of horror. Their bodies swarm with crawling insects and larva and display festering boils (actually egg deposits). *Ptan pa* otherwise retain all their normal abilities, but now serve the hiistich swarm.

PITS OF INSANITY

These areas of wild, chaotic energy warp and twist the orderly structure of Dwarvenhearth. For more information about the Pits of Insanity, see page 387.

SERVANTS OF THE AXE

The Servants of the Axe were fanatical dwarves, some of whom still exist as undead creatures. They all remain under the thrall of a powerful, mind-controlling artifact: an intelligent axe called *Thundersong*, whose control extends even past death. It is aware of everything its servants experience.

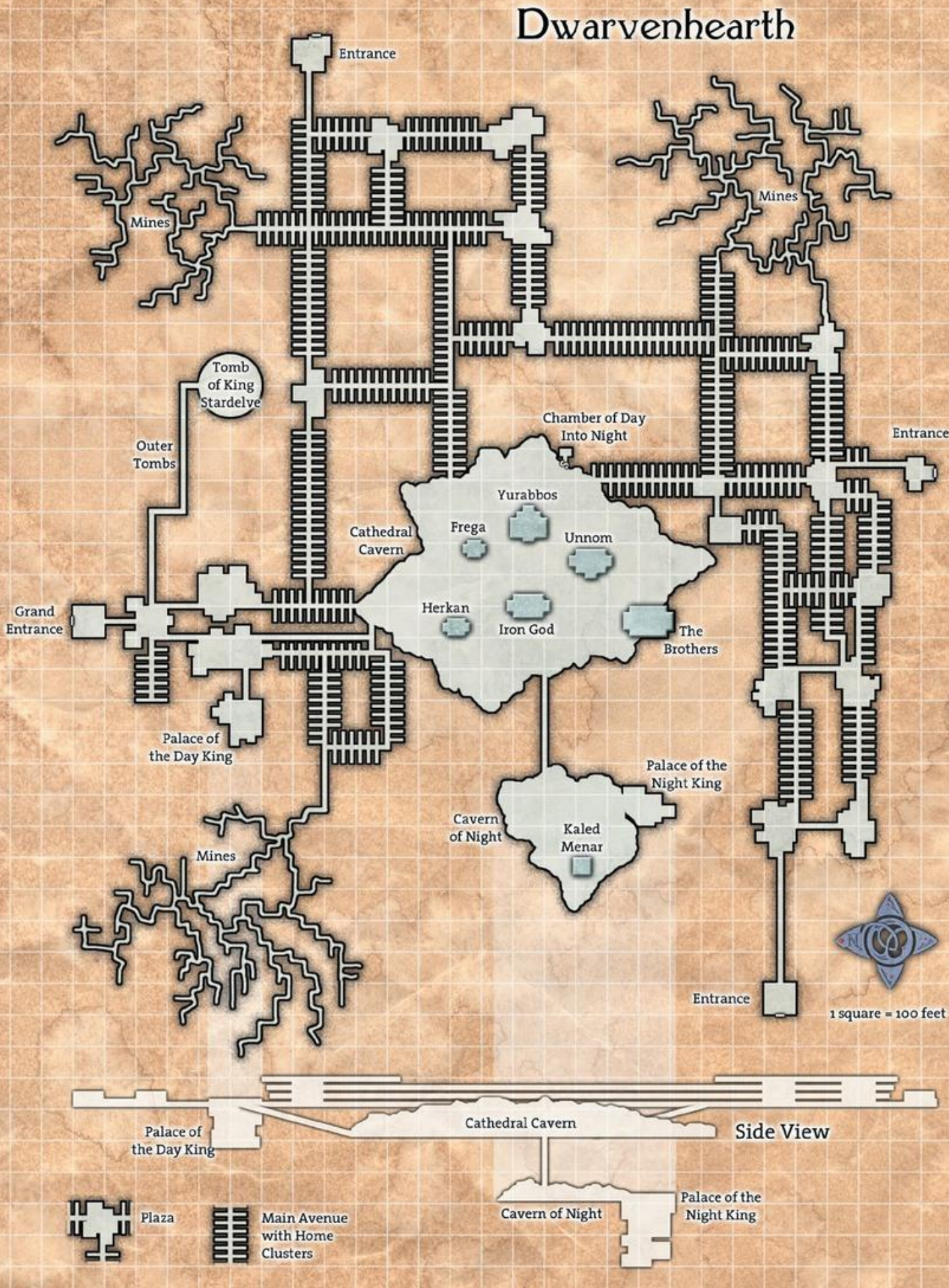
The axe lies within a secret room beneath the barracks found near a bastion in the southern portion of the city. With so little going on in Dwarvenhearth, *Thundersong* has few interests or goals. Once its servants encounter others from outside the city, however, it will wish to know where they are from—it may even want to go there. This may require that its servants, with the axe in hand, follow intruders out, or it may entail the servants capturing and interrogating outlanders. The axe also may attempt to lure the intruders to it, then trick them into taking it with them when they leave.

THE SOULLESS

Most dwarves fled Dwarvenhearth during the Ghulwar, but it was clear that some guardians needed to remain behind. While the Stonemight dwarves had fashioned golems and other constructs of all kinds, the constructs were too few in number to put up any significant resistance to a powerful and persistent invading force. Thus, the dwarves chose another, far more drastic option. Using powerful rune magic and a terrible ritual dedicated to Yurabbos, Goddess of Supreme Devotion, some dwarven volunteers imprisoned their own souls within runes, so their bodies and minds would remain to guard the city's most important locations. Their fierce dedication keeps them going without food, sleep, and emotion, and virtually without life. These are the Soulless.

GMs should be careful to note that the Soulless are not undead. They cannot be affected by things that normally affect undead. However, like most undead, they are immune to mind-affecting magic and effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and magic that causes instant death. They do not age and do not breathe.

Without their spirits, these guardians seem almost like automatons, but they are not mindless: they are soulless. They are smart enough to repair and maintain traps, barriers, weapons and armor, and so on. They cannot make complex decisions, however, and they cannot be reasoned with. Their only focus is to guard and to lay down their quasi-lives to defend Dwarvenhearth; they attack *any* intruder, even dwarves. They turn to dust when slain, the


Dwarvenhearth
Entrance
Mines
Mines
Tomb of King Stardelve
Outer Tombs
Chamber of Day Into Night
Entrance
Yurabbos
Frega
Unnom
Cathedral Cavern
Herkan
Iron God
The Brothers
Grand Entrance
Palace of the Day King
Palace of the Night King
Cavern of Night
Kaled Menar
Mines
Entrance
1 square = 100 feet
Palace of the Day King
Cathedral Cavern
Side View
Cavern of Night
Palace of the Night King
Plaza
Main Avenue with Home Clusters

It's worth stressing that despite Dwarvenhearth's age and the length of its abandonment, the place remains in extremely good condition. The walls do not show cracks. The engineering has not failed. It may occur to visitors that, should they ever feel themselves worthy again, the Stonelost dwarves could move back into their ancestral city and easily make it as though they had never left—except, of course, for the damage done by the Erebaccus and the Daragin, and the sad fact that the Soulless would all have to be slain.

The still-functioning plumbing of Dwarvenhearth brings fresh water into every home and every plaza and takes away waste.

Technology, page 521

tide of years long avoided finally catching up with them.

A spell capable of restoring life restores a Soulless's soul to their body, but unless the most powerful kind of revivification magic is used, the body ages and disintegrates four rounds after the soul is restored.

TREASURES

For all its wards and dangers, Dwarvenhearth retains its strong allure for delvers, because within these halls lie fabulous treasures of all kinds.

FIREARMS AND TECHNOLOGY

Although not as known for science as their Grailwarden cousins, the Stonemight dwarves were no strangers to firearms and other technology. Dwarvenhearth is filled with clocks and clockwork mechanisms, firearms and cannons, and the occasional steam-powered engine. Some of the more exotic firearms mentioned in Chapter 29: Technology—the hydra rifle, the chimera rifle, and the hellsbreath gun, for instance—are found in Dwarvenhearth more commonly than in Ptolus. Because they were fashioned by dwarves, almost all of these devices still function. Those interested in such things will find Dwarvenhearth to be a treasure trove.

JEWELRY AND OBJECTS OF ART

Anyone who thinks that dwarves are not artistic does not understand them at all. These artisans produced some of the most beautiful jewelry and other art objects ever seen. Dwarven treasures of this type are always carved from stone, shaped from metal, or both. This includes beautiful mithral armors; clothing of gold or silver threads; statues and sculptures of onyx, alabaster, malachite, gold, silver, or other materials; gem-encrusted weapons; golden-framed mirrors; jeweled lamps; bronze-bound books; gold belt buckles; elaborate silver and ebony necklaces; gold and emerald rings; and more.

MASTERWORK ITEMS

Much of the dwarves' handiwork was of masterwork quality, which means it's very high quality and worth an additional 10 to 100 gp more than common items of the same type. Weapons, armor, and even tools and household items were made with techniques that would amaze any modern crafter.

What's Down There? Map: Page 385

MITHRAL, ADAMANTINE, AND OTHER MINERALS

Items made from rare metals and minerals are common in Dwarvenhearth, and so are storehouses with deposits of unrefined ore. At its height, this city was so mineral-rich, the dwarves intentionally used aethel stones to absorb light and heat, creating what are known as *glowstones* and *warmstones*, respectively.

SKARLS AND OTHER MAGIC

The *delchordis* ("miracle workers") of Dwarvenhearth created unique magic items called skarls. Skarls resembled brass knuckles with a small metal shield over the wearer's fist. The shield bore a single Dwarvish rune. Skarls function like wands, which means they usually hold a single magical effect that can be triggered multiple times.

Of course, delvers can find other types of magic here as well—particularly weapons and armor, but also books, scrolls, potions, and various miscellaneous items. Actual wands and staves are quite rare.

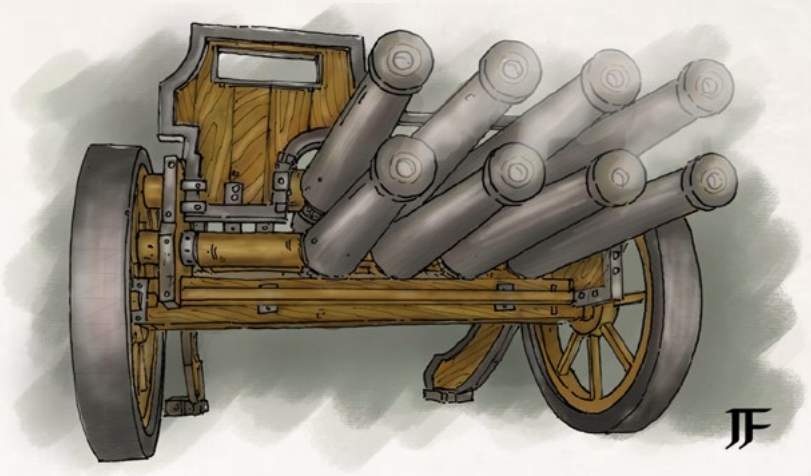
GENERAL LOCATIONS

Many areas within Dwarvenhearth strongly resemble each other, as the Stonemight dwarves built edifices with similar functions according to identical plans. Such locations—defensible bastions, community plazas, typical houses, mines, forges, storehouses, and workshops—are described here in general terms.

Being long-lived themselves, dwarf engineers build their structures to last—especially in Dwarvenhearth. They believed their home was a holy site, given to them by their gods, so they crafted every last wall join, frieze, and door with reverence and extreme care, not to mention a skill that surpasses anything other peoples could hope to attain. Over the centuries, these structures have remained in remarkably good shape, a testament to dwarven construction principles and practices.

Unless otherwise described, interior doors are made of 4-inch-thick stone and are locked. Unlike the doors that lead out of Dwarvenhearth, they have no special resistance to magic.

For a guide to the format of these locale descriptions and the icons used here, please see District Neighborhoods/Locations.



BASTIONS

see map, page 440

Located throughout Dwarvenhearth, bastions occupy positions built to be defensible. The entire city was designed so that, should invaders break through the outer barriers, the residents retained ever-shrinking perimeters that they could defend. Dwarven culture assumed that every adult would fight to defend the city, so the builders made sure they had well-designed places to defend.

LAYOUT

Each bastion stands within a chamber at least 30 feet high and at least 100 feet across. The bastion's walls measure 6 feet thick and are very smooth.

Aethel stones, page 646

GM TIPS

The mood of Dwarvenhearth is somber and at times even dour. This entire place is a testament to the greatness that can be attained and yet lost. The loss of Dwarvenhearth comes not only from the evil actions of Ghul but also from the impossibly high standards the dwarven residents set for themselves so long ago. Dwarvenhearth is a place of vanished glories, regrets, and sorrows.

Bastion wall: *AC 22, 1,800 hp, damage threshold 100 hp*

1. Ditch and Bridge

A chasm 20 feet deep and wide bisects the chamber in front of the bastion. The ditch's walls are smooth stone, identical to the walls of the bastion itself. In fact, the bastion's walls rise up directly from the bottom of the chasm—there is no lip on the bastion's outer wall upon which invaders could position planks or any kind of makeshift bridge. An iron drawbridge can lower in front of the gate (area 2) to span the ditch.

A typical Dwarvenhearth interior stone door is AC 19, 25 hp, DC 24 Strength check to break, DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to unlock

2. Gate

The gate is a single door made of iron measuring 1 foot thick. The drawbridge, when up, serves as an additional barrier of iron.

Gate and drawbridge (when up): *AC 20, 90 hp, DC 26 Strength check to break*

3. Gatehouse

Positioned over the gate, the gatehouse offers embrasures for making ranged attacks and murder holes for dropping attacks directly onto anyone immediately in front of the gate. This room hosts a large vat positioned over a firepit where defenders can heat oil to drop.

District Neighborhoods/Locations, page 160

Pit trap: *It is a DC 15 Dexterity save to avoid falling through the trapdoor into the 40-foot-deep pit. It is a DC 22 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 18 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

Bombs, page 523

Cannons, page 523

4. Crenellated Mezzanines

This area is open so defenders can attack those assaulting the bastion. The mezzanine stands 20 feet above the level of the floor and hangs 40 feet above the bottom of the ditch. It resembles the top of a defensive wall in a standard fortress, even though the wall here goes all the way to the ceiling. Those standing on the mezzanine have cover from anywhere in the bastion's chamber. The iron door leading back into the bastion has a special lever on the inward side that not only locks the door but sets a pit trap in the 5-foot square in front of it on the mezzanine side; when triggered, a trapdoor sends anyone standing on this square down into the chasm below.

5. Embrasures

These narrow openings located throughout the bastion's walls allow defenders to fire ranged weapons at oncoming attackers. A light crossbow and a quiver of crossbow bolts may hang on a peg nearby.

6. Upper Chamber

The use of the upper chamber shows how different fighting underground can be from aboveground battles. Above but *outside of* each bastion lies a chamber accessible only from within the bastion. This low-ceilinged room looks down on the attackers before the wall and has murder holes in the floor for dropping bombs, oil, and alchemist's fire, or for making ranged attacks. Each murder hole measures 3 feet across and is covered with both an iron door and a hinged iron grate.

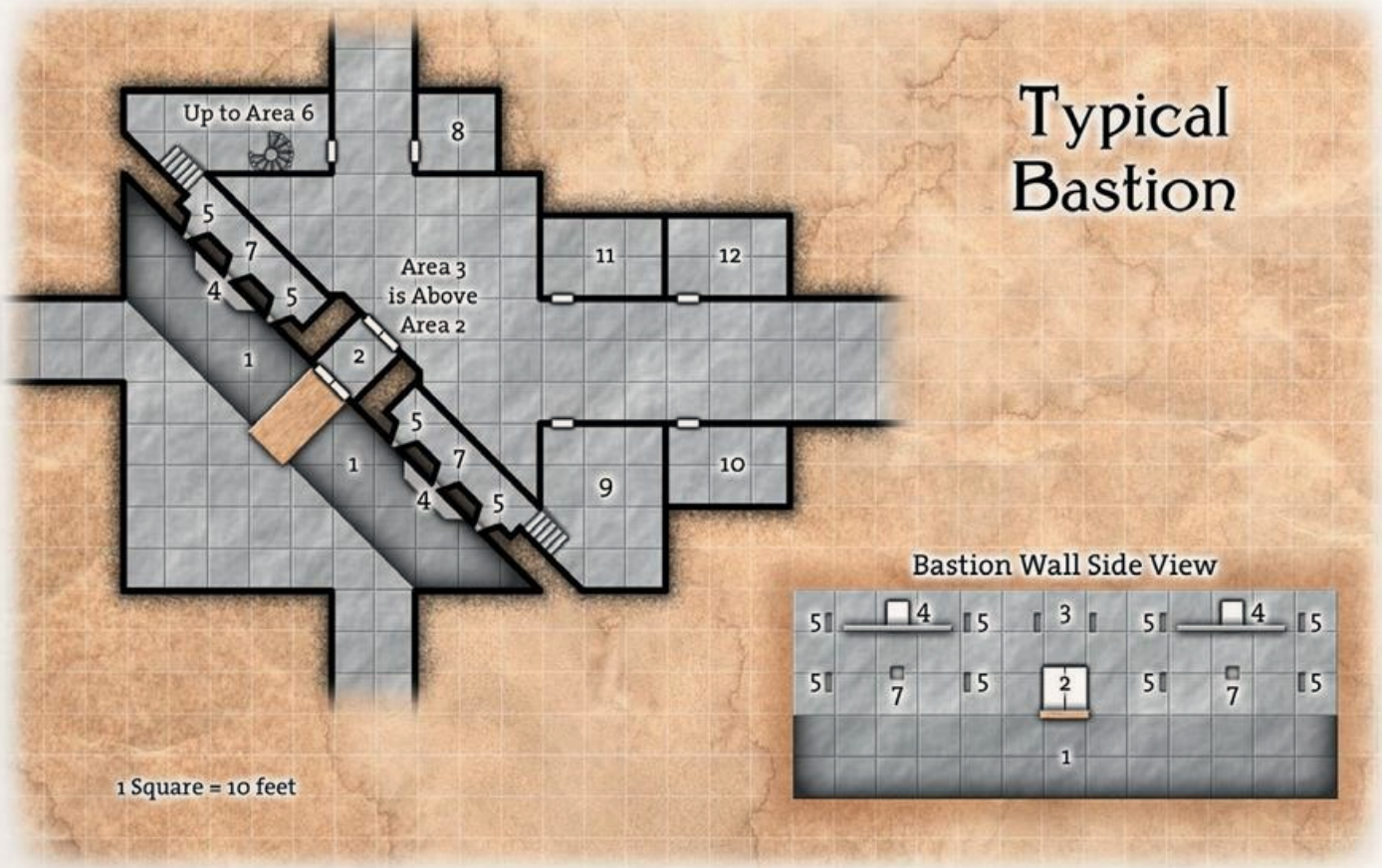
This room also holds four large cauldrons positioned over firepits for heating oil to drop, as well as a wooden barrel full of caltrops and an iron cabinet that holds five powder bombs and three smoke bombs.

7. Cannons

These two emplacements hold small cannons. The cannons fire from wide loops that can be sealed with iron doors.

8. Magazine

This chamber across a bailey from the bastion's main wall stores the powder kegs needed for the cannons as well as the defenders' firearms and ammunition. There is enough powder and shot here for two hundred rounds from a firearm and fifty uses of the cannons.



What's Down There? Map: Page 385

9. Barracks

The barracks for the defenders adjoins the bastion's main wall. It contains space enough to quarter twenty soldiers.

10. Commander's Quarters/Office

Next to the barracks (area 9), one can find the quarters for the commander of the bastion. This room also served as their office.

11. Storehouse

Across the bailey lies a simple storehouse of clothing, food, gear, and other necessities for the defenders. As the room is not sealed, most of the contents have rotted or spoiled by now.

12. Armory

The room adjacent to the storehouse holds arms and armor of all kinds. Typically, such an armory might contain the following:

- 12 glaives
- 12 battleaxes and 2 masterwork battleaxes
- 4 greataxes and 1 masterwork greataxe
- 12 heavy crossbows and 2 masterwork heavy crossbows
- 120 crossbow bolts
- 6 dragon rifles
- 8 suits of dwarf-sized chain mail armor
- 6 shields and 2 masterwork shields
- 2 masterwork breastplates

BASTIONS TODAY

Today, Soulless guards use these defensive points to watch for and defend against all intruders (as well as Erebaccus and other "native" foes). Erebaccus and Daragin avoid these bastions as places of certain doom.

If crewed (and most still are), a bastion contains ten Soulless guards standing watch. Typically, as soon as intruders enter the chamber to approach the wall, four guards crew and fire the cannons, then use light crossbows from the embrasures. Two take to the upper chamber and attack from above, using the powder bombs. Two crew the gatehouse and two the mezzanine.

FORGES/WORKSHOPS

map N/A

Not surprisingly, adventurers can find forges and workshops throughout Dwarvenhearth. Often located near a storehouse containing tools and raw materials, these areas can be very large, comprising a dozen different forges, kilns, and other individual work areas.

Forges and workshops are rarely inhabited and almost never guarded. The ghost or wraith of an artisan who worked here is the most likely—albeit rare—encounter. If a creature or elemental that hungers for metal ever gained entry to Dwarvenhearth, one likely would find it in a forge or workshop near a storehouse.

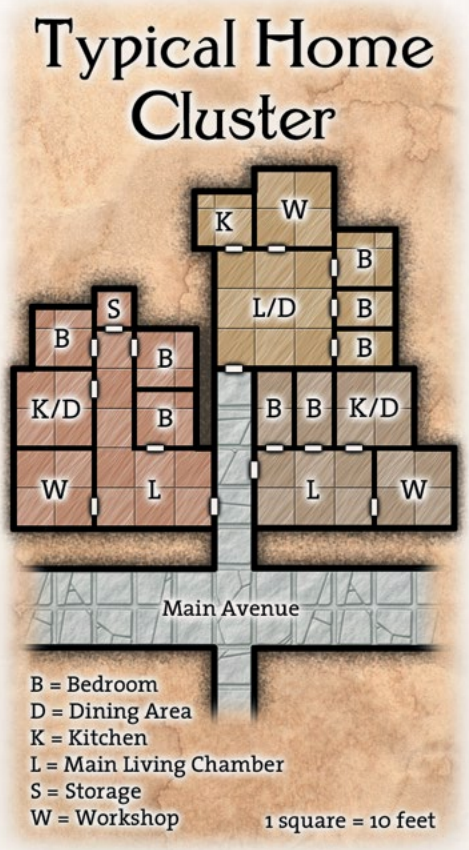
HOUSES

see map, below

Dwarvenhearth is full of homes. Most are located just off 20-foot-wide "avenues" tunneled through the earth. The dwarves built their homes in clusters of three connected by a 10-foot-wide passage leading to the avenue. Most residential areas have two or three levels. This means that, on the Dwarvenhearth map, each major passage actually represents two or three passages (stacked vertically), each with its own branches that hold subterranean homes.

A typical home provided living quarters for two to four dwarves. This usually meant a married couple and one or two children, or one child plus an elder relative such as an aunt, uncle, or grandparent. Most homes are simple but elegant—while not spacious or ornate, the craft in every pilaster, every cornice, every stone lintel, every coronet, and every ornament is impeccable and retains perfect form even centuries after its construction.

Most homes retain closed and locked doors. Looters will find valuables worth between 100 gp and 400 gp within, including very simple



Sometimes explorers in Dwarvenhearth come upon a bastion that has been damaged. This is usually from an attack by Erebaccus or Daragin. It's likely that in such a bastion, the armory (area 12) is empty and there are no defenders. These are the exception, however, rather than the rule.

Dwarvenhearth map, page 437

Dragon rifles, page 522

Soulless, page 436

Some Dwarvenhearth homes are atypical. These usually belonged to very wealthy or prestigious dwarves. Such homes are sealed with multiple locked doors and sometimes warded with traps or guards (such as constructs or Soulless). They also contain great wealth.

Storehouses, page 443

"Every home a palace, every dwarf a king."
~Stonelost saying about Dwarvenhearth

Sometimes in a dwarven home, workshop, or plaza, explorers might find a craftily hidden secret door. These typically lead to small vaults used to store personal treasures. The vast majority are undiscovered and unplundered and contain between 1,000 and 5,000 gp worth of various treasures.

Erebaccus and Erebaccus leaders, page 435

Warmstone, *page 439*

Soulless guard

Dwarvenhearth minted its own coins, which look distinctive in that they are rectangular and bear the images of hammers, anvils, and axes. Of course, spending Dwarvenhearth coins in Ptolus is likely to earn some attention and will rile the Stonelost dwarves.

jewelry, decorated vases, mirrors, pots, and so forth. About one in four homes contains a masterwork weapon as well—usually a battleaxe, greataxe, warhammer, dwarven waraxe, or heavy crossbow with ammunition.

Although typical homes are virtually never guarded, looters should beware of wandering oozes that might have gained entry into a home while seeking organic substances to consume. Delvers also should watch out for vengeful wraiths or ghosts of the dwarves who once lived here and dislike the idea of intruders in their homes.

MINES

map N/A

Winding passages, some unstable after all this time, make up the mines that stretch out from the edges of Dwarvenhearth. Many of them still harbor veins of silver and gold or valuable minerals. Ore cart tracks run through many mine passages, and the carts are still there as well. Winch-driven lifts move up and down shafts to provide access to lower and higher levels—the mines are very much three-dimensional networks of tunnels and chambers. The mines are never trapped, but occasionally isolated areas become unstable and can produce a cave-in if disturbed.

Oozes and various subterranean burrowing creatures make their homes in the mines, or simply use them to get around underground.

PLAZAS

see map, at right

Numerous plazas and gallerias can be found throughout Dwarvenhearth, usually at central points amid clusters of homes. A multitude of chambers extend off each plaza. These rooms were once shops and businesses that sold all manner of goods and services. Dealers of nonperishable items still may be stocked with various goods, some useful and some not (delvers might find rope, spikes, tools, and so forth, but just as many shops sold ceramic mugs and dishes, clothing, and furniture).

Each plaza's ceiling measures 60 to 70 feet high. They always have two levels—a main floor and a wide gallery that runs about the perimeter offering another level of shops, chambers, and passages leading off the gallery. The main level contains thick rectangular columns supporting the rock ceiling.

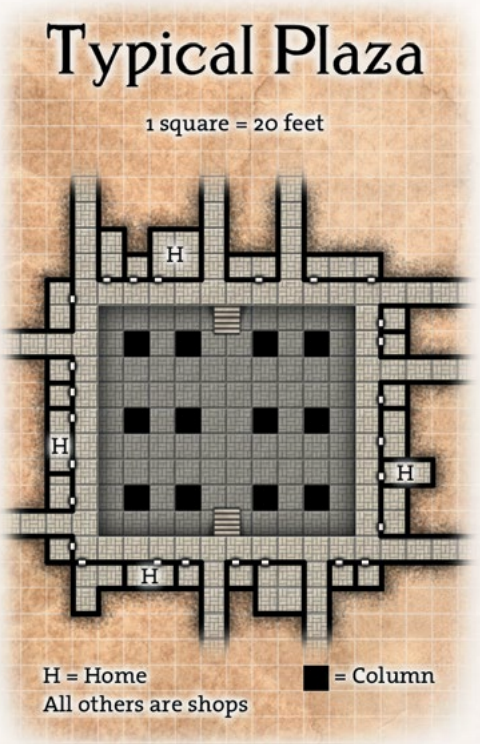
Many shops off the plazas have been looted by the Erebaccus or Daragin. In fact, a plaza is the most likely place to encounter a group of these deviant dwarves. It also might offer the lairs of creatures that have managed to gain entry into Dwarvenhearth, such as giant spiders or centipedes, oozes, or burrowing monsters.

EREBACCUS ENCOUNTER

A group of Erebaccus is likely to be five to eight individuals plus a leader. Having just looted a small shop for tools, weapons, or food, the group sits around a *warmstone*. At any given time, two Erebaccus stand watch. The group launches an immediate and furious attack against anyone it sees. However, the leader, a female sorcerer who speaks a little Common, might want to parley if the intruders offer a magical item in tribute, or information about magic that can be found within Dwarvenhearth.

The members of this particular group are very young. They all believe the former residents of Dwarvenhearth died in a terrible apocalypse. They also have a difficult time conceptualizing that the world is larger than the bounds of their subterranean city.

In addition to personal equipment, this group of looters carries about 1,000 gp worth of various masterwork or treasure items.



DARAGIN ENCOUNTER

A wandering group of Daragin comprises four to six individuals with a male champion. In addition to his normal equipment, the champion has a special one-use *iron flask* magic item that contains a bound D'Stradi dancer. This group has just found the flask and is returning to its leaders with the prize (the dwarves imprisoned the demon within the flask long ago and stored it in a vault, then forgot about it). The Daragin are on the move and don't want anyone or anything getting in their way, but, if pressed, they won't hesitate to release the demon.

STOREHOUSES

map n/a

A Dwarvenhearth storehouse is typically protected by a locked door. About half of the storehouses contain foodstuffs—grain, vegetables, salted meats, spices, fresh water, ale, beer, and so forth. Each type of food is kept in sealed stone bins. About one-third of the storehouses contain tools, gear (rope, pulleys, picks, lanterns, etc.), and raw materials, such as planks of wood, ores, and so on. Still others hold mundane items, from clothing to furniture. The rest—only about 10 percent—are armories with weapons and armor. Each armory contains at least five masterwork weapons, shields, or armor.

Dwarvenhearth stonework is so perfect that a sealed storehouse remains airtight even after the passage of centuries. Those containing food and other perishables preserve their contents so well that they virtually have not aged. When someone opens the door to a sealed dwarven storehouse, a faint hiss sounds as the airtight seal is broken.

A sealed storehouse never has inhabitants, but all manner of scavengers might live within the ones that have already been opened: Erebaccus, oozes, giant rats, giant insects, and so forth.

A few Dwarvenhearth storehouses are guarded by constructs or Soulless; in such cases, the contents are likely to be quite valuable.

SPECIFIC LOCATIONS

This section presents a few sample specific locations within Dwarvenhearth: the Grand Entrance, Outer Tombs, the Tomb of King Stardelve, Cathedral Cavern, Cavern of Night, and the Palace of the Day King. GMs should use these offerings as a guideline for creating other locations in the dwarven city and to supplement Dwarvenhearth adventures.

For a guide to the format of these locale descriptions and the icons used here, please see District Neighborhoods/Locations.

GRAND ENTRANCE

see map, page 444

At the north end of the city of Dwarvenhearth lies the Grand Entrance: the main entry to the settlement once the dwarves permanently closed off all direct passages to the surface upon discovering Ghul.

1. GEAR GATE

This massive gear gate door leading into Dwarvenhearth looks like a huge gearwheel that opens by rolling aside on cannily built tracks. It is made of steel 3 feet thick and laced with adamantine. The gate has ten different locking mechanisms, assuming a Dwarvenhearth key is not available. If any attempt to pick one of the ten locks fails, they all reset.

2. INVERTED TOWER

When the Gear Gate opens, the Inverted Tower is the first thing a visitor sees. The ceiling in the chamber rises 50 feet. Accessed from above, the tower projects down from the ceiling like a stalactite—the lowest level hangs suspended 15 feet off the ground. From within its three levels connected by ladders, defenders can fire crossbows and dragon rifles through loops at any spot within the chamber beyond the gate. If invaders gain access to the tower, the defenders can release the entire Inverted Tower from the ceiling with a single lever (in effect, triggering the Inverted Tower trap), not only denying the attackers access to the corridor above but sending hundreds of tons of stone crashing down onto them.

3. INNER GATE

The Inner Gate features a massive iron bar that seals its two iron doors just south of the Inverted Tower.

4. GATEHOUSE

Positioned above the Inner Gate, the gatehouse is accessed from above by a corridor that leads to the chamber above the Slaughterhouse (area 5). From the gatehouse, defenders can fire down upon anyone coming through the Gear Gate (area 1) with cover behind arrow loops. They also can use a mechanized lever system here to release the iron bar sealing the Inner Gate.

5. SLAUGHTERHOUSE

The Stonemight dwarves called this area between the Inner Gate and the Second Gate the Slaughterhouse because dwarves with crossbows and dragon rifles could fire at intruders from embrasures in the two-story chambers on either side, and dwarves above the room could

Daragin and Daragin champion, page 434

D'Stradi dancer, page 588

Ghul, page 83

The Grand Entrance lies near the Eternity Cave (see page 418), below the South Market.

Dwarvenhearth entrance door: *AC 22, 1,000 hp, damage threshold 100 hp. Each of the locks is a DC 26 Sleight of Hand check to open; failing a check resets all the locks. Dwarven earth magic makes the doors and locks immune to spells and effects of 4th level or less.*

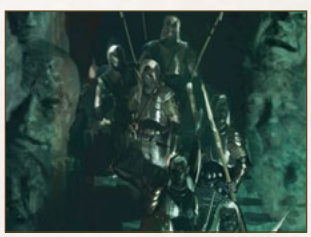
Dragon rifles, page 522

Inverted Tower trap: *The falling tower inflicts 52 (15d6) bludgeoning damage to anyone in the tower when it falls (no saving throw). Creatures in the chamber also take this amount of damage, but can attempt a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw to take half damage.*

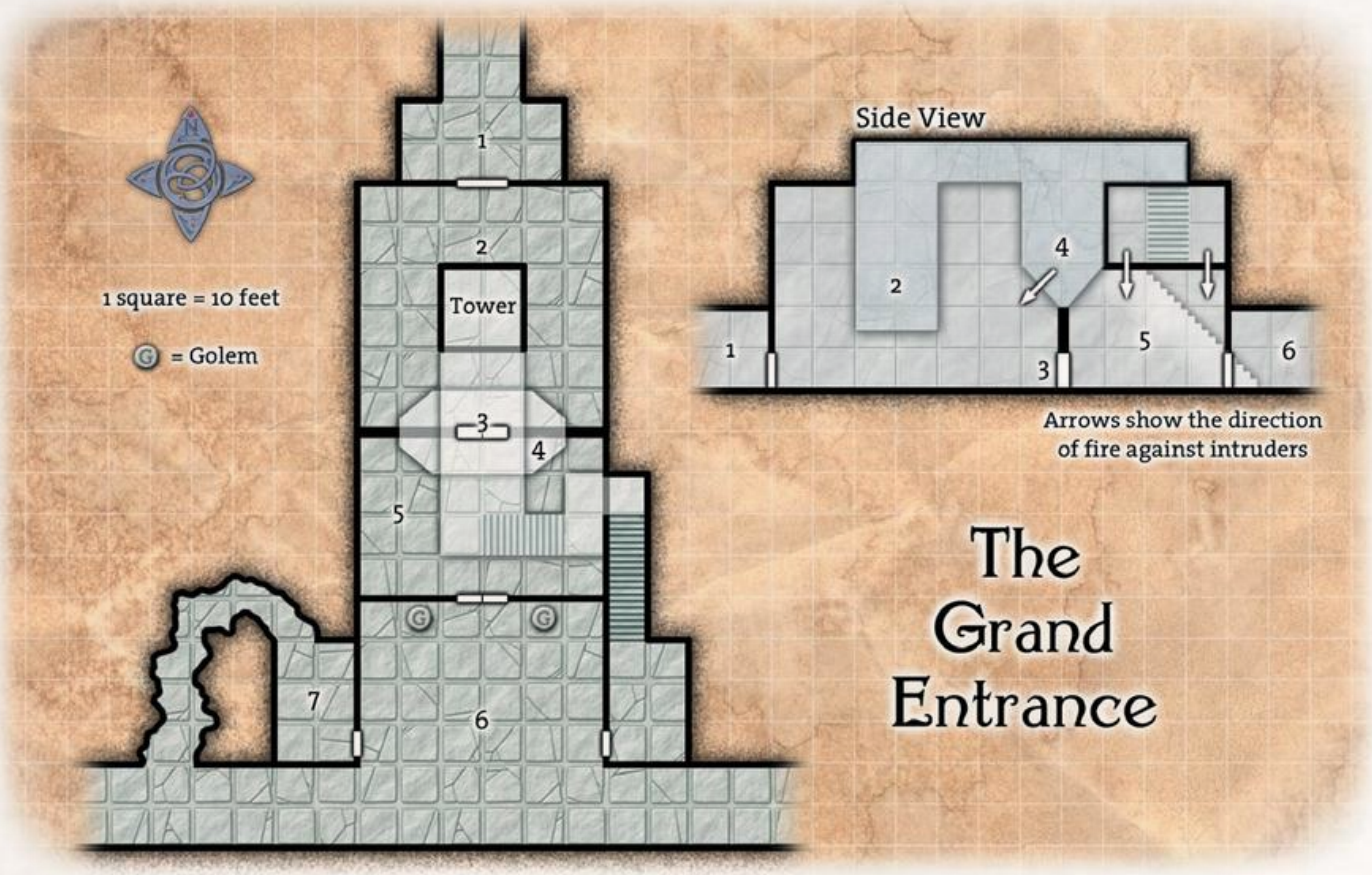
Inner Gate: *AC 20, 300 hp, DC 26 Strength check to break*

Soulless, page 436

Dark elves were the perennial enemies of the residents of Dwarvenhearth, although ultimately it was Ghul who caused them to abandon their beloved home.



District Neighborhoods/Locations, page 160



A Stonelost dwarf with any kind of scruples could likely conceive of no greater sacrilege than raiding the tomb of the heroic King Stardelve. Even the Grailwarden dwarves know of this historic monarch's great valor and treat his memory with supreme respect.

rain down more attacks, as well as alchemical bombs.

Even the floor can fill with traps. Once activated, hidden pressure plates throughout the room trigger the release of iron pikes that thrust up at an angle from holes in the floor to stab anyone moving across the floor. Those moving quickly or running through the room take additional damage as they impale themselves.

6. SECOND GATE

The stone valves of the Second Gate are sealed with a massive iron bar, effectively the same as the Inner Gate. On the inner side of the gate, two rune golems in the form of massive dwarven warriors attack anyone passing through the gate without a dwarf escort.

A rune golem has stone golem stats, plus one of its slam attacks inflicts an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage, and the other an additional 7 (2d6) cold damage.

7. GUARDHOUSE

Adjoining the chamber behind the Second Gate are the quarters of the guards who defended the Grand Entrance. These most elite and honored of soldiers enjoyed fairly opulent quarters. Today, however, the area is inhabited by a pair of bulettes (bear-sized scaly burrowing creatures, sometimes called "land sharks") that entered Dwarvenhearth a month or so ago and have been wandering its halls ever since.

Zachean, page 435

Bulette: *94 hp*

The bulettes uncharacteristically have gathered together all the shiny-looking treasure from the entire entrance complex—various silver mirrors, gold candlesticks, jewelry, coins, and ingots worth a total of 2,900 gp, as well as a masterwork greataxe and three flasks of alchemist's fire.

OUTER TOMBS

see map, page 437

Many tombs and crypts fill this dwarven necropolis east of the Grand Entrance. Treasure seekers will find to their delight that the dwarves entombed their dead with some of their own riches. However, they sealed the Outer Tombs well—and trapped them, to boot.

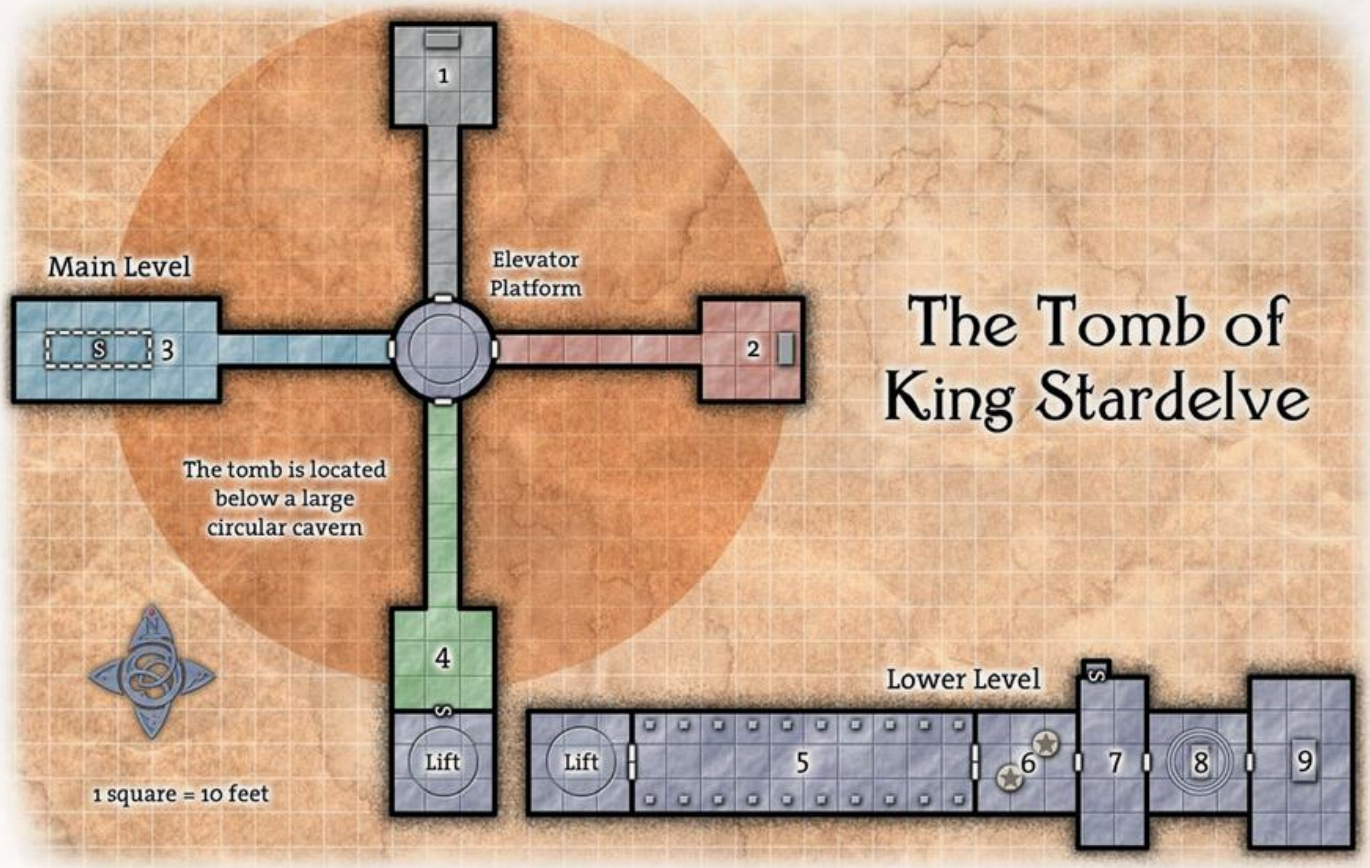
Dark elves led by Zachean looking for the Tomb of King Stardelve (see hereafter) may have made it as far as the Outer Tombs by the time PC explorers reach this area.

TOMB OF KING STARDELVE

see map, next page

Placed upon a massive stone dais within a circular chamber almost 200 feet across, the tomb appears to be a freestanding rotunda 20 feet in diameter covered in Dwarvish runes and flanked by two massive statues of dwarf warriors holding warhammers in both hands.

What's Down There? Map: Page 385



Actually, the rotunda is empty; it serves instead as an elevator down into the real tomb. If someone triggers the secret switch, the entire structure sinks down into a shaft 400 feet deep.

1. FIRST FALSE TOMB

The door leading north from the elevator closes and locks two rounds after someone opens it, unless somehow prevented. At the end of a long hallway paved in black and white marble squares, a chamber holds a massive sarcophagus with a dwarf laid in relief upon the lid.

The sarcophagus is a trap. Opening or even touching it triggers the chamber and hallway to fill with poison gas. The room is otherwise empty.

2. SECOND FALSE TOMB

The door leading east from the elevator closes and locks two rounds after someone opens it, unless somehow prevented. At the end of a long hallway paved in red granite slabs veined with green, a chamber holds a massive sarcophagus devoid of marking or ornamentation.

The entire room is a trap. If anyone so much as steps into the chamber, the sarcophagus sinks down into the floor, whirling poisoned blades come down from the ceiling in the hallway, and the walls close in within the chamber, crushing those inside—or forcing them into the blades.

3. THIRD FALSE TOMB

The door leading west from the elevator closes and locks two rounds after someone opens it, unless somehow prevented. The long hallway beyond is paved in small blue and white stones laid in a mosaic of Dwarvish runes relating the praises of King Stardelve. At the end of the hall, a chamber stands empty.

A large locked secret door in the middle of the floor of the chamber, if found, slides open to reveal a recessed area 10 feet wide, 30 feet long, and 10 feet deep. The only object in this recessed area is a sarcophagus covered in Dwarvish runes telling of King Stardelve's great deeds.

This sarcophagus is false, and the act of opening it (or even trying) triggers a spell that summons three giant bears into the room above, even as the secret door slides shut and locks again (one cannot open the lock from within). The bears attack anyone they see; they last until they are slain or until they slay all intruders.

4. ENTRANCE TO THE REAL TOMB

A long hallway paved in green marble leads south from the elevator. Its walls are etched with banderoles covered in Dwarvish runes that praise King Stardelve. At the end of the hall lies

Secret switch: *DC 21 Perception check to find*

Dwarvenhearth holds many other dwarven crypts, some even more elaborate and well protected than King Stardelve's.

Secret door: *DC 22 Perception check to find, DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to open*

The giant bears have werebear (bear form) stats, with no Shapechanger ability.

Sarcophagus poison gas trap: *Burnt othur fumes fill the chamber and hall; creatures in the area take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage each round for five rounds, or half that amount with a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw. DC 22 Perception check to find the trap, DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

Compacting room trap: *Targets must choose between facing the whirling blades in the hallway or the crushing walls in the chamber. Crushing walls inflict 42 (12d6) bludgeoning damage. Whirling blades attack each character with a +8 bonus and inflict 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage and 22 (4d10) poison damage; a creature struck must also succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one hour. DC 22 Perception check to find each trap, DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to disable each trap.*

Door mechanisms: *DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to open*

Magically trapped secret door: *DC 24 Perception check to find. It is trapped with a* glyph of warding, *triggered by contact: DC 18, 20-foot radius, 45 (10d8) thunder damage, half damage on a successful save.*

Wraith: *67 hp. They have advantage on saves to resist turning undead.*

Gorgons: *134 hp and 161 hp. Each can use the following ability as a bonus action, fired from one of its horns:* ***Flame Arrow.*** Ranged Spell Attack: *+4 to hit, range 50/100 ft., one target.* Hit: *4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.*

The gorgons in area 6 are not random monsters but creatures sacred to Mocharum, God of the Dwarves. At the height of Dwarvenhearth, trained gorgons guarded the Palace of the Day King (page 448) and the Cathedral Cavern (page 447). A character knowledgeable in religious lore might notice that the statues are not of bulls but of gorgons, traditional holy guardians. This information may provide the character with a useful clue to help survive that chamber.

an empty square chamber. The back wall of this room holds a magically trapped secret door.

Beyond the secret door lies another square chamber and what appears to be a deep pit 20 feet across. Runes surround the pit, and a massive stone falcon stands upon either side of it, their outstretched wings meeting over it. From the point where the wings of the two falcons touch, a pulley dangles a heavy iron chain down into the pit (illustrated below).

If anyone so much as approaches the pit, two dwarven wraiths come up out of it and attack immediately, followed by two more the following round.

The Pit: The pit is 200 feet deep. The chain and pulley connect to a lift that can be raised or lowered via mechanisms incorporated within one of the falcons. The pit goes down to an empty square chamber just outside one end of the Great Hall of Morachon (area 5).

5. GREAT HALL OF MORACHON

Square granite columns run down both sides of this long hallway, which is girded by a pair of iron doors on either end. Each door bears the hammer symbol of Morachon, god of the forge. Each column displays the relief of an anvil. The doors are affixed with mechanisms that allow only one pair to be open at a given time.

If characters disable the mechanisms, they also find a hidden switch in the mechanisms that detaches the doors altogether. If someone uses a detached door (weighing 2,500 pounds) to strike one of the columns—hammer striking anvil—a voice booms out in Dwarvish: "Receive the blessing of Morachon." At the same time, a secret panel opens in the column, revealing a niche that holds a vial. The vial contains a random magical potion.

There are twenty columns and twenty different potions.

6. GUARDIANS

Through the doors at the east end of the Great Hall of Morachon is a large room. Near the middle stand two stone statues of bulls, each 10 feet long. Their horn tips hold sconces containing torches ensorcelled to burn forever.

The two statues transform into gorgons (magical bulls covered in metal scales that breathe gas that turns foes to stone) when someone comes within 30 feet. They attack immediately. If slain, the gorgons collapse into stone fragments, as if they were statues all along.

7. GRAVE GOODS

Past the guardian chamber lies an opulent hall with golden chandeliers. Painted frescoes covering the walls depict King Stardelve's battle with the forces of Ghul. Urns, crates, baskets, and boxes fill the room, many old and rotted. These all used to contain kingly possessions—scented oils, rare spices, food, silks, and so forth. None of it has value any longer.

Treasure: In addition to the three chandeliers (worth 800 gp each), there is a secret door in the wall low to the floor, measuring only 3 feet square. Behind it lies a golden chest (worth 1,000 gp) containing 10,000 gp worth of jewelry and gold ingots.

8. FINAL TRAP

The doors into this room are typical for Dwarvenhearth, except they are bronze-coated stone and bear the runic words "Here lies King Stardelve, Greatest of the Day Kings."

Inside, a square chamber holds a massive sarcophagus on a wide dais. A dwarf skeleton standing atop the sarcophagus wears silken robes and a golden crown. He gestures with a jeweled scepter as if it were a magical rod. King Stardelve? No. It's one last trap.

The whole sarcophagus and dais are rigged so that if any force strikes them, whether it is an area spell, a missed attack, a climbing or leaping PC, or the skeleton collapsing after it is attacked, they explode with great force. The sarcophagus and dais are made of wood (painted to look like stone), filled with gunpowder, and laced with sorcery. The explosion fills this chamber and 20 feet into the adjoining chamber(s) if the doors are open.

The crown and scepter are phony.

9. THE REAL TOMB

The locked doors into this room are standard for Dwarvenhearth, but the seams have been filled with lead; this latter safeguard requires at least a half hour to remove, assuming the doors are unlocked. The bronze-coated stone doors are etched with the rune of King Stardelve.

Stardelve was a great and powerful king who had an artifact called the *Platinum Cestus*, a magical gauntlet that granted its wearer great power. His followers buried it with him, then sealed the tomb.

King Stardelve's body—dead, not undead—lies within a bronzewood coffin inside the sarcophagus in the middle of this tomb. The true sarcophagus is plain except for Stardelve's rune.

The corpse wears a gold ring with three rubies (worth 3,500 gp) and a gold crown set with emeralds (worth 5,400 gp). The king also wears the *Platinum Cestus*.

CATHEDRAL CAVERN

see map, page 437 ★★

The largest natural cavern that the dwarves incorporated into their city, the Cathedral Cavern was thought to be the most sacred portion of this settlement. The dwarves built temples to all their gods within this chamber.

The cave is so large that, rather than working the entire floor smooth, the dwarves merely cut paths through it. These roads wind their way through tall stalagmites, huge stony formations, and massive boulders. The Daragin roam the cavern, looking for loot. Swarms of hiistiches frequent the place as well.

Explorers can find temples to the following gods here (clockwise from the northmost temple):

HERKAN, GODDESS OF THE STONES

This tall, imposing structure appears as a sort of ziggurat. Entering this temple today triggers glyphs that summon four earth elementals to attack intruders. Amid other things, a stash of aethel stones and marlite lies within the temple's reliquary.

FREGA, GOAT GODDESS

This minor temple stands empty today; only the idols and painted images of goat-headed dwarves remain.

YURABBOS, GODDESS OF SUPREME DEVOTION

This largish temple seems rather nondescript. Hidden within it is a secret altar compartment, in which one can find an ancient scroll detailing the process for creating a Soulless and directions to find the Chamber of Day Into Night.

UNNOM, LORD OF CAVERNS

Although it looks like a normal dwarven structure on the outside, the interior of the temple resembles a set of natural caverns, complete with stalagmites, dripping limestone, and bats. The ghost of the last of this temple's priestesses, Frana Amberfist (female ghost dwarf), angrily haunts this place, seeking forevermore to complete one last rite dedicated to her god.

THE BROTHERS

The dwarves dedicated this, the largest of the Cathedral Cavern's temples, to Mocharum, God of the Dwarves, and his brother Morachon, God of the Forge.

King Stardelve wasn't just a hero in the fight against the Skull-King. He was a wise and benevolent ruler. Although his reign was unfortunately short by dwarven standards, he will always be remembered as one of the greatest of his people's kings. To the Stonelost dwarves' great dismay, King Stardelve never married or sired children. Although some dwarves living today claim a blood relation to this mighty king, it is at best a very distant relation.

Secret door: *DC 24 Perception check to find*

Daragin, page 434

Hiistiches, page 435

Skeleton: *13 hp*

Earth elementals: *126 hp*

Herkan is a chaotic *dwarf goddess! See page 72.*

Aethel stones, page 646

Marlite, page 647

One last trap: *Creatures in the area take 42 (12d6) fire damage, or half that amount with a successful DC 20 Dexterity save.*

GM TIPS

Roll for initiative when the player characters encounter the false Stardelve crypt (area 8) as if it were a normal encounter, but have the skeleton go last.

Frega watches over all animals, but particularly goats and boars. See page 72.

Secret altar compartment: *DC 20 Perception check to find*

Yurabbos represents unswerving loyalty. See page 74.

Soulless, page 436

Chamber of Day Into Night, page 448

Platinum Cestus, *page 642*

Frana Amberfist has ghost stats, with the cleric spellcasting of an ecclesiastic (page 608).

Worshippers of Unnom, Lord of Caverns, believe that their god created the caverns here to be found and used by the dwarves. See page 74.

"So? A bunch of long, empty halls and echoing chambers. What fun is that?"

~inexperienced halfling adventurer Seanus Illithan

Soulless, page 436

Hidden chamber: *DC 24 Perception check to find*

Fire elemental: *130 hp, size Huge, advantage on attack rolls*

War altar, page 646

Mocharum remains popular among all dwarf overclans, and Morachon is the patron of smiths and other dwarven craftsmen. (See page 73.)

Servants of the Axe, page 436

The Iron God is mainly a Prustan and Grailwarden deity. His image is never displayed (see page 72).

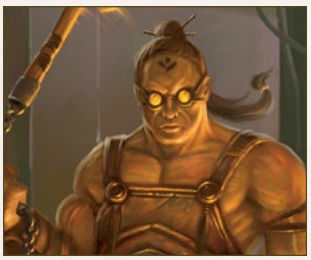
Mindforge dwarves, page 433

Secret passage: *DC 26 Perception check to find*

Storehouses, page 443

Daragin, page 434

Erebaccus, page 435



An avatar of the Iron God named the Wandering Smith sometimes can be found in the South Market; see page 341.

A dozen Soulless guard this temple. A hidden chamber within it holds the *war altar*. The central chamber is a functioning forge with a fire elemental trapped within it.

THE IRON GOD

This temple has been desecrated and gutted. The Servants of the Axe now control it; the magical axe *Thundersong* uses it as a base of operations for its mentally enslaved servitors. Seven of the warriors are here at any given time.

CHAMBER OF DAY INTO NIGHT

see map, page 437

This chamber just east of the Cathedral Cavern lies beyond a secret passage. All the walls in this 60-foot-long, 40-foot-wide room are covered with ceramic plates 6 inches across, each bearing a rune. These magical runes each hold the spirit of one Soulless guardian. This is the place where the Soulless dwarves were created.

A complex device in the middle of the room surrounds a flat stone slab upon which a volunteer was placed. The slab is engraved with the symbol of the deity Yurabbos: a hand clutching a gemstone. A character who spends some time experimenting can determine how to make the machine work. It requires a willing, living humanoid (even a nondwarf is suitable) and a blank ceramic plate upon which to etch a rune to store the target's soul. At the end of the three-hour process, the humanoid has become a Soulless able only to protect Dwarvenhearth.

CAVERN OF NIGHT

see map, page 437

Second largest of the natural caverns incorporated into Dwarvenhearth, the Cavern of Night west of the Cathedral Cavern takes its name from the unusual mineral deposits near the ceiling of the cave—a mass of dark stone punctuated with white crystalline formations. If anyone brings light into the cavern, the crystals twinkle like stars in the night sky.

The cavern measures over 400 feet long, with a ceiling more than 100 feet above the floor. All surfaces here are worked to be relatively smooth.

The Cavern of Night has various chambers, two of which are described below.

PALACE OF THE NIGHT KING

Infamous for its long, shadow-filled hallways, gothic arches, and baroque ornamentation, the Palace of the Night King hardly seems to fit most stereotypes regarding traditional dwarven architecture.

The palace has hundreds of rooms spread out over six levels. Beneath the fortress lies an extensive dungeon, which served as the primary Dwarvenhearth prison in its day.

Today the Court of Night and the dungeon beneath are haunted with shadows of the dead, as well as wraiths and ghosts. Soulless guardians and baroque-styled stone golems also attempt to prevent intruders from gaining entrance.

KALED MENAR

Within the Cavern of Night stands the tower of Kaled Menar, former home of the Mindforge dwarves. Even gaining entrance to this tower requires solving a puzzle lock. The tower stands 70 feet tall and has six levels, as well as two levels below the structure.

PALACE OF THE DAY KING

see map, page 437

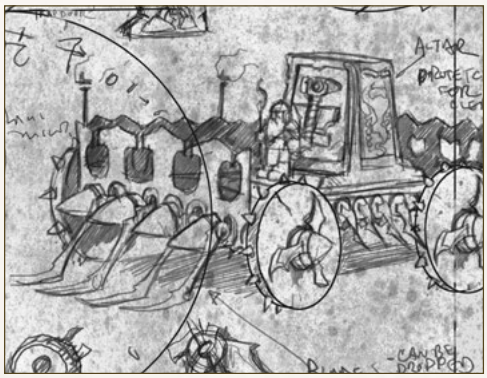
This large complex northeast of the Cavern of Night was the home of the Day Kings. It boasts hundreds of rooms, including some rather impressive columned great halls, on five levels. In its heyday, the palace had dozens of servants and staff and a large court of nobles and wealthy courtiers, many of whom lived right in the palace. It has its own selection of sealed storehouses and armories, as well as vast courtyards, an arena, an opera house, and more.

The vaults beneath and within the Palace of Day contain some of the city's greatest treasures. These vaults are made of steel and mithral and protected by traps, Soulless guardians, constructs, and triggered summonings that call nagas, guardian celestials, and earth elementals to attack intruders.

Over the years, both the Daragin and the Erebaccus have made many attempts to enter and loot the palace. Each time the effort met with defeat.

DWARVENHEARTH SCENARIOS

First and foremost, Dwarvenhearth awaits explorers. It is the very epitome of dungeon delves for the sake of gaining treasure, lost lore, and experience. However, there are



other things beyond the need for discovery or outright greed that can send player characters to Dwarvenhearth.

SECRET OF THE DWARVES

The PCs seek an important secret of the Stonemight dwarves. Perhaps it is as simple as some bit of stonework lore or a technological development of old. The only place to learn the secret is Dwarvenhearth, so they must mount an expedition to the subterranean city. Of course, the first portion of such an adventure involves acquiring a key or other means of entry, which might be a huge undertaking in itself. It may force the adventurers, for example, to enter into a business deal with Malkeen Balacazar, who has a key. Malkeen, in turn, will want the player characters to perform some favor for him—nothing too terrible, though, or they won't be likely to agree. But even doing something good for someone so evil seems distasteful.

STOP THE DARK ELVES

Zachean the dark elf vampire seeks the Tomb of King Stardelve to obtain the *Platinum Cestus*. If he succeeds in his unholy quest, it will give the dark elves a major victory. During an encounter with the Forsaken in the surface city, the player characters learn that Zachean has entered Dwarvenhearth and realize he must be stopped. To do so, they must enter the dwarven city themselves and find him and his men.

Along the way, the PCs may learn of *Sunstrike*, a magical sword in Kaled Menar—a useful weapon in their endeavor, to say the least.

DWARVENHEARTH FREE-FOR-ALL

A number of Dwarvenhearth keys are discovered. Some are auctioned off to delvers, and others are kept closely guarded. More and more outlanders enter the ancient city—far more dark elves than just Zachean and his team, plus surface elves interested in stopping them (perhaps sponsored by Doraedian Mythlord), various teams of delvers, and, of course, Stonelost dwarves seeking to keep them all out.

In this scenario (or mini-campaign), Dwarvenhearth becomes a busy place full of explorers, each racing to find new, unplundered areas. Each force battles the Soulless, the Erebaccus, and the Daragin, as well as the other inhabitants (constructs, miscellaneous monsters, and so forth).

It becomes an open battleground for elves and dark elves—ironic that they struggle amidst the remains of a dwarven community. Of course, the incursions become a serious bit of contention between the dwarves and the other peoples. Yorid Glitterfist, dwarf representative of Kaled Del to the Twelve Commanders, demands that the Commissar and Delver's Guild help keep out the offensive intruders. Dwarvenhearth becomes the object of a political battle as well as a physical one.

Sunstrike, *page 636*

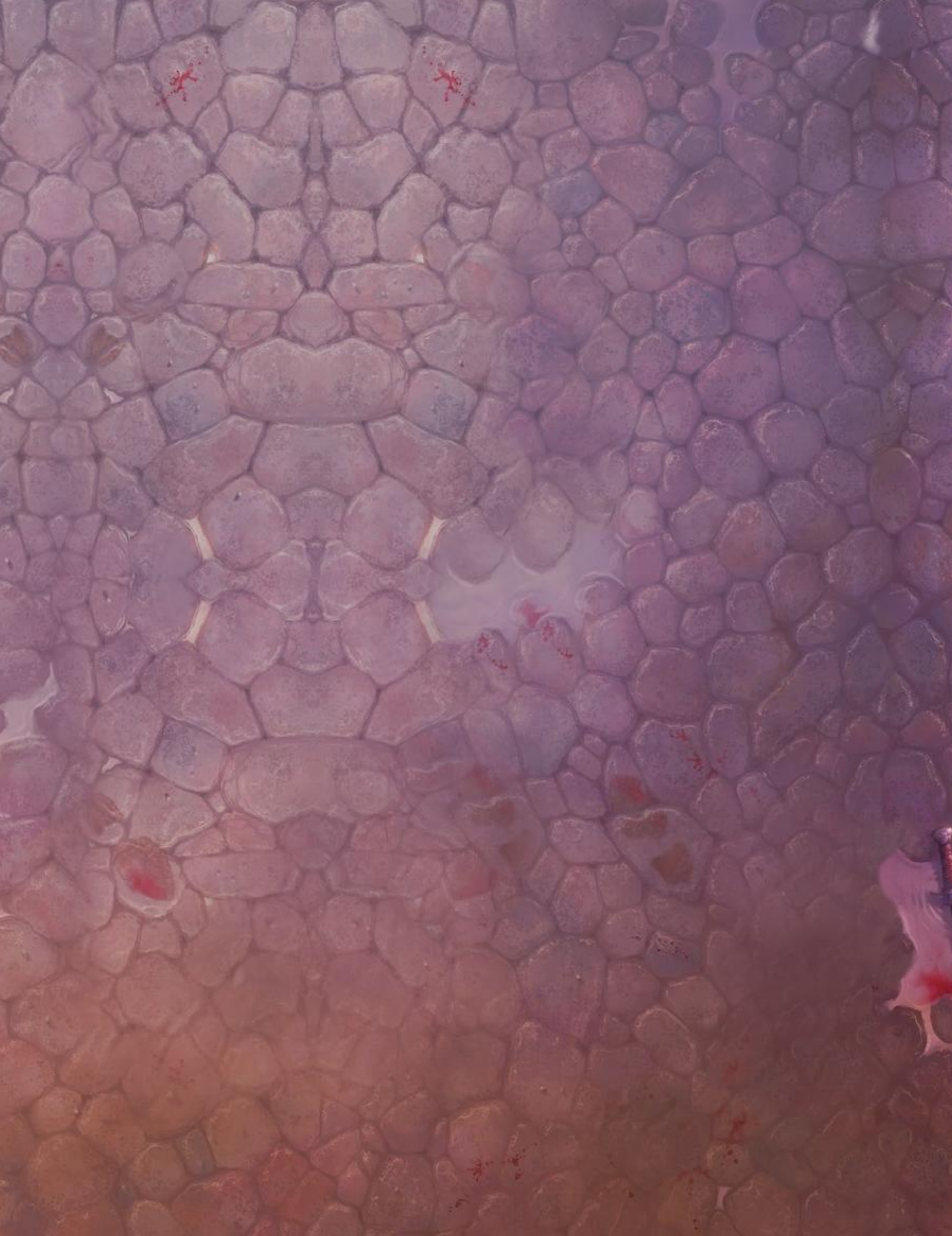
Various scrolls and other references within Dwarvenhearth suggest that a longsword called Sunstrike *was entrusted to the Mindforge dwarves after the last dark elf war and still lies within Kaled Menar.*

Doraedian Mythlord, page 197

Malkeen Balacazar, page 103

Zachean, page 435

Kaled Del, page 418
Twelve Commanders, page 140
Forsaken, page 111
Commissar, page 140
Delver's Guild, page 108



PART V:
ABOVE THE CITY

Soaring above the characters' heads at all times, the Spire is both awe-inspiring and daunting. Although often obscured by clouds, it poses an everpresent threat and a reminder of the region's dark history.

In part V, you will find details about the fortress of Ghul, the Skull-King and Half God. It is a place of great evil and great power, of interest to high-level characters as a site to explore. You will also find a chapter describing Jabel Shammar, almost certainly the worst place in the world. Jabel Shammar is the fortress at the top of the Spire, built by the Dread One himself. This chapter offers a room-by-room description of the stronghold and presents ideas for staging an exciting campaign climax there.

Maps of the locations in these Spire fortresses appear on the poster map in the packet.

Players should not read these chapters. The information found in part V is best left for the player characters to discover firsthand.

Chapter 24: Goth Gulgamel 452
Chapter 25: Jabel Shammar 465

Chapter 24:

GOTH GULGAMEL

Goth Gulgamel: "Castle of Darkness." The name is the corrupt and somewhat awkward combination of an Elvish word and a Dwarvish word, but that fact perfectly describes the nature of the place's original master. Ghul stole what came before him and twisted it to his own ends—first and foremost, he stole the legacy of the Dread One. Some believe that his flagrant, self-proclaimed association with Eslathagos Malkith was his ultimate undoing.

The Spire was created when the world itself reacted to the evil the Dread One had gathered in his fortress and thrust it away.

For the story of Ghul and Goth Gulgamel, see page 83.

Ghul is long dead. Most of his servants are dead or scattered to the far corners of the world, where they slink in shadows, fearing the light. Yet his fortress, Goth Gulgamel, remains—mostly due to its unique nature and its source of power: the legendary and fearsome Entropy Sphere.

Hall of Shadows, page 455
Entropy Sphere, page 463

INHABITANTS

After Ghul's defeat, the unified armies of humans, elves, and dwarves built Dalenguard to watch over Goth Gulgamel and prevent intrusion. Thanks to that move, Ptolus was born—or rather, reborn—and the evil fortress halfway up the Spire lay quiet and vacant for centuries.

Dalenguard, page 297

In the last few hundred years, however, the fortress has seen activity from strange and unexpected fronts. Three different groups have moved into Goth Gulgamel, hoping to use it for their own ends. Dalenguard has not noticed their presence, as the troops there have grown lax over the centuries, and all three groups are lying low—for now.

SOUL RIDERS

One of the most enigmatic and—among the few who know they exist—feared groups in Ptolus call themselves the soul riders. This group of now-disembodied minds uses the statues in the Hall of Shadows as their foci, believing that Goth Gulgamel's remoteness and reputation provide the necessary seclusion they need and its history suits their decidedly macabre tastes.

Soul riders, page 455
Path of Burning Souls, page 457

The soul riders attempt to keep their presence a secret and virtually never send their soul-slaves deeper into the fortress than the Hall of Shadows.

OCHREMESHK

An evil demon prince, one of the so-called Demon Gods, Ochremeshk was trapped in a magical prison almost five thousand years ago, bringing the Wars of Fire in ancient Kem to an end. To this day he remains trapped within a magical rune in a hidden room of a ruined citadel far south and east of Ptolus.

A soul magic spell etched into the tooth of a half-orc named Tinareg in the Dark Reliquary's Cruciform Prison can free Ochremeshk from entrapment. For more on this, see page 238. Find stats for Ochremeshk on page 589.

But the key to his freedom, he has found, lies within the wild, uncontrolled power of the now-damaged Entropy Sphere located in the Spire near Goth Gulgamel. Although he has not yet liberated himself, Ochremeshk has called to his ancient followers. Evil creatures like salamanders (serpentine creatures of dark red scales with humanlike arms and heads) and hellfire giants (fiery giants infused with hellish energy) have answered this clarion and now inhabit Goth Gulgamel, awaiting their master in the Path of Burning Souls.

URTHON AEDAR

Ironically, one of the groups using Goth Gulgamel isn't evil at all. The Urthon Aedar, a secretive and enigmatic gathering of most remaining Elder Elves, use the fortress as a waystation between Ptolus and Dreta Phantas, the Dreaming City. This elven city, which the dark elves stole ages ago and hid far beneath the earth, can be entered through the Entropy Sphere—a well-guarded secret known to very few.

Urthon Aedar, page 130

Dreta Phantas, page 425

THE NATURE OF GOTH GULGAMEL

Goth Gulgamel isn't the simple stronghold it appears to be. This fact becomes clear to anyone who has explored the Banewarrens and found the Baneheart, a shaft that extends up the entire length of the Spire. Goth Gulgamel is, in fact, its own demiplane—a half-world that worms its way through a realm of utter darkness, with various chambers anchoring themselves metaphysically in the dark, and many others now lost in lightless realms forever. Thus, the layout of Goth Gulgamel does not conform to the size and shape of the Spire.

Banewarrens, page 389

The forces of light that defeated Ghul cast powerful spells to seal Goth Gulgamel from intrusion, particularly by those of evil alignment. Over time, many of those spells decayed and so—unbeknownst to the majority of people—most of the fortress is unsealed today.

REACHING AND ENTERING GOTH GULGAMEL

Unlike Jabel Shammar, it is entirely possible for someone to fly or even climb up the Spire to the fortress and enter. Its main doors are not even locked. Still, as with Jabel Shammar, the stories of those who have tried to do so virtually always end with the words, "and they were never heard from again." Plus, conventional wisdom maintains that the fortress is still entirely sealed. Goth Gulgamel's reputation keeps most intruders away, and its reality keeps most intrepid explorers from ever returning to tell of what they have seen.

One cannot teleport into any location in Goth Gulgamel other than the courtyard (area 9) and the Hall of Shadows (area 7). Likewise, incorporeal creatures can get to those locations but cannot pass farther into the fortress—one must be corporeal to enter the extradimensional space that is Goth Gulgamel. (Once inside, an incorporeal creature can move about normally.)

Chamber of Immortal Fears, page 461

Jabel Shammar, page 465

Courtyard, page 456

WALLS, DOORS, AND DECOR

Except where noted, the walls of Goth Gulgamel are made of foot-thick blocks of stone. Behind the stone lies only darkness—the Utterdark. Entering the Utterdark is likely to be the end of any character (see below).

Unless otherwise stated, doors are made of reinforced iron 2 inches thick. Most are elaborately engraved with demonic imagery and skull faces.

Elaborate ornamentation and baroque style is the hallmark of the interior of this magical fortress. Many walls bear intricate frescoes or paintings. Dark wooden paneling covers other walls, or sometimes the lower half of the walls. Dark curtains are also common.

The Pits of Insanity are a phenomenon found throughout the interior of the Spire as well as the Dungeon areas beneath Ptolus. For details, see page 387.

EXTRADIMENSIONAL SPACES

Goth Gulgamel is an artificial extradimensional space with its own rules of existence, one of which is that other extradimensional spaces cannot be created or accessed within it. This means a spell that creates a safe place outside of reality does not function, nor do items that create such spaces (such as a bag or backpack that is larger on the inside than the outside).

THE UTTERDARK

The chambers and halls within Goth Gulgamel are all surrounded by the Utterdark of Ghul, a realm of complete lightlessness. A character who enters the Utterdark—either by breaking through an interior wall or traversing the Chamber of Immortal Fears—finds it a virtually endless void of darkness, without gravity or orientation. Objects and creatures in the Utterdark float in random directions at a speed of about 20 feet each round. Unless a character can fly, movement through this void is impossible. So is vision—no light short of that produced by a deity or the most powerful magical effects shed any illumination in the Utterdark. Abilities and magic that let one see in the dark or see all things as they truly are do not allow sight within the Utterdark.

The Utterdark is extremely cold. Those who haven't taken specific precautions against its heat-draining nature—such as wearing insulating winter gear—suffer from the below-freezing conditions.

The Utterdark's extreme cold means a character must make a DC 10 Constitution save every hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Its disorienting nature means a character must make an Intelligence check each round to avoid becoming lost. The DC starts at 10 and increases by 1 for each round they remain in the Utterdark.

Characters who remain in the Utterdark for more than one minute cannot be located by anyone using divination magic, except perhaps the most powerful spells and items of that type. Characters flying or somehow moving

THE DREAD

Any creature of good alignment has disadvantage on attacks, saves, and checks while in the confines of Goth Gulgamel. There is no defense roll against this effect; however, it is a fear effect, so characters immune to fear are immune to the Dread. Spells and abilities that remove or suppress the frightened condition negate the Dread for 1d4 rounds.

More than a thousand years ago, Ghul used the magic of the Entropy Sphere to spread his Utterdark across Palastan and all the lands he conquered in the Ghulwar.

Iron door: *AC 19, 25 hp, DC 25 Strength check to break*

GM TIPS

GMs running Spire-centered campaigns can use this chapter following The Banewarrens *adventure (see page 11). However,* The Banewarrens *is designed to take characters from 6th to 10th level, and adventuring groups really should not visit Goth Gulgamel before 15th level. GMs might want to add a few visits to midlevel locations in Ghul's Labyrinth (page 390) to help their groups level up.*

Khelaeson, page 85

Hall of Shadows, page 455

Marlite is a magic-dead material that shines like blue-tinted iron and is as hard as steel. For details, see page 647.

Combined together, the three spells of the ward of forbiddance act like a 9th-level forbiddance *spell, blocking magical travel and inflicting 27 (5d10) radiant damage to any evil elemental, fiend, or undead creature that enters the area or ends its turns there. Destroying the ward requires three successful dispelling attempts (such as* dispel magic*) against it.*

Any creature with 13 or fewer Hit Dice who attempts to pass through the main doors must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or instantly die; those who make the save instead take 49 (14d6) necrotic damage and gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with 14 or more Hit Dice are unaffected. This is a 9th-level spell effect. Because it is just within the doorway, good characters have disadvantage on their save against the abjuring hex.

Unless a creature avoids the razorwire by flying, they take 3 (1d6) slashing damage per 30 feet of movement through the tunnel. A DC 15 Acrobatics check reduces this damage by half.

Massive chimeras: *175 hp, 165 hp*

Sometimes at night, folks in Ptolus can look up and see eerie yellow-green lights coming from within Goth Gulgamel. Most attribute this, correctly, to restless evil spirits.

GM TIPS

Ghul's abjuring hex at the main entrance may pose more of a threat to the PCs' animal companions, cohorts, and conjured allies than to them, unless they enter the fortress prematurely.

through the Utterdark risk becoming hopelessly disoriented and lost.

DEAD ENDS

Some passages in Goth Gulgamel now come to dead ends. They were not dead ends originally—after the defeat of Ghul, the elf wizard Khelaeson severed the ties that bound much of the interior to the physical world. The dead ends now represent corridors that once connected to portions of the fortress now lost, adrift in the Utterdark. Today these passages offer direct access into the Utterdark. They look like spots where a hallway just fades into complete darkness.

FORTRESS LAYOUT

The layout of this strange extradimensional fortress includes more than two dozen areas today, though in the past, it was much larger. These areas appear on the map of Goth Gulgamel on the Spire side of the poster map in the packet.

1. MAIN ENTRANCE

Long ago, a massive stone platform jutted out from the Spire in front of Goth Gulgamel. It is gone now, so the main entrance hangs almost entirely above empty air—only a small ledge remains in front of it. The entrance to the fortress lies within a small tower completely open inside. From this point, an observer is about 1,300 feet in the air. On a clear day one can see the entire city and Ptolus Harbor. Most of the time it's not a clear day, however, and anyone standing at this entrance is wreathed in clouds.

A broad staircase leads up into a larger entry tower. This old guard tower has three levels; ferocious demon-ogre guards once occupied the upper two, but today all are empty. The tower's main level holds two sets of double doors. One set (marked A on the poster map) leads south to the razorwire tunnel (area 2). These doors are not locked and, in fact, stand slightly ajar. They are made of iron 3 inches thick.

The other set of double doors (marked B on the poster map) leads west deeper into the Spire and the Hall of Shadows (area 7). The portals are made of adamantine-reinforced marlite, making them immune to magic. White iron chains hang loosely on either side of the doors, and remnants of a mithral seal that was poured into the door still cling to the edges of the doorway—the seals on these doors obviously have been forced open. The unlocked doors now open easily. Only one remaining aspect of the original magic used to keep creatures out of Goth Gulgamel remains: a ward of forbiddance that prevents magical travel and hedges out evil creatures. Any evil creatures within either overcame this ward or entered another way.

Another abjuring hex centers on the entrance, this one just inside the doorway. Ghul himself placed a strange but powerful ward here to keep out riffraff but allow access to powerful visitors or servants.

2. RAZORWIRE TUNNEL

A 20-foot-wide, south-running tunnel connects the entry tower with the Tower of the Guardians (area 3). It stretches across empty air, with a 1,300-foot drop to the city below. The tunnel is made of curling razorwire with occasional iron supports.

3. TOWER OF THE GUARDIANS

The doors into this tower are identical to the adamantine-reinforced marlite doors described for the main entrance (area 1). However, the top of this tower is open; it is the lair of two massive chimeras that hunt the surrounding countryside but typically avoid the city. They attack anyone entering the tower from above or below but flee quickly if severely injured. They never use the doors to get out (obviously, having no way to open them).

Within the nestlike top level of the tower are scattered 958 gp, 1,390 sp, and a random selection of objects and gear, most broken and worthless (armor, weapons, furnishings, tools, and so on, but including a grime-encrusted halberd and a key. The key opens the side entrance farther south (area 9), which connects to the third level of Ghul's Tower to the immediate northwest.

This tower's first and second levels once had furnishings, but everything is wrecked and ruined now. Only a few very old wooden and cloth scraps lie about.

4. GHUL'S TOWER

The five levels of this tower, once Ghul's personal quarters, stand empty except for the occasional piece of ornate but now rotten furniture. The top level was a bedchamber, the fourth level a sitting room and study, the third a private library, the second a dining area, and the first a receiving area for guests. Nothing of value remains in Ghul's Tower.

The third level of this tower connects to the third level of the Tower of the Guardians to the immediate southeast.

5. ANCIENT ARMORIES

Now looted and empty, two chambers down a short passage from Ghul's Tower once contained weapons (westernmost) and armor (easternmost) for the guards in the fortress—mostly Sorn-Ulth, Toruk-Rul, and ogres, but also a variety of other monsters. Only hooks and empty racks suggest the rooms' former purpose.

6. OLD BARRACKS

Once the quarters of a number of Ghul's elite soldiers—in this case, Sorn-Ulth—this room between the armories (area 5) and Hall of Shadows (area 7) now stands empty. Iron bedframes and rusted iron-bound wooden chests furnish the room, but there is nothing of value. Presumably, when Goth Gulgamel was intact, it held many such chambers.

7. HALL OF SHADOWS

Characters heading west out of the main entrance enter into a long hallway with a 50-foot-high vaulted ceiling. Wide pillars line the walls, and between each set of pillars stands a 23-foot-tall statue of a muscular figure in armor. There are sixteen statues total. The room is completely dark; no matter what illumination the player characters bring with them, the hall stays shadowy and dimly lit. Characters who take a moment to carefully look around see that the shadows seem to move and scuttle about.

Goth Gulgamel as it appeared during the Ghulwar.

(This is an effect of the room. The shadows cannot harm or interact with anything, but they also cannot be affected themselves.)

SOUL RIDERS

The soul riders are a group of mutant creatures who long ago discarded their own bodies; their souls can take over or "ride" the souls of other creatures.

Player characters who are hostile to the soul riders will find perhaps the most dangerous encounter in Goth Gulgamel right here in this room. It is likely that six of the dozen soul riders will be here at any given time, each tied to one of the statues. They also keep four mighty human guardians here to "ride" if they need to accomplish something physical, like driving off intruders. (They sustain these hosts with food and water brought here by controlled wizards from the city.) If the PCs attempt to

The grime-encrusted halberd is a +1 halberd.

Soul riders, page 129

While creatures like the soul riders do not need a base, they find it useful to have one spot where they can gather in controlled bodies and meet in secret.

Guardians ridden by soul riders have assassin, bandit captain, berserker, or veteran stats; alignment lawful good. Equipment: typically each has +1 armor, a +1 weapon, and a potion of superior healing. *While under the control of a soul rider, these guardians are not affected by the Dread.*

confront the soul riders here, not only must they face the four guardians, but any soul riders not attached to the fighters can attempt to launch soul control over the intruders each round.

Resisting a soul rider is a DC 20 Wisdom save.

However, the soul riders may have no desire or reason to fight—or even reveal themselves—to any PC intruders. They would rather keep their presence here a secret; if that's not possible, they prefer to allow player characters to enter Goth Gulgamel and destroy the other creatures in the extradimensional fortress. While the soul riders do not consider the other forces here their enemies, they would have no objection to being the stronghold's only residents. It is also worth noting that the soul riders would never want anything to happen to Ptolus, because that would leave them with no one to ride. So if the PCs are on a mission of great import, the soul riders may actually *help* them, offering advice and an idea of the fortress's layout.

8. TOWER OF THE HARROWING

The Tower of the Harrowing is a two-level tower that holds the chambers Ghul and his minions—including such minor Galchutt as the zaug and the Elder Brood—used in ages past to torture captured Elder Elves, twisting them into the Harrow elves of today. (There were similar torture areas deeper in the complex as well; now they are lost to the Utterdark.) The chambers here hold torture devices of all kinds: racks, iron maidens, pillories, furnaces and branding irons, and a variety of knives, needles, spikes, hooks, hammers, and other grisly implements.

The Tower of the Harrowing's psychic resonance means elves who enter this tower must make a DC 22 Wisdom save or be stunned for 1d6 rounds and then frightened for 1d6 minutes. Harrow elves automatically fail their save against this.

Zaug, page 602

Elder Brood, page 602

Harrow elves, the blighted ones, page 30

Elves are vulnerable to the powerful psychic resonance of this place and the terrible things that happened here.

9. COURTYARD AND SIDE ENTRANCE

This forlorn open-air courtyard at the south end of the fortress is empty. The door leading into the fortress has a magical and nonmagical pair of locks. The entry room feels extremely cold.

In the end, Ghul simply wished to be the Dread One and wanted Goth Gulgamel to be Jabel Shammar. Yet he was never able to gain entrance to the notorious fortress atop the Spire.

The magical lock is an arcane lock. It is a DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to open the nonmagical lock.

The entry room inflicts 3 (1d6) cold damage on those who enter, and again for each additional round they remain.

10. OLD STORAGE

Once the grisly meat locker for storing food for some of Ghul's servants, this cold chamber reeks of rot. Hooks on chains dangle from the 15-foot ceiling. A few bones lie scattered across the smooth stone floor stained with ancient blood.

11. OLD TEMPLE

Ghul encouraged—even forced—his followers to worship him as a god. He created this temple chamber to serve as a shrine to himself. Black draperies cover the walls, each embroidered with the skull symbol of Ghul in glossy black fabric. In the center of the room, a black altar with inlaid silver plates in the shape of Ghul's skull symbol sits atop a steep 8-foot-high dais. The chamber is unhallowed ground.

An explorer named Chrystara is interested in getting inside Goth Gulgamel and may approach suitably powerful PCs about it in a local tavern. She won't say why she wants to go there, though . . .

Ghul himself never attained true divinity, so his altar has no power. However, hidden within it, a small compartment holds a stone idol of the Ageless Titan, with an attached brass plate bearing his name: Kadavalus.

Small hidden compartment: *DC 24 Perception check to find*

Ageless Titan, page 461

Piled around the altar on the dais, up to the altar's very base, are scores of small mummified figures. These are children, aged five to ten, that Ghul slew and mummified to desecrate his temple. Today these tiny corpses are extremely brittle, virtually turning to dust at a touch. If anyone disturbs them, portions of various mummies leap into the air and form into two devourers (ogre-sized undead creatures with a cagelike chest cavity imprisoning what appears to be the spirit of a child).

GM TIPS

Remember that any creature of good alignment has disadvantage on attacks, saves, and checks while in Goth Gulgamel due to the Dread (page 453).

A devourer has efreeti stats, except its abilities inflict cold or necrotic damage instead of fire.

12. CHAMBER OF COLD

An oddly shaped room near the north end of the fortress lies within the grip of soul-numbing cold due to an ancient spell of great power that Ghul once cast here (effectively the same cold as that experienced in area 9). The room is empty, but an elaborate mural covers the eastern wall. It depicts Ghul in shining silver armor, wielding a massive greatsword and commanding a vast army of bizarre and horrible creatures within an enormous cavern.

Those able to analyze or detect magical effects discern that the mural reeks of teleportation magic. It transports anyone who deliberately walks into it 1,500 feet directly

UNHALLOWED GROUND

The taint of evil in parts of Goth Gulgamel makes evil creatures more powerful and subtly interferes with non-evil creatures. This has the following effects:

- Celestials, elementals, and fey can't be conjured within unhallowed ground, and even if conjured outside of it, they cannot enter. (This doesn't affect celestials, elementals, and fey who permanently reside in Praemal, such as the Malkuth—the ward is against creatures that have only a temporary presence in the world.) These creatures cannot use mind control, fear, or possession abilities within the area, whether cast within or outside of the unhallowed area within Ghul's Lair.
- Attempts to use Channel Divinity to turn undead or fiends have disadvantage.
- Evil creatures in the unhallowed area are affected by *bless*.

down, to a chamber with a similar-looking mural. This matching chamber in Ghul's Labyrinth connects to many other areas below Ptolus. One can use the mural in that room to return to this one; the transport effect is two-way.

13. LOOKOUT TOWER

Stairs from the Chamber of Cold lead up to a tower that peeks out of the Spire and overlooks the surrounding countryside.

14. PATH OF BURNING SOULS

This enormous, winding area appears to be a natural cavern. In reality, it is no more natural than any other portion of Goth Gulgamel. The entire cavern is dotted with pits of bubbling lava. Powerful and twisted illusions make it appear to any observer that they are pits of souls tormented within fire. Incorporeal humanoid forms seem to writhe and swirl in the red-hot miasma, so it looks like the salamander inhabitants of the room literally swim in burning souls. The lava itself is quite real, and the pits are all 5 to 10 feet deep.

Once a place of torture Ghul used to imprison and torment his captured enemies, the Path of Burning Souls has become the refuge of the followers of Ochremeshk, who await the return of their demonic master. Presumably, if the demon god ever did come here, the place would teem with lesser demons, but the only creatures here now are his fire-using servitors.

Scattered throughout this vast, snaking chamber, ten salamanders led by a salamander noble cavort amid the lava pools. (The salamander noble wears a magically fireproof leather pouch containing ten 200-gp rubies, and a ring that resembles solidified fire—this ring confers no powers or benefits, although it is worth 5,000 gp as a curiosity and piece of jewelry, and it has a special function in the Temple of Blood.) Just barely tolerating their presence are six hellfire giants: fiendish fire giants of consummate evil who live in the eastern end of the path, although sometimes one may stand sentry at the western end.

Tactics: The inhabitants are likely to attack any intruder they see and fight to the death. They all use the burning souls pits to their advantage, attempting to knock or push opponents into the lava.

ENCOUNTERS ON THE PATH

The disorganized inhabitants of the Path of Burning Souls have spread themselves out to the point where intruders are unlikely to encounter all of them at once. More likely, player

Chamber in Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

Temple of Blood, page 458

Salamanders: *90 hp*

Salamander noble: *144 hp, with advantage on attacks, saves, and checks, and +3 to hit and damage with its spear attack. Equipment:* +3 spear.

Hellfire giants have fire giant stats, with AC 19; resistance to cold, lightning, and poison; and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks. Once per day, the giant can smite a non-evil foe as part of a greatsword attack, inflicting an additional 7 (2d6) fire and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. Equipment: +1 plate*; one of the six giants has a* demonskull talisman*, another has a ring of solidified fire like that of the salamander noble.*

Touching the lava inflicts 7 (2d6) fire damage; immersion inflicts 99 (18d10) fire damage.

GM TIPS

Some GMs may want to make the souls in the lava pits real. If you do, you should decide what magic is strong enough to release the trapped souls.

Ochremeshk, page 589

Some Orcish Words

Ornu-Nom orcs, Sorn-Ulth, and Toruk-Rul have vaguely different dialects of the same root language. Since Orcish comes from Westron (page 47) and Abyssal (page 47), the dialects vary based on whether they are more of one than the other.

Bruhur = Enemy
Nar = No
Nom = Axe
Orn = Howl
Rask = Kill
Rul = Fist
Sorn = Breath
Toruk = Closed
Ulth = Blood

characters will face three separate encounters:

- A single giant and six salamanders together
- The salamander noble, the remaining four salamanders, and two more giants
- The remaining three giants

However, if any encounter lasts more than five rounds, creatures from another encounter may come to investigate the noise.

15. PASSAGE TO THE SORN-ULTH CAVES

This passage stemming from the Path of Burning Souls winds for another 3,000 feet, widening every 500 feet into what appears to have once been a guard post (now unmanned). The corridor continues to spiral ever downward until it becomes what it looks like—a passage hewn from the living rock. Only those familiar with the craft of working stone are likely to notice the transition.

The path leads to a large complex made of both natural and created caverns beneath what is now the Nobles' Quarter. Here, descendants of the Sorn-Ulth created by Ghul live in darkness, practicing their foul sorceries. As time passes, they grow more bold—and more likely to venture up into the city above now and then. If the more powerful current residents of Goth Gulgamel were to leave, Zathiriax (female Sorn-Ulth) would most likely lead the Sorn-Ulth back up into the fortress.

The Sorn-Ulth caves, in turn, lead to caverns filled with Toruk-Rul. Although the Toruk-Rul are three times as numerous as the Sorn-Ulth, the Sorn-Ulth dominate their less intelligent brethren. All total, three to four hundred Sorn-Ulth and Toruk-Rul dwell in these caves: the legacy of Ghul.

Assuming one can fight or sneak through the caves, they eventually connect to other natural cave systems and tunnels of ancient origin below the city, and thus to numerous access points on the surface.

16. MINOR VAULT

The massive iron door to this chamber near the end of the Path of Burning Souls is made of iron a foot thick. It is triple locked and also held closed by a magical spell. To one side of the door, the wall holds a secret keyhole. If anyone attempts to open the door without first activating that hidden lock bypass, a trapdoor opens in front of the door, dumping anyone within 10 feet down into a 50-foot pit with spikes covered in purple worm poison.

Ghul maintained a number of secured storerooms for potent magic items and other objects of worth. This is one such vault; most of the others are now lost in the Utterdark. Inside the small room beyond the door lies a table of polished ebony wood and an iron rack of weapons mounted on the wall.

Table: On the table rests a locked silver box. The silk-lined box contains a pair of *lenses of the Utterdark*.

Weapon Rack: This weapon rack holds ten masterwork spears (high quality, but nonmagical). It also holds several magical weapons: five battleaxes, two longswords, a greatsword, and a mace.

Secret Stash: A locked secret door lies behind the visible weapon rack. Behind the secret door is a small niche with a second weapon rack that holds several magical items, including a longsword and eleven arrows.

17. BLOOD TEMPLE

The walls of this room farther down the passage from the Path of Burning Souls appear to have been burned recently. Crude images of hellish flames, tortured souls, and cavorting demons now cover the walls. In the middle of the room rests a solid block of reddish stone with veins of black running through it like streaks of dark lightning. This stone measures 6 feet long and 3 feet high and wide. Atop it rest four macabre black candlesticks.

This chamber was once an open staging area for Ghul's guards, but of late it serves a

Sorn-Ulth, page 599

Toruk-Rul, page 598

Massive iron door: *AC 19, 40 hp, DC 27 Strength check to break. The magical lock is an* arcane lock. *It is a DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to open each of the nonmagical locks.*

Secret keyhole: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Creatures in front of the door must make a Dexterity save or fall into the pit, taking 17 (5d6) falling damage, plus 11 (2d10) piercing damage from the spikes. Anyone who takes damage from the spikes must make a DC 19 Constitution save, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

Zathiriax is a sorcerer with archmage stats.

Locked silver box: *DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to open*

Lenses of the Utterdark, page 641

The weapon rack's magical weapons are all +1 weapons.

Locked secret door: *DC 22 Perception check to find, DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to open*

The second weapon rack contains an unholy longsword *made of adamantine, a quiver with ten* +3 arrows, *and an* arrow of elf slaying.

very different purpose. It is now a temple to Ochremeshk. The creatures that have come here awaiting the demon god's return have transformed the room to suit their needs, and those of their dread master. The entire area is unhallowed ground, aiding the blood trolls (see below) when they are here.

An open door at the west end of the temple leads into the room where the blood trolls live. This side chamber is a mess and contains nothing but miscellaneous worthless gear.

THE ALTAR

The temple altar—a reddish block of stone—is magical, having been brought here by the hellfire giants from their own foul nether-home. Any non-evil-aligned character who touches it has their mind filled with horrible, hellish images.

Anyone with a *demonskull talisman* (such as Quiral) who touches it to the altar gains an unholy blessing. If a ring of solidified fire from the Path of Burning Souls is touched to the altar, the wearer can contact Ochremeshk and get an answer to a question.

In either case, if the creature touching the talisman or ring to the altar is not a worshipper of Ochremeshk, the act instantly conjures a vrock that attacks the offender immediately and fights until one of them is dead.

THE BLOOD

The blood are intelligent trolls tainted with demonic ancestry, like tieflings or cambions. Their skin is blood red, their faces seem somewhat more humanlike than those of other trolls, and they are often armed with greatswords. Blood trolls remain some of the most devout servants of Ochremeshk. The priest of their temple resides nearby.

Tactics: Usually, at least two of the blood trolls are in the temple at any given time, while the others stay in the side chamber, relaxing but fairly alert. They like to double-up on their opponents and attempt to throw or push them into the altar if possible (forcing their target to deal with the hellish visions from touching the altar). They call for their priest, Quiral, in the next room only if they are outnumbered, although he may hear the sounds of combat in the temple and come on his own.

18. BLOOD PRIEST

The high priest of the Blood Temple and the leader of the blood trolls in general is Quiral the cleric, who lives in a room adjoining the temple. Originally a storeroom of some kind, this chamber includes old crates and barrels now used as furniture. It is crude but private compared to where the other blood trolls live (see above).

Quiral is missing an eye and has a large, crude ruby in the empty socket. He suffers no penalties from the loss, as he has adapted to it.

19. THE LABORATORY

This long chamber off a hallway leading from the Blood Temple (area 17) contains a dozen large, cylindrical glass vats that measure 7 feet high and 3 feet across. Four of them still contain brackish, green-hued liquid and what appear to be shriveled corpses suspended within. Workbenches with alchemical tools and equipment line the walls.

A careful examination of the alchemical equipment on the workbenches reveals a sealed jar with three vials inside. There are also sixteen flasks of acid, one flask of alchemist's fire, and twenty tindertwigs amid the tables.

The vats contain the remnants of what once were elves. These would have been transformed into Harrow elves, but they have been here far too long. They have instead turned into bodaks

Ochremeshk, page 589

Unhallowed ground, page 456

Those touching the temple altar must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be overcome by the power of the images, retching and reeling for 1d4 + 1 rounds and taking 22 (4d10) psychic damage. Those who make the save are overcome for only one round and don't take any psychic damage. The unholy blessing gained by someone with the demonskull talisman *gives the character a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls for the next ten minutes (a creature can't gain this blessing again until 24 hours have passed). The question answered by Ochremeshk is the equivalent of a* divination *spell.*

Demonskull talisman, *page 637*

Path of Burning Souls, page 457

Quiral has the stats of a blood troll (area 17), with AC 19, Wisdom 16, and the spellcasting of a priest. Equipment: +1 plate, potions of greater healing *(4),* potion of superior healing, *spell scrolls of* hold person *(2), ruby worth 100 gp. He has the following cleric spells prepared:*

Cantrips (at will): resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy

1st level (4 slots): cure wounds, guiding bolt, shield of faith

2nd level (3 slots): enhance ability, scorching ray

3rd level (2 slots): fireball, protection from energy

Vrock: *104 hp*

Blood trolls have troll stats, with AC 18, 106 hp; resistance to cold and fire; resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing weapons from nonmagical attacks; advantage on saves against magic. Once per day, the troll can smite a non-evil foe as part of a greatsword attack, inflicting an additional 3 (1d6) fire and 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. Equipment: plate, longbow, 20 arrows.

It's not always interesting to have creatures just sitting around in their quarters. Feel free to place the blood trolls in the middle of a horrific ceremony in their temple here, or have a few wandering blood trolls in the Path of Burning Souls (page 457), speaking with their erstwhile allies, the hellfire giants.

Blood Temple, page 458

The sealed jar contains three potions of superior healing.

The bodaks have medusa stats, with the undead type, and their gaze causes death instead of petrification.

Once, this fortress and the warrens carved out below what is now Ptolus held many breeding pits and laboratories that produced Harrow elves, Sorn-Ulth, and other monstrosities. All those in Goth Gulgamel have been lost to the Utterdark except for the one in area 19, but more may remain hidden away beneath Ptolus.

Path of Burning Souls, page 457

Liilor has rakshasa stats, plus the spellcasting of a mage, and double the normal uses of his innate spellcasting abilities; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: staff of power, potion of flying, potion of superior healing.

Chamber of Immortal Fears, page 461

GM TIPS

Remember that any creature of good alignment has disadvantage on attacks, saves, and checks while in Goth Gulgamel due to the Dread (page 453).

Rakshasa (lawful evil): *110 hp*

Cthorn blackguards have mummy lord stats, with AC 19, sneak attack +1d6, no spellcasting or legendary actions, and their weapon attacks are considered unholy weapons; *alignment neutral evil. They can use Dreadful Glare and make five attacks per round with their weapons (using* +1 longswords *and* +1 battleaxes *in melee, or javelins at range).* **Longsword or battleaxe.** Melee Weapon Attack: *+10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.* Hit: *9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage plus possible* unholy weapon *damage.* **Javelin.** Ranged Weapon Attack: *+9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target.* Hit: *7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus possible* unholy weapon *damage. Equipment:* +1 breastplate, +1 shield, *three* +1 longswords, *three* +1 battleaxes, *javelins (6).*

Cthorn wizards have mummy lord stats, with AC 19, wizard spellcasting instead of cleric, and no legendary actions; alignment neutral evil. They have the following special ability: **Doubled Spellcasting (Recharge 4–6):** *The cthorn uses its bonus action to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action. Equipment:* bracers of defense, spell scroll of stoneskin. *The cthorn wizard has the following spells prepared:*

Cantrips (at will): acid splash, fire bolt, mage hand, shocking grasp

1st level (4 slots): expeditious retreat, magic missile, shield, witch bolt

2nd level (3 slots): enhance ability, web

3rd level (3 slots): dispel magic, fireball, fly

4th level (3 slots): greater invisibility, ice storm

5th level (1 slot): dominate person

Kem, page 43

Banewarrens, page 389

(hairless, humanoid-shaped undead creatures tainted with fiendish energy), which leap out of the vats if anyone approaches them, hoping to attack with surprise. They stink of vinegary chemicals.

20. LAIR OF THE RAKSHASA LORD

Just west of the chamber of the blood trolls lies a room decorated with a macabre sense. Everything here is made of fused bones: two chairs, a table, a bed, a chest of drawers, and a pair of wardrobes. Even the walls, ceiling, and floor are covered in a layer of carefully placed bones. Four braziers made from skulls sit unlit in the room's corners.

Unlike so many inhabitants of Goth Gulgamel today, Liilor the rakshasa was one of Ghul's servants—a master alchemist who oversaw many of the Skull-King's laboratories.

Tactics: If Liilor knows intruders are nearby, he dons a tattered cloak, takes the shape of an elf, turns invisible, and spies on the intruders, using his ability to read surface thoughts and remain invisible. If discovered, or when he decides to show himself, his strategy is to convince the player characters he is a ghost of an Elder Elf slain here during Ghul's creation of the Harrow elves. He tells them they can go no farther without the "Gulgamel Key," which is in the possession of the Ageless Titan in the Chamber of Immortal Fears (area 23). This is a lie. If the PCs do not believe him, or if they do not immediately leave him alone, he then attempts to guide them into the laboratory (area 19) to face the bodaks; he moves to attack immediately after they have dealt with the undead. In combat he attacks with his staff's spells, using smart tactics and calling the other rakshasas (from area 21) for backup.

Treasure: The wardrobes and chest of drawers hold fine clothing and personal belongings, including 500 gp worth of perfumes and a jeweled hand mirror and comb set worth a total of 450 gp.

21. MORE RAKSHASAS

Brightly colored silken pillows cover the floor of this room just south of the chamber of the blood trolls. It is dimly lit by magical torchlights in two braziers that emit a pleasant lilac odor. The room magically produces the light strumming sound of harp music.

The rakshasas here, two assistants of Liilor, have spent the last few hundred years in a meditative state. Sounds of combat, or the call of Liilor, rouses them; they are ready one round later to take action. If intruders somehow reach this chamber without alerting the rakshasas, they are found sitting in the lotus position on silken pillows, covered in a smattering of dust.

Treasure: Under a pile of pillows, an iron chest holds fifty 10-gp agates, ten 100-gp sapphires, and three 500-gp pearls.

22. MAUSOLEUM OF THE CTHORN

A bluish-white glow dimly lights this long passage off a hallway leading from the Path of Burning Souls. The ceiling is 20 feet high, and a 10-foot-wide ledge runs along the eastern half of the hall at a height of 12 feet. At the far end of the hall, steps lead down to a small crypt with five empty niches.

CTHORN BACKGROUND

An ancient species devoted to the cause of darkness, the cthorn lived mostly in what is now Kem far to the southeast. Before coming to the Spire, Ghul slew the last members of this corrupt and dying species, and stole from them their knowledge. When he created Goth Gulgamel, he brought their remains here, entombed in a shrine-mausoleum honoring their slavish dedication to evil magic.

The power of the cthorn was so great that their spirits managed to use the dark energies from the nearby banes of the Banewarrens to bring themselves back from the dead. They rose as undead but retained many qualities and talents they had while alive.

In life, the cthorn were six-armed humanoids adept at completing multiple tasks at once with their many hands. Cthorn combatants usually wielded one two-handed weapon, one shield, and three one-handed weapons all at the same time.

The undead cthorn here are either blackguards (warriors with fiend-granted abilities) or wizards.

CTHORN ENCOUNTERS

Two cthorn blackguards watch the mausoleum's entrance in eternal vigilance from atop the high ledge. They attack all who approach, first letting javelins fly, then moving into melee range and attempting to get flanking positions, with each of them concentrating on battling one foe at a time.

Unlike most of the other denizens of Goth Gulgamel today, the cthorn despise Ghul and grow angry even at the mention of his name. But then, they're always angry, their undead state fueled by the bitterness and spite of the Skull-King's genocidal attack. Good characters, however, should not mourn the slaughtered cthorn or feel too much sympathy for them—they were as vile a species as can be imagined.

Two cthorn wizards and another blackguard wait in the back of the mausoleum. The wizards likely cast one or more defensive and enhancing spells (casting two per round, if able) on themselves or the blackguard before entering battle.

23. CHAMBER OF IMMORTAL FEARS

The entrance to this chamber west of the Mausoleum of the Cthorn (area 22) appears to be a shimmering curtain of moving shadows, impenetrable even with the most powerful magic. The curtain is only about a foot thick, but it has been magically poisoned.

Vast and strange, the Chamber of Immortal Fears has no walls, floors, or ceiling—it is entirely open to the Utterdark. Twenty-foot-wide walkways of fused bone connect to platforms of floating black stone. Destrachans (see The Guardians, below) wait at the entrance and on the first platform; they were enslaved long ago by one of the Charad Titans corrupted by the Galchutt. This titan killed himself only to receive the immortality of undeath. Now he remains here on the final platform, in a sort of eternal slumber.

THE FEAR

Any living creature that enters this chamber (other than the destrachans or rakshasas native to Goth Gulgamel) is subtly attacked by the fear, a magical effect that continues to build over several rounds.

WALKWAYS AND PLATFORMS

The walkways across the Utterdark here are an uneven surface of fused humanoid bones and skulls about 3 feet thick. A character moving across them at a rate faster than their normal walking speed risks tripping and falling on the uneven surface.

The stone platforms between walkways measure 20 feet thick and float in the Utterdark. Anyone who falls off one of the walkways or platforms is lost in the Utterdark. Anyone who leaves the walkways or platforms in any direction enters the Utterdark after moving 20 feet away from the solid surfaces.

THE GUARDIANS

For centuries, a small clan of destrachans has lived in Goth Gulgamel, slaves of an evil Charad Titan. They secretly use the passage to the Sorn-Ulth caves (area 15) to hunt and feed there and explore other locations beneath the city (but they never venture to the surface). The remaining members of the clan guard here, watching over their master's eternal rest. They attack intruders without question.

Four destrachans—blind, quasi-humanoid creatures that can produce deadly blasts of sonic energy—stand on the walkway near the entrance and remain alert and on guard. The destrachans sense their environment with sound, not sight. Four more relax on the first platform and seem likely to stand their ground.

Sadistic creatures, the destrachans carefully tune their sonic attacks to knock foes unconscious instead of killing them, hoping to capture any intruders for later torments and live feedings. When possible, they all focus their attacks on the same foes to overwhelm them quickly. They do not awaken the titan.

AWAKENING THE AGELESS TITAN

Upon the final platform at the northwest end of the chamber stands a figure 25 feet tall. The rags of a funerary vestment cling to his desiccated flesh and gaunt bones. The figure does not stir, even if approached. The titan awakens under only two conditions:

- If attacked or damaged in any way
- If someone standing on the stone platform upon which he sleeps says his name, Kadavalus. His name can be discovered in Ghul's Old Temple (area 11) or by someone with extensive knowledge of history.

If attacked or damaged, Kadavalus the Ageless Titan first uses an ancient pact he made aeons before, creating a portal that summons five rhodintor to him. They do as he bids without hesitation. Then he attacks any intruders he sees, not stopping until at least one of them is dead as a price for the transgression. At that point, he pauses to allow foes to parley with him, if they want to—he is always curious as to why someone would awaken him.

Characters interested in ancient and arcane lore will be curious about the cthorn, a species that exists only in an undead state today and is all but forgotten.

The cthorn created the original Book of Darkness *using divinations that allowed them to look into the shadowy past and get information from the* Book of Inverted Darkness.

GM TIPS

It's effective to have the player characters encounter the cthorn here before having heard of them elsewhere. The idea that this fortress holds evils so ancient that no one even remembers them creates the proper mood. After initial contact, the PCs can recall obscure mentions of cthorn with a DC 24 Arcana check or a DC 22 History check.

Sorn-Ulth caves, page 599

Destrachans have chimera stats plus blindsight 100 feet, but their breath weapon inflicts thunder damage instead of fire damage.

A creature that touches the curtain of moving shadows must make a DC 22 Constitution save or take 14 (4d6) poison damage and be poisoned for one hour. Even creatures immune to poison can be harmed by the shadow curtain, but they have advantage on the save against it.

Charad Titans, page 81

Galchutt, page 62

Recalling the titan's name: *DC 25 History check*

The Ageless Titan was an ally of Ghul, but the Half God's most important lieutenants were demons made of darkness called the tenebraccus.

A creature subject to the fear must make a DC 20 Wisdom save or become frightened. A frightened creature must save on the next round or flee the area for 1d6 rounds. A fleeing creature that remains in the chamber must save on the next round or fall prone. A successful save against any stage of this fear returns the character to normal in 1d4 rounds.

The fused bone walkway is AC 15, 100 hp, DC 25 Strength check to break. A character moving across the walkway at more than their walking speed in a round must make a DC 12 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

Moving in the Utterdark, page 453

Kadavalus the Ageless Titan has empyrean stats, with the undead type; immune to charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, and poisoned; immune to necrotic and poison damage; immune to attempts to turn undead; resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks; alignment neutral evil.

Ghul's Old Temple, page 256

Rhodintor, page 594

GM TIPS

Remember that any creature of good alignment has disadvantage on attacks, saves, and checks while in Goth Gulgamel due to the Dread (page 453).

One can even use the Entropy Sphere to get to Jabel Shammar.

Once the player characters cross through the dragon-headed gateway to the Urthon Aedar sentry (area 24), the Dread no longer has any effect.

Urthon Aedar, page 130

Baenarum has deadly stats (page 607), with Wisdom +5, Charisma +5, Arcana +13, History +13, Perception +8; the ability to glimpse the future (GM's discretion); alignment lawful neutral. Equipment: Urthon Aedar plate armor *(+3 instead of +1),* axiomatic greatsword, +1 heavy crossbow, +1 bolts *(12). He knows the following sorcerer spells (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks):*

Cantrips (at will): dancing lights, fire bolt, mage hand, minor illusion, ray of frost, true strike

1st level (4 slots): magic missile, shield, thunderwave

2nd level (3 slots): detect thoughts, invisibility, see invisibility, web

3rd level (3 slots): blink, lightning bolt

4th level (2 slots): stoneskin, wall of fire

5th level (1 slot): cone of cold

Should someone awaken him with his name, Kadavalus asks why he has been disturbed. A foolish answer, such as "It was an accident," leads him to launch a powerful magical attack. Otherwise, the player characters can attempt to persuade or negotiate with him. What the titan does next depends on the result of the PCs' attempts at persuading Kadavalus (see the box on the next page).

PORTAL TO THE ENTROPY SPHERE

The portal to the Entropy Sphere is controlled by the titan and opens only at his whim—no one can even find it without him. With a wave of his hand, a massive dragon's skull, 15 feet long and 7 feet wide, looms out of the darkness at the edge of his platform. It opens, revealing grey, swirling energy within. Anyone who steps into the energy is transported to the Urthon Aedar sentry (area 24).

If the titan is destroyed, the portal to the Entropy Sphere opens and remains open forever.

24. URTHON AEDAR SENTRY

On the other side of the magical dragon-head gateway, an Urthon Aedar named Baenarum (male Elder Elf) stands guard in a long, wide hallway, acting as a gatekeeper before the Entropy Sphere. Thanks to the future glimpses his species experiences, Baenarum knows creatures are coming long before they appear. Unless he's positive they are friendly or harmless, he turns invisible and casts protective spells on himself just before they appear.

Baenarum challenges anyone who approaches him. He attempts to discern why the intruders seek the Entropy Sphere, trying to perceive their motives using nonmagical means and reading their surface thoughts. He allows only people he deems worthy past him; he might actually escort them to the back of his hall and through a large opening to the Entropy Sphere. He worries about those who want to use the sphere to get to Dreta Phantas, but those who convince him of the purity of their motives will find him a helpful guide through the portal and into the Dreaming City.

"Worthy" candidates, in Baenarum's view, often have received dreams from the Dream King in Dreta Phantas telling them to come and find the city.

Interacting with Baenarum the Urthon Aedar is disconcerting because, due to his glimpses of the future, he is likely to know more about the characters than they know about him when they first meet. In addition, he seems cold and compassionless. Like all Urthon Aedar, he is very slow to trust.

PERSUADING KADAVALUS

The Persuasion attempt gains advantage if the PCs present the titan with a gift of a very rare or legendary magic item. The roll gets a +5 bonus if the item has an evil aura or connotation, regardless of its rarity.

Persuasion Check Result	Ageless Titan's Response
<20	Titan launches an attack against the PCs for wasting his time.
20	Titan does not attack but demands each character's most powerful magic item and then bids them to leave, or he attacks.
25	Titan does not attack. He wants to know more about the characters and the events of the current day. If the PCs answer his questions, they can make another check with a +5 bonus (and they can use the same modifiers as the original Persuasion check to influence him).
30	Titan commends them on the respect they show to their betters and offers to show them the means to get to the Entropy Sphere.

Entropy Sphere, page 463

25. ENTROPY SPHERE AND GATES OF DELIRIUM

This immense circular chamber resembles the interior of a globe. In the middle, a blazing sphere of power glows like the sun and spins with wild, crackling energy. All around it, six magical doorways stand on platforms connected to the walls of the chamber by very narrow bridges; an equally narrow walkway around the interior of the sphere connects the bridges to each other. The doors seethe with energy flowing from them into the sphere. One of the platforms is mangled and wrecked, the remnants of a shattered door frame on it—it appears as though that magical doorway was destroyed. It still crackles with energy in a less controlled manner than the other doors.

This is the fabled Entropy Sphere, perhaps the grandest creation of Eslathagos Malkith. Six gateways into a plane of primal chaos draw that immeasurable energy and direct it into a sphere of great power. The Dread One gained much of his power by tapping into this sphere, and even after his death others have tried to do so as well. Ghul built Goth Gulgamel here to access the Entropy Sphere, and the half-demon lich Sokalahn used a spell to destroy one of the gates to unleash the power needed to breach the Banewarrens. (Doing so also created the Pits of Insanity.) Yrkyth Vladaam built a machine called the Enigma Engine to tap into the power of the sphere, but he miscalculated the energies involved and his engine failed spectacularly.

It should be obvious to the player characters that the chamber of the Entropy Sphere is far more ancient than Goth Gulgamel and was built in a much different style. Technically, this chamber is more a part of Jabel Shammar than it is of Ghul's fortress. Like Goth Gulgamel, however, the space that the sphere occupies does not fully fit into the Spire but is extradimensional in nature.

Eslathagos Malkith, page 79

Sokalahn, page 405

Banewarrens, page 389

Pits of Insanity, page 387

Vladaams, page 100

CASTING SPELLS HERE

The chaotic energies swirling about this chamber make spellcasting difficult. If the caster fails to control the spell as they cast it, it goes wild. Refer to the Pits of Insanity description for the effects of a spell going wild.

Chaotic energies in the chamber mean a caster must make a DC 15 Constitution check to control a spell and cast it correctly.

TAPPING INTO THE SPHERE

Characters can attempt to use the wild energies of the Entropy Sphere. Even nonspellcasters can do so, but without some skill at manipulating magic, success is virtually impossible. The characters can use the energy to create any effect that duplicates a spell they are aware of, either arcane or divine.

- Characters must be within 1 foot per caster level of the Entropy Sphere to tap into its power. In the history of the world, only the Dread One could use its power from farther away.
- Using the sphere's power to cast a spell requires an Arcana check with a DC equal to 20 + the level of the spell being cast. Success means they cast the spell without expending any spell slots. The act of successfully drawing upon this power is very taxing, and the character gains levels of exhaustion equal to half the spell level (minimum 1).
- Failing the Arcana check means the energy is directed into the caster, inflicting 70 (20d6) force damage; the character must also make a DC 20 Wisdom save or gain 1d3 levels of exhaustion and their alignment moves one step closer to chaotic (neutral characters become chaotic, lawful characters become neutral).
- If a nonspellcaster attempts to use the Entropy Sphere to cast a spell, Charisma is their spellcasting ability for the spell.

GOING TO DRETA PHANTAS

If accompanied by Baenarum or another Urthon Aedar, characters can use the sphere as a means of transporting themselves to Dreta Phantas. Any Urthon Aedar can, as a full-round action, shape the energy of the sphere into a portal that lasts as long as they concentrate. This portal leads directly into the center of the stolen elven city.

The Dreaming City of Dreta Phantas, page 425

The powerful magical staff sought might be the staff of the magi.

Jabel Shammar, page 465

Banewarrens key, *page 389*

Parnaith's mirrored sphere, *page 641*

Dread One's staff, *page 638*

Seeping Portal, page 493

One possible Ptolus Campaign could involve a party of Stonelost dwarves on an epic quest to prove the worthiness of their species by entering Goth Gulgamel or destroying the staves of Ghul *(now in the hands of Helmut Itlestein; see Helmut's Horrid Scheme, page 573).*

Lenses of the Utterdark, *page 641*

Sorn-Ulth, page 599

GOING TO JABEL SHAMMAR

The Dread One once created an access point to Jabel Shammar via the Entropy Sphere. Few know this fact—Ghul did not know, and even the Urthon Aedar do not. Someone who has the *Banewarrens key*, *Parnaith's mirrored sphere*, or the *Dread One's staff* can, as their action for the round, shape the energy of the sphere into a portal that lasts as long as they concentrate. This portal leads to the dungeons of Jabel Shammar; characters who step through it find themselves spit out of the Seeping Portal.

GOTH GULGAMEL SCENARIOS

Although exploring Goth Gulgamel might be incentive enough for brave or foolhardy adventurers, there are other reasons to come here as well.

RECOVERY MISSION

Sorn-Ulth have ventured into the city and stolen some magical treasures. Divinations used to locate the stolen loot reveal that it lies within Goth Gulgamel, as do the thieves. No one knows that most of the sealing spells are gone from the fortress, so most people assume that it would be impossible to retrieve the loot. Then again, the fact that the divinations worked suggest that it might not be so impossible after all.

FIND THE STAFF OF THE MAGI

The player characters seek a powerful magical staff. Their extensive research of historical texts and conversations with sages near and far have taught them that the artifact once numbered among Ghul's treasures. However, it was lost in the Utterdark when Khelaeson (one of the Great Seven) helped dismantle much of Goth Gulgamel. In other words, the staff lies within a chamber that drifted off into the Utterdark, no longer connected to the rest of the fortress. Knowing this, a particularly wise sage recommends that a wishing spell cast within the Utterdark itself might allow the PCs to brave that cold, dark void and locate the lost chamber of the staff. Of course, the *lenses of the Utterdark* would help, too. . . .

GETTING TO DRETA PHANTAS

The player characters need to get to the Dreaming City. Perhaps one or more of them have received dreams calling to them, dreams that make it clear they must reach Dreta Phantas. Through these dreams, or through extensive research, they learn that they can reach the stolen city through the Entropy Sphere—and that one can access the sphere only through Goth Gulgamel.

Chapter 25:
JABEL SHAMMAR

For as long as people have known of the Spire, there has been a sinister and mysterious fortress perched at its top. What most people don't realize is that the fortress is older than the Spire itself.

This chapter provides details of arguably the most horrific place in the world—even worse than the Dark Reliquary or Goth Gulgamel, a place of darkness and death built by a figure so powerful and malevolent as to make even the demons and devils lower their heads in supplication and fear. This place, the fortress of Jabel Shammar, was the abode of the Dread One: Eslathagos Malkith.

But it was not always so. As Chapter 5: History describes, this tower was once called Mosul Pearl, the White Tower of Danar. The cleric Danar and his tower started out as forces of benevolence but fell from this lofty position into darkness, hatred, and despair—three things the Jabel Shammar of today still clearly reflects.

Eslathagos Malkith was that rarest of villains who reveled in evil and darkness for its own sake. Corrupted by the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, he was motivated entirely by hatred for what he had once been. For him, light was darkness and darkness light. He hated life, nature, and all things born of the Creator. Kindness, compassion, love—these qualities he considered contemptible. Misery, hate, and pain spoke to him, and depravity, destruction, and malice became the objects of his lust. Most would consider this outlook pathological, but such was the nature of the corruptive *Book of Inverted Darkness*.

After the fall of the Dread One, the Elder Gods sought to destroy forever the evil of this place, but despite all their power, the best they could do was to seal it off magically from those thinking to enter.

THE LOOK AND FEEL OF JABEL SHAMMAR

Once the center of a tyrannical empire bent on murder and destruction, the fortress Jabel Shammar served not only as a residence for the Dread One, but also as a command post for armies of demons, undead, and monstrous creatures. In its laboratories, Eslathagos Malkith fashioned such terrible beasts and aberrations as manticores and destrachans, plus the more ubiquitous goblins and bugbears, among others. Jabel Shammar was the birthplace of some of the mightiest and most malevolent spells of all time, as well as dark artifacts and other items of power.

Today the fortress stands abandoned, virtually a ruin. Its master is dead, and time has claimed most of his servants as well. A few guardians remain, and wards summon more if intruders violate the fortress, but Jabel Shammar is a lingering shade of the bastion of darkness and strife it once was.

It is a place of malice, but also of abiding sorrow, deep regret, and brooding despair. Its

Elder Gods, page 61

Dark Reliquary, page 223
Goth Gulgamel, page 452

Remnants of the original Mosul Pearl can still be found within Jabel Shammar, in an area called the Alabaster Sanctuary (see page 481).

Refer to the Eslathagos Malkith section on page 79 for more on the fall of Danar.

Jabel Shammar differs in look from Goth Gulgamel in the same way that standing in the presence of a god differs from kneeling before that god's altar. Ghul designed Goth Gulgamel to mimic Jabel Shammar, but he had never been there. Even after all these millennia, the Dread One's fortress atop the Spire remains burdened with the oppressive weight of the evil deeds done there and the malevolence of its master.

Keeping the Players Tense

Jabel Shammar is the worst place in all of Ptolus the player characters could visit—worse even than the Dark Reliquary or Goth Gulgamel. Call for frequent Perception checks, randomly setting the Difficulty Class at 15, 20, or 25. Those who succeed see movement in the omnipresent shadows or hear a strange noise: a scuttling, a squirming, breathing, or a distant moan or scream. However, no matter what they do or how they investigate, no source of the motion or sound presents itself. Soon, the players will either get unnerved (which is good!) or begin to doubt their senses, assuming all calls for such checks are meaningless. The latter can lead to trouble when the danger becomes real.

The powerful magic that protects Jabel Shammar from intrusion, divination, and harm is a combination of abjurations granted by Eslathagos Malkith to protect his demesne and by the Elder Gods after the Dread One's demise to prevent anyone from gaining access to the evil therein.

Malevolent force: *see the Malignancy, page 467*

Adamantine door: *AC 23, 25 hp, DC 27 Strength check to break*

Magical effects in Jabel Shammar that vary with the spell slot level used should be treated as if cast using a 9th-level spell slot. Even effects that do not vary by spell slot should be treated as if cast using an 8th-level spell slot. (This mostly applies to spells like dispel magic *that can succeed or fail based on the target magic's spell slot.)*

halls are quiet now, but each chamber seems laden with the monumental sins of the past and pregnant with the potential for further dangers—both physical and spiritual. Even the least sensitive individuals feel as though every inch of this place is haunted, and that spectral, sinister eyes follow them wherever they go.

Jabel Shammar is also a place of absolutes. Player characters entering this fortress should expect the forces they confront here to be singularly powerful. No locked door here is likely opened by any means other than that which Eslathagos Malkith intended. No barrier is bypassed by a simple spell or trick that worked in other dungeons or locales. Although this isn't always true, it's what explorers should expect. To put it another way, things just don't get any tougher than this. Jabel Shammar is the perfect setting for the final, climactic adventure of a Ptolus Campaign.

The Spire rises 3,000 feet above the highest level of the city, but Jabel Shammar rises another 500 feet above the pinnacle, extending its height by one-sixth. About 200 feet across for most of its height, the Spire widens slightly to almost 300 feet in diameter at the top, where the fortress rests.

Jabel Shammar consists of four towers: one central tower and three smaller and shorter ones that are each still quite massive. Two of the smaller towers connect to the central tower by 10-foot-wide walkways 50 feet above the level of the rocky, jagged ground below. Each tower appears to be fashioned from dark stone, but it is actually a form of solidified negative energy fortified by the malevolent force growing like a cancer within the fortress. Spikes and bladelike protrusions cover the outer walls, particularly at the top of each tower, which gives them the impression of wicked kings of darkness in barbed crowns brooding forever high above the city.

The wind often blows through the structure, which was deliberately fashioned so the breezes would moan as they passed by—distant, almost ephemeral, wails of torment. When the winds fall silent, clouds usually envelop the fortress. Tendrils of cold mist sometimes even seep inside the towers, reducing visibility to only 5 or 10 feet.

Jabel Shammar's design is gothic and twisted, with baroque ornamentation of a most demonic nature covering virtually every surface. Where there are no leering gargoyles or graven demons, the architecture boasts sharp angles and dangerous flanges. The Dread One fashioned the entire place to intimidate others. The large and high-ceilinged interior chambers have niches and alcoves everywhere, so that no matter where one stands, some corner of the room is always in shadow.

THE NATURE OF JABEL SHAMMAR

All of Jabel Shammar is unhallowed ground (see the box on the next page.

Powerful dweomers infuse the fortress, making it impossible for mortal magic to affect or damage the outer walls in any way, including bypassing them with teleportation, incorporeality, or divination magic used to look within the structure. Even the gods cannot look inside, so magic that petitions entities for information about the interior of Jabel Shammar automatically fails. This effect is only one-way, from the outside in. Thus, one can teleport out of a tower or scry someone in Ptolus from within the confines of the fortress.

The outer walls and doors remain similarly immune to brute force; they cannot be harmed physically. None of this affects summoning creatures into Jabel Shammar by creatures or supernatural forces that are within the fortress. Summoning something *out* of Jabel Shammar is impossible, though, as is summoning something into the fortress when the summoner stands outside its walls.

None of this is true of the interior walls, which have their own unique characteristics in each tower. However, note that no walls, ceilings, or floors in Jabel Shammar (except in the sublevels) are made of stone, although most appear to be. Thus, spells that create holes in stone walls or manipulate the shape of stone do not work on them.

Each individual tower is distinct from the others in this regard. One cannot teleport or scry, for example, from the interior of one tower to another, although from one room to another in the same tower such magic functions normally.

Unless stated otherwise, doors are made of adamantine and are 1 inch thick. They are not locked unless so stated in the individual locale descriptions.

Windows in the outer walls are opaque black from the outside and function the same as the walls they are set into. However, pervasive magic keeps all chambers in the towers (except the dungeons) lit in a dim, shadowy illumination. No spell, item, or effect short of the direct intervention of a deity can brighten the lighting here. Magic can make it darker, however.

MAGICAL EFFECTS

Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, assume that all magical effects in Jabel Shammar were created by the Dread One or a minion of nearly the same power, which means attempting to dispel or suppress them is difficult.

UNHALLOWED GROUND

Jabel Shammar is tainted with evil that makes it a supernaturally welcoming place for undead and demons, and an inherently hostile place for non-evil living creatures. This has the following effects:

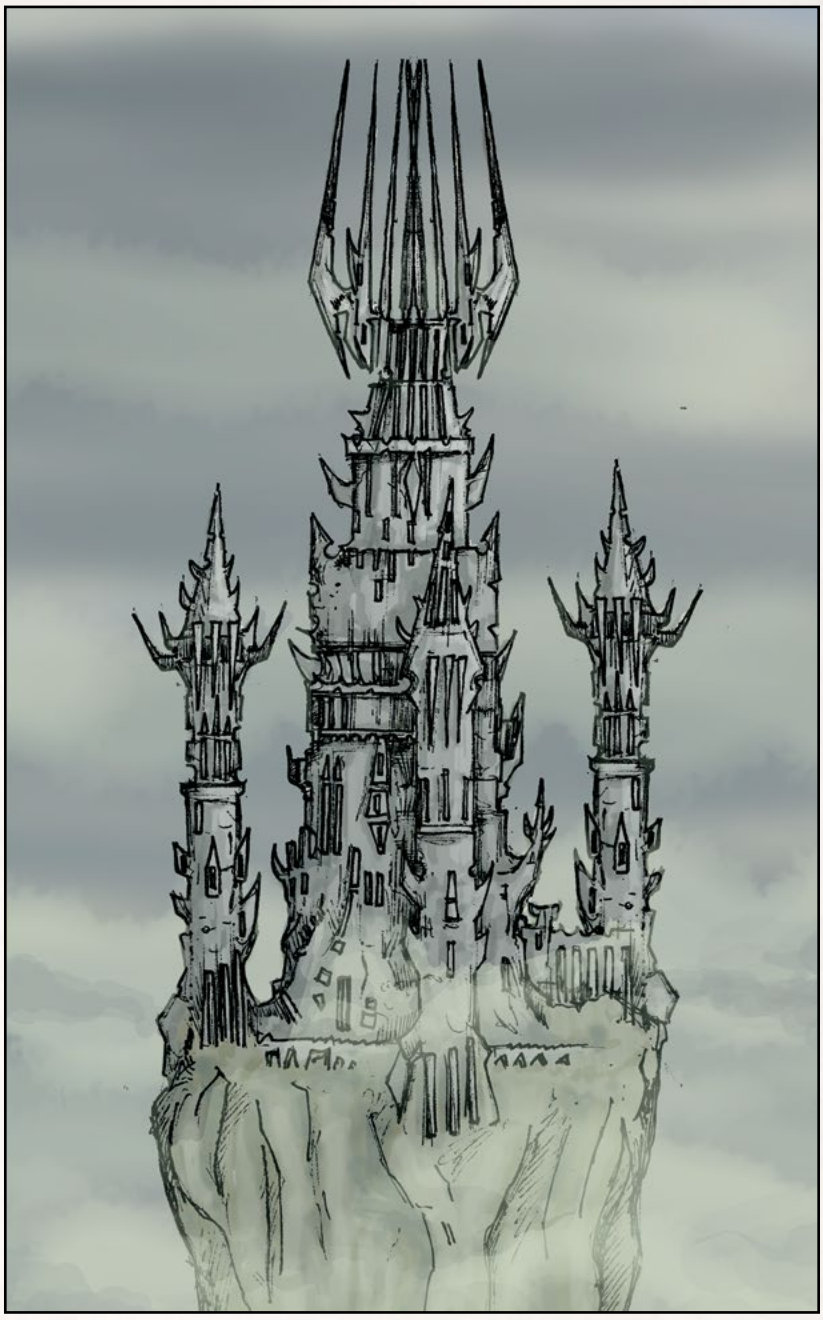
- Celestials, elementals, and fey can't be conjured within Jabel Shammar, and if conjured outside of it, they cannot enter. (This doesn't affect celestials, elementals, and fey who permanently reside in Praemal, such as the Malkuth—the ward is against creatures that have only a temporary presence in the world.) These creatures cannot use mind control, fear, or possession abilities within the area, whether cast within or outside of Jabel Shammar.
- Powerful demons and devils (challenge rating 6 and higher) have the ability to teleport at will within the unhallowed area. This ability works like *teleport*, except it affects only the creature (no passengers) plus about 50 pounds of objects it carries, and the fiend always arrives on target.
- Fiends and undead have advantage on saves to resist attempts to turn undead.
- All fiends and undead in the area are affected by *bless*.

THE MALIGNANCY

Something grows in Jabel Shammar, even to this day—grows like a cancer. This festering neoplasm is not visible to the naked eye and cannot be touched by the corporeal hand. However, anyone with magic that lets them see things as they actually are can see rootlike fibers of darkness weaving through the walls, floors, and ceilings. These foul tendrils thread through the physicality of the structure the way a creeping vine weaves its way through a trellis.

Nearly the entire fortress lies within the invisible, incorporeal grasp of this tumor of pure evil called the Malignancy, which proves that an evil as potent as Jabel Shammar cannot exist for so long in one place without leaving behind a permanent scar—in this case, an infected one that spreads its contamination throughout the fortress.

This would be of little concern, as Jabel Shammar is virtually empty and nigh unreachable, except for one thing: when the Malignancy spreads far enough to reach a chamber called the Sombrous Sepulcher, its power will flow into the last remaining spark of the Dread One's life force, and he will live once again. After almost eight thousand years since his death, this is likely to happen within just a few years—or sooner, if the Malignancy's growth is spurred on by the corruption of more creatures within its reach.



The Malignancy is the result of two factors: the accumulation of so much evil in one place for so long, and the nearly self-aware manifestation of the *Book of Inverted Darkness* that lies at the top of the Tower of Malice. In a manner of speaking, the fortress's residual evil feeds the Malignancy's metaphysical substance, and the *Book of Inverted Darkness* focuses the power of the Malignancy toward a goal.

Since the concept of corruption is at the very core of the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, it is no surprise that the Malignancy spreads a corruptive influence throughout Jabel Shammar. Anyone visiting this dire place faces the same corruptive forces that eventually overcame even

Time and Jabel Shammar

Despite its incredible age, none of the furnishings, décor, or fixtures in Jabel Shammar decay, unless described otherwise. Thus, wooden chairs, cloth tapestries, and woven rugs, just to name a few things, look mostly the way they did when the Dread One walked these halls. Jabel Shammar is also virtually free of dust or vermin (so there are no cobwebs).

Tower of Malice, page 477

How Long Before the Dread One Returns?

GMs who wish to use this plotline should decide exactly how long before the Malignancy reaches the Sombrous Sepulcher (page 490) and restores the Dread One. About one year is recommended, starting at a point when the player characters are of a level high enough to enter the fortress, and keeping in mind that each new figure completely corrupted by the Malignancy shortens that time by one month. If you're starting from the beginning of the campaign, two or three years is probably best.

Danace, page 72

CORRUPTION POINTS

Corruption points are a way to measure the spiritually cancerous power of the Malignancy upon characters entering Jabel Shammar. Each character's corruption point total indicates the level of defilement upon their soul. When a character comes to the fortress, determine their resolve level, a statistic that measures corruptibility and steadfastness. Resolve level is equal to a character's level plus their Wisdom saving throw bonus, adjusted by an alignment-based modifier as follows:

Alignment	Resolve Modifier
Good	+10
Lawful	+5
Neutral	+0
Chaotic	–2
Evil	–15

The GM may wish to grant ad hoc bonuses or penalties based on the natures of the individual characters and their personalities. A particularly devout cleric or a paladin might gain as much as an additional +5 bonus, for instance. A character who is neutral good but strays from their alignment now and again may have a –2 penalty. Someone devoted to an evil deity could have a penalty as high as –5.

Thus, a 20th-level character with a Wisdom save bonus of +11 and a chaotic good alignment has a resolve level of 39 (20 + 11 – 2 + 10). A 15th-level character with a Wisdom save bonus of +10 and a neutral evil alignment, devoted to Danace, Master of the Thousand Pains, has a resolve level of 5 (15 + 10 + 0 – 15 – 5).

When a character's corruption point total equals or exceeds their resolve level, they become forever evil, an unswerving servant of inverted darkness.

A character gains or loses corruption points based on the actions listed in the Corruption Points tables on the next page.

Also note: a character within the radius of a *holy aura* spell cannot gain corruption points. In addition, no character can have a negative corruption point total.

After gaining at least 10 corruption points, a character who is not already evil must make a DC 20 Wisdom save or their alignment moves one step toward evil (good characters become neutral, neutral characters become evil). This change takes place no matter what the character's resolve level.

When a character's corruption point total reaches 75 percent of their resolve level, their spirit grows darker. Even if their alignment is still good, their appearance takes on a sinister aura, and their features become more demonic. Voices in their head continually urge them toward foul, malevolent, or perverted acts. They can tap into the evil essence of the Malignancy to heal themselves of damage; as an action, they can recover 10d10 hit points. However, doing so earns them 2 corruption points and moves their alignment one step toward evil (no saving throw).

When a character's corruption point total equals or exceeds their resolve level, they become irredeemably evil. Such a character is considered completely corrupted. They immediately seek to kill all those they once loved or felt kinship for (including their fellow adventurers). A *wish* cast within ten minutes of the final corruption has a 50 percent chance of restoring the character's original alignment and reducing their corruption point total to half of what it was. However, the shock of the sudden separation from the Malignancy immediately slays the character.

Alabaster Sanctuary, page 481
Tower of Malice, page 477

Danar, a veritable pillar of righteousness and benevolence that no mortal has equaled in all the millennia since he was lost.

To measure the fell influence that infects anyone entering the grasp of the Malignancy, keep track of each character's corruption points.

CORRUPTED CHARACTERS AND THE MALIGNANCY

The process of completely corrupting a new character feeds the Malignancy, shortening the time until the return of the Dread One by one month. Such a character can continue to heal themselves using the Malignancy and remains forevermore in contact with the malign awareness. The character instantly and automatically knows the position of every creature in Jabel Shammar (except in the Alabaster Sanctuary within the Tower of Malice) and can use an action to perceive any location within it. Even characters who are invisible or hiding can be found using the Malignancy; for example, completely corrupted characters always know the location of an invisible creature (although it may still be difficult for the character to strike the invisible foe). The Malignancy forever controls the character, likely making them a guardian of Jabel Shammar and eventually—as the Malignancy grows ever stronger—perhaps an agent sent out of the fortress to prepare the way for the Dread One's return. A completely corrupted player character becomes an NPC controlled by the GM.

GAINING CORRUPTION POINTS TABLE

Action	Corruption Points
Each full hour spent in Jabel Shammar*	+1
Each full hour spent with any item taken from Jabel Shammar**†	+1
Using divination or scrying spells	+3
Using spells that allow contact with the dead	+3
Using spells to enhance vision, see magic, or penetrate walls	+2
Using spells to detect evil, alignment, or thoughts	+2
Using any evil spell	+5
Using a chaositech item	+1
Wearing a malefic mask** (see page 470)	+2
Being brought back to life within Jabel Shammar	+10
Committing an evil act††	+1 to +10
Examining a blasphemous shrine	+1
Examining the mural in the Tower of Malice's "Galleries" level	+2
Listening to the Dire Song in the Tower of Malice's "Residences" level	+2
Studying the books in the Tower of Malice's "Library" level	+2
Being possessed by the Dread One's shadow in the Heart of the Malignancy	+2
Being touched by a tendril in the Heart of the Malignancy	+4
Feeling the Breath of the Serpent in the dungeons	+2

LOSING CORRUPTION POINTS TABLE

Action	Corruption Points
Being the recipient of a spell that removes curses or provides atonement	–2
Being the recipient of a spell that dispels evil or breaks enchantment	–2
Touching the lammasu statue in the Alabaster Sanctuary	–5
Being within the positive energy burst of *Parnaith's Heart*	–10
Committing a particularly good or heroic act†††‡	–1 to –10
Each day spent away from Jabel Shammar	–1
Using a *wish* to reduce the corruption	–10
Using *miracle* to reduce the corruption	All points removed

* Time spent in the Alabaster Sanctuary does not count, but time spent in an extradimensional space does count.

** One time only; subsequent uses of the spell or item do not result in further corruption points.

† Other than the Egg of Parnaith.

†† GM's discretion.

‡ This should not be something as straightforward as killing a demon, but something self-sacrificing or heroic (taking a blow for a comrade or putting oneself in unnecessary danger to help another).

Using the Malignancy's Awareness

Even though all non-construct creatures of Jabel Shammar know where intruders are via the Malignancy, they do not immediately swarm to attack, for fear of being outflanked with a teleportation spell or some other strategy. However, some creatures, such as Ulithik the Misbegotten, may go hunting intruders if they show no interest in coming his way (assuming he awakes from his stasis; see page 473).

Parnaith's Heart, *page 641*

Egg of Parnaith, page 472

Blasphemous shrine, page 477

Someone who looks at a completely corrupted character using magic that perceives hidden things sees one of the rootlike tendrils of blackness extending directly into the character's forehead from the walls of the fortress.

Should Eslathagos Malkith ever live again, all control of completely corrupted creatures transfers to him. In effect, he becomes the Malignancy.

EVIL CREATURES AND THE MALIGNANCY

When fiends or fiendish creatures are summoned into Jabel Shammar (including those drawn in via the summoning cascade of the Tower of Malice), they immediately are considered corrupted characters in that they feed the Malignancy. Such creatures also have access to the Malignancy's awareness and its ability to heal them. Creatures awakened from stasis (such as the various aberrations in the Misbegotten Tower or the Tower of Malice) or undead in the fortress (such as the nightcrawler and the mummies in the Tower of Blasphemy and the mohrgs in the Tower of Malice) are already considered part of the Malignancy and do not feed it further, but they can take advantage of the healing effect and its awareness. The various golems in Jabel Shammar do not feed the Malignancy and cannot heal themselves using its energies.

Evil non-fiends that come to Jabel Shammar are not automatically corrupted. However, they likely have few resolve points and will soon become corrupted. Other creatures—fiends or not—summoned by casters not yet completely

Misbegotten Tower, page 470

Tower of Blasphemy, page 474

Jabel Shammar is also known as the Black Tower and the Dread Spike.

Summoning cascade, page 478

Malefic mask, *page 641*

Dread One's Suite, page 484

Serpent Path, page 491

Thousands of years ago, the Dread One adopted the Abyssal language and taught it to all his creations and servants.

Attempting to dispel the slow disintegration magic (a 9th-level spell slot) requires quick timing. Have the acting character make their dispelling check and also roll for initiative. If their initiative roll is at least a 15 and the dispel is successful, the disintegrating character is alive, but dying and very close to death (0 hp, two failed death saving throws); a great deal of the character's physical form has already been lost, as has half their equipment. If the initiative roll is less than 15, it is too late to save the disintegrating character's life; all that remains is a bloody mess of flesh and bone, and their nonmagical equipment is destroyed.

Banewarrens secret door: *DC 26 Perception check to find*

Misbegotten Tower walls and floors: *AC 19, 30 hp, DC 26 Strength check to break*

Alchestrin's Tomb, page 218

Banewarrens, page 389

Parnaith's mirrored sphere, *page 641*

Dread One's staff, *page 638*

Entropy Sphere, page 463

Seeping Portal, page 493

Rumors

Just about anyone in the city can relate the fact that climbing or flying up to the top of the Spire is foolhardy and dangerous. Those who try never return, people say. A few tell tales of wizards flying up to Jabel Shammar only to fade away into the wind or disappear into a cloud, never to be heard from again. This is the kind of thing that sounds like tavern gossip one shouldn't take too seriously, but in fact, it is quite accurate. Asking more experienced, knowledgeable sources, like mages in the Inverted Pyramid (page 114) or the Brides of Magic (page 106), authenticates the popular stories.

If a glass vat is smashed open, anyone within 5 feet takes 10 (3d6) acid damage, and everyone in this chamber must make a DC 18 Constitution save or become poisoned for 1d6 rounds.

Greater Shadow

A greater shadow is a more powerful version of a typical shadow. It has shadow stats, with 49 (9d8 + 9) hit points; has advantage on attacks, saves, and checks; and is challenge rating 4.

Narrow crevice: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

corrupted may be taken over by the Malignancy, adding further to its power.

MALEFIC MASKS

Eslathagos Malkith created a handful of magic items called *malefic masks* that allow wearers to bypass certain guardians, traps, or wards. They can be found in the top levels of both the Misbegotten Tower and the Tower of Blasphemy, as well as in the Dread One's Suite in the Tower of Malice. The Serpent Path in the dungeons replicates the special powers of a *malefic mask*.

ENTERING JABEL SHAMMAR

Getting into Jabel Shammar isn't just a matter of using a flying spell to reach the top of the Spire. Attempting to do so, in fact, is extremely dangerous. Anyone approaching within 100 feet of any part of the structure who has not used one of the methods listed below is targeted by a disintegration effect that, if successful, will scatter their dustlike remnants into the Ethereal Plane. This disintegration is slow, taking several extraordinary painful seconds to complete (which gives characters a brief opportunity to interrupt the magic before it kills the targeted character).

In any event, the doors and walls of Jabel Shammar remain impregnable to anyone attempting to enter the fortress in such a mundane way.

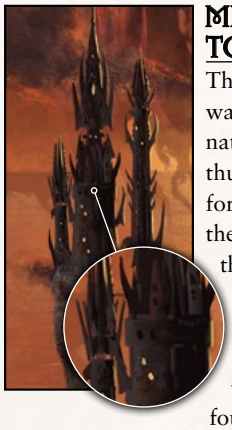
Also remember that the fortress is immune to magical means of entry such as teleportation or incorporeality, as described in The Nature of Jabel Shammar (page 466).

The ways into Jabel Shammar are very few.

- Alchestrin's Tomb in the Necropolis contains the soul magic spell that allows one to enter Jabel Shammar. This spell, usable once, takes characters onto the walkway between the Tower of Malice and the Tower of Blasphemy.
- From the Banewarrens, one can access the Dread One's Path, and from there—if one should find a secret door at the end of the path opened only with the *Banewarrens key*—one can pass magically up into the dungeons of Jabel Shammar, arriving in area 2. Getting into the Banewarrens presents its own difficulties, of course. (There is also an elevator in the Dread One's Path that leads into the dungeons, but it can be activated only from the dungeons, not from the Banewarrens.)
- If one has the *Banewarrens key*, *Parnaith's mirrored sphere*, or the *Dread One's staff* and accesses the Entropy Sphere via Goth Gulgamel, one can reach the Seeping Portal chamber in the Dungeons.

Those who use any of these means to get to the fortress can move around in Jabel Shammar, either within the towers or outside of them, without fear of the disintegration effect—unless and until they move more than 100 feet from the structure as a whole. Then, they once again face the difficulties described above regarding physical or magical entry. In other words, going inside once does not guarantee that they can easily return.

The areas described below correspond to those shown on the Spire side of the poster map.



MISBEGOTTEN TOWER

The Dread One sought to warp everything good and natural, perverting it and thus showing contempt for its creator. Many of the more horrid creatures that plague the world today exist because of his actions. The Misbegotten Tower, the easternmost of the four, was devoted to the creation of such monsters.

The door into the tower lies on the second level, at the end of a walkway from the Tower of Malice.

Unless otherwise stated, the interior walls and floors of this tower resemble desiccated, diseased, and warped flesh more than stone.

LEVEL 1: STOREHOUSE

Huge, sealed glass vats of foul chemicals and soups of organic materials fill this lower level. The ceiling is 50 feet high, and the room smells of dust and acid.

Eight greater shadows skulk about here, muttering dark whispers, but they are likely to be little more than a nuisance to anyone powerful enough to enter this tower. If they fight, they pass through the vats incorporeally and lunge out to make their attacks, hoping to trick opponents into accidentally smashing a vat and unleashing the caustic and noxious chemicals inside. The shadows flee if opposed by those with great puissance.

However, observant PCs can note that *how* they flee is significant. They all slither incorporeally into an area behind one of the vats, where there is a hidden narrow crevice. This crack is a flaw in Jabel Shammar's defense. After four person-hours of work (assuming some kind of tools are available), characters can widen the crack to reveal a slight natural cave in the

solid (normal) stone of the Spire; the shallow cave measures 7 feet deep and 4 feet wide. (The shadows are long gone by the time it is unearthed.) While this chamber does not provide refuge from the Malignancy, one could use magic (such as teleportation) to enter the cave from the outside of the fortress, thus gaining access back in. This is useful to PCs who find that they have to leave but wish to return. In addition, knowledge of this option would be invaluable to some of the evil forces in Ptolus.

The narrow crevice can also be found by searching, without the shadows giving away its presence.

LEVEL 2: ENTRY

The room behind the tower's main door appears empty except for the stairs going up to the next level, 40 feet above, and down to the bottom level. However, as soon as a living creature enters this room, veins rise in the fleshlike walls, pulsing as they carry some vile liquid from below to the levels above. This action signifies that the creatures on levels 5 and 7 (see pages 472 and 473) awaken from their aeons-long stasis and prepare to deal with intruders. Nothing short of smothering the area with antimagic can stop this trigger.

LEVEL 3: GUARDIANS

This high-ceilinged room is empty except for two huge statues that are, in fact, greater stone golems. No staircase rises to level 4; a black adamantine valve 5 inches thick covers the 10-foot-wide hole in the ceiling that leads up to the next level, 80 feet above the floor. On the ceiling, a massive stone dragon head on a long stony neck curls protectively around the valve.

Golems: The constructs stand at the ready and attack any creatures that enter the room except those who wear a *malefic mask*. The Dread One's servants fashioned each golem so that it appears to be a misshapen humanoid figure with grotesque, mutated features. These two guardians try to position themselves so that they command most of the chamber.

Each of them has a large ruby (worth 5,000 gp) set into one eye socket and a black diamond (worth 5,000 gp) in the other. If someone wearing a *malefic mask* commands a golem to remove its black diamond, it will do so; otherwise, all four gems can be removed only after the golem is destroyed.

Dragon Head: When the golems move, so does the stone dragon head, which animates so as to breathe fire down into the room. Further, the flame coalesces into an elder fire elemental that attacks. The fire elemental remains for ten rounds or until destroyed. The dragon head breathes every round, and each breath becomes a new fire elemental, so the room could get very crowded, very quickly. The dragon head goes dormant if the golems are destroyed or stop attacking.

Opening the Valve: Touching the two black diamonds from the golems together causes the valve in the ceiling to float down like a platform to the floor to ferry people up through the opening. Otherwise, it will not open unless magically opened. The valve ferries people down from above if someone standing atop it wills it to do so; if left on its own, it always reseals itself after one minute. The valve is indestructible.

LEVEL 4: LABORATORY

The ceiling is 20 feet high in both of the rooms on this level. The larger chamber is a laboratory, while the smaller one is a kind of storage room.

DREAD ONE'S LABORATORY

This room is crowded with equipment, all covered faintly in dust. A large glass vat of translucent green liquid stands in the middle of the room next to a U-shaped steel table covered in alchemical equipment and tools. In six recessed areas in the floor, steel boxes, not unlike coffins, lie marred with corrosion and the stains of strange admixtures and ancient blood. Along the walls and in between the recessed areas, tall glass tubes 2 to 4 feet across stretch from floor to ceiling. Suspended in thick liquid within each tube float strange-looking creatures, some humanoid, some not; apparently, they were grown there. Fleshy cords connect the creatures to strange arcane devices both inside and outside the tubes. A few shelves built into the walls hold various jars and bottles of alchemical compounds.

The creatures in the tubes are long dead, but the solutions in which they are suspended have preserved them. They appear to be half-grown goblins, fetal versions of aberrations (such as destrachans), or unidentifiable chimeras of twisted flesh and hideous form—obviously failed experiments. The vat contains a low-potency acid (half as strong as the alchemical acid an adventurer might buy in a flask).

The recessed areas in the floor measure about 8 feet long and 3 feet deep. The metal boxes in them are empty, save for one containing a hirsute humanoid (a kind of proto-bugbear). The humanoid is alive, preserved in the box, but utterly mindless and soulless—more of a thing of living meat than a sapient creature. The steel boxes are all faintly magical (as are the tubes). No one other than the Dread One can get them to function.

A DC 20 Arcana check (or a skill related to alchemy) identifies the chemicals in the storehouse as materials one might use if attempting to alter the structure of creatures or create new organic substances from scratch.

When the Dread One lived in Jabel Shammar, he spent a great deal of time in the Misbegotten Tower creating new horrors to unleash upon the world, simply for the evil they would wreak. Even today, the legacy of his labors endures in such aberrations as destrachans, chokers, chuuls, and more. None of these creatures alive today knows that they owe the existence of their species to the Dread One. Many of the more intelligent ones, in fact, have developed their own myths and gods to explain their creation.

The greater stone golems have stone golem stats, with Huge size, 300 hp, immunity to fire, and advantage on attacks and saves. They alternate using their Slow ability, trying to keep as many foes affected as often as possible.

A DC 22 Arcana check identifies the proto-bugbear inside the box for what it is.

The stone dragon head's breath fills an 80-foot-long cone and inflicts 35 (10d6) fire damage, or half that amount with a successful DC 18 Dexterity save. The stone dragon head has AC 15 and 200 hp.

The elder fire elemental has fire elemental stats, with Large size, 300 hp, and advantage on attacks and saves.

A DC 22 Arcana check (or some skill relating to alchemy) identifies the black goo.

This yellow mold's Constitution save DC is 18.

A dispel magic, dispel evil and good, *or similar effect will open the ivory egg, as will a* wish. *It otherwise cannot be opened.*

A DC 24 Arcana or History check identifies the Egg of Parnaith for what it is.

Ekarth'il and Setarsis are aboleths with the spellcasting ability of a mage, AC 19 (Setarsis only), 175 hp; advantage on spell attacks, saves, and checks; opponents have disadvantage on saves against their special abilities spells. Their lair actions and regional effects cannot reach very far beyond the water in this room. Equipment: two pearls of power *(Ekarth'il),* bracers of defense *(Setarsis), spell scrolls of* greater invisibility *and* true seeing *(Setarsis only, written on special waterproof skum skin-parchment).*

The mutant giant octopus has giant octopus stats, with aberration type, AC 15, lightning immunity, +5 to melee attacks and damage, and its tentacle attacks inflict an additional 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

Ekarth'il's illusion makes it appear as if the aboleths (one visible, one invisible) are both mermaids with silver tiaras and scepters, and the giant octopus is a dolphin. Setarsis's invisibility prevents her from being seen, but characters who can see invisible creatures will see her illusory mermaid form.

Malignancy, page 469

Keep in mind that the poor visibility makes it easy for both aboleths to hide in this room. They will frequently cast a spell and move, using both the murky water and their illusions to keep the player characters confused.

The magical potions are potions of superior healing.

Court of Hate, page 480

Abilities and magic that remove or resist disease work against the nausea caused by the murky water in level 5.

Creatures (other than the ones that live here) who breathe the brackish water must make a DC 18 Constitution save or gain the poisoned condition for as long as they remain in the water and for 1d4 rounds afterward.

Searching the table or the shelves reveals a great number of valuable substances as well as some large, imposing, unlabeled bottles of foul-smelling black goo. The goo is, quite simply, concentrated corruption. A living creature coated in this substance for five days changes into a twisted, horrible version of itself. Its flesh mutates, and it grows additional limbs, tendrils, extra heads, or stranger things. This is an extremely painful and mind-warping process. There are six bottles of concentrated corruption in the room, each with enough to coat a human-sized creature or two halfling-sized ones. The chemicals and equipment in this room, all total, is worth 8,000 gp.

The stairway at the south end of the level rises up into a horizontal plane of murky water that remains at the level of the ceiling as if contained by a transparent barrier, but in fact, there is not one; the water is held up by magic. Characters can freely walk up and into the water.

ALCHEMICAL STORAGE

Various containers fill this large closet on the north end of the laboratory. Many of them are empty or filled with uninteresting items like empty glass bottles or tools.

Yellow Mold: A particularly nasty patch of yellow mold grows over a number of the crates in this storage room. The mold can be destroyed with fire or direct exposure to sunlight.

Ivory Egg: After the yellow mold is gone, searching the crates reveals a strange, seemingly out-of-place container hidden among the rest. It looks like an ivory egg about 7 inches long, set within an ornate circular stand of gold and laced with small gemstones. A web of golden, jeweled threads wrap around the egg, holding it in place in its stand. The object has a strong aura of good and protective magic.

If a character removes the egg from the golden stand and removes the magic that keeps it sealed, an otherwise undetectable seam grows along its edge until the egg opens, revealing the artifact known as *Parnaith's Heart*. No divination spell works on the egg or its contents.

The egg has uses on level 5 of the Tower of Malice, in the Court of Hate.

LEVEL 5: CUSTODIANS

The tower's fifth level is filled with brackish water. Visibility within it is extremely poor: anything more than 5 feet away is concealed as if in a heavy mist, and visibility goes no farther than 10 feet. Plus, of course, air breathers will need a way to breathe. Worse, the water is so foul that air breathers—even those under the effects of magic that allows them to breathe water—are likely to become sickened from it. The creatures that live here can see normally within the water up to 20 feet; objects between 20 and 30 feet away from them are concealed as if in heavy mist, and they cannot see those beyond 30 feet.

The chamber is 80 feet high. Characters may exit up through a round hole 10 feet across in the floor of level 6.

WATERY DENIZENS

Aboleth are intelligent, malevolent, eel-like creatures with potent psychic abilities that grow to lengths of 20 feet or more. The aboleth mages Ekarth'il and Setarsis were two of the first aboleths ever created, and certainly the oldest two still alive.

The aboleths have enslaved a mutant giant octopus that the Dread One experimented upon long ago. Mainly, the octopus protects Ekarth'il.

Tactics: The aboleths each cast protective spells on themselves as soon as they awaken. Immediately afterward, Ekarth'il creates an illusion to cover this entire level, and Setarsis creates an illusion of kraken tentacles that reach out of the water as soon as someone comes within 10 feet of the surface. Thanks to their link with the Malignancy, the aboleths know where the PCs are at all times. They then wait 25 feet above the entrance for their foes to show themselves, at which point they attack with spells and Setarsis turns invisible. If they are in trouble, they swim upward, using the poor visibility to aid in their retreat. Those following them are likely to come upon illusory walls. They use their Enslave ability only as a last resort.

TREASURE

Hidden in the murky water is a spongelike organic sac that contains eight magical potions in special vials that make them easier to drink underwater. It also holds the aboleths' joint spellbook, written on a series of large shells; even without their spellbook aspect, the shells, adorned with jewels and delicate traceries, are worth a total of 5,000 gp.

LEVEL 6: TROPHIES

Characters may enter this chamber from level 5 through a round hole 10 feet across in the floor. The Dread One used this level, whose ceiling rises 20 feet above the floor, to show off some of his creations. The chamber is crammed full

of stuffed and mounted creatures, most of them aberrations. Some depend by wires from the ceiling, while the heads of others are mounted on the walls, and still others stand, stuffed, upright on the floor. The room stinks of acrid chemicals.

LEVEL 7: MISBEGOTTEN MASTER

The ceiling of this level is 20 feet above the floor. This, the top floor of the tower, is the home of a creature that once served the Dread One as an ally and counselor.

OUTER ROOM: THE MISBEGOTTEN

This room has a series of black marble pillars that run along the wall. From hooks on each pillar hang the skulls of various humanoids, each with a large hole in the cranium. Each pillar holds around a dozen skulls. The floor is tiled with octagonal pieces of highly polished dark grey marble.

Ulithik, a unique sorcerer aberration, was created long ago by Eslathagos Malkith. He resembles a man, but his face is nothing but a mass of tentacles, and most of it is obscured by a *malefic mask*. His skin is bluish-grey and covered in watery slime.

Ulithik has the aid of five undead minions that are grafted onto his body and soul so that they are extensions of his own will.

The Shadowskin: A sheath of darkness made of undead shadows surrounds Ulithik. The shadows making up this shadowskin are magically hardened like armor bound to his skin, and swirl around him to distract and confuse foes. Each time Ulithik is struck in melee, a shadow rises up from the skin and automatically touches the attacker with the effect of an undead shadow's touch.

Skeletal Hands: Long ago, the Dread One and Ulithik together slew a powerful wizard and fighter, then "harvested" their hands, enchanting them to become "companions" for Ulithik. Now, the fighter's two hands each bear a weapon, and the wizard's two hands each bear a magic wand as they orbit around Ulithik. The skeletal hands all share Ulithik's defenses—basically, they are *his* hands and cannot be destroyed until he dies. The skeletal hands obey the Misbegotten's mental commands, attacking each round as separate creatures.

The hands and shadowskin can be turned as separate undead creatures.

Tactics: As soon as he awakens, Ulithik casts spells to protect himself and allow him to see invisible creatures. When foes approach (he knows where they are thanks to the Malignancy), he casts shorter-duration protective spells and focuses on large, damaging spells, using the skeletal hands to pick off individual targets.

INNER ROOM

A door in the west wall of this room opens into a smaller inner chamber. Hideous painted reliefs adorn the walls here: tentacled horrors devouring humans, foul rites conducted by zaug and equally blasphemous creatures, and so on. This chamber holds a shallow pool of grey slime (the PCs might assume it is a hostile creature, but it is just inert fluid). This is the meditation pool of Ulithik. While reclining here, he heals quickly. If need be, he can retreat to this chamber, lock the black adamantine door and recuperate in the pool. The pool does not affect creatures other than Ulithik.

Etched crudely on the inside lip of the pool, just above the level of the slime, Ulithik has scratched "Ssenkrad99." This code refers to the magically disguised page of the book in the Dread One's Suite.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In my Ptolus Campaign, the Runewardens were summoned out of semi-retirement when a warning from elf historian Navaen Blueflight reached them from beyond the grave. His message was simply this: Something stirs again in Jabel Shammar.

Malefic mask, *page 641*

Ulithik has archmage stats, with aberration type, AC 18; alignment neutral evil. In addition to his own actions, on his turn the warrior hands make one melee attack each (as a veteran, with +3 to hit and damage) and each of the wizard hands attacks with a wand. Equipment: cube of force, malefic mask, ring of protection. *Skeletal hands equipment: two* +3 longswords, wand of lightning bolts, wand of magic missiles. *Ulithik can cast* shield *and* see invisibility *at will and has the following wizard spells prepared (asterisks indicate spells he casts in anticipation of combat):*

Cantrips (at will): chill touch, fire bolt, light, minor illusion, ray of frost

1st level (4 slots): expeditious retreat, mage armor*, magic missile, unseen servant

2nd level (3 slots): detect thoughts, mirror image*, misty step

3rd level (3 slots): fly, haste*, stinking cloud

4th level (3 slots): confusion, greater invisibility*, stoneskin*

5th level (3 slots): cone of cold, scrying, wall of force

6th level (1 slot): disintegrate

7th level (1 slot): teleport

8th level (1 slot): antipathy

9th level (1 slot): power word kill

Ulithik knows how to get into the Trial of the Book (page 488) in the Tower of Malice. A person might gain this information from him through magical compulsion, but he is beyond mundane intimidation.

Although Ulithik was far too wise to dare betray the Dread One while Malkith was alive, today, if awakened, he would love to get his hands on the Book of Inverted Darkness *and use its power for himself.*

GM TIPS

Remember that in every round of combat with Ulithik, each skeletal hand can attack, which means two sword attacks and two wand attacks. Plus, every time Ulithik is struck in melee, the shadowskin strikes. This is all in addition to whatever Ulithik himself chooses to do that round.

Holy *weapons can make a significant difference to someone fighting the evil denizens of Jabel Shammar.*

The shadowskin and each of the skeletal hands count as separate creatures for the purpose of turning undead, and have a Wisdom save bonus of +5. Remember that this area is unhallowed ground, so creatures have advantage on their turning saves. Without the shadowskin, Ulithik's AC drops to 15.

Zaug, page 602

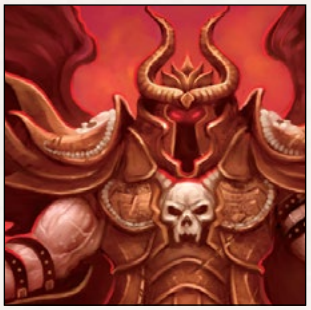
Dread One's Suite, page 484

When in the pool of grey slime, Ulithik regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn.

Adamantine door: *AC 23, 25 hp, DC 27 Strength check to break*

The magical darkness is the equivalent of a darkness *spell, but is a 4th-level effect.*

Liquid shadow, page 647



Temple of Impiety, page 475

Tower of Blasphemy walls and floors: *AC 19, 30 hp, DC 26 Strength check to break*

Ithilnaur, page 647

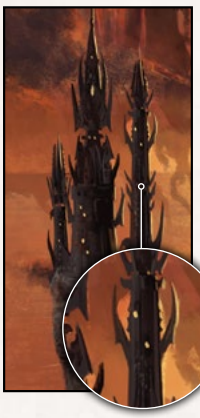
The compulsion is similar to a sympathy *spell, with a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw.*

Lance of endless night, *page 640*

Ul-Sinistar, page 424

A nightcrawler has purple worm stats, with the undead type, spellcasting of a mummy lord, and once per night it can summon 1d8 + 8 shadows or 1d4 + 2 greater shadows; alignment chaotic evil.

Corruption points, page 468



TOWER OF BLASPHEMY

The Dread One created the Tower of Blasphemy to mock all things divine, and in particular all things holy. During his reign of terror, he captured powerful priests, used years of torture to coerce them to renounce their faith, and then slew them in painful ways. These priests he made into undead versions of themselves, infusing them with some of his own power in order to replicate some of the divine spellcasting abilities they wielded in life. These, the Six Blasphemers, he placed in the Temple of Impiety at the top of this tower.

This tower is the northernmost of the four that make up Jabel Shammar. Unless stated otherwise, its interior walls and floors are smooth and glistening blackness forged from distilled night. Black iron spiral stairs connect all levels (except on the first, where they are illusory).

LEVEL 1: GRIP OF THE UNHOLY

One may enter this tower from the walkway that connects it with the much larger Tower of Malice. The bottom level of the Tower of Blasphemy is an elaborate trap. Through the open door, the entire chamber looks empty, save for the sconces on the walls girded by relief panels of hooded, robed figures standing motionless. The floor and staircase in this room are an illusion, accompanied by a powerful compulsion that makes anyone who sees the room through the open doorway want to enter, and thus most likely fall through the illusory floor into a pit below. If a character affected by the compulsion is flying, levitating, or otherwise not likely to fall through the illusory floor, the magic makes them willingly move down through it anyway.

The ceiling is 30 feet above the illusory floor. Since the staircase is an illusion, some means of flying, levitating, or climbing is required to get to level 2 through the opening above.

Pit: The pit below the illusory floor has the same diameter as the room but plunges 50 feet down to the true bottom of the tower. Coiled at the bottom is a nightcrawler nightshade, eager for new victims to drain after so many millennia of quiet solitude. It uses its magic if multiple victims fall into its lair, but prefers to bite if it has only one opponent. It fights until destroyed.

LEVEL 2: CENOTAPH OF DARKNESS

This completely dark chamber is filled with magical darkness. (If someone dispels it, the room recasts the spell in one minute.) The ceiling rises 70 feet above, and a staircase at the east end of the room spirals up. Two vats of liquid shadow flank an obsidian obelisk here. Written in shadow on the obelisk, such that one can read it only if they can sense magic, is this verse:

I curse the rising of the sun,
I loathe the wellspring of the light.
I abominate all of the world,
I blaspheme the days of all that live.
My scorn and hate for all of nature,
Discern no breadth or boundary.

LEVEL 3: SUNSLAYER

The ceiling in this chamber is 20 feet high, and the floor is black and white marble squares. Stairs in the center of the room lead up.

Here the player characters find a curved, semicircular table on which rests what appears to be a 12-foot lance of dark metal covered in small plates of bronze and ithilnaur. Copper wire attached in many places on the weapon extends off like dozens of thin tendrils. Some of these curl and coil back on themselves, some hang loose, and still others attach to more small ithilnaur and bronze plates on the table.

The walls bear six faded images of the sun, but each sun is covered in green and black sores, festering and cancerous. One of the many chthonian plans of the Dread One was to destroy the sun itself, to end all life in a single stroke of sacrilege against the Creator who put it there and all gods who extolled the beauty and warmth of daylight. In this chamber lies a half-constructed weapon that might have accomplished this foul task: the *lance of endless night*. (The dark elves of Ul-Sinistar scheme to build one too, based on legends of this very weapon.)

This room contains no secrets of the lance. Divination spells might be able to identify what it was meant to do, but none reveal how to complete it or even how close it is to completion (not at all close). Those wishing to destroy this thing could easily do so.

LEVEL 4: REVESTRY OF SACRILEGE

A blood-red carpet of woven leather covers the central portion of the floor of this level, with a hole cut in the middle to accommodate the staircase. A massive, intricate mural covers the 50-foot-high walls, depicting every sin, every act of perversion, every wrong that is possible to commit. (It would take weeks of study to examine each portion of this mural, although carefully doing so grants 1 corruption point per

ten-minute study period.) Three fonts of solid ebony are spaced equidistant from each other, just outside the perimeter of the carpet. Each one contains water and bears a small bronze plate with its name in Abyssal.

Font of Injustice: After speaking the phrase, "I revel in injustice," anyone drinking the clear water from this font gains the ability to curse one other creature with injustice. This ability must be used within six days of drinking. If someone drinks the water without speaking the phrase, the curse affects them for twenty-four hours (the GM randomly determines what rolls the curse affects). Drinking the water grants 1 corruption point. Saying the phrase grants an additional 2 corruption points. The water in the font magically refreshes itself.

Font of Immorality: Even touching the slimy, brackish water in this font causes a character to think terrible, evil, and perverse thoughts. Good-aligned characters are stunned for four rounds; neutral characters are stunned for one round. Touching the water grants 2 corruption points.

Font of Lies: The water in this font is an illusion. Recognizing the illusion but still pretending to drink the water grants the character the blessing of lies. Doing so grants 2 corruption points.

LEVEL 5: TEMPLE OF IMPIETY

The final steps into this chamber from the one below have six magical symbols inscribed upon them that activate when living creatures come within 10 feet. While the effects of multiple symbols do not stack, intruders have six chances to potentially fail, rather than just one. The undead in the temple are immune to their effect if triggered, and they know the key to bypassing the symbols without triggering them.

"Welcome to the Temple of Impiety," a creature in this room states in a hoarse whisper. "Your gods are not welcome here."

This level is a temple dedicated not to a god, but to the hatred of and irreverence for gods—in particular, gods of goodness. Divine spells are suppressed in the temple, and turning does not work. Even divine spells that were cast outside of this level and have ongoing durations are suppressed when brought into the temple, as if by antimagic. Spell scrolls of divine spells are also suppressed, but no other magic items are.

This chamber is 90 feet high. At 40 feet up, a 5-foot-wide balcony runs the circumference of the room; its iron mesh railing provides cover. The room offers no mundane means to get from the floor to the balcony.

On the floor are six carvings of human faces, each different, each contorted in an expression of anger and contempt. The reliefs, which each

Each symbol is the equivalent of a symbol *(pain) spell, DC 15 Constitution save.*

Curse of Injustice: *As an action, the drinker selects a creature within 50 feet and chooses to afflict their attack bonus, a specific skill bonus, or a specific save bonus. For the next 1d4 rounds, the creature has a penalty on that kind of roll equal to twice their proficiency bonus (so a character with a +5 proficiency bonus whose attacks are cursed has a –10 penalty on attack rolls).*

"Rumors say that one of the towers in the fortress of Jabel Shammar is dedicated solely to the hatred of all things divine. Thankfully, as powerful as the Dread One was, we know that even he could not block the power of the gods."

~Aran Boturr, High Priest of Navashtrom

Blessing of Lies: *The character permanently gains a +1 bonus on Deception checks.*

Touching any of the beams of light inflicts 14 (4d6) cold damage, and if the character has divine spell slots, they lose one spell slot from their remaining highest level of divine spells (as if they had expended it casting a spell).

The gemstone melanite is a type of black garnet. Its opaque crystals are found in highly metamorphosed rocks and in some igneous formations.

Dungeons of Jabel Shammar, page 491

Mummies (10): *AC 14, 58 hp. Equipment: half plate, jewelry worth 800 gp.*

Mummy lords (6): *97 hp, affected normally by fire (no resistance or vulnerability). Equipment: half plate,* ring of resistance *(fire), jewelry worth 800 gp.*

GM TIPS

Don't forget that evil creatures in Jabel Shammar are affected by the bless *spell (because it is unhallowed ground) and can use the Malignancy to heal themselves for 10d10 damage as an action.*

The mummy lords here, known as the Six Blasphemers, were powerful clerics of their time, broken through torture and forced to renounce their gods. After they did, the Dread One killed them to reforge them in undeath.

Secret compartment: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Malefic mask, *page 641*

Cloying malaise: *DC 20 Wisdom save. Creatures who fail gain a –1 penalty on attacks, saves, and checks for each minute they spend in the Forlorn Tower. If this penalty reaches –20, the character permanently falls into a catatonic state. A spell such as* dispel evil and good *(used to break an enchantment) or* heal *removes the penalty (and cures the catatonia, if necessary).*

GM TIPS

If someone falls victim to the Dread One's Despair, describe the effects subtly and without mechanics. Do not tell the player the affected PC's penalties until they attempt some sort of roll.

measure about 4 feet long and 3 feet wide, radiate around the center stairwell with their chins pointed toward it. They are about 10 feet from the stairs and 5 feet from each other. From each relief's angry, open mouth springs a blue beam of intense light that reaches the ceiling. Inlaid into the floor between each relief is a solid piece of melanite.

THE MUMMIES

At the floor level, equidistantly spaced around the circumference of the room are ten human-shaped niches, each containing an upright mummy wearing half plate. Each also wears a headdress, cloak, and jewelry (worth a total of 800 gp each). The balcony level holds six similar niches, except each contains a mummy lord. The mummy lords are indistinguishable in appearance from the mummies below, including their armor and jewelry. If intruders are detected, the mummies emerge and attack.

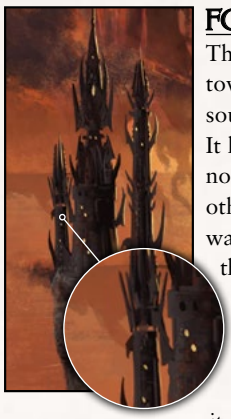
Throughout the entire encounter, all mummies and mummy lords rasp in unison a terrible, resonant, sacrilegious chant in the Abyssal tongue.

Tactics: The mummies enter into combat and serve two purposes. Working together, they team up on two or three foes and use smart tactics to help each other's attacks or defenses, particularly to defend the mummy lords. The mummies also try to put themselves in the way of attacks that would otherwise be meant for the mummy lords. If hurt, they back off and use their link with the Malignancy to heal themselves.

Using the Malignancy, the mummy lords almost certainly know the player characters are coming. Each has already cast defensive or augmenting spells on themselves in anticipation of the PCs arriving. They used their attack spells before entering melee, and are smart enough to plan their spell attacks against foes' vulnerabilities. If up against powerful spellcasters, they may use their own magic to counter or negate enemy spells.

HIDDEN TREASURE

Hidden within the niche of each mummy lord is a secret compartment. Each of these contains a small silver coffer (worth 250 gp) that holds broken bits of silver, gold, and jeweled holy symbols worth a total of 1,000 gp each. Within one of these compartments is another secret compartment that contains a *malefic mask*.



FORLORN TOWER

This, the third of the small towers, stands alone, to the southwest of the others. It has no visible entrance, nor does it connect to the other towers in any visible way. One can enter it only through the dungeons below the Tower of Malice. Strangely, this entire tower is open on the inside, making it mostly one cylindrical chamber 40 feet across and 300 feet high. No stairs offer purchase to anyone interested in scaling to the top.

A trapdoor in the floor at the west end of the tower opens to stairs that lead up from the dungeons.

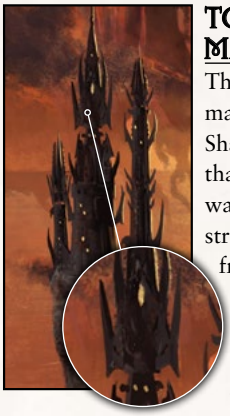
The interior walls are a medium grey but show strange, inexplicable black streaks, like claw marks or blood-splatter stains. About 30 feet from the tower's ceiling, a lattice of foot-wide iron beams spaced about 2 feet apart creates a kind of floor, although one through which a human- or halfling-sized creature could fall. There is no way to pass up through the lattice other than to squeeze through the 2-foot-wide gaps or to pass through incorporeally.

This top area has two interesting aspects. First, like the fortress's other two small towers, the black windows at the top of the Forlorn Tower are transparent from the inside, allowing one to view the rest of the fortress and the surrounding countryside if Jabel Shammar is not shrouded in clouds.

Second, a large crystal orb, 5 feet in diameter, floats about 4 feet above the iron grid. Next to it floats a huge iron chair without legs; it sports massive iron horns and spikes on both its left and right sides. It appears to be a seat for an ogre-sized humanoid. The orb is a *crystal ball* with special properties. Through it, one can cast any divination spell as if the targets viewed were within close range (approximately 30 feet).

THE DREAD ONE'S DESPAIR

Spending more than a minute in the Forlorn Tower risks becoming gripped by a cloying malaise that manifests itself subtly, but grows over time and lasts as long as the character remains in Jabel Shammar.



TOWER OF MALICE

This central tower is the main structure of Jabel Shammar. The very stones that comprise its interior walls, floors, and other structural elements sprang from the hatred and spite of Eslathagos Malkith. As such, they always feel cold to the touch, and are incredibly resistant to mundane and magical harm.

Tower of Malice stones: *AC 20, 35 hp, DC 28 Strength check to break, advantage on all saves against magic (even if they wouldn't normally get a save).*

CHARACTERISTICS

The Tower of Malice has three unique characteristics as shown on the poster map and described here: bladed hallways, blasphemous shrines, and iron guardians. The tower also brings into play the conditions of malice and a summoning cascade.

BLADED HALLWAYS

Fashioned more for their intimidating appearance than as a defensive measure, the walls of certain corridors in the tower are lined with blades, hooks, and spikes that protrude menacingly at different lengths and catch incautious creatures.

A creature in a bladed hallway moving faster than their walking speed or (regardless of their walking speed) faster than 60 feet in one round must make a DC 15 Acrobatics check or fall prone and take 2 (1d4) slashing damage. Anyone attempting a complex physical maneuver, including and especially combat, must make a DC 15 Acrobatics check or take 5 (2d4) slashing damage. Residents of Jabel Shammar do not need to make these checks.

BLASPHEMOUS SHRINES

Blasphemous shrines are located throughout the tower. While they appear to be shrines to some dark god, they are, in fact, more like anti-shrines. That is to say, each is dedicated not to the reverence of a deity, but to the hatred of deities (particularly good deities) as well as all things holy and natural. Worse, a loathsome intellect possesses each of these shrines; its magical intuition allows it to reshape itself, incorporating the images and symbols of deities not yet born when Jabel Shammar appeared.

Covered in debased holy symbols, each shrine appears to be a high, narrow table set in a shallow alcove with black drapery. The symbols and images of the various gods of all thinking creatures within 100 feet automatically appear on the shrine, formed from its own substance. These symbols and images are debased, corrupted, and desecrated in ways only a demon's mind could conjure. If approached, the shrine uses its blasphemy attack, then forms huge fist-like tendrils from the black draperies to pummel foes who are still standing.

The blasphemous shrine has mimic stats, with AC 17, 90 hp; advantage on attacks, saves, and checks; resistance to cold and fire; resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks; foes who devoutly serve a deity have disadvantage on their attack rolls against the shrine; alignment neutral evil. Unlike regular mimics, the shrines never take other forms. It has the following magical attack: **Blasphemy (Recharge 4–6).** *The shrine emits a wave of evil energy in a 40-foot radius. Each non-evil creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom save or lose its next action; creatures of 15 Hit Dice or less who fail their save are also paralyzed for one minute.*

IRON GUARDIANS

The Dread One created a number of varied iron golems to watch over the Tower of Malice in his absence. At each of the points marked on the poster map, he stationed these guardians. The golems attack all intruders, even demons and the like, except those who wear a *malefic mask*. They come toward noises they hear and, if they see an intruder, they attack. Because of this, once player characters have entered the tower and the summoning cascade has occurred (see below), the golems might seem to wander about the tower, moving from noise to noise. The GM should feel free to have the PCs encounter them wherever and whenever seems logical; the map and the text below note only their starting locations. The golems pursue foes until destroyed. Each one has been fashioned in a unique form and, in addition to its standard iron golem abilities, has a special power.

Heat Golem (Tower Level 4). These golems look like metal men in a constant state of melting and cooling. Each glows red hot, then white, then red again.

Heat golem (iron golem): 210 hp, with no Fire Absorption ability, regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn; its melee attacks inflict an additional 14 (4d6) fire damage on odd-numbered rounds and 21 (6d6) fire damage on even-numbered rounds. It has the following special ability: ***Hot Metal.*** At the start of each of the golem's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage

Spike Golem (Tower Level 7). These golems were fashioned in the shape of winged gargoyles covered with horns, spines, and spikes. They can fly.

Spike golem (iron golem): 210 hp, fly 60 feet. If it doesn't fly on its turn, it can make two additional slam attacks with its wings. When it uses poison breath, it also emits a volley of iron spikes in a 30-foot cone, inflicting 21 (6d6) slashing damage on a failed DC 19 Dexterity save, or half that amount on a successful one.

Electricity Golem (Tower Level 9). These golems look like featureless men made of blue metal and crackling with lightning. In the area where they stand guard, the floor sprouts stony hands if a living creature walks upon it. These hands grasp, smack, and shove living creatures, inflicting no damage but making it difficult to act or think normally.

Electricity golem (iron golem): 210 hp, Fire Absorption ability also works on lightning damage, regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn; its melee attacks inflict an additional 7 (2d6) lightning damage. When it uses poison breath, it also releases *chain lightning* (DC 20 Dexterity save) against up to four targets.

Stony hands: Intruders move at half speed; gain disadvantage on attacks, saves, and checks; and spellcasting requires a DC 10 concentration roll (Constitution save) to succeed.

Angel Golem (Tower Level 9). The Dread One made this golem look like a tall female winged angel made of iron wielding an iron sword.

Angel golem (iron golem): 300 hp, AC 25, fly 80 feet, Strength 30 (+3 on attack and damage rolls). Equipment: *unholy longsword* (page 645), *+3 shield*.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

Blasphemous shrines turned out to be much more dangerous than I had originally thought. Initially designed to be almost a nuisance encounter, the shrines proved to be a real threat due to their blasphemy attack. This ability allowed the shrines to dominate every encounter. It got to the point where, after encountering two of these things, the player characters would flee from them and erect barriers to keep them at bay. In a rather unfortunate encounter, a PC attempted to destroy a blasphemous shrine with a chaositech void bomb (see page 537), which ended up hurting the other party members much more than the shrine.

Malignancy, page 469

Malefic mask, page 641

GM TIPS

To keep up the tension in Jabel Shammar, remember to call for frequent Perception checks, randomly setting the Difficulty Class at 15, 20, or 25. Success means a character sees movement in the shadows or hears a strange noise, but no source of the motion or sound ever presents itself.

Aura of malice: *The creature must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, it is so consumed with anger and hate that it loses control and attacks the nearest creature to its fullest ability, regardless of that creature's identity. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. Once the creature saves, it is no longer affected by the aura.*

JABEL SHAMMAR GUIDE

Misbegotten Tower

Laboratories, aboleth custodians, the Misbegotten, and the Ivory Egg

Tower of Blasphemy

Nightcrawler pit, three evil fonts, and the Temple of Impiety

Forlorn Tower

Dread One's crystal orb and Dread One's Despair

Tower of Malice

Dread One's throne room and residence, Mirror Maze, Court of Hate, Alabaster Sanctuary, and Trial of the Book

Dungeons

Master of the Dungeons, the Hidden Prison, Naxx the ocular tyrant, and the Seeping Portal

Hostile ward: *This is similar to an* antipathy *spell, DC 20 Wisdom save.*

The fiendish ettins have fire giant stats, with the fiend type, AC 21; resistance to cold, fire, and lightning; resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks; +3 to attack and damage rolls, haste *(self only) as an innate spell, and the Two Heads and Wakeful abilities of an ettin. Equipment: Huge* +3 plate, *Huge* +2 battleaxes *(2).*

Horned devil: *148 hp*

D'Stradi annihilator, page 587

The ward of forbiddance acts like a 9th-level forbiddance *spell, blocking magical travel and inflicting 27 (5d10) necrotic damage to any good elemental or celestial creature that enters the area or ends its turn there.*

TELEPORTERS

The poster map shows four teleporters in various areas of the Tower of Malice. They link levels 5, 6, and 7. Each is a platform about 8 feet across that rises about an inch above the floor. They are made of stone engraved with a swirling pattern. A teleporter sends any creature (and its equipment) or object placed upon it to the corresponding teleporter after one round; anything placed on the teleporter marked "A" goes to the other teleporter marked "A," and likewise with the teleporters marked "B." A creature must step off a teleporter and step back on to return.

MALICE

Whenever any intelligent non-evil creature from another plane (whether celestial, elemental, or some other type) enters into combat within the Tower of Malice, it must contend with the tower's aura of malice. Those affected are so consumed with anger and hate that they lose control and attack the nearest creature to their fullest ability, regardless of that creature's identity, until they can throw off the effect.

SUMMONING CASCADE

As soon as anyone enters the Tower of Malice's first level, the summoned residents of level 1, level 5, and level 10 appear in their chambers, compelled to kill any intruder they encounter. The summoned creatures remain in their positions for a year and a day, then disappear (if not slain first). This is called the "summoning cascade," because literally one summoning triggers the next, and so on, until all the conjured creatures are once again in place.

Eslathagos Malkith was neutral evil, with no patience for law or chaos (although truthfully he exhibited tendencies of both in his desire to master and yet destroy everything he encountered). Thus, when he interacted with fiends, he had no preference for demons or devils, so the summoning cascade brings both to Jabel Shammar. The two types of fiends don't interact well together, but they do not automatically oppose one another, either, thanks in part to the Dread One's infamy and in part to the compulsions placed upon them.

In addition to the creatures in the descriptions below, a trio of horned devils is also summoned to Jabel Shammar, as are a pair of D'Stradi annihilators. They have no lairs, but instead wander around the four towers. GMs should use these encounters if the player characters begin to clean out the fortress. Returning to an already-explored area may result in one of these encounters. In either case, the fiends are immediately hostile. If seriously threatened, they are likely to teleport away, heal (using the Malignancy), find the PCs later (using the Malignancy), and attack with surprise.

LEVEL 1: ENTRY

Doors lead into the Tower of Malice via the walkways from the Misbegotten Tower to the east and the Tower of Blasphemy to the north. Only a *malefic mask* wearer can open these outside doors, which are indestructible. The statue next to the northern entrance depicts a life-size pit fiend, rendered in astonishing and terrifying detail. The ceilings on this level rise 80 feet above the floor.

FOYER

A mosaic of dark tiles covers the floor of the foyer, forming an intricate pattern of evil symbols and unholy runes (though they have no magical properties). Three massive suits of full plate armor stand upright along the east wall, and six huge black battleaxes hang next to them. Strangely, each armor harness has two helmets.

The huge black adamantine doors leading into the Great Hall carry a permanent hostile ward targeting neutral good creatures.

Guardians: As soon as anyone enters this room, the summoning cascade is invoked, bringing three two-headed giants (fiendish ettins) *into* the suits of armor. These three were always favorites of the Dread One, and he granted them powerful magic armor and weapons to use when summoned here. As soon as they appear, they use their innate magic to increase their speed, grab their weapons from the wall, and attack, fighting to the death.

GREAT HALL

As one enters from the foyer, the Great Hall plunges down into darkness as well as up to a dizzying height. Everything here is varying shades of grey and instills a feeling of dread.

This chamber has a ward of forbiddance effect that harms good celestials and elementals. The floor here is 50 feet below the level of the entrance from the east; a wide staircase leads up to the doors. The west half of the room is a platform of a height equal to that of the doors; wide steps lead from the floor up to it as well. Columns in an arc that bisects the room from north to south hold up the platform 50 feet off the floor and continue rising to meet the ceiling 80 feet above that.

Resting atop the platform in the western half of the room is another platform supported by pillars 10 feet high. On this rectangular

platform sits a 10-foot-cube steel cage with a door on the eastern side; a massive iron chain affixed to a hook in the top of the cage runs up to a hole in the ceiling. If anyone opens the cage door, the next time it is closed, the chain brings the cage up to level 2 (or, if it is already there, back down to level 1). This lift moves slowly, taking a full minute to get to the next level.

Anyone passing through the hole in the ceiling without being in the cage gets zapped by an electrical field.

The lowest level of the chamber has a 10-foot-square triple-locked secret trapdoor in the far western portion of the floor under the main platform. This is the entrance to the dungeons of Jabel Shammar.

LEVEL 2: THRONE OF THE DREAD ONE

This entire level is one vast, imposing chamber with a ceiling 60 feet above the floor. Those coming up via the iron cage lift from level 1 find this room designed specifically to intimidate and strike dreadful awe in the minds of all who enter.

Hundreds of magic black candles, forever burning, are set into holders and sconces in the floor around the throne to provide a flickering illumination. A huge throne on a massive dais dominates the eastern part of the chamber, flanked by many rows of black candles on tall iron candleholders. The walls are jagged and angled but bear no symbols or images. A red and gold carpet leads from the iron cage to the throne.

PUNISHMENT OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Any good-aligned creature that comes into this room is harmed by an aura of unholy magic.

On the first round, the aura of unholy magic inflicts 17 (5d6) necrotic damage. On later rounds, it inflicts 7 (2d6) necrotic damage every round.

SPEAKING IN THE THRONE ROOM

Anyone who speaks the name "the Dread One" while in this chamber is struck deaf permanently. The only exception to this effect is a creature kneeling before the throne when speaking the name. Such a creature instead gains the Dread One's boon, but they also gain 1 corruption point.

The Dread One's Boon: *The character gains inspiration, usable only on themselves and only within Jabel Shammar.*

Corruption points, page 468

Anyone who speaks the name "Eslathagos Malkith" while in this chamber is struck blind permanently.

Death spell: *The character must make a DC 15 Constitution save or instantly die.*

Creatures who speak the name "Danar" in this room are targeted by a death spell. Those

THRONE POWERS

Anyone seated on the throne gains advantage on all saves against magical effects.

Four secret switches on the throne's arms activate magical effects. Each is an action to activate.

1. Creates a magical stairway made of solidified darkness 10 feet wide that winds up and around the walls to get to the next level.

2. Surrounds the throne and anyone seated on it with a *wall of force*, or lowers this wall. Activating this switch while not seated may result in characters being cut off from the throne unless they can bring down a *wall of force*. Activating this switch while seated on the throne bestows 1 corruption point.

3. Fires rays of necromantic energy (as the spell *blight*, DC 15 Constitution save) at everyone in the room. (If the person activating the switch is seated, the attack excludes their allies.) Anyone seated on the throne gains 5 temporary hit points for each creature that fails its save against the rays. Activating this switch while seated on the throne bestows 2 corruption points.

4. Teleports anyone in the room anywhere in Jabel Shammar, including the dungeons; an unwilling creature can make a DC 20 Constitution save to resist this teleportation. The person seated on the throne chooses the targets and destination. If no one is seated, the destination is random, and everyone in the room is targeted. Activating this switch while seated on the throne bestows 1 corruption point.

Hidden Compartment: Within the massive throne and accessible to someone seated on it is a secret compartment (DC 25 Perception check to find) containing an unprepared Vallis stone.

Dungeons of Jabel Shammar, page 491

Vallis stone, page 648

GM TIPS

While the player characters are on this level, listen carefully to what the players say. If a player says, "the Dread One," "Eslathagos Malkith," or "Danar," assume that the PC says it.

"And in those days, the people did not understand what had become of their beloved Danar. They would still visit his tower and see that it had changed, but still they would appear before his throne—such a testament to vileness and a darkness of spirit as the world has never known before or since. In this evil throne room they would speak to Eslathagos Malkith, some begging for mercy, some with words of diplomatic alliance, and some with entreaties relating to the life he had led before his corruption. The most fortunate of these petitioners evoked dark, cynical laughter from the Dread Lord, and were slain swiftly. The less fortunate languished in the torture pits of his dungeons for untold years. Only one thing these supplicants had in common: all those who went into the fortress now known as Jabel Shammar never again saw the sun."

~Ancient scroll of anonymous authorship in the collection of Navaen Blueflight

GM TIPS

Don't forget that evil creatures in Jabel Shammar are affected by the bless *spell (because it is unhallowed ground) and can use the Malignancy to heal themselves for 10d10 damage as an action.*

The electrical field inflicts 35 (10d6) lightning damage, or half that amount with a successful DC 20 Dexterity save.

Secret trapdoor: *DC 25 Perception check to find; DC 25 Sleight of Hand check to open each of the locks*

Uncorrupted sections of Mosul Pearl: see the Alabaster Sanctuary, page 481

The symbol is equivalent to a symbol *(death) spell, DC 20 Constitution save.*

The wall is a wall of force.

Mirror Maze, page 405

Due to the prevalence of mirrors, saving throws versus gaze attacks on level 3 have disadvantage.

Extradimensional Spaces in Jabel Shammar
When someone in Jabel Shammar creates or opens an extradimensional space, such as a spell that creates a magical mansion or a bag that is larger on the inside than the outside, everything within that space appears normal at first. While they watch, however, a wave of dark red energy spreads from the entrance throughout the extradimensional space, transforming it to resemble the interior of Jabel Shammar: strange and dangerous angles, hideous reliefs and paintings, and a shadowy darkness that cannot be dispelled. All aspects of the space, including creatures (like transparent servants included with a magical mansion), appear to be evil spirits, and the furnishings are gothic and macabre in design.

The crushing wheel trap inflicts 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage and 35 (10d6) slashing damage to anyone within 10 feet of the outside of the stairs, or half that amount with a successful DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. It is a DC 25 Sleight of Hand check to disable the trap.

Hidden switches: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Bladed corridors, page 477

Heat golem guardians, page 477

Malignancy, page 469

Mirror guardians have fomorian stats, with aberration type, AC 20, 221 hp, and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks. Instead of the Evil Eye ability, they have the following gaze attack: **Confusing Gaze**. *When a creature starts their turn within 30 feet of the guardian and can see its eyes, they must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls 1d8 to determine its action (1–4: nothing, 5–6: nothing except move in a random direction, 7–8: attack nearest creature within reach).*

GM TIPS

In an encounter with the mirror guardians, a character could be affected by both the Malice effects of the tower (page 478) and the confusion of a guardian's gaze. Both these effects dictate PC actions. However, when both are in effect, the guardians' confusion gaze has priority over the effects of the Malice. This means that a character affected by both must first act as the gaze attack indicates. Only when that action concludes does the PC then fall victim to the Malice.

who resist this attack suddenly get the idea that there may be sections of Mosul Pearl still left uncorrupted within Jabel Shammar.

The Throne

Covered in carved jet and inlaid with gold, the throne is a wonder to behold. Though it was fashioned for a human-sized person to sit upon, it measures 10 feet wide and 20 feet tall. The throne cannot be moved without destroying it.

LEVEL 3: HALL OF TWISTED REFLECTIONS

This mazelike level is filled with mirrors arranged in a confusing layout not unlike the Undercity's well-known Mirror Maze (which was actually inspired by half-remembered legends of this place). No mirror here is perfect; each distorts the image it reflects, and some of them magically transform the images of creatures into those of demons, monstrous aberrations, or mutated versions of themselves. Each mirror is mounted on a sheet of steel 1 inch thick and presents as difficult a challenge to damage as any interior wall in the tower. The ceiling here is 15 feet high.

MIRROR GUARDIANS

Each of the five small rooms on this level holds a mirror guardian in stasis. Standing 14 feet high even with their hunched posture, these horrific monstrosities are covered in thick carapaces and reinforced with iron plates fused to their bodies. Massive, toothy maws dominate their wide, misshapen heads. Bulbous eyes positioned on the sides of their heads command an almost three-hundred-sixty degree range of vision. Their vaguely humanoid forms include arms ending in wicked claws.

Anyone entering the maze awakens the mirror guardians from their slumber. Using their link with the Malignancy, they always know the position of any intruders in the maze, as well as that of the other mirror guardians. Although they don't work well together, they are all very hungry and eager to feast on fresh meat.

LEVEL 4: GUEST CHAMBERS

This level contains many small chambers once used by advisors and emissaries to the Dread One—most of whom never left Jabel Shammar alive. The guest rooms were once lavish, but now have decayed into rotted parodies of past finery created to deceive and, ultimately, betray. The ceiling here is 15 feet high.

ANTIMAGIC ZONE

A 15-foot-radius area of antimagic surrounds the staircase leading from here up to level 5, suppressing all magical effects. No sensory signal provides a clue of this, unless someone directs or brings an obvious magical effect into the area. The antimagic is itself suppressed if a living creature stands upon the staircase. However, this ends the suppression of two permanent magical effects in the area: a magical symbol on the stairs, and a wall of force that follows the edge of the antimagic area and blocks the hole in the ceiling where the top of the stairs would otherwise provide access to the next level.

Crushing Trap: A massive iron wheel depends around the staircase set into the ceiling, with the staircase passing up and through the hole in the center of the wheel. The wheel measures 30 feet in diameter, its bottom covered in jagged blades. The wheel is, in fact, a number of nested wheels, each about 6 inches thick. If more than 50 pounds is placed anywhere beneath the wheel(s), all the individual wheels begin rotating quickly, each in a direction opposite those it touches. Then the entire terrible, grinding contraption pounds down to the floor. When the wheel is down, the staircase remains inaccessible. The crushing wheel trap resets in one round.

The only safe place is the staircase, or so it would seem. When the antimagic area is suppressed by the presence of someone on the stairs, it triggers the magical symbol inscribed upon it, and the wall of force seals the area at the edge of where the field used to be, trapping creatures on the stairs.

Hidden switches at the far ends of the bladed corridors on this level disable the trap (but not the antimagic or the magical symbol on the stairs) for one full round when pressed. Originally, guards were posted at these positions to deactivate the trap for welcome visitors or inhabitants of the tower.

Golems: The heat golems at the west end of the level come if the trap activates, and they likely hear any attempts to disarm it. They are not affected by the antimagic and may attempt to use it, pushing or even throwing grappled characters into the area of the crushing trap.

LEVEL 5: COURT OF HATE

Due to the needs of this chamber, the floor is 20 feet thick. The stairs from level 4 run up a shaft through the floor. This level is mainly a single large room built around a huge pool of blood-red water. The stairway shaft, in fact, comes up in the middle of the pool. On the west end of the pool rise two 30-foot-tall clear crystal obelisks. The ceiling here is 70 feet high.

Between the two obelisks at the end of the pool, a robed skeleton propped up on a post and surrounded by skulls and bones stands in effigy. The pool itself is surrounded by horned skulls.

When Jabel Shammar was in use, Eslathagos Malkith's lieutenants staged mock trials in this chamber, pronouncing death and destruction not only on prisoners brought here, but on whole species and nations of the world as well. It was here that the Dread One taught his servants to have contempt for all things and fostered an aura of spite and malice unlike anything the world has ever seen.

THE BLOOD-RED POOL

The blood-red pool is 11 feet deep, and the water is laden with hostile psychic energy. Anyone wearing a *malefic mask* is immune to the effects of the water.

THE OBELISKS/SUMMONED PIT FIENDS

Two winged, ruby-skinned devils with massive maces known as pit fiends stand watch from within the transparent obelisks. When intruders arrive—which the fiends can anticipate from their link to the Malignancy—they announce, "Welcome to the Court of Hate. You have been judged and found wanting. Ready yourselves for punishment."

On their mental command, the obelisks become incorporeal, allowing them to cast spells or even make melee attacks through the obelisks without difficulty. This mental command is not an action, so they can make the obelisk incorporeal, attack or cast, and then make it corporeal again, all on their turn. Each pit fiend's first action will probably be to summon a bug-faced, pike-wielding, icy fiend known as an ice devil (unless the intruders are in a good position for a fireball). Within the transparent obelisks, the pit fiends have complete cover—the player characters must destroy the obelisks to get at the devils. The transparent material of each obelisk is a strange, unique otherworldly substance. While the obelisks are corporeal, incorporeal creatures or attacks cannot bypass them, nor can magic that normally ignores objects.

Once a pit fiend's protective obelisk is destroyed, it changes tactics abruptly and uses its speed and maneuverability to fly around the large room, making swooping attacks against foes.

THE EGG

The ivory egg found on level 4 of the Misbegotten Tower has great power here: it makes its bearer immune to the pit fiends' attacks, whether they be physical or magical. Also, if anyone should throw the egg against one of the obelisks, both obelisks crumble to dust permanently, although the process destroys the egg as well (this does, however, release *Parnaith's Heart* from inside the egg if the PCs haven't already discovered and removed it). Parnaith, creator of the egg, hated and feared this chamber most of all.

HIDDEN TREASURE

Beneath each obelisk lies a secret compartment containing a glowing green gem that gives the obelisk above its power. If the gem is removed, the obelisk—or whatever is currently left of it—crumbles to dust. If the gems are not removed, the obelisks reform after sixty-six days.

LEVEL 6: SANCTUARY

This level contains a chamber of such puissant benevolence that even the Dread One could not corrupt it. The ceiling here rises 15 feet high. One can access this level only via the teleporters shown on the poster map on levels 5 and 7.

THE CORRIDOR OF CORRUPTION

Originally designed to store malevolent power to be used for attempts at corrupting the Alabaster Sanctuary (see below), this circular corridor surrounds the inner chamber. The only door that passes from this hallway to the sanctuary is sealed shut with three magical locks and covered with black adamantine. Further, any creature of a non-evil alignment that spends time in the corridor experiences an aura of overwhelming malevolence.

ALABASTER SANCTUARY

No creature of evil alignment can enter this sanctuary. The Malignancy does not extend here. Neither it nor creatures linked to it can sense into this room, and they continue to be unable to sense any character who has been in this room for one minute after they leave.

One of the last vestiges of Mosul Pearl, the Alabaster Sanctuary was the sanctum sanctorum of Danar before he became the Dread One. The walls and ceiling here are pearlescent white, with gold and silver tapestries hung tastefully throughout. A series of gold and blue rugs cover the floor. The air feels comfortably cool and smells of rose petals. All sounds are gently muffled.

In the center of the chamber is a circular dais surrounded by gauzy curtains. These drapes hang from a golden ring 20 feet across, suspended 15 feet above the floor on golden chains. On the dais is a bed of white and gold silken pillows. The chamber also holds a large golden chest, a white marble statue of a lammasu, and a painted stone statue of a bald angel whose skin is the color of vibrant leaves.

Legends say that even fiends summoned to the Court of Hate from hellish dimensions learned secrets of hatred and scorn from the Dread One. This is not the only time that ancient texts make reference to the idea that the Dread One somehow attained a stature of malevolence even greater than that of demons.

Parnaith's Heart, *page 641*

Secret compartment: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Each gem is the equivalent of a pearl of power.

Any creature other than fiends, undead, or a wearer of a malefic mask *who touches the water of the blood-red pool takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage, or half that amount with a successful DC 20 Wisdom save. The water retains this power even if it is transformed into ice or steam.*

Malefic mask, page 641

It is likely that once the player characters find the Alabaster Sanctuary, they will want to make it their base of operations for the rest of the time they spend in Jabel Shammar. GMs should encourage this plan.

Pit fiend: *300 hp; once per day it can summon an ice devil to serve it for one minute*

The door features three instances of arcane lock, *and each must be opened or dispelled separately.*

The aura affects non-evil creatures, who must make two DC 21 Wisdom saves each minute. Failing the first causes them to fall unconscious for one minute; failing the second causes them to gain 3 corruption points.

Corruption points, page 468

Ice devil: *180 hp*

Obelisk material: *AC 23, 25 hp, recovers 10 hp per round, DC 27 Strength check to break*

Ivory egg, page 472

The book is a tome of understanding.

Observant players will notice that the bed here (used by Danar) and the bed in the Dread One's Suite (page 484) both have incense burners nearby. Even after his complete corruption, some predilections of Danar/The Dread One did not change.

The potions are potions of superior healing, *and the scroll is a* spell scroll of divine word, heal, *and* holy aura.

The pulse of holy energy doesn't harm good creatures. It inflicts 35 (10d6) radiant damage to creatures that are neither good nor evil, or half that amount on a successful DC 20 Wisdom save. (The pulse would inflict double this damage to evil creatures, but they cannot enter the sanctuary, so this is a moot point.)

Balleah has planetar stats, 200 hp, and can innately cast the following spells:

3/day each: greater restoration, lesser restoration

1/day each: dispel magic *(6th-level spell slot)*, heal, heroes' feast

Balleah has been lonely but content knowing that helping to preserve a last bastion of goodness in this most evil of places is a worthwhile duty.

Malignancy, page 467
Dread One's Suite, page 484
Dungeons, page 491
Dark Averon, page 489
Bastion, page 489
Galchutt, page 62
Corruption points, page 468

Meditation Bed: With room for ten or more to recline comfortably, this area offers a safe and relaxing place to rest even within the evil confines of Jabel Shammar. On two sides of the dais, small tables hold incense burners. Lying amid the pillows is a magical book.

Golden Chest: Within the unlocked chest are ten potions in crystal vials (each worth 50 gp), ten crystal flasks of holy water (each worth 100 gp), and a scroll.

Lammasu: Touching this statue infuses a character with holy energy, healing all damage they've taken and removing 5 corruption points, if they have any. The statue works only once for each character.

Angel: Touching this statue brings it to life—it becomes a celestial being known as a planetar named Balleah. As it does, it releases a pulse of holy energy that fills the sanctuary. The planetar immediately notes whether the holy energy harms anyone present. She willingly helps anyone in the chamber any way she can, casting helpful spells from her magical repertoire. She knows all the properties of the sanctuary, about Jabel Shammar (generally, but not the specific contents or inhabitants of every room), and about the Malignancy. She tells the player characters what she can. She doesn't know the secret of the book in the Dread One's Suite, but she knows there is a secret way into a place called "the Trial of the Book." She even knows that the dungeons hold a secret prison somewhere for important prisoners, but again, she has no specifics beyond that. She also knows that her former friends Averon and Bastion have both been corrupted to darkness. She remains here with the hope that one day the evil can be purged from the tower, but she is apprehensive about leaving, fearing corruption.

When the characters are ready to depart, if the PCs ask her to come with them and she noted that no one was harmed by the pulse of holy energy, she will gather the courage to accompany them as an ally for as long as they are in Jabel Shammar, or until she is slain. If the entire group is not of good alignment, she will not accompany them, but she will cast any lasting spell on them that she might deem helpful.

LEVEL 7: GALLERIES

The ceilings on this level are 20 feet high. The various galleries here contain statues and paintings of demons, devils, dark gods, and hideous creatures—even horrible depictions of the Galchutt themselves.

Hideous Mural: On the northern wall of this level, the Dread One commissioned fiendish artisans to create a work of singular evil. It depicts scenes straight from Hell of depredations and torment no sane person should ever look upon. Anyone taking more than just a cursory glance at the mural gains 2 corruption points.

LEVEL 8: RESIDENCES

This level served as the lair of some of Jabel Shammar's most powerful residents, most of whom are long dead. Thus, many of its chambers are simply empty bedrooms and other living quarters, variously furnished. The ceilings on this level are 15 feet high.

THREE MURDERERS

The door to a large room on the south end of this level hangs open. This chamber served as the quarters for three undead servants of the Dread One. It is empty except for three wooden coffins covered with Elvish script and elaborate designs. The floor is extremely uneven, carved to appear to be a mass of writhing snakes, some normal size and some quite large. The snakes rise and twist around, creating strange holes, looming obstacles and other dangers to those who do not move carefully along the surface.

In the days of Danar and Mosul Pearl, the elves sent three representatives to entreat with the benevolent lord and his lovely wife—one of the Solarr elves, one of the Lunas, and one of the Shoal. The forces of Vladaam and Gorgoth-Lol, two Vested of the Galchutt, tricked the elf emissaries into taking a book to Danar as a gift. The elves had no idea that it was none other than the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, a tome older than the world itself.

Danar recognized the book for what it was, but—due to his faith or his overconfidence—he believed he could store it in a vault as he had done with so many other evil artifacts and objects. As is now well known, this decision was his undoing. When Danar had become completely corrupted, he tracked down the emissaries who had brought him the book and magically compelled them to slay their own families and friends. When they were finished, he killed the elves and brought them to Jabel Shammar as undead servants. They rose as undead skeletons with visibly writhing intestines and prehensile tongues (mohrgs).

Mohrgs: These undead hide not in the coffins, but amid the snakes on the floor, crouching and waiting to pounce. They attack any living creature that enters and pursue foes who attempt to leave or flee.

DIRE SONG

This northern room appears to be a normal bedchamber not unlike the others on this level. Music can be heard coming from the room, but it sounds muffled and indistinct until the door is opened.

The Dread One once had a human lieutenant named Polemith who spent all her time studying the dark side of music and sound. Her studies helped her master create such awful sound-manipulating creatures as cloakers and destrachans and loose them upon the world, but such creatures had only a fraction of Polemith's powers. When the Dread One died, Polemith found herself trapped within Jabel Shammar. She died here, but her ghost remained to haunt the place.

Over time, though, even the haunting subsided. With the passage of millennia, the ghost's intellect eroded away, until all that was left of it was the haunting melody at its very core. This Dire Song is itself a thing of corruption and darkness, even though it no longer has an intelligence behind it.

Treasure: Polemith's various journals and handwritten texts of musical knowledge lay about the room.

Hidden Treasure: Beneath the bed are Polemith's personal treasures, including magical pipes and a magical horn.

LEVEL 9: LIBRARY

A collection of mazelike chambers constitutes the library of the Dread One. This level holds an extensive collection of books and scrolls, each magically preserved so as not to age or decay as long as it stays here—any nonmagical books removed from the library turn to dust. The ceilings are 30 feet high, and the books go all the way to the top, although a dark wooden balcony 3 feet wide runs along most walls halfway up, with wooden ladders connecting the balcony to the floor. Smaller wooden ladders are spread throughout, resting on the floor and the balcony to reach high shelves.

The majority of the books are treatises on academic subjects, but many are tomes of inherent evil. A character searching through the shelves gains 2 corruption points. If a character takes one hour or more to search the library, they may find a magical book. Don't forget that every hour spent in Jabel Shammar also grants a corruption point.

LEVEL 10: DREAD ONE'S RESIDENCE

As the name suggests, this level was the home of Eslathagos Malkith. For all his vast power and ineffable malevolence, he was still a mortal man.

The ceilings here are 30 feet high.

PRISMATIC SPRAY TRAP

Any non-outsider entering this level without a *malefic mask* or without being adjacent to someone wearing one triggers four bursts of multicolored light, one from each direction. They fill the room one round after the first such person enters the level from below. These bursts are triggered each time someone comes up the stairs. The blasphemous shrine in the room is immune to the effects.

Characters within Polemith's room or within 30 feet of the doorway can hear the Dire Song.

Anyone hearing the Dire Song gains 2 corruption points and takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage. A successful DC 25 Wisdom save allows a creature to shut out the sound and not gain any corruption points, but it doesn't prevent the initial psychic damage. A bard's countercharm works against the Dire Song, but a silence *spell requires the caster to make a DC 20 concentration roll (Constitution save) to block the music. A spell such as* dispel evil and good *suppresses it for 1d6 rounds.*

The Dire Song has gained a legendary status among chaos cultists and other malevolent forces in Ptolus. Its actual origins are shrouded in myth, although someone versed in history may know the truth. Cultists evoke its name and believe that on the Night of Dissolution (page 62), the Dire Song will ring out for all to hear.

Anyone other than the resident mohrgs standing on the floor must make a DC 15 Acrobatics check or gain disadvantage on their attacks and grant advantage to their opponents' attacks against them. Moving in the room requires a new Acrobatics check (a running creature has disadvantage on this check).

An evil bard who reads Polemith's journals and handwritten texts (requiring one month of study) gains enough experience to gain one level, and their Charisma permanently increases by +1 (to a maximum of 19). Even a non-evil bard gains 2d6 × 1,000 XP (or just enough to gain one level, whichever is less) for reading them.

Polemith's treasures include pipes of haunting *(rare quality, DC 18) and a* horn of blasting.

Vested of the Galchutt, page 62

It's a DC 25 Perception check to find a magical book in the library of the Dread One. The possible books are as follows (equal chances; each book can be found only once):

- Manual of bodily health
- Manual of gainful exercise
- Manual of quickness of action
- Tome of clear thought
- Tome of leadership and influence
- Tome of understanding

The books in the Dread One's library are written in a variety of languages, all of them ancient. None are written in Common, which is too modern, but many are in Westron, Draconic, and especially Abyssal.

Mohrgs have flesh golem stats, with the undead type, AC 16, 132 hp, one extra attack each round (from scimitar) with +2 to hit and damage rolls. Equipment: +3 chain shirt, *scimitar of speed, jeweled cloak clasp worth 500 gp.*

If the player characters do not enter the room containing the mohrgs but the mohrgs hear them moving about, they leave their chamber and hunt down the intruders—hoping to attack them even as they deal with the Dire Song.

Blasphemous shrine, page 477

Each burst of light is equivalent to a prismatic spray *spell (DC 20 Dexterity save). Anyone in the room has to make a save against each spell. It is a DC 25 Sleight of Hand check to disable each of the traps.*

All breathing creatures in the room who are not immune to poison must make a DC 15 Constitution save every round or spend their action choking and coughing. A character who fails two saves in a row also takes 3 (1d6) poison damage and is poisoned for one hour.

When the Dread One launched his war against the rest of the world, Lathikamis the balor stood at the head of his armies of demons, orcs, undead, and aberrations.

Hidden Prison, page 493

Trial of the Book, page 488

Lathikamis the balor: *378 hp, with resistance to thunder (from ring), +2 on all Strength-based rolls (including melee attacks and damage), +3 on longsword attack and damage rolls (from* vorpal longsword*), Strength 30. Equipment:* vorpal longsword, ring of resistance *(thunder).*

Malefic mask*, page 641*

After Danar's corruption, his wife Parnaith returned to him many times, always hoping to redeem him somehow. As his evil power grew, these visits became more and more dangerous, and each time she had to use her own magic to escape. When she stopped coming, the Dread One made no attempt to find her.

Marilith: *189 hp, +1 to longsword attack and damage. Equipment: six +1* longswords *or six +1* battleaxes.

Succubus: *66 hp; see invisible creatures (from robe), advantage on sight-based Perception checks (from robe). Equipment:* robe of eyes *(native to this plane, remains if she is slain).*

Erinyes: *154 hp, +1 to longbow attack and damage, longbow inflicts an additional 3 (1d6) fire damage. Equipment:* +1 longbow.

Black adamantine, page 646

Lock: *DC 26 Sleight of Hand check*

The poison dart makes a ranged attack with a +10 bonus against a random target within 10 feet of the door. A target who is hit takes 2 (1d4) piercing damage and must make a DC 19 Constitution save or take 42 (12d6) poison damage or half as much on a successful save. It is a DC 25 Sleight of Hand check to disable the trap.

All creatures (other than constructs and undead) who hear the trap's deadly wail must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or drop to 0 hit points. On a successful save, the creature takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage. It is a DC 24 Perception check to detect the trap and a DC 24 Sleight of Hand check to disarm it.

Anyone perusing the words of the book must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or take 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

The player characters can find a clue to the word needed to activate the secret page scratched into the edge of Ulithik the Misbegotten's meditation pool on the top level of the Misbegotten Tower (see page 473).

Soul magic, page 619

The ring is a ring of three wishes*, with one* wish *left.*

Summoning Cascade, page 478

PERSONAL GUARDIAN

This chamber is filled with choking black smoke at all times (any smoke that does waft out of the room dissipates immediately). Visibility in this room is limited to about 5 feet, and everyone is concealed as if by a heavy mist.

Although it's difficult to see them in the smoke, ancient mummified corpses hang by chains from the ceiling, 20 feet off the floor.

When the summoning cascade occurs, Lathikamis, the Dread One's personal bodyguard and a "perfect specimen" of a balor, returns to Jabel Shammar. When Eslathagos Malkith faced his final battle, Lathikamis was trapped in an extradimensional space created to be a prison for him. But now Lathikamis is called, so he is here in the world physically and permanently.

And he's angry.

Jabel Shammar holds no secret of which Lathikamis is unaware, including all the traps, the Hidden Prison in the dungeons, and how to get to the Trial of the Book. He does not willingly reveal what he knows, although he might try to tempt wary intruders to enter the smoke-filled room with promises of information. Among his equipment he keeps a large steel key to the Dread One's Suite.

Tactics: Millennia of imprisonment have made Lathikamis hungry for vengeance, and he is eager to take it out on intruders. The balor is so angry that he does not retreat, even if in danger. He will, however, bellow loudly for the fiends in the harem (see hereafter) to come in, probably via teleportation.

Hanging Corpses: The mummified corpses suspended near the ceiling are where Lathikamis stores his belongings. Amid the dried husks, or in hollowed-out cavities within them, he keeps a *malefic mask*, 10,000 gp worth of gems and jewelry, three *potions of superior healing*, and four *immovable rods*.

HAREM

The red curtains over this room's walls each hide a painting depicting a vile and sexually graphic scene of perversion (six total, each of them worth 2,000 gp). The floors are strewn with red and gold carpets and silken pillow-covered divans. This room's name is a misnomer, however. Although he reveled in the concepts of perversion, the Dread One did not partake in them. He gathered the female-appearing fiends that lived here (and are summoned here once again) only to show his contempt for his former wife, Parnaith.

Four imposing yet beautiful fiends (a succubus, an erinyes, and two six-armed, tailed marilithes) appear when the summoning cascade occurs. Each is among the most alluring of their respective kinds. Each of these creatures wears 5,000 gp worth of jewelry. Even if the fiends should die, the jewelry is native to this plane (the fiends put them on when they got here).

The fiends reluctantly follow the direction of Lathikamis (see above). If the balor needs them, he will bellow for them, adding considerable might to his side. The erinyes hates the demons but is rightfully terrified by them.

Treasure: A chest of woven bronze strips (worth 150 gp) under one of the divans holds 500 gp worth of perfume and cosmetics and two *malefic masks*.

THE DREAD ONE'S SUITE

The door to this room on the east end of the level is 3-inch-thick black adamantine and has its own area of antimagic surrounding it out to 1 inch, making it impervious to magic (and negating any magical aids one might employ in searching it or opening it). The lock is large and devious, and anyone attempting to open it without first removing the trap triggers the release of a poison dart coated with purple worm venom. A magical trigger outside the door's antimagic field sets off a banshee-like wail if the dart fires. Lathikamis has the key to this door; using it avoids both traps.

This large chamber has a wide canopy bed with iron posts and black curtains. Three large wardrobes, a huge chest, a long table, and a chair—all of black wood inlaid with polished ebony—also furnish the room. A bookstand of silvered steel and adorned with protruding long, curving razor blades holds a large black book with red pages. Black and white silk drapes cover the walls, and a thick white fur rug swathes most of the floor. Braziers of black iron hang from long chains attached to the ceiling. The room smells of sandalwood. The aura of deep, cold evil feels palpable here, even more so than in the rest of the fortress.

Bookstand: The idea is that intruders will believe this tome is the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. It is not. It is, however, a sort of magical conduit to the book, and therefore to the Malignancy. The book's pages are filled with dangerous magical gibberish. On the ninety-ninth page of the book, a magically disguised secret page of text hides a soul magic spell that takes the reader instantly to the Trial of the Book. To reveal the hidden spell, one must utter the word "Ssenkrad."

Bed: A small table next to the bed holds an incense burner as well as two blocks of incense. A drawer in this side table contains a magic ring (left here in case of an emergency), a number

THE SEVEN JEWELS OF PARNAITH

Only a little is known about Danar's wife, Parnaith. Before her husband was corrupted by the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, Parnaith began creating her own magical masterpiece: seven Ethereal Islands tied metaphysically to Mosul Pearl (now Jabel Shammar) and developed specifically as a path to enlightenment—and eventual godhood—for those who sought it. These islands are called the Jewels of Parnaith and their individual names are Orr, Ond, Imn, Av, Ath, Unn, and Esh. One can reach the first jewel fairly easily, but a traveler can attain the others only one at a time, as they draw closer to true enlightenment.

THE NATURE OF THE JEWELS

The jewels are physical places located on the Ethereal Plane. But they are much more than that, as well: each one represents an important philosophical/metaphysical concept. Each is also tied closely to a specific symbol and a specific note on the musical scale. Most are literal islands, seeming to float in the empty space of the Ethereal Sea, although at least one (Av) has its own entirely shapeable essence and form. Each jewel is as large as it needs to be, taking up only ethereal space that does not necessarily correspond to normal space. Some of the jewels are as large or larger than Ptolus itself. Each has magical qualities unique to its nature. They are like no other places in all the planes, and today their creation remains one of the most phenomenal and impressive accomplishments of any mortal.

Their creation would never have been possible without the help of the Wizard-Priests of Ni-Gorth. Ni-Gorth, the first mortal to ascend to godhood, had proven to be an enemy of evil, including his former master, Father Claw. Thus, when Danar built the Banewarrens and Mosul Pearl, the Wizard-Priests found themselves drawn to a place so devoted to utter benevolence.

It is said that the Wizard-Priests felt so in awe of Danar that they spent their time with Parnaith instead. At the time, however, Parnaith was every bit as powerful as her husband—it was only the influence of the *Book of Inverted Darkness* and the eventual creation of the Entropy Sphere that gave him the might to challenge both gods and men.

Over the millennia, the evil of Jabel Shammar has slowly corrupted the Jewels of Parnaith, but only slightly. Incidents of such corruption are detailed in some of the jewels' descriptions here.

ACCESSING THE JEWELS

Seven golden pergolas float in orbit around Jabel Shammar, invisibly and intangibly. Each of these golden, open structures is approximately 10 feet across and 15 feet high. The orbits are wild and complex (but not random or erratic) and stretch out to almost a mile from the Spire. Because they are both invisible and intangible, finding one—let alone the correct one—is virtually impossible without a little help.

That help comes in the form of a magic item simply called the *orrery*. This device shows the complex orbital paths of the pergolas at any given time, thus predicting their relative positions with great accuracy. Getting to a pergola usually entails some

kind of magical flight; attempting to access one as it passes through the ground or near the surface is extremely difficult. Only when it comes within 25 feet of an *illitor* does a pergola become visible and tangible—and even then, only for those within 25 feet of the pergola.

An *illitor* is a complex magic item encompassing a golden belt, armband, and bracelet, each connected to the others by thin gold chains. Only someone wearing an *illitor* can gain entrance to a jewel; the process requires one to sound the proper tone on a chime while standing in a pergola. The wearer, and only the wearer, can see and play the chime located in each of the seven golden pergolas. The *illitor* has seven settings in which one can place a small gem. Travelers obtain these gems by attaining the proper enlightenment at each of the Seven Jewels of Parnaith.

Other than the chime, each pergola appears empty at first. Once the chime is played, a portal called a *colordoor node* opens and provides access to the Ethereal Plane and the corresponding jewel.

PROGRESSION THROUGH THE JEWELS

Each jewel represents a fundamental concept of the nature of reality. The intention was for everyone visiting a jewel to study, discuss, contemplate, and meditate upon that concept. Only after reaching true understanding can one pass on to the next jewel. For example, in the jewel of Orr, one must understand the concept of beginnings and endings, and that every beginning is an ending, and every ending a beginning. Truly comprehending each concept normally requires months, if not years, of contemplation.

Each jewel has an enlightenment key that resembles a globe of energy (of a color appropriate to each jewel). An impenetrable force field surrounds this globe, but when someone who has achieved the proper enlightenment approaches the field, it disappears, freeing the globe for a moment. It then fires a beam of energy that strikes the forehead of the enlightened. That person is also granted a gem of the appropriate color, which they can place within their *illitor* before heading to a transport point keyed to the pergola for the next jewel.

There is a way to circumvent, or "cheat," the whole process. The key to this is an object called *Parnaith's mirrored sphere*. Those who use such a sphere (there are said to be more than one) to travel from jewel to jewel without gaining enlightenment do

Entropy Sphere, page 463
Orrery, *page 641*
Illitor, *page 640*
Parnaith's mirrored sphere, *page 641*

not receive the ultimate reward at the end, however. Ghul himself captured *Parnaith's mirrored sphere* and used it to pass through Orr to get to Ond, where he was slain. The Great Seven brought the sphere back to Ptolus, where it now rests in the hands of Raguel in the Dark Reliquary.

Each of the jewels has a guardian, appointed long ago by Parnaith to safeguard a portion of the path to enlightenment.

ORR, JEWEL OF BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

The first of the jewels is Orr. Orr represents life and death as a single dichotomy—the beginning and the end. Much of the island is covered by a ruined and abandoned town, destroyed long ago when Ghul came to the jewels.

The enlightenment sphere lies within a silver tower near the town. The tower was the abode of Damarcan (male half-celestial), who ruled the jewel for millennia before succumbing to the evil of Jabel Shammar. Now corrupt himself, Damarcan passed on to Ond in the hopes of attaining great power by passing through all the jewels. (This is much harder than he thought, though, and he is still stuck in Ond.) He covets *Parnaith's mirrored sphere* above all else.

To reach the interior of Damarcan's tower, one must ride a boat on a river that flows across the island, over its edge, and across its underside. On the "bottom" of the island lies an entrance to a network of underground passages that eventually come up beneath the tower. Damarcan has placed a number of guardians in these tunnels.

OND, JEWEL OF THE PHYSICAL

The jewel of Ond seems entirely underground. This island, which stresses the concept of the body and physical matter, is honeycombed with passages and caverns, and everything important lies within them. Most objects in Ond are made of stone or metal. Everything feels more solid here than elsewhere. Creatures always feel physically fit and well here—or at least more so than normal. (Damage still accrues normally in combat.)

Ond has the distinction of being the place where Ghul finally met his end, slain by the heroes known as the Great Seven. This event scarred Ond in places. Where Ghul bled, slivers of his evil essence take the form of wraiths and attack all that lives. The stone in these areas looks twisted and blackened, with skull-like visages peering from within.

Donrah, the ruler of this jewel, is an intelligent, free-willed earth elemental of great power. He is very practical, very straightforward, and ultimately quite cold. The enlightenment key to leaving is in a hidden cave filled with crystals.

IMN, JEWEL OF ENERGY

Imn has a flat, relatively unremarkable landscape except for a tall iron tower at its very center. Surges of blue lightning run up and down this iron tower in regular, pulsating intervals, creating a rhythmic buzzing and flashing that one can see and hear anywhere in Imn.

The ruler, Znaam, lives in the tower. Znaam is a singular being, a bloated insect-like thing. He is self-interested and mean-spirited, but not cruel or treacherous. He is equally uninterested in fighting or helping anyone. To reach the enlightenment key, a character who has come to understand all aspects of energy must leap off the tower and into the pulsing lightning.

AV, JEWEL OF THE MIND

The jewel of the mind resembles a thick, verdant forest, but that is not its natural state. Without any outside influence, Av would be nothing but a seemingly endless white void. However, the substance (if it can be called that) of Av is influenced by the subconscious minds of those upon the jewel. For many centuries, these minds have been mainly those of the sibeccai who live here. These canine-like humanoids live here in a wooden fort, hunting and fishing for their sustenance and devoting themselves spiritually to Lothian. Their existence is a rather idyllic one. Beyond approximately a mile and a half from the fort, the landscape fades away into the white void, but the sibeccai do not venture that far. The enlightenment key lies within the white void, and only those using their own force of will to shape Av's existence can find it.

Av has a rift within it, created inadvertently by the Wars of Fire. It is possible to pass physically from Av to an isolated spot in the land of Kem and to travel from Kem to Av, bypassing the traditional means of reaching the jewel. However, the secret of the rift is all but lost today. Further, those using the rift without some kind of special protection risk permanent mental illness from the experience.

Great Seven, page 85
Dark Reliquary location of the sphere, page 226

Damarcan has cambion stats.

Donrah has dao stats, with Huge size; alignment neutral.

Znaam has ice devil stats, with immunity to acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder; alignment neutral.

Sibeccai have gnoll stats; alignment lawful good

Finding Av's enlightenment key requires a DC 22 Wisdom save.

Passing through the rift requires a DC 22 Wisdom save to avoid mental harm of the GM's choosing.

Wars of Fire: see Kem, page 43

The pergolas that offer access to the Seven Jewels of Parnaith orbit invisibly and intangibly around the Spire. Only calculations made with a magical orrery can help one locate the pergola for the first jewel and begin the Path to Enlightenment.

The sibeccai were brought here by none other than Lothian himself. Lothian's spirit, after his death, traveled through the Seven Jewels, attaining its reward of ultimate enlightenment. When he discovered the rift, he used it to bring the sibeccai here to ensure their safety.

Unfortunately, a powerful demon lord named Savvan discovered the rift and came to Av centuries ago. (Although not one of the Galchutt, Savvan was accidentally trapped in Praemal at the time of its creation, as they were.) These days Savvan takes the form of a sibeccai and rules them in the name of Lothian, twisting and perverting the god's teachings and dogma for his own use. No one has traveled through the jewels to this point in so long that Savvan has almost forgotten the rest of the world exists. When visitors come here, however, he is reminded and realizes it is time for him to leave. Savvan has the *cask of frozen dreams* in a *demon-sealed box*.

Av's ruler, Varen, became one with the jewel and now exists there only as a lingering mental form.

ATH, JEWEL OF SPIRIT

The jewel Ath has become a realm of ice and snow—a perpetual blizzard, in fact—due to an infestation of winter harridans (for more information on winter harridans, see *The Banewarrens* adventure; see page 11). This invasion was made possible through machinations of the Galchutt, who hoped to destroy the Jewels of Parnaith. It killed the jewel's ruler, Faranastra the Faithful, some time ago. The people of Ath, the acolytes and hirelings of Faranastra (and their descendants), live within a handful of snowbound monasteries guarded by fanatical monks.

Faranastra's tomb lies within an icy cave guarded by a white dragon and an ice devil, both brought here by the harridans. This same cave contains the enlightenment key.

UNN, JEWEL OF MAGIC

The jewel of magic resembles a pleasant island covered with grassy hills and trees. Dotting the landscape of Unn are tall stone towers of wizards. The jewel was ruled by a Wizard-Priest of Ni-Gorth named Leisarth, who disappeared more than fifty years ago. However, he had many apprentices, students, and servants. The most powerful of these call themselves the Children of Leisarth.

The so-called Children of Leisarth occupy their own towers across the face of the island—eleven in all. Each is a powerful wizard, and each spends their days studying magical lore for the secret of passing to Esh, the final jewel. They are a scheming, conniving, and treacherous lot, not one of whom earned passage to this point through enlightenment. The wizards are likely to use visitors to Unn in some way—either as part of an experiment or as a tool by one of the Children of Leisarth to kill one of the others. The enlightenment key lies at the top of Leisarth's old tower.

ESH, JEWEL OF THE DIVINE

The jewel of divinity is different from the others. It has no ruler, per se. Upon arrival, a traveler sees Esh as a wide crater with walls of sheer rock rising 1,500 feet all around. Along these walls stand statues of the Elder Gods, rising *another* 1,500 feet. The objective is to ascend out of the pit so one can see it is merely a small hole in the head of a much, much larger statue of another god: Praemus, the Creator.

Travelers who reach this point without cheating (by using *Parnaith's mirrored sphere*) spend anywhere from ten to one hundred years in conversation with the avatar of the Creator before ascending to godhood themselves. Travelers who use the *mirrored sphere* can ask a handful of questions (perhaps one or two per character) before they are sent back to Ptolus bereft of their *illitor* and *sphere*.

Cask of frozen dreams, *page 637. See also Dreta Phantas, page 425.*

Each wizard is level 12 to 15.

of 4-inch steel needles, and three fine knives of different shapes and sizes worth 100 gp each.

Wardrobes and Chest: The wardrobes and chest contain fine clothing (about 10,000 gp worth) and other simple personal possessions. One has a locked iron puzzlebox that contains a magically imprisoned elemental.

THE CLOAKROOM

In this room at the south end of the suite, cloaks and other types of clothing hang on hooks and sit folded on shelves. A wormy fruitwood table is pushed against the wall opposite the door. When the Dread One died, some of his objects of power returned here, thanks to intricate magical contingencies. Lying on the table are two *malefic masks*, the *Dread One's staff*, and two magic rings. Three of the cloaks hanging on hooks are magical. A wooden armoire with glass doors has a suit of magical armor, but the armoire is warded with a deadly magical symbol.

LEVEL 11: TRIAL OF THE BOOK

There is no staircase to the top level of the Tower of Malice. The only way to reach it is through the secret page in the book in the Dread One's Suite. This level appears entirely open and empty, with a 50-foot-high ceiling. When a character arrives, they appear alone (no matter how many people come into the chamber) and suddenly see a looming figure floating in the air above them. The figure appears to be a 9-foot-tall human man with a bald head and aged face. The figure holds a large black book with red pages and wears thick black and blue robes. It speaks immediately with a booming voice:

"I am Eslathagos Malkith, the Dread One. You are unworthy to be here. Begone!"

PROVING WORTHINESS

1. Convincing: If a character attempts to verbally convince the looming figure of their worth in some way, they should make a DC 24 Deception or Persuasion check, as appropriate (a Performance check might also work).

2. Combat: If a character attempts to engage in any kind of physical combat with the figure, the character suddenly finds themselves grappling with the figure. They must grapple and then pin the figure, who has a total grapple check bonus of +15. If the figure pins the character, they fail.

3. Spellcasting: If a character attempts to cast a spell or use other magic on the figure, success or failure is judged by the spell chosen. A 7th-level spell or higher is deemed a success. Anything else is a failure.

To proceed, each character must use one of three means to prove themselves worthy. Anything else accomplishes nothing and the figure simply stares disapprovingly, or mocks the actions with sophisticated, arrogant language: "Your meaningless prattle is as a gnat buzzing in my home, beneath my notice—beneath contempt!"

Success: The character is drawn into the figure—specifically, into the book it holds. They find themselves in the Heart of the Malignancy (see below).

Failure: The figure disappears, leaving the character alone in the room (or with others who may have failed). They must figure out a way to escape the chamber on their own. In theory, however, if they return to the Dread One's Suite, they could use the book to come here and attempt the test again—meanwhile, however, their friends may be combating the Malignancy alone.

HEART OF THE MALIGNANCY

This location lies beyond the bounds of normal reality in its own pocket dimension crafted from pure corruption.

To anyone who finds their way here, space itself seems to flow and pulse with an eerie, alien life of its own. There is no gravity, although characters can "fly" at their walking speed throughout the Heart and have no problems acting without a surface to stand on (wherever they are, it is as if they are standing on a solid surface, even if they are oriented differently than those around them). The size of the Heart fluctuates and changes—its red, violet, and black edges warp and swirl continually. Tendrils from the edges stretch into the space within the Heart, writhing and grasping. Those within the Heart can sense that many souls and minds are a part of the Malignancy, having been assimilated into its evil, corrupt whole. At the center of all of this floats a large black book with red pages: the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. The characters cannot leave unless they destroy the book, but the Malignancy wishes to absorb them into itself once and for all.

Worst of all, the shadow of the Dread One resides within the Heart of the Malignancy, floating about like a wave of soul-chilling black corruption.

THE TENDRILS

Once each round, tendrils attempt to touch each character (one tendril per character) and corrupt them. Those who are touched and fail to resist its influence gain 4 corruption points. Remember that a character whose corruption point total equals or exceeds their resolve level becomes a slave of the Malignancy. If this

It is a DC 28 Sleight of Hand check to open the puzzlebox. Once opened, it can be used as an iron flask, *which currently imprisons a water elemental.*

Malefic mask, *page 641*

Dread One's staff, *page 638*

The rings are a ring of spell storing *(currently holding a* planar binding *spell) and a* ring of spell turning. *The cloaks are a* cloak of arachnida, *a* cloak of displacement, *and a cursed magical cloak that poisons whoever puts it on, inflicting 49 (14d6) poison damage on a failed DC 20 Constitution save, or half that on a successful save. The plate armor is* armor of invulnerability.

The symbol is equivalent to a symbol *(death) spell, DC 20 Constitution save.*

GM TIPS

The actions the PCs take in the Trial of the Book depend a lot on you. If you describe the situation and ask, "What do you do?" many players will respond to the looming figure verbally. If you describe the situation and ask the players to roll initiative, they are more likely to respond with action. Perhaps it is best to steer each player toward their character's strengths—it's no fun, after all, not to be part of the climactic encounter.

The Reality of the Trial

Everything that happens in the Trial of the Book, including the robed figure, is an illusion projected into the minds of the characters. Unless the characters see through the illusion (requiring a DC 24 Wisdom save to disbelieve, or magic like true seeing*), they are unaware that others are in the room. Those who disbelieve successfully can still partake in the trial, and success still brings them into the Heart of the Malignancy, but each character must undergo the trial individually.*

The bless *effect for evil creatures granted by the unhallowed ground effect is not active here, nor can evil creatures here tap into the Malignancy (page 469) for information or healing.*

A character can avoid the touch of a tendril with a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. If touched, the character must make a DC 22 Wisdom save to resist its corrupting power. The tentacle's magic-destroying ability is equivalent to dispel magic, *with a +9 bonus on the ability check to dispel.*

Corruption points, page 468

happens here, the slave turns on their fellows and attacks them physically for two rounds before disappearing into the substance of the Malignancy itself, forever lost in corruption.

Alternatively, rather than corrupting the creatures it touches, the Malignancy can use the tendrils to destroy magical effects on a touched creature.

THE DREAD ONE'S SHADOW

Once each round, the Dread One's shadow passes over one random character and attempts to possess them; a possessed character attacks their fellows. If the possessed character is alone and has no one to attack, they allow a tendril to touch and corrupt them.

The Dread One's shadow cannot attack or be attacked except as described here. A character targeted by it must make a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or become possessed for one round and gain 2 corruption points. Magic that protects against possession (such as *protection from evil and good*) works normally against it. Magic that banishes or repels evil creatures (such as *banishment* or the dismissal aspect of *dispel evil and good*) or a successful Turn Undead attempt (its Wisdom save bonus is +10) keeps the shadow from taking an action for a round while it recoils. Other than these specific means, the Dread One's shadow cannot be harmed or moved in any way.

It's worth noting that this is not a shadow in the undead sense, nor is it truly a ghost or wraith. It is but a tiny sliver of the soul essence of the Dread One—all that remains of him.

SLAVE OF THE MALIGNANCY

At the end of the second round after hostile creatures have entered the Heart, the Malignancy vomits up a creature that it corrupted and consumed long ago to fight on its behalf. With a hideous scream, this creature proclaims itself to be the intruders' death bringer. This creature was of the mightiest class of angel, nearly godlike in power, known as a solar. But this solar was corrupted and is now called Dark Averon.

In ancient times, Danar had three close angelic allies: a planetar named Balleah; Bastion, Guardian of the Morning; and a solar named Averon, Lord of the Eternal Day. When Danar was corrupted by the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, he tricked Bastion using a magical artifact called the *antithesis stone* and introduced darkness into his celestial soul. Averon could not be corrupted, however, and was placed in the Hidden Prison in the Dungeons.

But now Averon has turned to evil as well, corrupted like Bastion—except that Averon

Dark Averon has solar stats, with Gargantuan size, fiend type, no Blinding Gaze, Flying Sword, Healing Touch, or Innate Spellcasting abilities; alignment neutral evil. His Angelic Weapons and Searing Burst abilities inflict necrotic damage instead of radiant damage. He can make two of the following attacks per round, or four if he doesn't fly (if he moves 50 feet or less on his turn, assume he isn't flying): **Plated Fists or Razor Wings.** Melee Weapon Attack: *+15 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.* Hit: *22 (4d6 + 8) slashing damage plus 27 (6d8) necrotic damage.*

Dark Averon has steeped so long in the Heart of the Malignancy that no magic—not even a wishing spell—can restore him to his original angelic state.

Balleah, page 482

Hidden Prison, page 493

For more on the antithesis stone *and Bastion (now called the Malificite), see* The Banewarrens *adventure (see page 11).*

Corruption points, page 468

Trial of the Book, page 488

Elder Gods, page 61

The force field has 200 hit points and recovers 20 hit points at the start of the book's turn each round, even if brought to 0 hit points. Unlike a wall of force*, it can be harmed by nonmagical attacks and spells. It is unaffected by* dispel magic*, but* disintegrate *affects it normally.*

Due to the dark spark, any living creature (other than a fiend or other evil being from another plane) takes 3 (1d6) cold damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage every round spent within the Sombrous Sepulcher.

Finding the entrance to the Sombrous Sepulcher within the Heart of the Malignancy is a DC 26 Perception check.

When the player characters enter the Heart of the Malignancy, make an initiative roll. It is on this initiative count that the book can use its power to dispel and also when the force field regenerates its power. Recall that even if the force field is completely destroyed, starting on this count it automatically begins to repair itself.

Jabel Shammar Without the Book

If the player characters succeed in banishing the Book of Inverted Darkness*, Jabel Shammar is free of the Malignancy and its effects. However, it remains a horribly evil and corrupt place. While corruption points no longer matter, remember that the fortress is so irredeemably evil that even divine beings could not purge it all, just contain it. Items removed from the fortress are still tainted with lingering evil.*

It is likely that only two things, in conjunction, could ever truly cleanse Jabel Shammar: stalwart, watchful heroes on hand to make sure that no evil comes along to exploit the place, and vast amounts of time.

was the first being despoiled by the Malignancy itself. When he turned to darkness, Averon was released from the prison and came here to lend his power and essence to the Malignancy. The solar lost most of his magical abilities. However, the corruptive influence has caused him to swell to enormous size. Further, blue and black adamantine plates have fused to his flesh. Having long ago discarded his angelic weapons, Dark Averon now strikes with his adamantine-clad fists and (when not flying) slashes with his metal-fused, razor-sharp wings.

Dark Averon can exist as an independent entity for only five rounds before he is automatically absorbed back into the walls of the Heart. If the corrupted solar dies before that can happen, all the tendrils grow dormant for two rounds. If he is absorbed, Dark Averon re-emerges two rounds later, fully healed and ready to fight for another five rounds.

THE BOOK

The only way to fight the Malignancy is to attack the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. The book floats here about 9 feet off the "floor." It measures about 2 feet tall and 18 inches across (3 feet when open). The cover is black, and the pages are red vellum with black lettering. A powerful regenerating force field around it protects it from harm.

Even if the force field is bypassed, the *Book of Inverted Darkness* is very durable. If anyone touches it, either with a hand or a weapon, ebony energy is unleashed that runs up the creature's limb and attempts to possess the attacker. If successful, the book takes control of the person for two rounds, forcing them to fight on its behalf. After this possession ends, the victim gains 2 corruption points. A character who fails to resist the black energy but is protected against possession is surrounded by a lingering black aura that goes away only if the character dies or the book is destroyed; if that protection is lost, the aura flows into the character and they are possessed.

If the book is destroyed, it is actually merely banished and fades from this plane of existence for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. The Malignancy disappears from Jabel Shammar entirely. The characters return to the chamber of the Trial of the Book, but a silver portal with a green outline stands in the middle of the room like a doorway, created by the power of the Elder Gods. Those who pass through it see faint images of the gods seated on thrones in a silvery, green-tinted chamber. They commend the player characters on a job well done and offer to send them wherever they want to go—including back into Jabel Shammar, if they desire.

The *Book of Inverted Darkness* has AC 10, 250 hit points, initiative +0, Int +15, Wis +15; resistance to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage; resistance to acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage; and immunity to necrotic and psychic damage. It always fails Strength and Dexterity saves, and always succeeds at Constitution saves. Resisting the book's black defensive energy requires a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw; failure means the character is controlled by the book for 1d4 rounds as it forces them to defend it against other attackers, after which the character is freed but gains 2 corruption points. The book can take no actions other than the following ability: ***Dispel Good:*** The book can automatically dispel one good spell or effect that is active within the heart of the Malignancy (no dispel roll needed); it mainly uses this to get rid of protective effects hedging out the Dread One's shadow or the book's own corruptive energy. Note that the book's Dispel Good ability is in addition to the dispelling ability of the Malignancy's tendrils.

SUMMONING CREATURES

Any creature that comes into the Heart of the Malignancy without passing the Trial of the Book, such as a creature summoned by a player character, is instantly corrupted, turns evil, and acts to defend the book—which is to say, probably attacks the party.

THE SOMBROUS SEPULCHER

Hidden within the Heart is the magical entrance to a small chamber that exists in the normal plane within Jabel Shammar. This black stone room, 10 feet square, is empty except for swirling shadowy essence, which is Eslathagos Malkith's dark spark of life. Mortal magic cannot affect this spark, but neither can it do anything to harm or affect others. Entering the sepulcher grants a character 3 corruption points, and emanation from the dark spark is harmful to most creatures.

Even though it exists above the Trial of the Book, to find the Sombrous Sepulcher one must enter the Heart of the Malignancy and search its strange, fluctuating "walls." Note that this search must occur while the Malignancy still thrives—otherwise, the Heart disappears and the sepulcher once again becomes completely inaccessible thanks to the sealing magic of the Elder Gods.

SUBLEVEL 1: DUNGEONS

The dungeons of Jabel Shammar are rank and fetid, stained with blood, and littered with fragments of bones and skulls from those who were brought here and never released. Wet, dark slime seems to cover everything, including the bare stone walls and slightly rusted iron doors. The ceilings in the dungeons are about 18 feet high.

One can enter the dungeons not only via a staircase from the Tower of Malice, but also through more unusual methods. As discussed in Entering Jabel Shammar, a secret door at the end of the Dread One's Path emerges from the Banewarrens into area 2 of the dungeons. Also, one can use the *Banewarrens key*, *Parnaith's mirrored sphere*, or the *Dread One's staff* to reach the Seeping Portal chamber in the dungeons via the Entropy Sphere accessed through Goth Gulgamel.

Entering Jabel Shammer, page 470

Parnaith's mirrored sphere, *page 641*
Dread One's staff, *page 638*
Seeping Portal, page 493
Entropy Sphere, page 463

MASTER OF THE DUNGEONS

Even after all this time, the unique Master of Jabel Shammar's dungeons remains a true horror—a terrifying fusion of demon and metal, fueled by pain and memories of the anguish that still resonate in these walls. This horrible fiend wanders about the dungeons but becomes instantly aware of intruders due to its link with the Malignancy and its general awareness of everything that happens in its domain. Hungry for prisoners to torment, it is likely to attempt to capture at least some in a group of intruders, putting them in the prison pits or antimagic pillory (see area 3), as appropriate.

The deadliest thing about the Master is its ability to utterly control its environment. With a thought it can magically lock the doors behind its foes, then use an action to seal them up behind a solid wall of stone or barrier of spinning blades. While its opponents attempt to deal with their confinement, the Master can see through the walls (and move through them, if need be) to create more barriers or attack.

Master of the Dungeons has goristro stats, with continuous true seeing*, *x-ray vision* (automatically see through walls and doors up to 3 feet thick), immunity to cold and poison damage, advantage on saves against magic*, advantage on Perception checks within the dungeons, regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn, control environment* (lock, unlock, open, or close any door), prevent all teleportation within 100 feet (it can activate or suppress this ability as a bonus action), pass through walls and doors as if incorporeal; alignment neutral evil. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20) and it can innately cast the following spells:*

At will: blade barrier, detect evil and good, detect magic, dispel magic, guards and wards *(only one active at a time)*, locate object, wall of stone

3/day each: hold monster *(up to three targets)*, reverse gravity, symbol

1/day: plane shift *(self only)*

** These abilities function only when the Master is within the dungeons beneath Jabel Shammar.*

1. VILE SLIME

Tainted by the evils perpetrated here, slime patches have mutated over time into vile slime: dark green crud that hangs over the floor at the bottom of the stairs leading down from the Forlorn Tower. Vile slime seeks life, animating enough to lunge at passersby within 5 feet even if they are too canny to walk underneath it.

Secret switch: *DC 22 Perception check to find*

Vile slime lashes out with a +10 melee attack; DC 20 Perception check to notice its presence. Vile slime inflicts twice the damage of green slime, half of which is acid and half necrotic.

A secret switch on the northern wall causes a 20-foot-square section of the floor in the center of this room to slide away, revealing a 50-foot-deep shaft. At the same time, a platform with a dark skull emblazoned on its surface rises up the shaft like an elevator. The shaft leads to area 2 of the Dread One's Path. The switch in that area no longer exists; only the one in this room will raise or lower the platform.

2. THE SERPENT PATH

A sort of maze without walls, the Serpent Path resembles a snake painted on the floor, winding its way through the dungeons. If anyone walks the length of this path, starting at the tip of the tail and ending at the head, without deviation, the serpent head rises up from the floor as if real. The giant snake then breathes on the character. The Breath of the Serpent is a dark blessing that leads Jabel Shammar to react to the affected character as if they were wearing a *malefic mask* at all times. Affected characters gain 2 corruption points.

Malefic mask, *page 641*

Characters passing up from the secret door in the Dread One's Path in the Banewarrens find

For details on the Dread One's Path, see The Banewarrens *adventure (see page 11).*

Naxx the ocular tyrant: *AC 19, 180 hp, +1 on all saves. His modifier for trying to control the sphere against a rival is +13. Equipment:* ring of protection.

Mahdoth, page 337

The magical black sphere shares most properties of a large sphere of annihilation, *but it is uniquely keyed to Naxx. He can pass in and out of it as though it did not exist and controls its movement.*

Steel grate: *AC 15, 15 hp, DC 20 Strength check to break. It's a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to open the lock.*

GM TIPS

Don't forget that evil creatures in Jabel Shammar are affected by the bless *spell (because it is unhallowed ground) and can use the Malignancy to heal themselves for 10d10 damage as an action.*

The dungeons beneath Jabel Shammar exist within an extradimensional space, not unlike that of Goth Gulgamel or the Dread One's Path in the Banewarrens.

For more background on the Banewarrens, see page 389.

Padlock: *DC 25 Sleight of Hand check to open*

Roper: *137 hp, +3 on Strength-based rolls (including attacks and damage), +4 on Con-based rolls*

The cylinder inflicts 17 (5d6) cold damage per round to anything placed within it.

themselves standing at the tip of the tail in the Serpent Path.

3. THE PRISON PITS

Into these dark, dank holes, prisoners were thrown—some never to emerge. A hinged steel grate with a heavy iron lock covers each pit. The keys for all the grates hang on a ring on a hook near the north exit. In the middle of the pits is a large wooden pillory stained with blood. Bones and chain fragments lie everywhere amid the pits, each of which contains three ancient corpses.

In some ways, the pits are surprisingly few in number. However, it is important to remember that most prisoners of the Dread One never made it this far (he also used portions of the Banewarrens as a prison). Only the most important—and therefore the least fortunate—were brought here. The Dread One's forces maintained many fortresses and prisons throughout the surrounding lands when his power was at its height.

Antimagic Pillory: The pillory locks with a heavy, diabolical padlock and encases anyone held within it in an area of antimagic that extends out 5 feet around the pillory.

Gaols: With a single bellow, the Master of the Dungeons can awaken the jailers that work for him, each of which has entered a sort of hibernation. The jailers are ropers—stalagmite-shaped creatures that catch prisoners with lashing tendrils. They obey the commands of the Master or Naxx (see below), but otherwise they simply seek food after their long fast.

Each roper's individual starting location is marked on the dungeons map.

NAXX'S HISTORY

Naxx the ocular tyrant was one of the first of his kind that Eslathagos Malkith created. In his time, Naxx served as a general in the Dread One's armies and was responsible in particular for the campaign against the ancient dwarves. In those battles, he was grievously wounded by a dwarven hero and, although most incapacitated warriors serving the Dread One were slain for their weakness, Naxx was reassigned to serve beneath the Master of the Dungeons. While not a sentence of death, this decision was, in his mind, a supreme humiliation. Should he be awakened today, Naxx is still gripped with resentment and bitterness. His only release is destruction, so he is not careful when using his eye rays or the sphere of annihilation.

4. TWO SPHERES OF DEATH

The leader of the gaols is Naxx. He is a weird, globular, many-eyed floating creature known as an ocular tyrant, similar to Mahdoth in the South Market. Naxx is held in stasis within a 5-foot-diameter magical black sphere that floats 4 feet off the floor in a chamber in the center of the dungeons. If not in stasis, he can pass in and out of the sphere as though it did not exist, and (unless another creature is vying for control of it) can move it up to 20 feet per round without using an action.

The Master must come to this chamber to bring Naxx out of stasis.

5. THE CHAMBER OF PHYSICAL TORTURE

A dread chamber at the east end of the dungeons houses an array of diabolical torture devices meant to break the bodies—and therefore the spirits and wills—of the unfortunate souls brought here. It holds racks, iron maidens, multiple cauldrons for heating oil, and braziers to hold coals for heating irons. The southern wall is covered with hooks from which depend scalpels, tongs, saws, hammers, buckets of nails, containers of needles, spiked collars and harnesses (designed to make the spikes pierce the wearer), and other implements.

The Dread One used magical apparatuses of torture as well. In the southwest corner of the room, a bluish glass cylinder about 2 feet long and 6 inches wide sits upon an iron table. It feels cold to the touch. If its brass cap is removed, one can insert something into the hollow tube—like a hand or a finger. The cylinder contains absolute cold, freezing anything placed within. Sometimes torturers

would stick a metal rod into the cylinder and another into coals so that victims could feel freezing cold and burning heat at once.

A magical torture device standing against the middle of the east wall looks like a large metal oven with a glass door. It stands 8 feet high and about that wide. Victims placed into this device can be subjected to any of a variety of painful effects, such as noxious fumes, extreme heat or cold, terrible wind, and bursts of electricity. The complex controls for this magical device involve a number of levers and switches located all over the surface of the machine.

6. THE CHAMBER OF MENTAL TORTURE

This room just north of the Chamber of Physical Torture looks starkly bare, except for six bedlike platforms covered with wires, tubes, and various arcane devices. The wires and tubes connect to a central column that is wider at the top than the bottom (like a cone 10 feet wide at the top and 5 feet wide at the bottom). Strange devices of metal, stone, and glass cover the column as well.

Victims brought here were strapped to the platforms and connected to the tubes and wires, after which the magical machine fed thoughts and images directly into their minds. These projections were designed specifically to cause mental fatigue, pain, and eventually madness: bright flashing colors, scenes running backward or too fast to understand, screeching sounds, and mind-grating nonsense images of all kinds. A typical victim would succumb to extreme dementia within three days of being strapped into the machine.

7. THE CHAMBER OF SPIRITUAL TORTURE

Near the north end of the dungeons lies a chamber that greatly resembles the Chamber of Mental Torture, in that it contains six platforms covered with wires, tubes, and various arcane devices, all connected to a central conelike column. However, victims placed within these magical devices are fed memories and thoughts that challenge their self-worth and identity. Telepathic messages tell them that they are alone, insignificant, unwanted, and unloved. This treatment could cause insanity, but it also proved useful for reprogramming victims into willing servants and slaves.

The spectral remains of some of the victims still haunt this torture chamber in the form of eight dread wraiths. They attack any living creature they see with a vengeance.

8. THE SEEPING PORTAL

The open area down the hall from the Chamber of Spiritual Torture is consumed by a swirling, churning pool of multicolored ooze of an unknown nature. The pool measures 20 feet across and has a greasy, rotting odor. Beneath 2 feet of the swirling muck is an inky black substance that seems to absorb light. This blackness is a powerful ooze creature that can draw energy into itself like an eternally hungry darkness. It greedily attacks anyone who comes near, except a creature wearing a *malefic mask*. It obeys the commands of a mask wearer, although the only commands it understands are to not attack and to transport someone down.

The ooze creature has black pudding stats, with size Gargantuan, 130 hp, advantage on attack rolls, pseudopod attack also inflicts 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

The ooze itself (both the creature and the nonliving substance) is a magical portal. If alive, it can send anyone passing into it down to the chamber of the Entropy Sphere near Goth Gulgamel. If it dies, anyone who enters the ooze pool is automatically transported.

Malefic mask, *page 641*

Entropy Sphere, page 463

Goth Gulgamel, page 452

9. THE HIDDEN PRISON

The secret door at the top of the north stairs is extremely well hidden. If someone attempts to descend the steps without wearing a *malefic mask*, it triggers a conjured wall trap that creates stone barriers on the staircase, enough to literally seal it in solid rock. The walls cannot appear where a creature is standing, so they appear immediately in front of and immediately behind those on the stairs, entombing them.

Secret door: *DC 26 Perception check to find*

The conjured walls are equivalent to wall of stone *spells. It is a DC 27 Arcana or Sleight of Hand check to disable the trap.*

The skeletal remains of a massive dragon dominate the Hidden Prison at the bottom of the staircase. In life, the dragon must have been well over 100 feet long. Amid its bones lie the dried, desiccated corpses of what must have been angels, archons, and other powerful but extremely exotic creatures.

Six birdcages, each about 2 feet tall, hang from chains attached to hooks on the walls here. Most appear empty. At the far eastern end of the hall, a brass-lidded glass jar about 8 inches tall sits on a shelf, faintly glowing with a golden spark inside. Two tall, rectangular mirrors in elaborate oaken frames flank the shelf, hanging on that wall.

THE CAGES

Each cage is made of a different metal: iron, bronze, brass, copper, gold, and silver, and each has a warding spell on it that affects neutral good creatures. Each cage is a very powerful magical prison, capable of holding a single victim in a magically preserved and miniaturized state (physically disturbing the creature releases them from the magic). Three are empty, save for some dust.

The ward is the equivalent of an antipathy *spell, DC 20 Wisdom save.*

Dread wraiths have wraith stats, with 120 hp and advantage on attacks and saves.

If freed, Meruk the solar would be lauded among all the angelic hosts (or at least among those in the world, the Malkuth), for unlike Bastion and Averon, he resisted the temptations and corruptions of the Dread One.

Meruk the Solar: *currently 1 hp, all ability scores are 1, and he cannot use any of his magical abilities.*

Nalachoserithis, ancient gold dragon: *546 hp*

It is a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw to resist the dragon soul's possession attempt.

Eruliche (in her current, weakened form) has empyrean stats; alignment chaotic neutral.

The entrapping spell is a 9th-level effect and can be broken with dispel evil and good, dispel magic, *or similar effects.*

Ni-Gorth, page 73

Bastion and the Malificite, page 489

For more on Bastion—now called the Malificite—see The Banewarrens *adventure (see page 11).*

Father Claw, page 72

House Dallimothan, page 94

The mirrors are mirrors of life trapping.

Muwal the oni: *110 hp*

Elder air elemental: *200 hp*

"Lyaele," doppelganger: *52 hp*

Erreshifal, half-dragon veteran: *65 hp; alignment neutral evil*

Wilhemara, cloud giant: *200 hp; alignment neutral good*

Haurt the troll: *110 hp*

Queen Doril the Elder has deadly warrior stats (page 607), with Athletics +8, Deception +8, Persuasion +8; alignment lawful good.

Queen Doril the Younger has deadly warrior stats (page 607), with Athletics +8, Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Perception +6; alignment lawful evil.

The copper cage holds the skeleton of a tiny, bird-headed woman, a now-dead cosmic entity once imprisoned by the Dread One.

The gold cage contains a small, green-skinned man with feathered wings who—although alive—appears on the brink of starvation and dehydration. He does not respond to any stimuli. He is Meruk, once a powerful angelic being known as a solar. (Normally, the imprisoning spell does not require the victim to eat, drink, or breathe, but the Dread One's cruel magic enforced an eternal condition of deprivation upon him.)

The silver cage holds what looks like a roughly carved clenched human fist of stone. The fist is a magically transformed being named Eruliche. The metamorphosis, in addition to the binding spell, was necessary to hold her because of her great power—she is, in fact, a demigoddess, the child and heir of Ni-Gorth.

Opening the door of any of the cages frees the victim within, assuming they are still alive.

Meruk's debilitated condition persists even after he is freed; he is incoherent until he receives restoration and healing, after which point he becomes extremely grateful to his rescuers. He was an ally of Danar's; when the onetime cleric became the Dread One, he imprisoned the angel here after failing to corrupt him (unlike Meruk's friend and half-brother, the planetar once known as Bastion, but now known as the Malificite). He asks about Bastion; if the PCs don't know the other angel's whereabouts, Meruk likely will leave soon to find his companion, promising to reward the PCs when he can (he will do so in a major fashion—the details are up to the GM).

Eruliche is more difficult to free; the entrapping spell on the stony fist must first be broken. Once freed, she appears as a massive humanoid woman of great beauty. Her power remains still diminished; time, acclimation, and perhaps some special actions on her part will allow her to truly resume her mantle of godhood. Eruliche seems very leery of her rescuers, unconvinced that they did not somehow play a role in her imprisonment. Extremely diplomatic characters might be able to get her to aid them with some magic, but that's probably the most she'll do. She is too arrogant to ever truly appreciate the helpful actions of mortals; PCs who demand that she act more grateful could make her very angry.

THE GOLDEN SPARK

The jar on the shelf resembles another type of magical binding prison. The golden spark is in fact the soul of the gold dragon whose bones fill the chamber. Opening or breaking the jar frees the soul, and it immediately attempts to possess the creature who freed it, which forces the possessed creature's soul into the jar. The dragon, Nalachoserithis, really wants its own body back, however, and immediately attempts to slay the body it inhabits so it can be free to leap into its own corpse; if the creature resists the possession attempt or is slain, the dragon's soul goes into its skeleton and rapidly transforms back into a living gold dragon.

In any event, Nalachoserithis hardly notices any characters present, let alone the fact that they just freed him. He teleports away almost immediately using his innate magical ability. Nalachoserithis, traditionally an ancient enemy of Father Claw, goes to discover how fares his foe and their respective forces. (Unfortunately, the dragon's servants and allies are, of course, long gone, and all note of him has been lost except in the most obscure of history texts. Once he learns this, he attempts to reestablish his power base, perhaps by usurping House Dallimothan.)

THE MIRRORS

Both of the mirrors on the east wall are magical items that can trap creatures in stasis. Each has a few souls trapped within it.

One mirror holds Muwal, an ogre mage who was a prince millennia ago; an elder air elemental; a doppelganger that had been impersonating a Lunas elf princess named Lyaele; and a half-dragon warrior named Erreshifal (a scion of Father Claw).

The other mirror holds a cloud giant queen named Wilhemara; a troll chieftain named Haurt; and two dwarf queens, Doril the Elder and her devious sister.

The two dwarves are part of the now-lost Earthsinger overclan. In fact, it was the loss of these queens that eventually led the overclan to die out thousands of years ago. Each woman is lovely and quite capable. Doril the Elder is the rightful ruler of all Earthsinger dwarves, so Doril the Younger would like to be freed without her sister. Neither realizes that they are

the last two Earthsinger dwarves in the world.

Of all these prisoners, Muwal, Erreshifal, Haurt, and the air elemental are likely to attack anyone who frees them. The doppelganger continues its deception as long as possible, and Wilhemara is grateful, swearing eternal fealty to her rescuers. Doril the Elder is also grateful, but demands to be taken to her dwarven homeland as soon as possible (however, it no longer exists). Doril the Younger pretends to be her sister (and thus the heir to the throne) and does whatever she can to prevent her sister from being freed, even going so far as to claim that her sister is an evil impostor.

SUBLEVEL 2: DREAD ONE'S PATH

This sublevel is not on the map. It is an extradimensional area created by Eslathagos Malkith as a means to claw his way out of this plane as he sought a powerful artifact called the *antithesis stone* (he found the stone but failed to break out of the confines of this plane). The area serves as a lair for a creature called the Malificite, a powerful angel perverted to evil by the Dread One.

For more information, see *The Banewarrens* adventure (see page 11).

SUBLEVEL 3: THE BANEHEART

This sublevel is not on the map—and actually, calling it a sublevel is a misnomer. The Baneheart (also called Tremoc Korin) is a shaft 100 feet wide that extends down the length of the Spire. Its presence proves that space folds in upon itself within the Spire, as the shaft does not join up with the chamber of the Entropy Sphere. The Baneheart connects to the rest of the Banewarrens. For more information, see *The Banewarrens* adventure.

JABEL SHAMMAR SCENARIOS

Exploring the most (in)famous location in the world might be incentive enough to some characters. However, there are other reasons to face its dangers. Here are just a few.

SOMETHING STIRS ONCE AGAIN

A venerable elf, known for being extremely sensitive and a bit of a seer, engages in a public match of Gold Dragonscales. In the course of the game, he uses the scales to spell out the message, "Something stirs, once again, in Jabel Shammar" and then he passes away of old age. He refers to the growing power of the Malignancy, something he was too afraid to ever mention aloud, but which he wanted to warn others of before he passed.

The danger—and the irony—of such a mission is that the only way to stop the Malignancy is to go to Jabel Shammar and destroy the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. But anyone who enters the fortress risks corruption by the Malignancy, which would only increase its power and hasten the danger.

RECOVER PARNAITH'S HEART

The player characters face the culmination of a long quest: to gain access to an important sealed location, to create a powerful artifact of good, to summon a god, or some other monumental task. They discover that to finish what they set out to do, they need an artifact called *Parnaith's Heart*. It's not her literal heart, but an item she created to fight the growing evil she saw in her husband (which failed, obviously). Research into ancient texts reveals that the object still lies within Jabel Shammar.

RESCUE THE DWARVEN QUEEN

Ancient records found in Dwarvenhearth reveal that a queen of old, long thought slain by demons, was in fact imprisoned by the Dread One in Jabel Shammar. Dreams haunting the sleep of dwarves everywhere suggest that Doril the Elder is still alive and, if rescued and returned to power, could lead the dwarves scattered across the world to unity and a renewed destiny. If a way into Jabel Shammar exists, the dwarves would repay Doril's rescuers with incredible treasures only they could grant.

DESTROY THE SIGNET OF SHALLAMOTH KINDRED

In his examination of the *Signet of Shallamoth Kindred*, the Iron Mage determines that only immersing it in the heart of darkness—which he determines to be the soul of the Dread One—will destroy it. Not wishing to brave the dangers of Jabel Shammar, he attempts to convince the player characters to go there, find the Sombrous Sepulcher, and place the signet within.

WRAPPING UP AN ADVENTURE IN JABEL SHAMMAR

If characters go to Jabel Shammar with the idea of cleansing it of its evil, the job is almost certainly too big for them. Even the Elder Gods could do no better than to seal it off. Destroying the Malignancy should be enough for heroes with even the loftiest of ideals. Jabel Shammar is sure to be a blight upon the world forevermore and, given time, may pose further threats.

Rescuing Queen Doril (either one, or both) and bringing her to the world could greatly alter the entire culture of dwarves. Once the queen(s) get an idea of the current situation facing the clans, they likely would attempt to rally the Stonelost dwarves—perhaps even renaming them Earthsingers—and move to reclaim Dwarvenhearth. Many Stonelost dwarves would see their return as a sign of a new dwarven age and would be willing to accept that Doril's leadership makes them once again worthy of their ancestral home.

Parnaith's Heart, *page 641*

Entropy Sphere, page 463

The Hidden Prisoners

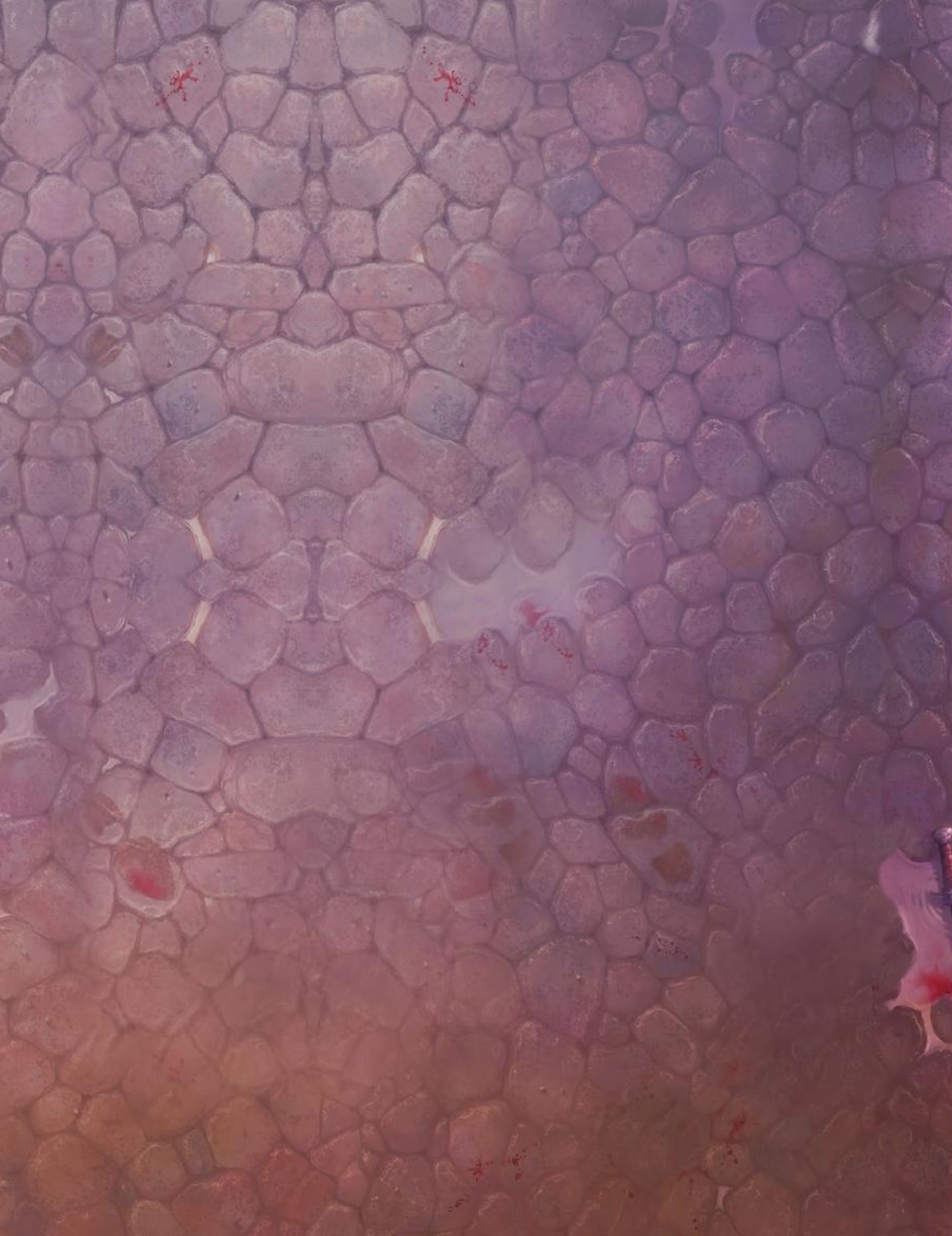
The Hidden Prison in the dungeons of Jabel Shammar (see page 493) is full of characters of historical importance: a demigoddess, the son of Father Claw, an ancient gold dragon, and other rulers and individuals of significance. Any of them could become the object of a quest into Jabel Shammar.

Signet of Shallamoth Kindred, *page 423*

Iron Mage, page 316

Sombrous Sepulcher, page 490

Gold Dragonscales, page 333



PART VI:
LIVING IN PTOLUS

Even after all of the places have been detailed and the people described, there's still more to consider about the city of Ptolus—what is it like to live there? What's the typical home like, what do people do for entertainment, and what kinds of tools do they use? The following chapters give the reader an idea of what it's like to walk the streets of Ptolus.

In part VI, you will learn what life is like for an average Ptolusite. You'll also get a feel for the life of a common adventurer in the city, and how it's different from living elsewhere. One chapter explores the extensive and complicated topic of Imperial law, offering you an idea of what is and isn't legal and how the authorities deal with crime. Another chapter discusses scientific wonders, including firearms, clocks, printing presses, and more. And from there we move on to a brief look at chaositech, the evil twin of technology.

Chapter 26: On Being a Resident. 498
Chapter 27: On Being a Delver 507
Chapter 28: Crime and the Law 511
Chapter 29: Technology. 521
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Chapter 26:

ON BEING A RESIDENT

How much does my rent cost each month? What do I wear to the market? What is the current news of the day? These are all questions that we can answer easily for ourselves in modern-day life. But when we're asking them of our characters in a Ptolus Campaign, the answers seem a bit more elusive.

Except for Tarsis itself, more people move to Ptolus each year than to any other city in the Empire.

This chapter describes what life is like for the most common resident of Ptolus: a human of lower middle class who is likely married with a small family. It explores issues of home, work, gender, religion, and the cost of living. To see life, and the city, through the eyes of such a character, this chapter has been written in the second person.

WHERE YOU LIVE

You probably live in a two-room flat in a two- or three-story building that contains six or eight such flats. It has at least one glass window that opens on a hinge, with a latch. The door into your home locks. Your kitchen has a hand-cranked pump that draws water through a pipe into a basin. The basin has a stoppered hole that drains down into the sewer, as does your garderobe, which also has a cover to keep out unwanted odors and rats.

It is held that every home develops a spirit, sometimes called a luritas. *For details on house gifts, see page 30.*

Door lock: *DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to open*

Your furniture is wooden and handmade. Some of it likely has nice decorative work, while other pieces are crude but functional. Your home probably has a table or two, at least one chair for everyone in the household, and a bench. You light the place with candles and an oil lamp. You have one or perhaps two fireplaces for warmth, and you might have a coal-burning stove. At night you sleep in a bed with a mattress stuffed with straw or cloth, and you likely share that bed with at least one other person—in a family home with three children, it's common to have two beds: one for the parents and one for the children.

Broadsheets, page 157

You decorate your home with a shelf of curios and mementos above the fireplace, and perhaps a few simple decorative cloth hangings on the walls. You might have a painting, likely a portrait of an elderly relative. Next to the main door is a small shelf for keeping house gifts.

You can read, at least slowly and simply. You own a few books—likely a holy book or two (depending on your religion), a primer for the children, and maybe a family record book or a book of poetry or love sonnets. Most of your reading skills are used on the various broadsheets published in the city.

For sample floor plans of Ptolus homes, see pages 187, 321, and 322.

You also own a set of ceramic dishes, a number of wooden or ceramic mugs, some kitchen knives and other utensils, some wooden spoons, a few large iron pots, a washtub, two basins, a ewer, a mirror, a comb, a brush, plenty of soap, other miscellaneous toiletries, a wooden chest (maybe with a lock), a wardrobe, many blankets, pillows, a number of barrels and crates (mostly for storing food, kept in a loft), a couple of buckets, a few rugs and tablecloths, some towels and rags, a quill pen and ink, a few

pieces of paper, chalk and a slate, oil for your lamp, and at least a week's worth of food for the household (and more of certain staple foods, like flour). If you have children, you likely have a few toys and entertainments for them as well. You might own a musical instrument and a game or two (some dice, Dragonscales, or cards). You probably own simple tools, like a mallet, an awl or chisel, a saw, a good knife or handaxe, and perhaps tongs. You might own a dagger, but it's more likely that the only weapon you own is a club.

In the window(s), you keep a box of soil where you grow a few plants—probably for food, but maybe flowers. You use some of the household waste as fertilizer. There's a hefty fine for throwing your trash and waste out the window, so you dump it down one of the pipes that leads into the sewer instead (those pipes frequently get clogged, and you are responsible for clearing them).

Dragonscales, page 333

Although you keep it covered, the garderobe has a bad odor, so it is located far from where you keep the food and where you eat. Instead, it's located near where you hang your clothing, since the smell keeps away moths.

WHAT YOU WEAR

If you're a man, you typically wear a linen shirt that ties in the front and sturdy woolen breeches or trousers. If you work in a shop, you probably wear a colored vest with buttons, or perhaps a laced doublet. If you are a laborer, a coarse woolen tunic probably goes over the shirt. With the rain and wind common in the region, many people wear cloaks outside, but if you're at all fashion conscious and can afford it, you wear a coat with a lapel and buttons instead. Men wearing cloaks are often assumed to be out-of-towners. Hats are also quite common, likely with a brim to keep the rain off your face. At night you wear a long nightshirt to bed, even in summer. Most likely you own two or three shirts, but only one of everything else. Most of what you have has been patched more than once.

You own a pair of sturdy leather boots, woolen socks, and maybe soft cloth slippers.

You wear your hair shoulder length and (if you're human) you keep your face clean shaven. Since it can be a fairly long time between baths, you sometimes wear cologne—unless you're a laborer, in which case you usually don't bother.

If you're a woman, you probably wear a long kirtle with an apron and a kerchief on your head. You likely own a single nice dress with a wide skirt that you save for special occasions. Wearing a hat with a veil in the back is fashionable, although more and more women are going out with no head covering at all these days. Outside, a hooded cloak of dyed wool is often needed to keep out the cold and rain. It's not common for women to wear men's clothing—a shirt, tunic and breeches, for example—but it's not unheard of, either, particularly among women who work at hard physical labor in a workshop or elsewhere. At night you wear a long linen nightgown. You likely also own a robe, a shawl, and a scarf or two.

You wear cloth slippers inside and wooden-soled leather shoes outside.

You wear your hair long but tied, bound, or braided to keep it manageable when you're working. On special occasions you use cosmetics and perfumes. These are expensive, though, so you need to be frugal with them.

If you are another gender, you might favor the clothing that men wear or that women wear, or mix and match from different sources (such as a vest and trousers with a kerchief, or a skirt, tunic, and a hat with a brim). If you are wealthy, you might invent your own style of clothing, but most people can't afford to do so and stick to clothing that men and women wear.

HOW YOU LIVE

You likely eat most of your meals at home—a light breakfast in the morning and a hefty dinner at night. During the day, you take a break for lunch, but it's generally only a cup or two of tea or coffee with maybe a hard roll to dunk in it. A midday meal is for the rich.

Both men and women smoke tobacco of various types. Cigarillos are held in long, lightly filtered holders, while thick cigars are smoked directly. Pipes are usual among commoners of any gender, with women's pipes often being small and ornamental.

You work long hours—usually six days a week, although if you run your own shop you likely work every day. There's always a great deal of work at home too: caring for the children, mending clothing, cleaning, and so forth. In your limited free time, you visit with

The wealthy eat with utensils made of silver and are the only class of Ptolusite to use forks.

friends and family, play games, or listen to your neighbor play the fiddle, the gittern, the flute, or the hurdy-gurdy. If you're athletic, you might get together with others for some sport from time to time, like wrestling or a ball game. Only on rare occasions do you go down to the tavern for a drink, although you and the neighbors frequently have homemade ale in the evenings. You almost never eat in a pub or restaurant, but occasionally you buy sweets, baked goods, or cooked meat on a stick from a street vendor.

For details on the food the common person eats, see Eating in Ptolus, page 282.

On holidays and special festivals (often organized by your church), you enjoy special meals and activities.

Some of the best diversions of the year for common folk occur at the Godsday Festival and Tournament, described in Chapter 17: Temple District, page 343. For other festivals, see Customs in Chapter 1: A Player's Guide to Ptolus, page 29.

When you or someone in your family is sick, you can't afford to go to a cleric for a healing spell. Instead, you rely on home remedies that you learned from your parents, and if that won't do, you go to a physicker or an herbalist. It might cost you a week's wages or more, but when you're sick, you're sick.

You try to keep yourself fresh and clean, but you get a real bath only once a week, at best.

THE CITY IN WHICH YOU LIVE

Although the city is full of all different species, you probably live in a neighborhood made up mostly of residents of the same species as yourself. You see members of other species in the market and on the street frequently, however. Some people harbor prejudices about one species or another, but considering all the differences, the various species live together in relative harmony.

Administration Building, page 291

Vock Row, page 309

Most of the time, you stay in your own district of the city, traveling to one of the two markets (if you don't already live there) perhaps once a week. You probably have never been to the Nobles' Quarter unless your job required it. If you did go there, you felt uncomfortable because it seemed as though everyone was watching you, expecting you to do something bad. It seems at times that you have more in common with the folk of other species than with the noble or extremely wealthy members of your own.

Occasionally, the law requires that you go to one of the government buildings in Oldtown to get a license or permit or register for some new tax. Imperial bureaucracy can be trying sometimes. A trip to the Administration Building often requires a full day of standing in lines and filling out forms. On the way there, though, you might make a point of passing through Vock Row, on the chance you'll see a wizard doing something interesting.

You probably consider magic and spells fascinating but strange. It's certainly nothing to

believe or disbelieve in—magic's demonstrably as real and true as gravity and the cycle of night and day. You likely don't enjoy many of its wonders and advantages, however; it's just rare enough to be beyond your means. You may know someone who has a torch in their home that never burns out, or someone who has spent their life's savings on a miraculous cure from a priest in the Temple District. And you see the evidence of magic almost every day—a wizard flies overhead, a cleric heals someone who is hurt, or an adventurer walks down the street carrying a glowing sword or with strange magic bits orbiting their head. Magic is clearly real—you'd never question that. It's just expensive.

MONETARY ISSUES

Speaking of life's savings, you likely have little or no savings; you earn just enough to pay for what you and your family need to live, with perhaps a bit more to splurge occasionally. Perhaps you buy a nice turkey or goose for dinner on Godsday, or some small gifts for the children on their birthdays. If you've got anything approaching savings, it comes in the form of an old gold ring, locket, or other heirloom handed down by your family.

You receive a visit from the tax collector three times a year, with the visits usually spaced equally apart, although the times differ for everyone. On each visit, an average citizen pays ten silver coins—that's ten shinies per adult, not per family. The tax collector can instead choose to assess the value of your current wealth and levy a tax upon you of 3 percent of the total on each visit, but you don't own enough to have to worry about that.

Noncitizens do not pay taxes. However, at any time, virtually any government official can demand one silver shield from a noncitizen as an Imperial services levy, if the noncitizen has spent the previous week in the bounds of the Empire (which is, according to the Empire, everywhere). Technically, a noncitizen needs to pay this only once per week, but since there is no way to prove that one has already paid the levy, someone without citizenship papers could get charged over and over. This isn't

Citizenship, page 512

Platinum Imperial coins are dragons and gold pieces are thrones. Silver pieces are shields (although slang terms include "shinies" and "moons"). Copper pieces are pennies (also known as "jennies," "bobs," or "jacks"). For more on Imperial money and the currency in Ptolus, see The Economy, page 145.

Godsday, page 364

Citizenship papers: see the packet

THE COST OF LIVING

Living in Ptolus is a costly venture. The price of necessities, not to mention luxuries, is high. For most items, use the prices in the main game sourcebook. The only alterations to those prices are as follows:

Item	Price
Spyglass	200 gp
Water clock	150 gp

OWNING AND RENTING PROPERTY

Most people who live in houses do not own them—they rent. Wealthy landholders and investors own most local residential and other buildings. Here's a rundown of the rent in Ptolus.

Residence*	Size	Rent/Month**
Apartment/flat	1 room	5 sp
Apartment/flat	2 rooms	1 gp
Apartment/flat	3–4 rooms	5 gp
House	Small	3 gp
House	Medium	10 gp
House	Large	50 gp+

* Of average quality.

** Triple the normal rent for the Nobles' Quarter. Halve it for the Warrens; many residents of the Warrens are squatters, however.

Many fortunate Ptolusites who do own their homes inherited them. See Chapter 10: Midtown (page 187) and Chapter 15: Rivergate District (pages 321–322) for maps of typical Ptolus houses that you can adapt for your campaign. The table below shows the purchase price of a typical house, by district:

District	Price
Docks	500 gp
Guildsman District	3,000 gp
Midtown	5,000 gp
Necropolis*	N/A
Nobles' Quarter	50,000 gp
North Market	5,000 gp
Oldtown	10,000 gp
Rivergate District	8,000 gp
South Market	6,000 gp
Temple District	9,000 gp
Warrens**	N/A

* Prices for burial in the Necropolis are in the table under Other Expenses.

** The availability of squatting opportunities means the Warrens is not a viable real estate market.

Many residents in Ptolus live in the same district in which they work, but that is by no means always the case. Shopkeepers who live above their stores may either own or rent the building.

OTHER EXPENSES

Ptolus offers unusual goods that some player characters may want to purchase and various services they may want to take advantage of. These appear in the table below. (Also see Chapter 29: Technology for additional goods one can purchase in Ptolus.)

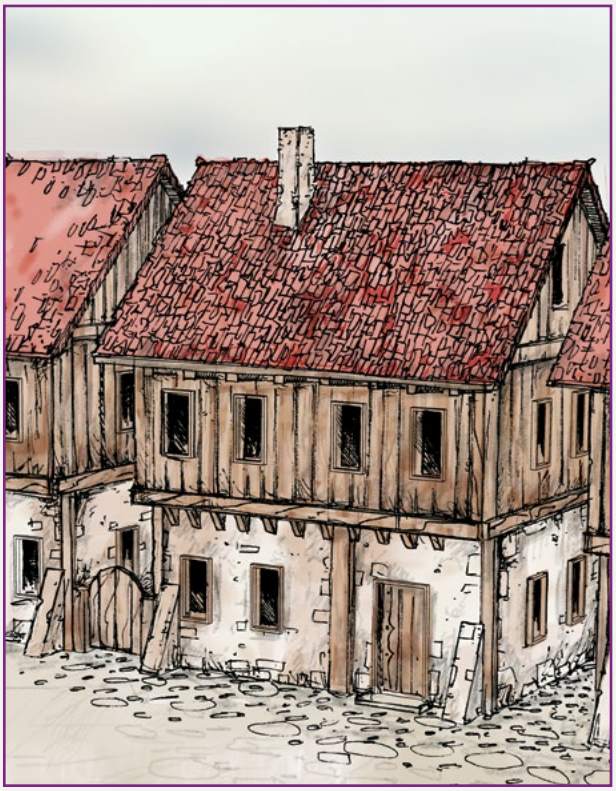
Goods/Service	Price	Notes
Messenger	1 sp	To anywhere in the city
Carriage ride	1 sp	To anywhere in the city
Bath	1 cp	—
Shave/haircut	1 cp	—
Massage	2 cp	—
Furnishings (one room)		
Expensive	800 gp+	—
Average	100 gp	—
Poor	15 gp	—
Taxidermy services	10–500 gp	—
Custom tailoring	5–50 gp	—
Custom armor enhancement	100–500 gp+	—
Custom weapon enhancement	20–200 gp+	—
Personal taxes	3 gp/year	Or 9% of total wealth/year
Leather coat (armor)	200 gp	
Burial (Necropolis)		
Common grave	1 sp	—
Headstone	5 gp	—
Individual plot	10 gp	—
Expensive crypt	500 gp	—
Mausoleum	5,000 gp	—

UPKEEP COSTS

One easy way to handle living expenses in a Ptolus Campaign is to have each player character pay a monthly upkeep cost. This is the amount the character spends on accommodations, food, drink, clothing, and items each month. It does not include the cost of adventuring gear, magic items, bribes, and so forth. The amount is paid on a regular basis (such as the first of each month), although it's assumed that the PC spends the money over the course of the entire month.

Upkeep costs are determined by the player, not the GM, based on how the player wants the character to live (assuming

A leather coat is medium armor, AC 13 + Dex modifier (max 2), Strength —, Stealth —, weight 20 lbs.



funds are available to maintain the desired lifestyle). GMs may wish to play out the details of dramatic changes in upkeep costs. Someone going from a poor to a high lifestyle has to move and spend a few days buying new things. Someone going from a luxurious lifestyle to an average one has to move, fire their servants, and so forth. To maintain realism, GMs should disallow dramatic changes in upkeep costs from month to month. It's unlikely someone could live a poor lifestyle one month, a high lifestyle the next, and a meager one the month after that. (It's possible, however. An adventurer might score a major haul and then blow it on wine, companionship, and song in a single month—although the character will end up looking like a fool who can't handle their money.)

Lifestyle	Upkeep/Month
Subsistence	2 gp
Meager	3–5 gp
Poor	6–10 gp
Average	11–20 gp
Good	21–50 gp
High	51–100 gp
Luxurious	101+ gp

Subsistence

This is the amount of money required simply to stay alive. It assumes living either in a very cheap abode (probably shared with others), on the streets, or in a place like the Mane (see page 190). Unless the character has access to free food (including food grown in a garden), all they eat is potatoes, broth, and bread. They never eat in restaurants or pubs, virtually never drink in taverns, and have no luxuries. They wear shabby, dirty clothes (probably covered in patches and mending) and rarely bathe. Either this character lives in the Warrens (or the really poor parts of the Guildsman District or Midtown), or people just assume that they do.

Meager

This is the lifestyle of the common laborer in Ptolus. The character lives in a one-room apartment, eats poorly, and drinks only cheap, watery ale at low-class taverns. They probably get a new article of clothing once a year, so what they wear is often tattered and stained.

Poor

The character lives comfortably, but completely without luxury. Meals are simple, but they don't go hungry and can afford a mug or two of ale regularly. The character's clothing is simple, but not shabby or dirty.

Average

This is a middle-class lifestyle. The character has a decent place to live, perhaps with more than one room. They eat fairly well, occasionally dining in restaurants or pubs. They can afford to indulge in extravagances such as decent wine, the occasional new clothing item, or even a bit of jewelry.

Good

The character lives very well. Their rented house or apartment has multiple rooms, and they dine on quality food at every meal. The character can adopt an expensive habit, such as fine wines, perfumes, gambling, or fancy clothing, but they still need to be mindful of the price of things.

High

The character lives in a large house with expensive furniture and silk sheets on the beds. They eat fine foods, drink quality beverages, and wear fashionable clothing. Perfumes, jewelry, and expensive tobaccos are just some of the luxuries the character can afford. They might even have a servant or two.

Luxurious

If the character sees something they want, they buy it. No extravagance is too great. They take every meal at a fine restaurant or an elegant dinner party. Their wardrobes overflow with articles of expensive clothing, and they wear jewelry and high-priced cologne at all times. This character almost certainly employs a personal servant (or a staff) to look after their home and possessions. They almost certainly live in the Nobles' Quarter.

Chaos cults, page 75

fair, but there's not much you can do about it, particularly if you're a noncitizen.

The most common profession is simply "laborer," which, of course, means many things. A laborer might work the bellows for a blacksmith, move cargo on the Docks or in a warehouse, deliver goods to homes or businesses, tote construction materials for a master carpenter, dig foundations, or do a hundred other menial tasks that require little training or skill—just a strong arm.

If you're lucky, you might have a job that is less strenuous and pays better, like working as a clerk in a shop, as a construction worker, or as a real craftsman. You may not belong to a guild, but you know how powerful they are in controlling the economics of the city, the welfare of the workers (including yourself, most likely), and other issues.

Guilds, page 113

Rivals to the Imperial Throne, page 91

RELIGIOUS ISSUES

It's likely that religion plays some role in your life. If you're a Lothianite, like most people in the city, you probably attend services on Theoday. Being that you're not of the higher classes, the service you attend is most likely in the afternoon or evening.

Commissar, page 140

City Council, page 140

No matter what your religion, though, you just don't have much time in your daily life to think about things like gods, religions, and the afterlife. It's easier to let the priests worry about that for you, and just do what you're told as much as you're able.

That said, you have little doubt that the gods exist. It's comforting to know that there are powers even higher than the nobles and the wealthy. Even the Iron Mage will have to answer to the gods someday, right? There's talk today of new religions worming their way into the city; although you wouldn't even try to account for all of them, these new faiths are different, or so folks say. Word on the street is that these chaos cults are interested in destruction and mayhem. That sounds horrid to you, of course—although you have to admit, things get so frustrating some days that you wouldn't mind seeing this city in flames. It would serve them right, in fact. You don't want to hurt anyone, but you can see how someone could get pushed just too far. . . .

Iron Mage, page 316

Republican movement, page 142

When others talk of good and evil, those are concepts you can identify with—it all seems pretty obvious. But when someone starts in about law and chaos, that's a bit too esoteric for your tastes. Let the clerics and philosophers worry about that kind of thing.

POLITICAL ISSUES

Today, three different people claim the Imperial Throne, but is one of them really any different from the others as far as you're concerned? It seems unlikely. It's difficult enough to keep abreast of city politics, let alone Imperial tangles.

You probably like the Commissar. He has a reputation as a war hero and a good civic leader. Unlike some commissars of the past, he seems interested in what the people want. Nevertheless, you still refer to the City Council as the "Council of Coin." As always, it's the rich that rule over the poor, and they make sure that they stay rich while you stay poor. At least you don't have it as bad as the folks who live outside the city. You've heard about how they live: digging in the mud for their dinner and living in terrible, dirty little shacks. That's what you think of country life, anyway.

You've probably heard of the so-called republican movement. Talk of such things goes hand in hand with discussion of whether Ptolus should break away from the Empire. Such talk surprises you; in your grandparents'

GENDER IN PTOLUS

Generally speaking, all genders are treated more or less equally under the law of the Empire, unlike localized governments of the past or those in some far-off lands. People of any gender can own property, hold titles, and own weapons and other items. They are also treated equally when accused of a crime (see Chapter 28: Crime and the Law).

The truth is, among the common species, there is nothing to keep a person of any gender from becoming a skilled fighter, wizard, merchant, or accountant. Still, about 75 percent of all outside-the-home occupations are filled by men, simply because so many married women stay home to care for their children.

GENDER TERMINOLOGY

It is not uncommon for locals to use gender-specific terms for general things. For example, sometimes lizardfolk (assarai) are referred to as lizardmen. Even the Guilds*man* District suggests this nomenclature bias, a holdover from a much earlier time. Most non-male people in Ptolus (and throughout the Empire) have seized the opportunity and adopted such terms as gender-neutral terms. A "man at arms" does not imply a male mercenary, for example, and most people of all genders don't balk at being a City Watchman or a City Councilman. Similarly, a female sorcerer is (usually) a "sorcerer," not a "sorceress."

Still, some gender-specific terms remain offensive. For instance, no woman with any self-respect likes being referred to as a "wench" or by similar terms.

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

All the major species share similar beliefs involving marriage. Within the traditional family unit, the man is usually expected to earn most of the money, because the woman traditionally cares for the home and children. There are plenty of exceptions, however—so many as to make them not even particularly notable. Further, even as they care for the children, many women also contribute to the family's financial well-being by growing vegetables, sewing, taking in wash, or doing other at-home duties. And of course, if the family business is indeed in the home (or vice versa), the female parent may take an equal or greater role. Many shopkeepers and artisans, for example, live in the back of their stores or above their workshops with their families. In such cases, either the man or the woman, or both, tends to the business.

Legally, the Empire recognizes that parents are entirely responsible for the upbringing and welfare of their children. They are also responsible for their children's actions. This means that if a young child commits a crime, the parent faces the punishment—even if that punishment is imprisonment or death.

All children attend formalized school from around age six to at least age ten. There they learn the basics of reading (Imperial Common), math, and history. The only exception to this is in small villages where no school or teachers are available. In Ptolus, only the very poorest children do not attend school. Residential districts like Midtown, Oldtown, Rivergate, and of course the Nobles' Quarter all have many schools for the local children. Such schools are usually run by the Empire, through the auspices of the Church of Lothian. There are cases, however, in which a neighborhood sponsors its own school. This is particularly true in some of Midtown's single-species neighborhoods—there is an elvish school in Emerald Hill, for example—or in the case of an organization sponsoring a school, such as the Shuul's plan for a technical institute (see page 310).

After they finish school, many children as young as age ten go to work, often for a relative. Young children serve as stablehands, messengers, or other assistants. Many go on to become apprentices and learn a trade. Those who do not may become manual laborers. Children who show scholastic aptitude have the opportunity to go to either an advanced school or a trade school until age sixteen. Those who finish the advanced school often go on to university and careers like advocate, physicker, judge, administrator, sage, and so forth. Trade schools teach advanced craftwork or other skills, going beyond that which a typical apprenticeship can grant. Trade schools produce accountants, master crafters, and similar professions.

Sixteen years is the generally accepted age of responsibility, in which a person becomes accountable for their own actions and welfare. However, that's an extremely humanocentric custom. Elves, gnomes, and dwarves are not considered adults by their own custom until at least age twenty, and sometimes as old as twenty-four. (Among their own kind, elves have a custom of the "carefree adult" that lasts from about age twenty until as old as one hundred and ten, although many elves ignore this tradition while living among humans and other species.)

OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

Same-gender relationships (including marriages) are accepted among most species, although the human middle and lower classes discourage the practice—a holdover from older, agrarian societies in which having the maximum number of children possible was considered vital to the survival of the entire society.

In the crowded streets of a place like Ptolus, however, such mores are easily forgotten. Polyamorous relationships and marriages are uncommon, but legal, and most Ptolusites regard them like same-gender relationships.

For details on the celebrations and holidays observed in Ptolus, see the calendar handout in the packet.

More weather, page 153

YOUR PTOLUS WEATHER (AVERAGES)

Month	Temperature (high/low °F)	Precipitation (inches)	Number of Days Clear/Partly Cloudy/Cloudy	Windspeed (mph)	Daylight Hours
Newyear	45/30	5.3	3/5/23	11	7
Birth	48/35	4	3/6/21	11	8
Wind	52/38	3.8	4/8/18	12	10
Rain	58/44	3.5	5/9/17	10	13
Bloom	65/49	2	7/10/15	10	16
Sun	75/56	1	7/8/15	9	19
Growth	73/55	0.8	12/10/9	9	17
Blessing	69/53	1.2	10/10/10	8	16
Toil	60/48	1.9	9/8/13	8	13
Harvest	51/41	3.3	5/8/18	9	10
Moons	48/49	5.7	3/6/21	9	9
Yearsend	46/31	6	3/5/22	10	7

time, discussing such matters would have been almost unthinkable. The Empire is so old, the very thought of not being part of it is strange, although somewhat compelling. The republicans, of course, want to take it a step further and have common folk decide who the rulers should be. That would be great, but it sounds like pure fantasy to you.

Broadsheets, page 157
House Vladaam, page 100
House Sadar, page 98

CURRENT EVENTS

It's obvious that some things in the city are worse than they used to be. There are manufactories in the Guildsman District that no longer produce anything, for example. Fewer people seem to understand how to make some of the more technical devices work. News from elsewhere in the Empire arrives more slowly than when you were a child. The roads outside of town, you've heard, are less safe than in years past.

On the other hand, more gold flows through the city than ever. Those delvers who explore the strange catacombs beneath the city are a dangerous and rough lot, but their activities bring coin into the shops and taverns, which then trickles into everyone's pockets. Of course, along with that comes inflation—prices are higher than they were ten or even five years ago.

Dungeon, page 385

You hear all kinds of stories about the strange things delvers find down there in the Dungeon. Ancient treasures and wonders, to be sure, but odd magic and horrible monsters as well. Is it all linked to the Spire, somehow? Probably. Those unnameable lords that caused so many travails hundreds of years back built their castles up on the Spire, but they burrowed down below it as well. It unnerves you to think about that kind of thing too much. Luckily, the grey clouds so common in the region usually obscure the Spire. Sometimes, you'd rather have a cloudy or rainy day than a clear day with the likes of Jabel Shammar staring down at you from thousands of feet up.

You try to keep up on the news by reading the broadsheets. You don't trust most noble families, but House Vladaam clearly seems to be the worst, and House Sadar is likely up to no good as well. On the other hand, the knightly orders—the Keepers of the Veil, the Knights of the Pale, the Knights of the Chord—these are people you can look up to.

Keepers of the Veil, page 117
Knights of the Pale, page 121
Knights of the Chord, page 120

The city's far from perfect, that's for certain. But there's more good than bad and, more importantly, it's home.

Chapter 27:

ON BEING A DELVER

In recent years, Ptolus has become something of a magnet, drawing in adventurers from across the Empire to venture down into the infamous Dungeon and emerge with a fortune—or at least a few good stories. The lifestyle of the delver is possible nowhere else in the Empire as it is in Ptolus.

This chapter details what life is like for the common adventurer living in Ptolus and illustrates some ways in which a delver's life in the city differs from the experience elsewhere. To see life, and the city, through their eyes, the chapter has been written in the second person.

PTOLUS VS. THE REST OF THE EMPIRE

"Delver" is a term unique to the city of Ptolus. Nowhere else in the world do they refer to adventurers as such. In fact, outside of Ptolus, even the word "adventurer" is used only rarely, most often to denote a mercenary or other freelance explorer or rogue. It's not a complimentary word, and people think poorly of folk such as yourself. To them, you are lawless, uncontrolled, and a danger to society. There are laws to restrict carrying weapons and wearing armor without Imperial permits.

In Ptolus, things are different. Sure, some of the people here don't trust you, and some steer clear of you when you walk down the street—but in the eyes of others, you're a brave hero. They wish they could do the exciting things you do and see the wondrous sights you've seen. Most folks treat you well enough. At the very least, they treat you no worse than any other resident, and in many cases much better, assuming you've got more coin than the commoners. And you probably do.

You don't always help your cause by walking through the city covered in sewage, blood, and grime, but no one's installed bathhouses next to all the Dungeon entrances, so what are you going to do?

Plus, there are more adventurers here than anywhere else. And why not? This is where you come if you want to strike it rich. Surely there are fortunes enough for you and all your friends below Ptolus. And you're brave and bold enough to go down there and take them.

Of course, many people in the city don't fully understand what it is you do. They don't really know what lies beneath their own city. They know about the ratmen and maybe the goblins. They know there are other monsters down there too, as well as undead—particularly in the Necropolis. But they don't really understand what they live above day after day. Not like you do.

And it's likely that, if they did truly understand, most of them would probably want to leave town as fast as possible. So perhaps it's best if nobody tells them.

For important delver information and tips on such issues as buying adventuring gear, selling loot, getting healed, and so on, see the two "Filling Campaign Needs" handouts in the packet.

Ratmen, page 591

HOW YOU LIVE

You probably don't have a family, so you live in a cheap, one-room flat in a two- or three-story building with six or eight such flats. You might share an apartment or small house with friends, as well. You most likely live in Midtown so you can be close to Delver's Square.

You eat most of your meals in pubs and taverns—a light breakfast in the morning and a hefty dinner at night. Obviously, delvers keep their own schedule. Most go on a mission beneath the city (or elsewhere) for a day or two and then relax for a week, living high on the spoils they've brought back with them.

Unless you are a divine spellcaster, you are less likely than the typical citizen to be religious, or at least devout. If you're a Lothianite, you probably attend services at St. Gustav's Chapel off of Delver's Square. The main temple, St. Valien's Cathedral, has made it clear that your kind isn't welcome there.

Dohrinthas, page 46

Tarsis, page 46

Firearm permits, page 516

The Conciliators, a fervent group within the Church of Lothian (see page 71), oppose any exploration of the areas beneath the city, as they fear that delvers will find more chaositech and stir up more ancient evils.

St. Gustav's Chapel, page 206

St. Valien's Cathedral, page 350

WHAT YOU WEAR

While you're exploring beneath the city, you're likely to wear your most protective armor (magical, if you're lucky) and carry around a large selection of weapons for all different situations.

When you're not down in the Dungeon garbed in your delving gear and armor, around town you might wear tough leather breeches, a cotton shirt, and a vest or jacket. This apparel is standard for delvers, regardless of gender.

On the other hand, you might wear around town exactly what you wear in the Dungeon, not caring what you look like (or smell like!). Such adventurers are exactly the people who give their kind a bad name and turn those who dislike delvers even more against them.

Leather coat, page 502

In its effort to impose a salvage tax on treasure that delvers find on their adventures, the Imperial government keeps a tax assayer's table in the Undercity Market, where delvers are instructed to register all of their finds and pay a 10 percent tax. See Taxes in Chapter 28: Crime and the Law (page 516).

The Delver's Guild can be an adventurer's best friend. Membership starts at 10 gp per year, and benefits include access to the guild's substantial catalog of Dungeon information and a 10 percent discount on essential gear at Ebbert's Outfitters. For more on the Guild, see page 108 in Chapter 6: Organizations.

GETTING ALONG IN THE CITY

There are no laws restricting weapon ownership or bearing arms within Ptolus, unlike in other large cities such as Dohrinthas or Tarsis. (The exception is that you need a permit to carry a firearm.) That said, if you go into a restaurant for a meal or to a guildhall to talk with the guildmaster, and you're carrying two swords, a crossbow, two quivers of bolts, a spear, and two daggers, as well as a full pack of gear, six torches, a 10-foot pole, and a hefty sack of miscellaneous equipment, you'll get some strange looks. In fact, you'll look quite the fool, and other adventurers will mock you. The classy adventurer casually going about town carries a weapon or two, but just their best. Either that, or you get very good at concealing your weapons and gear.

If you wear armor, you might very well wear it around the city. There's no prohibition against it, and plenty of people do. However, if you can afford it, you might opt for a chain shirt or a leather coat rather than wearing your heavy armor as you hang about the tavern drinking with your friends or conduct research in the library. It's more comfortable, and it doesn't slow you down.

Most people who own horses, even knights and paladins, stable them for their entire stay in the city. Only the main roads can easily accommodate people on horseback, and in many places a mount will slow you down rather than improve your speed. Most delvers don't own horses or other mounts, as they never need them in the city, and have no plans to leave anytime soon.

Enough adventurers have animal companions that people in Ptolus have grown accustomed to them. The sight of a bear or wolf at the side of a capable-looking individual draws attention, but not alarm.

THE CULT OF HEROISM

Some adventurers rise above their lowly station to gain reputations as heroes (and the fact that such heroes often have gained great wealth in the process doesn't hurt). Heroes in Ptolus are celebrated. No better evidence is needed than the statue of Abesh Runihan in Delver's Square (which is technically called Runihan Square), erected as a tribute to the hero who died defeating the ghost-lich Kagrisos. If word gets around that a group of delvers performed a heroic deed, even unintentionally, people around town may think well of them. Depending on the specific deed, the likability of the characters, and the mood of the city, this "fame" could mean anything from a few pats on the back to a few drinks on the house at a tavern to a parade around Delver's Square.

Why has Ptolus always respected its heroes? Maybe it's because the history of the region shows that it has always needed them. Although there were armies, generals, and perhaps even gods involved, it was a stalwart band of heroes that brought down the Dread One. Likewise, the Great Seven finished off Ghul, the Skull-King. Common folk may not know much about history, but most of them are aware that they owe a great deal to heroes such as these. And who are they to say that the adventurer they pass on the street isn't about to become a hero just like them?

WHAT THE OTHERS THINK

While there are more adventurers in Ptolus than anywhere else, the non-adventurers outnumber you by at least two hundred to one.

COMMON FOLK

Adventurers are not unknown to the people of Ptolus. However, most commoners look upon them as dangerous individuals. Folk who carry more weapons than a soldier, wield all manner of strange powers, and earn their keep by fighting monsters are best avoided, they think. Oh, the shopkeepers and tavern owners are usually happy to take your gold, but how many of them are willing to strike up a genial conversation with you? Not many. Of course, you probably prefer it that way: you don't bother them, and they don't bother you. Plus, you know that a lot of delvers *aren't* trustworthy and would slit their own grandmothers' throats for a couple of silver moons.

It's best not to spook the locals—although you're constantly surprised at how hard they are to spook. You expect them to blanch at the sight of a wizard casting spells or a druid talking to her lion in the streets, but they usually don't. They keep their distance and often watch with interest, but in Ptolus, it seems, they've probably seen stranger things.

THE AUTHORITIES

It may go without saying, but it's best to keep the authorities happy. City Watch guards look at you (and your weapons) suspiciously when they pass by on the street, but you just keep on walking. Relying on the Watch is a sure way to be disappointed—not because they're not capable, and not because they're not trustworthy, but because you frequently get yourself into scrapes that only you or others like you can get out of. The City Watch is there to protect the common folk, not to deal with delver-related problems. They're not eager to help you, and they certainly won't go under the city to take care of a problem you tell them about.

That said, the City Watch and the Commissar's Men are not your enemies, either. Even if you could take on a whole Watch patrol in a fair fight and win, what good could that possibly accomplish? You have learned to use the system, not work against it, just like you've learned that often you've got to fight your own battles and solve your own problems.

You know the laws of the city and avoid breaking them, at least obviously so, as often as you can. You know enough not to use enchantment magic on people in the city, particularly not officials, shopkeepers, or figures

Unless you have a very secure home, rent a vault to store your valuables (see Hammersong Vaults in Oldtown, page 299). Don't carry 500 pp and 3,000 gp around with you. No matter how good you are at securing your coins, some pickpocket is better.

Delver Statistics

It is estimated that for every ten delvers who go down into the Dungeon each week, one does not come back. About a hundred new adventurers come to Ptolus every week, and about twenty-five are raised from the dead. Since the Delver's Guild began keeping records three years ago, about eight thousand adventurers have died permanently while exploring the Dungeon. Another two hundred and thirty have retired, either in the city or elsewhere.

City Watch, page 141

Adventurers can find unique and interesting equipment at Ebbert's Outfitters in Delver's Square (page 192). Some of it is designed by Ebbert himself.

Commissar's Men, page 141

See also Chapter 28: Crime and the Law (page 511).

of importance. You know that when you get into a fight in the city, you need to be able to claim self-defense when someone gets a blade between their ribs.

There are some things that are technically illegal that you know you can get away with as long as the Watch doesn't catch you in the act: breaking and entering, dumping a body in the river, and even murder, if the victim is a known criminal or otherwise obviously dangerous individual. In other words, you know that if you take that sword you wear and use it to deal your own justice now and again, you're not likely to run afoul of the law. And if you do legitimately beat a foe in combat, particularly if the foe attacked you first, the authorities will not look twice if you rifle through the dead foe's purse or take their belongings.

THE ARISTOCRACY AND THE WEALTHY

You have a strange relationship with the wealthy. On one hand, you're a bit worse than the lowest commoner in their eyes. You're not only of low birth, but you willingly delve under the ground and into the sewer, living by the might of sword and spell rather than the rule of law. You're often dirty, scarred, and even bloody. Who knows what kinds of diseases and afflictions you're bringing up with you from down in the Dungeon? On the other hand, you're highly skilled, competent, smart—even dangerous. You might also have a good deal of money. People like you have their uses, the nobles probably think.

Thus, you interact with the nobility and the wealthy far more than the average citizen does. Maybe they want to purchase something you've found on your adventures, or maybe they want to hire you to take care of a problem. Maybe they seek to invest in your missions, staking your expenses for a share of the loot you recover. In either case, the wealthy of the Nobles' District might send a trusted servant to scour Delver's Square looking for the adventurers that their master needs. They even employ agents to hang around places that adventurers frequent with standing orders to purchase some of the interesting treasures the delvers uncover. Some delvers learn what various aristocrats want and venture up to the Nobles' Quarter with their valuables to sell.

AFTER THE DELVING'S DONE

The sad truth is that most delvers die in pursuit of their adventuring goals, and you know it. But you also know that some entirely unsuccessful delvers just quit—they make a little money by selling off their gear, and then they find regular jobs around town.

A few enjoy moderately successful adventuring careers but decide to give it up for one reason or another. They use what money they earned in their missions to start a stake in a business, open up a tavern, and so forth. Such entrepreneurs tend to stay in familiar areas, operating their businesses in the Undercity Market or out of Delver's Square, where they can interact with other adventurers. You appreciate this; most delvers prefer to do business with those who truly understand them. The dwarf Ebbert Boltcrafter of Ebbert's Outfitters is one example—when his brother took one too many blows to the head, he gave up his adventuring career and opened his shop.

Of course, some do get rich and retire, and that's what every delver dreams about: living long enough to retire, usually very wealthy. Sheva Callister is one notable example that you and every other delver in Ptolus knows about. Somewhere in the Dungeon she found an artifact called the *Crown of Ki-Lias* and now, although she's still fairly young, she lives off the proceeds she made from selling it. She never has to adventure or work again. Some retirees use their wealth to live among the rich in the Nobles' Quarter. But most find it difficult to remove themselves so far from their roots. Instead they find nice houses in Oldtown or Midtown. Few can handle the quiet lifestyle of Rivergate or the hustle and bustle of the markets and the Guildsman District.

Some delvers never retire but simply find other ways to use their adventuring skills. Warriors become bodyguards, the castellans of noble estates, or captains of the City Watch. A wizard might not retire but find that they spend less time going on adventures and more time studying and making magic items, until they are no longer really an adventurer at all.

Ebbert's Outfitters, page 192

Sheva Callister, page 208

Ten Things Smart Delvers Know (or Have Learned)

1. Remember that underground you have to think in all three dimensions. The best path might not be the most direct one.

2. The most valuable hauls come from those areas not yet explored by anyone else.

3. Any chamber or passage you stand within may have had multiple inhabitants and uses over the centuries.

4. Sleeping or resting below the city is dangerous, but often necessary. Spike the doors and post a guard.

5. Doors that look like huge gears lead into Dwarvenhearth. A chamber beyond a door of bluish steel likely holds great treasure. An intact glass and bronze door may open up whole new regions to explore.

6. Others have likely gone where you are about to go, and others will go there after you. Research records and maps before you explore. Keep your own records and maps, and sell them when you're done.

7. A membership in the Delver's Guild pays for itself relatively quickly.

8. Monsters and Dungeon natives have an ecology all their own. Understand how it works, and you'll be better off.

9. The Dungeon is vast—any location in the city might hold an entrance.

10. There is safety in numbers.

Chapter 28:

CRIME AND THE LAW

Imperial law is extensive and complicated. This chapter gives GMs an idea of what is and isn't legal, how the authorities deal with crimes, and the various punishments handed down by the courts.

Crime poses probably the greatest problem in Ptolus today. Crime has worsened over the last two decades, most noticeably in the last five years. Many blame the lawlessness encouraged by "delver culture." Others blame the rising power of the city's criminal organizations. The ranks of the Watch increase each year, but the Commissar believes it is better to suffer some controlled amount of crime than to risk open warfare with such formidable forces as the Balacazar family and the Killraven Crime League—or worse yet, both at the same time.

THE LAW

Ptolus operates under Imperial law, which places the Commissar, as the Emperor's representative, as the ultimate judge in all legal affairs. However, the Commissar almost never exercises this privilege, instead allowing the courts to dispense justice in his name. The Commissar's position also makes him the ultimate authority in enforcing the law, which is something he does do, through his administration of the City Watch and his own personal military force known as the Commissar's Men, not to mention the covert Imperial Eyes. In times of serious public disorder, such as a riot or other emergency (a particularly serious fire raging through dozens of buildings, for example), the Commissar takes direct control of the city's forces to deal with it. In fact, he often goes right to the site of the trouble and leads his people in the field, as it were, just like he did when he was a military general years ago.

IMPERIAL LAW

Imperial law is codified within the *Vast Codex*, a series of twenty-three volumes totaling more than twelve thousand pages—over ten thousand discrete laws, regulations, edicts, and codes. This complex system of rules covers specific cases rather than providing general guidelines. Imperial law affords greater rights and freedoms to Imperial citizens than to noncitizens, and greater rights and freedoms to Imperial officials (including priests of Lothian) than to Imperial citizens.

PTOLUS LAW

Thanks to a Commissar who understands the importance of tradition (and its value in keeping the people happy), Ptolus observes some modicum of traditional Palastani law. This means, for example, that members of the nobility are afforded the same privileges under the law as Imperial officials. So are members of the City Council. It also means that occasionally

Typically, a recidivist thief has their forehead branded to warn potential victims. Sometimes a pickpocket has a finger removed, and castration as punishment for serial rapists is standard in the city.

Balacazars, page 102
Killraven Crime League, page 118

City Watch, page 141
Commissar's Men, page 141
Imperial Eyes, page 144
Riot, page 520
Serious fire, page 520
City Council, page 140

criminals are branded or even mutilated as part of their punishment, even though such sentences are not part of the *Vast Codex*.

The punishment for falsely reporting a crime can be as severe as the punishment for the crime in question.

THE PROCESS OF LAW

From crime to punishment, the process of law typically follows four steps.

1. A crime is observed, reported, or investigated.
2. The criminal is hunted down and apprehended. They are placed in a jail at one of the Watchhouses. If the appropriate punishment for the crime is a fine, they can pay it at any time to secure their release.
3. The criminal is brought to trial, typically within one to two weeks.
4. The criminal is fined, sent to the Prison, or executed.

Bounties on well-known criminals are commonplace. Usually the Empire puts up the reward money, but sometimes the victim or the victim's family will do so. Earning a bounty involves physically bringing a criminal to justice. Telling the authorities where the criminal can be found usually earns a tenth of the posted bounty.

Prison, page 405

OBSERVING CRIMES

A City Watch guard observing a crime has the authority to apprehend and detain the criminal immediately. If the criminal resists, the guard can use lethal force to deal with them, if necessary. Brutality to criminals and even suspected criminals is expected.

The Sisterhood of Silence has the same authority as the City Watch when it comes to apprehending criminals observed committing a crime. The Sisterhood does not detain criminals, but turns them over to the custody of the City Watch.

GM TIPS

The City Watch is, in some ways, like an occupying military force. They are more interested in order than justice, and more interested in the well-being of the city as a whole than in the needs of a particular citizen.

Sisterhood of Silence, page 127
Ennin, page 165

REPORTING CRIMES

If a citizen goes to a Watchhouse or finds a guard on the street, the citizen can report a crime they have seen. (Noncitizens can report crimes, but the city guards are under no compunction to act.) The City Watch takes the person's statement. If the chance to apprehend the accused is high (which is to say, the crime is occurring at the time), the members of the Watch act immediately. Otherwise, they take the report and thank the person but make no assurances that anything will be done. If the citizen reporting the crime is the victim of the crime, they are usually given more attention than someone who is just a witness.

Watchhouse, page 142

THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION

The wheels of justice turn slowly. The City Watch exists first and foremost to preserve order—stopping crime, let alone investigating crime, is a secondary concern. Reporting a crime or providing information about a criminal does not automatically get results. Other factors include the current manpower level of the local Watchhouse and the personalities involved.

Ptolus is an unabashedly classist society. The Watch will almost certainly ignore a noncitizen accusing a wealthy citizen of a crime. A wealthy citizen reporting a crime gets better results than someone without wealth or prestige to back them up.

Say the player characters learn of the Ennin slaver base in the Docks and report that location to the City Watch. The Watch members will use the information as they see fit, but they will not necessarily storm the place. In fact, almost assuredly they will not.

This is not to say that the Watch is entirely corrupt, and certainly not that it is incompetent. Its priorities, however, may not always be the same as those of a victim of or a witness to a crime.

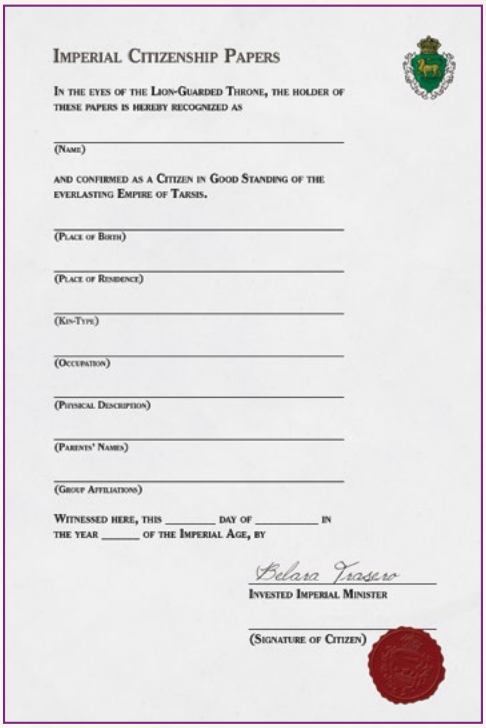
IMPERIAL CITIZENSHIP

Most people in the Empire are citizens. Originally the purview of humans of Prustan descent and Grailwarden dwarves only, citizenship was slowly bequeathed across the Empire during its more than seven hundred years. The child of a citizen is automatically a citizen, and for 250 gp, virtually anyone can go through the process of procuring citizenship.

All citizens are issued papers proving their citizenship. These Imperial Citizenship Papers show a person's name, age, place of birth, place of residence, family members, employment, and general physical description. They also record past residences and major travels. These identification papers are an important tool to let the Empire keep tabs on—and therefore control—its population. They also give City Watch guards, officials, and others an idea of how they ought to treat a given person.

Typically, all humans, all dwarves, all halflings, most elves (including half-elves and Cherubim elves), most half-orcs, and most gnomes are citizens. Some litorians and centaurs are citizens. Very few lizardfolk or Harrow elves are citizens. Virtually no goblins, orcs, minotaurs, or similar creatures are citizens. Dark elves, ratmen, demons, and truly monstrous creatures are never citizens. Imperial citizenship ends upon one's death (although it is reinstated if the person is raised from the dead), so undead are never citizens.

You can find sample Imperial Citizenship Papers (and Identification Papers for noncitizens) among the handouts in the packet.



IMPERIAL CITIZENSHIP PAPERS

IN THE EYES OF THE LION-GUARDED THRONE, THE HOLDER OF THESE PAPERS IS HEREBY RECOGNIZED AS

_____
(NAME)

AND CONFIRMED AS A CITIZEN IN GOOD STANDING OF THE EVERLASTING EMPIRE OF TARSIS.

_____
(PLACE OF BIRTH)

_____
(PLACE OF RESIDENCE)

_____
(KIN-TYPE)

_____
(OCCUPATION)

_____
(PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION)

_____
(PARENTS' NAMES)

_____
(GROUP AFFILIATIONS)

WITNESSED HERE, THIS _____ DAY OF _____ IN THE YEAR _____ OF THE IMPERIAL AGE, BY

Belara Trasero
INVESTED IMPERIAL MINISTER

_____
(SIGNATURE OF CITIZEN)

THE SISTERHOOD OF SILENCE

The Sisterhood of Silence does not take statements or listen to reports of a crime unless that crime is occurring at that very moment. Those who come to the Priory of Introspection to make a report are turned away unheard. Approaching a Sister and telling her that you saw someone steal an apple from an applecart twenty minutes ago obtains no results, but if you tell her that there's a person setting fire to the pub around the corner right this moment, she's likely to run off to find the arsonist. The Sisterhood cannot allow itself to become entangled in disputes and potentially false accusations. Mainly, they apprehend criminals whom they observe breaking the law, and nothing more. That's why they focus so much on patrols.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

It can't be stressed enough: the members of the City Watch don't really investigate crimes, at least not in the modern sense. They might question witnesses, but they don't look for clues. Mostly, they just care about stopping crimes as—or before—they happen.

One could say, as many have, that justice under Imperial law is extremely precarious. It is, in fact, frightfully easy for a person to be blamed for a crime unjustly, particularly if the person belongs to the lower classes or is a noncitizen.

Take the example of a high-stakes game of Dragonscales. During the game, one player

A typical Watchhouse; for details, see page 142. You can find the Watchhouse for each district on the poster map of the city and the district maps in part III by looking for this icon:

drops dead, the victim of poison (revealed through magic or healing knowledge). The other player immediately becomes a suspect for the murder. If the suspect has a criminal history known to the City Watch, they'll likely be arrested and detained. If not, they might still be arrested and detained if they are not a citizen with a respectable job or a family. And it would just take one person claiming to have seen the suspect put something in the victim's drink for even an upstanding citizen to be arrested. Arresting an upper-class citizen or an official (including a priest of the Church) would require more substantial evidence, however.

The point is that, either way, there is little investigation. The person who seems most likely to be guilty (if anyone) is assumed to be just that; the word of one eyewitness is sometimes all it takes to send a person to prison for decades.

Once detained, a suspect might be questioned or interrogated. The Watch may beat or torture a lower-class suspect, particularly if they are thought to have committed a particularly heinous crime. Some suspects are questioned under the effects of a truth-verifying or lie-preventing spell cast by a cleric of Lothian—usually an itinerant priest on retainer of the City Courts, but any cleric will do. This process is expensive (the courts must pay the cleric) and thus not undertaken lightly. No one

It is possible for an individual to hire a freelance investigator (often a spellcaster with access to divinatory magic) to look into a crime. Most charge 10 gp to 50 gp per day, plus the cost of spells, so this is a service available only to the wealthy. The findings of such an investigator do carry weight in a trial, though, so it may be money well spent.

Priory of Introspection, page 349

Since real criminal investigations are rare, this means that the player characters can break into a crime lord's safe house, kill all the thugs and cutthroats inside, and—as long as they make good on their escape before the Watch shows up—they can get away without fear of punishment.

In Ptolus, if a child commits a crime, their parents are legally responsible for facing the punishment.

Itinerant priest, page 295

City Courts, page 295

Dragonscales, page 333

Demon Gods, page 72

requests magical assistance in cases involving minor crimes unless the suspect is prominent in some way. And even so, if the spell reveals the suspect's innocence, the interrogators ask the suspect further questions about other possible crimes they may have committed, based on some digging the interrogators did ahead of time. The City Courts want to get their money's worth—if they pay for a spell to be cast, they want a conviction. This is why innocent people rarely demand a divination to reveal their innocence.

A cleric can volunteer to cast the divinations necessary to ascertain truth, even if it is not requested. In such a case, however, the authorities also scrutinize the caster closely. If the cleric is a friend of the suspect, the results of the spell may be called into question. This goes double if the cleric is not a Lothianite—or if the caster is not a cleric at all, but a wizard casting a mind-reading spell, for example.

And in the end, even the word of a cleric of Lothian is not beyond reproach. The courts are well aware that every kind of spell has its counter, and that the cleric might be controlled or charmed to say something they otherwise would not. Though most clerics called to perform these duties check for such counters, the system is not foolproof.

Vigilante Justice

The concept of citizens taking the law into their own hands is not considered a bad thing in Ptolus. Local authorities, from the lowest-ranking guard to the Commissar himself, are quite practical in this regard. In an effort to maintain order, they do what's best for the city rather than strictly uphold all the laws of the Vast Codex. *If an angry mob finds and kills a kidnapper of children, the authorities not only don't intervene, they don't even make arrests. They go out of their way not to get involved.*

This means an adventuring group can slay a Vai assassin or a human-sacrificing cultist without fear of the law. In most cases, the City Watch would rather not even know about it, to avoid the bureaucratic paperwork. The guards are happy to look the other way in such instances.

APPREHENDING CRIMINALS

As previously stated, the City Watch (and the Sisterhood of Silence) can use any amount of force deemed necessary to apprehend and detain a criminal. The law affords them great leeway in committing any act in the name of doing their duty.

The Watch guards have considerable discretion at this stage of the process to arrest whom they choose. This means that if a person holding a bloody sword is found standing over the body of a half-fiend sorcerer who was about to make a human sacrifice to one of the Demon Gods, they're unlikely to arrest the murderer. In other words, if player characters are careful, kill mainly evil foes, and don't cause too much destruction, they will rarely have to worry about being arrested (also see Vigilante Justice).

The City Watch usually puts captured prisoners in manacles, with a black hood over their heads to help disorient (and therefore control) them. Then they march them to the nearest Watchhouse and put them in a small and ill-kept jail cell. For some offenses, a criminal can immediately pay a fine and leave, but in the case of a drunk apprehended in a brawl or similar misconduct, the Watch captain may order a mandatory night in a cell on top of the fine.

Jailers frequently commit acts of brutality against prisoners, often in the name of justice, retribution on behalf of a victim, or rehabilitation.

TRIALS IN PTOLUS

Trials are brief and weighted heavily against the defendant, with the idea that if things have progressed this far, the suspect is probably guilty. A single judge presides over a case, with an advocate and an Imperial prosecutor to present evidence and argue applicable passages in the *Vast Codex*. Imperial law is not one of generalities or extrapolation, but of specifics, with different laws and codes for every particular situation. Advocates and prosecutors focus far more on knowledge of the law than on persuasion. Arguments come into play regarding which statute specifically applies.

Trials can be public or private, at the discretion of the judge. In fact, everything that occurs during the course of the trial is at the discretion of the judge, although a higher-ranking judge or other official can overrule these decisions.

There are three ranks of judge in the city: judges, high judges, and grand judges. The higher a judge's rank, the more important the cases they hear. Promotions come from the

Commissar's office. Today, Ptolus has about fifty judges.

Advocates usually charge anywhere from 10 gp to 1,000 gp per case, depending on the case, the client, and the advocate. More skilled and well-known advocates get paid more.

Of course, not everyone arrested for a crime goes to trial. If the City Watch apprehends a criminal in the act of committing a very serious crime, a Watch captain has the authority to mete out justice immediately. Because officials can challenge this authority after the fact and even reverse a decision, guard captains use this privilege sparingly and limit their summary sentences to fines and/or imprisonment—almost never death. (Captains found to have handed out an unwarranted sentence of death can be stripped of their rank.)

The Commissar himself can sentence anyone to serve a term in prison any time he wishes, as can the Holy Emperor and the Emperor.

PUNISHMENTS

Punishments in Ptolus are swift and harsh. Only aristocrats, Imperial officials, and the very rich can contest a verdict—an appeal requires the order of a powerful official, so only highly influential folks can attempt one.

Some crimes are punishable by death. Executions, usually hangings, are public events held in a square in Oldtown appropriately called Gallows Square.

A criminal who cannot pay a fine typically stays in prison until they or their family can pay, up to one year for every 100 gp of the original fine.

Sometimes a criminal is sentenced to labor rather than imprisonment—usually for one-quarter to one-half the length a sentence of imprisonment would carry. Labor means hard labor during the day and imprisonment at night. Construction projects are the most common sources for labor, although clearing clogged sewers remains a favorite among some judges. Usually sentences of labor have more to do with the current need for laborers than with anything having to do with the case.

The system deals harshly with recidivists. A criminal up on charges who is found to have committed similar (or worse) crimes in the past is typically given double the normal punishment.

The table on page 520 lists many crimes and typical punishments. Actual punishments can vary considerably.

Imperial lawmakers recognize the need to defend oneself against aggression. "Self-defense," a very common defense in murder or assault cases, often results in acquittal and complete exoneration for the accused.

Clogged sewers, page 410

Slavery

Owning a slave is not illegal in Ptolus, although it does raise eyebrows. Kidnapping people to sell as slaves is illegal, as is selling slaves. Abuse of anyone, including slaves, is also illegal. Of course, all these things still go on, more in some circles than others. For more on the slave trade, see page 399.

The prison beneath Ptolus is a grim place, but the Cruciform Prison (shown below) in the Dark Reliquary is far worse.

Cruciform Prison, page 237

It would be naive to think that, just because certain actions require permits, everyone who undertakes such actions always has them. No one building in the Warrens obtains a permit first, and there are far more illegal prostitutes and gambling dens than legal ones (to avoid both license fees and taxes).

Administration Building, page 291

SUBJECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT

There are crimes so serious that, although they may not carry the penalty of death, the authorities would not bat an eye if someone killed the perpetrators while attempting to stop them. For example, say you come upon two Pale Dogs beating a sister of the Order of Dayra within an inch of her life. For this crime of assaulting an official, they should receive up to twenty years of imprisonment. However, no judge in Ptolus would say a word against a band of adventurers who came upon the scene and slew the assailants.

LICENSES AND PERMITS

Imperial bureaucracy is extensive and difficult to navigate. Licenses and permits are required for many activities, and obtaining them is usually an expensive and time-consuming process. Forms must be filed, and often bribes must be paid. Ptolus residents apply for licenses and permits at the Administration Building in Oldtown.

Licenses and permits create revenue for the government and, more importantly, they register the applicant for appropriate taxes, which bring in even more revenue. They also allow the Imperial government to monitor activities they consider worth monitoring, such as firearm ownership and book printing.

The list below shows a few examples of activities that require permits or licenses, and their cost.

License/Permit	Fee
Owning a firearm	10 gp
Operating a tavern or restaurant*	25 gp
Operating a shop* (permanent structure)	50 gp
Operating a shop* (nonpermanent structure)	10 gp
Operating a service*	50 gp
Operating a gambling establishment*	100 gp
Bottling liquor or alcohol	4 cp/gallon
Working as a prostitute*	50 gp
Building within the city walls	25 gp
Modifying a structure significantly	10 gp
Holding a public gathering	10 gp
Keeping a large creature (larger than a large dog)	5 gp/creature
Printing books	1 gp/book
Distributing broadsheets	1 cp per 50 copies

** Must be renewed each year.*

CRIME AND "MONSTERS"

Nonhumanoid creatures have no rights under Imperial law. In other words, it is not murder to slay a dragon, it is not assault to attack a troll, and it is not theft to rob from a manticore's hoard. Exceptions have been made, however, in the case of beings like Urlenius, ogre-mage Star of Navashtrom (see page 361), and Shibata, minotaur cleric of Niveral (see page 370), who have found a place in civilized society.

You can find a sample firearms permit among the handouts in the packet.

Sometimes the city will issue a special permit to allow a spellcaster to cast potentially destructive spells (like fireballs) in the city. There are even so-called "death licenses" that enable the license-holder to commit murder with no fear of punishment. These are granted only in special circumstances, and only by the Commissar or someone of higher rank (which is to say, one of the Emperors). People like the Imperial Eyes or other special operatives might have such licenses.

TAXES

Most people find Imperial taxes burdensome, to say the least. Every Imperial citizen must pay 3 gp in tax per year—nothing to the wealthy, but onerous to the common laborer. (The tax collector can instead choose to assess the value of a citizen's current wealth and levy a yearly tax of 9 percent of the total.) Children are exempt from this unless they earn a wage, which means that fewer children work (and instead attend school) than one might suspect. Sometimes a parent convinces their employer to allow a child to work and add the wage to the parent's—this is more common in the manufactories and workshops of the Guildsman District than elsewhere. And, of course, children who work for their parents typically do not earn an official wage and so are not taxed.

The tax collectors also levy taxes on noncitizens, but not in the same fashion as for citizens. At any time, virtually any government official can demand one silver shield from a noncitizen as an Imperial services levy, as long as the noncitizen has spent the last week in the Empire. Technically, a noncitizen needs to pay this only once per week, but since there is no way to prove that one has already paid the levy, someone without citizenship papers could get charged multiple times.

IMPERIAL CHARTERS

Certain organizations in Ptolus hold an Imperial Charter, a document certifying official recognition by the Emperor. Chartered organizations often receive Imperial funding in the form of stipends and similar support from the Commissar's budget, in exchange for the valuable duties the groups perform for the city. Chartered organizations are also the first to be commandeered by the Commissar in the event of a civic emergency. Examples of groups with Imperial Charters include the Knights of the Chord, the Keepers of the Veil, and the Knights of the Pale. Groups lacking an Imperial Charter are not necessarily illegal, but they receive no official recognition from the Empire.

The government attempts to impose "salvage" taxes on treasure that delvers find on their adventures. If they could, Imperial officials would place a tax collector at every known entrance to the Dungeon, but of course, that isn't possible. So instead, the Empire keeps a tax assayer's table in the Undercity Market, where delvers are instructed to register all of their finds and pay a 10 percent tax. Naturally, adventurers don't cooperate with this plan. The Commissar has ordered a few of his Imperial Eyes to maintain a presence undercover in Delver's Square and other places where delvers bring their treasure, and report what they see to the tax collectors.

Imperial Eyes, page 144
Delver's Square, page 188

Taxes on goods are levied as they come into the city, unless proper paperwork is presented to show that the taxes have already been paid or that the goods are tax exempt (which is to say, they are being sold to the government, the Church, or an official thereof). The tax rate on all goods coming into the city is 25 percent of their assessed value. They are then stamped or marked with an Imperial seal to show that they need not be taxed when sold.

Goods produced in the city are not taxed unless they are also bought and consumed in the city. In this case, the seller must pay the 25 percent rate on goods, collected monthly. The sale of certain goods, such as alcohol, is taxed at an even higher rate: almost 40 percent.

These high taxes encourage smuggling and black market activities. Smugglers sneak goods into the city and sell them on the sly for a greater profit—often offering a 10 percent discount to move the goods quickly and to cover the customer's risk. It is a crime not only to circumvent the assessors, but to sell, buy, or even possess the results of such illegal actions.

Undercity Market, page 394

VICES

The availability of substances or services that are illegal, dangerous, or addictive—or some combination thereof—makes Ptolus a den of iniquity in the minds of some.

To make things easy for the GM, each addictive substance has been given an addiction Difficulty Class (or addiction DC). This is the DC of both a Constitution and Wisdom save (Constitution first). If both saves fail, the user is addicted and suffers some drawback when they do not have their regular dose. The drawback, usually damage inflicted for each day the user goes without the substance, is presented after the Difficulty Class in the substance descriptions that follow.

Overcoming addiction requires one to give up the addictive substance and make successful saves (both Constitution and Wisdom) for a number of consecutive days equal to the addiction DC. However, taking another dose immediately addicts the relapsing user. Some spells, such as *lesser restoration, greater restoration,* and *heal*, also alleviate addiction.

TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, AND LEGAL DRUGS

Smoking is a common practice in Ptolus. Tobacco grows in fields south of the city, and local merchants import it. It is rolled into cigarettes and cigars and smoked in pipes. Tobacco prices range from 1 cp to 50 gp per smoke. At the low end, the leaves are dry, old, and often mixed with bits of common grass or trash paper. At the high end, it is not only fresh and pure but mixed with expensive herbs, oils, and even magical substances to produce enhanced flavors, scents, and sometimes colors. Smoking is considered very sophisticated, and those who do not like the smell of smoke are thought uncultured. Most tobaccos have an addiction DC of 10 (1 necrotic damage). Dosage is usually twice daily. Long-term use (twenty to thirty years) permanently reduces the user's hit point maximum by 10 (3d6).

Note: A rare type of tobacco called ghostweed, imported from lands far to the west, allows ghosts to continue to interact with living friends.

Alcohol flows more freely than water in Ptolus. Ale, beer, wine, rum, whisky, and brandy are all common. There are no special laws against drunkenness, but the Watch knows that drunk people are likely to get rowdy, so the guards patrol the area around taverns late at night with regularity. Intoxicated drinkers, in addition to losing some of their inhibitions, gain the poisoned condition for 1d3 hours. Alcohol has an addiction DC of 5 (disadvantage on attacks, saves, and checks). Dosage is usually three times daily, although each dose for an addict is a prodigious amount. Long-term use (ten to twenty years) permanently gives the addict the poisoned condition, and can permanently reduce their Constitution score by 1d4. (GMs may want to simply ignore the addictive quality of alcohol.)

Most tobaccos and alcohols are legal in the Empire (but see below). However, because they are heavily taxed, they both are smuggled into the city frequently, alcohol more often than tobacco. Smuggled goods are considered illegal substances and confiscated or destroyed if found.

The city's physickers and herbalists use a wide variety of medicinal herbs and drugs to alleviate pain, treat symptoms, and even cure conditions such as baldness or warts. The effects of these treatments, usually brewed or applied as poultices, vary wildly. Only some are addictive and, if used as prescribed, pose little problem.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

Illegal drugs usually get that way because of their highly addictive nature coupled with a dangerous effect. The Empire, in conjunction with the Church of Lothian, has outlawed substances known to be deadly, either through their use or the lack thereof. The following substances are the more well-known illegal drugs.

AYORITH

Also known as smokeweed, ayorith is an intoxicating weed that one smokes like tobacco in cigarettes or pipes. It is a powerful relaxant, but after the first 1d12 times a creature smokes it, each additional time the user must make a DC 10 Constitution save or become so relaxed that they die of heart failure. Ayorith has an addiction DC of 12 (2 levels of exhaustion). The required dosage is once daily. Long-term use (one year or more) results in a permanent Constitution reduction of 1d4 points.

GRAVEBLOOM

Gravebloom is an extremely rare plant that grows only on the graves of those consecrated in the name of Blurrah, Goddess of Comfort in Sadness, an obscure deity with a very small following. Gravebloom flowers contain a potent narcotic worth 50 gp per dose. The drug creates a feeling of utter euphoria in those who use it, producing a near-catatonic state for 1d4 + 2 hours. It has an addiction DC of 16 (1d6 psychic damage). The required dosage is once daily. Long-term use (one year or more) results in an annual Intelligence reduction of 1d3 points, and the required dosage becomes twice daily.

Because of gravebloom, followers of Blurrah keep their burials a secret so would-be drug merchants do not desecrate the graves of their fallen.

MURLCH

When beer is brewed not with hops but with the pollen of a flower called yillow that grows in the Dragonsbirth Mountains, it becomes murlch. This potent alcohol becomes a stimulant, giving advantage on Strength and Constitution rolls, disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma rolls, and distinctively foul breath. These changes last for 1d3 hours. Murlch has an addiction DC of 13 (disadvantage on Strength rolls until the character takes a long rest). The required dosage is once daily. Long-term use (six months or more) permanently reduces the character's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma by 1 each, and the required dosage becomes twice daily.

A few taverns sell murlch on the sly, and there are secret murlch bars that serve nothing but the stimulant. Most of these secret bars are open for only a few hours each day, and their location moves to stay ahead of the City Watch.

NIGHTSONG

The magical/alchemical substance known as nightsong derives from an extremely rare plant found only in Cherubar. This substance changes ordinary people into powerful figures at night, able to ignore pain and perform amazing physical feats. While not addictive, the drug inflicts terrible damage on a user's body, burning them out and eventually opening them up to control by an otherwise bodiless evil fey spirit.

This drug, which functions only at night, has three aspects. First, it increases the character's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution ability scores to 19 (no effect if the character's ability score is already 19 or higher). Second, the user gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from

nonmagical weapons. Third, the user becomes immune to poison, stunning, and effects that cause sleep. The effects last for 1d3 + 1 hours.

The first dose of the drug gives disadvantage on Intelligence and Wisdom rolls starting one hour after using, lasting until the character takes a long rest. The second dose reduces the character's Intelligence and Wisdom by 1d6 until they take a long rest. The third dose reduces the character's Intelligence and Wisdom by 2d6 until they take a long rest, and permanently reduces all of their ability scores by 1. All subsequent doses permanently reduce all of the character's ability scores by 3d6. If any of these effects reduces the user's Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma to 0, they are possessed by a sly, murderous, evil fey spirit that controls them until the ability score is somehow restored.

Nightsong is for sale by the gnomes who own the North Point Restaurant in the Fairbriar neighborhood of Midtown (800 gp per dose; see page 202).

SHIVVEL

Called the "pleasant poison" or "black sea-powder," shivvel is developed from a black seaweed that grows near the shoreline of certain islands in the Whitewind Sea. The weed is harvested, dried, and eventually rendered into flakes or powder. When mixed with other substances, it becomes a powerful narcotic. A dose costs around 20 gp, although the price can vary greatly depending on the time of year and the seller. It has an addiction DC of 18 (2d6 necrotic damage). The required dosage is once daily. Long-term use of shivvel is almost always deadly, but only after a prolonged period of madness. After 1d10 doses, regardless of addiction, the user takes 1d6 psychic damage each day that they do not use the drug and 2d6 psychic damage on any day they do use it.

When a shivvel user's hit points reach 0 from psychic damage, rather than going unconscious, they go insane. When awake, the creature can't take actions, can't understand what other creatures say, can't read, and speaks only in gibberish; the GM controls their movement, which is erratic. After this occurs, the user generally dies 1d8 weeks later, unless healed via a *heal* or *greater restoration* spell.

Rumor has it that the secret of creating shivvel was passed on to humans by a demon. The Balacazars control virtually all of the shivvel traffic in Ptolus. It is the most commonly used illegal drug. (See Chapter 33: Adventures for a scenario involving a shivvel dealer named Linech Cran.)

ENHANCING DRUGS

Once prescribed by healers, the following drugs, distilled from various plants and flowers, have been declared illegal because of their strong addictive factor and the dire consequences of that addiction. Most people cannot survive the withdrawal effects without powerful magical assistance. These drugs inflict no harm based on long-term use. Prices below are per dose.

Alstalan: The imbiber's Dexterity increases to 16 (no effect if the user's Dexterity is already 16 or higher) for the next eight hours. A magically enhanced version of the drug increases the user's Dexterity to 18, but costs double per dosage.

Price: 35 gp (or 70 gp for magically enhanced alstalan); dosage: twice daily; addiction DC 18 (permanently reduces user's un-enhanced Dexterity by 1, and the user dies if this reduces their un-enhanced Dexterity to 0).

Ravalan: The imbiber's Strength increases to 16 (no effect if the user's Strength is already 16 or higher) for the next eight hours. A magically enhanced version of the drug increases the user's Strength to 18, but costs double per dosage.

Price: 35 gp (or 70 gp for magically enhanced ravalan); dosage: twice daily; addiction DC 17 (permanently reduces user's un-enhanced Strength by 1, and the user dies if this reduces their un-enhanced Strength to 0).

Vistaran: The imbiber's Constitution increases to 16 (no effect if the user's Constitution is already 16 or higher) for the next eight hours. A magically enhanced version of the drug increases the user's Constitution to 18, but costs double per dosage.

Price: 35 gp (or 70 gp for magically enhanced vistaran); dosage: twice daily; addiction DC 16 (permanently reduces user's un-enhanced Constitution by 1, and the user dies if this reduces their un-enhanced Constitution to 0).

GAMBLING

Gambling *per se* is not illegal. However, the heavy taxes placed on gambling earnings, whether won by individuals or "the house," have made it far more profitable to gamble in secret locations away from the tax collector's eyes.

The Church would like gambling itself to be illegal because it promotes destructive behavior and encourages a fascination with chaos and randomness, as opposed to Lothian's ordered will.

PROSTITUTION

Prostitution is illegal in the Empire without a license, requiring heavy taxation and regulation. The fees, taxes, and rules involved mean that many prostitutes—most of them, in fact—operate illegally. Generally, criminal organizations control these illegal prostitutes, which means that the life of an illegal prostitute is not a terribly pleasant one. Often they are slaves forced into the profession by their criminal owners. Some specialized illegal brothels cater to deviant or strange tastes, but most streetwalkers deal in fairly straightforward sex.

Legal, licensed prostitution is not only condoned, but certain temples in the Temple District require it. In such temples, sexual practices are used as a part of worship or atonement—but only with official temple prostitutes, who serve as special priests and priestesses.

Some of the few legal brothels include the White House in Oldtown, Esser's in the Docks, and the House of Delights in the Nobles' Quarter.

Five out of six prostitutes, legal or otherwise, are women. Breakdown by species mirrors the demographics of the city quite closely (see Chapter 7: The City by the Spire for more on Ptolus demographics).

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Crime	Typical Punishment*
Murder of an official	Death
Murder of a citizen	20 years imprisonment
Murder of a noncitizen	5 years imprisonment
Assault** upon an official	5–20 years imprisonment or death
Assault** upon a citizen	6 months – 20 years imprisonment
Assault** upon a noncitizen	1 month – 10 years imprisonment
Kidnapping an official	10 years imprisonment
Kidnapping a citizen	1 year imprisonment
Kidnapping a noncitizen	6 months imprisonment
Threatening the Holy Emperor/Prince of the Church	Death
Theft/destruction of the property of an official (or of city property)***	Petty: 1 month imprisonment + 10 gp fine; Lesser: 1 year imprisonment + 200 gp fine; Major: 10 years imprisonment + 500 gp fine
Theft/destruction of the property of a citizen***	Petty: 10 gp fine; Lesser: 6 months imprisonment + 200 gp fine; Major: 5 years imprisonment + 500 gp fine
Theft/destruction of the property of a noncitizen***	Petty: 3 gp fine; Lesser: 100 gp fine; Major: 1 year imprisonment + 500 gp fine
Trafficking in illegal goods†	1 year imprisonment + 500 gp fine (magic-related goods: 5 years + 800 gp)
Possession of illegal goods†	250 gp fine
Coercion of another	Of an official: 1 year imprisonment; a citizen: 500 gp fine; a noncitizen: 100 gp fine
Using magic to influence the mind of another	Of an official: 1 year imprisonment + 500 gp fine; a citizen: 6 months imprisonment + 100 gp fine; a noncitizen: 100 gp fine
Casting spells of mass destruction in the city††	1 year imprisonment + 200 gp fine
Intentionally using evil magic	1 year imprisonment + 500 gp fine
Creating an undead creature/bringing one into the city	10 years imprisonment
Grave-robbing	Death
Summoning a demon	Death
Intentionally spreading plague	Death
Inappropriate disposal of waste/trash	10–1,000 gp fine (inappropriate disposal of a corpse: 250 gp fine)
Disturbing the peace	5–50 gp fine
Inciting a riot	1 year imprisonment
Arson (in addition to destruction of property charge)	5 years imprisonment
Falsifying documents	Imperial documents: 1 year imprisonment + 200 gp fine (other documents: 200 gp fine)
Perjury in court	6 months imprisonment
Defaming the character of an official	6 months imprisonment
Bribing an official	250 gp fine
Tax evasion	Imprisonment until taxes are paid (plus 10% interest)
Failure to produce a license/permit when required‡	100–500 gp fine
Being a dark elf within city limits	Death
Harboring a dark elf within city limits	2 years imprisonment
Sacrilege against Lothian	Blaspheming: 50 gp fine; defiling a sacred site: 1–20 years imprisonment
Worshipping an illegal god (for example, Destor)	1–20 years imprisonment
Treason	Death

An "official" is someone with a role of leadership and/or enforcement in local or Imperial government. This honorific applies to those in positions of responsibility (managers, administrators, etc.) and to all members of the City Watch and clerics and paladins of Lothian. Anyone who works for the government isn't necessarily an official; low-ranking employees (clerks, street sweepers) can only aspire to such a rank.

* Punishments are cumulative. Thus, murdering two citizens is punishable by 40 years imprisonment. Typically for humans, a sentence of more than 50 years imprisonment is altered to death.

** "Assault" covers a broad range of crimes, from a physical strike to rape to draining life energy or blasting with magical fire. Thus, the range of punishments is broad as well. Typically, assault implies the intent to maim or kill. Barroom brawlers, for example, are usually charged with disturbing the peace, not assault.

*** Petty = property worth less than 1 gp; Lesser = property worth 1–100 gp; Major = property worth 101 gp or more.

† Smuggling otherwise legal goods into the city to avoid the tariff is considered trafficking in illegal goods.

†† Spells of mass destruction include fireballs, bolts of lightning, and similar magic that threatens life and property. Spellcasters can obtain special permits for limited use of such spells for specific sanctioned purposes.

‡ This extremely broad category can include unlicensed firearm use, unlicensed prostitution, building without a permit, and so on.

Chapter 29:
TECHNOLOGY

Although "technology" is a broad term, this chapter deals specifically with the various creations of the Grailwarden dwarves that extend beyond what is normally found in a fantasy campaign: steam-powered engines, clockwork mechanisms, firearms, and more.

It's worth pointing out the differences between straight technological items and chaositech, which is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. Chaositech is the result of harnessing raw chaos to accomplish seemingly impossible deeds. Chaositech has an opposite, however—and it's not magic. Whether you call it "steamtech" or "science," it uses the natural order of things to accomplish impressive deeds. Science is far more reliable than chaositech, but not as powerful, as it's bound by the laws of physics.

FIREARMS

The most dramatic application of science is probably the use of firearms.

In the Empire it is necessary to carry a firearms permit, which costs 10 gp to obtain and an annual fee of 1 gp to renew. Permits are granted only to citizens. They are required so the Empire can control these powerful weapons, at least to a point. Failure to present a permit when found with a firearm is a crime punishable by a 500-gp fine. Note that having a license to carry a firearm doesn't necessarily mean that the bearer knows how to use it; some wealthy people carry a firearm because it suits their fashion or because they want to give the impression that they know how to use these deadly weapons. Whether or not a character actually knows how to use one is a matter of proficiency.

PROFICIENCY

It's up to the GM to decide whether a character has proficiency with a firearm. Most characters in Praemal, including the city of Ptolus, aren't proficient in firearms. During their downtime, characters can use the game's standard training rules to acquire proficiency, which requires expending a certain amount of ammunition while the training takes place. A person proficient in firearms knows how to load, shoot, and maintain these kinds of weapons.

FIREARM WEAPON PROPERTIES

Ptolus firearms use ammunition. Some of them have the burst fire or reload property.

Ammunition. The ammunition of a firearm is destroyed upon use. Ptolus firearms use either bullets or alchemist's fire.

Burst Fire. A weapon with the burst fire property can target a single creature, or the wielder can spray a 10-foot-cube area with shots. Each creature in the area takes the weapon's normal damage unless they succeed at a DC 15 Dexterity save. A burst fire attack uses ten pieces of ammunition.

You can find a sample firearms permit among the handouts in the packet.

Ammunition, page 524

FIREARMS

Martial/Ranged Weapons

Bullet Weapons	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Double pistol	300 gp	1d8 piercing	4 lb.	Ammunition (range 25/75), loading
Dragon pistol	250 gp	1d10 piercing	3 lb.	Ammunition (range 30/90), loading
Hand cannon	900 gp	3d6 piercing	6 lb.	Ammunition (range 20/60), loading, two-handed
Sting (pistol)	120 gp	1d8 piercing	1 lb.	Ammunition (range 20/60), loading
Dragon rifle	500 gp	1d12 piercing	5 lb.	Ammunition (range 50/150), slow loading, two-handed
Spyglass rifle	700 gp	1d12 piercing	6 lb.	Ammunition (range 100/150), loading, two-handed
Hydra rifle	1,200 gp	1d10 piercing	7 lb.	Ammunition (range 40/120), slow loading, two-handed
Repeater rifle	2,000 gp	1d10 piercing	6 lb.	Ammunition (range 40/120), reload (6 shots), slow loading, two-handed

Ammunition

Bullets (10)	3 gp	—	2 lb.	—

Flame Weapons	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Chimera rifle	1,200 gp	Varies	10 lb.	Ammunition, slow loading, two-handed
Hellsbreath gun	1,000 gp	2d6 fire (line)	7 lb.	Ammunition, slow loading, two-handed

Bombs	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Powder bomb	150 gp	3d6 fire (area)	1 lb.	—
Smokebomb	30 gp	—	1 lb.	—

Cannons	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Small cannon	1,000 gp	4d6 bludgeoning	500 lb.	Ammunition (range 600/2,400)
Large cannon	2,500 gp	6d6 bludgeoning	1,500 lb.	Ammunition (range 900/3,600)
Pipe organ cannon	1,800 gp	3d6 bludgeoning each	1,000 lb.	Ammunition (400/1,600)

For more about firearm permits, see Licenses and Permits in Chapter 28: Crime and the Law (page 516).

For more about the role of Grailwarden technology in Imperial development, see Rise of Empire and The Decline in Chapter 5: History (page 87).

dragon rifle

The best-known local gunsmiths who can refit firearms work at the Smoke Shop in the North Market (page 286).

The firearms described here are fantasy weapons. They are easier and faster to load than real-world wheel-lock or matchlock firearms.

Loading. Like crossbows, most firearms are limited to one shot and need to be reloaded before they can be used again. A limited number of shots can be made with a weapon that has the reload property. A character must then reload it using an action or a bonus action (the character's choice).

Reload. The firearm can be shot the listed number of times before it needs to be reloaded. It can be reloaded (whether empty or not) using an action or a bonus action (character's choice) for each shot being added to the weapon. For example, a weapon with "reload (6 shots)" that has been fired four times could be reloaded with up to four shots, each shot using an action or a bonus action to reload.

Slow Loading. This weapon is slower to load than a weapon with the loading property. Instead of just one action or bonus action to load it, you must use two actions, two bonus actions, or one action and one bonus action.

BULLET WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Weapons that use bullets as ammunition are described here.

Double Pistol: This pistol has two barrels, so it can be fired twice before reloading (one move action for each barrel).

Dragon Pistol: The most common firearm in Ptolus, this weapon has an iron dragon's head around its muzzle so that its shot comes from the dragon's mouth.

Dragon Rifle: This firearm is a larger, longer-barreled version of the dragon pistol with better range and greater damage, but it takes longer to reload. A person could attempt to fire a dragon rifle in one hand, but the attack gains disadvantage.

Hand Cannon: This short, wide pistol is quite heavy. It has a very short range but packs an amazing punch. Adventurers often use hand cannons to blast down doors or through wooden walls.

Hydra Rifle: This variant dragon rifle gets its name from the fact that it has three barrels. Each barrel has a separate trigger and thus a character can fire the weapon three times without loading—it's like carrying three loaded rifles at once.

For an additional cost of 250 gp, a weaponsmith can fit a hydra rifle with a master trigger to allow the character to fire all three barrels at once at the same target. Each attack is rolled independently. It is not possible to fire only two barrels at once; you either fire one or all three when the weapon is fitted with a master trigger.

Each barrel must be loaded separately.

A person could attempt to fire a hydra rifle in one hand, but the attack (or attacks) gains disadvantage.

Repeater Rifle: This uncommon variant of the dragon rifle can fire six times before requiring a reload.

Spyglass Rifle: As a dragon rifle, except with a spyglass mounted atop it to increase its accuracy.

Sting: This is a small and concealable pistol.

FLAME WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Weapons that use alchemist's fire as a projectile are described here.

Chimera Rifle: This strange deviation of the hydra rifle has three barrels. One is a standard dragon rifle barrel, one launches a small dart (usually drugged or poisoned), and one shoots a stream of alchemist's fire like a hellsbreath gun (see below).

The dart inflicts 2 (1d4) piercing damage; it is designed to inflict only a small amount of damage so the target can be drugged and captured alive. It has range 20/60.

The stream of alchemist's fire forms a line 10 feet long and 5 feet wide in a direction the wielder chooses. Any creature in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 2 (1d4) fire damage, and again at the start of each of your turns; the creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames. On a successful save, the creature takes only 1 fire damage and does not take additional damage after that. (Unlike the hellsbreath gun, the smaller amount of alchemist's fire stored within the chimera rifle and the smaller powder charge—and thus the shorter range—mean it is safer to use and doesn't have a chance of exploding.)

Unlike a hydra rifle, a chimera rifle cannot be fitted with a master trigger.

Each barrel must be loaded separately.

Hellsbreath Gun: This device consists of a powerful pump activated by a blast of powder that sprays a reservoir of alchemist's fire in a line that is 20 feet long and 5 feet wide. Any creature in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes an additional 1d4 fire damage at the start of each of your turns; the creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames. On a successful save, the creature takes only 1 fire damage on your next turn and does not take additional damage after that.

Those who are not proficient with firearms tend to favor this weapon, but it is dangerous to use. Each time someone fires the weapon, roll a d20. On a roll of 1, the reservoir of alchemist's fire within the weapon ignites and explodes, destroying the gun and dousing the wielder with alchemist's fire, inflicting 7 (2d6) fire damage immediately and 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of the wielder's turns; if the wielder succeeds at a DC 20 Dexterity save, they take only half damage from the explosion. The wielder can extinguish the flames and end this ongoing damage by using their action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check.

A hellsbreath gun requires two full rounds to reload. One must use two hands to load and fire it.

BOMB WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Weapons that are bombs are described here.

Powder Bomb: This gunpowder explosive can be thrown up to 60 feet and has a blast radius of 5 feet. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) fire damage. Lighting the fuse is an action or a bonus action (character's choice). Throwing, rolling, or anything other than dropping it in your own space is an action. The powder bomb explodes on impact or at the end of the character's turn (character's choice).

Smokebomb: This nondamaging explosive can be thrown up to 60 feet and creates a cloud of smoke in a 20-foot radius. The cloud persists in still conditions for 1d3 + 6 rounds, or for only 1d3 + 1 rounds in windy conditions. Visibility within the smoke is limited to 2 feet and everything is heavily obscured. Lighting the fuse is an action or a bonus action (character's choice). Throwing, rolling, or anything other than dropping it in your own space is an action. The smokebomb explodes on impact or at the end of the character's turn (character's choice).

CANNONS

Cannons are very large firearms. Unlike standard firearms such as a dragon pistol, they are available in only one size (for example, there are no Small cannons meant for use by halflings and gnomes). Cannons normally must be

Dalenguard in Oldtown is the home of the famous Commissar's Guns, a battery of two dozen large cannons that Igor Urnst used in the Gnoll War. See Government in Chapter 7: The City by the Spire (page 140).

hand cannon

Powder bombs and smokebombs can be fitted with a match cord fuse; see page 526.

A smokebomb is sometimes called a smoke grenade.

A Huge creature can wield a small cannon as a two-handed weapon, and a Gargantuan creature can use a large cannon or a pipe organ cannon as a two-handed weapon. Even if used as a two-handed weapon, loading a cannon still takes a long time.

mounted on a solid surface or a small platform, often with wheels for transport.

Small Cannon: This 4-foot-long iron weapon takes four full rounds to load and fire. Two or more characters working together can shorten this time to two full rounds.

Large Cannon: This 7-foot-long iron weapon takes six full rounds to load and fire. Two or more characters can shorten this time to three full rounds.

Pipe Organ Cannon: This weapon gets its name from the fact that it has six barrels lined up—it is basically six small cannons in one. The six barrels can be fired all at once or one at a time, each targeting a different creature in an adjacent 5-foot space (a large creature that takes up more than one 5-foot space could be struck by more than one cannonball this way). Each cannon barrel must be loaded separately.

AMMUNITION

Powder bomb, page 523
Match cord fuse, page 526

Ammunition includes both bullets (often called "rounds" or "shot" in Ptolus) and powder.

By default, a firearm shoots a single bullet at one target; the damages listed in the table are for a single bullet. Some users prefer scattershot over single bullets.

GMs interested in injecting more realism into their games can rule that an attack roll of a natural 1 indicates not only a miss, but a firearm jam. A character can clear a jam by spending two actions and succeeding at a DC 15 Intelligence check.

Scattershot. This cluster of metal pellets spreads out when fired to affect a 10-foot-radius area. Instead of the wielder making an attack roll, creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Creatures that fail the save take half damage, or one-quarter damage on a successful save. Scattershot is ineffective beyond the weapon's normal range (the first number listed for its range).

Double Load. It is possible to load a firearm with twice the normal amount of shot and powder. This increases the firearm's damage by one die type (1d8 to 1d10, 1d10 to 1d12, 1d12 to 1d20, 3d6 to 3d8). However, if the attack roll is a natural 1, the gun bursts, destroying it and inflicting this damage on the character firing the weapon. Weapons with the reload property and cannons cannot be double-loaded.

Ammunition	Price
Shot and powder (1 load)	15 sp
Scattershot and powder (1 load)	2 gp
Ammunition pouch (10 shots)	5 gp
Powder horn (10 shots)	10 gp

CANNON AMMO

By default, a cannon shoots a single cannonball at one target; the damages listed in the table are for a single cannonball. Some users prefer grapeshot over single bullets.

Grapeshot. This is a mass of tiny pellets that spreads out when fired to affect a 10-foot-radius area. Instead of the wielder making an attack roll, creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Creatures that fail the save take half damage, or one-quarter damage on a successful save. Grapeshot has half the range (normal and long) of a cannonball.

Explosive Charge: This essentially is a large powder bomb with a match cord fuse. It explodes in a 10-foot radius upon impact.

Ammunition	Price
Cannonball and powder	5 gp
Grapeshot and powder	15 gp
Explosive charge and powder	50 gp

OTHER WEAPONS AND ARMOR

For the technologist warrior, there are more weapons to choose from than simply firearms. A few of the most interesting are described below.

Bayonet: The wielder can use this blade as a dagger or affix it to any rifle, allowing the rifle to be used as a spear that cannot be thrown. Price: 3 gp.

Blast Axe (Pistol Axe): This strange weapon is like a long-barreled dragon pistol; its reinforced barrel ends in an axe blade. It can be used as a dragon pistol and a handaxe. Price: 300 gp.

Pistol Shield: This metal shield has a built-in dragon pistol, with the barrel facing straight out. The wielder holds the shield as normal and

UNREALISTIC SCIENCE

Some of the weapons and gear described here are unlike anything that ever worked in the real world. Steam-powered constructs, strength-enhancing armor, and battle carts are all the stuff of fantasy. Some of them, such as a repeating rifle, merely push the limits of what one could realistically expect in a nonmodern setting. One has to imagine magically assisted intelligence was behind such invention, as well as fantastic alchemical aids such as firestone to produce the heat needed for the steam engines. GMs just need to figure out where to draw the line.

Of course, one could take the fantastic elements of such devices even further than the equipment in this chapter. For example, the Shuul's long-term plans involve the creation of an underground train that connects the Tower of Science and the Foundry in the Guildsman District (this is three to five years off, however—the tower isn't even finished yet). A technologist might even perfect a mechanized brain of some kind: a clockwork artificial intelligence!

uses their other hand to fire the pistol, or uses it as a regular shield and uses their other hand to wield another weapon. Price: 300 gp.

Steam Armor: Steam-powered armor protects the wearer as plate armor. Its built-in strength-augmenting mechanisms increase the wearer's Strength to 19 (these have no effect if your Strength is already 19 or higher). The armor requires one firestone per day to function; without it, it counts only as plate armor. Price: 1,500 gp (for the plate armor) plus 500–5,000 gp (the value of a rare magic item).

TRANSPORT

In a big place like Ptolus, characters need a reliable and fast way to get where they need to be. Below are just some of the options for using technology to get around.

Battle Cart: This massive vehicle looks like a wagon without horses. It measures 10 feet long and about 6 feet wide (approximately size Large). Its sides are armor plated with small slits for archers or riflemen. The cart has Armor Class 15 and 100 hit points.

A battle cart is steam-powered (it requires firestone) and can travel up to 20 miles per hour over flat, smooth terrain. The carts are usually outfitted with a ram or a spiked plate for running down foes on foot, inflicting 10 (3d6) piercing or bludgeoning damage at full speed; a successful DC 15 Dexterity save means the creature dodges out of the way and takes no damage. One character must drive the cart. While it is moving, controlling the cart uses the character's action. When moving at full speed, the driver must succeed at a DC 15 Dexterity check to avoid obstacles. Price: 15,000 gp.

Glider Wings: A Medium creature can strap on these aerodynamic wings to glide through the air. The wearer uses the Acrobatics skill to maneuver with them. On a still or relatively calm day, the glider travels in a straight line for twice as far as it drops, so a character wearing the wings and jumping from a 40-foot-tall tower can travel 80 feet laterally before landing. On a very windy day, a character can travel much farther (almost indefinitely) if they succeed at a DC 12 Acrobatics check every ten minutes. Landing safely requires a DC 12 Acrobatics check; failure means the character and wings each take falling damage for half the distance the character traveled the round they hit the ground. Made of light wood and canvas, the wings have Armor Class 5 and 10 hit points. Their wingspan measures 15 feet. Price: 1,400 gp.

Hot-Air Balloon: With a powerful furnace beneath it, a large balloon can carry aloft up to 2,000 pounds. A single character can operate the balloon, controlling its direction (which depends greatly on the wind's direction and speed) and altitude. The balloon itself measures about 40 feet across and 60 feet high. The basket below is about 8 feet in diameter. The balloon has Armor Class 5 and 5 hit points; the basket has Armor Class 5 and 30 hit points. Price (with furnace): 3,500 gp.

Steamboat: A steamboat is a keelboat (50- to 75-foot-long vessel) that does not require wind or oar to move. A powerful steam engine fuels its massive paddlewheel. Although these boats can't operate in the King's River (too many waterfalls), they are sometimes seen out in the Bay of Ptolus. Price: 18,000 gp.

Steam Cart, Large: This vehicle resembles a battle cart, but it is not armored or fitted with spikes, ram plates, or the like. With it, a person can haul up to 1,500 pounds of cargo or passengers. Its top speed is only 10 miles per hour. A driver operates it just like a battle cart, and it likewise requires firestone to use. Price: 8,000 gp.

Steam Cart, Medium: This wheeled chair has a steam motor and room enough for equipment or a passenger up to 250 pounds. Controlling the cart in motion uses the driver's action. It can move 5 miles per hour and requires firestone. Price: 5,000 gp.

Steam Cart, Small: This is basically a wheeled chair with a steam motor. Controlling the cart uses the driver's action. It can move up to 5 miles per hour and requires firestone to use. Price 3,000 gp.

MISCELLANEOUS GEAR

Below are some of the most basic technological devices delvers might encounter in Ptolus. Such items would be found among the Shuul, in Dwarvenhearth, or at the Smoke Shop. Because technology is more advanced in Praemal than in a typical fantasy campaign, some of the prices listed may differ from comparable items in the rulebooks.

Antitoxin: Drinking this vial grants advantage on saves against being poisoned and special abilities that inflict poison damage. It lasts one hour.

Firestone: see Maintenance and Fuel, page 528

King's River, page 151

The high priestess of Teun, Mother of All Machines, drives a steam cart. See page 367.

Shuul, page 126

Dwarvenhearth, page 429

Smoke Shop, page 286

Barbarian Balloonists in the Rivergate District (page 319) offer sightseeing rides and hunting trips in their hot-air balloon.

Item	Price	Weight
Antitoxin	50 gp	—
Barometer	300 gp	2 lb.
Bell alarm	50 gp	3 lb.
Breather mask	5 gp	1 lb.
Clock, wall or mantle	50 gp	5 lb.
Clock, grandfather	150 gp	90 lb.
Collapsible pole	35 gp	5 lb.
Fire-resistant coating	15 gp	1 lb.
Leather coat (armor)	200 gp	20 lb.
Magnetic compass	450 gp	1 lb.
Match cord fuse (50 ft.)	5 gp	1 lb.
Mercury thermometer	350 gp	1 lb.
Patch paste	3 gp	1 lb.
Pill	varies	—
Pocketwatch	30 gp	1 lb.
Pressurized launcher	420 gp	5 lb.
Printing press	1,200 gp	1,000 lb.
Paper (2 sheets)	1 cp	—
Protective goggles	5 gp	1/2 lb.
Rat harness	1 gp	—
Rat hide armor	50 gp	12 lb.
Rigging boots	10 gp	2 lb.
Sextant	150 gp	3 lb.
Spectacles	15 gp	—
Spyglass	200 gp	1 lb.
Stone mask	125 gp	1 lb.
Syringe	50 gp	1/2 lb.
Tanglefoot bag	25 gp	1 lb.
Thunderstone	25 gp	1 lb.
Tindertwig	1 gp	—
Trapfinder ball	5 gp	—

Larel's Implements, page 166

Barometer: A handy weather-predicting device.

Bell Alarm: The user can set this alarm to go off at a specified time.

Breather Mask: This leather and metal mask fits over the wearer's lower face and grants advantage on saving throws against gas attacks and other attacks that involve breathing (such as a choking smoke). Price: 5 gp. (This item is usually available only in Ebbert's Outfitters in Delver's Square.)

Ebbert's Outfitters, page 192

Clocks: These timepieces are often ornate and beautiful. They require daily winding.

Collapsible Pole: This wooden pole is made up of wooden tubes of gradually diminishing circumference that collapse together, one inside the other, like a telescope. When extended, it can be used to prod unsafe floors or anything else requiring a great reach. (Invented by Ebbert Boltcrafter, this item is available only in Ebbert's Outfitters in Delver's Square.)

Fire-Resistant Coating: When applied to cloth or fibrous material like rope, this coating grants a 10 percent chance that the material will not catch fire when it normally would. If applied to clothing, it gives fire resistance to the wearer. One application covers 10 square feet (or one Medium creature's clothing); once applied, it lasts for one week or until it has prevented a total of 5 fire damage. (This item is usually available only at Larel's Implements in the Docks district.)

Protective goggles are a favorite of members of the Shuul and servants of Teun.

Leather Coat (Armor): This heavy leather coat is hard like leather armor and covers the wearer from neck to ankles. Most of them tie or button in the front and have flexible leather sleeves or no sleeves at all. Some people prefer wearing it because to a casual observer or an untrained eye it looks like a long coat rather than armor. A leather coat is medium armor, AC 13 + Dex modifier (max 2), Strength —, Stealth —, weight 20 lbs.

Magnetic Compass: This device proves extremely valuable in determining direction and keeping a traveler on the right path, whether they are making their way through the woods or across the sea on a ship.

Mercury Thermometer: A handy device for determining the temperature.

Patch Paste: This paste is normally used to patch holes in the hulls of boats and ships. It dries into a woodlike hardness in one round. The patched area has the same Armor Class and hit points of normal wood. One application covers 1 square foot of hull. (This item is usually available only at Larel's Implements in the Docks district.)

Pill: Potions can be distilled into tablet form for easy storage. Most ingested poisons also can be made into pills. The effects and cost remain the same, but the weight is negligible.

Pocketwatch: This small timepiece requires daily winding.

Pressurized Launcher: This device can project an object with great force. Although one could use it as a weapon, this is not the standard use, as firearms are far more efficient. Instead, adventurers employ it most often to fire grapnels with attached ropes up to 100 feet with great force and accuracy, even anchoring them into a stone wall. If the grapnel does not need to embed itself, it can travel up to 200 feet. If used as a weapon, it inflicts 7 (2d6) piercing damage to a single foe up to 100 feet away, but the attack has disadvantage.

Printing Press: This machine, which can mass-produce the printed word, makes broadsheets possible and has allowed books and pamphlets to become common. Paper for the press can be purchased at very reasonable prices.

Protective Goggles: This eyewear protects eyes from flying debris and provides advantage on saving throws against blinding or eye-damaging effects.

Rat Harness: Distasteful to many, this harness is made to fit around the body and snout of a typical city rat (found in vast numbers throughout Ptolus). While harnessed, the rat cannot bite, but it can move normally. A long leash attaches to the harness, allowing the rat to scurry ahead into a dangerous area before the party. The rat can trigger any traps set off by small amounts of weight but, most importantly, it sets off magical traps that can sense the presence of a living creature. Further, one can adjust the harness straps to hold the rat immobile in a little ball, either to store in a pack or to toss into a dangerous area. (Invented by Ebbert Boltcrafter, this item is available only in Ebbert's Outfitters in Delver's Square.)

Rat Hide Armor: This variant type of hide armor gives the wearer advantage on checks to disguise themselves as a ratman.

Rigging Boots: These boots give the wearer advantage on climb checks for climbing ropes. They are not compatible with a climber's kit. (This item is usually available only at Larel's Implements in the Docks district.)

Sextant: This device aids navigation. The user gains advantage on checks to determine their current position, assuming they can spend at least five minutes using the device.

Spyglass: Objects viewed through a spyglass appear twice their normal size.

Stone Mask: This alchemical device appears to be a pliable grey sheet the size of a handkerchief, but about four times as thick. When it is applied to a humanoid's face, it can be used like a disguise kit (no proficiency needed) to give the wearer a different humanoid's appearance (the mask's color even changes for this purpose). The sculpting of the mask must be finished within three rounds of when it is applied to the wearer's face; otherwise it hardens and the disguise is incomplete. The mask lasts for an hour before it begins to flake off. Stone masks are rarely found in shops and are assumed to be the creation of an unknown alchemist who hasn't yet found a suitable venue for making and selling them in larger quantities.

Syringe: This is an easy way to inject a potion directly into a creature. If the syringe is in hand and full, the wielder can attack with it as an action or bonus action (character's choice).

Tanglefoot bag: This leather bag is filled with an alchemically created paste that quickly hardens when exposed to air. If thrown, it has a range of 20/60. Any creature struck by a tanglefoot bag must succeed at a DC 12 Dexterity save or become restrained by the hardened paste. If the target is flying using wings (as opposed to magical levitation), they begin falling. The paste dries and cracks apart after 2d4 full rounds. The hardened paste can be broken early by succeeding at a DC 15 Strength check or by dealing 10 slashing damage to the paste (attacks on the paste from the targeted creature and adjacent creatures automatically hit).

Thunderstone: This alchemically created object creates a deafening burst of noise when it strikes a hard surface or is struck. If thrown, it has a range of 20/60. Any creature within a 10-foot radius of the thunderstone's noise must succeed at a DC 12 Constitution save or be deafened for one hour. Creatures with resistance to thunder damage have advantage on this save; creatures with immunity to thunder damage are immune.

For the Technology domain and new spells that affect technology, see Chapter 35: Magic.

Ratmen, page 591

Tindertwig: This is a small piece of wood with an alchemical substance on one end that bursts into flame if scratched against a hard surface. Lighting a tindertwig isn't an action. Lighting a torch or other flammable item with a lit tindertwig takes an action.

Trapfinder Ball: A character can bounce this hard rubber ball down a corridor or into a room, perhaps triggering any traps set off by pressure or proximity. If it is not obvious whether the ball would set off a given trap, the GM should assume a flat 10 percent chance that it will. (Invented by Ebbert Boltcrafter, this item is available only in Ebbert's Outfitters in Delver's Square.)

CONSTRUCTS AND SPECIAL MACHINES

Putting steam-powered constructs into a fantasy setting is easy. Simply use existing constructs, such as a shield guardian (without its Spell Storing or Shield abilities), and describe the plume of steam or smoke that comes out of a smokestack built into its back. The means of construction becomes almost entirely a flavor issue in this case, except for the skills needed to create or disable the construct (see page 528). In Ptolus, one might find steam-powered constructs guarding Dwarvenhearth or perhaps among the Shuul.

The four main types of golem in the monster book make for poor steam constructs, unless you take away their Immutable Form, Magic Resistance, and Magic Weapons abilities (which make no sense for technological constructs). Losing these abilities reduces the golem's challenge rating by 1 (for flesh golems) or 2 (for clay, iron, and stone golems).

Steam and clockwork machinery can be put to other uses as well. A manor house could have a mechanized winch to raise and lower the portcullis or an automatic device to power and enable complex traps to keep out thieves. A

Technology Groups

Technologist characters can find ready allies among such organizations as these:

The Shuul, page 126

The Sorn, page 129

House Shever, page 99

Grailwarden dwarves, page 48

The followers of Teun, Mother of All Machines, page 73

GODS OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology enthusiasts can find a number of religions in Ptolus that embrace their unique interests. Asterisks indicate a new cleric domain described in chapter 35.

Baalhazor, Demon God of Technology (chaotic evil). Death, Technology*. Originally one of the Vested of the Galchutt, this minor deity is a demon lord.

The Iron God (lawful neutral). Technology*. This mysterious deity of the old Prustan humans and Grailwarden dwarves is the god of all things iron. His image is never seen.

Teun, Mother of All Machines (lawful neutral). Civilization*, Technology*. Another old Prustan deity, Teun is the goddess of machines and technology. She is revered by Grailwarden dwarves as well as by humans.

Tevra, the Clockwork Goddess (lawful neutral). Life, Technology*. Tevra, daughter of Teun, is thought to sleep now, but will awaken one day to help restore order to the world.

technologically savvy wizard could put machines in their lab to help them move heavy equipment and conduct delicate experiments.

AELECTRICITY

Aelectricity is the pinnacle of science reached in the world of Praemal. Experts create this energy—which scholars describe as "nonmagical artificially produced lightning"—using powerful steam engines or special static chargers. It is almost unheard of in Ptolus today, and even the dwarves of Dwarvenhearth had not mastered it. At the height of the Empire, however, aelectrical lights illuminated the Imperial Palace in Tarsis. Aelectricity-powered experimental devices such as constructs, lightning weapons, and even charged barriers that shocked an intruder when touched were being developed and refined. One could smell the scent of ozone when such devices were operating and, unless muffled by magic, they made a great deal of noise.

One is likely to find only a couple of different aelectrical implements in Ptolus today. Such items are relics, no longer produced in modern times. Virtually no one knows how to create or even repair them:

- A generator-powered aelectrical light or system of lights might still exist in an older home; they are not portable, however. Price (including the generator): 1,000 gp.
- A static gun creates a 5-foot-wide, 50-foot-long line of energy that inflicts 14 (4d6) lightning damage (a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw halves the damage). It is fueled not by a steam-powered generator but by a hand-cranked one that builds up a static charge. The gun requires five rounds of cranking (an action each round) to build up the needed charge. Price: 15,000 gp.

Proficiency in firearms, page 521

In order to maintain a unique Ptolus feel, GMs are highly encouraged to sprinkle a small amount of technology throughout their campaigns. Introduce NPCs with pocketwatches or the occasional firearm, substitute pills for potions, and include broken-down machines in older areas within or below the city.

See Create Firestone in Chapter 35: Magic (page 628).

For more on firestone, see page 646.

CRAFTING TECHNOLOGY

Technology changes some aspects of your game a bit.

Working on technology is a more advanced set of skills than simple tinkering with small items or forging metal armor. If the GM allows crafting in the game, treat machinesmithing as a separate proficiency, related to smithing and tinkering. Artisan's tools for machinesmithing cost 50 gp.

Gunsmithing is likewise related to machinesmithing, but focusing more in depth on firearms and explosive powder than on wheels, steam, and strange inventions. Artisan's tools for gunsmithing cost 50 gp.

The Sleight of Hand skill takes on a new meaning in a setting with technology. Characters could use this skill to make a dragon rifle inoperable or set a magnetic compass to point in the wrong direction.

Using firearms requires being proficient in firearms.

MAINTENANCE AND FUEL

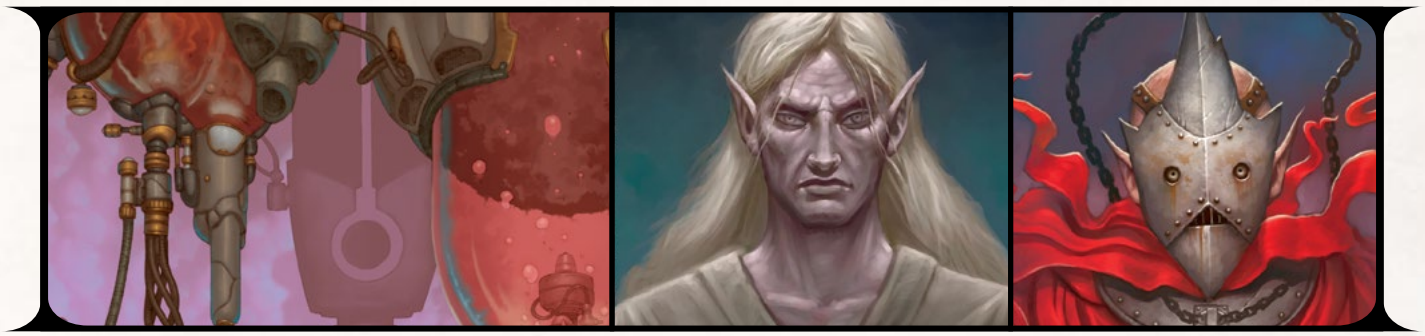
To keep a technological item functioning, whether it is a firearm or a steam-powered mechanical elevator, a character must make an Intelligence check once per month. The DC is usually 10, unless the overall price of the device exceeds 1,000 gp, in which case the DC is the price divided by 100. A proficient character using the correct kind of artisan's tools gains advantage on the check. Failing this check means the machine breaks down and someone must spend time repairing it.

Steam-powered items burn wood or coal to produce steam, or they use a special magical substance called firestone. Wood is cheap but takes a very large burner. Coal is more expensive than wood—about 5 gp worth of coal powers an item for only one day. Because firestone requires the least amount of space, it is required for steam armor and other fantastic tech items. However, each stone costs 10 gp and lasts about one day. Firestone can be created only via spell; it does not occur naturally. It is not dangerous to handle until lit, and users can light it as they would any flammable item.

Some clockwork items, like pocketwatches, are spring-driven and require no fuel, but must be wound or cranked manually.

Chapter 30:
CHAOSITECH

Most people have never heard of chaositech. Of those who have, most consider it an abomination. The Holy Emperor himself has stated that there is no greater threat to the world. A select few, however, find chaositech useful. And even fewer—chaos cultists—revere the stuff as gifts from the gods.



Chaositech: tool or creature? Blessing or curse? Gift or shackles? Chaositech is all of these and more.

The evil twin of technology, chaositech offers amazing devices fueled by raw chaos itself. The creations of the ancient Galchutt, chaositech items are coveted today by dark forces.

WHAT IS CHAOSITECH?

Chaositech enslaves even as it empowers. Its addictive nature grants the Lords of Chaos a foothold in controlling your mind, your body, and even your soul. But still the Galchutt find people willing to make these sacrifices to harness its great power. Of course, many believe they can use chaositech without falling victim to its dangers. A few are even correct.

Galchutt, page 62

Despite how it may appear, chaositech is not technology—it is technology's dark twin. It is not magic, but another power altogether. It is corruption and destruction given form. It is like nothing anyone in your campaign has ever seen before.

Most chaositech items are fairly straightforward devices made of steel, glass, and other inorganic substances. Many such devices bear a design or embellishment that makes them look organic, while others incorporate organic parts, such as actual skulls, bones, fleshlike coverings, membranous sacs, and so on. For this reason, some people call these devices the "bones of steel" (see below). A more aberrant type of chaositech is entirely organic based, but examples of such perversions of living organisms are quite rare.

Chaositech is a very scarce class of item in Ptolus. Characters can't buy it in a store—they can only find it in the Dungeon or receive it as a gift from an ally or organization. Most people in the Empire—even those in authority—don't know it exists, and the Church of Lothian does all it can to cover up word of its presence in the world. Those who see chaositech firsthand assume that it's magic. As a remnant of ancient days, chaositech can't be created, and only a rare few can repair or modify it. (It's thought that only the Galchutt themselves can make it, so no one even tries.)

BONES OF STEEL

The chaositech devices fashioned from steel, wire, and glass seem more straightforward than other types of chaositech, because they look rather like devices that people are already familiar with, such as crossbows or clockwork machines. These are the chaositech devices that virtually anyone can just pick up and use—if they can figure out how to work them. So many of those desiring chaositech seek these types of devices first. Chaos cultists use the term "bones

Created by the Galchutt as tools for their servants, most chaositech has lain dormant in subterranean caches around the Spire until recently, when activity in these underground areas has increased significantly.

Tribes of goblins are said to dwell near the Prison, led by bugbears and armed with a few discovered remnants of ancient chaositech. See Chapter 20: The Undercity, page 394.

Nowhere in the world can one find a greater accumulation of chaositech items than in the Vaults of the Rhodintor. These sealed caverns are inhabited by Galchutt-created demons who even now prepare the way for the Lords of Chaos. See Vaults of the Rhodintor (page 421) and Caches of Chaositech (page 420) in Chapter 22: The Caverns.

Galchutt, page 62

Eager to spread chaositech, some of the goat-headed rhodintor demons work with the lich Aggah-Shan on his Machine in his lair beneath the White House in Oldtown. See chapter 14, page 310.

of steel" as a secret code phrase for this type of "familiar" chaositech.

The bones of steel tap into chaotic energies and harness them, but, in terms of basic operation, they are still machines. Those with the proper training can refuel, repair, or even sometimes modify these devices using specialized tools. Iron bolts and clamps hold the mechanisms together. Their interiors are a jumble of wires, tubes, and spinning apparatuses bewildering to the eyes of most people—but then, most people rarely see a chaositech device at all, let alone open one up to look at the insides.

When hefted, the bones of steel feel cold and give off a tingling sensation that sets most folks' teeth on edge. A few users complain of headaches or muscle aches in the hands or arms (specifically, the hand holding the device). When activated, chaositech devices are rarely subtle. They make strange, unearthly noises, flare with arcing energy, and sometimes give off odors—usually a powerful metallic smell or the stench of acrid chemicals.

Bones of steel items are frequently called non-intrinsic devices, because they are not meant to fuse with a creature's body. These inorganic items draw on the power of chaos to produce strange and often dangerous effects. In the hands of someone who knows how to use it properly, a non-intrinsic chaositech device might appear to be magical.

The truth is actually much stranger.

THE CONSEQUENCES

Unquestionably, the use of chaositech carries consequences, despite the benefits and power it offers. The first is the terrible curse of mutation. Close proximity to chaositech over an extended period often results in physical and sometimes mental mutation. These mutations permanently warp a creature, leaving behind the indelible mark of chaos.

The second, perhaps even more insidious consequence is the fact that using chaositech can open one up to the influence of the dark powers behind it: the Lords of Chaos known as the Galchutt. Without caution, chaositech users end up the slaves of these terrible masters.

Most people consider chaositech unstable and unreliable. Using it involves many random elements, and there is no way of knowing when a device will fail, run out of power—or, worse, explode in the user's face.

LOOK AND FEEL

Chaositech is an alternative to technology, powered by chaos. Visually, even tactilely, its curves and lines seem alien. GMs should note that even if a device sounds like a "laser gun" or a "gas mask," it shouldn't look like one. Thanks to the influence of chaos, the form does not always logically match the function. Chaositech doesn't follow the laws of reality or the edicts of logic, either in its abilities or in its appearance. Many of the devices go beyond strange to the slightly disturbing. All of them are, at least at first, very mysterious.

As previously stated, chaositech has an organic appearance—even devices made of steel and other inorganic materials. When describing an item to players, feel free to incorporate insectoid or reptilian characteristics into its look. Means of activating chaositech are rarely as straightforward as a trigger or a switch, although the descriptions in this chapter sometimes use such words for simplicity's sake. Instead, a device might include a part the user sticks in their mouth and activates with their tongue, a membranous sac the user has to squeeze, or a small panel that one must tap in a certain sequence. Some parts of a device might seem utterly extraneous, their function never fully understood.

Many items also have a chaos symbol etched into them or hanging from them like a charm. Some might feature extra spikes, spines, or other dangerous-looking bits.

RIGORS OF CHAOS

Dealing with chaos is difficult and dangerous. Chaositech is no different, though it may appear to be simpler and safer than it really is. Chaositech devices frequently fail—and sometimes they fail spectacularly, exploding in the hands of the character attempting to use them. Worse, the mere presence of chaositech can cause deformity and mutation as the chaotic energies seep slowly from the device and leech into creatures and objects of normal matter.

CHAOTIC FAILURE

When a character makes a roll to use a non-intrinsic chaositech device, a natural die roll of 1 indicates that the item is drained of power, no matter how many or how few uses it has seen since its last refueling. Such is the unpredictable nature of chaos. If the device has no roll associated with its use, roll 1d20 when activating it. If it has no set activation, or if it goes for a long time between activations (such as with armor), make at least one roll daily to determine whether the device fails when it is used. Unused devices (sitting on a shelf, for example) require no rolls. You need not keep track of uses or charges with a chaositech device—the user simply waits until it fails. In effect, most chaositech devices have twenty uses. Some item descriptions specify how often checks should be made.

CHAOTIC BACKLASH

If a device fails, make another d20 roll. In the case of another roll of 1, the device overloads, explodes, or melts down in a dramatic and dangerous way, inflicting 10 (3d6) damage on anyone within 10 feet (a successful DC 18 Dexterity saving throw reduces this to half damage, but the character touching the item gets no save). The device is destroyed in the case of such a backlash.

RAW CHAOS

All chaositech is powered by raw chaos, a viscous fluid that appears at once to be dull grey and a gleaming mass of every scintillating color that exists. Raw chaos is perhaps one of the most dangerous substances in the universe, destroying everything it touches if not handled properly. It is normally stored in grey chaos storage cubes about 3 feet to a side. These cubes are perfectly smooth and featureless.

Only a siphon or a *siphon* spell allows one to remove raw chaos from the cube. Puncturing or destroying the cube (AC 19, 50 hp) releases the chaos in one burst, inflicting 70 (20d6) force damage in a 100-foot-radius sphere. Raw chaos ignores resistance, immunity, and vulnerability, treating all matter and all flesh the same.

Raw chaos itself is destroyed as it destroys whatever it touches.

A splash of raw chaos inflicts 35 (10d6) damage on anything it touches—the matter simply burns away in a cloud of steamy vapor. Raw chaos spilled on the floor may eat through the floor. If it inflicts damage in excess of the floor's hit points, it continues down to the level below (if any) and burns whatever is there.

Immersion in raw chaos inflicts 70 (20d6) damage per round.

Exposed raw chaos consumes even the air, given enough time. Left in a perfectly sealed 10-foot cubic chamber, a small bit of raw chaos would destroy all the air in the room in about five hours, leaving nothing but vacuum.

REPAIRING AND MODIFYING CHAOSITECH

Unless the GM decides otherwise, one can repair or modify chaositech devices with the right materials and tools. Chaositech tools are as strange and alien in appearance as chaositech itself. Without the proper training, most people could not even identify some of them as tools, let alone discern their functions. Most have pointy, jagged parts that make them appear sinister and dangerous.

Repairing or modifying most chaositech requires proficiency in chaositech tools. Some chaositech items, such as implants, call for use of the Medicine skill for performing surgery as well.

GMs should not allow player characters to create their own chaositech. Let it all be leftover creations of the Galchutt from long ago. Limiting characters from gaining proficiency in chaositech tools is one way to accomplish this goal. However, limiting access to the materials required to create the items works as well. The latter choice allows characters to repair damaged chaositech or identify a chaositech item without giving them the opportunity to build new ones.

If you are proficient in chaositech tools, you can repair or modify chaositech devices, as well as identify and activate newly encountered chaositech safely. The rolls to do any of these actions are always Intelligence-based.

To attempt to modify a chaositech device with this skill, a character must have the proper

Siphon, page 537

The siphon spell appears in Chapter 35: Magic (page 633).

The dark elves value chaositech, which they call avalashax (literally, "impossibles"). Alevolenz of Ul-Drakkan seeks these items for her people in the subterranean realms. See Ul-Drakkan in Chapter 22: The Caverns (page 424).

Chaositech enthusiasts can find ready allies among the chaos cults (page 75) and the followers of Baalhazor, Demon God of Technology (page 71). Originally one of the Vested of the Galchutt, Baalhazor is the lord of chaositech.

The Conciliators, a group within the Church of Lothian, leads the effort to root out the chaos cults and to destroy all chaositech they find. See Chapter 4: Cosmology and Religion, page 71.

Chaos storage cube, page 535

Most of the time, the corrupted Charad Titans stayed underground, where some of them spent their lives hoarding chaositech. It is unknown whether any of them still survive today. See The Age of the Elder Titans in Chapter 5: History, page 81.

Some zaug deep below the city have been using the chaositech created by their former masters, the Galchutt. See Kastralathakasal in Chapter 22: The Caverns (page 422).

tools. Outfitting a full chaositech laboratory costs 10,000 gp. One suitable only for repairs costs 1,000 gp. Either version counts as a set of chaositech tools.

Modifying a chaositech item works similarly to crafting a magic item (as described in the core rules), except it uses a modification cost instead of a creation cost. The modification cost of the item is as follows:

MODIFYING CHAOSITECH

Item Rarity	Modification Cost	Minimum Level
Common	35 gp	3rd
Uncommon	175 gp	6th
Rare	1,750 gp	6th
Very rare	17,500 gp	11th
Legendary	175,000 gp	17th

Halfway through the modification process, the GM should have the character roll an Intelligence check, with a modifier on the die roll equal to the opposite of the character's Wisdom modifier. For example, if the character has a +2 Wisdom bonus, they have a –2 penalty on the Intelligence check; if they have a –1 Wisdom penalty, they have a +1 bonus on the Intelligence check. Failure means the modifications have gone awry and the character must start over; success means the modifications are working as intended and the character can proceed through the remainder of the modification process.

Parameters: Through modification, one cannot change an item into an item of a different type. For example, a character can change one kind of emitter into another or alter its activation method, but cannot modify an emitter to become an implant or a chaos storage cube.

Repairing Items: Generally, you can repair an item using the same process as modifying an item, but the repair cost is only half the modification cost.

As with modifying chaositech, repairing it requires rolling an Intelligence check (modified by the opposite of the character's Wisdom modifier) approximately halfway through the process. Success means the repairs can be completed as normal; failure means the item is completely destroyed.

CHAOS SURGERY

You can perform surgical procedures to implant chaositech into the body of a living creature or replace portions of a living body with chaositech. Each type of chaositech implant or replacement has its own Medicine DC, and the procedure for each one requires a specific length of time to perform.

To make a chaos surgery attempt, a character must have the proper surgical tools (including a scalpel, grips, and cutters); a number of small clamps, probes, and needles; strong thread, wire, and more; as well as various herbs and chemicals. The surgical kit costs 1,000 gp. If the environment is not conducive to healthy, distraction-free work, the character has disadvantage on the Medicine check. This would include a filthy area, one in which there are noises or other disruptions, one in which the patient cannot remain still throughout the procedure, and so on. (A filthy area may also force the subject to make a Constitution saving throw to resist disease, at the GM's discretion.) As with modifying chaositech, the surgeon's Intelligence check is modified by the opposite of their Wisdom modifier.

If the character fails the skill check, the procedure is a failure. The subject takes 27 (5d10) slashing damage and gains 1d6–1 levels of exhaustion. They must still wait through the recovery period noted for the implant before taking strenuous action (or undergoing another procedure). If the procedure involved replacing a healthy portion of the subject's body, that portion is now gone and cannot be reattached.

A character cannot perform chaos surgery procedures on themselves.

CHAOSITECH ITEMS

Below are some sample chaositech devices. The items described here are not magical and their effects cannot be dispelled. Spells that offer protection against magical effects, such as *nondetection*, do not work against similar chaositech devices. Of course, spells that provide an AC bonus still apply against chaositech item attacks, and spells that provide energy resistance or immunity work against that kind of damage from a chaositech device. As a rule of thumb, when an effect specifies spells or magic, you cannot extrapolate that such an effect applies to chaositech as well.

Chaositech items can be made into magic items using the normal rules for crafting magic items.

Many, many more weapons, armor pieces, bombs, and other devices can be found in the *Chaositech* sourcebook.

ACTIVATING ITEMS

Using a chaositech device is rarely easy or straightforward. Usually, strange switches, levers, dials, or even more obtuse mechanisms are involved. Sometimes one lever must be activated just right in order for another switch to function at all, or to function safely. Other devices have two switches that the user must activate at the same time. There is no internal logic to it, and even two devices with the same function might have different appearances and different means of activation.

A character who finds a chaositech item and wants to figure out how to use it has two options:

- Use the *identify device* spell. (A generous GM may allow *identify* to work on chaositech items, but, technically speaking, the spell reveals only the magical properties of magic items.)
- Examine and experiment with the item. The character makes an Intelligence check (DC 15), with the following modifiers (all relevant modifiers apply):

Modifier	Condition
+1	Character is extremely chaotic or maybe even a little insane (GM's discretion).
+1	Character has used or dealt with chaositech before.
+2	Character has used or dealt with a chaositech item similar to this one before.
+5	Chaositech item's use is straightforward or obvious (such as goggles).
–1	Character is extremely lawful and logical.
–2	Character believes the item to be magical.

Success means that the character can activate the item. They still might not know what it does (unless its function is obvious). Trial and error is probably the best way to discover what an item does, once a character has determined how to activate it. Failure on the check means that the character doesn't understand the item and can't use it until they get assistance from someone

The differences between chaositech and technology are obvious to anyone observing either. No one with even the remotest understanding of either discipline would confuse the two. However, some people might look at chaositech and mistake it for magic. In fact, even learned observers might not realize that chaositech is present without the use of an appropriate divination spell. A device that throws lightning bolts, for example, would certainly appear magical to just about anyone in the city without specific chaositech-related skills. Yet when spells able to detect magic fail to reveal a magical aura for the device, a knowledgeable observer might suspect chaositech. Such savvy people are very few in number, however, as chaositech is still very much unknown.

Identify device, *page 630*

with more knowledge, or until they make another check the next day. A character who rolls a 1 on the check accidentally activates the device; if it is a weapon, they very likely inflict damage upon themselves or someone nearby in the process.

All chaositech items differ slightly from one another, and they are all bizarre in appearance and use. The GM should stress that these devices aren't all that much like modern-day technology. They weren't created on an assembly line or mass produced, and they weren't made to be used easily, particularly by those with stable, ordered minds.

Some chaositech devices require no activation but are "activated" simply by wearing them. This simple use-activation is straightforward. Other methods of activation include the following:

Switches: Most non-intrinsic chaositech devices are activated via a switch. A common switch type is a small plate that fits into a creature's mouth, connected to the device by a thin tube or cord. The user bites down on the plate to activate the switch. (This does not impair speech.) Other common switches include a glass panel that one taps or a rotating ball that one turns. Activating a switch is not an action (it is part of the action of using the item). Weapons with a switch activation take the normal amount of time to use in an attack. A character that can make multiple attacks in one round with a conventional weapon can do so with a switch-activated weapon.

Lever or Unique Control: Some non-intrinsic chaositech devices have more complex controls, such as a small lever with multiple positions, a cord that one must pull (often to a specific length), or a liquid-filled bag that one must squeeze. Activating an item this way is an action.

Throughout the Ptolus underworld, the mysterious name of the Surgeon in the Shadows strikes fear into the hearts of listeners, even though the vast majority of them do not understand exactly what it is that he does. To the uninitiated, he simply uses unknown but painful processes to change people, sometimes giving them new forms or additional powers. He is, in reality, a skilled chaositech surgeon who uses forbidden techniques to rebuild people into monstrous creatures and implant chaositech devices in the willing—and, often, the not-so-willing. Certain individuals, such as Malkeen Balacazar (page 103), are beginning to understand the value of paying the surgeon's large fees in order to enhance their elite bodyguards and enforcers with his horrific processes.

The Surgeon in the Shadows plays a significant role in The Night of Dissolution *adventure (see page 11).*

Chaos bombs

Headclamps: Some chaositech devices the user can control mentally, through a tube or cord connected to a headclamp.

ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

ATTACK SPHERE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This device appears to be a steel sphere about 10 inches across and weighing 10 pounds. When you use a bonus action to toggle its lever, it rises up into the air, floating under its own power, but remaining in your space as tiny slits open in its surface, producing blades, sharp points, and hooks. It attacks one creature of your choice within 5 feet of it. The sphere uses your attack roll and ability score modifier to damage rolls, but it has advantage on its attack.

While the sphere hovers, you can use a bonus action to cause the sphere to attack one creature within 5 feet of it.

After ten rounds, the sphere retracts its weapons and tries to return to your hand. If you have no hand free, it falls to the ground at your feet. It also ceases to hover if you grasp it or move more than 30 feet away from it.

CHAOS STORAGE CUBE

Wondrous item, uncommon

This is the grey power battery for all chaositech devices. It has AC 19 and 50 hp. Other than storing power for chaositech devices, and perhaps its use as an accidental explosive if opened, it has no functions and has no means of activation. It weighs 100 pounds.

DEVICE DESTABILIZER

Wondrous item, uncommon

This is a long rectangular device with a cone-shaped dish at one end. It uses chaotic energies to foil the workings of conventional (non-chaositech) devices like locks, traps, clockwork mechanisms, and so on. When you use its lever to activate it, it emits a 30-foot cone. You roll 2d20 for each device in the area.

If the total of your roll equals or exceeds a trap's DC, the trap is disabled. If the total exceeds a lock's DC, it opens. For other items (such as a clock), the GM assigns a DC, usually between 15 and 20, with more complex items having a higher DC.

A clockwork creature in the area must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw; it takes 10 (3d6) damage, or half that amount with a successful save. This damage represents its mechanisms locking up or failing, and isn't subject to damage resistance or immunity.

The device destabilizer's effects are permanent—the mechanism stops working until it is repaired.

The destabilizer weighs 10 pounds.

DISEASE INCUBATOR IMPLANT

Wondrous item, uncommon

Body implants like this one are additions made to a creature's physical form through surgical procedures. They are always additions, never replacements. They are usually made of grown flesh components, but can incorporate steel plates, wire, tubes, or other inorganic parts. This implant is often used by the cultists known as the Plagueborn. You have this item surgically implanted within your chest, and it collects any and all disease-bearing contagions that enter your body, even those your body normally would ignore as insignificant. You become immune to disease. Meanwhile, the disease incubator fosters and nurtures the diseases within it. After a month, you can inflict these diseases on a creature by making a melee attack to touch them; this attack is usable once every two days. With each use of the ability, the GM should choose a disease randomly (such as cackle fever or sewer plague). The creature you target with this disease attack must make a DC 17 Constitution save or contract the disease.

If you are killed, the incubator bursts open in a 10-foot sphere. All creatures in this sphere must succeed at a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or contract a random disease (as if you had used your disease touch attack on them). This damages the incubator but does not destroy it; it can be repaired and implanted within another creature.

It is a DC 25 Medicine check to implant this device in a creature. The procedure takes ten hours and the recovery period is one week.

DISRUPTION RAY EMITTER

Wondrous item, rare

This item is usually a long, metallic rifle-like object activated by a lever, and it weighs about 5 pounds. It fires a ray of chaositech energy that disrupts flesh on a cellular level and causes great pain. The ray harms only creatures of living flesh and has no effect on undead, objects, or creatures not made of flesh (such as an iron golem). A living flesh target struck by the ray takes 10 (3d6) damage and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain disadvantage on attacks, saves, and checks for the next 1d6 + 4 rounds due to the pain. The weapon's range is 70/210. Some of these items are fitted with a bayonet.

The Night of Dissolution adventure features a number of chaositech items. Many of the player characters' foes are armed with chaositech devices. GMs might do well to foreshadow the existence of this type of item before the adventure begins.

Plagueborn, page 76

Chaos Bombs

The various bombs described here are one-use weapons that explode in a sphere, affecting all within that area. Each chaos bomb has a switch. Once activated, it detonates at the end of the character's turn—leaving just enough time for the user to throw the bomb or to drop it and move away before it explodes.

Chaos bombs vary wildly in appearance and size but are not the same as the strictly technological bombs described in the previous chapter (page 523). Unless otherwise mentioned, the effects of bombs are instantaneous. They are thrown weapons with range 20/60.

Raw chaos, page 531

Chaositech Rarities

Chaositech items use the same rarity categories as magic items, which are used to determine their power level relative to other items; a rare chaositech weapon is about on par with a rare magical weapon. However, in most campaigns, in terms of frequency of finding them in the hands of NPCs or as treasure, chaositech items will be far more rare than magic items. The GM can represent this by treating chaositech items as one category more rare than the item's description. For example, if a random treasure roll indicates a rare magic item, it might be appropriate to instead include an uncommon chaositech item.

The dark elf Shilukar conducts experiments in chaositech in his lair beneath the Guildsman District. This lair and some of his projects are described in Chapter 33: Adventures.

Using a chaositech item in Jabel Shammar earns a character 1 corruption point. (See page 468.)

Swarm of insects: *22 hp*

DOCILITY BOMB

Wondrous item, rare

This bomb detonates with a 20-foot-radius silent flash of white light. All creatures in the area must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw; a failed save means they become docile, peaceful, and calm. They are unable to take actions other than to move (at half speed), speak, or defend themselves. This docility lasts for 2d10 + 5 rounds; attacking a docile creature ends the effect for that creature only. The bomb weighs 1 pound.

DRILLING SPEAR

Weapon (spear), uncommon

This chaositech weapon bears a strong resemblance to a standard spear. The head, however, looks like a drill tip, and below that along the shaft is a small mechanism. When you use a bonus action to activate its switch, the tip rapidly rotates with a drilling motion. A drilling spear inflicts 5 (1d10) piercing damage. If you attack an object with the spear and also use your bonus action to hold it firm against your target as it drills, you gain advantage on the attack roll, and if you hit, the attack is a critical hit.

The drilling spear is otherwise identical to a regular spear; you need to be proficient only with simple weapons to use it.

EMOTION READER

Wondrous item, uncommon

This rectangular device is about 3 inches long, 2 1/2 inches wide, and 1/2 inch high, with a strap to attach it to your wrist and a cord connecting it to a headclamp. Altogether it weighs about 1 pound. When you point the reader at a target within 30 feet and use an action to mentally activate the headclamp, it analyzes the target's posture, heart rate, perspiration, brain activity, and other factors to sense the target's general emotional state. This information is transmitted to you telepathically through the headclamp, and for the next minute it gives you advantage on Perception checks to understand the target's motivation, as well as to Intimidation and Persuasion checks to influence the target.

This item checks for chaotic failure every time you activate it.

HARROWER

Wondrous item, rare

This horrible weapon fires off a stream of razor-sharp metal shards at a fantastic rate, either in a line or in a cone. You can use an action to change the weapon from a line to a cone attack or back again. You activate it by using an action to flip a switch. When configured for a line attack, the shards fly in a line 100 feet long and 2 feet wide. Any creature in the area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw; those who fail take 21 (6d6) slashing damage.

When configured for a cone attack, the shards fly in a 60-foot cone. Any creature in the cone must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. The cone of shards inflicts 14 (4d6) slashing damage, or half that amount with a successful save.

A typical harrower weighs 6 pounds and requires two hands to use.

INFESTATION BOMB

Wondrous item, rare

This bomb's explosion releases about a hundred tiny insectlike constructs made of metal in a 10-foot-radius sphere, each animated and powered by chaos. The bugs scurry about for one round. Any creature in that area gains disadvantage on all rolls due to distraction and annoyance. On your turn the round after it explodes, the constructs spread out to a radius of 20 feet, and creatures in this larger area gain disadvantage. They persist for one more round after that, then burn out, blackening to become inert bits of metal. The cloud of insects has the stats of a swarm of insects, but they do not attack or take actions other than to distract and annoy creatures in the area. The bomb weighs 3 pounds.

Chaos bombs

MADNESS BOMB

Wondrous item, rare

This bomb explodes in a 10-foot-radius sphere, releasing a thin and greasy dark grey vapor. Creatures in the area must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw; failure means they become confused and unable to determine what to do. Each round, the GM should roll for each creature on the following table to see what they do that round.

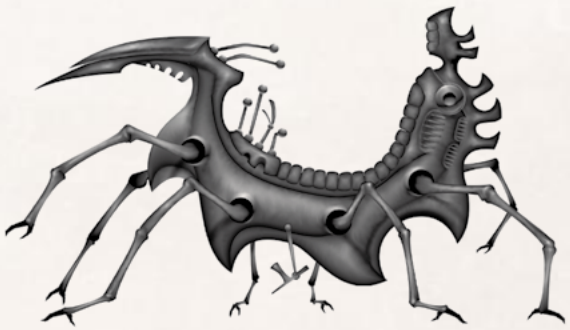
d10	Behavior
1	Make a melee or ranged attack against whoever threw the bomb (or a random creature if it doesn't know who threw it).
2	Move and act normally.
3–5	Don't move or take actions.
6–7	Flee from whoever threw the bomb (or in a random direction if it doesn't know who threw it)
8–10	Make a melee attack against a random creature within reach (or do nothing if there is no creature within reach).

A maddened creature that can't carry out the behavior determined by the d10 roll does nothing on its turn but babble incoherently. If a maddened creature was attacked in the past round, instead of the GM rolling for its behavior, the creature attempts to attack its attacker on its next turn. At the end of each of its turns, a maddened creature can make a new Wisdom saving throw; if it succeeds, the madness ends for it. Otherwise, the madness lasts for 1d10 + 10 rounds. The bomb weighs 1 pound.

SIPHON

Wondrous item, uncommon

One end of this black tube can be inserted into any chaositech device. The other end fits into a chaos storage cube in order to refuel the device. See the *siphon* spell for more details. This item never needs to check for chaotic failure. It weighs about 1 pound.



SPIDERY WALKER

Wondrous item, very rare

This item is about the size of a small cart—5 feet long and 3 feet wide—with eight spiderlike legs, each about 3 feet long. The whole thing weighs 500 pounds. The body of the device is fitted with a single seat, with straps to secure you in so you don't fall out. Using the levers and other controls arranged around the seat, you can ride in this walker. The spidery walker is a Large object with the following statistics.

Armor Class: 17

Hit Points: 100

Speed: 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

The spidery walker can move on virtually any solid surface, including walls and ceilings. It is as strong as a warhorse and can carry or drag heavy loads. Steering the walker uses your action, but once it is moving, you don't need to use your action again unless you want it to stop or turn. A check for chaotic failure is required for every seven days of use.

This device/vehicle is useful for wounded or disabled characters, for those who move slowly, or simply for those who don't care to walk.

VOID BOMB

Wondrous item, very rare

Perhaps one of the rarest chaositech devices, and certainly one of the most dreaded, this bomb creates a 5-foot-radius sphere of utter blackness. Creatures in the area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. Those who succeed are able to move just past the edge of the area, to the safest location possible (GM's discretion), and are unharmed. Those who fail must make a DC 17 Constitution save. Creatures in the area take 75 (10d6 + 40) force damage, or half that amount with a successful save. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, it is disintegrated.

All unsecured items within 20 feet of the edge of the sphere are pulled toward it, with the speed of this movement depending on the weight and shape of each item. A shield easily slides 20 feet, but a metal statue might topple over and move only 10 feet. Anything pulled into the sphere of blackness takes damage as if it had failed its save, and is disintegrated if this damage reduces it to 0 hit points.

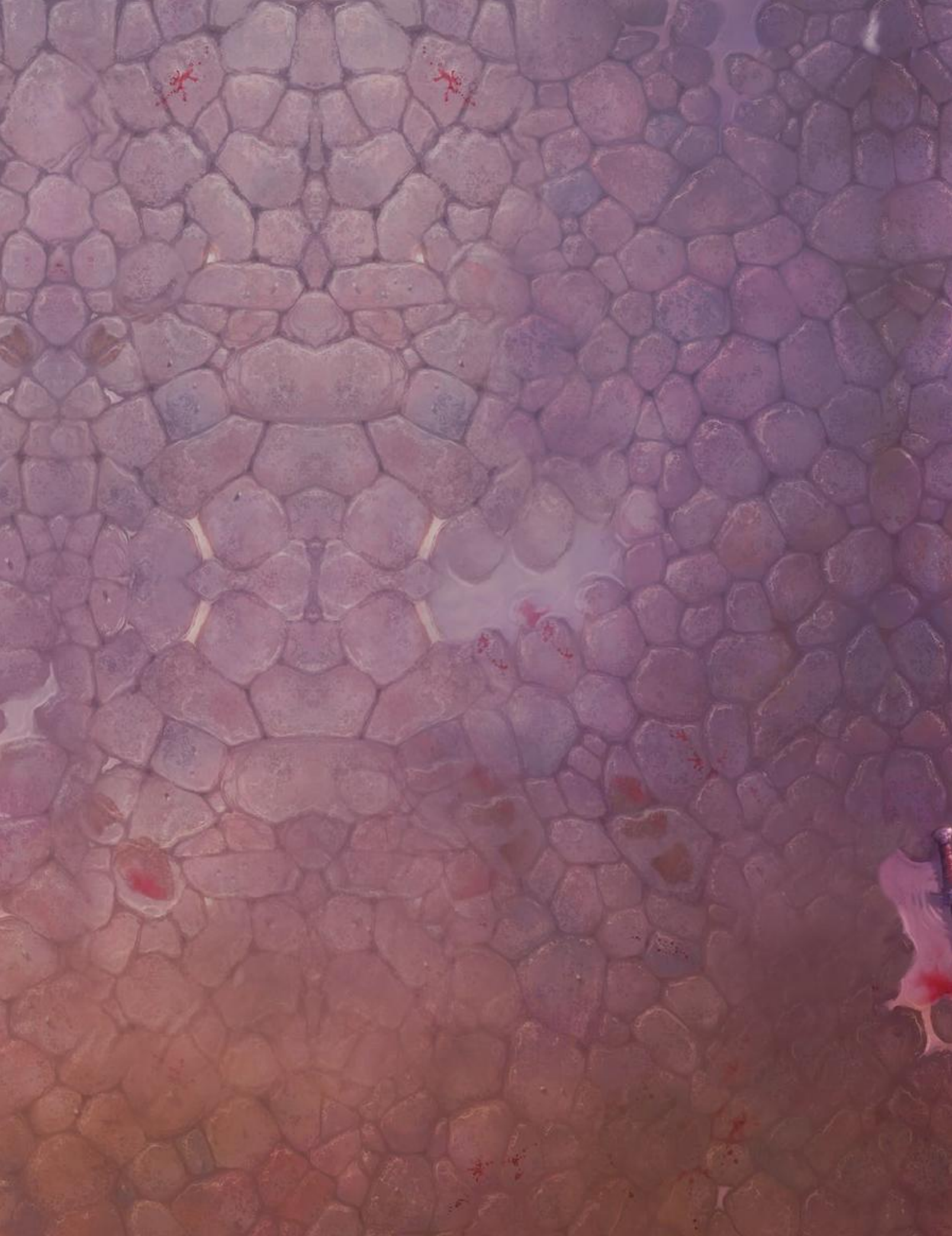
The black void remains for 1d6 rounds and continues to damage creatures within it (who must save each round they remain there) and pull unsecured items toward it (which automatically take damage if they enter it).

The bomb weighs 3 pounds.

Chaositech is usually found in the hands of chaos cultists, dark elves, or characters and creatures that have been plumbing the depths below the city. For example, a goblin band may have found a single chaos bomb, an adventurer might have a useful device, or a ratman might carry around a piece of burned-out, broken chaositech.

An emitter

Chaos storage cube, page 535
Siphon *spell, page 633*



PART VII:
RUNNING A PTOLUS CAMPAIGN

This, the final part of the book, is for GMs only. It discusses how to plan and run a campaign in the Ptolus setting, lays out some differences between urban campaigns and other types, and presents a series of exciting linked adventures set in the streets of Ptolus to get your campaign started. Part VII also offers some valuable new rules material: an assortment of monsters, magic, and character options needed for a Ptolus Campaign.

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Chapter 31:

CAMPAIGN ADVICE

You hold in your hands a wealth of information about the city of Ptolus and all the related areas above and below. And while it may make for an interesting read, first and foremost it's here so that GMs can use it to create campaigns for their players.

GMs can use Ptolus in many ways. With the backdrop provided by the evil Galchutt, they can run many different epic campaigns. On the other hand, the background on the city's organized crime groups makes a gritty, street-level campaign just as good a possibility. It all depends on the kind of campaign you want to run.

This book contains chapters on different areas of town, encounter areas above and below the city, the land's history, organizations, and more. And every one of those chapters is rife with adventure possibilities. How does a GM put all of this together and boil it down into a cohesive campaign? This chapter offers advice for assembling the material in the rest of the book to create your own Ptolus Campaign.

WEAVING A CAMPAIGN

Well, the first step is easy. Chapter 33 of this book is an entire chapter of adventures that take starting player characters to 3rd or 4th level.

Chapter 33: Adventures, page 554

Beyond that, it's up to the GM to string together adventures, encounters, adventure seeds, sites, and NPCs to build their Ptolus Campaign. To help, this book offers many fully fleshed-out locations that can be used for further adventures, including:

- The Dark Reliquary (see Chapter 12: Necropolis, page 223)
- A ratman nest (see Chapter 21: The Sewers, page 411)
- Kadmiel, the Shade Tower (see Chapter 14: Oldtown, page 303)

So the material is there; the GM just has to organize it. As the GM, you can create an overarching theme for your Ptolus Campaign, or you can let the city itself be the theme and mix and match adventures as needed. Some potential campaign themes are described hereafter.

THE DUNGEON CAMPAIGN

For lovers of dungeon delving and all things subterranean, Ptolus offers plenty of options. Such adventurers might want to start out hunting ratmen in the sewers, which can eventually lead them to encounter a whole nest of the creatures (in Chapter 21: The Sewers), which in turn can lead to the Temple of the Rat God (in Chapter 17: Temple District) and maybe even the Temple of the Ebon Hand (also in the Temple District).

Low-level dungeon delvers can raid the Halls of Cordaris (see Locations Within the Labyrinth in Chapter 19: What's Down There?) or deal with criminals and thieves who have set themselves up beneath the city somewhere. The player characters can explore some of the many ancient crypts beneath the city that are likely filled with zombies and ghouls.

Once the characters approach the **middle levels**, Dwarvenhearth (see chapter 23) is the obvious setting for many, many adventures. Of course, exploring Dwarvenhearth ensures that the PCs run afoul of the dark elves already there (with more wanting to get in). Following the dark elves down to Ul-Drakkan, perhaps with a stop at the locathah cavern (see Chapter 22: The Caverns), can lead the adventurers to Nluguran and Ul-Sinistar, for a great campaign finale geared toward the restoration of Dreta Phantas (all of which can be found in Dark Elf Caverns in chapter 22).

Of course, freeing Dreta Phantas takes **high-level** characters to Goth Gulgamel (see chapter 24) to get to the heart of the Elder Elf city via the Entropy Sphere. Next the delvers head to the Throne of Darkness to recover the Dreaming Stone (see Caverns of the Galchutt in Chapter 22: The Caverns). And lastly, the characters must head to either the Jewels of Parnaith (Chapter 25: Jabel Shammar) or the Dark Reliquary (Chapter 12: Necropolis) to get the *cask of frozen dreams*.

A dungeon-themed campaign like this would be interesting to run with an all-dwarf (or mostly dwarf) group of characters focused on restoring their former home and proving themselves worthy of it again. Taking a different tack, the party could be all or mostly all elves out to oppose their ancestral enemies, the dark elves, in every way possible.

Locathah cavern, page 420
Nluguran and Ul-Sinistar, page 424–425
Dreta Phantas, page 425
Ratman nest, page 411
Temple of the Rat God, page 363
Goth Gulgamel, page 452
Temple of the Ebon Hand, page 354
Entropy Sphere, page 463
Throne of Darkness, page 422
Halls of Cordaris, page 392
Jewels of Parnaith, page 485
Cask of frozen dreams, page 637
Dwarvenhearth, page 429
Ul-Drakkan, page 424

The Runewardens from the original Ptolus Campaign (from left): Canabulum, Serai Lorenci, Aliya Al-Mari, Zophas Adhar, Shurrin Delano, Sister Mara von Witten, and Udalaag the half-dragon, half "something else."

THE SPIRE CAMPAIGN

One might construct an entire campaign around Ptolus's most dramatic feature, the Spire. In such a campaign, the scenarios in Chapter 33: Adventures take the player characters to around 4th level. After that point, you can start *The Banewarrens* adventure if you choose to. The intricacies of the Banewarrens take PCs to 9th level or higher. Having explored the Banewarrens, the group may decide to try to get into Jabel Shammar (see chapter 25). To do so, they might seek out an entrance (or clues to an entrance) in different locations, including Goth Gulgamel (chapter 24) and maybe the Jewels of Parnaith (chapter 25). The Spire Campaign finale comes when the characters finally gain entrance to Jabel Shammar and explore that fortress of ancient history and great evil.

The Banewarrens *adventure, page 11*

Spire, page 150

THE RISE OF CHAOS

In many ways the quintessential Ptolus Campaign, the Rise of Chaos involves the growing threat of the chaos cults and the ultimate awakening of their ancient masters, the Galchutt. Such a campaign should start out innocently enough: clues gleaned from investigations of the ratmen in the sewers lead to the Temple of the Rat God and the Temple of the Ebon Hand (both in chapter 17). This theme also can use some sections of Chapter 33: Adventures. All the while, the player characters should hear rumors or read prophecies of the coming Night of Dissolution, the return of the Vallis moon, and other portentous foreshadowings.

The Night of Dissolution *adventure, page 11*

Night of Dissolution, page 62

Vallis moon, page 42

Fallen, page 109

Forsaken, page 111

Citadel of the Seven Chains, page 64

Chaos cults, page 75

Galchutt, page 62

If you choose to, you can follow the events of *The Night of Dissolution* adventure. By its conclusion, the PCs will know all about the rise of the Galchutt and the involvement of the Fallen and Forsaken. The latter discovery takes them into the Dark Reliquary (in Chapter 12: Necropolis) to learn more and hopefully strike a blow against the evil there. Eventually, the characters may want to restore the captive Calista's memories (see the box opposite) and learn how to truly put a stop to the Galchutt's plan to destroy the world. This goal leads them to the city of Dreta Phantas far below Ptolus (see Dark Elf Caverns in chapter 22) and to the Citadel of the Seven Chains on the invisible Vallis moon far overhead.

THE STREETS CAMPAIGN

Far different than a save-the-world campaign, the Streets Campaign gets the player characters mixed up with the criminal elements of the city. They wind up involved with the gang war waged between the Balacazars and

Balacazars, page 102

CALISTA, THE DREAMING STONE, AND THE CASK OF FROZEN DREAMS

A number of possible campaigns could involve Calista, a prisoner in the Dark Reliquary. When she was a child, Calista received a visitation by the Elder Gods. They told her of their plan to save the world when the true Night of Dissolution finally came and the Galchutt rose again.

The Elder Gods knew that when the Vallis moon returned, the Galchutt would awaken. When they did, they would break the Seven Chains and destroy the soul of the world (see Elder Gods). The gods' plan was to destroy the chains themselves, but transfer the soul of the world to the ancient elven city of Dreta Phantas. The world would be saved, but with the Seven Chains severed it would be "unsealed"—open to all the other worlds of the multiverse.

Thus the Galchutt would escape, but the Elder Gods would be ready for them with a new prison plane—this one without any living creatures forced to serve as the "wardens." The Elder Gods would force the surprised Galchutt into this new prison plane before they knew what was happening. However, the plan could succeed only if the chains were broken at exactly the right time, and if the Galchutt were not the ones to do it.

Once the Elder Gods told Calista their plan, they sealed up her memories with magic so powerful that only someone using both the Dreaming Stone and the *cask of frozen dreams* could unlock them. Not coincidentally, the Dreaming Stone and the *cask of frozen dreams* are exactly what the Dream King needs to restore the lost elven city of Dreta Phantas to its original place on the surface, where it can become the new home to the soul of the world.

The idea, then, was that some heroes would come along and help Calista regain her memories, recover the stone and cask, restore Dreta Phantas, and learn that they need to travel to the Vallis moon to destroy the Seven Chains. It was a complex plan, but if the Elder Gods attempted anything more overt, the Galchutt or their servants would learn of the plot and thwart it.

Lilith, mistress of the Dark Reliquary, was the possible weakness in their plan. Extremely perceptive and crafty, she learned long ago that Calista knew something important, so she kidnapped her and imprisoned her in the dungeons beneath the Dark Reliquary. There Lilith spent years trying to learn who Calista was (or see who, if anyone, would come to rescue her).

Eventually, Lilith will learn of the importance of the stone and the cask on her own. She will bring the demon lord Savvan out of the Jewels of Parnaith, likely using the rift that leads to the land of Kem. With him comes his *demon-sealed box* and the cask within it. They will place the box in the Chamber of Riven Souls in the Dark Reliquary for safekeeping. Eventually, if nothing stops them, they will bring Calista and the cask to the Dreaming Stone. Once they learn of the Elder Gods' plans, they can wait until the Galchutt awaken and present them with the knowledge, as well as Calista, the box, and the stone, hoping for a reward. Nothing can save the world then.

Player characters can learn of Calista's importance through dreams sent to them by the Elder Gods, through divinations cast to learn of a way to stop the Night of Dissolution, or by talking to Praemus the Creator at the end of the Jewels of Parnaith.

Calista, page 238

Elder Gods, page 61

Dreaming Stone, page 423

Cask of frozen dreams, page 637

Restoring Dreta Phantas, page 427

A campaign in which the PCs rescue Calista and discover and act upon her secret knowledge would be the ultimate epic campaign, allowing the characters to have a role in reshaping the world.

Savvan, page 487

Chamber of Riven Souls, page 233

Jewels of Parnaith, page 485

Kevris Killraven, either by siding with one or the other or by being caught in the middle. Such a campaign might spring from the PCs' need to find and/or infiltrate the headquarters of the Longfingers Guild. They run afoul of various important criminal entities (or ally with them), including House Rau, House Vladaam, Dark Leaf, the Vai, and Shigmaa Urasta (see Chapter 6: Organizations), and maybe even the Commissar himself, just to name a few. The truth is, on some level, just about everything in Ptolus is linked to crime.

Player characters in this campaign might have been wronged by the criminal element ("Malkeen Balacazar killed my father!") or they might just want to clean up the streets. Ironically, those who side with the lawful elements in the city for aid might eventually find that even the lawful Shuul have allied themselves with Killraven.

Alternatively, the PCs in a Streets Campaign might be small-time criminals themselves, members of the Longfingers Guild, or somehow involved with crime in the city without opposing it directly.

Kevris Killraven, page 119

Longfingers Guild, page 123

Longfingers Guild Headquarters, page 400

CAMPAIGN HOOKS AND GOALS

An urban campaign like one set in Ptolus offers many possible objectives for player characters. While these options may not be enough to base an entire campaign around, they can become an important part of the game nonetheless.

House Rau, page 97

House Vladaam, page 100

Dark Leaf, page 108

Vai, page 131

Shigmaa Urasta, page 545

Commissar, page 140

OWNING A BUSINESS

The player characters pool their money and open a shop. They start their own tavern. They create a mercenary company. They provide a bodyguard service. The sky's the limit when it comes to the kind of thing the PCs can do to create their own enterprise. The business, if

Shuul, page 126

successful, can offer them an income in addition to gold earned through their adventures.

Of course, owning a business requires startup capital. And businesses have to be maintained or they lose money rather than make it. The PCs will have to decide how involved they are going to be in this enterprise. Do they take an active role, or do they hire NPCs to maintain day-to-day operations? Perhaps they are just investors or managers. Or perhaps they are the foundation upon which the business is based. If a magic item creation service requires that the group's wizard make the items, that limits the time the PC can spend off on adventures (and of course, running such a business would incur the wrath of the Dreaming Apothecary). If the business *is* the PCs and the moneymaking efforts *are* the adventures (such as with a mercenary company), that's one thing. But a more pedestrian business that requires much of the group's time can prove an obstacle to going on adventures.

Dreaming Apothecary, page 116

Businesses have competitors, who sometimes use shady means to get ahead. Businesses also face taxes, crime (from theft to extortion), and a multitude of other threats.

OWNING A HOME

Though it may seem a small goal, owning a home is something that player characters seem to do only rarely in most campaigns. Perhaps this is because in a traditional campaign, the PCs move around quite a bit. Owning a home suggests, if not requires, that the group settle down and stay in one area for much of the time.

Owning a home requires a great deal of money. Will the player characters all share the same home, or will they each have their own place to live? The PCs might need to hire servants to keep the place up (and, if they store valuables there, protect it) while they are on adventures.

GETTING A JOB

"Adventurer" is an occupation, at least in Ptolus, but some player characters might gain employment elsewhere. A warrior could serve as a bodyguard or a tactical advisor for an important personage in the city, for example. A druid might tend the gardens of a wealthy noble. A PC could work in a shop or labor as an artisan of some kind to fill the time between adventures and earn some money.

Having a job requires a time commitment on the part of the character, but it also earns a little extra income and can provide the PC with a way of gaining information and contacts they otherwise would not have. Working as an assistant trainer in the Arena, for example, a character might overhear interesting adventure leads or make friends with a valuable ally among the other trainers.

Arena, page 292

BELONGING TO AN ORGANIZATION

Player characters can join one of the many groups or orders in Ptolus, from the Knights of the Chord to the Keepers of the Veil, from the Longfingers Guild to the Inverted Pyramid (see Chapter 6: Organizations). They also can become heavily involved with a religion, as either clergy or laity. Joining an organization provides benefits, usually in the form of training, information, and protection. Most such groups provide the PCs with a place to go and maybe a place to live.

Of course, belonging to an organization can carry its share of responsibilities and obligations as well. Sometimes a group will request some of the character's time or a share of their money. They may send a PC on specific missions, which can be a great hook for adventures for the whole party.

A family can be an organization, after a fashion. Player characters in Ptolus could easily fall in love, get married, and start a family. Having a family can provide the same kinds of benefits and obligations as any other organization.

GAINING PRESTIGE AND POWER

Some characters might want to join the ranks of the influential in the city. Making a fortune helps with this goal a great deal, and establishing a reputation as a hero while gaining that wealth doesn't hurt either. Such PCs need to learn the ins and outs of the city; in particular, they need to meet people who wield influence and power—and that doesn't just mean nobles and rulers. It also means the heads of organizations and enigmas like the Iron Mage. Player characters out for prestige will have to attend all the right parties and functions to meet with important people, and they will have to do favors for them to get ahead and earn respect and esteem.

Iron Mage, page 316

CAMPAIGN VILLAINS

Many good campaigns have recurring villains. For our purposes here, we'll use the term "campaign villains," as these opponents figure in more than one adventure in the campaign and pop up time and again. Sometimes the confrontation is direct, and other times it is more indirect. A campaign villain might be behind the bandits the player characters have been dealing with, even though they didn't know that at first.

Other Campaign Themes

The Holy War

The PCs all belong to one religion that is directly opposed by another religion in the city. Adventures deal with intrigues between the two clergies, spying, sabotage, recovering an important lost relic, and all-out conflict with the opposing religion.

War With the Barbarians

The barbarians of the east march across the land and lay siege to Ptolus. Adventures deal with defending against the attackers, handling spies and saboteurs, and launching counterattacks against the barbarian camp. (It might also lead the PCs to learn the real reason the barbarians are here and compel them to deal with that.) You can learn more about this in The Night of Dissolution *adventure (see page 11).*

The Magic Campaign

The player characters (all spellcasters) join the Inverted Pyramid and discover magical mysteries including the Pits of Insanity, the Entropy Sphere, and more.

The Political Campaign

The PCs join a group interested in declaring Ptolus's independence from the Empire. Adventures are full of intrigue, spying, convincing others to join the cause, sabotage, and hiding from the Empire until the time is right.

Ptolus offers many good campaign villains. Here are some of the best.

HELMUT ITLESTEIN

A very atypical villain, Helmut Itlestein is not evil. In fact, he spends almost every waking moment working for what he believes is best for the city. What makes him a villain is that he has no qualms about committing heinous acts for what he considers good reasons. Helmut will hunt down and execute children who are born runebearers because he has seen visions telling him they will bring doom to the city. He strongly believes that the ends justify the means. He is not faultless, as evidenced by the extramarital affair he is having with a young woman named Phon.

Helmut leads a fledgling organization in the republican movement. He's also the high priest of a fairly sizable and influential temple, the Watcher of the Skies. He would love to topple the Empire, but he'll settle for achieving independence for Ptolus—even if it means assassinating the Holy Emperor or the Commissar to do it.

HOUSE VLADAAM

An ancient noble family with tainted blood, House Vladaam has its hands in all manner of evil. The members of this clan are the kind of people who like to handle their affairs directly, cheating, stealing, and killing as needed. The head of the house, Iristul, is almost never around; he searches for the six *hungerswords*. His children involve themselves indirectly with the cults of chaos, with attempts to get into the Banewarrens, and with the Balacazar crime family. They would do anything to discredit or destroy their rival noble houses.

KEVRIS KILLRAVEN

Kevris Killraven is literally a monster who associates with monstrous creatures. She also heads up a vast criminal organization. Should the player characters wind up opposing her, they will have encounters not only with hired muscle, tough thugs, and assassins, but also with troglodytes, trolls, and efreet. Moreover, with her control of the Sorn and links to the Shuul, having Killraven as an enemy ensures a wide variety of foes for the PCs to contend with.

MENON BALACAZAR

An obvious long-term villain, Menon Balacazar runs a criminal empire. Inexperienced player characters will hear his name spoken in back alleyways as they fight against his thugs. If they cause him too much trouble, powerful assassins or dark magic-wielding agents may descend upon them over the course of the campaign. Menon is interesting because he is no real threat himself, yet he is one of the most powerful men in the city.

Helmet Itlestein, page 363

RAGUEL AND LILITH

Raguel and Lilith make for interesting villains because, while Lilith is dark hearted to the core, Raguel is not. The lord of the Dark Reliquary is just trying to decide the best course—mostly the best one for him, but in a way the best course for everyone. Lilith, meanwhile, has forged ties with evil organizations across the city, from the Forsaken to the Balacazars to House Vladaam. Crossing these two earns the enmity of all the demons in the Dark Reliquary.

Raguel and Lilith, page 110

Dark Reliquary, page 223

Forsaken, page 111

Phon Quartermain, page 557

Republican movement, page 142

SHIGMAA URASTA

Shigmaa Urasta is here to reinforce the idea that the Forsaken make excellent villains overall. They are truly despicable and utterly unsympathetic. Encounters with the Forsaken also ensure a hefty dose of undead in the campaign. The player characters probably won't be able to handle a direct encounter with Urasta until they are very powerful, but they can hear about her and encounter her minions over and over.

Shigmaa Urasta, page 113

Watcher of the Skies, page 362

House Vladaam, page 100

SHILUKAR

The dark elf Shilukar is a plotter and a manipulator. He uses others like puppets on strings, and his schemes are vast and complicated. He thinks six steps ahead of everyone else, moving others into positions that will prove useful to him months later. Even if the player characters confront him directly, he's sure to have some contingency to keep them from attacking him. Ultimately, Shilukar wants power for himself. He doesn't care who gets hurt, but neither is he vindictive or cruel—surprising, for a dark elf.

Shilukar, page 563

Hungerswords, *page 639*

Cults of chaos, page 75

Banewarrens, page 389

Kevris Killraven, page 119

Sorn, page 129

Shuul, page 126

Menon Balacazar, page 103

THE PTOLUS BOOK

This book has many components—especially in the packet—to make your adventure-running life easier. See the appendix for a rundown of all these handouts, maps, and more, along with suggestions for how to use those elements in your adventures.

Kevris Killraven

Chapter 32:

URBAN CAMPAIGNS

An urban campaign is very different from a typical campaign in which the player characters move all around the continent, traversing the wilderness as well as stopping in settlements. This chapter gives a brief overview of some things to keep in mind as you plan and run a campaign set in Ptolus.

Running an urban campaign offers some unique challenges compared with running, say, a dungeon campaign or one set in the wilderness. The sections that follow describe those challenges and offer suggestions on how best to conduct a campaign set in a city like Ptolus.

THE URBAN ADVENTURE

Although Ptolus offers plenty of opportunities for dungeon forays, truly urban adventures have a flavor unique unto themselves. The dungeon adventure is primarily an exploratory affair of venturing into the unknown. Urban adventures aren't usually about exploration, because the environment isn't unknown (a trip to the Warrens being a notable exception).

The typical urban adventure involves a mystery of some kind, either a straightforward one (who killed the constable?) or a more convoluted puzzle (what's the connection between Blackstock Printing and the Shadow Eyes?). This typical type of scenario may involve a fair amount of interaction with NPCs (using diplomacy and investigative skills along with some bluffing and perception to see if an NPC is lying, and maybe even intimidation), includes some study and investigation (using various knowledge skills, research in libraries, consultation with sages), and likely ends with a big fight.

Blackstock Printing, page 328
Shadow Eyes, page 323

Another way to look at the difference between urban adventures and other types is to outline them. One could sum up a typical dungeon adventure in this way:

Exploration ⇒ small fight ⇒ exploration ⇒ small fight ⇒ exploration ⇒ big fight

One could break down an urban adventure like this:

Interaction/investigation ⇒ interaction/investigation ⇒ interaction/investigation ⇒ big fight

Of course, "interaction/investigation" can cover a lot of territory. It can mean one skill roll involving diplomacy or gathering information, or something as complex as tailing a suspect, casing a building, or searching an entire house for clues. And course, some of those latter activities might lead to combat. It's not hard to sprinkle a few small fights into the urban adventure flow.

One way to break out of this pattern is to vary the outline a bit. Have a brand-new adventure start off with action: the player

characters are attacked by a powerful force. They win the fight, but they still don't know why they were attacked. The quintessential beginning for such an adventure in Ptolus is to have the PCs attacked by Vai assassins. Assuming the characters survive, they still have to figure out who hired the assassins and deal with that person so they don't keep facing more attempts on their lives.

Urban adventures can be very reactive: an NPC does something, and the player characters react. It doesn't have to be that way, however. GMs can encourage the PCs to be proactive. Proactive characters pick a goal and then figure out how to reach it. For example, the PCs might decide they want to start their own thieves' guild. This requires them to find a headquarters, recruit members, and deal with the existing thieves' guild, the Longfingers. Rather than wait for that guild to act upon them, however, the characters could attempt to put it out of business somehow—maybe by putting its leaders to the sword, if they're particularly ruthless, or perhaps by doing what they can to destroy the relationship between the Longfingers Guild and its benefactor, House Rau.

BALANCING URBAN ADVENTURES

GMs should remember that a typical urban adventure's combat encounters are more spread out in time than in other types of adventure—instead of several combats in one day, there might be zero or one combats per day for several days in a row. This fact, coupled with the close proximity of healing resources and other types of assistance in the city, means the PCs should be able to handle much more difficult encounters. Do not be afraid to have them face a challenging or very challenging encounter as part of a city adventure, particularly if it's the only such encounter they'll have that day.

However, keep in mind that this approach to balance runs a greater risk of PC fatality. Encounters in general will become more touch-and-go, more outright challenging. Rather than a number of moderate encounters, player characters will run up against fights that they decisively win or that soundly trounce them. This kind of campaign truly tests their mettle, encouraging them to use their resources differently than they would in a non-urban campaign. In other words, if you're going to have only one combat encounter today, there's no reason for the characters to conserve their resources. They'll use their best abilities and magic items to give themselves the best possible chance at winning, knowing that afterward they can head to a temple of Lothian for healing and then home to sleep in their beds.

STORY ARCS, PLOT WEAVING, AND ONGOING THREATS

Urban adventures lend themselves to story arcs rather than brief encounters or single-session adventures. In other words, something of import will happen, which leads to something else, which leads to something more. For example, in breaking up a fight in a tavern, the player characters might discover that one of the combatants dropped a map with some notes. Some investigation and study the next day confirms it as a map of Hammersong Vaults, and the notes suggest that someone is planning to break in. The PCs turn the papers over to a grateful Ollam Hammersong, who suspects it's from a criminal gang led by a troglodyte named Durant. He offers the characters a reward if they'll break up the gang. The PCs ask around, find Durant, and go after him. Of course, Durant is a lieutenant of Kevris Killraven, so the adventurers end up making some powerful enemies. . . .

Sometimes, a GM will weave two urban adventures together. They may not be related, but the player characters have to deal with them at the same time. A pair of woven adventures might look like this:

Interaction/investigation A ⇒ interaction/investigation B ⇒ interaction/investigation A ⇒ big fight A ⇒ interaction/investigation B ⇒ big fight B

The encounters are staggered in time, so the player characters can deal with one plot and then the other. Of course, the PCs should have some say over which thread of the woven adventures they deal with, but it's easy for the GM to put up a roadblock in one story arc and present them with new avenues to follow in another. Avoid doing this too much, however, or the players may feel like the campaign is nothing but a dozen or more unresolved plot threads.

As the Hammersong Vaults example shows, it's often more difficult in an urban adventure to tell when the adventure is actually over. The story arc can just keep going and going. Sure, if it's a mystery and the mystery is solved, that's obvious. But if the opposition is a group of Sorn sorcerer-assassins, it's next to impossible to kill all of them—it's not like being able to clear a dungeon full of orcs. The PCs' conflict with the Sorn may come back to haunt them weeks or months in the future. Occasionally, though, it's good to provide the characters with some closure. If they have been fending

Vai assassins, page 131

Never underestimate the value of combining a typical urban adventure with a typical dungeon adventure. The availability of both scenario types is, after all, one of Ptolus's strong suits. The characters' investigations might reveal that they have to go down below the city to get at the heart of their mystery. A clue in the Dungeon could send them up to the city to interact with people who can give them important information.

Hammersong Vaults, page 299

Longfingers Guild, page 123

Durant, page 119

Kevris Killraven, page 119

House Rau, page 97

Some mysterious villains in the streets and alleyways of Ptolus wear masks while they commit their crimes.

Sorn, page 129

The Company of the Black Lantern from the original Ptolus Campaign (from left): Gaerioth Shadowhand, Sercian Lorenci, Vexander Sangreal, and Tellian Riverborn.

House Vladaam, page 100
Smoke Shop, page 286
Forsaken, page 111

Lady Nagel, page 97
The Prison, page 405

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

off attacks from agents of House Vladaam for weeks, have the Vladaams obviously turn their attention elsewhere, or present the PCs with the opportunity to either bring down House Vladaam once and for all (a drastic step!) or negotiate some kind of détente with them.

Remember that permanently eliminating a threat to the PCs—like the Forsaken, the Killraven Crime League, or House Vladaam—only serves to cut off a source of future campaign plots. Try to achieve closure without ridding Ptolus of all the bad guys. Bringing down one powerful evil organization like that should be the culmination of an entire campaign and serve as a fitting climactic encounter. In addition, it offers the characters a unique reward: the satisfaction that they made an important difference in the city.

Another thing you can weave into your adventures is some of the scenario ideas presented throughout this book. These scenarios tie together with locations, groups, or individuals described in the various chapters. Perhaps the best way to use these scenario ideas in creating your urban campaign is in a spontaneous fashion. Don't feel that you have to plan to use them ahead of time, but if in the course of the regular campaign the characters go to a particular place or meet a certain person, you can use the scenario in response.

For instance, take the scenario involving the Smoke Shop in the North Market. If the PCs get involved with the staff there, plug the scenario into your campaign then. In this way, the player characters never feel like they're being led to adventures, but that adventure waits for them wherever they go.

That said, some of the scenarios do require a bit of planning, such as the one involving escorting Lady Nagel to the Prison, as presented in the Nagel Estate section of chapter 12. So, as you plan your story arcs and multiple plotlines, don't neglect the opportunities presented by the scenario nuggets in locale, organization, and character descriptions.

URBAN REWARDS

Magic items, gold, and other typical treasures are of great value in an urban adventure, just as in any other scenario. But don't overlook another potential reward: the respect of a powerful individual or organization. For example, slaying a mighty vampire can earn the admiration of the undead-fighting Keepers of the Veil. That admiration could turn into assistance, healing, or free information later on, when it's needed.

Over the long term, becoming a known entity in the city can also reward a group's accomplishments. A good reputation can get a

person more than free drinks in the tavern—it can lead to job offers from wealthy clients or such special boons as a *thoughtstone*. Eventually, these kinds of rewards can turn into positions of authority. A PC might be invited to join the Twelve Commanders, for example.

"Treasure items" can take on a different meaning in a Ptolus adventure as well. Imagine the value of a ledger showing the names and addresses of an Inverted Pyramid mage's contacts in the city, or a map showing all the Sorn cells' headquarters.

ALLIES, AID, AND HEALING

In a city like Ptolus, the player characters enjoy nearby resources that they don't have while exploring a remote jungle or delving deep into a dungeon. First and foremost, the remedy for virtually any wound or malady is readily available to those who can pay for it—from blindness to curses to diseases. So no harmful condition will be lasting, even if dealing with it would normally be beyond the PCs' power. Even a group of afflictions that render a character nearly helpless can be fixed by a trip to the Temple District, and the heroes can be back in the adventure in an hour or two. This is both a boon and a bane to the campaign. On one hand, the whole adventure isn't derailed if a player character fails an important roll against an enervating spell or poison. On the other, debilitating conditions become a minor annoyance or a monetary drain rather than a real threat.

Likewise, if the characters need information or advice, they can just go down the street (more or less) and get it. If an adventure involves a foreign text in a mysterious language, the PCs can almost certainly find a translator somewhere in the city with relative ease. If an adventure involves ancient lore, they can go to the library that very day and look it up. Information is readily available.

Further, if the adventurers are hunting a ghost, they can go to the Keepers of the Veil and ask for a few knights and clerics to accompany them. That's what the Keepers *do,* after all, so it's difficult to imagine that they will say no. Of course, they *can* say no. Perhaps they are busy with their current missions at the moment, or maybe the PCs just don't seem trustworthy. Or perhaps the Keepers insist on taking care of the problem without the adventurers—they condescendingly pat the party members on the head and reassure them that *they'll* take care of it if the PCs just go back to their homes. But in the cases where it makes sense to give the party some NPC assistance, let it happen. Have the Keepers of the Veil go with the characters, and then increase the challenges they face together. Use the knights as cannon fodder, and kill them off in gruesome ways to add to the flavor of the adventure and heighten the danger.

Over the course of an urban campaign, the player characters should learn that help is there if they really need it, but that it's available only to those who establish themselves as trustworthy and reputable. More importantly, they should learn that most influential people in Ptolus respect those who take care of problems themselves, rather than turning over the responsibility to others.

Of course, another option for PCs looking for allies is to just pay mercenaries or other adventurers to accompany them or take care of the problem. This often proves an unprofitable solution, as the player characters end up paying out more than they earn. In addition, it runs the risk of giving the PCs a bad reputation if the people they hire or recruit never come back alive.

In the end, GMs should prepare for all these possibilities. They should expect that the PCs will take care of debilitating conditions, get the information they need, and maybe even recruit help. If a GM understands the resources at the characters' disposal, there will be fewer surprises in store down the line.

Thoughtstones, *page 158*

Twelve Commanders, page 140

Inverted Pyramid, page 114

Sorn, page 129

Use the elf Celdore Silverwood of Dark Leaf (see page 108 in Chapter 6: Organizations) as a neutral go-between to negotiate a "peace" between the player characters and any of the criminal groups in the city.

GM TIPS

Beware of overdoing the danger to NPCs who assist the party—you don't want the PCs to assume that their helpers will always die.

Divination magic can circumvent or replace some or all of the steps involved in gathering bits of information. Don't let that bother you. If the PCs have access to such resources, just plan on it when preparing the adventure.

Goldshield, page 144

URBAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

GMs should try not to set up their expectations for what their urban campaign will be like until they have seen the characters. Players likely will create their characters differently, they will balance with each other differently, and they will have different capabilities. But one thing is true: the mix of characters indelibly shapes a Ptolus Campaign, making one potentially quite unlike any other.

TYPES OF CHARACTERS

While characters like sneaky rogues and chatty bards are tailor-made for urban adventuring, GMs will discover that spellcasters truly shine in city adventures because the PCs have far more control over when and where they will face encounters. This means that spellcasters are more likely to expend their resources all at once rather than conserving them. Urban adventures, as opposed to dungeon adventures, are far less likely to have multiple dangerous encounters in rapid succession in one day.

The strength of many martial-oriented characters, whether straightforward combatants like warriors, reckless berserkers, or backstabbing rogues, is that they often have few or no resources that deplete over the course of an adventure. A warrior can swing their sword as many times as they wish over the course of one day, and as long as they don't take too much damage, they can handle many encounters, one after another, without difficulty. The fact that this kind of adventuring does not happen often in a city virtually negates this strength, however.

The GM needs to remain aware of this issue. Occasionally creating urban adventures with multiple encounters, or mixing in more dungeon-style scenarios with the urban adventures, helps restore balance. Some GMs may want to offer treasure that gives the "nonexpendable resource" characters interesting, nonstandard abilities. For example, maybe the warrior's cool magic sword is made of stone and can create a magical wall of stone once per day. Now that warrior can take advantage of the same situational benefits (fewer encounters) as the group's spellcasters, even if in a small way.

SKILLS

In an urban campaign, it's difficult to overstress the importance of skills like bluffing, diplomacy, gathering information, knowledge on various topics (especially local gossip), and being able to read an NPC's attitude. The PCs likely will use these skills over and over again, so characters who have these skills might seem to have an advantage. However, what this really means is that characters who have a strong assortment of these skills—which typically do not quite measure up in a dungeon-oriented campaign—have more to do in an urban campaign than they would in a more standard one.

GMs might see forgery and similar skills get more use than normal in an urban campaign. They also might need to apply some often-ignored rules such as using sleight of hand to hide small objects.

MAGIC

Don't forget that some of the magical abilities player characters might have used often in previous campaigns, like using mind control (even weak stuff to get a better deal from a shopkeeper) or animating the dead, are frowned upon or downright illegal in Ptolus. PCs who use such abilities may be in for a rude awakening. Characters who routinely skulk about the city invisibly will likely draw unwanted attention from groups like Goldshield. Characters who disrupt traffic on a major road with a magical web or a conjured wall of stone face hefty fines, at least. In an urban setting, magic can have unexpected repercussions.

PLOTTING URBAN ADVENTURES

Chapter 33: Adventures presents a number of Ptolus-specific adventures you can run. But how do GMs create their own urban scenarios?

It's useful to think about adventures as bits of information, one leading to the next. The GM needs to think about how the PCs will get each bit of information so that the campaign can continue. For example, say a band of ghouls has moved out of the catacombs below the Necropolis and into the sewers beneath the South Market. That's the final bit of information (actually, it's not, but keep reading). But where does the adventure start? Not with the bit about the ghouls, because how could the player characters know that?

Instead, the adventure starts with something that the PCs could know. They could know, for example, that there's a rash of missing people in the South Market. This is the first bit of information and, since it's something that many people could know and be concerned about, it suggests a hook for how the party members get involved: someone comes to them to ask for help in uncovering the truth behind the disappearances. It could be someone who is interested in the problem in general, or it could be someone interested in a specific disappearance that affects them directly—a husband who has lost his spouse or a woman who has lost her friend.

If the PCs accept the task, they've got to get to the next bit of information, which is that the people were forcibly taken. They can discover this either from clues found at the missing people's homes (by searching for signs of a struggle) or from eyewitness reports of those who saw figures dragging off a victim or two (gained by talking to and convincing witnesses, or listening to the local rumor mill).

The next bit of information is either (1) The people were taken by ghouls, or (2) The people were taken into the sewers. The player characters can learn these facts again by looking for clues (investigating the scene of the abduction) or eyewitness reports (again, using diplomacy, threats, or just knowing the right people to talk to).

Once they learn that they need to look for the missing people in the sewers, it's time for the characters to take action. At this point, they may or may not know they're going after ghouls. The next bit of information is the last one: the exact location and condition of the abducted victims. You can prepare the ghoul lair and the combat encounters that happen when the PCs finally track down the creatures.

Now that you've got the general idea of how the adventure will flow from bit to bit, throw in some red herrings. Maybe the player characters are led to believe that the abductors are ratmen in the sewers, or slavers, because of a misleading word or clue. You can also prepare extraneous but interesting encounters. Maybe the adventurers do run into hostile ratmen when they go down into the sewers. Maybe a living member of the Forsaken attempts to hamper the PCs' efforts while they're still in the city above.

Ratmen, page 591
Slavers, page 399
Forsaken, page 111

Lastly, you've got to be ready for the characters to come up with a surprising scheme. Will they set a trap for the abductors, waiting for them to strike again? Will they use a divination spell to track one of the missing? You've got to give this a bit of thought. Player characters do the darnedest things.

Of course, not every urban adventure involves a mystery. Say, for example, a cleric in a new temple in the Temple District has been confronted by Balacazar agents demanding extortion money. The cleric comes to the PCs asking for help. There's no mystery to solve. The characters know who the bad guys are and what they're up to. But they still need to track information bits that can reveal how to stop them. The characters might start by using chatty skills or personal contacts to learn about the extortionists and their hangouts. They'll have to go and observe them to learn even more. Then, they might try a variety of options: confronting them directly, alerting the City Watch, or contacting other NPCs for help. They might even come up with a plan to convince the criminals that extorting money from this particular temple isn't in their best interests. Ultimately, the PCs reach the final bit of information on their own and ask themselves: Is helping the cleric worth making an enemy of the Balacazar organization?

In either case, just as a dungeon adventure flows along, taking the characters from one room to the next, the urban adventure flows along, taking them from one bit of information to the next—from one discovery to the next. Think of the adventure as steps toward the PCs' ultimate goal, and plan it one step at a time. They might not take all the steps you expect, they might skip steps, or they might invent whole new steps. Nevertheless, breaking the adventure down into small bits of information makes it easier to manage and prepare.

Balacazars, page 102

Enemies and Allies

As the campaign progresses, the PCs may develop a long list of ongoing enemies and allies. This is because, unlike when facing a dragon or a band of orcs, it's almost inconceivable for the PCs to take on and eliminate the entire Balacazar crime organization or all the Forsaken in the city. No matter how successful the party may be in fighting the Vai, there will almost certainly be more of these assassins to cope with later.

The GM should keep careful track of these enemies and allies and use them as the campaign progresses. Enemies reemerge to challenge the PCs when they least expect it, either by happenstance or with premeditated revenge in mind. Allies show up to both offer help and ask for it from time to time. Sometimes they stop by just to talk or share a meal.

PTOLUS RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

When putting together an urban adventure, it's always important to leave room for random encounters: chance person-on-the-street meetings that could entail anything from a minute's conversation or a bit of local color to a brief fight or even the spark of a whole new adventure.

The Ptolus Random Encounter Matrix is included in the packet items.

Random street encounters are possible in any district of Ptolus. You'll find the Random Encounter Matrix in the packet. If you're interested in a random encounter, first roll d100. Find the number you rolled in the left-hand column of the matrix, and read across in that row till you arrive at the column for the appropriate district. The result will be a number. (Some results have a different number for daytime and nighttime encounters.) Flip through the numbered encounter descriptions on the sheets until you find the description for your result. There's your random encounter.

Random encounters below the city have their own separate tables on pages 410 (the sewers) and 416 (the caverns).

This matrix isn't meant to generate every creature the player characters pass by as they wander the streets. Instead, it generates potential encounters—the events that happen within the district. Most of them are not combat encounters, although some could be. Some of these events might lead to adventures all their own. Others can be used simply as flavor, perhaps presented after the fact. For example, the GM might roll for a Warrens random encounter, getting a result of 160: "Teenagers pelt passersby with eggs." In such a case, the GM might tell the players, "On your way to speak with Madame Kaethea, some kids throw eggs at you and other passersby on the street from the roof of one of the dilapidated tenements. Probably their only form of entertainment. Nice place, huh?"

GM TIPS

Take a particular tavern, shop, restaurant, or city square that the PCs frequent, and make that a familiar touchstone. It's where the characters gather before a mission, where they hold prearranged meetings with NPCs, and where—at least eventually—others know they can find the PCs. Although this touchstone place can be almost anything, the Ghostly Minstrel in Midtown (see chapter 10, page 193) was created specifically for this purpose. Other choices might include the Griffon (page 196), the statue in Delver's Square (page 188), or the old Clock Tower in Oldtown (page 296).

Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind when generating random encounters in a district of Ptolus.

- Ignore results that make no sense in the current situation.
- Don't use the encounters every time the PCs move from place to place. A good rule of thumb might be to use one street encounter per game session, or perhaps one every other game session.
- Use them only if whatever is going on in the game can handle a potential interruption.
- Don't overuse any one encounter, but don't be afraid to run an encounter twice—just change some of the details first.

Firehouses are located all over the city, usually near Watchhouses. Each one has ladders, buckets, and other tools needed to fight fires. Firehouses are marked on the Ptolus poster map and individual district maps with this icon: . The Fire Brigade usually responds to an alarm within thirty minutes.

For more information, see Fire Brigade in Chapter 7: The City by the Spire (page 144).

HANDLING DANGEROUS EVENTS

Some urban events, such as raging fires, angry mobs, and panicked groups, require special rules.

FIRE!

Fire is a dangerous threat to densely populated regions like the districts of Ptolus. To make fighting a fire an exciting encounter, GMs can treat fire like a mindless monster. A fire has 25 hp for every 5-foot space it occupies. It is AC 10, has a +0 bonus on all saves, and has the following abilities:

Fire Form. The fire can move or attack through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. A creature that touches the fire or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Flame. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

The fire makes two Flame attacks each turn at random spaces adjacent to it; if that space has a creature, the fire attacks the creature instead of the space. A fire that fills a 15-foot-by-15-foot space (or a fire of similar size that isn't an exact square) has advantage on its attacks and (at the GM's discretion) might have additional attacks per round.

A fire is immune to all attacks that don't smother it or reduce its temperature, effectively limiting creatures' options to actions that inflict cold damage, using water or sand to douse the flames, or using magic specifically meant to stop fires, such as a *frost brand*. Splashing a gallon of water on a fire inflicts 3 (1d6) damage to it. Smothering a fire with a blanket or similar item likewise inflicts 3 (1d6) damage to it.

Fire tends to burn out in a space that has been burning for at least ten minutes (unless there is a lot of fuel there), causing the fire to lose that space, as well as the hit points for that space.

In a building, wooden ceilings and floors that have been burning for at least a minute are at risk of collapsing. There is a 20 percent chance each round that a character in the building has to make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. The character takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and 3 (1d6) fire damage on a failed save, or none on a successful one. If the fire has been burning for ten minutes or more, the entire ceiling might collapse instead (20 percent chance each round). In such a case, the characters have disadvantage on the Dexterity save, and the collapsing ceiling inflicts 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful one.

Breathing air in a burning building inflicts 3 (1d6) fire damage per minute. The character must make a DC 10 Constitution save

every five minutes (the DC increases by 1 for every previous save) or gain one level of exhaustion. A creature wearing heavy clothing has disadvantage on this save. If a creature is wearing metal armor, the GM might have the armor heat up over time and inflict damage like a half-strength *heat metal* spell. Depending on the amount of smoke, the area might be lightly or heavily obscured.

MOB SCENE OR PANIC

Use these rules when the player characters face an angry mob looking to harm an ally of theirs, or to handle the sudden appearance of a monster in a large group of people—the PCs must fight it even as the crowd panics around them.

Mob scenes are bound to occur from time to time in an urban environment as densely packed as the city of Ptolus, especially with so many resident adventurers and monsters about. An angry mob or a panicked group of people can make for an interesting challenge. Assume that a typical mob is a group of ten or more people. Mobs are undirected and chaotic. People run in all different directions, shouting, screaming, pushing, and even attacking.

Angry mobs typically take up one 5-foot space per individual in them. Panicked groups take up one 10-foot space per individual, as people run about more haphazardly.

Calming an angry mob or panicked group requires diplomacy and is more difficult the larger the crowd is. The base DC of a Diplomacy check to calm the group is 10, plus 1 for every two people in the group, so calming 30 people is a DC 25 Diplomacy check. Additional characters can assist this check using the help action. Success means that the mob or group calms for one round, not attacking and not moving. After two successful attempts at diplomacy, an angry mob will disperse quietly or a panicked group will remain in place, should that be the desired outcome of the character trying to influence them.

The GM can choose to treat a very large mob or group as several smaller ones.

Usually an angry mob moves much slower than the individual people in the mob do—typically at speed 10 feet for a mob of creatures that individually move at speed 30 feet. A mob provoked to move faster (such as in pursuit of someone) moves at speed 20 feet, but has a 20 percent chance each round of dispersing into angry individuals, at least half of whom will calm down and leave the area.

Rules for mobs making attacks are in the main GM rulebook.

A panicked group is somewhat slowed because the people in it move erratically—typically speed 20 feet for a group of creatures that individually move at speed 30 feet. Each round it has a 40 percent chance of dispersing; in effect, a panicked group is, by its very nature, attempting to disperse as it runs from whatever it is afraid of. Such groups typically do not last long. Panicked groups do not attack.

Anyone within the space of an angry mob or a panicked group has disadvantage on attacks, saves, and checks due to being jostled and bumped. A character in the area who isn't part of the group must succeed at a DC 5 Acrobatics check each round or fall down or be knocked down. Not only is the character then prone, but each round they must succeed at a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from trampling. Standing up within a surging mob or group requires a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check.

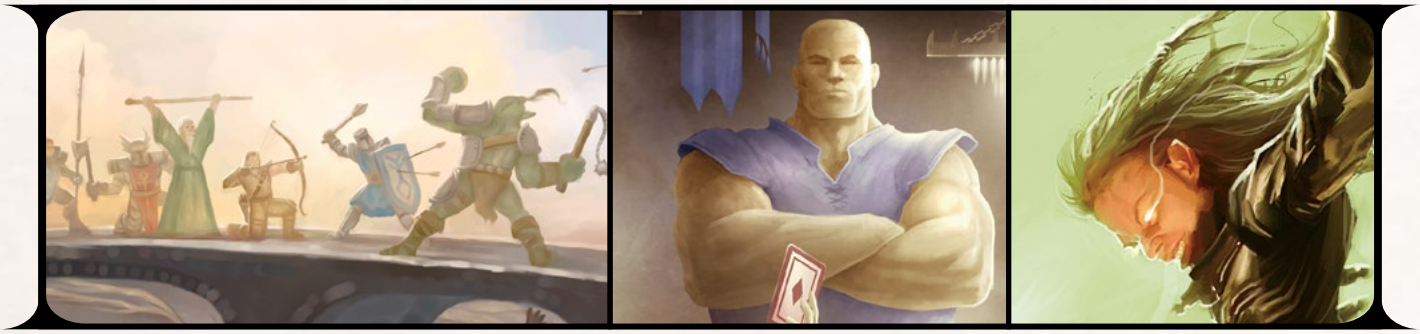
GM TIPS

As a tool to help you pace the campaign the way you want, occasionally implement a mandatory rest period after a particularly grievous wound—like when a character survives an encounter with a creature that reduces the character's maximum hit point total. Force the affected character to rest a few days or perhaps a week, even if the attack says the character recovers after a long rest or if healed by magic.

Chapter 33:

ADVENTURES

This chapter presents a series of short adventures to introduce players and player characters to Ptolus. Characters of 1st or 2nd level can start with these adventures, and they could reasonably expect to be 3rd level once they complete this chapter.



Because it contains adventure spoilers, players should not read this chapter.

Lords of Castle Shard, page 263

Balacazar family, page 102
Temple of the Rat God, page 363
Ebon Hand temple, page 354
Typical Ratman nest, page 411

Lord Abbercombe, page 93

The adventures presented here are episodic, but they are designed to be run together, one after another. They involve gangsters, politics, and a conniving dark elf manipulating events—and the PCs—to get what he wants. By the end, the characters will have met some of the movers and shakers in the city and are likely to have made both allies and enemies. The chapter also includes some short, independent "interludes" that can be inserted at almost any time.

These adventures mostly do not involve dungeon crawls. For dungeon crawl adventuring, use the Temple of the Rat God, the Ebon Hand Temple (both in the Temple District), or the typical ratman lair (in the sewers). Or mix in one or more of those dungeon raids with the ongoing adventures presented here, such as between "Smuggler's Daughter" and "End of the Trail."

THE FLOW OF THE ADVENTURES

Things start, as they often do, with action. Some thugs accost a young woman named Phon. The player characters intervene and discover that, inexplicably, someone seems to have paid for her to be assassinated. They follow a trail of clues to an old warehouse and finally to the home of a minor criminal named Toridan Cran. But there the trail goes cold.

However, the brother of Toridan, Linech Cran, is also a criminal, as the PCs learn when they get involved with none other than the Lords of Castle Shard. These Ptolus notables want to know why Linech is seeking adventurers. The player characters end up looking for a sunken ship that carried the coffin of Linech's deceased daughter. The coffin holds more than just her corpse, however—it also contains a demon-possessed watch very valuable to Linech and the Balacazar family. When the PCs learn that the watch has caused Linech's daughter to rise from the grave as an undead creature, returning her to her father suddenly becomes much more complicated.

Further, Linech owns a solid gold statue. Unbeknownst to him, it is actually a man named Lord Abbercombe held in stasis. The Lords of Castle Shard want Lord Abbercombe brought to them and restored. But the whole thing is a setup. A dark elf named Shilukar has given the statue to Linech specifically so the PCs would find it and eventually get it to Castle Shard. Then the dark elf could offer to trade the magic to restore Abbercombe for the lords' hospitality and protection.

A FULL CAMPAIGN!

The adventures in Ptolus can take your player characters all the way from novice adventurers to veteran heroes. Here's one adventure path with an emphasis on fully fleshed-out adventure locations from this book. (It doesn't touch on investigating the caverns, the Prison, Mahdoth's Asylum, and interesting places such as Dreta Phantas and the Jewels of Parnaith, which require a little development work.)

Adventure	Source
The Murderer's Trail/The Trouble With Goblins	Chapter 33
Smuggler's Daughter	Chapter 33
End of the Trail/The Missing Wafers	Chapter 33
Shilukar's Lair*	Chapter 33
*The Night of Dissolution***	See page 11
Longfingers Guild	Chapter 20
Dwarvenhearth	Chapter 23
Kadmiel the Shade Tower	Chapter 14
Goth Gulgamel	Chapter 24
Dark Reliquary†	Chapter 11
Jabel Shammar	Chapter 25

* Alternative option: ratman nest, chapter 21

** Alternative options: Temple of the Rat God (chapter 17) or Temple of the Ebon Hand (chapter 17), with *The Banewarrens* (see page 11)

† See adventure ideas for other levels in Dark Reliquary Scenarios, page 254.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

The scenarios involving Linech, Linele, and Shilukar had great impact on my Ptolus Campaign. Although Linele was safely "rescued," the watch fell into the hands of the Covenant of Blood, who coaxed even more amazing powers out of it. Shilukar went on to become one of the campaign's most frustrating villains to deal with after he safely secured residence in Castle Shard.

Next, the player characters learn that Phon has disappeared, and their only lead is the name of her secret lover, Helmut Itlestein. Helmut is holding the pregnant Phon, planning to kill the baby when it is born—for he has seen a prophetic vision that the child, and others like it, hold nothing but doom for all of Ptolus.

Helmut Itlestein, page 363

Helmut also has an important clue in his house that will lead the PCs to Shilukar's lair. After the adventurers rescue Phon, they have only two days to get the magical restorative from Shilukar's lair before the Lords of Castle Shard grant him what he wishes. And while that may not seem so bad in the short term, granting the wish of a manipulative and conniving dark elf like Shilukar cannot be good in the long run. And Shilukar's lair holds still more dark secrets involving chaositech and the powerful and evil idol of a bestial god and his progeny.

The Night of Dissolution *adventure is meant to pick up where the adventures in this chapter leave off.*

Also included in this chapter are two unrelated one-session interludes that GMs can insert into the flow of events at any time.

GETTING STARTED

The adventures in this chapter start with the assumption that the player characters are new to adventuring and likely entirely inexperienced. They can be new to Ptolus or natives—it doesn't matter.

Either way, GMs should give the group copies of *A Player's Guide to Ptolus* (from the Ptolus Digital Extras). Each player should have a copy. Let everyone have a chance to learn about the city and get a feel for the setting before you begin.

A blank Ptolus character sheet is available in the packet, and there is a PDF version in the Ptolus Digital Extras. You'll also want to gather these handouts: the players' city map sheet, the Random Encounter Matrix (three sheets), the Ptolus at a Glance sheet, the players' map of Linech's burrow, and the GM's adventure maps

As you begin the adventure, refer to the appendix for suggestions on using the cardstock and fabric bookmarks, the poster map, and the loose sheets to make your sessions run more smoothly.

Typically 1st- and 2nd-level PCs

If you want to print out a copy of the Shilukar wanted poster, you can find a PDF of it in the Ptolus Digital Extras.

(two sheets). The city side of the poster map can help you find the various streets mentioned in the adventures.

Shivvel, page 519

Keep one of your bookmark ribbons in Chapter 32: Urban Campaigns in case you need to flip back quickly to the sections on random encounters or urban player characters.

FORESHADOWING

During the first adventure, use the following four instances of foreshadowing to presage the coming events.

Republicans, page 142
Administration Building, page 291

1. SHILUKAR WANTED POSTER

Helmut Itlestein, page 363
Shilukar, page 563

The player characters see the wanted poster on the previous page. Some PCs may have heard rumors that someone named Shilukar has broken into a number of manor homes in the Nobles' Quarter and stolen valuables of all types. Many of these homes are owned by members of House Abanar. Most people assume that the theft victims got his name through divination spells, but that the spells haven't revealed the thief's location. Some even say that Shilukar has gnoll servants working with him on these break-ins, which is unusual because the hyena-men are extremely uncommon in this part of the world.

Knowing the rumors about Shilukar requires a successful DC 17 Investigation check. If the character's check result is 20 or higher, they also hear a rumor that Shilukar uses a fence named Ammel Dar.

2. SHIVVEL ADDICTS

The player characters encounter one or more beggars on the street who are obviously addicted to the drug shivvel. They bear the typical signs of an addict: dark rings around bloodshot eyes, dark-stained fingers, extremely bad breath, and severe shakes.

3. REPUBLICAN RALLY

While the characters walk about town, they find flyers advertising a big republican rally to be held in front of the Administration Building in Oldtown. This is an opportunity for them to find out about this political movement. Even if they don't attend the rally (which Helmut Itlestein is organizing), they learn that republicans want Ptolus to secede from the Empire and form its own new independent government run by representatives elected by the people.

4. BLUE GNOLLS

If the adventurers go into the Guildsman District at any time, they hear a rumor that an old man saw a blue-skinned/furred gnoll around the southeastern side of the district one night. Most people (understandably) think he was just drunk.

ADVENTURE 1: THE MURDERER'S TRAIL

The gist of this adventure is fairly simple. A priest named Helmut Itlestein wants his pregnant mistress murdered and has hired criminals to do the dirty deed. The player characters must not only save the woman, but also follow the trail of criminals, perhaps all the way back to Helmut. This adventure requires a fair bit of investigation; skills that allow the PCs to gather information will prove very useful.

PHON AND THE PALE DOGS

Phon Quartermain, a very young and comely human woman, works as a seamstress at Saches. She is a frequent visitor to St. Gustav's Chapel, as she lives only a few blocks away, in the heart of Midtown. Her lover is Helmut Itlestein, high priest of the Watcher of the Skies temple in the Temple District. Due to their illicit affair, she is pregnant. Unbeknownst to her (but revealed to Helmut in a vision from his deity), her child will be a runebearer.

Brother Fabitor at St. Gustav's does what he can for Phon, but she will not reveal to anyone the identity of the father of her child. Brother Fabitor is her only real friend other than Helmut, who turns out to be no real friend at all: he has hired criminals to kill Phon so that her baby will never be born. Helmut believes that the birth of runebearers spells doom for the city.

A CRY FOR HELP

The player characters walk the streets of Midtown at dusk. A light rain falls. Suddenly, they hear a woman scream and cry for help.

If they investigate, they see two thugs attacking a young woman: Phon Quartermain (female human). Phon is pregnant, but not obviously so. What is obvious is that she will die if someone doesn't stop these young assailants. A close look reveals that both of the attackers wear a double-finger ring and have black-painted fingernails—obvious signs that they belong to the Pale Dogs.

If the PCs do intervene, the thugs (Ortry and Derral, male humans) attempt to run away. A chase through rain-slicked streets ensues.

INTERROGATING CAPTIVES

Ortry and Derral won't resist a harsh interrogation (one or two successful rolls to intimidate them is enough to get them to talk), but they don't have much of use to say. They admit to being part of the Pale Dogs and might even claim that their leader is Jirraith, but they add that they've never actually seen him. Further, he didn't send them on this job. They were hired to kill Phon by a man named Doffel (a fake name given to them by Vagger—see page 558). They each got 10 gp for the job and were each to receive another 40 gp if they met with their employer at a warehouse on Able Row, on Theoday, two hours after dusk.

ORTRY'S NOTE

Ortry carries a scrap of paper on which is scribbled this barely legible message:

> *Phon Quartermail. 3rd door westarn side of Crispin Streat. Blak hair, yung. After: the red wairhuse on Able row, 2 hours after dusk. Theoday.*

Phon doesn't have any idea who her attackers are, or why anyone would want her killed. She assumes—unless shown evidence to the contrary—that they are simply muggers.

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

The player characters have a few options for further investigation. They can ask around in the neighborhood or find out from Phon herself that the young woman works at a seamstress shop called Saches in Midtown. She spends much of her time at St. Gustav's Chapel, as she is a devout Lothianite.

If the characters want to go storming into the Warrens, remind them that that part of town is so dangerous that even the City Watch doesn't usually enter. The streets there have no names, and the buildings bear no signs, so finding one's way around—let alone finding the Pale Dogs on their home turf—without more information should be next to impossible.

Of much greater value, however, would be a conversation with Brother Fabitor at St. Gustav's. Fabitor knows Phon fairly well and is worried about her. He strongly suspects she is pregnant as a result of a recent love affair, and that she believes the affair is over. He doesn't know who Phon's lover is, but he fears that the whole relationship is a problem. If he learns of the attack, he will implore the PCs to watch over her.

If the characters go to Saches, they learn little other than that Phon is well liked and quiet. If the PCs are persuasive enough, some of the other employees will say that at times it seemed as though Phon had more money than she should—not a lot more, but she never really appeared to have money problems. If the PCs confront Phon with this fact, assuming the adventurers are friendly to her, she admits to the affair, explaining that her "friend" helped

Read more on another plot by Helmut Itlestein against runebearer children in the city in the scenario described under Cloud Theater in Chapter 10: Midtown (page 191).

Threats to a pregnancy may be a sensitive topic for some players. For advice on approaching or avoiding sensitive topics in an RPG, read the free Consent in Gaming *PDF at myMCG.info/consent. If this topic is problematic for your group, instead have Helmut discover that Phon is* destined *to give birth to a runebearer (no matter who the father is), but she isn't pregnant at this time, and Helmut plans to kill her to prevent her runebearer child from ever being born.*

Saches, page 206

St. Gustav's Chapel, page 206

Watcher of the Skies temple, page 362

Runebearers, page 62

Brother Fabitor, page 206

Runebearers and doom for the city, page 363

City Watch, page 141

Phon Quartermain has commoner stats; alignment neutral good. Equipment: gold necklace worth 10 gp, 9 sp.

Pale Dogs, page 126

Realizing that the ring and fingernails mean the attackers are Pale Dogs is a DC 13 Insight or Investigation check.

The slippery streets mean anyone running must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check or fall prone, ending their movement for that turn.

Ortry Gannon has thug stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: leather armor, club, heavy crossbow, bolts (12), potion of healing, *brass double-finger ring worth 3 gp, 10 gp, 8 sp, and a note.*

Derral Fank has scout stats; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, thieves' tools, brass double-finger ring worth 3 gp, 10 gp, 15 sp.

Saches employees: *DC 13 Persuasion check*

GM TIPS

If the player characters aren't interested in helping Phon any further, or if they don't follow up on the mystery of her attackers, Brother Fabitor Thisk comes to them the next day to offer them each an 80 gp spellcasting credit at St. Gustav's in exchange for looking into the matter.

Jirraith, page 378

You can find Ortry's note in the Ptolus Digital Extras.

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

Asking around the neighborhood or a successful Investigation check among people of nearby buildings reveals the following:

- *The Pale Dogs are a gang of young thugs in Ptolus (DC 10).*
- *The Pale Dogs sometimes get hired for freelance jobs to do unimportant work by those not affiliated with their group (DC 12).*
- *The Pale Dogs are based in the Warrens (DC 13).*
- *Other, more powerful and experienced criminals may exploit the Pale Dogs (DC 14).*
- *The Pale Dogs' leader is a mysterious man named Jirraith (DC 17).*
- *Jirraith and the Pale Dogs ultimately work for the Balacazars (DC 20).*
- *The Pale Dogs sometimes advance to become enforcers or bosses in the Balacazar organization or assassins with the Vai (DC 22).*

Balacazars, page 102

The Vai, page 131

Sea Kingdoms, page 46

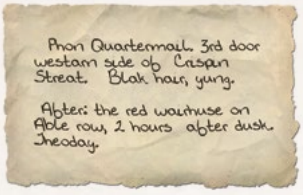
Wise player characters might try to scope out the warehouse before the appointed time. If they come more than an hour ahead of time, they're likely to catch Vagger and Laucio off guard. If they come more than two hours ahead of time, they'll find the warehouse workers still present; Vagger and Laucio won't be there yet.

All the maps for the adventures in this chapter are in the packet.

Vagger Nulus has guard stats, with Perception +5 and Stealth +6; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: studded leather, shortsword, shortbow, arrows (20), thieves' tools, gold ring worth 50 gp, 19 sp.

Marcus the dog has mastiff stats.

Laucio Dellinti is an elf with guard stats; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: chainmail, shield, longsword, longbow, arrows (20), potion of healing, 21 gp, 15 sp, 4 cp.



her pay the bills. Under no circumstances will she say who her lover is, and she'll cry if anyone attempts to force her.

THE NOTE

The best clue for the player characters, obviously, is Ortry's note. If they go to the warehouse mentioned at the time noted, they find those who hired the Pale Dog thugs.

THE WAREHOUSE

Located in Midtown, in the neighborhood known as Longbottom, the red warehouse is on Able Row. It is an innocuous-looking rectangular wooden building with a partial second floor. See the warehouse map in the packet.

If the PCs arrive at the appointed time, the warehouse is closed, dark, and locked up, except for a door on the south side that stands open. The two men in the warehouse are not members of the Pale Dogs. Instead, they are criminals who work for a minor crime boss named Toridan Cran.

VAGGER AND LAUCIO

Vagger Nulus (male human) is a small-time hood with big ambitions. Vagger has a long-muzzled shiny black dog named Marcus. Laucio Dellinti (male Shoal elf) came to town recently from the Sea Kingdoms of the south. He met up with Vagger, and the two became partners working for Toridan Cran. Despite Vagger's inexperience, he is definitely the brains of the team, and Laucio does what the human tells him.

Vagger has no intention of paying the Pale Dogs to whom he subcontracted Phon's assassination. He and Laucio wait in ambush at the warehouse. Who's going to miss two scum like Ortry and Derral?

Tactics: Vagger is close friends with one of the men who works at the warehouse, so he has a key to the doors. An hour before the appointed time, he and Laucio get into position, with the elf going up to the second level by the foreman's office and preparing to use his bow. Vagger plans to greet his "guests" and then attack with surprise when they get close. Marcus the dog will leap into the fray right after. When the PCs enter instead of Ortry and Derral, the criminals inside are likely to be very surprised. Vagger might try to bluff them into going away, but shouts "Laucio, attack!" at the first sign of trouble.

FOLLOWING UP

Vagger and Laucio are loyal to Toridan Cran, through both fidelity and fear. They are difficult to intimidate if captured. If one of them cracks, they can tell the PCs that Toridan paid them 100 gp to kill Phon Quartermain, and that they were going to cheat the men they subcontracted to perform the murder. They know where Toridan lives.

Otherwise, asking around some of the less-than-reputable areas of town can reveal that Vagger and Laucio often work for a criminal named Toridan Cran.

The warehouse holds nothing of much value or interest, just crates of bolts of cloth, clay mugs, and similar goods. No one associated with the place has done anything wrong, other than being too friendly with Vagger.

Other PC Tactics

The player characters might try other modes of investigation in this adventure. For example, they might let an enemy get away so they can follow him. Assuming the PCs can hide well enough to not be noticed by whoever they're pursuing, this tactic will work—the person they tail leads them right to the next step of the adventure (but no further than Toridan Cran's house).

Likewise, the PCs might try to find out more information about the NPCs involved using investigation, local knowledge or rumors, or magical means. GMs should feel free to elaborate on their backgrounds, but the important thing is to get the PCs to the next step on the trail.

TORIDAN CRAN'S HOUSE

Toridan Cran (male half-orc) lives in a small, one-story wooden house on Nar Street in southern Midtown. See the map in the packet. The neighborhood is fairly run-down, and a number of vacant houses surround the ones that are still occupied. The house is ill-kept and filthy, with various bits of trash (including paper wrappers from groceries and purchased meals) wadded up and piled in the corners.

Toridan's operation is too new and too small to have been incorporated into one of the larger criminal organizations yet, which is exactly why Helmut chose it. He specifically instructed Toridan to get someone else to do the job but not tell them who was behind it, so that there would be multiple layers between him and the dire deed. Toridan's mage associate, Collus Adderwood (male human), told him to hire Vagger and Laucio, figuring that they themselves would subcontract the job and probably kill whomever they hired. He thought this extra step would please Helmut. In reality, Helmut intends to kill Toridan and everyone with him once the job is done, just to cover his own tracks.

Toridan is not bright enough to be much of a leader, but he has a forceful personality that makes him *seem* like one. Collus is the real mastermind, although he is not entirely sane. Collus believes himself to be far more powerful than he really is. Toridan's brother, Linech, runs a much larger operation out of the Rivergate District. Toridan used to work for his brother, but they had a falling out, and now he wants to show up his older sibling.

THE FIGHT

It is likely that the player characters catch Toridan and his crew completely off guard. Unless given a reason to be alert, they have no idea that anyone could trace the attack on Phon to them. They may not even know yet that the job didn't succeed.

More likely than not, Toridan, his ne'er-do-well sidekick Guun (male human), and his mage friend Collus are relaxing in the house. Toridan and Guun play a dice game near the back door, and Collus reads a book of arcanum in the front part of the main room.

Tactics: Toridan and Guun leap into the fray, believing that any fight is for their lives; they may assume the PCs are a rival gang. If Toridan has time to prepare, he drinks his potion. Collus is paranoid and a bit delusional. At the first sign of trouble, he blasts his opponents with a fire spell; in the trash-filled house, it is extremely likely that the spell sets the house on fire.

TREASURE

If the house doesn't burn down, the player characters can snag a fair bit of interesting loot. Under a loose floorboard in the kitchen, Toridan keeps a locked iron box that is also trapped with a poisoned needle that shoots out of the open lid if the box is opened without using the key. Toridan has hidden the key on the underside of the oil lamp on the kitchen table.

Inside the box are two *potions of healing*, two doses of poison (the same kind as on the needle trap), a flask of antitoxin, a flask of alchemist's fire, and a leather bag with 150 sp and 84 gp.

There are also three interesting books in the house:

Toridan's Ledger: This handwritten book keeps track of all of Toridan's business dealings in very simple form. It shows that someone named Methul Watcher paid him 200 gp to kill

Attempts to intimidate Vagger or Laucio have disadvantage.

It is a DC 15 Investigation check or (if asking the right people) Persuasion check to find the connection to Toridan Cran.

Linech, page 563

Toridan Cran is a half-orc with guard stats; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: chain mail, greataxe, daggers (2), potion of heroism, *28 gp.*

Toridan is a formidable opponent for novice characters. He isn't particularly sturdy, but he's hard to hit and inflicts a lot of damage with his greataxe.

Guun has bandit stats, with AC 16; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: chain shirt, shield, mace, climber's kit, silk rope (50 ft.), silver ring worth 25 gp, 15 gp, 22 sp.

Collus Adderwood is a wizard with acolyte stats; he knows the 1st-level spells burning hands *and* shield*; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: dagger,* scroll of magic missile, scroll of haste, *spectacles (needed for reading).*

For rules on fighting fires, see Handling Dangerous Events in Chapter 32: Urban Campaigns (page 552).

Loose floorboard: *DC 16 Perception check*

It is a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to open the locked iron box or to disable the trap.

The poisoned needle trap attacks whoever is in front of the lock when the box is opened (+5 to hit). Hit: 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage and be poisoned for one hour.

Hidden key: *DC 20 Perception check*

From left: Guun, Toridan, and (in front) Collus.

GM TIPS

After this segment of the adventure, some PCs might get hung up on trying to find out who hired Toridan Cran in the first place. You may have to directly intervene (i.e., send them an NPC asking for help) to get them working on the next adventure, which may not have anything to do with this one.

A firehouse is located about six blocks northeast of Toridan's house. For more information, see Fire Brigade, page 144.

Calling in the Watch

If, at any time during the course of this first adventure, the PCs try to turn in evidence to the City Watch and let them take care of things, the scenario likely comes to an end. However, most members of the Watch will encourage the PCs (who likely look more capable than the typical shopkeeper) to follow up on it themselves. "There might be a reward for taking care of the guilty party," the adventurers are told.

There is, in fact, a reward for Toridan. He has a bounty on his head of 50 gp, payable by the government (collected in the Administration Building in Oldtown).

Phon Quartermain, specifically requesting that Toridan subcontract the job to someone else to put further distance between Methul and the crime. (Methul is a fake name Helmut used.)

Perhaps just as interesting, however, the ledger shows a number of other transactions and includes the names and sometimes even the addresses of a few other criminals in the city. The GM could use this information to lead the PCs to other "crimebusting" or "bounty hunting" adventures.

Collus's Spellbook: The spellbook contains the spells that Collus knows and a handful of other novice wizard spells.

Collus's Arcanum Text: This rare book is worth 35 gp to anyone interested in magic.

FIRE!

It is likely that the fire spell that Collus casts ends up catching the house on fire. The fire begins in the front room and spreads through the entire house within ten rounds. See Handling Dangerous Events in Chapter 32: Urban Campaigns (page 552) for more information on dealing with the fire.

If the house burns, the abovementioned books are all destroyed, but the contents of the locked iron box are likely fine.

DEAD END

This dangerous encounter is likely to be the ultimate one, for now. The trail goes cold, as Toridan has nothing to link the murders to anyone else. If interrogated, Guun knows nothing. The best that either of the others can do is offer up "Methul Watcher," who isn't even a real person—following up on that name gets no results. Nothing in the encounter leads the characters to Helmut Itlestein . . . until later. See Adventure 3: End of the Trail for the ability to follow up on this scenario.

XP AWARDS

In addition to the XP awards for overcoming the combat encounters in this adventure, the PCs earn XP (divided evenly among them) as follows:

- 50 XP for getting Phon safely to her home or St. Gustav's Chapel
- 50 XP for learning that Phon has a mysterious wealthy lover
- 50 XP for getting to the warehouse before Vagger and his cronies do
- 50 XP for confronting Toridan Cran
- 100 XP for preventing the fire from spreading to other buildings

INTERLUDE 1: THE TROUBLE WITH GOBLINS

This brief interlude is a stand-alone adventure that is likely to occupy one short session of your game. Since its primary focus is to earn the player characters some experience points (and let them beat on some weaker foes), you could replace it with a trip down into the sewers to hunt ratmen or any other adventure you wish.

The old Greyson House is believed to be haunted. The player characters hear of recent strange sounds and eerie sights around the house, an old two-story home in the North Market. If that's not enough to pique their interest, they see a posted notice indicating that the neighbors have jointly collected 75 gp to pay anyone who will investigate the house and rid it of spooks.

In reality, the house has never been haunted. It does, however, have a direct link from its cellar down into an ancient section of Ghul's Labyrinth. This means that monsters have sometimes wandered up into the city from the house, which has started various rumors. Today, the house is the lair of goblins that have come up from below the city. They hunt at night, preying mainly on pets, but occasionally taking down a lone citizen, whom they drag back to the house. Generally, though, they steal rather than hunt, breaking into houses and taking food, valuables, and anything they can get their little hands on.

The neighbor who seems to take the lead role is Erell Yinnick (male human). He's the one who holds the collected reward money and tells the PCs about the ghostly sounds and sights that folks have noticed over the last few weeks.

THE HOUSE

The goblins in the house have their own brand of organization and strategy. During the day, most of them (other than the lookout in area 1) are asleep, hidden in the cellar (area 4) and the back room (area 2). The lookout and his pet hide, doing their best to scare off intruders while alerting the others. At night, about half the goblins are out hunting/foraging/stealing, but the rest are present and alert.

See the map of the house on the adventure maps sheet in the packet.

1. GOBLIN LOOKOUT

Watching out a window in the front room of the old house, a single goblin makes sure that no one disturbs the place. If he sees someone coming, he makes scary noises—a few creaks of wooden boards, some scratches, and a brief, low howl. This is enough to send most of the neighbors running off.

If anyone comes into the house, the goblins have rigged up the crudest of traps on the front door: If opened, it tips over a covered bucket of rancid meat, feces, and turpentine, creating nauseating vapors in the front room. This bucket trap is hard to deal with from the outside. Like the lookout's noises, it is meant to drive people off.

If the stench doesn't get rid of intruders, the hidden goblin launches his pet stirge (a creature resembling both a mosquito and a bat) at the player characters, but he covers it with an old stained sheet first. The stirge flitters about, looking a bit like a ghost. A perceptive character can tell that it's just a bird or similar creature under a sheet—otherwise, to surprised intruders, it might actually look like a fluttering spirit of some kind. Whether revealed or not, it still attacks and attempts to drain the blood of a victim—and a "ghost" latching onto a character might be fairly frightening. If the PCs realize it isn't a spirit, the goblin also attacks.

2. BACK ROOM

Bones and refuse cover the floor of this old kitchen. The room has a terrible stench. A character knowledgeable about healing or animals can tell that while some of the bones here belong to rats, cats, and dogs, some are human bones.

A trapdoor here opens into the cellar (area 4).

3. UPPER FLOOR

The upper floor is empty. Rotten furnishings and dust-covered trash are all that PCs find here. Natural house-creaking sounds may make the adventurers believe there's more here than there really is.

4. CELLAR

The ladder leading down into the cellar is rotten. Any creature heavier than a goblin attempting to climb it causes it to come crashing down. Anyone on the ladder when it collapses falls 10 feet; a falling creature can try to catch the sides of the cellar door to stop their fall.

The cellar contains old boxes, barrels, and crates, and a pair of trunks. The containers hold old clothing and other sundries—nothing of value, and most of it rotten.

Three goblins hide in this room. They have javelins that they hurl at anyone coming down the ladder, falling down the collapsing ladder, or searching the ladder to see whether it is safe. They hide behind old crates and barrels that give them cover.

Creatures in the room other than goblins must make a DC 10 Constitution save. Those who fail are poisoned and have disadvantage on attacks and checks for 1d3 rounds. Noticing the trap from the outside is a DC 20 Perception check, and disabling it is a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check.

Sewers, page 408

Goblin: *7 hp*
Stirge: *2 hp*

It is a DC 15 Perception check to realize the creature isn't a floating spirit; in an area of torchlight or brighter, this check has advantage.

Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

It is a DC 12 Investigation, Medicine, or Nature check to recognize the non-animal bones.

Nosy Neighbors

Making this scenario more difficult, the people in the surrounding houses cannot help themselves: they want to watch the events going on in and around the house. When the PCs go in, neighbors come out of their houses and try to peek in the windows. Some braver ones come in to "help," likely getting in the way—particularly when they turn and run in terror after something frightening happens. GMs should feel free to have NPC commoners get in the thick of things, attempt to grab the adventurers in fear (distracting and hindering their actions), try to "drag them to safety," or just seek to put the PCs between them and whatever is frightening them. Regardless, such actions are likely to disrupt the characters' actions and make things more difficult.

Erell Yinnick has commoner stats.

It is a DC 13 Perception check to realize that the ladder is rotten.

A successful DC 18 Dexterity save allows a character to grab the cellar door and not fall.

Goblins (3): *7 hp, Stealth +6*

Goblin Treasure

Each goblin in this adventure has about 3 (1d6) gp worth of treasure, usually in the form of silver and copper coins, and even a few half- or quarter-coins. Every third goblin or so has a 10 percent chance of having a common or uncommon potion, typically a potion of animal friendship *or* potion of climbing.

5. STORAGE

This dank room off the main cellar holds a number of empty wine racks and a large iron safe, which hangs open (the latch is broken).

Goblins (3): *7 hp*

Three more goblins relax in this room unless they hear sounds of trouble, in which case they run into the cellar (area 4) to join the goblins there.

Secret door: The secret door in the west wall shown on the map isn't a secret door at all, but an opening hidden behind a stack of crates. The crates are empty and easily moved.

Zombies: *15 hp*

It is a DC 15 Perception check to find the secret opening.

6. OLD PASSAGE

From the opening behind the stack of crates in area 5, an old passage leads west. The passage is part of Ghul's Labyrinth, which connects to all sorts of places beneath the city. It's clearly much older than the cellar rooms and of a very different construction. Filled with cobwebs and dust, this area has seen little use over the past decade, or even century. The goblins have half a dozen bedrolls laid out, as well as a pile of miscellaneous stuff.

Ghul's Labyrinth, page 390

Six goblins stay here most of the time. Two are on watch, one looking down the passage one way, the other in the opposite direction. The rest of them relax unless alerted to danger. Even if alerted, the goblins in this passage remain here, preparing to ambush any foe that comes within sight.

Treasure: This is where the goblins keep their "loot." The player characters find various stolen foodstuffs and miscellaneous items: combs, books, ink jars, empty bottles, candles, mugs, tools, and so forth. They can also find a clock (worth 50 gp), a silver hand mirror with an elaborate frame and handle (worth 35 gp), and a sack of 10 gp, 89 sp, and 240 cp.

7. GOING TOO FAR

The PCs eventually should realize that they've taken care of the "haunting" of the old Greyson House once they've slain the goblins in area 6. If the characters insist on exploring the passage leading into Ghul's Labyrinth, stress how it winds around with many branches and side passages, all appearing old and ill-used. They fairly quickly run into a group of wandering zombies, which are dry and brittle from extreme age. Their clothing has fused with their rotten flesh, and each blow struck upon one renders a portion of it to dry dust.

The passages literally go as far as you want them to—and as far as the adventurers are willing to explore. They wind through ancient chambers empty except for more and more zombie encounters. There is no treasure to find.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Once they're done, the PCs can collect their reward from Erell Yinnick. If they explain that the house wasn't haunted but just goblin infested, the neighbors become embarrassed and defensive, perhaps even angry. "No, I saw a ghost in there," one might insist. "Couldn't have been *only* goblins," another demands. The smarter thing to do might be to say, "All the spooks are gone," and leave it at that. In this case, the neighbors are quite satisfied and happy.

XP AWARDS

In addition to the XP awards for overcoming the combat encounters in this adventure, the PCs earn XP (divided evenly among them) as follows:

- 100 XP for keeping the townsfolk out of the house, or keeping them from being harmed if they enter it
- 50 XP for finding the secret opening to area 6 and realizing it connects to a much larger system of passages

ADVENTURE 2: SMUGGLER'S DAUGHTER

If the player characters have completed "The Murderer's Trail" adventure and Interlude 1, they should have gained enough XP that they're no longer novice adventurers and are ready for the next step in this series (if they haven't, the GM should devise more adventures for them, perhaps using the Temple of the Rat God). This will be considerably more challenging than anything they have experienced previously.

"Smuggler's Daughter" is a complicated adventure involving four different parties, each with its own agenda: Lord Zavere of Castle Shard, the Balacazar family, a minor crime lord named Linech Cran, and a very crafty dark elf named Shilukar.

INTERESTED PARTIES

To start with, here is a breakdown of each group's motivations as they concern the events in this adventure.

LORD ZAVERE/CASTLE SHARD

Lord Zavere of Castle Shard despises the drug trafficking that goes on in Ptolus. Recently, he and some of his personal agents (including many spellcasters) attacked Sallachor Isle in the Whitewind Sea, where a major shivvel-processing operation thrived. The operation was controlled by the Balacazar family and managed by a half-orc named Linech. Zavere wants to put a stop to the shivvel trade in the city.

He has no intention of telling anyone that he was the one who destroyed the operation on Sallachor Isle, particularly when he learns that a young girl—Linech's daughter Linele—apparently died in the attack. This knowledge doesn't make him regret his actions, but it does deeply sadden him.

Zavere is also an old friend of Lord Abbercombe the Golden, last lord of House Abbercombe, who disappeared some time ago. Zavere values friendship and commitment more than anything and would go to great lengths to help a true friend.

THE BALACAZAR FAMILY

The Balacazars make a great deal of money trafficking in illegal drugs. When their operation on Sallachor Isle was destroyed, they blamed Linech, who wasn't even there at the time. They plan on assassinating him as payback. When they hear that Linech was able to salvage one more shipload from Sallachor to Ptolus, they attempt to intercept it and claim everything on board—in particular a demon-possessed watch that contains the secret to processing shivvel. To accomplish this mission, they use the Hussar, a warrior-cult devoted to the goddess Unnah, Mistress of the Blades. The cult members are beholden to Menon Balacazar because they believe he holds their goddess prisoner.

The Hussar got a little overzealous, however, and started a fire on board the ship. It went down before they could get much out of the hold. Now the Balacazars must play another of their many cards and use sahuagin to bring the cargo up from the sunken ship into a secret base.

The Balacazars suspect that Zavere was behind the attack, but for now he is well out of even their reach as far as revenge goes (Menon also has a personal respect for Zavere). They know nothing of Shilukar and his involvement.

LINECH

Linech Cran ran the production and transportation of the drug shivvel for Menon Balacazar on Sallachor Isle. When the operation on Sallachor was destroyed, it cost the Balacazars an unbelievable amount of money; Linech's life became forfeit, and his operation was suddenly penniless. He knew the Balacazars likely would send Vai assassins to slay him for letting this happen. While contemplating skipping town, he was approached by his half-sister Biesta's lover, a dark elf named Shilukar. Shilukar loaned him a great deal of money and even gave him a huge golden statue as a gift. Suddenly feeling quite blessed, Linech now had enough resources to get one more ship out to Sallachor to recover any remaining shivvel and the demon-possessed watch that he just might be able to trade to the Balacazars in exchange for his life.

But the ship caught fire in Ptolus Harbor and sank. He is now investing the last of Shilukar's money in an effort to recover some of the contents of the ship's hold.

Linele, Linech's daughter, was on Sallachor Isle when it was attacked. She died in a fire started by a magic spell cast in her father's house. Her body was on the ship that went down on its way back from Sallachor. The watch was hidden in her coffin.

Linech believes that Shilukar has helped him because of Biesta, not because of any ulterior motives. The dark elf has quarters in Linech's Burrow (see the map in the packet), and Linech refers to him only as "our guest."

SHILUKAR

Shilukar is a dark elf wizard with a secret lair below the Guildsman District. He originally hailed from a subterranean dark elf city far to the north. Shunned by his own kind for

GM TIPS

The four groups involved in this scenario all have their own motivations and all know different details about what's going on. GMs should take special care to keep track of who knows what and who is betraying or manipulating whom.

Temple of the Rat God, page 363
Castle Shard, page 263
Balacazar family, page 102

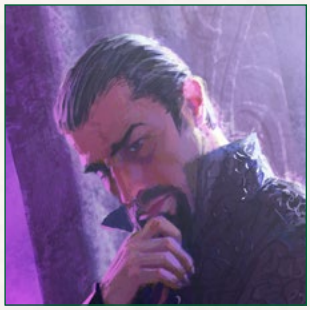
Pronunciations:
Linech (lin-NECK)
Linele (lin-NELL)
Seanus (SHAY-nus)
Biesta (bee-ESS-tah)
Oukina (wah-KEE-nah)

Unnah, page 74

Lord Zavere, page 264
Vai assassins, page 131

Shivvel, page 519

Lord Abbercombe, page 93



Lord Zavere

Demon-possessed watch, page 572

Chaositech caches, page 420

Ravvan, page 73

Mand Scheben, page 353

Mand does not realize it, but Shilukar has subtly maneuvered him into contacting the PCs. Posing as an elf (using a disguise spell), he approached Mand casually in the Griffon tavern in Midtown one night, started up a friendly conversation, and asked him whether he'd heard that someone named Linech was looking for adventurers. Knowing that Zavere hated Linech, Mand took the information to his friend immediately, which is exactly what Shilukar intended. The dark elf wants the PCs working for Castle Shard to get involved with Linech and recover Lord Abbercombe.

Castle Shard, page 263

Read more about Shilukar's lair on page 577.

Kadmus, page 265

Lady Rill, page 264

Demon-possessed watch, page 572

systematically betraying and manipulating every noble house he was associated with, Shilukar came to the areas below Ptolus to experiment in chaositech. While looking for ancient chaositech caches far below the city, he came upon two important things. The first was a magical idol of Ravvan the Beast God. The second was an explorer from the surface world named Lord Abbercombe, who was investigating the same caverns deep underground. The dark elf put him in stasis using a one-use chaositech device. Because Abbercombe inhabits an artificial body, he now appears to be simply a well-made solid gold statue.

When Shilukar learned that Abbercombe was the last of a noble line and a friend to Castle Shard, he knew he could use him for something special. His fascination has always been with reshaping life—manipulating living physical forms as though he were a god. Since he was very young, Shilukar has seen other living creatures only as tools to be used and raw material to be experimented upon. He is without empathy. He is a master manipulator, always knowing what must be done to get others to do as he wishes—usually without their knowledge. This skill at manipulation extends to his chaositech experimentation as well.

Shilukar has recently learned that he has a counterpart among the Shuul named Doctor Feegus, who attempts to use science and law as well as magic to create new creatures. However, these creatures (former dwarves now called the Prajdall) have been created specifically to find and destroy chaositech. Because Shilukar fears Feegus and the Prajdall, he seeks a lair that is utterly proof from invasion or attack. Only one possibility came to mind: Castle Shard.

The first step of Shilukar's plan was to gather a great deal of money. He did so by stealing from wealthy homes in the Nobles' Quarter with gnoll allies he summoned using the magical idol. Next, he started a relationship with Biesta, Linech's half-sister. Through her, he forged a bond with Linech, and eventually gave him Lord Abbercombe, telling him that the unmoving figure was just a solid gold statue. Shilukar loaned Linech much of what he earned from his thefts. This loan has enabled Linech to finance an expedition back to Sallachor Isle—after which he will hire the player characters.

Shilukar's goals are twofold. He wants the demon-possessed watch for himself and plans on stealing it from Linech once the criminal gets it back. Much more importantly, however, he wants the PCs, whom he knows are working for Castle Shard, to see Lord Abbercombe, so they will tell Zavere and Rill about him. He wants the player characters to come back and make off with the statue, because he can then offer to give Zavere and Rill the only means of lifting the curse that renders their friend permanently motionless. In return for this cure, he wants sanctuary in Castle Shard. He needs this all to seem like happenstance, though—not like the calculated plan that it is.

ENTER: MAND SCHEBEN

Not long after the events of the previous adventure(s), a tall, good-looking, fit man with brown hair and a beard approaches the PCs. He introduces himself as Mand Scheben, a priest at the Temple of Asche. He tells them that it has come to his attention that they have run afoul of a criminal named Toridan Cran. He listens with interest to as much or as little of their story regarding Toridan as they wish to tell. He tells the adventurers he would like to hire them for a somewhat risky undertaking. Before he will tell them more, he asks them to meet him at Castle Shard the following afternoon. He explains, "The Lords of Castle Shard are my friends, and they have some small concern in this matter. Asche looks favorably upon them because of their importance to Ptolus. More of them I cannot say."

If the player characters take the time to check up on Mand, they can confirm that he is who he says he is. They also can learn more about Castle Shard, if they'd like.

A VISIT TO CASTLE SHARD

When the player characters arrive at Castle Shard the next day, Kadmus the majordomo greets them warmly. "How lovely to see you all. You warm our castle with your presence." He is extremely polite, gracious, and kind. He attempts to put them at ease rather than reinforce the fact that they have just come to one of the most infamous places in the city.

Kadmus informs them that Mand is late, and asks them to wait in the castle's meeting room. On their way there, they see Lady Rill. "I am Rill, Lady of Castle Shard," she says. Today she floats around cross-legged on a platform held aloft by softly tweeting birds. She makes her appearance before they even get to the meeting room, then leaves.

Zavere waits for them in the meeting room. "I am Zavere of Castle Shard. Kadmus, see to it that every courtesy is extended to our guests here." Lord Zavere is extremely confident, poised, and forceful. He shows the PCs every courtesy, and brooks no discourtesy himself. Kadmus returns shortly with a tray of afternoon wines, teas, and honeyed biscuits. Mand shows

up eventually, and Zavere waits for him to begin to explain why the player characters are here. Mand obviously defers to Zavere.

Zavere says, "I understand that you have dealt with Toridan Cran. Toridan's brother, Linech, is also a small-time gangster. Truthfully, a man of little consequence, but more successful than Toridan. He has, however, crossed us in the past, and now he's up to something new. He's hiring adventurers. He's never done that before. At the very least, we want to know what he's doing. We might also want to put a stop to it. His actions indicate a sudden influx of resources, when we thought he was already overextended."

Mand then explains, "Linech is a drug smuggler. He has a small operation on some island to the north where his people manufacture shivvel. He brings it in on ships. Something bad happened on the island recently, however, and we believed he was finished. Now, it appears otherwise."

Zavere offers them each 100 gp to go to Linech and take whatever job he's offering, then find out what it is and report back to Castle Shard. "Do well on this, and you'll be invited to return."

If the characters ask why they don't just contact the City Watch, Zavere says, "First, because I would rather see Ptolus burned to ash before I trust the Commissar or any of his men. Second, because we here at Castle Shard fight our own battles and accomplish our own deeds."

Should the PCs ask about the Shard, Rill, or virtually anything else, Zavere answers simply, "After a few visits, you may ask a question such as that."

LINECH'S BURROW

Linech lives in the Rivergate District and owns an entire cul-de-sac, which they call a "burrow" in that part of town. Everyone in the burrow works for Linech one way or another. See the map of the burrow (in the packet), and give the players the unlabeled handout of Linech's burrow (also in the packet) while they explore.

ARRIVAL

When the player characters arrive, anyone around the burrow can direct them to Linech's office. When they enter this building, they encounter the half-orc's aide, Seanus, and his half-sister, Biesta, in the first-floor reception room. If the PCs announce that they've heard Linech is looking for adventurers, Seanus shows them upstairs to see his boss. Biesta doesn't say much—she's in a narcotic stupor from taking shivvel. She shows many of the signs of being an addict.

MEETING WITH LINECH

Linech waits for the characters in his office with his girlfriend, Oukina. Seanus stays inside and listens as well. The office is nice, although the large gold statue of a nobleman (see page 580) seems out of place. Linech is a male half-orc with brown hair and is good looking in a rugged sort of way, for a half-orc. He smokes a smelly cigar. He doesn't beat around the bush, but he never admits that he's a criminal—at the same time, however, he assumes that the PCs know who he is. Linech tries to talk like a sophisticate, but he is at heart a low-class hood.

Linech says he wants his daughter's body returned to him so he can bury her properly. She died on an island in the Whitewind Sea, and her coffin was being brought back to Ptolus on a ship called the *Arrowhead* when a fire sent the vessel to the bottom of the bay. He thinks it was no accident.

Linele, his daughter from his now-defunct marriage, was about thirteen years old when she died. (Linech's ex-wife was human, so Linele was three-quarters human.) The ship went down as it was moored in the harbor (not at the Docks). He wants the PCs to find out all they can, and then go down to get the body. It's in a sealed glass coffin. They need to bring up the whole coffin to get the full reward.

GM TIPS

This is a good opportunity to remind the player characters about the concept of house gifts (Chapter 1: A Player's Guide to Ptolus, page 30). It would be extremely appropriate for them to bring one to Castle Shard. Kadmus accepts it with sincere grace.

Oukina, page 567

Seanus, page 566
Biesta, page 566

Shivvel, page 519

Although all of the buildings in Linech's burrow are described here, it is likely that the first time the PCs come here they'll only meet with Linech in his office (area 5) and won't visit any other buildings.

Radolf and Sissy Cooper have commoner stats.

It's a DC 15 Perception check to find the fireplace hiding spot.

Persuading Linech is a DC 15 Persuasion check.

Biesta is well known around town, particularly in various taverns. A DC 15 Investigation check reveals that lately she's been seen meeting with Ammel Dar, the fence (page 209).

It's a DC 18 Perception check to find the secret compartment and a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to open the locked iron box.

Biesta Cran is a half-elf with performer stats (page 612); knows the spells dissonant whispers, sleep, *and* suggestion*; alignment neutral. Equipment: studded leather, 6 daggers,* scroll of charm person, *shivvel (3 doses), silver ring with an opal worth 150 gp, 98 gp.*

Biesta is sincerely in love with Shilukar, but the dark elf is only interested in using her to get to Linech.

Seanus Illithan is a halfling with scout stats; alignment neutral. Equipment: chain shirt, mace, dagger, light crossbow, bolts (12), potion of growth, potion of healing, *climber's kit, thieves' tools, 42 gp.*

Linech's burrow is #79 on the poster map and on the Rivergate district map on page 318.

Linech won't mention her unless asked, but his ex-wife is Tashari Lin, who works with the Rogue Moon Trading Company in the South Market (page 339).

Shivvel, page 519

Menon Balacazar, page 103

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

Some of the PCs in the original Ptolus Campaign befriended Seanus and managed to convince him to leave his criminal life and join them.

He warns that there might be others interested in the *Arrowhead* who may try to stop the PCs. They're after the other contents of the hold (the drugs, he implies, but never admits), but he says he only wants his daughter back and doesn't care about the rest.

To help them accomplish the task, Linech will provide them each with a *potion of water breathing*. He offers to pay them the collective sum of 1,200 gp to recover Linele's body and belongings. They can keep whatever other salvage they find.

Further, Linech insists that Seanus accompany them (with his own *potion of water breathing* in case he needs to dive, too), although the characters can try to talk him out of this if they strongly protest. Seanus, of course, will be instructed to watch the party closely and report everything that happens back to Linech. He's also to make sure they don't open Linele's coffin.

If the player characters wonder why Linech doesn't do this himself, he says, "'Cause I gots the money to pay you to do it for me, see?"

Should anyone suggest that Linech may have motives beyond getting Linele back, he says, "Just 'cause I'm a businessman, I ain't a father?"

If the PCs ask any questions about who might have sabotaged or attacked the ship, he says, "That's one o' the things what I'm paying you for to find out."

Asking about the solid gold statue leads Linech to respond, "That's a gift from my guest." He won't say anything more about it or the guest, although he's obviously very attached to the statue.

If anyone insults him, interrupts him, or asks about something he doesn't want to talk about, he says, "Nobody talks here unless I wants 'em to talk, see?" or "I'm paying, so I get to ask the questions, not you."

What He's Not Saying: There is, of course, much that Linech's not telling the PCs, including the fact that inside Linele's coffin is a watch possessed by a demon—the very demon that originally taught his people how to process shivvel. While Linech would indeed be happy to get his daughter's body back, what he really wants is the watch so he can trade it to Menon Balacazar in exchange for his life. He no longer cares about the shivvel in the ship's hold.

He also isn't telling them that he has recently allied with a dark elf wizard named Shilukar, who is his half-sister Biesta's lover.

LAYOUT OF THE BURROW

Although it appears to be a typical Rivergate burrow, Linech controls the entire cul-de-sac and everyone in it. It consists of a cluster of houses on two levels surrounding a decorative fountain. See the map of this burrow in the packet.

1. The Coopers' House

The Cooper family—Radolf (male human), Sissy (female human), and their four children—live in a home near the entrance to the burrow. They all work for Linech, doing whatever he needs. Usually, this means handling sales and delivery of shivvel. None of them are combatants, and they will surrender or run if threatened. The parents will fight if their children are in danger, however.

There is little of real value in the house except for a pair of silver goblets (worth 10 gp each) and a pouch hidden in the fireplace containing 33 gp. Due to the loss of the Sallachor Isle facility, there is no shivvel here.

2. Shemmy's House

Shemmy Thofur was an accountant who also helped Linech run his overall organization. (Shemmy was on the *Arrowhead* when it went down.) His house sits at the northwest corner of the burrow. Hidden under his bed is a secret compartment containing a locked iron box. The box holds the 984 gp, 349 sp, and 89 cp he had embezzled from his employer.

3. Biesta's House

Biesta Cran (female half-elf) is a well-known barfly and gadabout, living off her half-brother's success. She's also Shilukar's girlfriend and a shivvel addict. She lives in a simple house on the north end of the burrow. Unless she's off in a pub somewhere, she's usually either here or in her brother's office.

Tactics: If in danger, Biesta is far more likely to run or surrender than fight. If she must, she'll use spells before weapons, resorting to fighting with a dagger in both hands as a very last resort.

The house is tidy, thanks to Biesta's roommate and Linech's newest employee, Seanus Illithan (male halfling). Seanus is an eager beaver who wants to demonstrate his worth. He's not a bad person, really; he just hasn't thought through his life's choices very well. Mostly, he just wants to be accepted somewhere. "I'll do it real good, boss," is his most common phrase. Like Biesta, if Seanus is in the burrow, he's either here or in Linech's office. If he's away, he's likely running errands for his boss.

Tactics: Although trained by the Longfingers Guild, Seanus has never been in a real life-or-death fight. He relishes the prospect, but will go into combat as though it's a lark, not a struggle. After taking his first hit, he's likely to back down, unless a friend of his is in danger, in which case he'll fight on.

4. Guard House

Linech has a group of guards always close at hand. They are basically "muscle"—enforcers who spend their time collecting from delinquent customers. In their line of work, they use their fists or maybe their clubs. They don't wear armor and aren't really killers.

The guards use as their barracks the house up a short ramp from the fountain in the center of the burrow. It's filthy and cluttered with garbage, containing nothing of value.

5. Linech's Office

Linech's office is on the second floor of a building at the south end of the burrow. The first floor has a reception area where Seanus often works at a small desk, keeping his boss's schedule. The second floor is the half-orc's personal office, featuring a nicely carved hardwood desk covered with papers, maps, and ledgers. Of course, Lord Abbercombe is here as well, "decorating" the office. Linech (male half-orc) is usually here, sitting at his desk.

Tactics: It's safe to assume that Linech has his defensive spell cast on himself virtually at all times. In a fight, he relies on his attack spells, although if seriously threatened, he drinks his *potion of invisibility* and casts a spell to speed his getaway.

Linech is almost always accompanied by his dwarf bodyguard, Ruror Greatblade (male dwarf). Ruror has black hair, extremely bushy eyebrows, and a short-trimmed beard.

6. The Guest House

When Shilukar is here, he occupies the guest house at the east end of the burrow. During these times, two gnolls wearing heavy woolen cloaks to cover their appearance stand guard in front of the door. The dark elf is here the first time the player characters come (to talk to Linech), but not on any subsequent times—then he is in his lair below the Guildsman District.

If the PCs engage him at this point, he fights only to subdue (using sleep spells and similar tactics) unless his life is in real jeopardy. He *wants* the characters to succeed in everything they're doing at this point.

7. Linech's House

Linech has a nicely furnished, well-appointed house at the northeast corner of the burrow, although the décor seems a bit garish and tacky. If the PCs search the house, they might find a silver platter (worth 30 gp), a silverware set (worth 50 gp), a pair of gold candlesticks (worth 20 gp each), a clock (worth 50 gp), three gold and crystal goblets (worth 15 gp each), and a large silver mirror (worth 100 gp). In various cabinets, there is also a forgery kit, a disguise kit, a set of tools for picking locks, ten tindertwigs, two vials of acid, and two tanglefoot bags.

Linech's secret vault is here as well. He does not have much cash left, having spent it to hire the PCs and buy their water-breathing potions. The vault does hold other items of interest, however. It is hidden behind a secret door in Linech's bedroom. The secret door is just an unlocked sliding panel. The vault door, however, is iron 3 inches thick. Opening the vault door also triggers bricks to fall on the area in front of the sliding panel.

Inside the vault is a wooden box with ivory inlay (worth 120 gp) containing 240 gp (plus another 1,200 gp if the characters have not yet been paid). The vault also holds a plain wooden box containing two *potions of water breathing* (plus one more per PC if they have not yet received their potions from Linech), a *potion of vitality*, and a *potion of healing*. A secret compartment in the back of the vault holds forty sets of forged Imperial identification papers (each is worth about 100 gp to someone interested in such a thing).

Oukina: Oukina (female human) is Linech's girlfriend who lives with him here. She's rough, crude, and not terribly good looking, but she's big, and that's how he likes his women. She's not always here, but unless Linech is in danger (in which case she'll be by his side), she's usually at this house when in the burrow at all.

8. Storehouses

These single-story stone buildings have wide doors for moving cargo in and out. A padlock locks the doors. Linech uses the buildings as storehouses for shivvel as well as a few other things he or his people might need. Today, however, they stand mostly empty. There is no shivvel within, but hiding inside one of the storehouses is a slave once owned by Linech and forced to perform manual labor here. Even though he escaped, he still returns to steal shivvel—he's horribly addicted. He knows how to slip into the storehouse by moving a few loose bricks near the foundation.

If the characters find him, the slave—Nared (male human)—may try to flee or fight. Should the PCs convince him that they are Linech's enemies, he tries to join with them in fighting the half-orc and his people (hoping to find some shivvel to steal). Nared knows the layout of the burrow very well.

Linech's guards have guard stats; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: club, 15 gp.

It is a DC 21 Perception check to find the secret door.

Vault: *AC 19, 25 hp, DC 23 Strength check to break*

Falling bricks: *Anyone in front of the vault door must succeed at a DC 12 Dexterity save or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. It is a DC 15 Perception check to find the trap and a DC 15 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

Linech and Toridan's father was an Ornu-Nom orc, and their mother was a human woman. Before their (consensual) relationship, their mother was married to an elf and gave birth to Biesta. Thus the half-elf Biesta is the half-sister of the two half-orcs.

Linech's ledgers contain a lot of damning evidence on illegal drug purchasers all across town. They're worth 150 gp to the right (unscrupulous) buyer.

It is a DC 20 Perception check to find the secret compartment.

Imperial identification papers, page 512

Linech Cran is a half-orc sorcerer with arcanist stats (page 605); knows the spells expeditious retreat, mage armor, *and* magic missile; *alignment neutral evil. Equipment: club, sling, sling bullets (12),* potion of climbing, potion of healing, potion of invisibility, scroll of protection from energy, *alchemist's fire (2 flasks), thieves' tools, 96 gp.*

Ruror Greatblade is a dwarf with guard stats, with advantage on initiative; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: splint armor, battleaxe, heavy crossbow, bolts (12), potion of hill giant strength, *10 gp.*

Unfortunately, killing Linech and bringing his operation to an end does not halt the shivvel trade in Ptolus. Someone else will quickly fill the vacuum left by his departure.

Oukina has scout stats with the Reckless ability of a berserker; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: leather armor, shield, longsword, longbow, arrows (40), potion of healing, *43 gp, 15 sp.*

Linech, Oukina, and the others are designed to be a tough challenge for the PCs (or even a little too powerful to fight) when they first meet. However, later on, the PCs can come back and take them out successfully.

Shilukar, page 563

Gnolls (2): *22 hp*

Shilukar's Lair, page 577

It's a DC 18 Sleight of Hand check to pick the padlock.

Finding each of these items with a search is a DC 12 Perception check.

Lord Zavere, page 264

The PCs might notice Zavere's discomfort if they succeed at an Insight or Perception check contested by his Deception check.

Lady Rill, page 264

There is a Castle Shard invitation in the Ptolus Digital Extras.

It's a DC 15 Investigation check to learn the Hussar rumor.

Hussar have guard stats; alignment chaotic neutral. Equipment: chainmail, scimitar, dragon pistol, ammunition (10 rounds), tindertwigs (2), alchemist fire (4), 20 gp.

Dragon pistol, page 522

Unnah, Mistress of the Blades, page 74

Menon Balacazar, page 103

If the PCs know that Unnah is imprisoned, offering to free her for the Hussar also angers them, because it insinuates that they are weaker than the PCs and can't do it for themselves.

It's a DC 15 Investigation check to find out who they should ask about the ship.

Sard's Boats, page 167

Dodun Fisk has commoner stats.

PCs in the cold water must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw each hour or gain one level of exhaustion.

Finding the sunken Arrowhead *is a DC 16 Perception check.*

The Dockmaster (page 164) does have past records of the Arrowhead *that list the captain as a human woman named Karra Bann. It was a cargo ship that usually delivered foodstuffs from the north coast. The PCs can investigate Captain Bann and the ship further, but these are all red herrings and produce nothing of value.*

Spotting the sharks and sahuagin is a DC 18 Perception check.

RETURNING TO CASTLE SHARD

If the player characters return to Castle Shard, they are welcomed as before. Zavere listens to whatever they have to say while he finishes a meal (Kadmus offers to bring each of the PCs a plate as well). Assuming they tell him everything Linech said, Zavere tries to conceal that he is particularly disturbed by news of Linele's death. (This is the first he has heard of it, and he knows he is responsible.)

In any event, after considering things for a few moments, Zavere asks them to undertake the mission. He doubles his original offer (to 200 gp each) if they will investigate the ship and bring anything suspicious they find back to him. He says that if Linech really does only want his child's body returned to him, there's nothing wrong with that, but he thinks more is going on.

Meanwhile, if they mention the solid gold statue, Zavere seems very interested and wants them to describe it in as much detail as possible. He calls in Lady Rill to confer. He then asks if, at some point in this venture, the PCs would be willing to "rescue" that statue from Linech. He explains that it's not a statue at all, but a friend of theirs, long missing. He won't say who it is at this juncture, but he offers a further reward of 1,000 gp (for the entire group of PCs) if they bring back the "statue." He'll even provide a wagon when and if they need it (which is likely, since Lord Abbercombe weighs almost 1,000 pounds).

GOING AFTER THE *ARROWHEAD*

With two patrons paying the PCs to find the *Arrowhead*, it's likely they will agree to the task. First, however, they are supposed to find out more about how it sank.

AT THE DOCKS

Should the PCs look around the Docks for information about the ship's sinking, they'll need to find out who to talk to about it. If successful, they are directed to speak to an old man, Dodun Fisk (male human), who has been telling people he saw the event. This aged fisherman is happy to tell anyone who asks that he saw some men in gold and purple robes come ashore in a dingy, leaving the burning ship.

The men in gold and purple were the Hussar, but Dodun has no idea that that's the case.

No one else seems to know much about the event. Apparently, the ship had just dropped anchor in the harbor when it caught fire and went down quickly. There were no survivors. Checking with the Dockmaster results in a somewhat disturbing encounter that provides little real information. The ship hadn't yet officially docked in Ptolus before it sank, so he has no record of its point of origin, crew, or cargo.

Either Dodun or the Dockmaster can give a fairly precise description of where the ship was anchored when it went down.

THE HUSSAR

The Hussar (male humans) have a small shrine in the Temple District. It is fairly modest, consisting of a sanctuary in the front and barracks-like accommodations for all dozen members of the faith in the back. They have no leader or priest—they are all equals in their religion. The Hussar dress in long purple and gold robes that reach the floor. Hoods cover their heads. In keeping with their religion, all of them are male and sport thick handlebar mustaches. They generally eschew magic, although they enjoy setting things afire. (The Hussar holy books speak frequently and at length of burning all who oppose them and their goddess Unnah in holy flames.)

Visiting this shrine likely results in a very dangerous fight, for the Hussar are quick to anger, and accusing them of any wrongdoing, even obliquely, will enrage them. At any given time, four to six of them are usually present. Unless the PCs are extremely diplomatic, taking on the Hussar is probably a mistake—plus, there is no reason to do it. Only under magical compulsion would any of the Hussar reveal that they do Menon Balacazar's bidding because he has their goddess trapped.

However, it is a common rumor that the Hussar work for the Balacazar family under duress.

THE SUNKEN DRUG SHIP

Getting out to the *Arrowhead* requires a boat, which the party can rent from Sard's Boats. If Seanus accompanied the PCs as Linech wanted, a good duty for him could be to stay in the boat and make sure it doesn't drift (although he's happy to go underwater and help there instead).

The *Arrowhead* lies almost 80 feet below the surface; see the map of the sunken ship in the packet. Characters who go down to that depth, even if they can breathe underwater, still risk damage from the extremely cold water.

At this depth, it is too dim to operate for creatures that cannot see in the dark.

Finding the ship in the murky water is the greatest challenge, particularly since the characters have a strict time limit (the duration of the water breathing potions). Assuming the PCs are in the right area, they can attempt to search once every ten minutes.

If they do find the ship, they have a chance of noticing the sahuagin and sharks swimming

in and around the wreckage. Otherwise, the aquatic foes catch the characters unaware. If the PCs do not find the ship after thirty minutes, it is possible that the nearby sahuagin and sharks will find them and attack.

When the PCs arrive, one sahuagin is inside the wreck, pulling out a crate, while its shark keeps watch. Another sahuagin and its shark are outside. Neither sahuagin nor shark will want to fight in the cramped interior of the sunken ship and will move out into open water if possible. Anyone taking combat actions inside the ship must swim carefully to avoid hurting themselves on the many jagged bits of broken hull or crates.

WHAT WERE THE SAHUAGIN DOING?

It's clear that the ship, not fully burned before it went down, has been broken into and ransacked. Cargo is obviously missing, and broken bits of wood float everywhere. Plus, the PCs can easily see that there is no glass coffin here.

Following the sahuagin, or their trail, is surprisingly easy. These creatures never considered that anyone might confront them here. A trail of broken pieces of crates and barrels leads to the northwest.

The Balacazars, hoping to recover the lost shivvel, convinced a group of vampires calling themselves the Covenant of Blood to invoke the ancient pacts, use the *horn of blood*, and summon sahuagin to loot the sunken ship. The vampires agreed, but only because they sense Linele and the demon-possessed watch and want those things for themselves.

THE TRITON

Quillong is a triton scout/spy from an underwater city called Konagis far to the north in the Whitewind Sea. He has followed the sahuagin here, as it is his job to keep watch over these enemies of his people. If he sees the player characters fighting the sahuagin, he considers them friendly. However, he won't get involved unless they truly need his help—he doesn't want to reveal his presence. If the PCs do encounter him, he knows about the Covenant of Blood and its connection to the sahuagin, and can communicate this information to the party.

Quillong is accompanied by a dolphin that fights at his side. If the PCs convince Quillong to help them follow the sahuagin, he sends the dolphin back to Konagis to report what they have seen.

THE UNDERWATER CAVES

The sahuagin have been carrying loads from the sunken wreck of the *Arrowhead* to a cave along the coast and to the north of the city about a half mile. The cave entry is underwater, some 25 feet below the surface. Most of the caves are filled entirely with water. However, the central cave (area 5, page 570) is open to the air, as is a passage that leads out to the sea at sea level (area 8).

The sahuagin brought Linele's glass coffin to the central cave, where the evil presence in the pocketwatch caused the little girl to rise up as an undead creature. Her unexpected appearance terrified the guards and thugs in that cave, and she then fled to area 10. This happened just a short time before the PCs arrive, and the information has been communicated to everyone in the manor house above the caves. Those in

Tritons are humanlike aquatic beings with webbed fingers and small fins on their legs. Originally from the Elemental Plane of Water, they came to the oceans of the world to pursue their evil elemental enemies.

Quillong has merfolk stats, with advantage on attacks and saves; alignment neutral good

Quillong's dolphin has reef shark stats.

It's a DC 13 Athletics (swimming) check each round to avoid taking 2 (1d4) points of slashing damage.

Sahuagin (2): *22 hp*

Reef sharks (2): *22 hp*

GM TIPS

Stress the cold, the dark, and the disorienting environment of the undersea world the player characters explore.

GM TIPS

The currents at the floor of the bay where the ship lies are not very strong and should not present a problem to the player characters.

Covenant of Blood, page 103
Horn of blood, *page 639*
Demon-possessed watch, page 572

See the core books for rules about underwater combat. Assume that any magic that allows the PCs to breathe underwater also allows them to speak. However, it's unlikely that they'll be understood by anyone not within 15 feet.

If need be, the GM can add more encounters with sahuagin, probably encountered in pairs, in any underwater location.

When it appears that all the sahuagin have been dealt with, Quillong the triton parts company with the group. He's curious to know more about the Covenant of Blood that summoned the sea devils but smart enough to know that neither he nor any of the PCs is powerful enough to confront these vampires.

The four Balacazar thugs have bandit stats; alignment neutral

Shivvel, page 519

The giant crab has giant scorpion stats, with no sting attack.

The two Balacazar guards have guard stats; alignment chaotic evil

Uraq, page 46

Sumar has commoner stats; alignment chaotic good

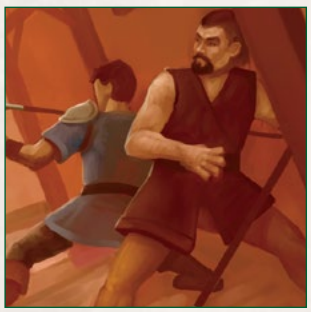
Salsan "Sir Jingles" has lizardfolk stats; alignment neutral

Sahuagin (2): *22 hp*

The Balacazars used to use this complex frequently for smuggling operations, back when the security at the city gates was far laxer than the security at the Docks. Today, they rarely use it.

Salsan knows the location of the Slave City (see page 393 in Chapter 19: What's Down There?) and is acquainted with Ssethenus, the assarai former slave who seeks to take control of the place. This can be a link to further adventures involving that location. Sumar could make an interesting cohort for a player character, given the opportunity to train as a fighter, monk, or ranger.

Balacazar family, page 102



charge are trying to decide what to do about this unforeseen turn of events.

The following descriptions correspond to areas on the map of the caves, found in the packet.

1. ENTRY CAVE

Fish and eels swim in and out of this 8-foot-wide cave mouth.

2. GIANT CRAB

A giant crab, 7 feet long and 10 feet across, has made its lair just south of the entry cave. Although it spends its day catching large fish and eels in its claws, it's just as happy to attack a humanoid, whether a surface-dweller or a sahuagin. If injured below half its normal health, it attempts to scuttle away, fighting defensively as it retreats.

3. SAHUAGIN

Two more sahuagin (also summoned by the *horn of blood*) are in the cave just north of the entry cave, about to return to the *Arrowhead* after carrying a load. The player characters are not likely to surprise them unless the PCs are not using a light source. The sahuagin attack immediately and fight to the death. If Quillong is with the adventurers, the sahuagin attack him first.

4. TUNNEL UP

Continuing west from the entry cave, the characters come to a narrow, natural chimney that winds upward for 30 feet. The tunnel leads up to the central cave (area 5), which lies mostly above sea level. A number of eels nest in this tunnel, but they offer no real threat to the party.

5. CENTRAL CAVE

The complex's large central cave has air, as it lies above sea level. Water comes in from the deep underwater tunnel (area 4), but also from the sea level passage (area 8). The Balacazar family occasionally uses this as a smuggler's cave. They bring goods off ships via small boats through area 8, then haul them up the staircase through the doors to the northwest, to a secluded manor house at the top of the cliffs directly above.

6. CRATES AND COFFIN

Currently, the dry portion of the cave is filled with wet crates of shivvel. There is also a small wooden rowboat with oars here, which the characters can use to escape out area 8. Linele's glass coffin lies on the ground here as well. It is empty, broken open. A careful look at the coffin and the shattered glass around it makes it obvious that it was smashed open from the inside.

A short time ago, after the sahuagin deposited the glass coffin here, the power of the demon-possessed watch fully animated Linele as an undead creature. She broke out of the coffin and went down the passage marked area 9 on the map. This terrified those in the cavern, and they are still quite edgy (see area 7, below).

7. THUGS, GUARDS, AND SLAVES

Four Balacazar thugs (male humans) are present in the central cave, opening the crates with crowbars to see whether any of the drugs are salvageable. (Although made from seaweed, refined shivvel is a dry powder that becomes useless paste when wet.) Two guards (male humans) stand by, although they're not expecting trouble. Two slaves are on hand to carry the crates up the many flights of stairs to the manor house. One slave is a large, muscular human from Uraq named Sumar, while the other is an assarai named Salsan. Long ago, they tied bells all over this lizard man and now call him "Sir Jingles."

Tactics: The people here are all on edge because they just saw the young dead girl get out of her coffin and walk away. They're watching down the passage to the south, afraid she will return. They're not watching for an attack from the water in this cave. Even if they spot someone coming up out of the water, they first assume it's the sahuagin, which gives the player characters a chance to act with surprise if they have their wits about them. As soon as the guards realize there are intruders, they either use their longbows to attack foes in the water or ready their spears (which they have at hand) to engage in melee.

The thugs wait until foes are on dry land to engage. They're likely to throw their clubs, then fight in melee, using their crowbars as clubs.

Both slaves turn on the thugs at the first opportunity and help the PCs. Salsan the lizard man is particularly vicious and bloodthirsty, mostly due to his ill treatment. Both slaves will stick with the PCs and do almost anything they ask if they believe they will obtain their freedom in the end. The slaves (as well as the thugs and guards) saw Linele rise up out of her coffin with a pocketwatch in her hand. They're terrified of the "devil girl."

8. TUNNEL TO THE SEA

A wide tunnel leads northeast to the sea from the central cave. At high tide, the water in the tunnel is about 3 feet deep. At low tide, it is too shallow to use a boat, but a character could walk/wade its length, though there is a risk of slipping. The tunnel is filled with normal crabs, up to about the size of a human hand.

It's a DC 12 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping and taking 2 points of slashing damage.

9. ANGRY EEL

The natural passage leading west from areas 6 and 7 is relatively dry but ends in a dead end with a pool. A cave lies 20 feet below the level of the pool. One can also reach this cave via a winding passage from area 2.

Player characters coming into this small cave disturb an eel that launches itself out of a hole in the rocks to bite the first character that comes in. After its initial attack, it is likely to retreat and hide in its hole, although if the PCs leave it alive and come back through this way, it will attack the lead character again.

The eel has poisonous snake stats.

10. LINELE

Linele hides in a cave northwest of the pool and the eel. She no longer needs to breathe, as she has become an unliving thing animated by the power of the demon-possessed watch. She greatly resembles a vampire; she now must feed on blood but has none of a vampire's traditional weaknesses (other than typical undead vulnerabilities).

Linele is still in shock from the transition. The last thing she remembers is being on Sallachor Isle, and then a conflagration of fire that killed her. When the characters approach her, she unconsciously uses a mental power granted her in her new form to project figments into their minds. In the vision, the PCs see themselves on a stormy, rocky shoreline (obviously not in Ptolus). They see a pretty young girl and her small black dog playing in the surf, with a compound of buildings beyond, as well as a ship. (It is possible to recognize that the ship is the *Arrowhead*, which made frequent trips to transport shivvel. This should be enough to allow the PCs to realize that it is a vision and they haven't been teleported.)

It's a DC 12 Perception check to recognize the ship in the vision as the Arrowhead.

Then the vision changes. The *Arrowhead* is gone, and the structures are all in flames. Figures in black move around the compound, putting survivors to the sword, but they are too far away to recognize or identify. Linele asks the PCs plaintively, "Why?" This time, the dog is gone, but she holds the demon-possessed watch in her hands.

At any time, suspicious characters can attempt to break free of the vision and see things as they really are (back in the cave). Otherwise, the vision just keeps repeating. Linele has the ability to speak and hear telepathically at will (but not read an unwilling creature's thoughts), as well as to project realistic illusions.

PCs must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw to break free of the vision. They can retry each round.

Linele does not attack unless she herself is attacked. A smarter tactic is to talk to her and convince her to do what the PCs want. Multiple attempts to convince her after a failure are allowed, although if the characters say something to anger or threaten her, Linele attacks. She has the watch and is loath to give it up; a second attempt to convince her after a failed attempt at the watch angers her.

Depending on what the PCs want, convincing Linele to do anything requires one or more successful Persuasion checks contested by her Charisma check (+2). Attempts to convince her to give up the watch have disadvantage.

It's worth noting that Linele doesn't know what shivvel is. She doesn't know her father is a criminal, or that her home on the island was used to process illegal and dangerous drugs. She was too young and innocent to understand any of it.

Linele has wight stats; alignment neutral

Linele still has the mind of a small child. She is confused and scared and doesn't understand the undead thing that she's become. However, the demon in the pocketwatch has tainted her, making her more prone to violent outbursts than she ever was while she was still alive. She almost killed one of the Balacazar thugs when she broke free of her coffin (he was taken up the stairs to the manor house before the PCs arrived).

RETURNING TO LINECH . . .

Whether they bring back Linele "living" or dead, the player characters eventually must bid Quillong farewell, leave the underwater caves, and return to where Seanus waits for them in the boat (unless he is already with them).

. . . WITH LINELE'S CORPSE

If the characters return to Linech with his daughter's body (slain again by them, most likely), the glass coffin, and its contents, Linech seems extremely pleased and pays them the promised fee. He doesn't even notice the condition of Linele's body (he doesn't know exactly how she died). He is sincerely saddened by her death, but he's elated at the return of the watch, which he can use to barter for his life with Menon Balacazar.

Player characters may find that a wise strategy involves destroying the watch. This does not affect Linele physically, but it breaks the demon's hold on her and ensures that no one can ever use it again.

Some characters may not want to bring the demon-possessed watch back to the drug smuggler. However, if they don't, a furious Linech asks about it specifically. They can try to lie to him, but if he sees through the lie, he attempts (with the help of whatever guards he has on hand) to slay the PCs, or at least capture and interrogate them.

Demon-possessed watch, page 572

THE DEMON-POSSESSED WATCH

For decades, a demonic spirit named Ylouil has dwelled within an otherwise mundane pocketwatch. It can speak to anyone who touches the watch. Typically, it does so only rarely and on its own terms, often whispering secrets that empower the creature with which it speaks to accomplish something evil (although also seemingly profitable). For example, it imparted the secret of creating the drug shivvel to humanity years ago.

Ylouil's very presence carries a strong evil taint that can have varied effects on those exposed to the spirit over a period of time. These effects are up to the GM, but they always involve corruption of some kind—like turning an innocent young girl into an undead creature.

The pocketwatch is not a magic item but a mundane item possessed by a demon. It confers no powers upon the possessor and is only a corrupting influence. It is as fragile as any other pocketwatch.

He won't pay them if he doesn't get the watch. Without the watch, he won't last the week, so holding up his end of the bargain with the PCs isn't a priority.

. . . WITH UNDEAD LINELE

The encounter with Linech likely goes very differently if the player characters bring back Linele in undead form, having convinced her to follow them back to the city. Linech is horrified, and anyone else around is terrified and runs from the girl. Linele, blaming her father and his misdeeds for her death, attacks him regardless of what the PCs do. Thus, the adventurers have to decide whether to try to save Linech, and—whichever choice they make—what to do with Linele afterward.

Technically, it is illegal to bring an undead creature into the city. See Chapter 28: Crime and the Law.

If they save Linech from his undead daughter, he pays them the money he owes them and offers them anything they want to deal with her. He wants them to make sure he never sees her again and doesn't have to fear her attacking him. This, of course, would be an ideal time to ask for the gold "statue" in his office.

Brotherhood of Redemption, page 106

Pale Tower, page 305

BACK TO CASTLE SHARD

Zavere and Rill are interested to hear everything the characters report and gladly give them their reward, regardless of how they handled the situation.

They are, of course, horrified to learn of Linele's fate. If she is still undead and with the party (or somewhere else known to them), Rill suggests taking her to the Brotherhood of Redemption. If the PCs try to give them the demon-possessed watch, they refuse it, saying that it would be unwise to keep it here. Should the party seem worried about hanging onto it, Zavere might suggest taking it to the Pale Tower for the Malkuth to guard.

If Zavere knows that Linech has the "gold statue," he will also remind the PCs of his offer to pay them 1,000 gp to bring their magically imprisoned friend.

Linele and the watch are of great interest to the Covenant of Blood. The vampires eventually want to have both, if they do not already. This may involve the PCs later on, particularly if they have the watch or have hidden or destroyed it. If the characters give Linele to the Brotherhood of Redemption, the vampires dominate Linele's mother Tashari Lin (page 339) and force her to convince the Brotherhood to release the girl, so that they can bring her into their fold (and study her, since she is a rare spontaneously generated vampire).

GETTING LORD ABBERCOMBE

Going back to Linech's Burrow might be easy or difficult, depending on what the player characters did there before. If they've already defeated Linech and his henchmen, or if Linele has dealt with her father and chased everyone else off, getting the statue is simple. If Linech and his crew are all still fit and able, it will be difficult.

The PCs may wish to stage some kind of ruse or diversion and then race in to spirit away the statue as quickly as possible. As Linech and his people are already anxious—expecting an attack by the Balacazars at any moment—this could prove fairly easy. Alternatively, if the characters gave Linech the watch, he and most of his guards won't even be at home. Instead, they'll be off parleying with the Balacazars.

If the party succeeds in retrieving Lord Abbercombe, the Lords of Castle Shard are very grateful, and Rill begins attempting to lift the spell that keeps him in stasis. It will take days, perhaps even weeks (whichever works best for the flow of the campaign), but eventually she realizes that she cannot free him. Only then does Shilukar send Castle Shard a missive stating that he can restore Lord Abbercombe—but only if they grant him permanent hospitality in the castle. See Shilukar's Lair on page 577 for more information.

XP AWARDS

In addition to the XP awards for overcoming the combat encounters in this adventure, the PCs earn XP (divided evenly among them) as follows:

- 100 XP for talking to Linech about the *Arrowhead* and agreeing to bring back the coffin
- 100 XP for defeating the sahuagin looting the *Arrowhead* (bonus XP for the difficulty of the underwater encounter)
- 100 XP for freeing the slaves Salsan and Sumar and getting them back to Ptolus alive
- 800 XP for convincing Linele to give up the watch (without killing her)
- 100 XP for destroying the watch
- 200 XP for bringing Lord Abbercombe to Castle Shard

ADVENTURE 3: END OF THE TRAIL

This short adventure works best if you leave a few months of in-game time between the end of "The Murderer's Trail" and the start of this one. Maybe the whole episode with Linech, the sunken ship, and Lord Abbercombe takes a while. The PCs might decide to take some time off for a rest after dealing with Linech.

You can run Interlude 2 ("The Missing Wafers") before this adventure.

Things start out as Brother Fabitor contacts the PCs to tell them that Phon Quartermain is missing. The pregnant woman they saved from assassins some months earlier has been gone for three days: She hasn't come to St. Gustav's Chapel, and she hasn't been to her job. In recent weeks, however, Fabitor has learned the name of her lover: a cleric named Helmut Itlestein. He reveals this information very reluctantly—only, he says, because he fears for her. He's seen the two of them together, and they seemed happy, but Fabitor wonders if Helmut knows something about her disappearance now.

Fabitor confirms that no attacks have been made on Phon's life since the PCs got involved. He thanks them for being so caring and helpful, and apologizes that he has no one else to go to for assistance in this matter.

If, after their previous involvement, the PCs put special precautions in place to protect Phon, it is quite likely that Helmut could overcome them, particularly since he has Phon's trust. Helmut didn't abduct Phon—he just came and got her. She went with him willingly because she loves him.

HELMUT'S HORRID SCHEME

Phon is indeed with her lover, Helmut Itlestein, kept in a secret room in his house. Helmut can't bring himself to hurt Phon, but he intends to have the baby killed as soon as it is born. Phon is too blinded by her love for Helmut to believe that he truly means her or her baby harm. Even after everything that happens, she will not cooperate in getting Helmut arrested or punished for her kidnapping (and, technically, she was not kidnapped).

Helmut is not currently in the city—he is off meeting with other republicans in the city of Kartare to the east, in Ren Tehoth. His organization needs money, and he's willing to go anywhere and do anything to obtain it. It's important to this adventure (and the PCs' well-being) that Helmut himself not get involved. The idea is to set him up as an ongoing villain, but not a typical one. Helmut is not evil, and he truly wants only what's best for Ptolus. He is, however, willing to go to extraordinary lengths and commit terrible crimes against individuals in order for the city as a whole to prosper.

As Helmut makes his way back from Kartare, a woman approaches him, claiming to know who he is. She tells him that she knows where he can obtain objects that will empower him to bring his goals to fruition. The objects are the *staves of Ghul*, which indeed have a great deal of power. He won't be back in Ptolus for many weeks, as he follows the woman on a quest to obtain the staves in the secret city of Shoggoth in the Dragonsbirth Mountains. He doesn't care that they are evil items—he does not even care if they will eventually damn his soul for using them, as long as they allow him to set the city on the path to freedom and democracy. Helmut is smart enough to know that using this power unwisely would draw the attention of those who would object to the use of such items at all (the Keepers of the Veil, the Church of Lothian, the high priests of Gaen, and so on). He even knows that the woman who guides him is a succubus—he slays her once they find the staves. He plans to use them eventually to kill the Holy Emperor. But that won't happen for months in the campaign.

INITIAL INQUIRIES

Inquiring at the Temple Observatory of the Watcher of the Skies, the player characters learn that Helmut isn't in the city at all. The clergy won't say where he's gone, and even if intimidated, magically influenced, or otherwise forced to tell, it becomes clear that they don't really know. However, the lesser priests there can be persuaded to tell the PCs how to find Helmut's house.

Otherwise, asking around in the Temple District can uncover the location of his house. One can also go to the Administration Building in Oldtown to learn this information, but a hefty bribe (at least 50 gp) is required to get the address quickly.

HELMUT'S HOUSE

Helmut lives on Limit Street, in the very western end of the Temple District, in a residential area disproportionately inhabited by clerics and temple workers. Helmut is married, but he and his wife Errathe are estranged, mainly because she wanted to raise children and he won't allow it. She often spends time with her family in Oldtown.

Nevertheless, if the player characters watch the house, it takes very little time to observe activity around the place. At night, they can see light from the windows, and once or twice a day a mysterious figure or two come and go from the house.

Staves of Ghul, *page 643*

"The Missing Wafers," page 575

Brother Fabitor, page 206
St. Gustav's Chapel, page 206
Helmut Itlestein, page 363

Pregnancy is a sensitive topic. For some people, worrying about a threat to a pregnant woman or her pregnancy is distracting and stressful. For more information on how to handle sensitive topics in an RPG campaign, read the free Consent in Gaming *PDF at myMCG.info/consent*

Keepers of the Veil, page 117
Church of Lothian, page 67
High Priests of Gaen, page 359
Holy Emperor, page 269

The scenario described for the Cloud Theater on page 191 would be particularly appropriate to run a few sessions after this one, as it also deals with Helmut and his plot against runebearer children.

Temple Observatory of the Watcher of the Skies, page 362
Administration Building, page 291

Depending on what the PCs say, a DC 15 Deception or Persuasion check convinces the priests to talk, as does magic like charm person. *The PCs can also use this tactic on other people who would know Helmut's address.*

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

Asking around with the neighbors or a successful Investigation check among nearby residents reveals a few details about the Itlesteins:

- *Helmut and Errathe do not get along, and Errathe is almost never here (DC 12).*
- *Helmut is traveling, although there still seems to be some activity around the house (DC 14).*
- *Helmut left two days ago (DC 16).*
- *Two young people are seen coming and going from the house every day (DC 18).*

"End of the Trail" is not meant to be the actual end of the trail. This adventure is intended to be a setup for future direct encounters with Helmut Itlestein, when the PCs are more powerful.

Fate Weavers' symbol

Watcher of the Skies, page 362

Fate Weavers, page 111

Republican movement, page 142

Runebearers, page 62

It is a DC 20 Perception check to find the secret door.

Phon, page 557

Administration Building, page 291

Imperial University, page 300

Holy Palace, page 269

The animated table has scarecrow stats, with no Terrifying Glare ability, and its claw (leg) attacks don't frighten targets.

The Ethics of the Situation

In this adventure, the PCs may find themselves on two different sides of the issue at hand. As distasteful as harming children is, if they learn of Helmut's fears about the runebearers and believe his vision of doom, it might be worth doing save the whole city. This adventure is more about roleplaying and character development than anything else.

Menaster Orrund is a sorcerer with cult fanatic stats and AC 15 (from mage armor*); he knows the* burning hands, mage armor, *and* silent image *spells; alignment neutral. Equipment: dragon pistol, ammunition (20 rounds),* potion of healing, potion of heroism, scroll of grease, scroll of jump, scroll of see invisibility, *silver rings (2, worth 45 gp and 65 gp), 11 gp, 12 sp.*

Dragon pistol, page 522

Jamila Nox has guard stats, with AC 19 and +1 on melee attack and rolls; alignment neutral good. Equipment: chain mail, shield, +1 longsword, *longbow, arrows (12),* potion of healing, *key to Helmut's house, 13 sp.*

Fate Weavers' headquarters, page 324

Helmut's front door: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to open*

THE FATE WEAVERS

The figures seen around Helmut's house are two young human Fate Weavers. They are lithe and tall; both wear their hair long but pulled back and have the symbol of their group painted on their foreheads. The man, Menaster Orrund, is blond with blue eyes and a large nose, while the woman, Jamila Nox, has auburn hair and large green eyes.

The Fate Weavers secretly work with Helmut and the republican movement. However, Helmut has further convinced Menaster and Jamila of his beliefs that runebearer children spell doom for the city, and—as horrible as it may seem—that these children must be eliminated for the good of all.

In Helmut's absence, Menaster and Jamila bring fresh, hot food for Phon each day and check on her to make sure she's in good health. Phon is still many weeks from giving birth. It's important to note that Jamila is a good-hearted young woman. She doesn't use lethal force indiscriminately unless her life, or the life of someone she cares about, is in danger. Menaster is slightly more mercenary, although both of them believe in Helmut's cause. However, neither has any reason to think that the PCs are here to help Phon. More likely, in their view, the characters are here to hurt her or, conversely, here to save the baby that spells doom for the city.

If the player characters follow these two away from the house, they see them go to the Fate Weavers' headquarters in Rivergate. However, both NPCs should have a chance to spot that they are being tailed. If they notice the PCs, they try to lose them in Midtown, spending time in various establishments on Tavern Row.

The rest of the Fate Weavers know that their organization allies itself with Helmut, but they know nothing of Phon, her child, or Helmut's vision regarding runebearers.

Menaster and Jamila sometimes come and go together, but usually one leaves and one stays.

INSIDE THE HOUSE

The front door is locked, but Jamila has a key. The house is very typical for the neighborhood (see the map in the packet). The wealth of a high priest of a major temple is evident here, although one might have expected much more—Helmut has devoted most of his own wealth to his cause. Still, if the characters want to ransack the house, they'll likely find 2,000 gp worth of easily removed goods (silverware, a silver tea set, jewelry, a nice painting, and so forth).

Most interesting, however, is a sheaf of papers on a desk in the first-floor office. The papers detail a number of prophecies and visions that Helmut has received from the Watcher of the Skies. While most seem incomprehensible, meaningless, or irrelevant, one of them catches the PCs' eyes. It says:

"Lord Abbercombe will be found by a dark elf named Shilukar. But the Idol of Ravvan brings doom. His lair lies beneath a vacant lot on Brandywine Street in the Guildsman District."

Secret Room: The upstairs has a large room behind a secret door hidden within Helmut's wardrobe. Helmut keeps Phon here. She is visibly pregnant now and also heavily sedated. The room's furnishings include a bed; a small table holding a lamp, washbasin, and pitcher; a couple of chairs; and a large table that holds maps of important government and Church locations (the Administration Building, the Imperial University, the Holy Palace, and so on), along with a few notes on infiltrating or even destroying them.

Phon spends most of her time asleep or talking quietly with Menaster and Jamila. She's well cared for and well protected. If anyone should attempt to harm Phon or take her out of this room, the large table animates magically and attacks the offenders.

Unless the player characters specifically waited until they saw both Menaster and Jamila leave, one or both of them might be here as well, ready to protect Phon.

WRAPPING UP

Since Helmut will be gone for weeks, he won't know until much later what the player characters have done. However, Phon will, under no circumstances, believe that he meant her harm. Even if the PCs have figured out that he hired the killers who attacked her, they can find no proof of it, and Phon certainly won't believe it.

For now, though, Phon is safe. And the adventurers have the location of Shilukar's lair, which will become extremely valuable later on.

XP AWARDS

In addition to the XP awards for overcoming the combat encounters in this adventure, the PCs earn XP (divided evenly among them) as follows:

- 100 XP for confirming with the temple that Helmut is away
- 50 XP for getting Helmut's address
- 100 XP for getting Phon out of Helmut's house, even if she doesn't believe their reasons why
- 100 XP for learning the location of Shilukar's lair

INTERLUDE 2: THE MISSING WAFERS

This interlude provides another short, one-session adventure that has nothing to do with anything that comes before or after it.

SETUP

A priestess named Delemele Sartaris (female human) sits dejected and sad in the Ghostly Minstrel (or another tavern or restaurant that the PCs frequent). She even weeps at one point. If the player characters approach her, she invites them to sit down. She explains that she is a priestess of Melann, Goddess of Farming, and that she was given the duty of transporting the blessed wafers of her deity to the fields north of the city, where they are crumbled and scattered upon the ground to ensure fertility.

When she arrived at the fields earlier today, however, the wafers were missing. She feels terrible about this, and faces severe chastisement and probably a demotion in priestly rank. Worse still, the farmers risk poor crops and even blight (at least, that's what she believes). She begs the characters for help.

Delemele admits that on her way out of the city, she stopped for a time in a small tavern called the Gatehouse Pub. This was careless of her, but she was meeting her friend Kaela Sparkborn (female elf) there for lunch.

THE THEFT

A rival cleric named Thord Questin (male human) was recently excommunicated from the service of Melann. Delemele discovered that he was stealing from church donations. Thord lost all cleric magical abilities and all respect from everyone he knew. Eager for revenge, he has stolen the wafers and plans to make it look as if Delemele planned on selling them. In doing so, he hopes to frame her for his own past crimes and redeem himself in everyone's eyes. He paid a thief named Araevil Seversong (male Shoal elf) to lift them out of her bag while she was at the pub.

Delemele knows about Thord, obviously, but she doesn't know that he has anything to do with this situation.

AT THE GATEHOUSE PUB

The obvious place to start investigation is the Gatehouse Pub in the North Market. Delemele accompanies the characters unless they ask her not to.

The pub is located on North Gate Road very near the North Gate. It's usually quite crowded, mostly with farmers and visitors from out of town. The owner is Wilsha Rarris (female human), and she has a staff of four overworked helpers. The place serves ale as well as simple lunch fare.

Thord figured that Delemele might get someone to help her, so he also paid Araevil Seversong to remain at the pub and watch for anyone poking around. If Araevil does see "investigators," he is supposed to throw them off the trail. He can do that in one of two ways.

In Disguise. Araevil pretends to be a patron in the pub who claims to have seen the heist. He tells the PCs that two dwarves slipped the wafers out of the cleric's bag. He says he saw

Thord losing all of his clerical magic abilities means he can't cast spells, use items that work only for clerics or people who can cast spells, or use abilities that require having a connection to a deity. Basically now he's just a warrior with nonmagical skills relating to religion; his stats on page 576 account for this.

Araevil Seversong is a rogue for hire. He'll do anything for money. He's looking forward to a time in the near future when he can join either the Longfingers Guild or one of the larger criminal organizations.

Delemele Sartaris has priest stats; alignment neutral good

Ghostly Minstrel, page 193

Melann, Goddess of Farming, page 73

Gatehouse Pub, page 288

Wilsha Rarris has expert stats, page 609

The PCs can investigate Kaela Sparkborn, but she doesn't know anything about the theft and didn't see anything.

Kaela Sparkborn is an elf with performer stats (page 612); alignment neutral good

Araevil Seversong is an elf with spy stats; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: +1 studded leather, shortsword, daggers (3), dragon pistol, ammunition (8 rounds), potion of climbing, disguise kit, thieves' tools, silver and opal necklace worth 500 gp, 16 gp.

Dragon pistol, page 522

the thieves run off along the wall to the west, toward Rivergate. He was afraid to get involved earlier, so he didn't say anything.

If asked, Delemele tells the PCs that the missing wafers were in a holy silver box wrapped in silk. No one would necessarily know they were wafers just by seeing them lifted out of her bag. In other words, Araevil should have said he saw the thieves steal a box, not "wafers." Delemele won't think of this herself, however.

Thord Questin has priest stats, with AC 16, +1 on melee attack and damage rolls, and no Divine Eminence or Spellcasting ability; alignment lawful evil. Equipment: breastplate armor, shield, +1 mace, potion of greater healing, *silver box worth 50 gp containing the holy wafers of Melann, 48 gp.*

The Direct Approach. Araevil may try to scare off the characters by ambushing them after they leave the pub. He attacks (hopefully) with surprise, hiding in some shadowy cover, making a ranged attack. He hopes that one good shot from his pistol takes down the toughest-looking PC. He then threatens the rest from the shadows. "Get out of here, or you'll all end up like that one."

FINDING THORD

If the party captures and interrogates Araevil, he might eventually crack (assuming the PCs successfully intimidate him). If so, he says Thord hired him to steal the wafers in the box; he gave them to Thord after doing so. He won't reveal where Thord went unless successfully intimidated a second time or the PCs give him at least 25 gp. He knows Thord is hiding in a nearby park, in the gardener's shed.

Watchhouses, page 142

It is a DC 13 Investigation or Persuasion check to get this information.

If the characters ask around in the pub about the elf, people say they saw him give a box to a tall, thin man with shaggy brown hair and a missing front tooth (Delemele can confirm this matches Thord's description). Afterward, the man ran off to nearby Deaven Park. This flower-filled park is just across the street—it's very small, and the only place anyone could be hiding is an old gardener's shed.

IN THE GARDENER'S SHED

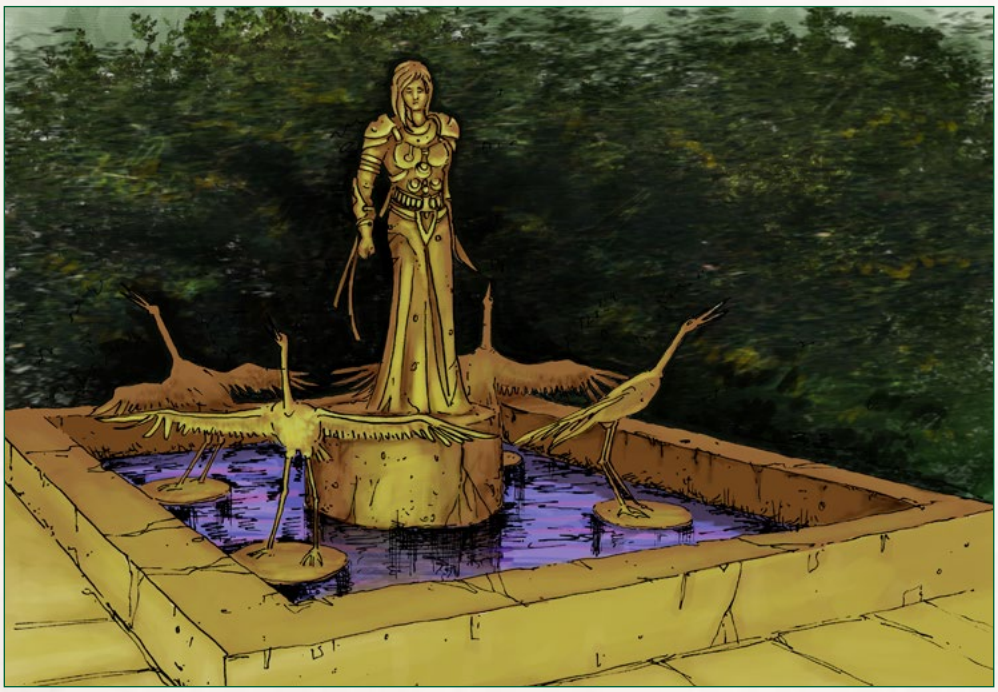
This small wooden building contains tools, sacks of seed, and a large bucket of fertilizer. Thord hides here with the wafers. He peeks out the door quite frequently, so he may well see the PCs coming. If he sees them in time and realizes that they are obviously looking for him (if, for example, Delemele is with them), he runs. Otherwise, he tries to fight them off. He surrenders to save his life, if it comes to that.

He confesses to his crimes if forced. The proper thing to do at this point would be to take him to the nearby Watchhouse or perhaps the Temple of Melann. Delemele wants to take the wafers to the fields north of town immediately. She has no money with which to pay the characters but promises that they can come to her for spellcasting if they ever need it.

XP AWARDS

In addition to the XP awards for overcoming the combat encounters in this adventure, the PCs earn XP (divided evenly among them) as follows:

- 50 XP for investigating leads at the Gatehouse Pub
- 50 XP for confronting Thord
- 100 XP for returning the wafers to Delemele



ADVENTURE 4: SHILUKAR'S LAIR

Deep underground, below the Guildsman District, Shilukar has claimed a section of tunnels and chambers that were once a part of Ghul's Labyrinth. Here, he has built his chaositech laboratory and keeps his weird creations. The place is guarded by gnolls he brought to Praemal using a portal created by a magic item called the *idol of Ravvan*.

SETUP

Shilukar has sent his offer to Lord Zavere and Lady Rill via courier. He wants an invitation to live permanently in Castle Shard in exchange for the key to restoring Lord Abbercombe from his stasis. This is significant, because anyone with such an invitation is afforded not only a safe place to live, but the protection of Zavere and Rill. The Lords of Castle Shard summon the player characters to another meeting at the castle and explain the situation.

Zavere says Shilukar has given them only two days to decide. In that time, if someone could obtain the restorative to help Lord Abbercombe, the whole issue would be moot. Hopefully, the PCs found the location of Shilukar's lair in Helmut Itlestein's house. If they try to tell the Lords of Castle Shard about this, Zavere stops them. "Ah, ah," he says. "If *someone* could obtain the restorative to help Lord Abbercombe, the whole issue would be *moot*. That's all I am saying." He looks at them meaningfully and then bids them good day.

The characters should get the obvious hint that he wants them to go after Shilukar, but he doesn't want to know about it. He makes no offer of reward, but by this time, it should be clear to the PCs that helping the Lords of Castle Shard is always a good idea.

The characters have two days to infiltrate Shilukar's lair, get the restorative, and bring it back to Castle Shard. This is an extremely difficult task for them to attempt, and they may fail. However, Shilukar doesn't want them dead—he wants them to return to Rill and Zavere and convince them to accept his offer. He tells the PCs that if he goes to Castle Shard, he won't need his gnoll guards anymore and he will destroy the *idol of Ravvan* (see area 9).

LAYOUT OF THE LAIR

Practically all of Shilukar's lair lies beneath the streets, part of Ghul's ancient labyrinth. Unless otherwise noted, the doors are wooden and unlocked, the ceilings are 12 feet high, and the walls, floors, and ceilings are masonry stone. The numbered areas below correspond to those on the map of the lair (in the packet).

1. THE SCRAP LOT AND THE SHACK

The main entrance into Shilukar's lair lies within a small shack in an open lot on Brandywine Street in the Guildsman District. The lot is filled with trash and scrap. Those trying to get to the old shack must climb over piles of discarded planks, broken furniture, unused bricks and stones, and rusty pipes and sheets of metal. Characters moving through the debris must be careful to avoid stepping on a nail or scraping against a sharp piece of scrap. All the junk means it is difficult to move quietly through the area. A periscope hidden in the scrap nearby (see area 2) allows the underground guards an opportunity to spot intruders.

The shack measures barely 10 feet by 10 feet. It is made of wood and filled with more trash. One section of scrap and rubbish is actually a well-disguised secret door in the floor with what looks like a rusted, broken padlock, though it is in fact a well-maintained lock securing the door. Another section of scrap has been set to fall and make a great deal of noise when the trapdoor opens, automatically alerting the guards below, if they were not already (this is essentially a trap, but meant only to warn the guards rather than harm anyone).

Climbing down the ladder from the trapdoor in the old shack leads to an empty room with another door leading out to area 2.

2. GUARDS

The four gnoll guards here wait and watch the trash-filled lot. Shilukar has rigged a periscope in this room, giving them the ability to watch for intruders. The periscope is disguised as scrap and 10 feet away from the shack, making it very difficult to notice by people approaching the shack. The guardroom has a wooden table made from an old door. It is covered with mugs, a keg, and scraps of food.

One of the gnolls always mans the periscope. The others typically sit around the table, telling tall tales and drinking weak beer unless alerted. They all howl like wolves if attacked to alert the gnoll in area 3.

Treasure: If the PCs remove the large periscope without breaking it, it is worth 100 gp.

3. NET TRAP

A single gnoll waits in an intersection of corridors, holding a rope. If he pulls it, a large weighted net falls down over a 10-foot-square area in front of the north door. The gnoll howls out to his fellows once the net is dropped, then attacks anyone not trapped by it.

GM TIPS

Player characters should be at least 3rd level before reaching Shilukar's lair.

Some basic features of Ghul's Labyrinth appear starting on page 390 in Chapter 19: What's Down There?

Chaositech, page 529

It is a DC 5 Perception check to avoid these hazards during the day, or DC 10 at night. Those who fail must succeed at a DC 12 Dexterity save or take 2 (1d4) piercing or slashing damage from the debris.

Stealth checks to be quiet (rather than just hide from view) have disadvantage.

Couriers, page 154

Castle Shard, page 263

Lord Abbercombe, page 93

Helmut Itlestein's house, page 573

Neither Zavere nor Rill seems interested in discussing ways to trick Shilukar into giving them the restorative without letting him live in Castle Shard. Such actions, Zavere says, are without honor or dignity.

It is a DC 20 Search check to find the secret door and a DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to open the lock.

It is a DC 20 Search check to find the noisy scrap trap and a DC 14 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.

Anyone who thinks to look into who owns the scrap lot can find documents in the Administration Building showing that the land was recently sold to a Shoal elf named Shaelukar Darkfingers. This is an alias Shilukar uses while in disguise.

If the PCs ask around about anything strange in the area, a DC 15 Investigation check reveals that gnolls have been seen around Brandywine Street, skulking in the darkness. A DC 20 success on the check means the characters also learn that at least one person claims not only to have seen gnolls, but that one of the gnolls had blue skin or fur.

It is a DC 23 Perception check to notice the periscope. Removing it without breaking it requires a DC 12 Sleight of Hand check.

Gnolls: *22 hp*

None of the gnolls in this adventure speak Common, only Gnoll.

Gnoll Treasure

The common gnolls in this adventure usually have about 10 (3d6) gp worth of treasure—a mix of strange coins, tiny gemstones, interesting animal teeth, and so on. Most merchants in town won't accept them as currency, but the PCs can find some vendors in Delver's Square who'll accept them in lieu of real money. Each gnoll has a 5 percent chance of having a common or uncommon potion, typically a potion of healing *or* fire resistance.

Creatures in the area of the net must succeed at a DC 16 Dexterity save or be restrained as if by a net weapon.

GM TIPS

This is a very challenging adventure, with a real chance of PCs dying. It's entirely possible and not at all inappropriate for them to retreat and admit that the challenge is too much for them. GMs shouldn't punish them for this and, in fact, can facilitate what might be the wiser course of action.

The character can resist going berserk with a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw.

Drinking from the font has the effect of the bear's endurance and bull's strength effects of the enhance ability *spell.*

GM TIPS

It may be worth mentioning to the players how strange it is to see gnolls in Ptolus.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom saving throw resists the savagery effect of the idol.

City Sewers, page 408

It is a DC 22 Perception check to notice the door from the sewer side, and a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to unlock it.

It is a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to open the lock.

Nyatrah has gnoll pack lord stats, with AC 20, Wis 14, and 3rd-level spellcasting (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks); alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: plate armor, shield, flail, longbow, arrows (12), potion of animal friendship, potion of greater healing, potion of hill giant strength, potion of heroism, *25 gp. He has the following spells prepared:*
Cantrips (at will): resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy
1st level (4 slots): cure wounds, inflict wounds, shield of faith
2nd level (2 slots): hold person, spiritual weapon

Angash has cambion stats with size Large, the Rampage ability of a gnoll; alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: Large greataxe, 25 pp, 39 gp.

Shilukar has convinced the gnolls from Ravvan's realm that if they do as he asks, he will lead them to greater glory for their lord. So far, he has been true to his word, but he is ready to betray them in a moment if it will help him. If the idol of Ravvan *is destroyed, all the creatures who have passed through its gate fall into a coma for a few days. Shilukar knows this.*

4. GNOLLS WORKING

Two gnolls work here attempting to widen the room by burrowing into the eastern wall. The wall has no masonry on it any longer, and piles of broken stones and dirt fill the room.

If engaged, the gnolls fight with their picks (same damage as their normal attacks) and without shields. They are quick to retreat, though, attempting to reach one of the exits. If they hear the sounds of battle, they do not come to the aid of others.

5. GNOLL BARRACKS

Four off-duty gnolls lounge and sleep in this large chamber in the northwest corner of the lair. Unless alerted, they are not prepared for combat. They require about a minute to don their armor and get their weapons ready. With less time, they are not wearing any armor and have only melee weapons and shields at hand. If they hear noise in area 3, they immediately start donning their armor.

6. EMERGENCY EXIT

Two more gnolls watch the lair's secret eastern exit, which leads into the city sewers. The stone door is secret from the sewer side and locked. The gnolls on guard have the key. They stand at their positions, even if they hear sounds of combat elsewhere in the lair.

7. GNOLL CLERIC

The door to this room near the center of the lair is locked. The chamber has a wooden bed covered in animal hides. The walls are covered in crude pictures and symbols drawn in blood. They look disturbing but ultimately have no meaning. Bones, teeth, claws, skulls, and bits of fur hang from the ceiling, suspended on string.

This is the lair of Nyatrah, a cleric of Ravvan and one of the favored of his progeny. Nyatrah is fiercely devoted to Ravvan—with the key word being "fierce." He does whatever the half-fiend gnolls Brugul and Angash tell him to do, and thus, whatever Shilukar wants.

Tactics: If he hears shouts of alarm, Nyatrah spends at least a couple of rounds to use his spells and potions to augment his defenses and physical might.

8. FONT OF HEALTH AND STRENGTH

As an unexpected side effect of the nearby *idol of Ravvan*, this ancient pool—once empty except for muck and slime—is now full of cool, clear water. Strength and vitality seethes within the water, making it constantly ripple, even though no source for such an effect is evident. Anyone who drinks from the font is immediately physically enhanced for twenty minutes. However, the pool enhances a character only the first time they drink from it. If the character ever drinks from the pool again, or (for the first drinking) the character is already under the effect of magic that enhances strength and endurance, the enchanted pool instead causes them to go berserk for one minute, with a 50 percent chance each round of attacking an ally.

9. IDOL OF RAVVAN THE BEAST GOD

This chamber at the south end of the lair remains mostly empty, except for a squat ceramic idol, 1 foot tall, that sits atop a 3-foot-tall simple stone pedestal. This is the *idol of Ravvan*, a dangerous magic item.

Those who enter this chamber are compelled to act and feel more bestial and savage. On the round after they arrive, affected characters begin seeing visions in their minds' eyes of themselves tearing apart their friends using only their nails and teeth. On the round after that, the affected characters act on these visions, and have a 50 percent chance each round of attacking an ally. This effect is permanent, and the chance of attacking an ally continues as long as they remain within this chamber or are otherwise within 20 feet of the idol. This compulsion can be broken with magic or other effects that end hostile magic or calm emotions.

Angash the Mighty. Typically, Angash the fiend-blooded gnoll is here. He is more than 8 feet tall, his skin and fur are blue, and his feet are cloven (unlike many half-fiends, he does not have wings). He gladly attacks any intruders—he loves combat. He rarely uses his magic, preferring to chop things with his axe. Although he likes to bellow in battle, he won't cry for help unless he is reduced to half his hit points. He is a very dangerous foe.

10. BRUGUL

This chamber east of the font (area 8) has blood and gore spattered across its stone walls and floor. Worse, it appears as if someone has attempted (crudely) to draw pictures and symbols of beasts, claws, and tooth-filled maws in the blood. Two large furred skins lie on the floor like beds.

Brugul the Ferocious. As with her brother Angash, the blood of Ravvan has increased Brugul's size without giving her wings. Her fur and skin are blue, her feet are cloven, and she has four small horns on her head. With her spellcasting and equipment, she is likely far more dangerous than her brother—and woe to the group that must confront them both at the same time. If she can, she uses her spells to enhance her defenses (and her brother's, if he is present). She comes to his aid if she hears him fighting in area 9, but she takes a couple of rounds to cast her spells first—unless he cries out for help, at which point she comes immediately.

11. ALARM AND TRAP

Entering this open area just west of the font (area 8) triggers a magical alarm that mentally warns Shilukar. It also activates a magical trap; one round after the first person enters the room, the entire room is hit by a wave of magical energy.

When alerted by the magical alarm, Shilukar hastens here to take advantage of the intruders while they are slowed or asleep.

Because Shilukar has lied to them, Brugul and Angash don't understand how the world works. Having recently come here from the realms beyond, they don't even realize that now they can never return. Occasionally they leave Shilukar's lair, but only to hunt live prey in the city above. Shilukar keeps them from doing so too often, so as not to attract attention. Still, rumors are already circulating of strange blue gnolls. If not slain, these half-demons will escape the lair and creep about Ptolus's dark alleyways, hiding in abandoned ruins, hunting prey, and wreaking havoc.

If Angash or Brugul (or both) have the player characters on the ropes, Shilukar intervenes (arriving from area 14). He tells the PCs that he will let them escape alive if they return to Castle Shard and help convince the lords there to accept his offer. He tells the PCs that if he is allowed to live in Castle Shard, he won't need the gnolls anymore and will destroy the *idol of Ravvan*. The fiend-gnolls don't speak Common, so they won't know he is selling them out.

12. CHAOSITECH LAB

The large room in the southwest corner of the lair is Shilukar's laboratory. The ceiling here is 20 feet high. The chamber stinks of foul chemicals and organic, rotting smells. Running through the middle of the room is a wooden platform reached via a ramp. The platform is 10 feet off the ground and allows anyone on it to look down into the nearby glass tanks filled with chaositech-created chemicals. These vats vary in size, from 8 to 12 feet in height, and from 3 to 5 feet in diameter. In most of the vats a creature gestates, suspended in the liquid and attached to a number of umbilical-like cords. These cords connect to horrid, semi-organic machines, each about 2 feet in diameter, that pump nutrients and chemicals into the creature.

Growing Creatures. Each creature in the vats looks like a terrible fusion of a recognizable animal (a dog, a large bird, a snake, and so on) and a human-sized spider. Some look hardly viable. None of them is ready to live on its own; if removed from its tank, any of them will die.

The chemicals in the vats are toxic. If a tank is destroyed, not only do the chemicals spill out onto the floor, but a cloud of poisonous gas roils up.

The machines and tanks cannot be moved without destroying them.

Table. The far corner of the room has a table covered in alchemical apparatus: 1,000 gp worth of jars, tubes, beakers, chemicals, powders, and specialized tools.

13. SPIDER SPAWN

The door to this room adjacent to the lab is made of wood and is locked.

This chamber contains the results of some of Shilukar's most successful experiments to date. Horrible fusions of spiders with giant bats and rats, these hungry creatures attack immediately. The two spider-bats look like monstrous spiders 4 feet across but have bat wings with a wingspan of nearly 10 feet. The three spider-rats look like giant rats, but with four additional spiderlike legs coming out of each side, which allow them to walk on walls.

14. SHILUKAR'S BEDCHAMBER

This lavish room just north of the lab (area 12) and the spider-spawn room (area 13) is appointed in lavender, white, and black silks. These cover the walls and the massive four-poster bed, as well as the canopy over the bed. The room also contains a desk and chair, a round wooden table with two more chairs, a bathtub, a divan, and two wardrobes.

Brugul has cambion stats with size Large, the Rampage ability of a gnoll, Wis 15, and 2nd-level spellcasting (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks); alignment chaotic evil. Equipment: Large splint armor, Large shield, Large flail, ring of feather falling, *flask of alchemist's fire, emerald ring worth 550 gp. She has the following spells prepared:*

Cantrips (at will): resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy

1st level (3 slots): cure wounds, guiding bolt, inflict wounds, shield of faith

Everyone in the area of the magical trap must make a DC 15 Wisdom save. Those who fail are affected by slow *for five rounds and must succeed at another Wisdom save or fall asleep for 1d6 minutes. It is a DC 22 Perception check to notice the trap and a DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to disable it.*

The cloud of gas is 10 feet in diameter and lasts for 1d4 rounds before dissipating. Any creature entering or starting their turn in it must succeed at a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or become poisoned for one hour.

Door lock: *DC 22 Sleight of Hand check to open*

Spider-bats have giant wolf spider stats, with a fly speed of 20 ft.

Spider-rats have ratling stats (page 592), plus the ability to climb walls and ceilings without making an ability check.

Shilukar is a dark elf with arcanist (page 605) stats (spell save DC 14, +4 to hit with spell attacks), AC 14 (17 with mage armor*), Dex 18, Int 19, Perception +4, Stealth +4; alignment neutral evil. Equipment: fine dagger (worth 100 gp), fine staff (worth 100 gp),* scroll of enhance ability, scroll of fireball, scroll of see invisibility, scrolls of shield *(2), chaositech emotion reader*, docility bomb*, infestation bomb*, vial of liquid (restorative for Lord Abbercombe), antitoxin, thunderstone, ruby ring worth 500 gp, key to his room, 27 gp.*

He can innately cast the following spells:
At will: dancing lights
1/day each: darkness, faerie fire

He has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): assess creature, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation
1st level (4 slots): expeditious retreat, mage armor, sleep
2nd level (3 slots): invisibility, Mel's acid arrow, web
3rd level (2 slots): fireball, fly

** See Chapter 30: Chaositech*

For more on the personality and motivations of Shilukar, see page 563. See also Shilukar as a campaign villain, page 545.

Shilukar enjoys a dark elf vintage of red wine called voveche, a beverage that most other species find repulsive.

Lord Abbercombe, page 93

It is doubtful that the characters will encounter Shilukar (male dark elf) here. He is more likely to come find them at some point, or to be working in his lab when they arrive.

Unless his foes seem extremely powerful, Shilukar uses his sleep spell as his primary offensive tactic. He likes to take prisoners, because dead foes can't be manipulated or used.

Shilukar carries a tiny vial of liquid that, when sprinkled upon Lord Abbercombe, relieves the stasis affecting him.

Treasure. Searching for several minutes through the clothing, toiletries, towels, and other mundane items in the wardrobes, the PCs can find a bag containing 890 gp. Further, Shilukar's spellbook is in a drawer in the desk (it contains the spells he can cast, plus an equal number of spells of similar power, including several spells having to do with chaositech).

WRAPPING UP

If the player characters got the vial of liquid from Shilukar, Lady Rill can restore Lord Abbercombe. She and Zavere (and Lord Abbercombe) all give them their gratitude, as well as a monetary reward of 3,000 gp. Perhaps more importantly, however, the PCs take a huge step toward becoming figures of respect and importance. Zavere and Rill give them gold friendship bands with the words "Castle Shard" engraved upon them.

Friendship bands, page 29

If the PCs failed to get the restorative, the Lords of Castle Shard invite Shilukar to live in the castle. This puts him under their protection, and the characters (or anyone else) can no longer attack him without incurring the wrath of Zavere and Rill. The Lords of Castle Shard still appreciate the PCs' efforts, and while they give the characters no monetary reward, they do still grant them the friendship bands.

The Night of Dissolution *adventure, page 11*

Shuul, page 126
Prajdall, page 564

XP AWARDS

In addition to the XP awards for overcoming the combat encounters in this adventure, the PCs earn XP (divided evenly among them) as follows:

- 100 XP for getting into the lair without the gnolls realizing it
- 200 XP for destroying the *idol of Ravvan*
- 200 XP for destroying the chaositech lab
- 200 XP for restoring Lord Abbercombe without Shilukar being invited to Castle Shard

FURTHER ADVENTURES

Helmut Itlestein is still around and still causing trouble. But what if he's right? What if the runebearer children do spell doom for the city? This is covered in some detail in *The Night of Dissolution* adventure—although perhaps not the way anyone might expect.

Shilukar, too, is likely still around, either in Castle Shard or in hiding in a new lair somewhere. Undoubtedly he has multiple contingency plans to fall back on. Perhaps he attempts to manipulate the player characters into opposing the Shuul and destroying the chaositech-hunting Prajdall he so fears (the details of which are up to the GM).

Chapter 34:
MONSTERS

While the Ptolus book uses many standard monsters from the core rules, the city harbors monsters unique to the setting as well. These creatures—including some of the dreaded Galchutt—are presented here.

Both holy and horrific, sacred and surreal, the monsters in this chapter offer a bit of unique flavor to a Ptolus campaign. They are meant to be used along with other standard fantasy monsters such as dragons, goblins, giant spiders, ogres, and so on, and they use a similar monster format. If you are unfamiliar with how to read a monster stat block, read the introduction of the core monster book before proceeding—it explains the information in a stat block and gives rules for common monster traits such as size categories, monster types (fiend, monstrosity, and so on), and senses like darkvision and truesight.

The creatures in this chapter are organized alphabetically, although those of a similar type (such as the three kinds of D'Stradi demons) are grouped together under a common entry (such as "D'Stradi Demon").

The first part of this chapter includes monsters. For humanoid NPCs like arcanists, deadly warriors, high priests, and more (including stat blocks for a few specific NPCs), see Additional NPC Stat Blocks.

CREATURES BY CHALLENGE RATING

Ratling (ratman)	1/4
Balsam (blessed child)	1/2
Ratlord (ratman)	1
Skulk	1
Toruk-Rul	1
Sorn-Ulth	1
Ratbrute (ratman)	2
Dayod (blessed child)	3
Fealom (blessed child)	5
D'Stradi abductor	6
Rhodintor	6
Hallas (blessed child)	7
D'Stradi dancer	8
D'Stradi annihilator	11
Zaug	13
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This chapter is intended only for GMs, not players. Players should not read this material unless directed to do so by the GM.

Additional NPC Stat Blocks, page 604

OTHER MONSTERS IN PTOLUS

Almost all standard monsters can be used as-is in a Ptolus Campaign, with the following special exceptions:

- Dinosaurs are very rare, usually the result of magical conjuration.
- Duergar do not exist in the world of Praemal, nor do the standard PC species subtypes (hill dwarves, high elves, lightfoot halflings, and so on) or dragonborn. Praemal's dwarves, elves, and other PC-type species are specific to this world and are described in Chapter 3: Species.
- Hobgoblins, kobolds, troglodytes, and gnolls are not common to the region around Ptolus, but they do exist in the world (hobgoblins to the far southeast, gnolls to the southwest, troglodytes to the far south, and kobolds in the Dragonsbirth Mountains).
- For obvious reasons, such creatures as dryads, sprites, treants, remorhazes, and winter wolves are not typically found in a city setting of temperate climate.
- Merfolk and satyrs do not live anywhere near Ptolus.
- Ankhegs, bulettes, and rocs are very rare in Ptolus, but more common in the lands surrounding the city.
- There is not a strong distinction made between demons and devils in Ptolus. For more information, see Demons and Devils in Chapter 4: Cosmology and Religion.
- Lastly, remember that all extraplanar monsters, such as angels, demons, elementals, and so on, are either temporarily summoned to Praemal or trapped here permanently.

Demons and Devils, page 65

BLESSED CHILD

Blessed children are the spirits of people not yet born. They look like serious-minded (but innocent) children with white-feathered wings, although only the upper torso is distinct and visible. The rest of their body fades off into mist. They carry swords that appear far too large for them to wield, but they do wield them—with great skill and surprising power. Except for their weapons (which grow more ornate for each successive blessed child type), it is impossible for an untrained viewer to tell the difference between the types of blessed children.

Temporary Summoning. No one encounters a blessed child by accident. They are summoned from a spiritual realm by good-aligned casters or particularly holy individuals to accomplish important tasks or to fight against evil (particularly against undead). Unlike other extraplanar beings, blessed children cannot be permanently called to Praemal; they can only be temporarily summoned. A good cleric can summon a blessed child using the *conjure blessed child* or *conjure celestial* spell.

Opposite of Undead. Blessed children are the opposite of undead, and as pure and innocent as undead are corrupt and evil.

Uncorruptible. Blessed children move into combat in the most straightforward means possible. They are utterly guileless, but they are also fearless. If their summoner can speak Celestial, they will obey whatever commands they receive. When they return from whence they came, these spirits carry with them no memories. The same blessed child can be summoned twice, but it will not remember the caster or any of the circumstances. In this way, the purity and innocence of the blessed child cannot be tainted, no matter what happens.

BALSAM BLESSED CHILD

Medium celestial, any good alignment

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 0 ft., fly 80 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	6 (–3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +3, Wis +3
Skills Medicine +3, Perception +3, Persuasion +4, Religion –1, Stealth +3
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages understands Celestial but can't speak
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Susceptible to Evil Channeled Divinity. An evil cleric can use their Turn Undead feature to turn or destroy a blessed child as if it were undead (although this "destruction" merely returns them safely to the spiritual realm whence they came). Blessed children have advantage on their saves against this.

Undead Slayer. The blessed child has advantage on attack rolls against undead, and its attacks inflict an additional 2 (1d4) radiant damage to undead.

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

Sister Mara von Witten of the Runewardens adventuring group made it a point to summon blessed children to help in key battles or sometimes just when a winged messenger was needed. Many clerics in Ptolus—especially clerics of Lothian—prefer to summon blessed children rather than other monsters.

Conjure blessed child, *page 627*

Summoned blessed children were crucial in the final battles against Ghul's Squirming Horde.

PCs may encounter blessed children in the Prison of the Blessed Children (see page 392).

The Wintersouled (page 600) hate blessed children even more than they hate the living.

DAYOD BLESSED CHILD

Medium celestial, any good alignment

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 21)
Speed 0 ft., fly 80 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +4
Skills Medicine +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2, Stealth +3
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages understands Celestial but can't speak
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Susceptible to Evil Channeled Divinity. An evil cleric can use their Turn Undead feature to turn or destroy a blessed child as if it were undead (although this "destruction" merely returns them safely to the spiritual realm whence they came). Blessed children have advantage on their saves against this.

Undead Slayer. The blessed child has advantage on attack rolls against undead, and its attacks inflict an additional 2 (1d4) radiant damage to undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The blessed child makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

FEALOM BLESSED CHILD

Medium celestial, any good alignment

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 76 (9d8 + 36)
Speed 0 ft., fly 80 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +6
Skills Medicine +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +7, Religion +3, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages understands Celestial but can't speak
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Susceptible to Evil Channeled Divinity. An evil cleric can use their Turn Undead feature to turn or destroy a blessed child as if it were undead (although this "destruction" merely returns them safely to the spiritual realm whence they came). Blessed children have advantage on their saves against this.

Undead Slayer. The blessed child has advantage on attack rolls against undead, and its attacks inflict an additional 2 (1d4) radiant damage to undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The blessed child makes three greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

HALLAS BLESSED CHILD

Medium celestial, any good alignment

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (13d8 + 52)
Speed 0 ft., fly 100 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +7, Wis +6
Skills Medicine +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +7, Religion +4, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages understands Celestial but can't speak
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Susceptible to Evil Channeled Divinity. An evil cleric can use their Turn Undead feature to turn or destroy a blessed child as if it were undead (although this "destruction" merely returns them safely to the spiritual realm whence they came). Blessed children have advantage on their saves against this.

Undead Slayer. The blessed child has advantage on attack rolls against undead, and its attacks inflict an additional 2 (1d4) radiant damage to undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The blessed child makes three greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

D'STRADI DEMON

Dark Reliquary, page 223

D'Stradi demons are chaotic evil natives of the lower planes, bent on destruction and mayhem. These demons have adapted to life in Ptolus and serve the leaders of the Dark Reliquary.

D'Stradi demons are ferocity personified and will attack any creature for the sheer fun of it—even other demons. They enjoy terrifying their victims before slaying them and often devour the slain. Many of these demons can create *darkness*, and a group of them frequently blankets the enemy with *darkness* before joining battle.

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

A group of D'Stradi abductors snatched most of the Runewardens during an ill-advised foray into the Necropolis, taking them to the prison deep below the Dark Reliquary.

Despite all living at the Dark Reliquary among the Fallen, the three types of D'Stradi demon work together very little.

Recently someone came into Rastor's Weapons in Delver's Square and sold him five D'Stradi abductor bloodblades. Rastor has already managed to sell off a few of them.

D'STRADI ABDUCTOR

Gangly creatures that appear at first glance to be all arms and legs, these gaunt demons walk in a crouch, their narrow, serpentine faces always nervously looking about. Their scaly flesh runs from a deep green to black. D'Stradi abductors are bloodthirsty, conniving, disgusting creatures filled with loathing and hatred. They work alone or in small groups as thieves and kidnappers, often attempting to remove important individuals from the battlefield or to abduct leaders right out of their own homes. Consummate cowards, they teleport away if seriously threatened or intimidated.

Teleportation Abduction. The primary tactic of the D'Stradi abductor is to teleport in, grab a victim, and teleport away with their captive—usually to a prearranged sealed holding area, where the demon leaves the foe and teleports away to gain more prisoners.

Bloodblade Wielder. A D'Stradi abductor wields a longsword called a bloodblade. In the hands of anyone other than a D'Stradi abductor, it is only a common longsword, but the power of the demon's magical blood makes the weapon inflict horrible wounds that resist magical healing.

D'STRADI ABDUCTOR

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 130 (20d8 + 40)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +5
Skills Athletics +7, Perception +4, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, lightning
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The abductor's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). The abductor can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: *darkness*, *telekinesis*
3/day: *fear*

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

Magic Weapons. The abductor's weapon attacks are magical.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the abductor deals an extra 7 (2d6) 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 abductor that isn't incapacitated and the abductor doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The abductor makes two bloodblade attacks and one claw attack.

Bloodblade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) necrotic damage at the start of each of the target's turns. The target can end this damage with a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw, or they or another creature within 5 feet can use an action to make a DC 15 Medicine check to end all of this ongoing damage on the creature. Damage from the D'Stradi-wielded bloodblade can be recovered only by short or long rests (not by regeneration, magic, or other means).

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 15) and restrained until the grapple ends.

Teleport. The abductor teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. It can bring a Medium or smaller creature with it that is unconscious, grappled, or restrained, but the creature can make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw to remain behind.

Summon Demon (1/Day). The demon chooses what to summon and attempts a magical summoning. A D'Stradi abductor can attempt to summon another abductor with a 30 percent chance of success or a D'Stradi dancer with a 10 percent chance of success.

D'STRADI ANNIHILATOR

Stout, sturdy engines of destruction, D'Stradi annihilators stand about 9 feet tall and resemble huge reptiles with red, scaly skin. Their enormous maws bristle with daggerlike teeth; their long, muscular arms sport vicious claws; and their backs are ridged. On the snout of their long, snakelike heads grows a swollen, yellow-orange nodule.

Singular Purpose. D'Stradi annihilators were created for one purpose only: to kill mortal foes. Full of rage and hatred, these demons serve that purpose well. D'Stradi annihilators charge into combat lusting for battle, but they are not stupid creatures and use their powers wisely, using the oily residue of their strange nodule to control the battlefield, and teleporting themselves to gain a better tactical position.

Sages and scholars in Ptolus know less about the D'Stradi demons than almost any other demon type. No one in the city even knows where the name D'Stradi comes from—and the demons certainly aren't talking. Some theorize that they have a special connection to Lilith (page 110).

D'STRADI ANNIHILATOR

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +9, Wis +6
Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +6, Perception +6
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, lightning
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The annihilator's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The D'Stradi can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: *darkness*, *dispel magic*, *telekinesis*
3/day: *fear*, *see invisibility*

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The annihilator makes one bite attack and two claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage and become poisoned for one minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage and become poisoned for one minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

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

Summon Demon (1/Day). The demon chooses what to summon and attempts a magical summoning. A D'Stradi annihilator can attempt to summon another annihilator with a 40 percent chance of success.

Life-Draining Spew (Recharge 4–6). The annihilator can project a stream of reddish oil from the nodule on its head, targeting one creature within 30 feet. If the target makes a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, the oil misses and forms a 5-foot-square slick puddle in the target's space, which persists for six rounds. A creature hit by the stream or entering the space with the puddle must make a successful DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 18 (4d8) necrotic damage and have its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken (the creature targeted by the stream doesn't have to make this save unless it leaves the area and returns). This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The creature dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

One may encounter D'Stradi demons in the Necropolis, especially the Dark Reliquary (page 223), and possibly in Dwarvenhearth (page 429).

D'Stradi dancers have a special connection to the Erebaccus in Dwarvenhearth (page 429) and perhaps even to the dwarven concept of madness itself.

D'STRADI DANCER

A D'Stradi dancer looks a little like a D'Stradi abductor standing up straight. Gangly and tall, this demon has electric-blue skin and a long, narrow head. D'Stradi dancers appear lithe and graceful, yet convey an aura of menace and hatred. They carry quarterstaffs for balance and support while they dance, as well as for combat.

Dances of Death and Magic. As their name implies, D'Stradi dancers are trained in acrobatic and dexterous combat techniques. They also know certain magical effects achieved through dance, thus using dance to enhance both their combat might and their magic. These bloodthirsty, battle-loving demons favor style and form over results. They consider it more important to attack foes with grace and panache than to defeat them. D'Stradi dancers leap into battle with fervor and aplomb. If they anticipate a fight, they'll use one of their magic dances to increase their effectiveness. They do not hesitate to tumble out of combat if things go against them. In a group, the dancers prefer to gang up on a single victim rather than fight fair.

D'STRADI DANCER

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 137 (25d8 + 25)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	24 (+7)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +10
Skills Acrobatics +10, Perception +6, Performance +5, Stealth +10
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, lightning
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The dancer's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The dancer can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: *darkness*, *dispel magic*, *telekinesis*
3/day: *fear*, *see invisibility*
1/day: *alter self*, *invisibility*, *major image*

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

Magic Weapons. The dancer's weapon attacks are magical.

Magic Dance. A D'Stradi dancer knows 1d3 of the following magical dances. The dances are graceful but horrid to behold, with lots of wild, chaotic leaps, gestures, and stances. Non-D'Stradi cannot participate in the dance.

Battle Dance. A dancer who uses an action to perform this dance gains advantage on attack rolls for the next minute.

Dance of Speed. This dance requires at least two dancers performing together for three rounds, after which all participants gain the benefits of *haste* for one minute with no concentration required.

Shielding Dance. A dancer who spends two rounds performing this dance gains the ability to parry for the next ten minutes. Parrying is a reaction, adding +2 to the dancer's AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To parry, the dancer must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Warding Dance. A dancer who spends five rounds performing this dance around the edge of an area (up to 1,000 square feet) can ward it against intruders for the next hour. Any non-demon that tries to enter the area must make a successful DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be forced to avoid the area as if affected by an *antipathy* spell.

Pounce. If the dancer moves at least 30 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the dancer can make one claw attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The D'Stradi makes five quarterstaff attacks or four claw attacks.

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage or 11 (1d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d6 + 7) slashing damage.

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

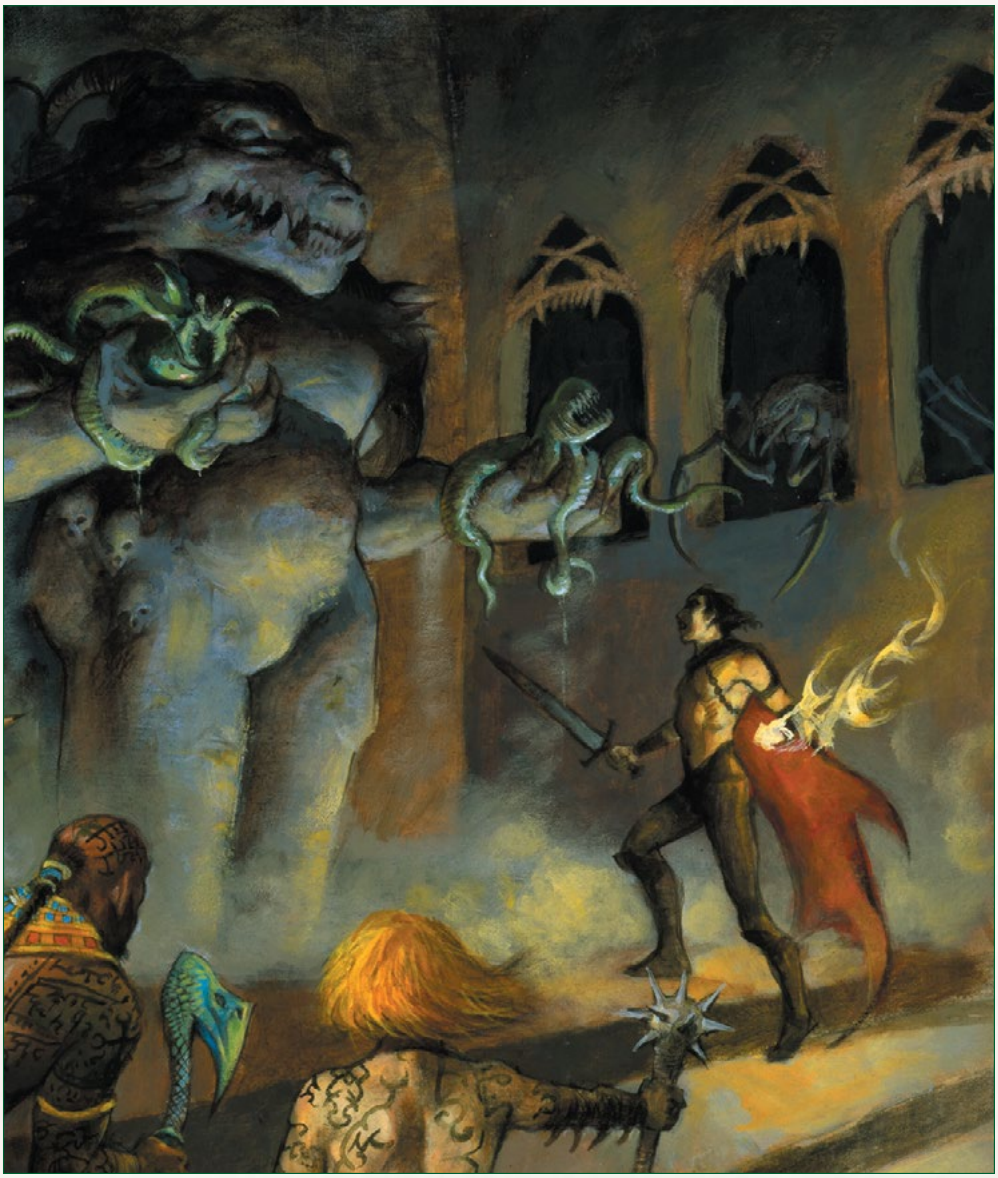
Summon Demon (1/Day). The demon chooses what to summon and attempts a magical summoning. A D'Stradi dancer can attempt to summon another dancer with a 30 percent chance of success or a D'Stradi abductor with a 40 percent chance of success.

OCHREMESHK (DEMON PRINCE)

Ochremeshk is a demon lord, a repulsive, towering humanoid about 16 feet tall with dark red skin and massive, clawed hands. He greatly resembles a wingless balor, wielding a massive sword and sheathed in flames—for long ago he was once a balor, and fought his way up to his current position by slaying and consuming thousands of enemies.

Demon Prince. Ochremeshk is a powerful and terrible entity, although he does not have the might of beings like Orcus or even Gorgoth-Lol. In the Abyss, he commands an elite cadre of balors and mariliths, as well as a small army of lesser demons, half-demons, and demonic undead. Like all fiends who came to Praemal, Ochremeshk is trapped here, but he has largely given up on returning to his old realm and plans to claim Praemal as his own.

False God. He is worshipped as a god and called one of the Demon Gods, but he is not a true god; like many demon lords, he is a channel to the power of an evil deity. To mortals the distinction is moot, and his cult is very real (although it once was much greater than it is now); they call him "the Defiler" or "the Demon God" and worship him as a god of chaos, evil, fire, and death. He demands living sacrifices in huge numbers, killed with horrific and bloody methods. His symbol is a demonskull visage, taken from a terrifying countenance he can assume. His main temple far to the east in Ren Tehoth has a monolithic statue resembling his form.



Gorgoth-Lol, page 72

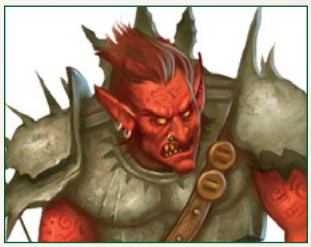
Praemal as a Prison Plane, page 63

"Demon lord" and "demon prince" mean the same thing: a demon so powerful that it controls an entire realm in the Abyss and has godlike powers over its minions.

Ochremeshk's cleric domains are Death, Tempest, and War.

The demon god Ochremeshk was trapped in a magical prison almost five thousand years ago in the Wars of Fire in ancient Kem. He might be freed by a soul magic spell in the hands—or, rather, the mouth—of one of his half-orc followers, currently locked up in the cruciform prison beneath the Dark Reliquary. See Tinareg, page 238.

If freed, Ochremeshk will relocate to Goth Gulgamel and attempt to usurp all the creatures that used to follow Ghul. He will set up the fortress as his own lair (and develop his own set of lair actions) and begin to amass power.



One may encounter Ochremeshk in the prison beneath the Dark Reliquary (page 239) and possibly among the blood trolls and his other followers in Goth Gulgamel (page 457).

A half-orc named Barghart (male cleric6/barbarian2) is attempting to raise money in the underworld of Ptolus—mostly by thievery, but also through mercenary work—because he believes that Menon Balacazar has information about Ochremeshk to sell him. (Menon does not have this information, although he allows the half-orc to think he does.)

OCHREMESHK

Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 287 (23d12 + 138)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +16, Con +13, Wis +11, Cha +13
Skills Intimidation +13, Perception +11
Damage Resistances acid, cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire, lightning, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 24 (62,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Ochremeshk's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: *darkness*, *detect evil and good*, *dispel magic*, *fire bolt*, *suggestion*, *telekinesis*, *wall of fire*
1/day each: *fire storm*, *disintegrate*

Death Throes. When Ochremeshk dies, he explodes, and each creature within 30 feet of him must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful one. The explosion ignites flammable objects in that area that aren't being worn or carried, and it destroys Ochremeshk's weapons.

Evasion. If Ochremeshk is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Fire Aura. At the start of each of Ochremeshk's turns, each creature within 5 feet of him takes 10 (3d6) fire damage, and flammable objects in the aura that aren't being worn or carried ignite. A creature that touches him or hits him with a melee attack while within 5 feet of him takes 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Ochremeshk fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

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

Magic Weapons. Ochremeshk's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ochremeshk makes two greatsword attacks or two slam attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d10 + 9) slashing damage, plus 13 (3d8) lightning damage. If Ochremeshk scores a critical hit, he rolls damage dice three times instead of twice. If his target is a celestial, it inflicts an extra 11 (2d10) necrotic damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for one minute. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end 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 this fear for the next 24 hours.

Death Visage (Recharges After a Long Rest). Once per day, Ochremeshk can use an action to change his face into that of a horrific demon skull. While this ability is active, any creature starting its turn within 50 feet of him and able to see his face must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see Ochremeshk until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at Ochremeshk in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

When the death visage is active, Ochremeshk's fire aura is suppressed and he cannot use his innate spellcasting. It automatically ends after six rounds or if he uses a bonus action to end it early.

Summon Demon (1/Day). Ochremeshk chooses what to summon and attempts a magical summoning. He can attempt to summon 4d10 dretches, 1d8 vrocks, 1d6 hezrous, 1d4 glabrezus, 1d3 nalfeshnees, or 1d2 mariliths or balors, with a 60 percent chance of success.

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

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Ochremeshk 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. Ochremeshk regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Attack. Ochremeshk makes one greatsword attack.

Fire Bolt. Ochremeshk casts *fire bolt*.

Necrotic Gaze. Ochremeshk's eyes momentarily transform into burning sockets. One creature he can see within 50 feet of him is targeted by his Death Visage gaze attack.

Demonskull talisman, page 637

RATMAN

Ratmen are much more than rats that walk upright and use tools. Hair covers their body and is usually grey, although it can be brown, black, or (in the case of an albino) white. They are degenerate, conniving, repulsive, and malevolent creatures that revel in the misery of others and the spread of disease and filth. They don't call themselves "ratmen"—that is the derogatory but nevertheless accurate moniker given to them by the major species. Their own name for themselves in Rattish sounds like nothing more than a grunt and a squeal.

Although they are called rat*men*, they are, of course, not all males. Telling the difference is almost impossible for a non-ratman, and no one really wants to learn that much about the intimate details of these nasty creatures anyway. Ratmen of all ages are combatants, even the very young. Ratmen have their own crude, squeaky language called Rattish. Strangely, normal rats and giant rats seem to understand simple commands in this language and usually do what ratmen tell them.

Many Sizes. Ratmen have broods of dozens of young, most of which die early—some even killed and eaten by their own parents or others in the nest. Young mature extremely quickly. Ratmen typically live only about ten years at most. Perhaps due in part to their allegiance to chaos, ratmen can grow to a very great size, regardless of the size of the parents. Most ratmen are the size of halflings and are called ratlings. A few rare individuals grow to be the size of a human and are called ratlords. The rarest reach the size of ogres and are called ratbrutes. Some people claim that all ratmen never stop growing and that the ratbrutes are the oldest of their kind, but this is untrue.

Vicious Cowards. Ratmen are greedy and selfish, callous and sadistic. They have no pride, no honor, and no compassion or even real camaraderie. They hate other ratmen and rats only slightly less than they hate every other living thing. All ratmen dislike any confrontation in which they do not enjoy the clear upper hand. They use weapons, but are just as likely to bite foes while using weapon attacks. Despite their cowardly nature, ratmen will fight ferociously if cornered and their lives threatened. They have a hierarchy based on size and brute force, although intelligence can come into play, as ratman intelligence is used almost exclusively toward refining personal power and tricks to overcome foes. In general, ratlords rule over ratlings, and ratbrutes over both types, although the advantages of being an albino ratman often trumps size. Regardless, the leader in a squirming, screeching ratman nest is almost irrelevant anyway. Unless the leader is right there with them, ratmen just do whatever occurs to them at the time. Ratmen sometimes serve a strong non-ratman, but they desert that creature quickly if not given situations where they can steal and murder.

Scavengers and Cannibals. Ratmen live off the civilizations of others. They use tools, weapons, clothing, and armor, but only what they can steal from others. They eat almost anything organic, including the flesh of their fallen comrades. Starving ratmen will kill and eat each other without hesitation. The life of a ratman is harsh, painful, and short. Living in tunnels, ruins, or sewers, ratmen can squeeze through tiny spaces, crawl through garbage, swim in sewage, and climb crumbling walls as a matter of course. They fill their lairs with refuse, bones, and feces. They revere disease but fear light and dislike fire. Ratmen never create (though they may cobble things together or use found items in new ways). All of their equipment is stolen. Their homes originally were meant to be something else. Even the spikes of their traps are made from stolen weapons; they literally would not know how to sharpen a stick to make a spike on their own. Because they don't know how to maintain their equipment, they use it until it stops working, at which point it becomes more trash in their nest.

Filthy Nests. Ratman nests are foul, cluttered indoor midden heaps, usually underground. In a city (and they are rarely found elsewhere), ratmen normally dwell exclusively in or around a sewer. The lairs are intentionally confusing, cramped, and disorganized. The trash and muck in a nest usually require intruders to move carefully or risk slipping and falling. Ratmen like traps, but they are not engineers. Tripwires or spikes (sometimes poisoned) hidden among trash heaps placed in tunnels, or crumbling sewer walls rigged to topple if an intruder moves by are about as sophisticated as they get.

Characters are likely to encounter ratmen in the sewers beneath the city (see chapter 21).

You can find ready-to-run encounters with ratmen in the Temple of the Rat God (page 363) and A Ratman Nest (page 411).

The youngest ratmen have giant rat stats.

All ratmen in and below Ptolus worship "the Rat God," which is actually just a front for Abhoth, Lord of the Unclean—one of the Galchutt. This gives them something in common with the Plagueborn chaos cult (page 76).

Ratmen sometimes climb up out of the sewer to steal what they need or get food on the surface. To do so, they'll use any means necessary, even crawling up through privies. This is why some Ptolus residents put heavy grates or even locks on the lids.

Albino ratman, page 593

GM TIPS

In every ratman encounter, make sure to stress the filth, the smell, the swarming fleas, and the creatures' tattered clothing, armor, and equipment.

RATLING

The most common ratmen are also the smallest. They prefer to attack a single foe *en masse*, often with some aiding the attacks of others.

RATLING

Small monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 9 (2d6 + 2)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (–2)	9 (–1)	7 (–2)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Athletics +0, Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Rattish
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Disease Carrier. A ratling's body is a festering, seething mass of filth and contagion, and all ratlings are infected with diseases. However, they suffer no symptoms. Their bites transmit the disease that some giant rats carry (DC 11). Anyone having prolonged contact with a ratling or spending more than a few hours in a lair or nest is likely to catch this disease.

Fear of Light. Ratlings hate bright light and fear to be caught in its revealing glow. If within 10 feet of the source of a light at least as bright as a torch or lantern, they are frightened, and must succeed at a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or flee for 1d3 rounds. Ratlings have to make this saving throw only once per encounter.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ratling makes one longsword attack and one bite attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d3 + 1) piercing damage, plus disease.

RATLORD

Dragon pistols, page 522

Ratman Gear, page 593

Ratlords get their name from the fact that, due to their size, they often lead groups of ratlings. They skulk about in the shadows, usually hoping that one of their lesser companions will distract a foe so they can move in for a sneak attack. Many of them carry dragon pistols, although they are quite filthy (see Ratman Gear).

RATLORD

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Athletics +2, Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Rattish
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Disease Carrier. A ratlord's body is a festering, seething mass of filth and contagion, and all ratlords are infected with diseases. However, they suffer no symptoms. Their bites transmit the disease that some giant rats carry (DC 13). Anyone having prolonged contact with a ratlord or spending more than a few hours in a lair or nest is likely to catch this disease.

Fear of Light. Ratlords hate bright light and fear to be caught in its revealing glow. If within 10 feet of the source of a light at least as bright as a torch or lantern, they are frightened, and must succeed at a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or flee for 1d3 rounds. Ratlords have to make this saving throw only once per encounter.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the ratlord deals an extra 7 (2d6) 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 ratlord that isn't incapacitated and the ratlord doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ratlord makes one longsword attack and one bite attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, plus disease.

Dragon Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

RATMEN IN A PTOLUS CAMPAIGN

Ratmen serve a Ptolus GM as low-level adversaries and a default adventure hook. "There are ratmen in the sewers" is a common claim, and it's true. A bounty on ratman tails is offered—they are fairly indistinguishable from giant rat tails, so unscrupulous bounty hunters can get paid for both. In any event, hunting ratmen is a fine way for low-level adventurers to spend their time getting used to dealing with delving below the city.

Ratmen offer the GM more than just that, however. They are, in a manner of speaking, both a "gateway monster" and a means to offering a contiguous tie between adventures. Fighting ratmen can lead to encounters with the cult of the Rat God, which can lead to more adventures dealing with the chaos cults in the city . . . which can lead to adventures dealing with the Forsaken and even the Fallen. These creatures provide continuity: among the chaos cultists, the Forsaken, the Fallen, or any other evil group in the city, one is likely to find a ratman or two among their ranks, usually as servants or slaves. Some say that a few of the nastiest assassins in the Vai are ratmen. Other rumors speak of ratbrutes of Huge or even greater size under the Dark Reliquary in the Necropolis.

ALBINO RATMEN

One in one hundred ratlings, one in two hundred ratlords, and one in five hundred ratbrutes is an albino with exceptional talents. These creatures are much smarter (+4 to Intelligence) and have proficiency in one or two additional skills. Most have an unusual ability such as Brute (like a bugbear), Pack Tactics (like a giant rat), or a sneak attack that inflicts an extra 7 (2d6) damage. Albino ratmen always lead their groups, regardless of size, and they always have the best equipment.

RATBRUTE

Ratbrutes are the largest of the ratmen. They have the size and bulk of ogres; if they hold nothing in their hands, they are likely to get on all fours to run or crouch, which tends to conceal their imposing stature.

RATBRUTE

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 57 (6d10 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Athletics +6, Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Rattish
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Disease Carrier. A ratbrute's body is a festering, seething mass of filth and contagion, and all ratbrutes are infected with diseases. However, they suffer no symptoms. Their bites transmit the disease that some giant rats carry (DC 14). Anyone having prolonged contact with a ratbrute or spending more than a few hours in a lair or nest is likely to catch this disease.

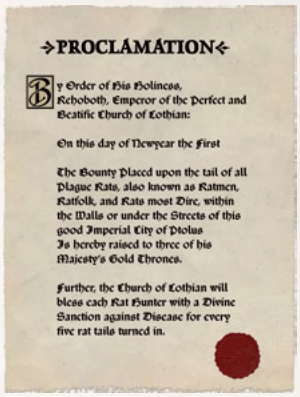
Fear of Light. Ratbrutes hate bright light and fear to be caught in its revealing glow. If within 10 feet of the source of a light at least as bright as a torch or lantern, they are frightened, and must succeed at a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or flee for 1d3 rounds. Ratbrutes have to make this saving throw only once per encounter.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ratbrute makes one greatsword attack and one bite attack.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage, plus disease.



For a player handout on the bounty on ratman tails, see the Proclamation sheet in the packet.

Cult of the Rat God, page 363
Forsaken, page 111
Fallen, page 109
Vai, page 131
Dark Reliquary, page 223

Ratmen Gear

Ratmen's goods are always stolen, and half the time they're in poor condition. This reduces the resale value of each item by 50 percent, because its life is about half of what one would expect. (Plus, it is difficult if not impossible to get the ratman stench out of leather armor and similar items.)

Ratmen love firearms and explosives if they can get their hands on them. They also like alchemical weapons, particularly tanglefoot bags. In addition, they use poison regularly and have developed a weapon that adventurers call a festering bomb.

Festering Bomb

Stoppered bottle contains a mixture of fecal matter and rancid meat. As an action, you can throw the bottle up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. Make a ranged attack against a creature or object, treating the bottle as an improvised weapon. On a hit, the target and anyone within 5 feet must succeed at a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or contract the disease carried by giant rats.

RHODINTOR

Night of Dissolution, page 62

Rhodintor Staves

Instead of a battleaxe, some Sarycal-path rhodintor wield a quarterstaff made of solidified fire; as a melee weapon, it inflicts an additional 3 (1d6) fire damage. A rhodintor can channel its innate spellcasting through the staff, expending one of its 1/day abilities to instead cast fireball, fire shield, *or* wall of fire. *Anyone other than a rhodintor who attempts to use or wield the staff causes it to explode in a 20-foot-radius fireball that inflicts 21 (6d6) fire damage.*

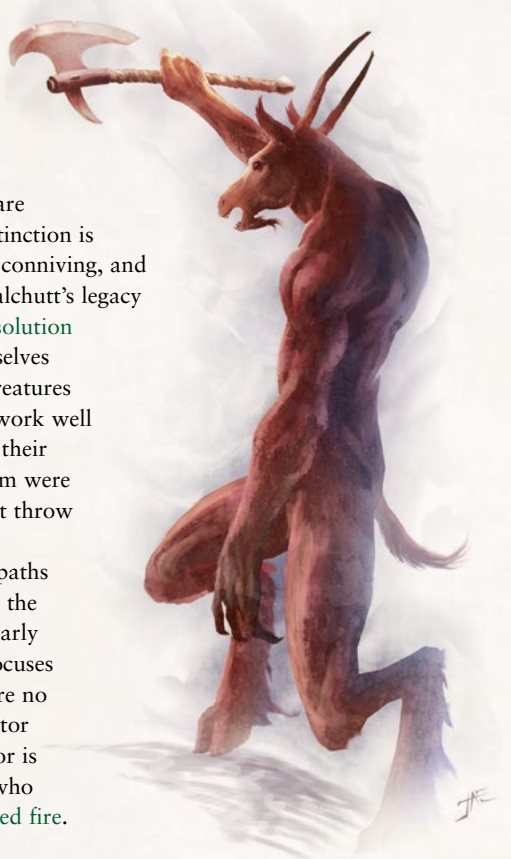
One may encounter rhodintor in the Vaults of the Rhodintor (page 421) and in the Undercity beneath the White House (page 310), as well as in The Night of Dissolution, *a Ptolus adventure.*

The rhodintor believe the Galchutt can accomplish their goal of destroying the world only by first destroying the lost Dreaming City of Dreta Phantas (page 425).

Rhodintor are tall, wiry, humanoid-like creatures with lean, muscular bodies. Their heads are long and angular, topped with ramlike horns. Their legs bend backward and end in cloven hooves.

False Demons. Rhodintor are creations of the Galchutt. Known as "earthbound demons," they are not fiends or true demons at all. However, the distinction is virtually academic—they are every bit as devious, conniving, and brutal as actual demons. These stewards of the Galchutt's legacy are responsible for ensuring that the Night of Dissolution comes to pass. They have no leaders among themselves but do consider themselves superior to all other creatures except the Galchutt. For creatures of chaos, they work well together—all the better to serve their masters and their dread goal. Rhodintor do not procreate; all of them were directly created by the Galchutt. Thus, they do not throw their lives away recklessly.

Affinity for Magic. Rhodintor take one of two paths in their pursuit of arcane magic. The first is called the Kravren, which enhances them physically, particularly for combat. The second is called Sarycal, which focuses on magic that directly attacks opponents. There are no physical or intellectual differences between rhodintor who choose different paths; any group of rhodintor is likely to have followers of both. Some rhodintor who follow the Sarycal path use staves made of solidified fire.



RHODINTOR

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +6
Skills Acrobatics +5, Arcana +8, Perception +6, Religion +8, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The rhodintor's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). The rhodintor can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

Kravren:
At will: *true strike*
3/day each: *enhance ability* (self only), *levitate*, *shield*
1/day each: *blink*, *dispel magic*

Sarycal:
At will: *magic missile*
3/day each: *hold person*, *levitate*, *ray of enfeeblement*
1/day each: *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the rhodintor hits with it (included in the attack).

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

Magic Weapons. The rhodintor's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rhodintor makes two battleaxe attacks and one horns attack.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Horns. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

SHAADOM

A hulking shaadom is a type of Galchutt. Its physical form has two muscular arms that end in three-fingered hands, an arachnoid head with six eyes and a large, mandibled mouth, and a torso that ends in a squirming mass of wide tentacles rather than legs. It floats just above the ground. Shaadom do not need to eat, drink, or breathe.

Selfish Mages. The role of the shaadom (singular and plural) is that of the consummate chaos mage. A shaadom's spellcasting abilities are great, and its knowledge of chaos and its workings makes it a caster without peer. Shaadom understand power on a scale beyond what most beings can imagine, and they realize that far greater might exists than even they can wield. They lust after this might—the power to consume and destroy everything that does not serve their ends. A shaadom relies on its magical abilities above all else. Physical combat is only a last resort.

Hateful Independence. Among the Galchutt, the shaadom represent individuality taken to the ultimate extreme of selfishness and obsession. As such, they hate even each other, and the other Galchutt look upon them only as rivals and enemies—the same way they look upon all living things. Fueled by hate, jealousy, lust, and greed, and centered around the acquisition of power, shaadom are most often found on their own individual quests. They are quick to use slaves gained through chaositech enslavement.

Misfiled in the City Library there lies a book called The Text of Awill Circlebreaker. *Anyone who deciphers the code in which this book is written can find that it contains the secret to awakening and summoning a shaadom.*

One may encounter a shaadom in the Caverns of the Galchutt (page 422) and the Dark Reliquary (page 223).

Chaositech enslavement, page 530

Detect chaositech, *page 628*

SHAADOM

Large fiend (Galchutt), chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 210 (20d10 + 100)
Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	25 (+7)	24 (+7)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +11, Wis +13
Skills Arcana +13, Perception +13, Persuasion +13, Religion +13
Damage Vulnerabilities force
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic, thunder
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities frightened, paralyzed, stunned
Senses passive Perception 23
Languages telepathy 1,000 ft.
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The shaadom's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21). The shaadom can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: *confusion*, *contagion*, *darkness*, *detect chaositech*, *detect evil and good*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *lightning bolt*, *magic circle*, *teleport*
1/day: *power word kill*, *power word stun*

Chaos Weaving. A shaadom that doesn't move on its turn can weave pure chaos into the spell it casts on that turn. Creatures have disadvantage on their saving throws against that spell and on attempts to dispel it.

Dire Contact. Each time a creature attempts to speak to a shaadom telepathically or read its mind, the creature must succeed at a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or go permanently insane. A creature driven insane by this contact spends most of its time unconscious, but sometimes awakens for minutes or hours and acts as if affected by a *confusion* spell.

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

Magic Weapons. The shaadom's weapon attacks are magical.

Spellcasting. A shaadom has the spellcasting ability of an archmage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shaadom makes one bite attack and two claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) psychic damage and become poisoned for one minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage.

SKULK

In the rare instance when they are seen, skulks look like hairless, almost featureless humanoids with slender, graceful forms. Many people have described them as being transparent or taking on the colors and textures of their surroundings, but this is a misconception based on the observer's inability to focus on the skulk. It is possible to be having a conversation with a skulk and lose track of exactly where it is. The creatures somehow compel others to ignore them, even creatures immune to mind control or magic.

Skulks operate as spies, scouts, and information gatherers. To those rare few people who know how to find the skulks and interact with them, they can provide vast amounts of information. They have embraced and even capitalized on the fact that no one notices them. They wander about the city, *watching*. They know almost everything that's going on, and when they don't, it's a rather simple matter for them to find out.

Skulk Alley, page 310

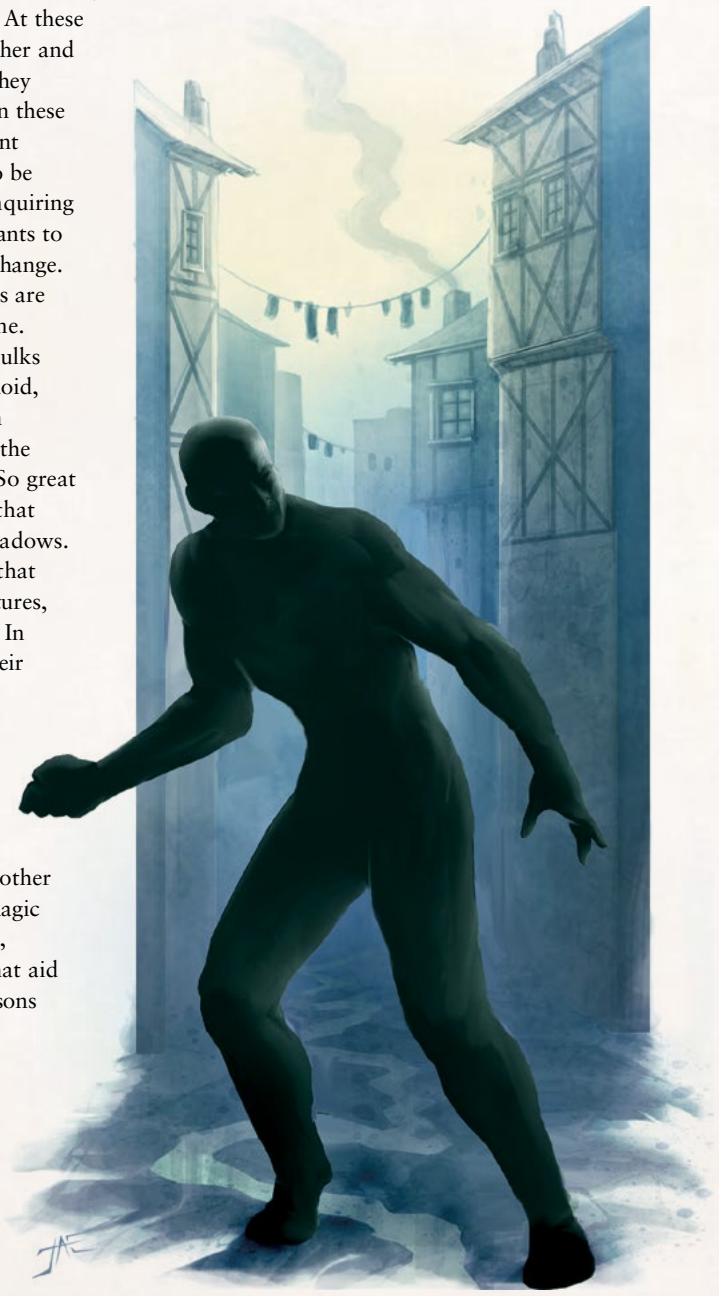
In a few places around the city such as Skulk Alley in Oldtown, they place their mark. The skulk sign is usually found in alleyways or other out-of-the-way places, and it is generally inscribed so subtly that one must actively search to find it, and even then only with great difficulty. At these marked spots, skulks sometimes gather and exchange information. Even when they are not meeting, they keep an eye on these sites; a non-skulk who stands in front of the symbol at night can expect to be approached within an hour by an inquiring skulk who assumes the character wants to make some kind of information exchange.

In the unlikely event that the player characters become friends with a skulk, over time it begins to look more solid and easier to see in their presence.

Naturally Overlooked. The skulks are by their very nature difficult to define. According to their own histories, skulks were once human or at least humanoid, with nothing in common other than the fact that they were the ignored, the forgotten, and the disenfranchised. So great was the power of others' disregard that the skulks literally faded into the shadows. Today they are nocturnal creatures that live within the cities of civilized cultures, but are not a part of those cultures. In fact, most people are unaware of their existence. Those who do know of skulks generally think poorly of them, believing them to be cowards, voyeurs, thieves, and serial murderers.

Skulks may gather in shadowy alleys in the surface city, but they live in extremely well-hidden and difficult-to-reach lairs below the city.

Because they don't value coinage much, skulks who make deals with other creatures would rather be paid in magic items—particularly curative potions, ability-enhancing items, or things that aid their own sneakiness. They like poisons as well. Also of interest to them are promises for favors later, such as magical healing when they need it. However, they will never suggest the latter themselves, for they never assume that a non-skulk will honor such a deal or even remember them later.



One may encounter skulks in Skulk Alley in Oldtown and in areas of the Undercity such as Ravenstroke (page 393), where some particularly malign skulks dwell.

Lost and Forgotten. Despite what some claim, skulks are not a unique species, such as dwarves, elves, or humans. Each individual skulk has become a skulk on their own. They do not appear to age (some claim that even time cannot find them, if they do not want to be found) or retain gender. Skulks have names that are just a fraction of the names they were born with. So Nasel Turgoun becomes "Nas," and Yurshimin Delese becomes "Shim." Decades (maybe centuries) of being ignored has affected the skulks psychologically. Skulks are very unemotional, but they harbor a strong sense of loyalty to their friends (usually other skulks) and a powerful sense of gratitude toward anyone who helps them. However, they assume that no one could ever care about their well-being. They also assume that non-skulks forget about them as soon as they part company. Some skulks, over time, grow bitter and even malevolent due to their lot in life.

Passive and Reclusive. Skulks typically steal what they need, but despite their reputations they do not steal much. They do not use equipment or even clothing, and they eat very little. To say that skulks avoid combat is to understate dramatically. If confronted by a hostile foe, they leave, using their many abilities to evade perception and scrutiny. They typically do not even carry weapons. However, if the foe greatly wronged them or hurt them in some way, the skulk will return when least expected with three or four others, each armed with a poisoned weapon and using sneak attacks to make short work of their enemy.

GM TIPS

When roleplaying a skulk, the GM should not whisper, but should talk so softly that the players must strain to hear it. When interacting with PCs, skulks come and go unnoticed; when they do appear, they always seem as though they have been there for some time but simply weren't noticed.

Exceptional skulks might have spy or assassin stats, with skulk abilities (Blurred, Greater Invisibility, Hide Anytime, Mutable Form, and Untrackable, and 3d6 or higher Sneak Attack damage).

SKULK

Medium humanoid (skulk), neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (–2)

Saving Throws Dex +6
Skills Acrobatics +6, Investigation +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Blurred. Because it is so difficult to focus attention on them, attacks against a skulk have disadvantage.

Greater Invisibility. A skulk can use its action to become invisible, which lasts for as long as it concentrates (up to one minute), even if it attacks or casts a spell, as if using *greater invisibility*.

Hide Anytime. A skulk can always attempt to hide, even if a creature can see it or has special senses like blindsight that would allow it to spot a hiding creature.

Mutable Form. A skulk can squeeze through a space that is large enough for a creature two sizes smaller than itself. Thus, a Medium skulk can squeeze through a passage that's only big enough for a Tiny creature to pass through.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the skulk deals an extra 10 (3d6) 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 skulk that isn't incapacitated and the skulk doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Untrackable. Attempts to track a skulk (including by scent) have disadvantage, and the tracking DC is increased by +10.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (2d4) poison damage and become poisoned for one minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

The skulk sign

SOLDIERS OF GHUL

Ghul the Half God used magic, dangerous chemicals, torture, and profane rituals to create minions and slaves for his plans of conquest. Two of his greatest successes were the Sorn-Ulth and the Toruk-Rul, elite soldiers created by enslaving orcs, stripping them of any redeeming qualities, and augmenting their magical or physical might. Although most of Ghul's creations have died off or gone into hiding in the centuries since their master's defeat, tribes of Sorn-Ulth and Toruk-Rul live on, working their own evil in the hidden places of the Skull-King's old territory, and maintaining footholds in parts of the coast along the Whitewind Sea.

Crafted From Orc Flesh. Sorn-Ulth ("bleeding breath") and Toruk-Rul ("closing fist") were originally created from orcs but have been changed so greatly by magic, mutation, and fiendish corruption that they are no longer orcs. In some ways, they are mentally more akin to demons than mortal beings, driven by an unwavering hatred of others and unable to conceive of benign qualities such as mercy and justice. Although their physical forms are reminiscent of orcs, they no longer have any kinship with them. True orcs that were never enslaved by Ghul (such as the Ornu-Nom tribes) consider them abominations, obscene parodies of orc-ness; conversely, Sorn-Ulth and Toruk-Rul consider orcs to be weak, soft, and cowardly, suitable only for enslavement.

Ornu-Nom orc tribes, page 34

TORUK-RUL

The Toruk-Rul are muscular, bestial, and ferocious. They have dark green skin and large, usually hairy heads. Their skin is tough, and on average they stand almost 6 inches taller than a true orc.

Bred for Battle. Toruk-Rul are incredibly strong and cursed with a terrible bloodlust. Only a strong leader or the presence of enemies to fight keeps them from turning on each other in pointless brawls. They rarely spare enemies, and only for the purpose of crude bloodsport. When pushed to work together, they can build mighty, dread-inspiring structures—Toruk-Rul were the builders of Goth Gulgamel under their creator's watchful eye.

TORUK-RUL

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (–2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5
Skills Intimidation +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Orcish
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the Toruk-Rul can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

SORN-ULTH

The Sorn-Ulth are physically much smaller than Toruk-Rul—even smaller than true orcs—and most have a hunched posture. Their skin is black as pitch, and they have beady, white bulbous eyes. They were created over a century after the Toruk-Rul, emerging from Goth Gulgamel as leaders and assassins in Ghul's armies.

Bred for Magic and Stealth. Sorn-Ulth are clever and have a natural inclination for sorcery, and even the weakest of them knows at least a few cantrips. They are also supernaturally adept at hiding and sneaking. Some Sorn-Ulth combine these talents into a knack for crafting traps.

SORN-ULTH

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)
Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +3
Skills Arcana +3, Intimidation +6, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Orcish
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the Sorn-Ulth can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Spellcasting. The Sorn-Ulth is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:
Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *message*, *poison spray*, *true strike*
1st level (2 slots): *disguise self*, *false life*

ACTIONS

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

WINTERSOULED

Wintersouled appear to be nearly invisible humans with billowing, tattered, but voluminous cloaks. Their faces are obscured, but their eyes are pinpricks of yellow hatred.

The First Undead in Praemal. Legend says that in the earliest days of the world, the veil between life and death was inviolate. There were no such things as undead. It was the Vested of the Galchutt who tore this veil asunder. The first spirits to cross over from death into the land of the living were the Wintersouled. Now they, oldest of all the undead—arguably oldest of anything that still walks the world (with the exception of perhaps a few gods)—the dread Wintersouled represent the epitome of coldness and contempt. They hate all things that live, and they remain in the world of the living only so that one day they can see it all destroyed by the Galchutt.

Dark Reliquary, page 223
Forsaken, page 111

Slumbering Below. The Wintersouled are responsible for building the Dark Reliquary and creating the organization known as the Forsaken. Currently, all the Wintersouled known to still exist sleep below that structure, awaiting the time when the Galchutt will rise again and destroy the world and all that lives within it. At any given time there is one living creature with the title Herald of the Wintersouled; that entity is entrusted with the *waking key*, an artifact that can awaken the Wintersouled early.

The Herald is magically blessed by the Wintersouled, which grants immunity to cold and necrotic damage, as well as all magical effects that cause instant death (such as power word kill*). The current Herald is Shigmaa Irretharm of the Forsaken (page 250).*

Waking key, *page 645*

Generals of Undeath. Through spells and innate magic, the Wintersouled can create and command new undead almost at will. They use these creatures to defend them and fight on their behalf, sacrificing the undead fodder if necessary to preserve the Wintersouled's ancient existence. This frees up the embattled Wintersouled to use other spells to eliminate key enemies or escape to safety elsewhere. All undead respect and fear the power and experience of the Wintersouled, and would never willingly attempt to harm them.

Bereft of Body. A Wintersouled can move through solid creatures and objects as easily as a mortal creature moves through fog.

The Wintersouled sometimes call themselves "saints of death." A set of large stained-glass windows in the Dark Reliquary depicts them (page 229).

Undead Nature. A Wintersouled doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

WINTERSOULED

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 165 (22d8 + 66)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Wis +9, Cha +11
Skills Arcana +10, History +10, Intimidation +11, Perception +9, Stealth +10
Damage Resistances acid, lightning, thunder
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages all
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The Wintersouled's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19). The Wintersouled can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: *darkness*
3/day: *create undead* (9th-level spell slot)

Incorporeal Movement. The Wintersouled 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.

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

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the Wintersouled has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Turn Immunity. The Wintersouled is immune to effects that turn undead.

Undead Dominance. All undead, regardless of power level, obey the commands of a Wintersouled.

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 33 (8d6 + 5) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Wraith. The Wintersouled targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that died violently and has been dead for no longer than one minute. The target's spirit rises as a wraith in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The wraith is under the Wintersouled's control. The Wintersouled can have no more than ten enslaved wraiths at one time, but its Undead Dominance ability means that undead beyond this limit will still obey it to the best of their ability.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Attack. The Wintersouled makes one Life Drain attack.

Cast a Spell (Costs 3 Actions). The Wintersouled casts a spell from its list of known spells, using a spell slot as normal.

Channel Negative Energy (Costs 2 Actions). The Wintersouled magically unleashes negative energy. Creatures within 60 feet of the Wintersouled, including those behind barriers and around corners, can't regain hit points until the end of the Wintersouled's next turn.

Create Wraith. The Wintersouled uses its Create Wraith ability.

Flight. The Wintersouled flies up to half its flying speed.

One may encounter the Wintersouled in the deep levels of the Dark Reliquary (page 251).

ZAUG

The Elder Brood

The least among the Galchutt are known collectively as the Elder Brood. The brood comprises about half a dozen different kinds of creatures. The zaug and the Elder Brood are the sworn enemies of the Harrow elves, for their role in corrupting the Elder Elves into Harrow elves.

A zaug resembles a large, fleshy humanoid that is flabby and hairless. It has a wide, toothy mouth, clawed hands, and short horns on its head. Some zaug have vestigial, rotted wings. Sores oozing pus and bile cover their entire bodies. Much of their skin hangs off of them, pocked with holes from which intestines and other guts spill out, spurting fluid. They are least among the Galchutt (except for the Elder Brood) and seethe with disease and corruption.

Zaug do not need to eat, drink, or breathe. They do not speak; when they wish to communicate, they do so telepathically.

Corruption Given Form. The zaug's focus lies with decay and rot. It embodies the slow, lingering death of disease and decomposition. It dwells alone, usually in a lair filled with decaying bodies, festering illnesses, and vermin of all types. It is not guileful or subtle, neither devious nor quick. The zaug is a carrier of wretched disease and can spew forth unmitigated corruption when it wishes. Covered in lethal wounds that never heal yet never slay, teeming with diseases and poisons that fester and grow, and filled with parasites and vermin that feed on its ever-regenerating flesh, a zaug is a horrible creature to behold.

The Galchutt known as Abhoth the Unclean is lord of the zaug and is revered by the Plagueborn cult (page 76).

Patient as a Plague. A zaug attacks belligerently and relentlessly, but it does not hurry toward its foes. It never uses ambushes or anything even resembling tactics. It simply shuffles toward a potential foe and attempts to infect it with its disease-ridden attacks. Once it chooses a foe, it does not give up until either it or the foe is dead. It never fears for its own life.

One may encounter zaug in the Caverns of the Galchutt (page 422) and in the Dark Reliquary (page 223).

ZAUG

Large fiend (Galchutt), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)
Speed 20 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	8 (–2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +10
Skills Intimidation +7, Perception +7, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities force
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder
Condition Immunities frightened, paralyzed, stunned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages telepathy 1,000 ft.
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The zaug's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The zaug can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: *contagion*, *darkness*, *detect chaositech*, *detect evil and good*, *magic circle*, *stinking cloud*
3/day: *fear*

Corrupt Healing (Su). The zaug's inherent corruption makes it instantly regenerate all damage inflicted upon it. The only things that can harm a zaug are radiant damage and healing spells; healing spells deal damage to a zaug equal to the amount of damage they would heal a normal creature. (Any other kind of damage instantly heals, even if it reduces the zaug to 0 hit points.)

Dire Contact. Each time a creature attempts to speak to a zaug telepathically or read its mind, the creature must succeed at a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or go permanently insane. A creature driven insane by this contact spends most of its time unconscious, but sometimes awakens for minutes or hours and acts as if affected by a *confusion* spell.

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

Revulsion Aura. Any creature hostile to the zaug that starts its turn within 20 feet of the zaug must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The zaug makes two claw attacks and one bite attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for one minute, during which time they can't regain hit points. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for one minute, during which time they can't regain hit points. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Corruption Spew (Recharge 6). The zaug exhales a cone of corruption (consisting of acid, rotting flesh, disease, poison, and even such disgusting vermin as maggots, worms, and flies) in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the cone must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful one. Furthermore, creatures who fail their save must make another DC 18 Constitution saving throw; those who fail suffer the effects of the Revulsion Aura (even if they previously saved against the aura) and are poisoned for one minute, during which time they can't regain hit points (the target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poisoned effect on itself on a success).

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

Legends from the most ancient days of Praemal speak of a forbidden place that today is lost in the remote reaches of Ren Tehoth. This place is known as the Shrine of the Despoiler. The legends speak of a horrific god living at the center of this temple that was nothing more than a mound of decaying flesh that spewed forth corruption and bile. This god seemed unkillable, as its very nature was to revel in damage done to the flesh. Those few today who know anything of Galchutt lore recognize this "god" as a zaug.

Detect chaositech, *page 628*

ADDITIONAL NPC STAT BLOCKS

This part of the chapter contains statistics for various NPCs that adventurers might encounter during a Ptolus Campaign. *Players should not read these pages.*

The first section has generic stat blocks for various types of NPCs, much like the stat blocks in the core sourcebooks for assassins, bandits, and cultists. These stat blocks are for you, the GM, to use to fill common roles for NPCs in the city. They can represent both human and nonhuman NPCs.

The second section has long stat blocks for a few specific NPCs (Derresh, Hadrien Runihan, and Kevris Killraven) and the special abilities available to the Forsaken shigmaa.

CUSTOMIZING NPCs

You can customize these generic NPC stat blocks just like you can for those in the core sourcebooks—add abilities if the character is a dwarf or an elf, swap one or more spells, change their armor and weapons, or add magic items.

This customizing process can be as detailed or as casual as you want to make it. For example, if you have a combat encounter with a Shoal elf wizard who has arcanist stats, you could adjust the arcanist ability scores to account for the elf's increased Dexterity score and modify other things based on Dexterity (like their AC, dagger attack and damage bonus, and so on), or you could use the arcanist stat block as is, without changing anything. Even if the arcanist were a dark elf instead of a Shoal elf, it's fine to ignore most or all of the dark elf abilities unless they become important to the encounter. The point of having these stat blocks is to make being a GM easier, not harder.

Arcanist, page 605
Holy champion, page 610

Many NPCs described elsewhere in this book refer to the generic stat blocks and make simple swaps, like giving a thug a +2d6 sneak attack, or giving an arcanist or mage a +5 Stealth bonus. Some of these might subtly gloss over or break other rules; as with any customizing you do for an NPC, you can be detailed or casual about the extent of these changes.

For example, if an NPC has "veteran stats with Stealth +4," you might realize that a standard veteran wears splint armor, and splint armor gives disadvantage on Stealth checks, so you give this NPC disadvantage when they make Stealth checks. Or you could ignore that and let the NPC make normal Stealth rolls (without disadvantage) despite their splint armor. Maybe the NPC got special training to be stealthy in the armor, or their armor is customized, or they have a friendly priest who cast a special spell on them. Don't sweat the details unless you *want* to sweat the details.

The same guidelines apply for giving NPCs equipment and magic items. If the stat block says "longsword" but the NPC is described as having a shortsword, you don't have to update the damage from slashing to piercing if you don't want to, and you don't have to update their damage from 1d8 to 1d6 if you don't want to. If the stat block says "chain mail" but the specific NPC wears a *+1 chain shirt*, you don't have to update their AC from 16 to 14. These differences are very small, and 99 percent of the time they have no impact on the NPC's challenge rating.

Alignment. You can change the alignment in a stat block just like you can change any other stats. For example, there can be a good-aligned Ptolus NPC who has assassin stats, but they don't kill people for a living. They use the assassin stat block because the assassin's hit points, skill bonuses, and attacks are a good fit for that NPC's overall power level and role in the campaign. Likewise, the holy champion stat block is basically a lawful good paladin, but you could use it for an evil champion of a chaos cult.

Swapping Class Spells. Many Ptolus NPCs customize a stat block by changing the associated class, such as describing an NPC as "a sorcerer with mage stats." The generic mage stat block casts spells like a wizard, which means they probably have a spellbook and might be interested in trading spells with a wizard PC. By changing the NPC's flavor to a sorcerer, you know they don't have a spellbook, and you can give them some PC-type sorcerer flavor, like making one of their spells have a wild surge or hinting that the NPC has a draconic bloodline. Likewise, an NPC who is "a druid with priest stats" has cleric spells prepared instead of druid spells; you can actually swap their spells, or you can just flavor the descriptions of the spells as the NPC casts them (such as describing a priest's *spiritual weapon* spell to look like a druid's *flame blade* spell).

Some spellcaster NPCs are described as being diviners, enchanters, or some other kind of wizard school, usually with an arcanist or mage stat block. For these NPCs, feel free to swap out one or more spells from their stat block for a

spell from that wizard school. For example, an enchanter with mage stats probably has *dominate person* as a 5th-level spell instead of *cone of cold*. As with other kinds of customization, these changes can be as detailed or as casual as you want—plan them in advance, or do them in the middle of combat as needed.

Knowing a Few Spells. Some Ptolus NPCs have non-spellcaster stat blocks but still know how to cast a few spells. Usually, they rely on their magic as a backup for their normal abilities (like a thief who can cast *detect magic*, or a captain of the guard at a temple learning the prayers for *cure wounds*), so their spell save DC and spell attack bonus don't matter (and if they suddenly do matter, something weak like DC 12 and attack bonus +2 is appropriate). How many spells an NPC knows depends on their challenge rating and their role in the story, but one to three cantrips or 1st-level spells are generally appropriate and won't affect the NPC's overall power.

AGENTS AND SIGNIFICANT NPCs

Members and agents of noble houses and powerful organizations often have special magic items or other equipment relevant to whatever they're working on. For example, if a chaos cult has been setting fire to various House Abanar buildings, the nobles and their elite guards might start carrying *potions of fire resistance* as a contingency for these attacks. Depending on how useful this extra equipment would be in a battle against the PCs, this might increase the NPC's challenge rating. For example, if the PCs also rely on fire magic and come into conflict with House Abanar, the characters will have a harder time defeating them.

The same goes if the PCs make themselves known as threats to a particular organization. Just as the characters can research their foes' capabilities and plan accordingly, the NPCs can learn the strengths and weaknesses of the PCs, then make strategies and buy or steal equipment and magic items to improve their chances against them. This puts the PCs in an interesting position where they may want to earn fame as adventurers and heroes, but that same recognition makes them more vulnerable to their enemies.

ARCANIST

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3
Skills Arcana +5, History +5
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any three languages
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The arcanist is a 5th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The arcanist has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *invisibility*, *see invisibility*, *web*
3rd level (2 slots): *fly*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Arcanists are arcane spellcasters of moderate magical skill. Most hope to someday gain knowledge and power to become mages or even archmages.

House Abanar, page 93

Other sourcebooks may have full stat blocks for diviners, enchanters, and other types of wizards. Feel free to use them or other generic NPC stat blocks as needed.

ARISTOCRAT

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, History +2
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any one or two languages
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hard to Sway. The aristocrat has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The aristocrat makes two longsword attacks, or uses a defensive magic item (such as a potion).

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Dictate (Recharges After a Long Rest). As their action, the aristocrat speaks a one-word command to a creature they can see within 30 feet. If the target understands and fails a DC 12 Charisma saving throw, it follows the command on its next turn.

Stillness (Recharges After a Long Rest). As their action, the aristocrat speaks a one-word command to a creature they can see within 30 feet. If the target understands and fails a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw, it is paralyzed for one minute. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw to end the effect.

Aristocrats are born of privilege, and as such have had far more access to schooling, training, and other advantages that ordinary people lack. Sometimes aristocrats are groomed for (or actually hold) positions of power. Others merely while away their time on personal pursuits.

ARTISAN

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Persuasion +3, History +2, Insight +4 (relating to their area of knowledge), any one Intelligence skill +4 or Wisdom skill +3
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any one or two languages
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hard to Sway. The artisan has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Light Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Crafty Maneuver (Recharges 5–6). As their action, the artisan makes an attack with some tool or material relating to their specialty against a creature within 10 feet. Depending on the nature of this attack, it can blind, poison, restrain, or stun the creature if it fails a DC 12 saving throw (usually Dexterity or Constitution). For example, a blacksmith might throw a pan of hot ashes in an opponent's face, an actor might release a stage weight or curtain to drop on an opponent, or a tanner might splash a foe with acrid chemicals.

An artisan is a person with advanced skill in a particular trade; they are very good at their profession. An artisan might craft physical items like clothing or armor; be a well-known singer, playwright, or actor; or simply be really good at running an inn or restaurant. They are generally respected in their community and have friends who will defend them—as well as rivals interested in seeing them fail.

Depending on the nature of the artisan's skills, they might attack with the equivalent of a dagger, hand axe, or sickle instead of a light hammer. For example, a tailor probably has an assortment of scissors.

DEADLY WARRIOR

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 161 (19d8 + 76)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +8, Wis +6, Cha +8
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Enhanced Weapons. The deadly warrior's weapon attacks are treated as if magical and deal an extra 14 (4d6) lightning damage on a hit (included in the attacks).

Resistance. The deadly warrior has advantage on saves against magical attacks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The deadly warrior makes four longsword or longbow attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 14 (4d6) lightning damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) lightning damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The deadly warrior adds 4 to their AC against one melee attack that would hit them. To do so, they must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

The deadly warrior is an elite combatant who wields greater skill than most other fighters. Although deadly warriors might command others, that is not their forte. They focus on personal combat and skill with their own blade, and use magical armor, weapons, and miscellaneous items to further heighten their effectiveness.

DEFENDER

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)
Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (–1)

Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dutybound. At the start of their turn, the defender can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn if they are guarding someone or something they have sworn to protect, but doing so gives advantage to attack rolls against them until the start of their next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The defender makes two longsword attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Defenders are a cut above average guards and put duty before their own well-being.

DISCIPLE

Medium humanoid (any species), any lawful alignment

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +5
Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The disciple makes two Monk Weapon attacks.

Monk Weapon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. A disciple can use their reaction to deflect or catch the missile when they are hit by a ranged weapon attack, reducing the damage of the attack by 1d10 + 6.

Disciples channel the ki energy of their bodies into phenomenal physical actions.

ECCLESIASTIC

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)
Hit Points 49 (9d8 + 9)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Skills Medicine +6, Persuasion +5, Religion +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages any two languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the ecclesiastic can expend a spell slot to cause their melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the ecclesiastic expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The ecclesiastic is a 9th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The ecclesiastic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *spare the dying*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, *sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*, *spirit guardians*
4th level (3 slots): *death ward*, *guardian of faith*
5th level (1 slot): *flame strike*

ACTIONS

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Ecclesiastics are divine spellcasters of significant skill and prestige, on par with mages. In a large city, most minor temples are run by an ecclesiastic with the aid of one or more priests.

EXPERIENCED MONK

Medium humanoid (any species), any lawful alignment

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +5
Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Advanced Training. The experienced monk has advantage on saving throws against area effects and effects that charm or frighten.

Magic Weapons. The experienced monk's Monk Weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The experienced monk makes two Monk Weapon attacks.

Monk Weapon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Throw Missile. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning or piercing damage.

Stunning Strike (Recharge 4–6): The experienced monk uses their bonus action to attempt to stun a creature they just hit with a monk weapon. The target must succeed at a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the experienced monk's next turn.

Wholeness of Body (Recharge After a Long Rest): The experienced monk uses their action to heal themselves of 30 points of damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. A experienced monk can use their reaction to deflect or catch the missile when they are hit by a ranged weapon attack, reducing the damage of the attack by 1d10 + 12. If this reduces the damage to 0, the experienced monk catches the missile and throws it as part of their reaction.

Experienced monks are advanced practitioners of mystical martial arts. They are often in charge of a monastery and have disciple followers who study their methods.

EXPERT

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather)
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills any one Intelligence skill +4 or Wisdom skill +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

An expert is usually someone skilled at a particular trade, such as a blacksmith, merchant, or scholar, but can also be someone who is passionate about a hobby requiring a certain set of skills.

HIGH PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)
Hit Points 97 (15d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Skills Medicine +8, Persuasion +7, Religion +7
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages any two languages
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the high priest can expend a spell slot to cause their melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the high priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The high priest is a 15th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The high priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *sacred flame*, *spare the dying*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, *sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*, *spirit guardians*
4th level (3 slots): *death ward*, *guardian of faith*
5th level (2 slots): *flame strike*, *greater restoration*
6th level (1 slot): *heal*, *heroes' feast*
7th level (1 slot): *conjure celestial*, *divine word*, *regenerate*
8th level (1 slot): *holy aura*

ACTIONS

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

High priests are the most powerful clerics of a temple, comparable to archmages. In a large city, major temples are run by a high priest with the aid of one or more ecclesiastics and various other priests.

HOLY CHAMPION

Medium humanoid (any species), lawful good

Armor Class 17 (splint) or 18 (plate)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +2, Con +4, Wis +2, Cha +5
Skills Medicine +4, Perception +4, Religion +2
Damage Resistances fire, radiant
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages any one language
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) radiant damage.

Lay on Hands. The holy champion can heal themselves or another living creature by touch, up to a total of 45 hit points per day. This amount replenishes after the champion takes a long rest.

Holy Smite (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest). The holy champion deals an additional 13 (3d8) radiant damage with a successful melee attack.

Holy champions are tough agents of good and law. They seek out and slay evil creatures, especially fiends and undead. They may use magical weapons or armor.

HOLY PARAGON

Medium humanoid (any species), lawful good

Armor Class 18 (plate mail)
Hit Points 142 (19d8 + 57)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +7, Wis +6, Cha +6
Skills Medicine +8, Perception +6, Religion +4
Damage Immunities fire, radiant
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages any one language
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Protection From Evil. Aberrations, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead have disadvantage on attack rolls against the holy paragon, and they cannot frighten or possess it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The holy paragon makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

Divine Sense (Recharge 6). The holy paragon can spend an action to detect all celestials, fiends, and undead within 60 feet. This sense remains active until the end of the paragon's next turn.

Lay on Hands. The holy paragon can heal themselves or another living creature by touch, up to a total of 100 hit points per day. This amount replenishes after the holy paragon takes a long rest.

Holy Smite (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest). The holy paragon deals an additional 22 (5d8) radiant damage with a successful melee attack.

Holy paragons are the greatest heroes of good and law. They are often leaders of knighthoods or holy armies set against fiends, undead, and other wicked foes, with holy champions as their lieutenants. They may use magical weapons or armor.

MASTER THIEF

Medium humanoid (any species), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 97 (15d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +5
Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +4, Deception +4, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of their turns, the master thief can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. If the master thief is subjected to an effect that allows them to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, they instead take no damage if they succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if they fail.

Keen Hearing and Sight. The master thief has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the master thief deals an extra 28 (8d6) damage when they hit a target with a weapon attack and have advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the master thief that isn't incapacitated and the master thief doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The master thief makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that the master thief can see hits them with an attack, the master thief can use their reaction to halve the attack's damage against them.

Master thieves are notorious masters of stealth and subtlety. Some create or take over a guild of other thieves, or study magic or poisons to stave off the boredom of regular crime being too easy for them.

PERFORMER

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Investigation +3, Persuasion +4, Performance +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any three languages
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Jack of All Trades. The performer adds +1 to any ability check they make (other than for the skills listed above).

Spellcasting. The performer is a 5th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The performer knows the following bard spells:
Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *disguise self*, *sleep*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *calm emotions*, *hold person*, *see invisibility*
3rd level (2 slots): *sending*

ACTIONS

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Performers are actors, bards, storytellers, troubadours, or other people who wield the power of lore and music.

STEWARD

Medium humanoid (any species), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather)
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Persuasion +2, History +3
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Hard to Sway. The steward has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Stewards are not skilled combatants, but they often have a community that supports them, including those with far more skills in combat to defend them.

SUPERIOR MONK

Medium humanoid (any species), any lawful alignment

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)
Speed 55 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +6
Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +5
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities diseased, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages speaks all languages
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Magic Weapons. The superior monk's Monk Weapon attacks are magical.

Perfect Soul (Recharge After a Short Rest). If the superior monk fails a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead.

Superior Training. The superior monk has advantage on all saving throws.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The superior monk makes three Monk Weapon attacks.

Monk Weapon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Throw Missile. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning or piercing damage.

Stunning Strike (Recharge 3–6): The superior monk uses their bonus action to attempt to stun a creature they just hit with a monk weapon. The target must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the superior monk's next turn.

Wholeness of Body (Recharge After a Long Rest): The superior monk uses their action to heal themselves of 50 points of damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. A superior monk can use their reaction to deflect or catch the missile when they are hit by a ranged weapon attack, reducing the damage of the attack by 1d10 + 12. If this reduces the damage to 0, the superior monk catches the missile and throws it as part of their reaction.

Superior monks have mastered at least one style of mystical martial arts. They often supervise one or more monasteries, instructing experienced monks and talented disciple students.

Derresh, page 315

DERRESH

Medium construct, neutral evil

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +6
Skills Acrobatics +8, Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +11
Damage Resistances damage from spells
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 20 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, thieves' cant
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Assassinate. During his first turn, Derresh has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit he scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Evasion. If Derresh is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Illusory Form. Derresh is an intelligent illusion; his illusory "body" gives him several advantages and unique abilities. He has advantage on Stealth checks. Most spells used on him have no effect other than to heal him (restoring 1d6 hit points per spell slot level). Spells that directly affect other magic (such as *dispel magic*) harm him, inflicting 1d6 points of force damage per spell slot level (no saving throw). An *antimagic field* suppresses him entirely, causing him to vanish like a summoned creature. Most divinations don't work on him at all; *detect magic* registers his presence as magic, and *true seeing* reveals him to be an illusion.

Derresh's innate spellcasting works on him normally because it's the result of him manipulating his own magical essence rather than actually casting a spell on himself. When he casts his wizard spells (but not his spells from innate spellcasting) on himself, they heal him just as would a spell cast by someone else.

Incorporeal Movement. Derresh moves through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object. He must use an action to become corporeal again. Unlike a ghost, Derresh is not naturally incorporeal, and must use his action to become incorporeal.

Innate Spellcasting. Derresh's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *dimension door*, *disguise self*, *invisibility*

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Derresh deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he 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 his that isn't incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Spellcasting. Derresh is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*, *true strike*
1st level (4 slots): *alarm*, *fog cloud*, *sleep*
2nd level (3 slots): *darkness*, *detect thoughts*, *phantasmal force*
3rd level (3 slots): *nondetection*, *sending*
4th level (1 slot): *arcane eye*, *locate creature*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Derresh makes two rapier attacks.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) piercing damage with a *+1 arrow*, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

EQUIPMENT

+2 rapier, *+1 longbow*, *+1 arrows* (20), poison (10 doses), 34 gp, 10 sp.

Derresh is a sentient illusion who often works as an assassin for hire.

FORSAKEN SHIGMAA

The Forsaken shigmaas, or just shigmaas, are some of the vilest characters in Ptolus. They serve as leaders and heroes among the Forsaken—that alone is enough to indicate the foulness of their being.

Shigmaas are typically hideous, as they must undergo a terrible scarification ritual to earn their rank. Further, to gain more power, a shigmaa must die over and over again. This process, which some call "walking the dead halls," involves the death of the shigmaa and the character's subsequent resurrection. This means a shigmaa cannot exist in isolation; the advancement process requires the support of a malevolent and despicable organization like the Forsaken.

Shigmaas, like the rest of the organization, prefer the company of the undead and dwell among carrion and corpses the way others live among friends and family. Typically, a shigmaa remains in hiding from the rest of the world, secreted away among ancient tombs and dark sepulchers along with vampires, ghouls, and other undead.

The word of a shigmaa is obeyed by all Forsaken and most undead. However, they number only a half dozen or more at any given time, due to the rigorous requirements of attaining these powers. Shigmaas are truly dread masters to be feared. They are hated most of all by the Keepers of the Veil.

Note that only some among the Forsaken who call themselves shigmaas actually have these abilities. The word in its common use simply indicates a leader on the path of death and darkness. However, there are "shigmaas" who have not walked the dead halls but received the title as an honorific; they do not command the respect or fear due a true shigmaa. True shigmaas have the following abilities, gained in this order (therefore, only the most powerful and experienced shigmaas can use the last abilities in this list):

Second Chance. If killed, the shigmaa can recover 1d6 rounds later (they never were actually dead). The shigmaa is in a weakened state (similar to being revived by *raise dead*). Once they use this ability, the shigmaa cannot use it again until they have truly died and been revived.

Call of Death. Summon one or more incorporeal undead that obey the shigmaa's commands for one minute. The undead cannot have more total hit points than half the shigmaa's current hit points. More powerful shigmaas can use this ability two or three times per day.

Necromantic Lore. Necromancy spell save DC and spell attack bonus each increase by 2.

Reap the Living. Melee attacks inflict an additional 1d6 necrotic damage. The shigmaa heals an amount equal to the necrotic damage. More powerful shigmaas inflict an additional +1d6 or +2d6 damage above this base amount.

Love of the Dead. Undead weaker than the shigmaa will never attack them.

Death Ward. Immune to abilities that instantly kill, as well as necrotic damage.

Paralyzing Touch. The shigmaa can paralyze with a touch, like a lich.

Immunities of the Grave. Immune to disease, poison, and stuns.

Leadership of the Dead. Advantage on checks to persuade intelligent undead.

Only the most powerful shigmaas can use the following abilities:

Imbue With Undeath. Once per day, animate a fallen foe as a vampire. The new vampire has a "death debt" to the shigmaa and cannot attack them for twenty-four hours, but thereafter can act as it wants. Most shigmaas use this ability sparingly because the vampire might challenge them in the future.

Mastery of Death. If the shigmaa dies, they can bring themselves back to life 1d6 hours later as if with *raise dead*. While dead, they can observe the world of the living with *clairvoyance*.

"Each time I return from the realm of death, I bring a bit more of the dark gods with me back into this world."
~Shigmaa Urasta, Forsaken Leader

Forsaken, page 111

Shigmaa characters in this book include the following NPCs:

Shigmaa Cynric Gallow, Urasta's lieutenant (page 230)

Shigmaa Irretharm, Herald of the Wintersouled; shigmaa in name only (page 250)

Shigmaa Surmoil Rallekred, liaison with the Fallen (page 229)

Shigmaa Urasta, tiefling leader of the Forsaken (page 545)

Shigmaa Wuntad, seeks to unite all the chaos cults for the Night of Dissolution (page 77)

Shigmaas are some of the most vile and feared people living in Ptolus today. Although most commoners don't know the word "shigmaa," those who do shudder every time they hear it. Of course, the Forsaken delight in that level of revulsion, which earns the shigmaas that much more power and respect from those who serve beneath them.

"The Wintersouled still sleep deep in their fortress, silent and unseen. Our victory is inevitable."
~The Book of Days Forsaken

Keepers of the Veil, page 117

The Book of Days Forsaken

"Life, by its very definition, is finite and short. Death is eternal. Infinite."

The book, bound in what appears to be human flesh and decorated with actual bones and teeth, is handwritten. Not quite a journal, it is an attempt by the authors to chronicle the events of the hideous group that calls itself the Forsaken. It appears to have been written by Shigmaa Urasta.

The book explains that leaders of the Forsaken are called "shigmaa," which means "to shepherd toward death" in an ancient, long-forgotten tongue. The shigmaas are living people who have touched death and returned to speak of it. Their bodies course with negative energy to the point where they are practically undead, even while still alive. Each time they die, their power grows stronger.

Hadrien Runihan, page 185

HADRIEN RUNIHAN

Medium undead (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +10, Con +5, Int +9, Wis +8, Cha +10
Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Perception +7, Stealth +9
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Hadrien fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. When Hadrien drops to 0 hit points outside his resting place, he transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in sunlight or running water. If he can't transform, he is destroyed.

While he has 0 hit points in mist form, he can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his resting place within two hours or be destroyed. Once in his resting place, he reverts to his vampire form. He is then paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit point. After spending one hour in his resting place with 0 hit points, he regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. Hadrien regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If he takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

Shapechanger. If Hadrien isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a Medium feral dog or a Medium cloud of mist, or back into his true form.

While in dog form, he can't speak, and his walking speed is 40 feet. His other statistics are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

While in mist form, he can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing. He can't pass through water. He has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and he is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage he takes from sunlight.

Spellcasting. Hadrien is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *mending*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *blast of cold* (*ray of frost*)
1st level (4 slots): *color spray*, *comprehend languages*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *invisibility*
3rd level (3 slots): *fly*, *lightning bolt*
4th level (1 slot): *dimension door*

Spider Climb. Hadrien can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. Hadrien has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. He can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. He takes 20 acid damage if he ends his turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into his heart while he is incapacitated in his resting place, he is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. He takes 20 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Vampire Form Only). Hadrien makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Daggerwand. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage with *+1 dagger*, and Hadrien can expend one charge from the wand to add 7 (2d6) necrotic damage to the attack (and heal himself for 2d6 hit points).

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage using a *+1 bolt*.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, he can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Bite (Dog or Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by him, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Hadrien regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under Hadrien's control.

Charm. Hadrien targets one humanoid he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see him, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by him. The charmed target regards Hadrien as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Hadrien's control, it takes his requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for his bite attack.

Each time Hadrien or his companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts for 24 hours or until Hadrien is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Night (1/Day). Hadrien magically calls 2d4 swarms of bats or rats, provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, he can call 3d6 feral dogs instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as his allies and obeying his spoken commands. The beasts remain for one hour, until he dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Hadrien 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. He regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. He moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Unarmed Strike. He makes one unarmed strike.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). He makes one bite attack.

EQUIPMENT

Hadrien's daggerwand, *bracers of defense*, *ring of protection*, light crossbow, *+1 bolts* (10), *skullring*, pocketwatch, platinum ring with onyx (worth 1,000 gp), silver smoking pipe (worth 200 gp), letter of credit from Menon Balacazar (worth 1,000 gp), 200 pp.

Hadrien Runihan is a vampire ally of Menon Balacazar and a member of the Covenant of Blood.

Hadrien's daggerwand, page 638

Skullring, page 643

Menon Balacazar, page 103

Covenant of Blood, page 103

Legends say that Kevris got her longbow years ago by killing a hill giant chief in the Cherubar Mountains in unarmed single combat. She apparently led the hill giant tribe for a time, until most of the giants were slain by Cherubim sorcerers.

Kevris Killraven is an annis hag and the founder of the Killraven Crime League (page 118). Whenever possible, she rides her powerful nightmare steed, Tallix.

Tallix has nightmare stats, plus an additional 70 hit points; advantage on attacks, checks, and saves; his hoof attack inflicts an additional 5 bludgeoning and 5 fire damage. He is challenge rating 9.

Thoughtstone, *page 644*

KEVRIS KILLRAVEN

Large fey, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (plate, natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +7
Skills Athletics +10, Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Perception +7
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Giant, Sylvan
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Killraven's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). She can innately cast the following spells:
3/day each: *disguise self* (including the form of a Medium humanoid), *fog cloud*

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

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Killraven deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when she 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 hers that isn't incapacitated and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Spellcasting. Killraven is a 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Oathbreaker paladin spells prepared:
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *hellish rebuke*, *searing smite*, *shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *crown of madness*
3rd level (2 slots): *blinding smite*, *dispel magic*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Killraven makes three attacks (one with her bite and two with her claws), three Despair Sword attacks, or three longbow attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Crushing Hug. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 37 (9d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16) if it is a Large or smaller creature. Until the grapple ends, the target takes 37 (9d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of Killraven's turns. Killraven can't make attacks while grappling a creature in this way.

Despair Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage using a *+1 arrow*.

REACTIONS

Parry. Killraven adds 4 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, she must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

EQUIPMENT

+1 plate armor, *Despair* (*flame tongue* Large greatsword), *+1 longbow*, *+1 arrows* (20), *thoughtstone*, *ring of spell storing*, *iron horn of Valhalla*, *potion of fly*, *potion of superior healing*, pocketwatch, spyglass, 130 gp.

Chapter 35:
MAGIC

From technology-related spells to new cleric domains and more, this chapter presents magic options suitable for a Ptolus Campaign.

Magic is an important part of Ptolus, and the magic found there is often new and strange. This chapter discusses the concept of soul magic and presents new cleric domains, spells useful to the mages of the city, and all the new magic items found in Ptolus.

SOUL MAGIC

The power of magic stirs in the world with an intelligence and a soul all its own. The most powerful arcanists know this and grow familiar with magic's own mind and spirit. The key to the power of this magical soul lies in words. That is why verbal components, written scrolls, spellbooks, runes, symbols, glyphs, power words, and similar communicative forms lie at the heart of magic. Some arcanists stumble upon a way to tap into magic's essence to fashion single whispered words. This method, called soul magic, relies on the belief that there is indeed a sentience behind magic itself.

Soul magic is a term that describes a specific sort of spell and the effects it creates. Soul magic spells are sentient, intelligent spells that want to be cast. They are always found encoded in symbols or other writing, similar to scrolls. However, any surface can hold a soul magic spell: a wall, the pages of a book, even an old tooth. Because these spells need to be cast, one cannot learn them, prepare them, or copy them into spellbooks. Once a soul magic spell gets inside you, you simply *must cast it*.

As with any spell, the power of soul magic spells varies. The important thing to remember is that any arcane spellcaster of any character level can use one. Soul magic spells rarely communicate other than to relate their powers (and then only if they feel like it—soul magic spells vary in personality, and some seem quite capricious). Their only goal is to be cast, which allows them to join once again with the universal power of magic itself. They revel in arcane strength and rejoice in all its forms.

A soul magic spell etched into a half-orc's tooth might set the Demon God Ochremeshk free in the Dark Reliquary (see page 239).

CREATING AND USING SOUL MAGIC

The key to creating a soul magic spell lies in encoding it into symbols. To do so requires time and a vast amount of power in the form of experience points. So great is the cost, in fact, that most truly magnificent soul magic spells are created by beings with a lot of personal power, such as deities and similar entities. What's more, it's a cost the creator pays for someone else: casters cannot use the soul magic spells they create. One devotes a small part of one's own soul when creating one of these spells, but casting it requires part of yet another soul. The fusion of these powers fuels the soul magic.

In a way, a soul magic spell is like an intelligent magic item without a physical form.

Wealthy residents of the Nobles' Quarter make use of spellcasters as house mages, security mages, and show mages (page 260).

GM TIPS

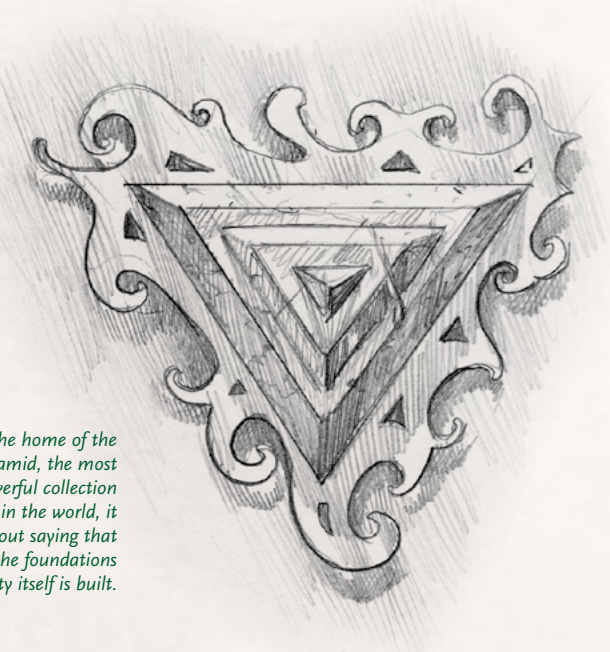
GMs should feel free to use soul magic throughout Ptolus. It does a nice job of representing mysterious, powerful, and dangerous magic beyond the common, everyday spells found in the game.

Soul magic spells are intelligent and have Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, all of which are always at least 10. They have somatic and verbal components, but never material components.

Most casters are far more likely to use soul magic than to create it. Casting a soul magic spell is an action, but does not use any of the caster's spell slots. The caster's level, ability scores, and other character abilities do not affect the spell—only the spell's level and ability scores matter. For example, a particular soul magic spell might have a spell save DC of 18, no matter who casts it. If any effects of a spell depend on the level of the caster, the soul magic level is 10 or the minimum spellcaster level needed to cast a spell of that level, whichever is higher. There is no minimum level or ability score requirement for casters to cast soul magic spells—only that they have the ability to cast arcane spells. Even a character who can cast a single cantrip because of their species (such as a forest gnome's ability to cast *minor illusion*) can cast a soul magic spell.

A soul magic's proficiency bonus is equal to half its level, plus 2. So a level 5 soul magic's proficiency bonus is +4 (5 / 2 + 2). Like a PC spellcaster, a soul magic spell uses its proficiency bonus and ability modifier when setting the saving throw for the spell and when making an attack roll.

- **Spell save DC** = 8 + proficiency bonus + ability modifier
- **Spell attack modifier** = proficiency bonus + ability modifier



Since Ptolus is the home of the Inverted Pyramid, the most infamous and powerful collection of spellcasters in the world, it almost goes without saying that magic is one of the foundations upon which the city itself is built.

Usually, a soul magic's spellcasting ability is the highest of its three ability scores.

When creating unique soul magic effects, the GM should make them a little different from standard spells. Soul magic should feel strange, and the differences give the GM an opportunity to increase the spell effects slightly. Although soul magic spells ought to match up generally with other spells of their level, they should prove slightly more powerful. Feel free to tailor soul magic to fit the circumstances of a particular setting or adventure.

There are three distinct types of soul magic: imperative, declamatory, and extemporaneous.

IMPERATIVE SOUL MAGIC

Imperative soul magic preys upon the intelligence of others to entice them to cast the spell. An arcane caster within 10 feet of an encoded soul magic spell must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 10 + soul magic spell's level + spell's Charisma bonus). On a failed save, the symbols and runes that make up the spell swirl up and around the caster, compelling them to cast it immediately. There is no cost to the caster to do so, but they must use their action to cast the spell, and cannot use a bonus action or reaction until the start of their next turn.

Imperative soul magic effectively becomes a trap. Say a powerful elemental creature has been sealed in a pit, imprisoned forever. The creature labors over the centuries to encode an imperative soul magic spell to free itself. Then it waits for an arcane caster to come along, feel the compulsion of the spell's will, and cast the spell.

Once an arcane spellcaster makes a successful saving throw to resist the compulsion of the imperative spell, they don't need to make another—they remain immune to it. They can still willingly cast the spell, but they do so as if it were a declamatory soul magic spell.

DECLAMATORY SOUL MAGIC

Declamatory soul magic is more akin to a normal spell. It draws a little of its power from the caster's soul, however. A declamatory soul magic spell temporarily hinders the caster's Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score, drawing power from the caster where the spell is most deficient (in other words, if the spell's lowest ability score is Wisdom, it draws power from the caster's Wisdom). If there is a tie for the spell's lowest ability score, the spell's creator chooses which of the caster's ability scores it affects. The caster gains disadvantage on checks and saves with that ability score, and the ability score is reduced by the following amount:

Ability score reduction = 1d6 + soul magic spell's level – soul magic spell's lowest ability score bonus

For example, a 5th-level soul magic spell with Intelligence 10, Wisdom 12, and Charisma 16 reduces the caster's Intelligence by 1d6 + 5 – 0 = 1d6 + 5.

The caster dies if this reduces their ability score to 0. Finishing a long rest ends the reduction (and the disadvantage) to one of the character's ability scores.

EXTEMPERANEOUS SOUL MAGIC

Extemporaneous soul magic is stored magical power that is not encoded for a specific effect. Each is almost like a *wish*, although at varying levels. For example, a 5th-level extemporaneous soul magic spell allows a caster to produce an effect equivalent to that of a 5th-level spell or lower. This casting draws more power from the caster than declamatory soul magic, as follows:

Ability score reduction = 2d6 + soul magic spell's level – soul magic spell's lowest ability score bonus

CLERIC DOMAINS

The priests of Ptolus have access to five divine domains not normally available to clerics in the game: Civilization, the Future, Radiance, Sleep, and Technology. These domains are important to such major deities in the Empire as Asche, God of Cities; Gaen, Goddess of Light; Teun, Mother of All Machines; and the Watcher of the Skies.

In this section, an asterisk (*) indicates a spell detailed later in this chapter.

CIVILIZATION

The gods of civilization promote cooperation over anarchy and alliance over adversity. The means of how they promote and advance civilization may vary—such as construction, celebration, or invention—but the goal is to advance the social and cultural development of mortals. Clerics of these gods work to create and enforce just laws, protect people from war and destructive influences, and ensure that civilization itself will grow and continue.

Deities: Asche, God of Cities; Mocharum, God of Dwarves; Ollom, God of the Keg; Teun, Mother of All Machines

CIVILIZATION DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*Sanctuary*, *unseen servant*
3rd	*Calm emotions*, *zone of truth*
5th	*Create food and water*, *sending*
7th	*Banishment*, *locate creature*
9th	*Commune with the city**, *teleportation circle*

BLESSINGS OF CIVILIZATION

At 1st level, you learn two languages of your choice. You also become proficient in two of the following skills: History, Investigation, Medicine, or Persuasion. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses either of those skills.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: EDUCATION

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to tap into a divine well of knowledge. As an action, you choose one skill or tool. For ten minutes, you have proficiency with the chosen skill or tool.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: CLAIRVOYANCE

At 6th level, you can use your Channel Divinity to observe a location as if using *clairvoyance* for up to ten minutes. During that time, you can use your action to end this effect and send a message of up to twenty-five words to that location (similar to using *sending*, but without expending a spell slot and creatures at the location do not have the opportunity to reply). As part of sending the message, you can have the location manifest an image of a face to speak the words; you choose whether the face looks like you or if it is an unremarkable humanoid face of indeterminate gender and species.

For many casters, extemporaneous soul magic spells are extremely dangerous to use. One spell could wipe an arcanist's mind.

A soul magic spell found in Alchestrin's Tomb (page 218) can take the characters to Jabel Shammar.

Just as you can incorporate new deities from other sources, so too can you pull in new domains of magic. Adding new cleric domains to a Ptolus Campaign should be limited only by the GM's preference.

Although people are always quick to talk about the arcanists in Ptolus, the city also is home to many powerful divine spellcasters. Considering all the temples in the Temple District, clerics likely outnumber wizards and sorcerers combined within Ptolus.

Temple of Asche, page 353

Temple of Teun, Mother of All Machines, page 367

POTENT SPELLCASTING
Starting at 8th level, you add your Wisdom modifier to the damage you deal with any cleric cantrip.

CITY TRAVEL
At 17th level, your walking speed doubles when you are on a street or road of a village, town, or city. This includes homes, businesses, and fortifications within that community, but not dungeons, caves, or other "uncivilized" areas within or below it.

THE FUTURE
The gods of the future know what has not yet come to pass. Their ability to reveal it to mortals is often constrained by pacts and paradoxes, and their only recourse is prophecy. Their clerics are careful observers, watching for omens and insight about future events, and occasionally wresting glimpses of likely outcomes.

Temple Observatory of the Watcher of the Skies, page 362

Deities: Aldinach, the Goddess of the Moons; Niveral, God of Secrets; Watcher of the Skies

FUTURE DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*Command*, *shield of faith*
3rd	*Aid from the future**, *augury*
5th	*Peer into the future**, *will of the gods**
7th	*Arcane eye*, *divination*
9th	*Commune*, *futuresight**

INSIGHTFUL DODGE
At 1st level, you can experience a momentary glimpse of your future, allowing you to gain advantage on one Dexterity saving throw of your choosing, or give an opponent disadvantage on one attack roll of your choosing (you can use this feature even if you were otherwise unaware of the attack or effect). If you use it on your Dexterity saving throw, you can do so after seeing the initial roll but before any of the roll's effects occur.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (a minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: AUGURY
Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to tap into knowledge of events occurring within the next ten minutes. As an action, concentrate upon your holy symbol and ask for an omen about a specific course of action you plan to take within the next ten minutes. Similar to *augury*, the possible omens are "weal," "woe," "weal and woe," or "nothing." Like *augury*, using this feature multiple times carries a cumulative chance of a random reading, but only if you use it on the same action.

BEND FATE
Starting at 6th level, you have the ability to alter the present to suit your plan for the future. When you make an ability check or a saving throw, you can use this feature to add a d10 to your roll. You can do so after seeing the initial roll but before any of the roll's effects occur.

You must finish a short or long rest before you can use this feature again.

POTENT SPELLCASTING
Starting at 8th level, you add your Wisdom modifier to the damage you deal with any cleric cantrip.

MASTER OF FATE
Starting at 17th level, you have 3 fate points, which work like luck points from the Lucky feat. You regain your expended fate points when you finish a long rest.

RADIANCE
Gods of light are often viewed as gentle, benign, protective entities, but they just as easily can be powerful destructive forces arraigned against evil and ready to smite the champions of darkness. Martial clerics who are ready to take up the fight against demons and undead may prefer the Radiance domain over the Light domain.

Temple of Gaen, page 359

GMs may want to give the Radiance domain to some or all deities that have the Light domain, or choose just one or the other.

Deities: Ardaen, Dead God of Light; Gaen, Goddess of Light

RADIANCE DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*Illuminated weapon**, *searing smite*
3rd	*Blazing light**, *heartglow**
5th	*Daylight*, *shield of light**
7th	*Guardian of faith*, *waves of light**
9th	*Scrying*, *wellspring of soul's light**

BONUS PROFICIENCIES
At 1st level, you gain proficiency with martial weapons and heavy armor.

FONT OF RADIANCE

Also at 1st level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon with divine energy. As a bonus action when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the wound to glow with holy power. The wound glows like a torch and the creature takes 1 radiant damage each round; after one minute, the glow stops and the creature no longer takes this radiant damage every round.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (a minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: CONSECRATE GROUND

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to infuse the ground with holy power, dealing radiant damage to those who touch or enter the area.

As an action, you present your holy symbol, charging a 5-foot-radius sphere with a visible web or maze of golden energy. A hostile creature that enters this area must make a Constitution saving throw; they take radiant damage equal to 2d10 + your cleric level on a failed saving throw, and half as much damage on a successful one. The golden energy disappears after one minute or after it has discharged its power four times, whichever comes first.

BLINDING WRATH

At 6th level, you can rebuke attackers with blinding flashes of light. When a creature within 5 feet of you that you can see hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to cause the creature to make a Constitution saving throw. If it fails, it is blinded until the end of your next turn.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (a minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

DIVINE STRIKE

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with divine energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 radiant damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

REGENERATIVE RADIANCE

Starting at 17th level, you are immune to radiant damage. Whenever you inflict at least 5 radiant damage to a creature, you regain 1 hit point.

SLEEP

Gods of sleep embody the concepts of restfulness, replenishment, and subtle magic. They are often associated with night and the moon and creatures that strongly feel their influence, such as fey and werewolves. These gods also have influence over dreams, scrying, prophecy, and illusion, as well as dark nightmares. Clerics of these gods tend to be mysterious people who see things that others can't, using their gifts to gently nudge the course of the world in a direction more suitable for their interests.

Deities: Aldinach, Goddess of the Moon; Phoeboul, God of Dreams

SLEEP DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*Alarm*, *sleep*
3rd	*Darkvision*, *silence*
5th	*Clairvoyance*, *hypnotic pattern*
7th	*Death ward*, *hallucinatory terrain*
9th	*Dream*, *legend lore*

DREAM VISION

At 1st level, you can view the dreams of a sleeping creature you touch. As an action, touch one creature. The creature must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature succeeds on the saving throw, you can't use this feature on them again until you finish a long rest. You can use this feature to observe the dreams of an elf (or other creature that meditates rather than sleeping), but they have advantage on their saving throw.

If the creature fails its save, you can see and hear whatever they are dreaming, if anything. This effect lasts for ten minutes. Using this knowledge of their dream, you gain advantage on one Deception, Insight, Intimidation, or Persuasion roll against that creature within the next twenty-four hours.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: GIFT OF SLEEP

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to make creatures fall asleep. As an action, present your holy symbol and invoke the name of your deity. Each creature that can see you within 10 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails their saving throw, they fall unconscious for one minute or until they take damage or someone uses an action to shake or slap them awake.

Constructs, undead, and creatures immune to being charmed aren't affected by this ability.

Read about Phoeboul and the setting's other deities in Chapter 4: Cosmology and Religion, page 73.

EFFECTIVE REST

Starting at 6th level, you get more out of your short and long rests. If you roll a 1 on any Hit Die spent to regain hit points, you can reroll it until it isn't a 1. When you spend a long rest and regain spent Hit Dice, you regain half again as many spent Hit Dice, with a minimum of one additional Hit Die (so if you would normally regain four Hit Dice after a long rest, you'd instead regain six).

NIGHTMARE STRIKE

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with divine energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 psychic damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

WAKING DREAM

Starting at 17th level, you can plunge a creature into an illusory realm that seems strangely real and unreal, like a dream or nightmare. As an action, choose a creature that you can see within 60 feet of you. It must make a Wisdom saving throw against your cleric spell save DC. On a failed save, it is charmed or frightened by you (your choice) for one minute or until your concentration is broken (as if you are concentrating on a spell). This effect ends early if the creature takes any damage.

Until this illusion ends, the creature thinks it is lost in a dream or nightmare, the appearance of which you choose. The creature can see and hear only itself, you, and the illusion.

You must finish a short or long rest before you can use this feature again.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a facet of knowledge, building upon existing information to advance what can be created and studied for greater understanding. Technology is amoral—it is neither good nor evil, just another in a set of ever-growing tools that mortals can use. Some clerics of technology use their knowledge to improve civilization, some use it to wage war, and some use it to make the improbable possible.

Deities: Baalhazor, Demon God of Technology; the Iron God; Teun, Mother of All Machines; Tevra, the Clockwork Goddess

Temple of Teun, Mother of All Machines, page 367

BONUS PROFICIENCIES

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with firearms and on any skill check to use a technological device.

TECHNOLOGY DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*Identify device**, *unseen servant*
3rd	*Find traps*, *lock and load**
5th	*Cannons of heaven**, *repair device**
7th	*Conjure device**, *conveyance**
9th	*Animate objects*, *explosive shot**

CHANNEL DIVINITY: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to tap into a divine well of knowledge. As an action, you choose one tool, or an Intelligence- or Wisdom-based skill. For ten minutes, you have proficiency with the chosen tool or skill.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: LOCK AND LOAD

At 6th level, when you or a creature within 30 feet of you makes an attack roll with a crossbow or firearm, you can use your reaction to grant that attack a +10 bonus to the roll, using your Channel Divinity. You make this choice after you see the roll, but before the GM says whether the attack hits or misses. You can use this ability on a device capable of making its own attacks, such as a trap or a steam-powered construct, even if its attacks aren't with crossbows or firearms.

Instead of adding to the weapon's attack roll, you can use your Channel Divinity to instantly reload a crossbow or firearm within 30 feet using ammunition from the wielder's equipment. This does not work on cannons.

DIVINE STRIKE

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with divine energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d6 damage of the same type dealt by the weapon to the target (or 1d8 if the weapon is a firearm). When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d6 (or 2d8 if the weapon is a firearm).

AVATAR OF TECHNOLOGY

Starting at 17th level, you gain resistance to fire and lightning damage, and to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical devices and mechanical creatures.

SPELL LIST

There are hundreds of spellcasters in Ptolus. Here is a list of some of the spells described in this chapter that are in common use among them.

BARD SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)
- Assess Creature
- Sense Spell

1ST LEVEL
- Detect Chaositech
- Identify Device

2ND LEVEL
- Conjure Blessed Child

4TH LEVEL
- Conjure Device

5TH LEVEL
- Commune With the City

9TH LEVEL
- Lord of the City

CLERIC SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)
- Assess Creature
- Sense Spell

1ST LEVEL
- Detect Chaositech
- Identify Device

2ND LEVEL
- Aid From the Future
- Blazing Light
- Conjure Blessed Child
- Siphon

3RD LEVEL
- Create Firestone
- Deadly Carrier
- Peer Into the Future
- Shield of Light
- Will of the Gods

4TH LEVEL
- Waves of Light

5TH LEVEL
- Futuresight
- Wellspring of Soul's Light

9TH LEVEL
- Lord of the City
- Sunfire Tomb

DRUID SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)
- Assess Creature
- Sense Spell

3RD LEVEL
- Deadly Carrier

9TH LEVEL
- Sunfire Tomb

PALADIN SPELLS

1ST LEVEL
- Illuminated Weapon

2ND LEVEL
- Heartglow

SORCERER SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)
- Assess Creature
- Sense Spell

1ST LEVEL
- Detect Chaositech
- Identify Device

2ND LEVEL
- Conjure Blessed Child
- Lock and Load
- Siphon

3RD LEVEL
- Create Firestone
- Jevicca's Just Reversal
- Repair Device

4TH LEVEL
- Conjure Device
- Conveyance
- Jevicca's Fourfold Ostracism

5TH LEVEL
- Animate Necrosis
- Divinatory Expungement
- Explosive Shot

7TH LEVEL
- Month of Vallis

WARLOCK SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)
- Assess Creature
- Sense Spell

1ST LEVEL
- Detect Chaositech

2ND LEVEL
- Siphon

3RD LEVEL
- Create Firestone
- Deadly Carrier
- Jevicca's Just Reversal

4TH LEVEL
- Jevicca's Fourfold Ostracism

5TH LEVEL
- Animate Necrosis

8TH LEVEL
- Month of Vallis

9TH LEVEL
- Sunfire Tomb

WIZARD SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)
- Assess Creature
- Sense Spell

1ST LEVEL
- Detect Chaositech
- Identify Device

2ND LEVEL
- Aid From the Future
- Conjure Blessed Child
- Lock and Load
- Siphon

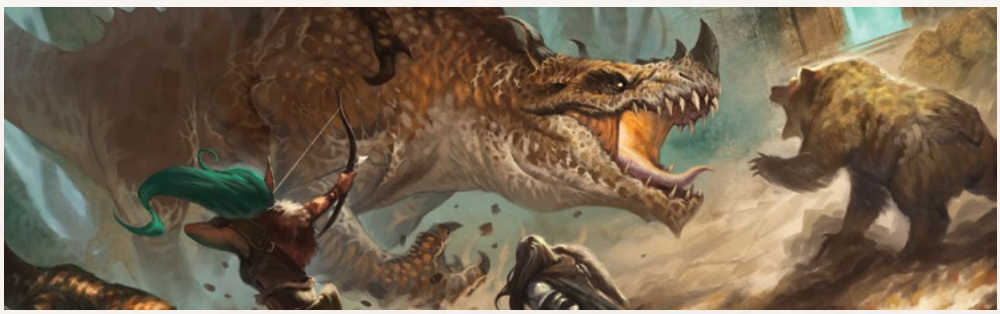
3RD LEVEL
- Create Firestone
- Jevicca's Just Reversal
- Repair Device

4TH LEVEL
- Conjure Device
- Conveyance
- Jevicca's Fourfold Ostracism

5TH LEVEL
- Animate Necrosis
- Divinatory Expungement
- Explosive Shot

8TH LEVEL
- Month of Vallis

9TH LEVEL
- Lord of the City
- Sunfire Tomb



Jevicca's fourfold ostracism *is a variant of* banishment; *see page 630 for more information.*

Arcane spellcasters of Praemal who learn the imprisonment *spell may choose* ***sunfire entombment*** *(page 633) as the form of imprisonment when they cast the spell.*

Since the city of Ptolus has many spellcasters and many different traditions of magic, it's highly appropriate to incorporate spells and magic items from other sources, to reflect the place's cosmopolitan nature.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

In Ptolus, almost anything that exists is subject to the effects of magic. Even technology is not exempt from this arcane power. This section presents a sampling of this local magic.

AID FROM THE FUTURE

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You call on your future self to aid you in the present. Drawing on the life energy of the "you" living twenty-four hours in the future, you regain one 1st-level spell slot and a number of hit points equal to 1d8 + your spellcasting ability modifier.

Exactly twenty-four hours after the casting of this spell, you lose 16 (3d10) hit points and are stunned for 1d6 rounds.

If you cast *aid from the future* but die without being raised before the twenty-four hours elapse, or if in twenty-four hours you are within the area of an *antimagic field*, or if something else prevents this spell from logically functioning after it has been cast, the temporal flux caused by the paradox makes you (and all allies who were within 30 feet of you when you cast it, regardless of their current location and condition) lose 27 (5d10) hit points and are stunned for ten rounds.

Once you cast this spell, you cannot cast it again until the twenty-four hours have passed.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, for each spell slot above 3rd, the level of the spell slot regained increases by 1, the healing increases by 1d8, the hit points lost after twenty-four hours increase by 5 (1d10), and the stun duration increases by two rounds.

ANIMATE NECROSIS

5th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a bit of string coated in animal fat)
Duration: Instantaneous

You animate the dead tissue in one wound of a living creature (the creature must currently be below its maximum number of hit points due to an injury), causing bits of animated flesh to form a sickly tendril that reaches up and out of one of the creature's wounds.

The tendril attempts to attack the living portion of the creature, choking and strangling it. The tendril's attack bonus is equal to your spellcasting ability modifier + your proficiency bonus. On a hit, it deals 3d8 bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled. Until this grapple ends, the target can't breathe, and the tendril has advantage on attack rolls against the creature. The tendril attacks again at the start of your next three turns.

The tendril has AC 15 and 2 hit points per Hit Die of the target. It automatically fails all saving throws.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the damage increases by 3d8 for each slot level above 5th.

ASSESS CREATURE

Divination cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: S
Duration: Instantaneous

You wave your hand at a creature within range; if the creature fails a Wisdom saving throw, you learn how many Hit Dice it has and (if an NPC or monster) its challenge rating. The spell automatically fails if the creature is using any type of magical disguise, polymorph, or shapechange (although you don't know if it failed because the creature made its saving throw or because it is magically disguised).

BLAZING LIGHT

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

Focusing holy power like a ray of sunlight, you project two rays of light from your hand that strike out at targets within range. You can hurl them at one target or several.

Make a ranged spell attack for each ray. On a hit, the target takes 2d6 radiant damage. If the target is an undead creature, it takes an additional 1d6 radiant damage, or 2d6 if it is sensitive or vulnerable to sunlight (such as a vampire or wraith).

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you create one additional ray for each slot level above 2nd.

CANNONS OF HEAVEN

3rd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 500 feet
Components: V, S, M (a hand-sized miniature bronze cannon)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A cloud in the shape of a 30-foot sphere appears in the sky anywhere from 50 to 100 feet above you at a point you choose. The spell fails if you can't see a point in the air where the cloud could appear (for example, if you are in a room that can't accommodate the cloud). Multiple metal cannons project out of the cloud, like a well-armed ship.

When you cast the spell, choose a 10-foot-radius area you can see within range. The cannons fire upon that area. Each creature in the area must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d10 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. On each of your turns until the spell ends, you can use your action to call down another barrage of cannonballs in this way again, targeting the same area or a different one.

The cloud and cannons cannot be attacked, but can be dispelled.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d10 for each slot level above 3rd.

The cannons of heaven *spell was used by clerics of Teun in the early days of the Empire to help support Imperial troops as they secured western lands.*

COMMUNE WITH THE CITY

5th-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a map of the settlement you are in)
Duration: 1 minute

You draw upon the gestalt knowledge of all the residents of the settlement and ask up to three yes-or-no questions pertaining to the community in some way. You must ask your questions before the spell ends. If someone in the settlement knows the correct answer, you receive a correct answer for the question; otherwise you receive no answer at all. So if you cast the spell and ask, "Is the *box of shadows* within the Tower of Kadmiel?" you will get an answer only if someone in the local community knows the answer.

The local people whose knowledge provides these answers are unaware that the magic is using their knowledge, even if only one person knows the answer.

You can cast this spell only within a settlement that is home to at least one hundred people. The area must be considered a city, town, village, hamlet, or similar community. You cannot, for example, define one hundred farmers living across hundreds of acres as a "settlement."

CONJURE BLESSED CHILD

2nd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You summon a balsam blessed child (the good, pure spirit of someone not yet born), which appears in an unoccupied space that you can see within range. The blessed child disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or when the spell ends.

The blessed child is friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the blessed child, which has its own turns. They cannot speak, but they understand Celestial and obeys any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you), as long as the commands don't violate their alignment. If you don't issue any commands, they defend themselves from hostile creatures but otherwise take no actions.

The GM has the blessed child's statistics.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you have additional options. You can conjure a dayod blessed child (challenge rating 3) with a 4th-level slot, a fealom (challenge rating 5) with a 5th-level slot, or a hallas (challenge rating 7) with a 7th-level slot.

You can conjure two balsam by using a 4th-level slot, three using a 6th-level slot, or four with an 8th-level slot. You can conjure two dayod by using a 6th-level slot or three using an 8th-level slot. You can conjure two fealom by using a 7th-level slot or three using a 9th-level slot. You can conjure two hallas by using a 9th-level slot.

Blessed child, page 583

In Ptolus, the ray of frost *cantrip is known as* blast of cold.

CONJURE DEVICE

4th-level conjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a jewel worth half as much as the device being conjured, which the spell consumes)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create a mechanical device with which you are familiar. The device is in perfect working order and fully fueled or loaded, as the case may be.

At Higher Levels. If you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the duration is concentration, up to 1 hour. If you use a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the duration is 8 hours. If you use a spell slot of 7th level or higher, the duration is 24 hours. If you use a 9th-level spell slot, the spell lasts until it is dispelled. Using a spell slot of 6th level or higher grants a duration that doesn't require concentration.

Items fueled by firestone include steam-powered armor, battle carts, and steam carts (see page 525).

CONVEYANCE

4th-level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (100 pounds of metal, all of which the spell consumes)
Duration: Concentration, up to 8 hours

You touch a piece of metal or a metal device weighing at least a hundred pounds, which transforms over the course of one round into a technological flying platform for you. You understand the controls and can steer the device using your action or bonus action each round. (If you make the platform stationary, it remains in place and does not need any attention until you decide to move it.) Over short distances, the conveyance has a flying speed of 40 feet, but by traveling in a generally straight line for at least a minute it can accelerate to about 50 miles per hour.

When the spell ends, the conveyance disassembles into rust and metal scraps; creatures on it fall if it is still aloft, unless they can stop their falls.

The conveyance has AC 19 and 27 (5d10) hit points.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the conveyance is larger and can carry one additional creature for each slot level above 4th.

The spell deadly carrier *is a favorite of the members of the Plagueborn chaos cult (page 76).*

Metal	Cost Per Pound
Iron	*1 sp*
Copper	*5 sp*
Silver	*5 gp*
Gold	*50 gp*

Brass, bronze, lead, tin, and other base metals have similar prices as iron.

CREATE FIRESTONE

3rd-level conjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (10 gp worth of coal, which the spell consumes)
Duration: Instantaneous

You create one pound of firestone, a mineral that burns hotly and with great efficiency for 24 hours. It is used to power some of the equipment described in Chapter 29: Technology.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the number of firestones you create increases by one for each slot level above 3rd.

DEADLY CARRIER

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self (20-foot-radius sphere)
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 day

Choose one disease you are infected with. You become immune to that disease but continue to carry it, and you become very contagious to others. If the disease does not already have game mechanics for its contagiousness, assume that anyone spending at least ten minutes within 20 feet of you must make a Constitution save against the disease or become afflicted with it. Any creature you infect has the normal disease infection rate (not the enhanced rate of the spell).

This spell has no effect if you are not currently infected with a contagious disease.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the duration increases by 1 day for each slot level above 3rd.

DETECT CHAOSITECH

1st-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

For the duration, you sense the presence of chaositech within 30 feet of you. If you sense chaositech in this way, you can use your action to see a faint aura around any visible creature or object in the area that has chaositech, and you learn its general purpose, if any (such as weapon, shield, power source, information, transportation, and so on).

The spell can penetrate most barriers, but is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt.

DIVINATORY EXPUNGEMENT

5th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 300 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Until dispelled

You designate a specific area and a time in the immediate past (no more than ten minutes ago), protecting it from divinations that would reveal what happened there and then. The area of the spell consists of up to ten 10-foot cubes, which you can arrange as you wish. Each cube must have at least one face adjacent to the face of another cube. Only divination spells of 6th level or higher can determine events taking place in the warded area during the time you designated.

For example, if a wizard were to break into a tower, then cast this spell after leaving, it would hinder the effectiveness of divinations seeking to reveal the break-in, the party responsible, or exactly what occurred. Someone using *divination* (a 4th-level spell) would be unable to gain information about the wizard's activities in that time and place. Since this spell affects only the past, however, the wizard's actions might have been observed (such as with *clairvoyance* or *scrying*) while they were ongoing.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the level of divination needed to overcome this protection increases by 1 for each slot level above 5th. Thus, using a 6th-level spell slot protects against divinations up to 6th level, a 7th-level spell slot protects against divinations up to 7th level, and so on.

EXPLOSIVE SHOT

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You enchant a firearm you touch so that its ammunition explodes upon impact, affecting all creatures in a 10-foot-radius sphere. The firearm's target takes the normal amount of damage from the weapon. Creatures other than the target take damage as if they had been hit by the weapon, or half that amount if they make a Dexterity save against your spell save DC.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, each creature damaged by the weapon or its exploding ammunition takes an additional 1d4 fire damage for each spell slot above 5th.

Danbury's is a tavern in Delver's Square that caters to mages.

Danbury's, page 192

Divinatory expungement *is used frequently by the mages of the Inverted Pyramid (page 114) and the Dreaming Apothecary (page 116) to cover their tracks and their actions.*

Jevicca Nor (page 115) is a well-known mage of the Inverted Pyramid. Her variant of the banishment *spell,* Jevicca's fourfold ostracism, *specifically banishes creatures to the Ethereal Sea for the duration (where they can interact with each other and take actions normally), and allows the caster to use a higher-level spell slot to force a target to make an additional saving throw for each spell slot above 4th. Her spell's material component is a bit of copper wire bent into a square. This spell is so popular that it is used by many sorcerers, warlocks, and wizards throughout Ptolus.*

The paladin Steron Vsool (page 359) has a permanent heartglow *effect. The most powerful paladin in Ptolus, he works tirelessly for the temple of Gaen.*

Like Jevicca's fourfold ostracism, Jevicca's just reversal *is quite popular among the mages of Ptolus.*

Demon gun, page 637

FUTURESIGHT

5th-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a piece of crystal worth 10 gp)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

This spell is similar to *peer into the future*, but instead of giving you a vision of your own future, you experience a future vision of the creature you touch. The vision is of any point in the creature's future lifespan, but the exact point in time is up to the GM. Unlike *peer into the future*, you can specify a general topic on which your vision will focus. For example, you could say "a great battle" or "a moment of great triumph," and the GM will describe for you a point in the creature's future involving the chosen topic, if there is one. However, topics such as "the moment of Feldrik's death" or "when we find the *Black Grail*" are too specific.

HEARTGLOW

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self (10-foot-radius sphere)
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You focus the holy power within yourself into your heart, causing it to glow like a brilliant light, which can be seen through your chest, and even through your clothing and armor. While your heart glows, all evil creatures within range are discomfited by the shining light of your faith, giving them disadvantage on their attack rolls against you and on saves against your abilities and spells.

You can cast this spell only if your alignment is good.

IDENTIFY DEVICE

1st-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a small metal spring)
Duration: Instantaneous

You choose one mechanical or chaositech device that you touch throughout the casting of the spell. You learn its basic properties and how to use them, whether it requires attunement to use, and how many charges it has. For example, casting this on a demon gun would tell you that it is a "weapon," while casting it on a spyglass would tell you that it is a "device for seeing faraway things."

If a device has different functions that are equally basic, the spell determines the weakest or simplest function. If these functions are also of equal level or power, the GM decides randomly which is identified.

If you instead touch a creature throughout the casting, you learn what devices, if any, are attached to it.

ILLUMINATED WEAPON

1st-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action
Range: Touch
Components: V
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You touch a weapon, infusing it with magical daylight. Until the spell ends, when you strike an undead creature with the weapon, the creature must make a Constitution save or it gains disadvantage on attacks, checks, and saves. An incorporeal undead struck by the weapon is slowed; its speed is halved, and on its turn it can use either an action or a bonus action (not both).

JEVICCA'S JUST REVERSAL

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: 10 minutes

You protect yourself against mind-controlling spells (such as *charm person* and *suggestion*) of 3rd level or lower. If you make your saving throw against such a spell, the spell has no effect on you and instead targets the caster, using the slot level, spell save DC, attack bonus, and spellcasting ability of the caster. If the caster fails their save, the spell takes effect on them as if you had cast it upon them.

Jevicca's just reversal only affects spells that target only you, not area of effect spells.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the level of mind-controlling spells it can turn upon their source increases by 1 for each slot level above 5th. Thus, using a 4th-level spell slot protects against mind-controlling spells up to 4th level, a 5th-level spell slot protects against ones up to 5th level, and so on.

LOCK AND LOAD

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You touch a firearm, enchanting it so that it automatically loads the powder and ammunition after being fired. This temporarily negates the loading property of the firearm; the wielder doesn't have to use an action or bonus action to reload it, and if they can make multiple attacks per round, they can use the firearm for any or all of them. The powder and ammunition are drawn from the wielder's equipment (if the wielder is out of either, the spell cannot reload the weapon).

This spell is especially useful when cast on a cannon.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can affect one additional weapon for each spell slot above 2nd.

LORD OF THE CITY

9th-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: Self (3-mile-radius sphere)
Components: V, S, M (a 1,000-gp bronze plate etched with an accurate map of the settlement, which the spell consumes)
Duration: 3 hours

For the duration, you know the general status of the people in the settlement you are in: content, rebellious, afraid, dying, and so on. You become aware of large-scale calamities or strong emotions—anything that affects at least 10 percent of the population or physically endangers 1 percent of the population. For example, in a city of ten thousand people, if one hundred fifty people had the plague, you would become aware of it (with no further details). If the city were under attack, you would become aware of it. If a major festival were occurring with a thousand people attending, you would know whether they were enjoying themselves. You would not learn of minor occurrences (two people attacked during a robbery, three people dying in an accident, five people dying of natural causes, and so on).

As an action, you can learn the location and status of one creature you name, if that creature is within the settlement. At the time of this attempt, you must have touched that creature or be touching something belonging to them. Your awareness of their location is incredibly accurate, and includes an address, building name, business name, or some other description that leaves no doubt as to where the creature is; only a *mind blank* or similarly powerful magic thwarts this awareness.

Once you have located a creature with this spell, you can send a short message to them and get a reply (as if using *sending*). You can use this aspect of *lord of the city* up to twenty times per casting.

You can cast this spell only within a settlement that is home to at least one hundred people. The area must be considered a city, town, village, hamlet, or similar community. You cannot, for example, define one hundred farmers living across hundreds of acres as a "settlement."

Looking for spell components? Try Tess' Cauldron on Vock Row (Dweomer Street). Tess Essani has an excellent selection of material components.

Tess' Cauldron, page 313

MONTH OF VALLIS

7th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 day
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Thirty days

You gain access to the secret thirteenth month, known only to a precious few. This month, called the month of Vallis, is named after the secret moon of magic that once looked down invisibly from the skies above the world, and that may one day return. Vallis falls between the months of Yearsend and Newyear, but it passes unknown by most people. Only by means of this spell can you experience the extra thirteenth month, and then only under special circumstances.

Vallis, page 42

It is said that a soul rider (page 455) can be born only if conceived during the month of Vallis.

You must cast the spell on Yearsend Day within a sealed chamber no larger than 1,300 square feet. You and your familiar (if you have one) are the only creatures that can be in the chamber during the casting or the spell fails; the only exception is if multiple people all cast the spell within the same chamber.

During the month—the spell's thirty-day duration—you cannot leave the sealed chamber or interact with anyone outside it in any way. Trying to leave the chamber sends you into a coma until the month ends (because you won't be able to eat or drink, this can be dangerous if it happens early enough in the month). You can use the time to rest, study, research, craft magic items, or perform similar actions. However, all materials you need must be on hand when the spell is cast. When looking out a window from the sealed chamber, you see the normal surroundings, as well as regular night and day cycles, but no other living creatures of any kind. Time truly does pass for you, so you had better have a month's supply of food and water on hand, or you may starve to death.

You can cast spells during the *month of Vallis*, but they generally won't work if their effects extend outside the sealed chamber. For example, casting *locate creature* or *scrying* to find or observe another creature won't work, but a general divination like *commune* or *legend lore* will.

At the end of the month, the spell ends and you reenter normal time on Newyear's Day. However, there is a 25 percent chance that you experience an erratic existence on Newyear's Day, fading out and "losing time" 1d3 times during the day, each occurrence lasting 1d4 hours.

It is a subtle but important distinction that this is not a purely artificial magical effect like *time stop*. Vallis is a real month, but most people do not experience it. During the secret thirteenth month, time has not stopped flowing, but rather you are experiencing what most people do not. You age a month during Vallis, spell durations proceed normally, and so on.

PEER INTO THE FUTURE

3rd-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (1,000 gp worth of incense, herbs, and holy water)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You experience a vision of something you will be doing at some point in the future, anywhere from seven to seventeen days from now. The exact point in time is up to the GM. You experience this vision from your future self's senses (rather than viewing the scene from outside your body), and it occurs in real time—one minute passing in the vision requires you to watch it for one minute in the present. You have no control over your future self's actions in the vision. The events you see are based on the possibilities available before you cast *peer into the future*; the knowledge you gain from the spell may change what the future brings.

The spell has enough power to ensure that the future period viewed is one of some importance to you. You will not, for example, view a time while you are asleep, eating a simple meal, or the like. You will view a battle, an important conversation or confrontation, or a similar moment. The GM remains in full control of the particulars.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the maximum possible time into the future you may see increases by four days for each slot level above 3rd. For example, by using a 4th-level spell slot, the vision might be of events anywhere from seven to twenty-one days from the present.

REPAIR DEVICE

3rd-level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You touch one broken or disabled device and restore it to full working condition, assuming that at least 80 percent of the device is still present. The device may still need fuel or ammunition.

If a device is broken due to hit point damage rather than neglect or wear, *repair device* restores hit points equal to 3d8 + your

spellcasting modifier, similar to a *cure wounds* spell cast with a 3rd-level spell slot.

This spell does not work on chaositech.

SENSE SPELL

Divination cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self (10-foot-radius sphere)
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You specify one spell at the time of casting; it must not have a duration of "instantaneous." The spell must be on your spell list, and you must be of a high-enough level to cast it. If the specified spell is in effect within the area, you become aware of it. You gain no other information—you don't know the caster, caster level, remaining duration, or even the number of such spells in the area.

Spells whose effects confuse or block divinations (such as *nondetection*) automatically foil this cantrip, and therefore cannot be detected with it. If a creature has a spell on it that changes or conceals its appearance (such as *disguise self*) and that spell is the one you specified, the creature can make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC to prevent the cantrip from detecting their spell.

SHIELD OF LIGHT

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 bonus action
Range: Self (30-foot-radius sphere)
Components: V, S, M (a small parchment with a bit of holy text written on it)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create a glowing shield of brilliant daylight that you wield as you would a normal shield (you cannot wield a normal shield and this spell shield at the same time). The shield counts as a divine focus, fills a 30-foot radius with bright light, and sheds dim light for an additional 30 feet. If any of this spell's area overlaps with an area of darkness created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell that created the darkness is dispelled.

Like a physical shield, the shield of light grants you +2 to your AC for the duration. Undead creatures have disadvantage on attacks against you.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, an undead creature that strikes you in melee takes 1d6 radiant damage for each slot level above 3rd (1d6 radiant damage for a 4th-level slot, 2d6 for a 5th-level slot, and so on).

SIPHON

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You touch a chaos storage cube and a chaositech device, transferring the raw chaos within the cube into the device, refueling and restoring it. The spell allows you to safely touch both items for this purpose. Once you cast the spell, the device is fully charged. There is a 10 percent chance that the storage cube is now empty, at which point it collapses into a corrosive puddle (equivalent to a spilled flask of acid). There is a 25 percent chance that the collapse of the cube draws the attention of a chaos-inclined creature, which arrives within a few minutes; the creature is not predisposed to be either hostile or friendly.

Chaos storage cube, page 535

A spellcaster working with chaositech will find the siphon *spell to be a most valuable asset.*

SUNFIRE TOMB

9th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a vellum depiction or a carved statuette in the likeness of the target, and a special component that varies according to the version of the spell you choose, worth at least 500 gp per Hit Die of the target)
Duration: Until dispelled

This variant of the *imprisonment* spell only lets you choose this specific form of imprisonment:

Sunfire Entombment: The target is entombed within the sun in a sphere of magical force that is just large enough to contain the target. Nothing can pass through the sphere, nor can any creature teleport or use planar travel to get into or out of it. The creature is painfully aware of the heat and light around them—those sensations are all they experience while entombed in the sun. This spell is often used against creatures such as dark elves, vampires, or other beings that hate the light of day, as a fitting punishment for their misdeeds.

The special component for this form of imprisonment is a holy symbol or clear crystal that has been exposed to full daylight for at least eight continuous hours within the past week.

Arcane spellcasters of Praemal who learn the imprisonment *spell may choose* ***sunfire entombment*** *as the form of imprisonment when they cast the spell.*

House Vladaam, page 100

WAVES OF LIGHT

4th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a small parchment with a bit of holy text written on it)
Duration: Instantaneous

Waves of holy energy emanate from you. Choose any number of creatures you can see within range. Targeted evil creatures take 5d6 radiant damage, or half that amount with a successful Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, an evil creature also suffers an effect based on its current hit points:

- 50 hit points or fewer: stunned for one round
- 40 hit points or fewer: stunned for 1d4 rounds
- 30 hit points or fewer: stunned for 1d6 + 1 rounds
- 20 hit points or fewer: knocked unconscious for 1d6 minutes

The spell has no effect on non-evil creatures.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 4th.

WELLSPRING OF SOUL'S LIGHT

5th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You call upon the honored dead who have fallen in the service of good to come forth and aid the cause once again. You create a flash of holy light in an unoccupied space you can see within range, and a paladin appears in that space. The paladin disappears when they drop to 0 hit points or when the spell ends.

The summoned paladin has holy champion stats, page 610

The paladin is friendly to you and your companions for the duration. Roll initiative for the paladin, who has their own turns. They obey any verbal commands that you issue (no action required by you) as long as the commands don't violate their alignment. If you don't issue any commands to the paladin, they defend themselves from hostile creatures but otherwise take no actions.

Most religions that are able to have paladins keep records of notable deceased paladins who can be summoned by this spell.

You cannot cast this spell if you have an evil alignment.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using certain higher-level spell slots, more paladins appear: two with a 7th-level slot, or three with a 9th-level slot.

WILL OF THE GODS

3rd-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You ask one question regarding a choice or action that you (or a specifically named other creature) might take in the next week and learn whether your deity would like to see it done. The answer is always yes or no (or no answer), so you must phrase your question appropriately. For example, you could ask, "Is it your will that I launch an attack on House Vladaam?" or "Would it honor you if Warall the ranger broke the Tablets of Understanding?" or "Shall I build your new temple on the east side of the Street of a Million Gods?" Vague questions such as "Should I try harder to find the lost scroll?" or "Do you like it when we occasionally spare your enemies?" receive no answer.

There is only a small chance that your deity cares whether or not the action takes place. If the deity has no opinion, this spell offers no guidance. The percentage chance of gaining an answer is equal to the level (if a PC) or CR (if an NPC or monster) of the creature taking the potential action + one or more of these modifiers:

Modifier	The Action . . .
+5%	directly affects a cleric (level 1–5) of the deity
+10%	directly affects a cleric (level 6–12) of the deity
+15%	directly affects a cleric (level 13+) of the deity
+15%	significantly affects a temple of the deity
+10%	significantly affects a temple of an enemy deity
+10%	directly affects a cleric (level 10+) of an enemy deity
+10%	directly affects more than one hundred intelligent creatures important to the deity
+10%	directly affects a magic item, artifact, or other object important to the deity

GMs should understand that *will of the gods* differs from *commune* in that it asks questions of opinion, not of fact. A deity may not be all-knowing and may encourage an action that does not work out for the best. A deity might be biased and want to see an action undertaken

that helps itself but not the mortal undertaking the action.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the percentage chance of getting an answer increases by +10%.

MAGIC ITEMS

Just as Ptolus has an amazing variety of spells, there are many magic items found in the city. Some of these items are unique or in the hands of powerful individuals, but some are as common as a *potion of greater healing* or a *bag of holding*.

The following magic items are presented in alphabetical order. Each item's description gives its name, category (armor, ring, and so on), rarity, and magical properties.

INCOMPATIBLE ATTUNEMENT

Some of the items in this book function similarly to or exactly like another kind of magic item (such as a ring that has the abilities of a *cloak of protection*). For the purpose of attunement, these items count as the item it is similar to, so a character could not attune themselves to a *cloak of protection* and a ring that has the same powers as the cloak.

BUYING AND SELLING POTIONS AND SCROLLS

In Ptolus, the influx of potions and scrolls brought up from the Dungeon means there is a thriving economy of buying and selling single-use magic items. Delvers looking for a particular low-level scroll or potion can usually find them for a few hundred gold or less in shops such as Myraeth's Oddities (both potions and scrolls), Potions and Elixirs (potions only), St. Gustav's Chapel (mainly for various kinds of healing potions and remedies), and the Arcane Scribe table in the Undercity Market (arcane scrolls only). Of course, if those vendors don't have a particular scroll or potion, the Dreaming Apothecary can craft items to order.

Typical prices for potions and scrolls are as follows. Vendors with a physical location are generally willing to buy a potion or scroll at half the listed price.

Spell Level	Potion	Scroll
Cantrip	25 gp	13 gp
1st	50 gp	25 gp
2nd	300 gp	150 gp
3rd	750 gp	375 gp

AMALGAM ARMOR OF THE IRON MAGE

Armor (plate), artifact (requires attunement by a sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

One of the greatest artifacts in Ptolus, this suit of armor was assembled from pieces of at least a dozen other suits, all near artifact level in power themselves. Somehow, the Iron Mage fashioned from them a suit that took on the magical qualities of all the armors represented. You are proficient in this armor, it has no Strength requirement, and it doesn't give disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. It grants you the following abilities.

- You gain a +5 bonus to AC.
- Any critical hit against you becomes a normal hit.
- Resistance to acid, cold, electricity, fire, thunder, and nonmagical damage.
- Advantage on all saving throws.
- No damage from *magic missile* (as if protected by *shield*).
- Ignore the somatic components of your arcane spells.

AMULET OF THE ARCANIST

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

This silver medallion bears several arcane magical symbols. Your spell save DC and spell attack bonus each increase by 2.

ANARCHIC WEAPON

Weapon (any weapon), rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. When you hit a lawful celestial, dragon, fiend, or undead with it, that creature takes an extra 2d6 psychic damage. (At the GM's discretion, certain particularly lawful creatures such as paladins might take this damage even if they have a different creature type.)

ANKH OF JUSTICE

Weapon (greatsword), rare (requires attunement by a devout worshiper of Lothian)

This *axiomatic greatsword* has an ankh-shaped hilt. If you are slain while holding the sword, it brings you back to life (if you are willing) with a *true resurrection* spell; this happens immediately on the same round you are killed. Once the sword raises you from the dead, it can never do so again.

Potions could become a thing of the past if the Shuul's pills (page 526) catch on in Ptolus.

Ptolus is a high-magic setting where magic items are more common than in a typical campaign. To represent this, the GM may want to allow PCs to attune to one additional magic item at 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th level.

Anarchic weapons are usually crafted with icons, runes, or symbols from a chaotic-aligned deity, chaos cult, or other organization that actively wants to promote chaos and destruction.

Myraeth's Oddities, page 199

Potions and Elixirs, page 209 and 397

St. Gustav's Chapel, page 206

Arcane Scribe, page 395

Dreaming Apothecary, page 116

In Ptolus, merchants who sell magic items typically have +1 weapons on sale for two or three thousand gold, +1 armor on sale for about half that amount, and individual +1 arrows or other ammunition for 50 gp each. An uncommon item like boots of elvenkind or a cloak of protection sells for about the same as a +1 weapon.

Some items, such as Araki's runeplates, are actually unique—only one of them is known to exist. These items are not artifacts, but finding (or creating) another item like it would be very unusual.

ARAKI'S RUNEPLATES

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

In his research into Palastani magic, Araki Chipestiro discovered the tradition of creating small magical ceramic plates about 1 inch long and half an inch wide. You wear these by tying them individually to your fingers, one on each segment, so that each finger has three and there are thirty worn, forming something similar to a set of finger-gauntlets. The runeplates make you a better arcane spellcaster. As a bonus action, you can activate either of the following effects.

- For one spell you cast this round, your spell save DC and spell attack bonus each increase by 1. Once you use this ability, you can't do so again until the next dawn.
- For one spell you cast this round, increase its spell slot level by 1. Once you use this ability, you can't do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

Shadow of Ptolus, page 304

Kadmiel, page 303

A greater shadow is a more powerful version of a typical shadow. It has shadow stats, with 49 (9d8 + 9) hit points; advantage on attacks, saves, and checks; and is challenge rating 4.

AXIOMATIC WEAPON

Weapon (any weapon), rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. When you hit a chaotic aberration, dragon, fiend, or undead with it, that creature takes an extra 2d6 force damage. (At the GM's discretion, certain especially chaotic creatures might take this damage even if they have a different creature type.)

Axiomatic weapons are usually crafted with icons, runes, or symbols from a lawful-aligned deity, such as Lothian.

The famous blade known as Sunstrike, *believed to be lost in Dwarvenhearth, is an* axiomatic longsword *that also inflicts its force damage to dark elves.*

BOX OF SHADOWS

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

This major artifact is inherently evil and is said to have been created by the same being who created the *shadowstaff*. It draws its power from a location beneath the Imperial University called the Tenebrous Pit, created by a lieutenant of Ghul's while the Utterdark held sway over the land. The box appears to be silver but is truly a thin, strong material called ithilnaur. Painted black, it measures about 1 foot long, 8 inches wide, and 6 inches tall, and it weighs 5 pounds. It can be locked, and the lock cannot be opened except with the proper key (it cannot be picked or opened by magic).

If opened, the box emanates a continual *hallow* spell (of unholy power) that moves with it.

The box has ten charges. It regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn and dusk. As your action, you can expend one or more charges and use one of the following abilities.

- (1 charge) Infuse yourself with shadows for as long as you remain touching the box. This gives you advantage and double your proficiency bonus on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. While you are infused with shadows, you can try to hide in plain sight by pressing yourself up against a solid surface, such as a tree or wall, that is at least as tall and wide as you are. When shadow-infused, you automatically draw power from magical areas of shadow; thus, while you are in the Shadow of Ptolus, within 100 feet of the Tenebrous Pit, or holding the *shadowstaff*, your hit point maximum increases by 2d10, and you gain the same number of hit points.
- (1 charge) Teleport to the Shadow of Ptolus or Kadmiel, the Shade Tower.
- (2 charges) Travel through the Shadow of Ptolus at a walking speed of 300 feet, emerging back into Praemal after an hour (or earlier, if you choose).
- (2 charges) Summon 3d6 shadows or 1d6 greater shadows. These shadows understand and obey your commands, and remain for ten rounds.
- (3 charges) *Conjure celestial*, except it summons a fiend that is a semi-real illusion infused with shadow.
- (3 charges) *Conjure elemental*, except the elemental is a semi-real illusion infused with shadow.

Semi-real illusions created by the *box of shadows* have disadvantage on their attacks, and opponents have advantage on their saves against them. The first time an opponent sees or interacts with the semi-real illusion, they can attempt an Intelligence (Investigation) check to recognize that it is partially illusory. A creature that recognizes this has resistance to the illusion's attacks and the illusion has vulnerability to the creature's attacks.

If you are infused with shadows, you can choose to sacrifice some of your own soul into the box. This permanently reduces your hit point maximum by 10, a loss that cannot be restored. In exchange, when touching the box you have displacement (as a *cloak of displacement*) and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons. Once you make this sacrifice, this benefit automatically returns every time you use the box to infuse yourself with shadow.

Shadowstaff, page 642

Tenebrous Pit, page 300

Ithilnaur, page 647

BROOCH OF KHATRU

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

This brooch has the shape of the Khatru family crest. You are proficient in all weapons and add +3 to your weapon damage rolls. Your allies, minions, and others who serve you gain the effects of a *bless* spell when they are within 100 feet of you and can see you.

House Khatru, page 96

CASK OF FROZEN DREAMS

Wondrous item, artifact

An ancient elven artifact, the cask is an ithilnaur box 2 feet long and 1 foot wide and tall with elaborate scrollwork and filigree. Within lies the stored remains of every dream that has ever been dreamed and every memory that anyone has ever had. When used together with the Dreaming Stone, it has virtually all information. That said, the information is almost impossible to access easily. Without divine help, or the help of the Dream King in Dreta Phantas, it would take many years to sift through all the dreams and memories to find the information one seeks.

DEMON GUN

Weapon (dragon pistol), very rare

Rather than a dragon's head, this *+1 dragon pistol* sports a demon's head at the end of its barrel. The gun itself is a demon bound magically into the form of a gun. It produces its own ammunition internally, so it never needs reloading. If you can make more than one attack on your turn, you can use this weapon to make multiple attacks on your turn.

As your bonus action, you can command the gun to fire an unholy bullet. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this bullet. If you hit a celestial or a good dragon with it, that creature takes an extra 2d6 necrotic damage. (At the GM's discretion, certain particularly good creatures such as paladins might take this damage even if they are not celestials or dragons.) Once you use this property, you cannot do so again until you've finished a short rest. After creating a second unholy bullet in a day, you cannot do so again until you've finished a long rest.

DEMON-SEALED BOX

Wondrous item, legendary

Literally a container sealed with a demon, this chest appears to be a hideously decorated silver box 5 feet long, 3 feet tall, and 3 feet wide. A nalfeshnee demon is bound into the indestructible box to form the seal. It can be opened only by a willing demon, by a mortal using a *wish* on Godsday, or with a *wish* cast by a 20th-level spellcaster.

Currently, the demon-sealed box *is hidden away by Lilith (page 110) and contains the* cask of frozen dreams.

DEMONSKULL TALISMAN

Wondrous item, legendary

This small, angular, bestial skull appears to be the actual shrunken skull of a fiendish creature, with horns and sharp teeth. It is the unholy symbol of Ochremeshk, the Demon God. The talisman is a gift from Ochremeshk himself, giving you advantage on any one roll of your choice. When you use this property, you can also roll a d10 and add the number rolled to either of your d20 rolls. After one use, the talisman turns to powder.

Demonskull talismans *cannot be made by mortals, only by Ochremeshk himself.*

Dreaming Stone, page 423

Dream King and Dreta Phantas, page 425

DISPELLING CHARM

Wondrous item, very rare

This ceramic figurine resembles some kind of humanoid. When broken (usually by throwing it at an area or object bearing a spell), it releases a burst of abjurative energy on whatever it is touching, which functions as a *dispel magic* spell using an 8th-level spell slot. This automatically ends any spell of 8th level or lower on the target, and against each 9th-level spell on the target you can attempt an Intelligence check with a +5 bonus against DC 19. On a successful check, the spell ends.

Dispelling charms *are custom magic items created for master thief Sobac Redwand (page 212) by a friend in the Inverted Pyramid.*

DREAD CLOAK

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

This evil artifact is as black as night and lined with black felt. You gain a +5 bonus to AC and saving throws while you wear this cloak, and are protected by *nondetection*. It has the following abilities, each requiring your action to activate.

- Displacement as a *cloak of displacement*, lasting ten minutes. You can't use this property again until you finish a long rest.
- Invisibility as the *invisibility* spell, lasting ten minutes. You can't use this property again until you finish a long rest.
- Teleportation as the *teleport* spell, but affecting only you and your equipment. You can't use this property again until seven days have passed.

To attune yourself to the *Dread Cloak*, you must bathe it in the blood of a human and eat that human's heart. If you fail to repeat this process every seven days, you lose your attunement to the cloak.

The Dread Cloak *currently belongs to Menon Balacazar (page 103).*

THE DREAD ONE'S STAFF

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement by an evil spellcaster)

Black adamantine, page 646
Liquid shadow, page 647

This shriveled, ebony wood staff is bound at both ends with black adamantine. Runes of liquid shadow cover its surface, oozing and moving constantly. It is a *+5 quarterstaff* that inflicts an extra 1d6 necrotic damage to a living target. It also is an *unholy* weapon; when you hit a celestial or a good dragon with it, that creature takes an extra 2d6 necrotic damage. (At the GM's discretion, certain particularly good creatures such as paladins might take this damage even if they are not celestials or dragons.)

Unholy weapon, page 645

As your action, you may cast any one of these spells from it, using your spell save DC: *conjure celestial* (except a fiend instead of a celestial), *create undead* (8th-level slot), *disintegrate*, *divine word*, or *finger of death*.

When you are touching the staff, it emits an aura of faint shadows in a 30-foot radius around you (this doesn't affect the illumination level). Your allies and minions are limned with faint shadows; they have advantage on saving throws, and other creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against them. If a celestial or good dragon strikes a shadow-limned creature, the attacker must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be blinded for one minute.

Sentience. The staff is a sentient neutral evil weapon with an Intelligence of 14, a Wisdom of 18, and a Charisma of 18. It can see, hear, and perceive with blindsense and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet. It can speak and communicate telepathically.

Personality. Like its former master, the staff wants to corrupt goodness into evil, enslave and conquer whatever enemies it can, and destroy or imprison those it cannot.

Hadrien Runihan, page 185

FLAYER PISTOL

Weapon (dragon pistol), very rare

Rather than a dragon's head, this *+1 dragon pistol* has a tentacled head at the end of its barrel. As your bonus action, you can command it to fire a psionic bullet that inflicts an additional 2d6 psychic damage. Once you use this property, you cannot do so again until you've finished a short rest.

FORSAKEN BODY PAINT

Wondrous item, rare

This clay jar contains a mixture of black and white paint. You can spend one minute applying the paint to yourself, either drawing symbols of death or making you look vaguely like a skeleton (black-painted flesh with white images of bones over it). The paint makes low-intelligence undead and undead that lack free will (such as skeletons and zombies) perceive you as not a foe, and they will not attack you. This effect ends as soon as you attack any undead creature.

When you are in the Necropolis or within 30 feet of an undead creature, your weapon attacks against living creatures add +1 necrotic damage.

The paint lasts for 1d4 days unless it is intentionally removed. Immersion in water for up to an hour won't wash it off, but longer periods of time tend to reduce the paint's duration.

GLOBE OF ACCORD

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This 4-inch glass sphere is often mistaken for a *crystal ball*. When you hold it and concentrate upon it, you know the identity of anyone else within 100 miles who is attuned to a *globe of accord* (but not their locations or any other details regarding them). As your action, you can attempt to initiate a verbal and visual conversation with another creature attuned to a globe. If they accept, you can communicate with them by looking and speaking through the globe. If they refuse, no connection happens. Communication can last as long as the parties are willing, conscious, and within range. Anyone near you can hear but not see who you are talking with. Spells and magical effects cannot be transmitted through a *globe of accord*. Magical barriers (such as a *wall of force*) may interfere with the globe's communication.

A creature with a globe of accord *who wants to avoid attempts to communicate with them can end their attunement to their globe.*

HADRIEN'S DAGGERWAND

Weapon (dagger), rare (requires attunement)

This thin *+1 dagger* is nearly a foot long and is shaped more like a sharp-tipped wand than a typical dagger. It has three charges. While holding it, you can use your bonus action to expend one charge to add 2d6 necrotic damage to a successful melee attack with it. The dagger also channels this energy into your hand, inflicting 2d6 necrotic damage to you (however, if you are undead, this heals you instead of harms you).

The wand regains three expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand loses its ability to add necrotic damage but can still be used as a *+1 dagger*.

HEADBAND OF REFLECTED ARROWS

Wondrous item, uncommon

This headband of woven gold threads bears small crossed arrow symbols all around the outside. The headband has three charges and regains three expended charges daily at dawn. As a reaction when hit with a ranged weapon attack (such as a throwing axe, arrow, or crossbow bolt), you can expend a charge and attempt to deflect or redirect the missile. When you do so, the damage you take from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + 5.

If you reduce the damage to 0, you can make a ranged attack with that weapon or piece of ammunition you just caught, as part of the same reaction. You make this attack with proficiency, regardless of your weapon proficiencies, using the attack bonus of the creature who attacked you with the missile, and the missile has a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 60 feet.

HOLY WEAPON

Weapon (any weapon), rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. When you hit a fiend or an undead with it, that creature takes an extra 2d6 radiant damage. (At the GM's discretion, certain especially evil creatures might take this damage even if they are not fiends or undead.)

Holy weapons are usually crafted with icons, runes, or symbols from a good-aligned deity, such as Lothian.

HORN OF BLOOD

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a vampire)

This ancient, massive horn is made of tarnished bronze with ivory inlay. If you are a vampire and you sound the horn, it produces a subsonic noise that summons 2d6 + 2 sahuagin that willingly serve you for one week. Sounding the horn gives you one level of exhaustion. Any creature other than a vampire who sounds the horn gains two levels of exhaustion.

The horn of blood *is a unique magic item.*

HUNGERSWORD

Weapon (greatsword), legendary (requires attunement)

This magic weapon is made of black adamantine with a bone hilt and pommel. You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. The sword has the following additional abilities.

- When you roll a 20 on the attack roll, the target takes an extra 10 necrotic damage and you heal 10 hit points. Neither of these effects happens if your target is a construct or undead.
- When you hit a celestial (or some other especially good mortal creature, such as a paladin or a devout cleric of a good deity), that creature takes an extra 2d10 necrotic damage.
- You can use the sword like a *rod of absorption*, but only to absorb good spells and spells from good spellcasters. There is no limit to how many spells the sword can absorb, but instead of converting stored energy into casting spells, as your bonus action you can use the absorbed spells to add +1 necrotic damage per level expended (maximum +10) to an attack with the sword.
- As your action you can use the magic of the sword to create a black, skull-shaped mark on the face, hand, or other prominent feature of any willing creature. You can't use this property again until you finish a long rest. A creature with the mark is protected as if carrying a *scarab of protection* (with unlimited charges). The creature gains the ability to launch a pale grey ray of energy (a ranged spell attack). A creature struck by this ray must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 10d6 + 40 necrotic damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, it dies. On a successful save, the target gains two levels of exhaustion. Once the marked creature uses this ray, it loses the mark granted by the *hungersword*.

It is said that six of these swords exist.

IDOL OF RAVVAN

Wondrous item, artifact

This artifact maintains an open gateway leading to the extradimensional hell that the minor god/demon prince Ravvan the Beast God rules over. Millennia ago, Ravvan sent this idol to the world to create a conduit. However, because of Praemal's closed nature, the gate is only one way. Creatures, things, and energies can come here, but they can never leave. As a god of savagery and beasts, much of what Ravvan sends are foul energies that corrupt and tempt creatures toward their more bestial natures.

If the idol is destroyed, all the creatures who have passed through its gate fall into a coma for 1d4 days.

In the adventure "Shilukar's Lair" (page 577), Ravvan has sent a number of his gnoll followers and two of his demonic offspring to aid the dark elf Shilukar in his efforts.

ILLITOR

Wondrous item, legendary

An *illitor* is a complex item encompassing a golden belt, armband, and bracelet, each connected to the others by thin gold chains. Seven open sockets on various parts of the item are meant to hold gems. Wearing the *illitor* grants you several abilities.

If you come within 25 feet of one of the seven invisible, intangible golden pergolas orbiting Jabel Shammar, the pergola becomes visible and tangible to anyone within 25 feet of it.

It allows you to see and interact with the invisible chime at the center of the pergola. (The chime remains invisible and intangible for everyone else.)

If you use the *illitor* to play the chime, it opens a portal called a *colordoor node* that allows access to the Ethereal Plane and the Seven Jewels of Parnaith.

Seven Jewels of Parnaith, page 485

Travelers through the Jewels of Parnaith can obtain enlightenment, which creates gems meant to be placed within the illitor.

INVISIBLE CHARM

Wondrous item, rare

When you wear this invisible brooch, it projects above your head an upside-down floating pyramid symbol, which only someone wearing another *invisible charm* can see. The Inverted Pyramid can deactivate any *invisible charm* remotely, should one ever be stolen or a member die.

Membership in the Inverted Pyramid is usually considered secret, although many members—particularly the masters—have allowed their association with the group to become known. Every member is given an invisible charm.

IRON MAGE'S RING OF WIZARDRY

Ring, artifact (requires attunement by a sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

You can use an action to speak the ring's command word and gain one spell slot each of levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 (if you are a warlock, you instead gain two warlock spell slots). Once you use the ring, it can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Korben's beastblade *was made specifically for Korben Trollone (page 335), but another competent crafter could make a similar item.*

JEVICCA'S ARM

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This red glass is sculpted to look like a human left arm and hand. Attuning to it requires you to be missing most or all of your left arm. When you attune to it, it attaches itself to whatever remains of your left arm. Removing it from you without your permission requires an opposed Strength check (you have advantage on this check).

The arm has five charges, and it regains 1d4 charges daily at dawn. Wearing the arm gives you the following abilities.

Deflect Missile. When you are hit by a ranged weapon attack, you can use your reaction to expend one charge and deflect or catch the missile. When you do so, the damage you take from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + your Dexterity modifier + 10. If you reduce the damage to 0, you can catch the missile if it is small enough for you to hold in one hand and the arm's hand is free.

Enhanced Physique. Your Strength and Dexterity scores are 17 while you wear the arm. If your ability score is already 17 or higher without the arm, it doesn't improve that ability score.

Grapple. You gain the Grappler feat.

Stunning Strike. When you hit with the arm, you can expend a charge to attempt a stunning strike. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 17) or be stunned until the end of your next turn.

Unarmed Strike. You can use the arm to make an unarmed strike, inflicting 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

The Sunslayer being built in Jabel Shammar (page 474) would not have required the wood and iron scaffolding described here. It would have used Jabel Shammar itself as a power source, had it ever been finished.

The creator and bearer of Jevicca's arm *is, of course, Jevicca Nor of the Inverted Pyramid (page 114).*

Other magical prosthetic limbs exist, but Jevicca's arm *is unique, and she won't reveal how she made it, lest her enemies use that knowledge against her.*

KORBEN'S BEASTBLADE

Weapon (longsword), uncommon

This *+1 longsword* has a brass lion's head in the pommel. You can give a reasonable mental suggestion to a beast within 30 feet, and if it fails a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, it obeys that suggestion to the best of its ability. This is similar to a *suggestion* spell, but the command is purely mental and works only on beasts. Once you have used this property, you cannot do so again until you have finished a long rest.

LANCE OF ENDLESS NIGHT

Wondrous item, artifact

This artifact comes in two parts. The first is gigantic and resembles a wooden and iron scaffolding. Once assembled, it forms a massive cube 100 feet on a side. This structure must be built around a major energy source. After twenty-four hours, the energy fully charges the artifact, and the second part of the device comes into play. An iron lance, 12 feet long, fits into a conduit built into the scaffold, so that all of the absorbed energy transfers into the weapon.

The lance has no magical powers as a weapon. In fact, it doesn't even make a very good lance. When charged with energy and pointed at the sun, however, it emits a ray of darkness that stabs at the very heart of the fiery orb. It slays the sun.

Obviously, no one has ever successfully employed this horrible weapon. Without the sun, the world would quickly devolve into a cold, lifeless place of total darkness where only undead and similar creatures could survive.

LENSES OF THE UTTERDARK

Wondrous item, rare

These lenses fit over your eyes. You can see in absolutely any darkness, even magical darkness and the Utterdark, up to a range of 60 feet. However, you are blind in the presence of any light.

MAGNETIC DRAGON PISTOL

Weapon (dragon pistol), uncommon

Rounds fired from this weapon gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls and inflict an additional 1d6 piercing damage against foes that are wearing metal armor or are made out of a significant amount of metal (such as an iron golem).

MALEFIC MASK

Wondrous item, rare

Eslathagos Malkith created a handful of these featureless magical masks that allow wearers to bypass certain guardians, traps, and wards in Jabel Shammar (similar to a key or magical password). The mask is made of smooth, almost reflective obsidian. When worn, it is completely transparent to you. It has no powers other than how it makes the traps and guardians react to your presence.

MARA'S MACE

Weapon (mace), rare (requires attunement by a divine spellcaster of Lothian)

This *+1 mace* has a Lothianite ankh prominently inscribed on its handle. It increases your spell save DC and spell attack bonus by 2.

MASK OF THE SKULL

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This ivory mask has been fashioned into the likeness of a human skull. You can use an action to make it fly from your face, traveling up to 60 feet to a creature you can see. The targeted creature must make a DC 15 Constitution save; it takes 7d8 + 30 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. After this magical attack, the mask flies back to you and places itself on your face.

Once the mask has made this attack, you can't use it again until the next dawn.

ORRERY

Wondrous item, artifact

Seven golden pergolas float in orbit around Jabel Shammar, invisibly and intangibly. Each of these golden, open structures is approximately 10 feet across and 15 feet high. The orbits are wild and complex (but not random or erratic) and stretch out to almost a mile from the Spire. Because the pergolas are both invisible and intangible, finding one is virtually impossible without a little help. The *orrery* is a magical device that shows the complex orbital paths of the pergolas at any given time, thus predicting their relative positions with great accuracy.

Utterdark, page 453

Pergola: an archway in a garden or park consisting of a framework covered with trained climbing or trailing plants.

The pergolas are the means to reach the Seven Jewels of Parnaith (page 485)—hidden islands in the Ethereal Plane with an ancient tie to Jabel Shammar.

PARNAITH'S HEART

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

Even as Danar changed into the Dread One, his wife Parnaith used her own formidable power to plant a seed of possible salvation and redemption in Jabel Shammar before she fled for her life. The seed, a magic artifact called *Parnaith's Heart*, looks like a golden orb 3 inches across, set with various gemstones. It feels warm to the touch and smells of lilac.

If you hold the heart and use your action to concentrate on it, it releases a pulse of energy out to a range of 20 feet. All creatures in the area are affected by *heal*, lose 10 corruption points, and (if evil) must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or change their alignment from evil to neutral (this doesn't affect the lawful or chaotic aspect of a creature's alignment). The heart can be activated two times per century. Activating it the first time requires you to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw; for the second activation, the DC increases to 20.

Jabel Shammar, page 465

Corruption points, page 468

PARNAITH'S MIRRORED SPHERE

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

This silver orb 6 inches across floats in the air. It follows you around at head height and will not allow itself to be grabbed (AC 30). It is indestructible. If taken to the Jewels of Parnaith, it allows you and those accompanying you to pass through the jewels as if you had achieved enlightenment.

The sphere also allows you to pass through the Entropy Sphere and go to Jabel Shammar.

Entropy Sphere, page 463

PLATINUM CESTUS

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

King Stardelve died using the Platinum Cestus, calling upon one too many wishes in his valiant battle against Ghul (see page 83).

This single platinum gauntlet shimmers with energy. It is a powerful artifact that draws upon your personal power—the more powerful you are, the greater the artifact's might.

While wearing this cestus, your Strength and Charisma scores change, depending on your level. It has no effect on your ability scores if your Strength or Charisma without it is equal to or greater than the gauntlet's score.

Level	Strength and Charisma
1–5	15
6–10	17
11–15	19
16–20	21

The cestus has a number of charges equal to your level, and it regains 2d10 charges daily at dawn. You can cast the following spells from the cestus, expending the necessary number of charges: *disintegrate* (6 charges), *divine favor* (1 charge), *flesh to stone* (6 charges), *greater restoration* (removes petrification only, 5 charges), *heal* (6 charges), *levitate* (2 charges), *move earth* (6 charges), *regenerate* (7 charges), *shield* (1 charge), *true strike* (1 charge), and *wall of stone* (5 charges).

A nightcrawler is a monstrous creature resembling a purple worm, except it is undead, is immune to necrotic and poison damage, and is immune to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

You can use the cestus to cast *wish*, but this permanently reduces your hit point maximum by 5d6, a loss that cannot be restored.

QUAAN BONE RING

Ring, common (requires attunement)

Quaan, page 125

This ring is made of bone. Once you put it on, it can't be removed (by you or anyone) unless you are dead. Anyone at the Font of the Pact (a fountain of onyx and gold at the center of the half-world known as the Quaan) who knows your name can concentrate and know your location. Virtually all Pactlords and all Pactslaves wear these rings.

RADIANT HOLY SYMBOL OF GAEN

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement by a worshipper of Gaen)

Gaen, page 72

Your Wisdom score is 19 while you wear this holy symbol. It has no effect on you if your Wisdom is 19 or higher without it. You can create light at will (DC 13).

You can create a ray of concentrated light and unleash it at a target within range. When you make the spell's attack, you do so with an attack bonus of +5. This ability can't be used again until you finish a short or long rest.

RAPID-FIRE DRAGON PISTOL

Weapon (dragon pistol), rare

You can load this dragon pistol with up to six rounds of ammunition, allowing you to fire it up to six times without reloading. If you can make more than one attack on your turn, you can use this weapon to make multiple attacks on your turn.

SHADOWSTAFF

Staff, artifact (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This artifact is centuries old, weaved together from strands of pure shadow into a twisted staff of rigid but flexible material.

The staff automatically makes you slightly shadowy and incorporeal, granting you a +2 bonus on AC and saving throws. In bright light (such as sunlight) or in darkness, you gain disadvantage on attack rolls, saves, and checks.

The staff has ten charges. It regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn and dusk. As your action, you can expend one or more charges and use one of the following abilities.

- (1 charge) Summon 2d4 shadows. These shadows have advantage on Wisdom saving throws against effects that turn undead. They understand and obey your commands, and remain for ten rounds.
- (7 charges) Summon an undead nightcrawler that understands and obeys your commands and remains for ten rounds. You can't use this property again until thirty days have passed.
- (1 charge) Become a living shadow, with all of the effects of a *gaseous form* spell.
- (2 charges) Create a ray of cold energy that strikes one target within 100 feet. The ray uses your spell save DC. The target takes 10d6 cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

SHEVA'S SWORD

Weapon (greatsword), legendary (requires attunement)

This +3 *greatsword* has all the abilities of a *hungersword*. In addition, it gives you the following abilities.

- Your Strength score is 19 while you carry or wield the sword. This has no effect on you if your Strength is 19 or higher without it.
- You can cast *haste* on yourself. Once you use this ability, you can't do so again until the next dawn.
- As with a *defender* weapon, the first time you attack with the sword on each of your turns, you can transfer some or all of the sword's bonus to your Armor Class, instead of using the bonus on any attacks that turn.

SIGNET OF SHALLAMOTH KINDRED

Wondrous item, artifact

This strange device is normally 4 feet across and 1 foot thick, shaped like a three-pronged cross of dull blackness.

It constantly emits *darkness* in a 20-foot radius. Anything that enters the darkness is instantly transported to the Tourbillion, a teleportation network in the Throne of Darkness (a Galchutt stronghold deep beneath the surface).

If you know the signet's name and can see it, you can command it to shrink down to the size and weight of an amulet or return to its normal size. The signet doesn't emit *darkness* in its amulet form.

SILENT AMMUNITION

Weapon (bullet), uncommon

This ammunition makes no noise when it is fired.

SILENT FIREARM

Weapon (dragon pistol or dragon rifle), uncommon

This firearm makes no noise when it fires.

SKULLRING

Ring, uncommon

These iron rings were developed by the Forsaken. Each ring bears a small skull device. You gain advantage on Wisdom saving throws against effects that turn undead.

SONG OF DEATH

Weapon (dragon rifle), rare

When you hit with an attack from this +1 *repeater rifle*, the target takes an extra 1d6 thunder damage.

As your action, you can use the rifle to fire an invisible ray of concentrated sound that inflicts 3d6 thunder damage. Once you use this property, you cannot do so again until you've finished a short rest.

STAVES OF GHUL

Weapon (battlestaves), artifact (requires attunement by creature of non-good alignment)

While he was alive, Ghul wielded two short battlestaves (maces) imbued with great power. When holding both of them, you gain the use of the following abilities.

- You gain a +2 bonus to AC and saves.
- When you hit with a melee attack using a battlestaff, the target takes an additional 1d8 necrotic damage.
- You can use your action to cast one of the following spells (DC 17): *disintegrate*, *fear*, or *wall of force*. The battlestaves maintain concentration on the *fear* or *wall of force* spell so you don't have to.
- You can use your action to cast a *wish* spell. Once you use this property, you cannot use it again until seven days have passed.

Sentience. The battlestaves are sentient chaotic evil weapons with an Intelligence of 10, a Wisdom of 9, and a Charisma of 13. They have hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet. They communicate empathically, urging you to commit acts of violence, cruelty, and domination.

Personality. The battlestaves function as one mind shared by two separate objects. Their goal is to promote evil, dominate others, and accumulate power. They are aggressive and cruel. If their bearer's *wish* tries to accomplish something kind or benevolent, they may withhold this power or weave in a detrimental effect.

STUNNING BOLT

Weapon (crossbow bolt), rare

The Dreaming Apothecary makes these +1 *crossbow bolts* specifically for the Sisterhood of Silence and by agreement will not sell them to anyone else. Any humanoid struck by one of these bolts must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 15) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. Once the bolt hits a target, it is no longer magical.

Sheva's sword *is actually a unique, magically disguised and altered* hungersword, *changed to obfuscate its true nature and keep it away from House Vladaam.*

Hungersword, *page 639*

Repeater rifle, page 523

Tourbillion, page 422

SUNLESS SALVE

Wondrous item, rare

As an action, one dose of this ointment can be applied to the flesh of a vampire (or other corporeal creature harmed by sunlight). The creature that receives it becomes immune to harmful effects of the sun or sunlight (or magical effects that have enhanced effects because of that weakness) for twenty-four hours. For example, a vampire protected by the *sunless salve* could stand outdoors on a bright day and not suffer the effects of its sunlight hypersensitivity.

SWORD OF THE DRAGONKINGS

Weapon (longsword), artifact (requires attunement)

This artifact—a golden-hilted weapon with an indestructible ivory blade—was created by the Wizard-Priests of Ni-Gorth (see Chapter 5: History). It is a *+3 longsword* that scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20. Three times per day, you can enter a rage (like a barbarian) as a bonus action, with a rage damage bonus of +3. Created while Father Claw was still bound by the fabled dragon chain, this blade was believed to help eliminate all chromatic dragons from the world, ensuring that humans and metallic dragons could live in peace forevermore. Now it is the traditional weapon of the head of House Dallimothan, and has been for more than five millennia.

House Dallimothan, page 94

It is the normal practice of the Inverted Pyramid to deactivate any thoughtstone *that falls into the hands of an unauthorized user.*

Acquiring and using thoughtstones, page 158

SWORDS OF PTOLUS

Weapon (longsword), legendary (requires attunement)

In the Guildsman District not long ago, Spyncer Coil received a vision from Asche, God of Cities, and was moved to forge the three *Swords of Ptolus*. So powerful are these weapons that he was forced to flee to the "safety" of a Pale Dogs refuge in the Warrens (page 380). He kept *Insight* himself and *Power* was stolen; no one knows the whereabouts of the last sword, *Deceit*—although many people seek all three. Each sword is a *+1 longsword*, with an additional unique ability.

Deceit: This sword taps into the secretive side of the city. *Deceit* is immune to divinations—it cannot be detected, located, or seen through a scrying device. When you have it drawn, you are likewise protected.

Insight: This sword draws upon the collective knowledge of those in the city and imparts it to you. As your action, you can ask it a yes or no question pertaining to the city, a location within the city, or a creature or object in the city. The chance of the sword answering is 5 percent × your level. The answer is always correct. Once you ask a question of the sword, you can't ask it another until the next dawn.

Power: This sword can mimic any single ability of any other sword in the city. Thus, it can take on the cold damage of a *frost brand* sword or adopt the protective aura of a *holy avenger* sword. It can even adopt a unique ability, such as "only someone wielding the sword *Xelambras* may pass through this doorway." To change the property of the sword, you must spend ten minutes concentrating on it, and you must be directly familiar with the property being duplicated (which is to say, you must have seen or studied the property of that sword). Once you change the property of the sword, you can't do so again until the next dawn.

THOUGHTSTONE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

A *thoughtstone* is a magical communication device that looks like a small, clear, smooth stone. When placed upon your temple, it becomes invisible and intangible. It can be removed only if you will it or if you die. Wearing it allows you to connect to a telepathic network created and maintained by the Inverted Pyramid, as long as you are within 2 miles of the Inverted Pyramid itself.

As a bonus action, you can use your connection to the network to detect whether an individual whose name you know also has a

thoughtstone and is within range of the Inverted Pyramid. If so, you can use an action to attempt to set up a telepathic link through which the two of you may communicate. The contactee can automatically tell that someone seeks to communicate mentally with them, and they gain a sense of your identity (it cannot be masked or disguised) and can allow open telepathic communication between the two of you. Once a connection is established, either of you can attempt to get others to join in on the mental discussion, setting up additional thought links as described above. Communication can last as long as the parties are willing, conscious, and within range.

You can refuse communication with anyone who attempts to contact you through your *thoughtstone*, and can specify that you never accept communication from a specific person. You can mentally turn off the *thoughtstone* at any time, and it cannot send or receive communication until you reactivate it again.

Spells or effects can never be transmitted through a *thoughtstone*. It doesn't give you any sense of the other person's location (although they can tell you). Magical barriers (such as a *wall of force*) may interfere with *thoughtstone* communication. The Inverted Pyramid can deactivate any *thoughtstone* at any time, effectively removing it from the telepathic network.

THUNDERSONG

Weapon (greataxe), legendary (requires attunement)

This weapon appears finely made but fairly unremarkable. It is a *+3 greataxe* that scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20. It attempts to control any dwarf who touches it (no attunement required). If the dwarf dies while under the control of *Thundersong*, there is a 25 percent chance that they reanimate as a Servant of the Axe, an undead fanatical dwarf under the axe's control. The axe is aware of everything its undead servants experience.

Sentience. The axe is a sentient chaotic neutral weapon with an Intelligence of 18, a Wisdom of 13, and a Charisma of 22. It can see, hear, and perceive with blindsense out to a range of 120 feet. It can speak and communicate telepathically.

Personality. The axe is selfish, controlling, and egotistical. Although it enjoys controlling dwarves, it hates all other species.

UNHOLY WEAPON

Weapon (any weapon), rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. When you hit a good celestial or dragon with it, that creature takes an extra 2d6 necrotic damage. (At the GM's discretion, certain particularly good creatures such as paladins might take this damage even if they are not celestials or dragons.)

Unholy weapons are usually crafted with icons, runes, or symbols from an evil-aligned deity, chaos cult, or other organization that actively wants to promote evil and destroy good.

URTHON AEDAR PLATE ARMOR

Armor (plate), legendary (requires attunement by an elf with the blessing of the Urthon Aedar)

This suit of thick bronze features baroque ornamentation. You have a +1 bonus to AC while wearing this armor, even if you aren't attuned to it.

If you are attuned to the armor and are proficient in plate, it doesn't restrict your movement speed (even if you don't meet the Strength requirement of plate) or give you disadvantage on Stealth checks.

Only elves who practice martial combat and arcane spellcasting (such as the Eldritch Knight martial archetype for the fighter class, or multiclassed fighter/wizards) can attune to the armor, and only if an Urthon Aedar shows them how.

WAKING KEY

Wondrous item, artifact

You can use this key to open the Sepulcher of the Wintersouled in the Necropolis.

Sepulcher of the Wintersouled, page 251

As your action, you can use the key to summon a Wintersouled—one of the first undead creatures to come to Praemal ages ago—to appear before you. The summoned Wintersouled is not compelled to act and can remain no more than an hour. You can try to convince it to do something—a much easier task for one of its allies or servants than, say, an enemy. If the Wintersouled believes itself to be wrongly summoned, it slays you and takes the key. Once you summon a Wintersouled, you can't use the key to do so again until a year and a day have passed.

Wintersouled, page 600

Servant of the Axe, page 436

WAR ALTAR

Wondrous item, legendary

This huge stone altar with gold inlay is mounted atop a wheeled platform 12 feet long and 8 feet wide. It is enchanted to move under its own power and designed to carry clerics into battle to support the warriors. As your action, you can command it to move, turn, or stop; once moving in a particular direction, it continues to do so until given a new command. The war altar is the center of a *hallow* spell. Everyone on it gains the benefit of *bless* and three-quarters cover.

The *war altar* is a Huge object with the following statistics:

Armor Class: 20
Hit Points: 200
Speed: 20 ft.
Damage Immunities: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

To be used as a vehicle, the *war altar* requires one pilot (typically the highest-level cleric).

SPECIAL MATERIALS

A number of valuable, supernatural, or otherwise unique materials are found in the world of Praemal. Characters may chance upon items made from these materials or even the substances themselves in their raw form.

Other special materials found in Ptolus include adamantine and mithral.

AETHEL

One of the rarest and most valuable substances in Ptolus isn't a drug or a weapon, but a mineral. Aethel was discovered in this region, named, and experimented upon by the Elder Elves in the time of the titans, five thousand years ago. In many ways, it is the opposite of Vallis. While the greenish stone of the absent moon is a natural power source on its own, the clear crystals of aethel absorb magical energy and even light.

See also the create firestone *spell, page 628.*

Vallis, page 648

Aethel can absorb one to ten spell levels (depending on the size of the crystal). Once the crystal has absorbed this many spell levels of energy, it can't ever absorb more.

Spellcasters can use the energy stored within aethel to power their own spells, as though the crystal were a *rod of absorption*. The aethel stone does not require attunement. A crystal that can no longer absorb energy and has no energy remaining becomes inert forever.

If a character tries to absorb more spell levels than a piece of aethel can hold, the stone bursts in a 10-foot radius, inflicting 10 (3d6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) piercing damage for each spell level stored within the crystal (characters in the area can attempt a DC 18 Dexterity save for half damage).

The value of aethel stone is equal to the number of potential spell levels absorbed squared × 1,000 gp.

A character who makes a DC 25 Arcana check can figure out a way to use an aethel crystal full of absorbed energy as a crafting component for a magic item. The exact use of the stone is up to the GM, but is generally the equivalent of a spell scroll of a spell whose level is equal to the stone's stored spell levels.

BLACK ADAMANTINE

Black adamantine was only ever found in one place: in a mound located in the region occupied by the Cold Desert today. All the black adamantine that exists has been mined and used—no more can be found occurring naturally. Black adamantine is one of the hardest substances in existence, and it has additional antimagical qualities. It is immensely expensive, usually about 1,000 gp per ounce.

Black adamantine has resistance to all damage, and advantage on saves against magic. A DC 25 Arcana check reveals that a *wish* spell can make black adamantine completely impervious to physical force or spells. Black adamantine armor is equivalent to adamantine armor, but the wearer also gains the metal's advantage on saves against magic.

FIRESTONE

The mineral known as firestone can be created only through magic. It burns with great efficiency, which causes technologists to desire it greatly to fuel their devices. A small stone weighs 1 pound and can burn hotly for twenty-four hours. It is used to power some of the equipment described in Chapter 29: Technology.

HELIOTHIL

Heliothil is a pale violet stone that has negative weight. A stone that should weigh about 1 pound has in fact 5 pounds of negative weight. This means that, if a piece of pure heliothil were unsecured, it would fall upward at a great rate and disappear into the sky. It also means that securing 5 pounds of normal material to a 1-pound chunk of heliothil renders the normal material effectively weightless. The heliothil and attached material float in midair.

When dwarven miners discovered heliothil on the floating Mountain of the Sky Kings far to the west, much of it initially was lost—once mined and freed from surrounding minerals, the loosed heliothil floated up into space. Eventually, the dwarves developed safe mining and transporting practices, and engineers began

using heliothil to create floating castles, flying ships, hovering (virtually) weightless chariots, and so on. The Mountain of the Sky Kings was a huge source of heliothil, but it was overmined, and the mountain eventually descended slowly to the ground, where it shattered.

Today, the largest quantities of heliothil can be found in the Inverted Pyramid, keeping the mage guild's invisible headquarters afloat above the city of Ptolus.

Inverted Pyramid headquarters, page 302

Heliothil is not magical, at least not in the technical sense of the word. It retains its negative weight even in antimagic areas.

Heliothil is worth 100 gp per negative pound.

ITHILDIN AND ITHILNAUR

The elves know of many special minerals, materials, and herbs. In particular, they are known for two metals: ithildin (a decorative silver that glows at night but is dull and almost invisible during the day) and ithilnaur (a thin, strong material with the same properties as ithildin). Both metals' glow is equal to that of candlelight.

Ithildin is like silver but costs twice as much. Ithilnaur is like silver, but harder and lighter than steel of the same thickness, and costs five times as much.

LIQUID LIGHT

In the earliest days of creation, when air, earth, fire, and water had not yet reached their final states, sunlight shone into pockets of air that eventually became trapped deep underground. This air turned naturally into liquid light as a result of tremendous good done in the world; the residue seeps up from the depths of the earth and takes on a physical substance. Thus, deep in the earth one can encounter pools of bright sunlight, preserved forever as a thick, milky liquid. One pint of this fluid shines as if full daylight in just over a 100-foot radius without ever losing its brightness.

Liquid light is worth 1,000 gp per pint and is usually found only in amounts of six to ten pints at a time.

One can use liquid light to enhance spells that create or amplify light and goodness; any spell cast with liquid light added as an optional material component counts as a spell of light and good. A pint of the material used as a spell component modifies a spell so that its effective spell slot level is 2 higher than normal (maximum 9th level), and increases the spell save DC by +2.

Liquid light can be used like holy water against fiends, undead, and evil-aligned creatures native to other planes. Each pint inflicts 10 (3d6) radiant damage, or 70 (20d6) radiant damage per round for full immersion.

LIQUID SHADOW

Liquid shadow is a vile substance that pools in the darkest corners of the world—usually at the heartrock of a massive mountain or in a cave at the bottom of the deepest lake. It exists naturally as a result of evil done in the world; the residue seeps into the earth and takes on a physical substance in the deep darkness.

Liquid shadow is worth 1,000 gp per pint and is usually found in amounts of only one or two pints at a time.

One can use liquid shadow to enhance spells that create or amplify darkness, evil, or shadow; any spell cast with liquid shadow added as an optional material component counts as a spell of darkness, evil, and shadow. A pint of the material used as a spell component modifies a spell so that its effective spell slot level is 2 higher than normal (maximum 9th level), and increases the spell save DC by +2.

Like splashing undead with holy water, liquid shadow can be used to harm blessed children, celestials, and good-aligned creatures native to other planes. Each pint inflicts 10 (3d6) necrotic damage, or 70 (20d6) necrotic damage per round for full immersion. If used against fiends or undead, it heals them instead of harms them.

Blessed children, page 583

The Banewarrens, a complex of ancient warrens beneath the Spire, is rumored to hold vats and vats of liquid shadow sealed away in vaults.

MARLITE

Marlite shines like blue-tinted iron and can be processed into a metal as hard and resilient as steel. It is far more valuable than steel, however, due to its secondary property: marlite is a magic-dead material. It has no natural magic within it, and it cannot be affected by spells, magic items, or magical abilities. In effect, it is completely immune to magic. A sword made of marlite couldn't be affected by a spell designed to make it too hot to hold or turn to dust. No one could magically yank such a sword from the wielder's hand with magical telekinesis.

This means, of course, that magic can't affect it in beneficial ways, either—the sword couldn't be made magically sharper or more likely to hit.

Armor made of marlite gives the wearer no special properties. Spells can still affect the wearer, just not the armor directly.

An item made with marlite instead of iron or steel costs ten times the normal price.

MOONSILVER

Called "ithilirid" by the elves, this metal is always found in liquid form, looking similar to mercury. One can use it to coat a solid surface, to which it then adheres, protecting the surface

KNOWLEDGE ROLLS

With a successful Arcana check, a character can attempt to identify and understand strange substances such as the ones listed here:

Aethel (DC 22)
Black adamantine (DC 25)
Firestone (DC 15)
Heliothil (DC 19)
Ithildin (DC 18)
Ithilnaur (DC 18)
Liquid light (DC 23)
Liquid shadow (DC 24)
Marlite (DC 24)
Moonsilver (DC 20)
Vallis (DC 22)

as if it were made of iron. The surface retains all normal flexibility. Thus, one could apply it to a person to grant them the benefits of wearing plate with none of the drawbacks that heavier armor usually exacts. The effects of moonsilver are as fleeting as the moon's reign in the night sky, however—the substance fades away approximately four hours after it adheres to a surface.

Moonsilver will not adhere to ithildin or ithilnaur, so sealed containers made of these materials can be used to store the liquid. Moonsilver forms in droplets among the dew of heavily forested areas on nights of the full moon. If no one collects it, the trees, grass, and other plants in such regions sometimes have silvery drops clinging to them after daybreak, as hard as metal. However, they fade by mid-morning.

Moonsilver prices depend on the amount of the substance. Enough for a full suit of armor costs about 600 gp. Partial doses fail to work, and multiple doses do not add up.

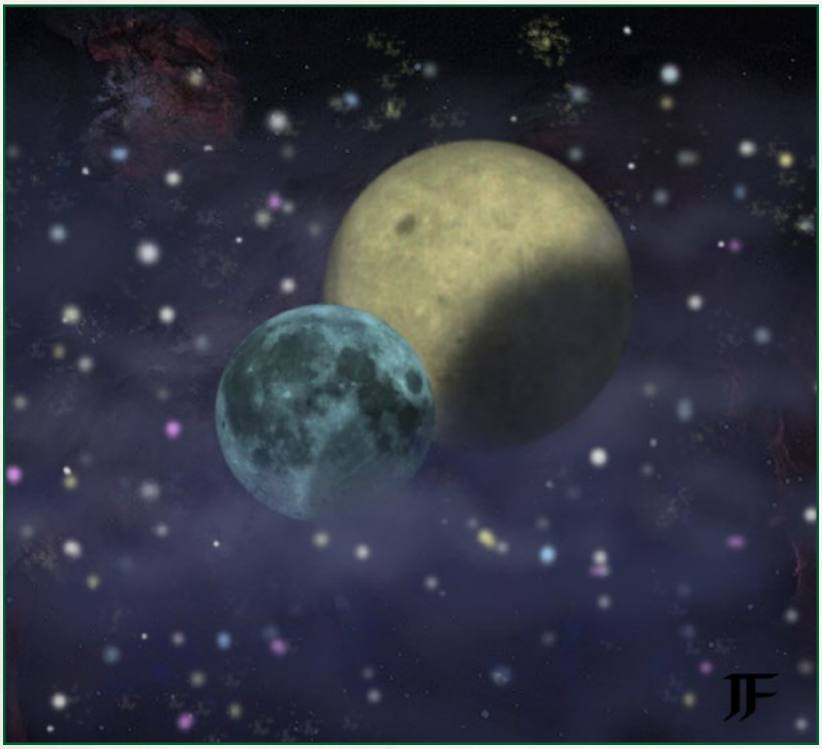
Moon of magic, page 42

Jabel Shammar throne room, page 479

Today Vallis dust is a substance that carries with it more prestige than actual power. Wealthy mages like to flaunt it more than they like to use it.

VALLIS

Vallis is the name of the mysterious moon of magic that once orbited Praemal. In ancient days, meteors of green Vallis stone rained down upon the world from time to time. Vallis stones were raw magical power in solid form and could be used to fuel spells, magic items, and mighty rituals probably not even possible to conduct today.



The Vallis moon is long gone, and most of the Vallis stone was used up like a squandered commodity. Still, some remains, in the form of sparkling green Vallis dust. With so little of the stuff left in the world, spellcasters have learned to extract as much as they can from the dust. A careful mage can use a tiny mote of Vallis dust to do what a caster of the distant past (with no need to conserve) would have done with a stone the size of a human fist.

Vallis dust can be used to create spell slots just like using the stored energy of a *rod of absorption*. The larger the speck of dust, the more spell levels it can create; most specks range from one to six spell levels in capacity. As the piece of Vallis is used, it diminishes. So if a bit of Vallis dust with the capacity for four spell levels is used to create a 2nd-level spell slot, it grows noticeably smaller, but still has two spell levels left and can be used to create another 2nd-level spell slot or two 1st-level spell slots. Exhausted Vallis disappears entirely.

For proper use, one must prepare the Vallis in a magical ritual that takes twenty-four hours. Unprepared Vallis can power spells, but at a less efficient rate. A piece of unprepared Vallis weighing 1 ounce holds power for one spell level, while a prepared Vallis stone that same size could power twenty spell levels.

Should one find a significantly large piece of unprepared Vallis (such as in the Throne Room of Jabel Shammar atop the Spire), using it would pose a real danger. Once tapped, the stone literally leaks power. Further, the Vallis loses one potential spell level of power per day as the stone's capacity leaks away. Anyone touching a leaking Vallis stone must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw each round or gain one level of exhaustion.

Someone who succeeds at a DC 25 Arcana check can figure out how to use a Vallis stone as a crafting component for a magic item. The exact use of the stone is up to the GM, but is generally the equivalent of a spell scroll of a spell whose level is equal to the stone's stored spell levels.

The value of Vallis stone or dust is equal to its number of spell levels squared × 50. Thus, a piece of Vallis that could power one spell level costs 50 gp; one that could power two spell levels costs 200 gp; three spell levels is 450 gp; and so on.

Chapter 36:

CHARACTER OPTIONS

Some of the organizations of Ptolus grant additional special abilities to characters who are members. These abilities reflect the interests of the organizations and their activities in the city at large.

The Inverted Pyramid, Knights of the Chord, and Knights of the Pale are established organizations within the city of Ptolus. Each has a long history and a specific agenda. Player characters who join these organizations have access to special abilities. GMs also may assign some or all of an organization's special abilities to NPCs associated with the group.

MAGE OF THE INVERTED PYRAMID

The Inverted Pyramid is a semi-secret "guild" of arcanists. Only those of proven power and skill, sponsored by another member, are invited to join the group. Members of the Inverted Pyramid are always sorcerers, warlocks, or wizards. While technically a bard or a member of another arcane spellcasting class could qualify, few have ever joined.

To be invited to join, a character must be able to cast 4th-level arcane spells, and must have an existing member willing to act as their sponsor. A new member of the guild is called an Initiate, and many Initiates include this rank as their formal title, such as "Eldaroon, Initiate of the Inverted Pyramid." After two years of membership and proving that they can cast 5th-level arcane spells, the Initiate may request promotion to Adept. After three more years of membership and proving that they can cast 8th-level arcane spells, the Adept can request promotion and join the ranks of Masters of the Inverted Pyramid.

The following are class features for members of this organization; instead of level requirements, the character must have the listed rank or higher within the guild. Upon achieving the listed rank and paying the dues for that year, the character participates in a magical ritual that unlocks the ability for that guild rank.

For more information about joining the Inverted Pyramid, including membership dues and perks (such as housing, workshop space, access to the library, discounts with the Dreaming Apothecary, making reasonable requests of lesser-ranking members, ownership of an *invisible charm*, and access to a *thoughtstone*), see Chapter 6: Organizations.

SPELL AFFINITY (INITIATE)

Choose one arcane spell you know of 2nd level or higher. Casting this spell comes so easily to you that it expends only a fraction of your spellcasting efforts. When you cast this spell 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.

Upon becoming an Adept, you may choose a second spell to gain the benefits of this ability. Upon becoming a Master, you may choose a third spell to gain the benefits of this ability.

Fleeing the Empire's growing distaste for arcane magic (due to the influence of the Church of Lothian), the Inverted Pyramid relocated to far-flung Ptolus in 554 IA.

Inverted Pyramid, see page 114
Dreaming Apothecary, page 116
Invisible charm, *page 640*
Thoughtstone, *page 644*

The symbol of the Inverted Pyramid hearkens back to ancient lore, in which the pyramid symbolized the power of many being focused into one—like the power of a kingdom focusing on the king. Inverting the pyramid shows that the power of magic starts with the individual.

A warlock Adept who can cast an 8th-level spell using their Mystic Arcanum feature qualifies for promotion to Master.

Because warlocks have so few spell slots, they gain little benefit from the first option of the Spell Weaving ability, but the second option can come in handy. Likewise, Spell Emphasis is rarely used by warlock members of the guild. Overall, the few warlocks who advance to Adept or Master rank do so mainly for the privilege and status among their peers rather than for the power.

Mage of the Inverted Pyramid is not a subclass. Unlike a wild magic sorcerer or a diviner wizard, it is not a choice that the character has to make at a particular level, and it doesn't take the place of any subclass abilities. Any qualified arcane spellcaster—sorcerer, warlock, or wizard—who meets the requirements can join the guild and learn its secrets without giving up any other opportunities from their innate magic, pact, or school of magic.

Knights of the Chord, page 120

Knights of the Chord are not numerous. However, they are important in a Ptolus Campaign. They demonstrate that a bard can be more than just a minstrel singing songs in a tavern. They also show that knightly orders can be more than simply groups of fighters or paladins and can have their own unique focus.

Knights of the Chord symbol

Jode, Guardian of Song, page 72

SPELL WEAVING (ADEPT)

You can use a bonus action to weave together two arcane spell slots of the same level to create one arcane spell slot whose level is one higher. For example, you could weave together two 1st-level spell slots to create one 2nd-level spell slot, or two 3rd-level spell slots to create one 4th-level spell slot. The created spell slot cannot be of a spell level higher than you can cast.

You can use a bonus action to unweave one arcane spell slot to create two arcane spell slots whose level is one lower. For example, you could unweave a 4th-level spell slot to create two 3rd-level spell slots.

SPELL EMPHASIS (MASTER)

When you cast an arcane spell, you can expend a second spell slot of the spell's level to add extra power to it, increasing your spell save DC and spell attack bonus by 2. Using this ability does not increase the casting time or use any additional actions other than what is needed to cast the spell.

KNIGHT OF THE CHORD (BARD SUBCLASS)

The sound and the fury, the music of battle, and the songs of war—these elements make up the life of a Knight of the Chord. The Knights of the Chord are a group that uses the magic of music to aid their fighting skills. It is a loosely organized order of knighthood, as each member remains a free spirit and highly individualistic.

The order's code is simple: defend the downtrodden, and preserve freedom above all else. The knights sing and focus on music, but they are not performers. They do not sing to entertain, but to call upon music's hidden power. Nevertheless, their practiced voices make them more than a match for any professional minstrel, and fortunate is anyone blessed to hear a knight's daily song-meditations.

Knights of the Chord are bards or at least have some bard levels. Multiclass fighter/bards are common among the order's ranks. Knights travel alone or in small groups, only occasionally returning to one of the order's strongholds—called Jodan Templehalls, as each is dedicated to Jode, Guardian of Song. As the knights rarely recognize local authorities (members usually have a nonlawful alignment), magistrates and law enforcers do not exactly welcome their presence. However, the common folk look upon them as champions and defenders.

Bards who join this group can choose Knight of the Chord as their bard college at 3rd level. They gain the following class features.

BONUS PROFICIENCIES

When you join the Knights of the Chord at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with medium armor, shields, and martial weapons.

When you reach 5th level, you gain proficiency with heavy armor.

THUNDER RESISTANCE

At 3rd level, you also gain resistance to thunder damage.

SMITING SONG

At 6th level, you gain a powerful smiting song that harms or even incapacitates an opponent. When you hit another creature with a melee weapon attack, you can expend one use of Bardic Inspiration to enhance the attack with thunder damage. You add your Bardic Inspiration die to the attack's damage roll (as thunder damage), and the target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or be stunned until the end of your next turn.

IMBUE VIBRATION

When you reach 6th level, you can spend an hour singing a magical song that imbues your melee weapon with a specific magical vibration, granting it a special ability when you (and only you) wield it. The choice of abilities available to you depend on your bard level.

Bard Level	Vibration Ability
6th	The weapon's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.
7th	When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can expend one use of Bardic Inspiration to attempt to disarm the target, forcing it to drop one item of your choice that it's holding. You add your Bardic Inspiration die to the attack's damage roll, and the target must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, it drops the object, which lands at its feet.
8th	When you are blind, your attack rolls do not have disadvantage, and enemies do not have advantage on attacks against you.
9th	When you move, you can expend one Bardic Inspiration die, rolling the die and adding the number rolled to your AC until you stop moving.

Once you use Imbue Vibration, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

SINGBLADE

At 14th level, you can use your action to expend one use of Bardic Inspiration and sing a magical song that lasts for one minute or until you lose your concentration (as if you were concentrating on a spell). While this song is active, add your Charisma bonus to your melee attack rolls and Armor Class. Once you use this song, you cannot do so again until you have completed a long rest.

KNIGHT OF THE PALE (PALADIN SUBCLASS)

Many great heroes of good lived in earlier times; some people called these holy champions saints. Many heroes alive today draw upon the goodness and purity of these historical figures to fight the forces of evil. The Knights of the Pale specialize in revering and honoring the saints of the past.

The Knights of the Pale are an order dedicated to ridding the world of evil magic as well as the creatures created or summoned by that magic. In particular, they despise demons. Because they also prove fairly adept at fighting undead, they frequently ally with lawful good churches, although they are not a part of any formal church hierarchy.

Most Knights of the Pale are fighters, paladins, rangers, or clerics, although barbarians, druids, and even rogues occasionally join their ranks. NPC Knights of the Pale work in groups, fighting alongside their brethren or like-minded individuals. They do not allow evil people or creatures to join their ranks.

Paladins who join this group can choose Oath of Saints as their sacred oath at 3rd level. They gain the following class features.

OATH OF SAINTS

The Oath of Saints idealizes the holiness and good deeds of great heroes of the past, inspiring the paladin to perform similar deeds and uphold the traditions of sacred knighthood. They are an active knighthood, devoted to seeking out evil and protecting vulnerable people and places from powerful foes, which means that at any time a knight might be crusading against a known enemy or guarding something from an expected threat.

TENETS OF DEVOTION

Each morning, I pray and invoke these six heroes by name and title, which reminds me of the many stories and records of their deeds that were passed down to me, to inspire my own heroics and that may someday inspire others.

- St. Chausle, Guardian of the Temple
- St. Gustav, Protector of the Just
- St. Yessid, Judgment From Above
- St. Daris, Swift Avenger
- St. Feldin, Faultless Rock of Faith
- Lothian, Provider of Truth

OATH SPELLS

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	*guiding bolt*, *longstrider*
5th	*enhance ability*, *see invisibility*
9th	*fly*, *haste*
13th	*guardian of faith*, *stoneskin*
17th	*dispel evil and good*, *mass cure wounds*

CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following Channel Divinity options. Each day when you prepare your spells, you choose one of the heroes of the knighthood, and that determines which Channel Divinity option you can use. You can choose a different hero after a short or long rest.

Sacred Weapon. When you choose Lothian or St. Chausle, you can imbue one weapon that you are holding with positive energy, as if you were a paladin with the Oath of Devotion.

Turn the Unholy. When you choose St. Gustav or St. Yessid, you can censure fiends and undead, as if you were a paladin with the Oath of Devotion.

Abjure Enemy. When you choose St. Daris or St. Feldin, you can denounce one foe of any type, as if you were a paladin with the Oath of Vengeance.

PALE AURA

At 7th level, your holiness allows you to call upon the sacred heroes for additional abilities. The hero you chose for your Channel Divinity ability determines which Pale Aura you have active. (Choosing a different hero for your Channel Divinity after a short or long rest also changes the effect of your Pale Aura.)

Aura of Devotion: By choosing St. Chausle or St. Gustav, you and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you can't be charmed while you are conscious, as if you were a paladin with the Oath of Devotion. (This range does not increase at 18th level.)

Aura of Warding: By choosing Lothian, St. Feldin, or St. Yessid, you and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you have resistance to damage against spells, as if you were a paladin with the Oath of the Ancients. (This range does not increase at 18th level.)

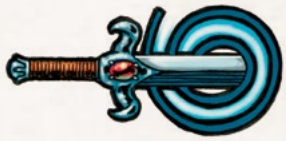
Relentless Avenger: By choosing St. Daris, you can move up to half your speed when you hit a creature with an opportunity attack, as if you were a paladin with the Oath of Vengeance.

PURITY OF SPIRIT

Beginning at 15th level, you are always under the effects of a *protection from evil and good* spell.

AVENGING ANGEL

At 20th level, you can assume the form of an angelic avenger, as if you were a paladin with the Oath of Vengeance.



Knights of the Pale symbol

Knights of the Pale, page 121

Key members of the Knights of the Pale in Ptolus include the Runewarden Zophas Adhar and "Prince" Ironheart.

GMs may want to treat the Oath of Saints as a Lothianite blend of several common lay paladin orders. However, even the rare Knight of the Pale whose patron deity is someone other than Lothian respects his devotion to goodness and law, and honors his sacrifice and mortal works, so it's reasonable to allow non-Lothianite paladins to choose this oath.

The angelic avenger form of an Oath of Saints paladin resembles the hero they currently have chosen for their other oath abilities.

APPENDIX

Even though you've nearly reached the end of this book, there's still plenty more of Ptolus to discover! Starting on page 654 you'll find the glossary, featuring page numbers and short descriptions of important locales and NPCs (alphabetized by first name). Organizations, rules, and other topics are covered in the general index starting on page 665.

The packet with this book contains GM and player aids to enhance your Ptolus Campaign, as well as supplemental material that we couldn't manage to squeeze into the book itself. This first part of the appendix gives you a rundown of all the components found in the envelope. Afterward, the appendix presents glossaries of important locales and NPCs, as well as a general index.

USING THE POSTER MAP

The poster map of the city included with this book is meant for GMs and players alike to reference. It shouldn't contain any information that needs to be kept from the players, so putting it out on the game table most sessions or even hanging it on your wall would be appropriate. The back side of the poster shows the interiors of the Spire fortresses Goth Gulgamel and Jabel Shammar. You're not likely to need this information until the end of the campaign, by which time you'll hardly need the map of the city at all (and while the PCs are in either fortress, you certainly won't need it). In any case, the Spire maps are for the GM only.

USING THE HANDOUTS

You also will find many handouts in the envelope. They are as follows:

Empire Map and Eastern Palastan Map: Use these as references for the rest of the world outside of Ptolus.

Player's City Map: Give this to the players. If you want more copies, you can print them from the Ptolus Digital Extras and give each player their own copy.

Delver's Square: The characters likely will frequent this area, so use this sheet as a visual aid and reference.

Rosegate House (both 5e and Cypher System versions): If the PCs ever get a nice house in the Nobles' Quarter, either on their own or granted to them for a service, use Rosegate House and give them this handout (and reference the special information in Chapter 12: Nobles' Quarter yourself).

Dungeon Side View: A handy, albeit somewhat abstract view of the regions below the city.

Calendar: Use this to keep track of time in the campaign. If you would like, you can print out multiple copies from the Ptolus Digital Extras and give each player their own copy to mark off days, circle important dates, and so on.

Character Sheet (both 5e and Cypher System versions): Feel free to make copies of this handout and the blank "Notes" sheet for each player, or print out copies from the Ptolus Digital Extras.

Clip-On Screen Reference Sheet: Clip some or all of the portions of this sheet onto your GM's screen to help you remember the basics of Ptolus individuals, groups, and so forth.

Ptolus at a Glance: A handy reference sheet for GMs and players that covers basic information about the city.

Events in the City: This reference suggests events, both general and specific, that can happen during the campaign to affect the city.

Filling Campaign Needs: Refer to these two sheets when the PCs have a specific need (Where can one buy a high-quality weapon? Where can one get a bath after a sewer mission?), or allow players of Ptolus-savvy characters to have access to the sheets themselves.

Random Encounter Matrix (both 5e and Cypher System versions): This set of sheets contains an encounter matrix based on district. Roll 1d100, then reference the resulting encounter number for the proper district with the list of encounters on the sheets. Results consisting of two numbers separated by a slash indicate that a different encounter occurs based on whether it is day (use the first number) or night (use the second number).

Adventure Maps: Three sheets are devoted to maps for the adventures in chapter 33. The two color sheets are strictly for GMs, and the black-and-white sheet is a player's map of one adventure locale.

Flavorful Handouts: Use these sheets as you see fit in your game. They include: the Ghostly Minstrel menu, a wanted poster, the Imperial citizenship and identification papers (feel free to make copies for each player or print out additional sheets from the Ptolus Digital Extras), the firearm permit, the proclamation, *The Midtown Partisan*, a flyer from the Brotherhood of Redemption, a warning proclamation about Kevris Killraven, and a flyer for Ebbert's Outfitters (separate versions for 5e and Cypher System). (See the Ptolus Digital Extras for more such handouts.)

USING THE BOOKMARKS

In addition to the three bound-in fabric ribbon bookmarks, you will find four cardstock bookmarks at the back of the book. Tear or cut these out along the perforations and use them to mark the pages of an important NPC, a vital location, a general city reference you need, and a rules section that you'll be referring to in game. For example, if the PCs are in the Dark Reliquary, you might put a bookmark on page 232 to remember that they are currently in area 36 of the Reliquary's dungeons, another on page 222 to reference the Siege Tower that they'll soon retreat back to, a third on page 242 so you can flip right to it when Drusii comes to hunt down the party, and the last on page 651, marking the Knight of the Pale character options (if one of the PCs is a member of that group).

Of course, you can mark whatever pages you want. And if you'd rather not tear out the cardstock bookmarks, you can print them from the Ptolus Digital Extras onto cardstock of your own.

USING THE PTOLUS DIGITAL EXTRAS

You can find even more material in the Ptolus Digital Extras. This includes:

Download the Ptolus Digital Extras at myMCG.info/PtolusDigitalExtras

***A Player's Guide to Ptolus*:** The PDF of a 32-page player book containing everything a player needs to know to start a new character native to the city in a Ptolus Campaign. This is essentially the same as chapter 1 of this book. Every player should be able to read and reference the *Player's Guide* throughout the campaign.

Campaign Journals: These PDF files detail the events of the two campaigns for which Monte originally created Ptolus. Enjoy reading about the city as it was formed by the original GM and players—but players, beware of spoilers!

***Saga of the Blade*:** Read the complete serialized Ptolus fiction series that originally appeared in *Game Trade Magazine*.

Handouts: All of the handouts in the packet are also here in PDF form (in color where available) so you can print out extra or replacement copies. Some additional handouts are included, too, such as a note the PCs can find during one of the adventures in chapter 33, an invitation to Castle Shard, and more.

Other Features: You'll also find PDFs of the bookmarks so you don't have to tear them out of this book, a full year's worth of "This Week in Ptolus" happenings, an expanded, searchable version of this book's index for reference, and more!

LOCALES GLOSSARY

Listing offers only the main reference for each item; does not include all "Other Locales" sites.

Administration Building (291): Local government headquarters; Oldtown.
Alabaster Sanctuary (481–482): Good remnant of Mosul Pearl; Jabel Shammar.
Alchestrin's Tomb (218): Ancient wizard's resting place; Necropolis.
Ar-Nampur (81): Charad Titan fortress north of the city.
Arena (292): Sporting events stadium; Oldtown.
Aristocrat's Table (262): Classy restaurant; Nobles' Quarter.
Ath (487): Ethereal Isle; Jewel of Spirit.
Av (486): Ethereal Isle; Jewel of the Mind.
Avery's Armor (190): Shop; Midtown.
Back Room (181): Sex club at Skull and Sword; Guildsman District.
Baneheart (495): Shaft up the length of the Spire in the Banewarrens; also called Tremoc Korin.
Banewarrens (79, 389): Danar's underground storage vaults for evil items and artifacts.
Barbarian Balloonists (319): Halfling air tours; Rivergate.
Beacon Island (151, 164): In the Bay of Ptolus; Docks.
Bellringers' Guild Office (294): Guild headquarters; Oldtown.
Black Spike (63): A Galchutt fortress.
Black Swan (191): Dwarven bar; Midtown.
Blackstock Printing (328): Operated by Fardream elf clones; South Market.
Bladechapel (122, 294): Knights of the Pale home; Oldtown.
Blessed Bridge (345–346): Crosses the King's River at the Street of a Million Gods.
Bone Hill (214): Area within the Necropolis.
Book Wagon (281): Darthalis Temester's information business; North Market.
Borning Stone (362): Ren Tehoth site significant to Navashtrom and his sister Tardeshou.
Bull and Bear (18, 191): Delver's Square armorers; Midtown.
Castle Shard (263): Ancient magical castle; Nobles' Quarter.
Cathedral Cavern (447): Great hall; Dwarvenhearth.
Cathedral of Night (232): Chambers in the Dark Reliquary, home to a pair of nightshades; Necropolis.
Cavern of Night (448): Site of Kaled Menar; Dwarvenhearth.
Caverns of the Galchutt (422): Site deep below the city where the Natharl'nacna sleep.
Celestial Conclave (346): Temple where religion itself is revered; Temple District.
Chamber of Longing (398): Delvers' meeting spot with claw-shaped statue; Undercity Market.
Chapel of the Final Resolution (376–377): Vai headquarters; Warrens.
Chapel of St. Thessina (324): For Lothianites; Rivergate.
Chapel of the Uncreated (233): Shrine in Dark Reliquary led by Kaladeen the balor; Necropolis.
Cherubar (43): Land far west of Ptolus.
Church of the Lawgiver (288): For Lothianites; North Market.
Church of Lothian the Redeemer (313): Oldtown.
Citadel of the Golden Cross (294): Knights' headquarters; Oldtown.
Citadel of Might (295): Order of Iron Might headquarters; Oldtown.
Citadel of the Seven Chains (61): Fortress on the Vallis moon; home of the heart of the world.
City Courts (295): Justice center; Oldtown.
City Library (295): Oldtown.
Clasthamus Isle (218–219): Home of Andach; Necropolis.
Clock Tower (296): Oldtown.
Cloud Theater (191): Dramas performed; Midtown.
Cock Pit (330): Gambling den; South Market.
Cold Desert (43): Southwest of Ptolus.
Conciliator Chapterhouse (347): Headquarters of Lothianite inquisitor sect; Temple District.
Conservatory: See *Imperial Academy of Music*.
Copper Kettle (192): Coppersmith; Midtown.
Court of Night (448): Night King's Palace; Dwarvenhearth.
Courthouse: See *City Courts*.
Crown Theater (96, 268): Opera house; Nobles' Quarter.
Crypt Home of Igor Reichstav (220): Necropolis.
Dalen's Cliffs (146): Ridge at east end of Oldtown.
Dalenguard (297): Historic fortress; Oldtown.
Dallaster Manor (268): Spice magnate's home; Nobles' Quarter.
Danbury's (18, 192): Delver's Square Mage bar; Midtown.
Dark Elf Refuge: See *Madame Kaethea's House*.
Dark Market (399): Illegal commerce; Undercity Market.
Dark Reliquary (223): Fallen/Forsaken headquarters; Necropolis.
Darkbirth Madhouse (174): Asylum; Guildsman District.
Darklock Hill (214): Area within the Necropolis.
Darksoul House (321): Yavos Nared's house, home to a Sorn cell; Rivergate.
Daykeeper's Chapel (209): For Lothianites; Midtown.
Deathguild Headquarters (221): Funerals; Necropolis.
Delver's Guild Library and Maproom (299): Oldtown.
Delver's Guild Office (395): Group headquarters; Undercity Market.
Delver's Square (18, 188): Adventurers' quarter; Midtown.
Dockmaster's Tower (164): Harbormaster's; Docks.
Dohrinthas (46): Empress's capital and the Golden City of the Sea Kingdoms southwest of Ptolus.
Donnel's (331): Leather shop; South Market.
Dragon Vault (272): In Dallimothan tower; Nobles' Quarter.
Dragonsbirth Mountains (45): East of Ptolus.
Dread One's Path (495): Extradimensional space inside the Spire.
Dreaming Stone (423): In the Caverns of the Galchutt.
Dreta Phantas (425, 427): Dreaming City of Elder Elves, captured by dark elves; now far below city.
Dungeon (385): Adventuring areas below the city.
Dwarvenhearth (429–449): Abandoned home of Stonemight dwarves; fell to Ghul long ago.
Dweomer Street (309): See *Vock Row.*
Ebbert's Outfitters (18, 192): Adventuring supplies in Delver's Square; Midtown.
Ebony Tube (320): Underground passage connecting Rivergate and Oldtown.
Edarth's Loans (335): Korben Trollone's front; South Market.
Emerald Hill (189): Elf neighborhood; Midtown.
Endle's Finery (19): Clothiers; North Market.
Endless Sea of Ice (43, 81): Far north of Ptolus.
Entropy Sphere (463): Powered by the Gates of Delirium near Goth Gulgamel.
Erdek Ard (418): Dwarvish name of Eternity Cave.
Erish-aga (82): City built by wizards of Kem.
Esh (487): Ethereal Isle; Jewel of the Divine.
Eternity Cave (418): Massive caverns under the city.
Ethereal Islands, Seven (485): See *Jewels of Parnaith*.
Ethereal Sea (66): The Ethereal Plane.
Everwood (66): Elder Elves' name for Ethereal Sea.
Exotic Market (332): Sells rare items; South Market.
Fabric Market (334): South Market.
Fairbriar (189): Gnome neighborhood; Midtown.
Faraway Scents (334): Perfume shop; South Market.

Finelle's Pleasant Diversions (321): Games hall; Rivergate.
Firehouses (144): Fire Brigade stations.
Fogbottom (81): Area around Ar-Nampur.
Fortress of the Redeemed (392): Brotherhood of Redemption's headquarters.
Foundry (176): Ironworks; Guildsman District.
Gallows Square (295): Execution site; Oldtown.
Games House (309, 313): On Vock Row; Oldtown.
Gates of Delirium (463): Built by Eslathagos Malkith within the Spire to power the Entropy Sphere.
Gathering Hall (395): At Delver's Guild office; Undercity Market.
Gear Gate (443): At the Grand Entrance; Dwarvenhearth.
Ghostly Minstrel (18, 193): In Delver's Square; Midtown.
Ghoul paths (221): Run beneath the Necropolis.
Ghul's Labyrinth (390): Warrens beneath the city Ghul built for storage, billeting, and laboratories.
Giant's Staircase (418): Leads to Eternity Cave.
Glaugsgulgus (420): Locathah city in deep caverns.
Golathan Naddershrike's House and Laboratory (322): Former wizard home; Rivergate.
Golden Tooth (334): Gold shop; South Market.
Goth Gulgamel (83, 452): Ghul's fortress on the Spire.
Grail Keep (45, 48): Fortress-city home of Grailwarden dwarves in Prustan Peninsula.
Grail Temple (45): Beneath Grail Keep.
Grand Cathedral (67): Lothianites' headquarters in Tarsis.
Grand Entrance (443): Accesses Dwarvenhearth.
Grand Guildhall (177): Gathering place; Guildsman District.
Great Hall of Morachon (446): Part of King Stardelve's Tomb; Dwarvenhearth.
Great Hall (395): Contains shops and vendors; Undercity Market.
Grey Mountains (44): East of Tarsis.
Greyson House (561): "Haunted" house; North Market.
The Griffon (196): Popular bar; Midtown.
Guildhouse of Iron (177): Ironworkers' headquarters; Guildsman District.
Guilder Gate (148): A southern entry into Ptolus.
Gurhorond (181): See the *Star Jewelers*.
Hall of Heroes (347): Statue garden/memorial; Temple District.
Hall of the Valiant (221): Quiet memorial; Necropolis.
Hammersong Vaults (299): Stores valuables; Oldtown.
Havan's Haven (196): Barbershop; Midtown.
Heart of the Malignancy (488): Pinnacle of evil; Jabel Shammar.
Heartwood of all Trees (125): Former Quaan locale.
Heavenly Baked Goods (284): Bakery; North Market.
Herbalists' Guildhall (178): Group's headquarters; Guildsman District.
Hidden Prison (493): In the dungeons of Jabel Shammar.
Holy Palace (269): Holy Emperor's Ptolus residence; includes fine chapel for locals; Nobles' Quarter.
Holy Throne (141): Seat of the Holy Emperor.
Hotash Mountains (45): In Prustan Peninsula.
House of the Sacred Heat (348): Mundane healing center; Temple District.
The Howling (214): Area within Necropolis.
Imn (486): Ethereal Isle; Jewel of Energy.
Imperial Academy of Music (271): Arts school; Nobles' Quarter.
Imperial Palace (30): Emperor's residence in Tarsis.
Imperial University (300): Oldtown.
Inner Vaults (389): Ring the Spire in the Banewarrens.
Inverted Pyramid (302): Invisible, floating headquarters of mage guild; Oldtown.
Inverted Tower (443): At the Grand Entrance; Dwarvenhearth.
Iridithil's Home (197): Elven sanctuary run by Doraedian Mythlord; Midtown.
Jabel Shammar (81, 465–495): Evil fortress of Eslathagos Malkith atop the Spire.
Jangave Lesh's Training Hall (322): Martial and combat training; Rivergate.
Jeweled Cliffs (146): Ridge at east end of Nobles' Quarter.
Jewels of Parnaith, Seven (485): Ethereal path to godhood created by the wife of the Dread One.
Jirraith's Lair (378): Headquarters of Pale Dog leader; Warrens.
Jodan Templehall (313): Knights of the Chord headquarters; Oldtown.
Jurrin's Plaza (190): Katterwood central square; Midtown.
Kadmiel (303): Shade Tower that exists only in the Shadow of Ptolus; Oldtown.
Kaled Del (418): Stonelost settlement in the Eternity Cave.
Kaled Menar (448): Home of the Mindforge in the Cavern of Night; Dwarvenhearth.
Kastralathakasal (422): Galchutt stronghold of alien metals and organic components in deep caverns.
Katterwood (190): Halfling neighborhood; Midtown.
Kem (43): Land along the Southern Sea, blighted by Wars of Fire millennia ago.
Kerrik's (209): Bar where one can reach the Vai; Midtown.
King Stardelve's Tomb (444–447): Stonelost holy site; Dwarvenhearth.
King's River (93, 151): Flows through Ptolus.
King's River Gorge (151): Runs through Ptolus.
Konagis (569): Underwater triton city in the Whitewind Sea.
Korben Trollone's Office (335): Headquarters of crime boss at Edarth's Loans; South Market.
Koth (426): Dream tower that guards the path to the many worlds in Dreta Phantas.
The Labyrinth (390): See *Ghul's Labyrinth*.
Lackie's (378): Cheap bar; Warrens.
Ladris' Fine Foods (199): Grocery in Narred; Midtown.
Larel's Implements (166): Nautical shop; Docks.
Lendarick (285): Kennel; North Market.
Longbottom (190): Rough neighborhood in southern Midtown.
Longdraught Brewery (178): Largest brewer; Guildsman District.
Madame Kaethea's House (379): Dark elf refuge run by Urshanna; Warrens.
Mahdoth's Asylum (336): For mad arcanists; South Market.
Maran's Odd Sizes (338): Unique clothiers; South Market.
Market Gate (148): A southern entry into Ptolus.
Midden Heaps (179): Local dump; Guildsman District.
Mirror Maze (405): Built by Kagrisos; Undercity Market.
Misbegotten Tower (470): Part of Jabel Shammar.
Mitoren's Blades (285): Weapon shop; North Market.
Moonsilver Forest (44): Palastan home of Shoal elves, once home of the Harrow elves.
Mosul Pearl (79): Original name of Danar's fortress; became Jabel Shammar.
Mountain of the Sky Kings (646–647): Floating dwarf mountain far to the west; now shattered.
Mrathrach's Pit (78): Evil site in the Cold Desert.
Myraeth's Oddities (199): Magic and trinket shop in Delver's Square; Midtown.
Nall (43): A northern wasteland east of Ptolus.
Nall Hall (285): Nallish cultural center; North Market.
Navaen Bowcraft (338): Elf archery shop; South Market.
Necrophilium (232): Licheloved area of the Dark Reliquary; Necropolis.
Nluguran (425): Dark elf city in deep caverns.
North Gate (148): A main entry into Ptolus.
North Point Restaurant (202): Fairbriar eatery whose owners sell nightsong magic drug; Midtown.
Ond (486): Ethereal Isle; Jewel of the Physical.
Onyx Spider (203): Sinister Tavern Row bar; Midtown.
Order of the Fist Compound (348): Temple District.
Orr (486): Ethereal Isle to which Ghul fled; Jewel of Beginnings and Endings.

Outer Vaults (389): Area of the Banewarrens.
Palace of Day (448): Day King's court; Dwarvenhearth.
Palastan (44): The land that includes Ptolus.
Pale Dogs Safe House (380): Harbors fugitive Spyncer Coil; Warrens.
Pale Tower (305): Home of the Malkuth; Oldtown.
Pier Five (166): Harbors the ghost of Tyrus Green; Docks.
Pits of Insanity (387): Areas within the Spire that play havoc with natural laws.
Plains of Panish (44): Area between Tarsis and the Grey Mountains.
The Pointy Hat (309, 313): Wizard bar and grill on Vock Row; Oldtown.
Postal Stationhouses (154): Mail delivery headquarters.
Potions and Elixirs (209, 397): Magic shops; Undercity Market, Midtown.
Potter's (18, 204): Cheap Delver's Square hostel; Midtown.
Praemal (42, 61): The world.
Priory of Introspection (349): Sisterhood of Silence headquarters; Temple District
Prustan Peninsula (29, 44–45): Land between Kem and the Plains of Panish.
Ptolus Harbor (162): In the Bay of Ptolus; Docks.
The Quaan (125): Pactlords' extradimensional headquarters.
The Quiet (214): An area within the Necropolis.
Ramoro's Bakery (339): South Market.
Rastor's Weapons (18, 204): In Delver's Square; Midtown.
Ravenstroke (393): Laboratory in the Well of Shadow Eyes below the city.
Red Stallion Pub (285): Large alehouse; North Market.
Ren Tehoth (45): Ruined land east of Palastan.
Rhoth (45–46): Provincial land west of Ptolus.
River Tonam (30, 84): Palastani river.
Rogue Moon Trading Company (339): Major commerce outfit; office in South Market.
Rosegate House (275): Home in Nobles' Quarter.
Row Bathhouse (206): On Tavern Row; Midtown.
Runihan Square: See *Delver's Square*.
Saches (206): Yeoman Street clothiers; Midtown.
Sages' Guild Headquarters (308): Oldtown.
Sailor's Rest (166): Nice bar; Docks.
Sallachor Isle (563): Center of shivvel processing in the Whitewind Sea.
Salora's Pots (339): Ceramics shop; South Market.
Sard's Boats (167): Rent or buy; Docks.
Savage Shark (167): Tough bar; Docks.
Scorched Peaks (46): Range south of Uraq.
Scouts, Guides, and Porters (398): Hiring hall and access point to Dark Market; Undercity Market.
Sea of World's End (46): World's southern edge.
Sea Kingdoms (46): South and west of Ptolus.
Secret Hall (308): Naltegro Suun headquarters; Oldtown.
Sepulcher of the Wintersouled (251): Shrine in Dark Reliquary; Necropolis.
Serpent Caves (419): Connect Mahdoth's Asylum to deep caverns.
Serpent Path (491): Part of the dungeons of Jabel Shammar.
Seven Jewels of Parnaith (485): See *Jewels of Parnaith*.
Shade Tower (303): See *Kadmiel*.
Shadow of Ptolus (304): Dimension of shadow parallel to Ptolus; accessed via Kadmiel.
Shadow Sendings (154, 209): Magic couriers; Midtown.
Shadow Theater (310): Unique performances; Oldtown.
Shoggoth (573): Hidden city in Dragonsbirth Mountains.
Shrine of the Oracle (350): Temple District.
Siege Tower (222): Keepers of the Veil headquarters; Necropolis.
Sign of the Shovel (397): Booth that sells digging equipment; Undercity Market.
Silver Palace (269): Onetime Ptolus home of the Prince of the Church.
Sinking Swamp (78): Once surrounded what is now the Pit of Mrathrach.
Skulk Alley (310): Street where one signals the desire to meet with a skulk; Oldtown.
The Skull and Sword (180): Rough tavern; Guildsman District.
Slave City (393): Refuge of escaped slaves below city.
Smoke Shop (286): Shuul firearms shop; North Market.
Soaring Idyll (276): Floating apartment; Nobles' Quarter.
Sombrous Sepulcher (490): Dread One's abode; Jabel Shammar.
South Gate (148): A main entry into the city.
Southern Sea (46): South of the Sea Kingdoms.
Spice Market (340): South Market.
Spire (150–151, 79): Stone needle 3,000 feet tall; marks the location of Ptolus and is steeped in evil.
St. Chausle's Chapel (342): For Lothianites; South Market.
St. Daris' Church (184): For Lothianites; Guildsman District.
St. Gustav's Chapel (206): For Lothianites, across from Delver's Square; run by Fabitor Thisk; Midtown.
St. Valien's Cathedral (350): City's main Church of Lothian; adventurers unwelcome; Temple District.
Star Crossing (325): Large open plaza; South Market.
Star Jewelers (181): Skilled dwarf gemcrafters; Guildsman District.
Stirring Stone (254): Idol of Kihomenethoth, the Writhing One in Galchutt temple.
Stockyards (182): Guildsman District.
Stormwrought Campanile (352): Carillon; Temple District.
Street of a Million Gods (343): Church hub; Temple District.
Swordthrower's Club (276): Exclusive tavern; Nobles' Quarter.
Tabby's Den (183): Small bar; Guildsman District.
Taggert's (353): Bar/temple of the ale god; Temple District.
Tarsis (46): Imperial capital, the Eternal City.
Tavern Row (189): Hub of many bars; Midtown.
Tavoh's Bakery (288): North Market.
Temple of Ahaar (353): God of the winds; Temple District.
Temple of Asche (353): God of cities; Temple District.
Temple of Destor (375, 393): Devoted to illegal god of ill luck; in Ghul's Labyrinth.
Temple of the Ebon Hand (354): Cult headquarters; Temple District.
Temple of Excellence (358): Improve in skills; Temple District.
Temple of Gaen (359): Goddess of the sun; Temple District.
Temple of the Iron God (369): God of the forge; Temple District.
Temple of Navashtrom (361): God of strength and harmony; Temple District.
Temple of the Rat God (363): Chaos cult front; Temple District.
Temple of Teun (367): Mother of All Machines; Temple District.
Temple Observatory (362): Dedicated to the Watcher of the Skies; Temple District.
Tenebrous Pit (300): Below the cellar of Imperial University, created by minion of Ghul; Oldtown.
Tent City (155): Around the Market Gate.
Theridae (44, 81–83): Elder Elf land north of the Spire along the Whitewind coast.
Three-Horned Goat (322): Sage; Rivergate.
Throne of Darkness (422): Galchutt stronghold accessed most easily via the Tourbillion.
Tourbillion (422): Teleportation matrix accessible via activation of the *Signet of Shallamoth Kindred*.
Tournament Field (364–365): Site of the Godsday Tournament, north of the city wall.
Tower of Blasphemy (474): Part of Jabel Shammar.
Tower of House Dallimothan (273): Designed by the aasimar wizard Tirestian; Nobles' Quarter.
Tower of Malice (477): Part of Jabel Shammar.
Tower of Science (310): Under construction; Oldtown.
Tower of Terephon (223): Home of Licheloved leader; Necropolis.

Tremoc Korin: See the *Baneheart*.
Tridam (419): Island in Umbral Lake that holds stronghold of Pactlords of the Quaan.
Trolone (29, 44): Capital of Palastan.
Ul-Drakkan (424): House Vrama's fortress in dark elf caverns; Citadel of the Lizard.
Ullar's Sons' Tannery (184): Fine leather; Guildsman District.
Ul-Rassadin (425): Temple-palace in Nluguran.
Ul-Sinistar (424): House Yurganth's fortress in dark elf caverns; Citadel of the Spider.
Umbral Lake (419): In the Eternity Cave.
Undercity Market (394): Shopping hub and entry into the Dungeon, accessed from Delver's Square.
Unn (487): Ethereal Isle; Jewel of Magic.
Uraq (46): Empire south of the Southern Sea.
Urnst, Alchemist (398): Magic shop; Undercity Market.
Ursaon's Used (397): Pawnshop; Undercity Market.
Vantaran Peaks (45): Western limit of Ren Tehoth.
Vaults of the Rhodintor (421): Earthbound demons' home in deep caverns below the city.
Vock Row (309): Arcane street; Oldtown.
The Waiting (214): An area within the Necropolis.
Wall of the Lost (397): Posting board for lost adventurers in the Great Hall; Undercity Market.
Watchhouse (142): Garrisons for City Watch.
Welcome Inn (341): Hostel near South Gate; South Market.
Well of the Shadow Eyes (323): Leads to Ravenstroke; Rivergate.
The White House (310): Legal brothel owned by Aggah-Shan; Oldtown.
Whitewind Sea (44–45): Inland sea north of Palastan.
Wings Falls (151): Site where the King's River drops down Dalen's Cliffs.
Wondrous Tattoos (286): Magical tattoo parlor; North Market.
Zar'at (287): Harrow elf neighborhood; North Market.

NPC GLOSSARY

Alphabetized by first name, not last name or title. Listing offers only the main reference for each name; does not include all "Other Locales" proprietors.

Abbercombe, Lord (93): Last member of ancient noble house, trapped in gold body.
Addares XXXIV (91): Current Empress.
Adlam Theobold (351): Cleric of Lothian, archbishop in St. Valien's Cathedral.
Adnith Fror (155): Runs the Lost Dove in Charenburg north of Ptolus.
Aelian Fardream (329): Elf wizard who cloned himself disastrously.
Ageless Titan (461): See *Kadavalus*.
Aggah-Shan (311): Lich owner of the White House.
Aisheth (168): Elf wizard, now gone.
Alevolenz (424): Dark elf ruler of House Vrama.
Aliaster Vladaam (101): Arcanist son of Iristul.
Aliya Al-Mari (349): Monk member of the Runewardens from Uraq.
Allarrete Cangeri (276): Soaring Idyll's manager.
Alninai Silvertree (197): Manager at the Wind's Mystery at Iridithil's Home.
Ammel Dar (209): Fence for stolen goods.
Anageo Quigg (286): Gnome tattoo artist and spellcaster, runs Wondrous Tattoos.
Anathais, King (44): King of Palastan in Trolone.
Andach (219): Mighty druid of Clasthamus Isle.
Ander Von Yelsin (271): Dubious Conservatory instructor.
Angash (578): Male half-fiend gnoll in Shilukar's lair, child of Ravvan.
Aoska (124): Malkuth, one of the Twelve Commanders.
Araevil Seversong (575): Elf rogue hired to frame Delemele.
Araki Chipestiro (314): Yearsend child and runecaster.
Aran Boturr (361): High priest of Navashtrom.
Arbon Sevolve (125): Cofounder of the Order of Iron Might.
Arkhall Vaugn (105): Infamous Balacazar wizard.
Asaiel Silverdoor (124): Paladin at Pale Tower.
Ashby Gerard (140): Retired City Watch captain and one of the Twelve Commanders.
Aullik (240): Ghoul sorcerer and Warhound keeper in the Dark Reliquary.
Averon (489): See *Dark Averon*.
Avery Tannenboss (190): Owns Avery's Armor.
Balleah (482): Planetar in the Alabaster Sanctuary.
Barit Calomar (359): A high priest of Gaen.
Barras Noven (204): Mercenary who hangs out at the Onyx Spider; cousin of Thurman Rees.
Bartel Denton (143): Crooked Watch captain in the South Market.
Bastion (389): See the *Malificite*.
Beck Von Tibbitz (118): Keepers of the Veil leader.
Bellas Rau (98): Verrana's cousin.
Bermund Thorn (353): Cleric of Ahaar.
Biesta Cran (566): Linech's shivvel-addict half-sister, now dating Shilukar.
Bith the Ratter (281): Rogue in the North Market.
Boris Ilvata (127): See *Savane*.
Brig Stoneheart (122): Famous Knight of the Pale.
Brugul (579): Female half-fiend gnoll in Shilukar's lair, child of Ravvan.
Brusselt Airmol (213): Halfling master thief and friend to Daersidian Ringsire.
Cabais Fortun (292): The Minister of Religion.
Calista (238): Girl entrusted with the Elder Gods' secret; imprisoned in the Dark Reliquary.
Canabulum (60, 542): Minotaur wizard and member of the Runewardens.
Cardalian (211): Halfling held in the Dark Reliquary; Lilith created a magical duplicate of her.
Cardilion Brunner (294): A paladin Knight of the Pale at the Bladechapel.
Carlatia Udelis (339): Runs Ramoro's Bakery.
Carson Herdsman (310): Father of Tellith and manager of the Shadow Theater.
Celdore Silverwood (108): Dark Leaf leader.
Cerrinthan "Cerry" Sanserra (105): Balacazar family diplomat.
Chanticleer Winterwood (199): Member of the Order of the Bow.
Charan Fellashath (203): Bartender at Onyx Spider, with Hennick.
Charl Willothon (155): Old sailor who runs the Stew Pot in Balleton north of Ptolus.
Charnoth (57): Litorian of the surrounding plains.
Chelsean Featherhair (401): Sorcerer/rogue on retainer at the Longfingers Guild headquarters.
Chol Notan (166): Five-year-old son of Larel.
Chorian (424): Female dark elf warrior of Ul-Sinistar.
Chuster Nogol (113): Bankers' guildmaster.
Collus Adderwood (559): Addled mage ally of Toridan Cran.
Commissar of Ptolus (140): See *Igor Urnst*.
Cordelia Erthuo (95): Human member of House Erthuo.
Cravish Nathed (106): Nobles' Quarter crime boss.
Cynric Gallow, Shigmaa (230): Urasta's lieutenant.
Dadian Navaen (339): Uncle of Naequant at Navaen Bowcraft.
Daersidian Ringsire (213): Elf battle mage who rides a wyvern; friend to Brusselt Airmol.

Damarcan (486): Half-celestial ruler of Orr who became corrupt.
Dark Averon (489): Solar who helped Danar build the Banewarrens, now corrupted.
Dartalius Estalon (294): New Knight of the Pale at the Bladechapel.
Darthalis Temester (281): Information broker who owns the Book Wagon.
Dasani Merriwether (262): Aasimar proprietor of the Aristocrat's Table.
Delemele Sartaris (575): Cleric of Melann.
Delline Yashara (178): Herbalists' guildmaster.
Delloch Boundstone (179): Dwarven chief scrap merchant at Midden Heaps.
Dered Abanar (93): Head of House Abanar.
Deregalis Finorin (337): Crazy summoner inmate at Mahdoth's Asylum.
Derral Fank (557): Member of the Pale Dogs.
Derrence Springdart (396): Halfling vendor of magical torches in the Undercity Market.
Derron Polon (206): Co-owner (with Eltan) of the Row Bathhouse.
Derresh (315): The greatest assassin in Ptolus; specialty is illusions; "lives" in Oldtown.
Desariana Ballack (314): On the run from Araki Chipestiro.
Dessis Palath (121): Gnome rogue Knight of the Golden Cross.
Devina Kath (96): Head of House Kath and chancellor of the Conservatory.
Dharim Boch (111): Lives at Fate Weavers' school.
Dialla Cester (176): Physicker bad apple at Darkbirth's Madhouse.
Dierna Hillerchaun (122): Knight of the Pale leader.
Dockmaster (164): Obese harbormaster in the Docks.
Dodun Fisk (568): Old man at the Docks.
Dollin Ebonhome (120): Killraven's dwarven crime boss in the North Market.
Donrah (486): Ruler of the jewel of Ond.
Doraedian Mythlord (197): Master of Iridithil's Home.
Dorant Khatru (96): Head of House Khatru.
Dorg (398): Troll guard at Potions and Elixirs.
Doril the Elder (494): Dwarf queen imprisoned in the dungeons of Jabel Shammar.
Doril the Younger (494): Dwarf queen imprisoned in the dungeons of Jabel Shammar, devious sister of Doril the Elder.
Dorut Wolfstone (310): Architect at Tower of Science.
Dream King (426): Ruler in Dreta Phantas, spent his entire adult life asleep.
Drusii (242): Marilith in the Dark Reliquary.
Dullin Balacazar (104): Maystra's son, a runebearer.
Dulson Farber (322): Lives at the three-horned goat house.
Durant (119): Troglodyte agent of Killraven; the Stink Man.
Durg (336): Korben Trollone's best friend and closest cohort, a troll.
Ebbert Boltcrafter (192): Rotund, good-natured dwarf owner of Ebbert's Outfitters.
Edarth Ovis (335): Moneylender and front for Korben Trollone.
Edwina Coll (123): Owner of Heavenly Baked Goods and leader of the Knights of the Secret Sun.
Ekarth'il (472): Aboleth mage in the Misbegotten Tower.
Ednol Friss (164): Docks resident.
Elga Kord (106): Rivergate crime boss.
Eltan Polon (206): Co-owner (with Derron) of the Row Bathhouse.
Emperor of the Church (91, 269): See *Rehoboth Ylestos*.
Empress Addares (91): See *Addares XXXIV*.
Enis Sadar (99): Wife of Renn Sadar.
Erda Schenk (143): Crooked Oldtown City Watch captain.
Erediana (425): Rules Nluguran and House Thess.
Erell Yinnick (561): Neighbor of Greyson House.
Erissa Endal, Sister (168): Cleric of Lothian.
Ernast Krundar (319): Halfling owner (with Fallix Hord) of Barbarian Balloonists.
Erred (111): Centaur Fate Weaver.
Erreshifal (494): Half-dragon scion of Father Claw, in Jabel Shammar's dungeons.
Esbel Pamorias (332): Owns the Exotic Market.
Esgilar Masters (306): Paladin leader of the Order of the Steadfast Heart.
Ethisha Kath (96): Devina's ballerina daughter.
Everard Wibert (143): Crooked Watch captain in the Guildsman District.
Eyvind (393): Fugitive wizard in the Slave City.
Fabitor Thisk, Brother (206): Chaplain of St. Gustav's Chapel.
Falishmal (234): Balor in the Dark Reliquary.
Falles Donnel (331): Uris's father, started a leather shop.
Fallix Hord (319): Halfling owner (with Ernast Krundar) of Barbarian Balloonists.
Falstef (238): First of the Malkuth; tortured deva angel held in the Dark Reliquary.
Favil Dallimothan, Uncle (94): A very old silver dragon.
Feegus, Doctor (564): Shuul creator of the Prajdall.
Felaer (307): Deva with gold-tipped feathers at the Pale Tower.
Feligg Desiduo (338): Maran's husband.
Fellis (249): A vampire guardian of the Wintersouled.
Ferrid Naphon (106): Docks crime boss.
Fesamere Balacazar (104): Menon's daughter.
Fhomas Reen (107): Vies for leadership of the Brotherhood of Redemption.
Filas Nevish (377): Drug-using master in the Banker's Guild.
Frana Amberfist (447): Ghost of last cleric of Unnom in Dwarvenhearth.
Fransin Nagel (97): Head of House Nagel.
Frastis Bek (192): An extremely talented coppersmith and owner of the Copper Kettle.
Frein Avathon (357): Commander of the Ebon Hand temple guard.
Gaerioth Shadowhand (53): Harrow elf monk and a member of the Company of the Black Lantern.
Garin Vnata (96): Conservatory Vice Chancellor.
Garreth Bek (192): Son of Frastis the coppersmith.
Gattara Vladaam (102): Daughter of Iristul.
Gavel Longdraught (178): Gnome brewery owner.
Geffrey Barton (140): Renowned war hero and one of the Twelve Commanders.
Gegall (231): Nalfeshnee in the Dark Reliquary.
Geraeal Glitterstone (202): Gnome co-owner of the North Point Restaurant.
Giva Desiduo (338): Gnome daughter of Maran.
Glasa Tiaro (305): The Graven's half-celestial friend.
Godfred Vladaam (102): Son of Iristul.
Golathan Naddershrike (322): Recently murdered human wizard in the Rivergate District.
Gorti Jurgen (395): The Delver's Guild's chief representative in the Undercity office.
The Graven (305): Stone golem covered in engraved holy symbols at the Pale Tower.
Grandmama Dallimothan (94): Old gold dragon.
Guildmaster Delver (108): See *Sorum Dandubal*.
Gunther Edlund (286): Runs the Smoke Shop.
Guun Morrigon (559): Toridan Cran's warrior ally.
Hadrien Runihan (185): Son of Abesh and friend of the Balacazars; Covenant of Blood vampire.
Halgrim Fatherstone (106, 341): Dwarf South Market crime boss for the Balacazars.
Hallidin (183): Centaur employee at the Stockyards.
Hallos Dallimothan (94): Kirstol's "grandfather."
Hallusiun Everfar (120): Elf Knight of the Chord.
Hannis Goldtooth (334): Dwarf owner of the Golden Tooth, head of Goldsmiths' guild.
Hanthan Yan (167): Owns the Savage Shark.
Harla Glitterstrike (182): Dwarf mage who gets gems from Star Jewelers.
Haurt (494): Troll chieftain in Jabel Shammar's dungeons.
Hayman Knapp (123): Aging Guildmaster Thief.
Heffrul Dominarik (292): Minister of Health.

Helmut Itlestein (363): Republican leader and Watcher of the Skies high priest.
Hennam (220): Andach's apprentice, afflicted with demonseed.
Hennick Fellashath (203): Bartender at Onyx Spider, with Charan.
Hirus Feek (191): Blacksmith of the Bull and Bear, with brother Sholum.
Hogun Silvergleam (107): Dwarf monk of the Brotherhood of Redemption.
Holy Emperor (91, 269): See *Rehoboth Ylestos*.
Iernis Poetaen (396): Elf who sells mapping equipment in the Undercity Market.
Igor Reichstav (220): Friend of Necropolis flies.
Igor Urnst (140): Commissar of Ptolus and a famous general who won the Gnoll War.
Illene Schuk (341): A daughter of the Welcome Inn's owners.
Ilti (231): One of two night hags (with Ulti) in the Dark Reliquary.
Iltumar Shon (191): Sixteen-year-old human clerk at the Bull and Bear.
Iniah Croesh (115): Inverted Pyramid master.
Inlios Pabovini (332): Gnome who hangs out at Danbury's and runs the Exotic Market.
Ireve Nal (106): Midtown crime boss.
Iristul Vladaam (100): Head of House Vladaam.
Iron Mage (316): Most powerful wizard in Ptolus, independent.
Irretharm, Shigmaa (250): Herald of the Wintersouled.
Jallek Pedastan (121): Paladin Knight of the Golden Cross.
Jamila Nox (574): A Fate Weaver at Helmut Itlestein's house.
Jangave Lesh (322): Offers combat training in Rivergate.
Jebathio Spiritstar (202): Gnome co-owner of the North Point Restaurant.
Jevicca Nor (115): Well-known Inverted Pyramid mage.
Jinsa Hammerblight (396): Dwarf vendor of firearms in the Undercity Market.
Jirraith (378): Doppelganger and crime lord in charge of the Pale Dogs.
Juna Quenan (291): Minister of Education.
Juranan Kath (268): Lady Devina's aging uncle.
Jurgen Yath (285): Adventurer at the Red Stallion Pub.
Kabel Dathimol (70): Leader of the local Order of the Dawn and one of the Twelve Commanders.
Kadavalus (461): The Ageless Titan in Goth Gulgamel.
Kadiradel (124): A solar angel; Malkuth high-up.
Kadmus (265): Majordomo of Castle Shard.
Kaela Sparkborn (575): Elf bard; friend of Delemele.
Kaeran Altarstone (115): Inverted Pyramid master.
Kaira Swanwing (121): Elf leader of the Knights of the Golden Cross; lives in Oldtown.
Kaladeen (233): Balor in the Dark Reliquary who would like to lead the Fallen; hates Lilith/Raguel.
Kalbir Rau (98): Verrana's son.
Karee (287): Harrow elf vampire and a member of the Covenant of Blood.
Karetsan (287): Harrow elf wizard and leader in the Zar'at.
Karn Ellosh (242): Prisoner in Drusii's chamber.
Karsha Hammersong (299): Dwarf wife of Ollam.
Katerin (96): Devina Kath's sculptor cousin.
Kenill Dallaster (268): Made a small fortune as a spice merchant.
Keper, Lords (131): Twins Reddis Keper and Neivis Keper, who lead the Vai.
Kevris Killraven (119): Hag crime lord.
Keylord (236): Half-demon minotaur in Dark Reliquary dungeons.
Kharl Mitoren (285): Sells weapons at Mitoren's Blades.
King in Yellow (82): Leader of the Wintersouled.
Kird (201): Myraeth's ogre bodyguard.
Kirian Ylestos (270): Prince of the Church.
Kirstol Dallimothan (94): Head of House Dallimothan.
Kiseela Starwave (315): Elf illusionist on Dweomer Street, created Derresh.
Klaron Dallimothan, Great-Aunt (94): Ancient silver dragon.
Knifal (241): Half-fiend sorcerer and chief torturer in the Dark Reliquary.
Kohoath the Betrayer (131): Once was one of the Urthon Aedar, now in league with Ul-Sinistar.
Kolister Mahaven (175): Administrator of Darkbirth's Madhouse.
Konna Werran (107): Human bard with the Brotherhood of Redemption.
Korben "the Keeper" Trollone (335): Killraven's agent in the South Market.
Koth Yurtin (331): Arena manager at the Cock Pit.
Krag (331): Minotaur warrior in the Cock Pit's arena.
Kragas the Bold (199): Infamous Harrow elf barbarian.
Kruellis, Lady (141): Tarsis noblewoman who hates Ptolus.
Kurnor Steelaxe (397): Stonelost dwarf of the Sign of the Shovel.
Kurtlan Nagel (97): Jailed former head of House Nagel (he was framed).
Lackie (378): The Beggar King and a Harrow elf; real name Lakimos; owns Lackie's bar.
Ladris (199): Centaur cohort of Kragas the Bold.
Laerose Trueflight (339): Elf member of the Order of the Bow and an owner of Navaen Bowcraft.
Laithe Silksong (340): Manages drug traffic through the Spice Market.
Lakimos (378): See *Lackie*.
Larel Notan (166): An alchemist.
Larsh (398): Guard at Potions and Elixirs.
Lathikamis (484): The Dread One's personal bodyguard, a balor.
Laucio Dellinti (558): Criminal Shoal elf from the Sea Kingdoms.
Leisarth (487): Wizard-Priest of Ni-Gorth and vanished ruler of Unn.
Lerthan Dergstrom (106): Oldtown crime boss.
Liessa Vergan (346): Celestial Conclave high priestess.
Lilith (110): Ruler of the Fallen and Forsaken.
Linech Cran (563): Drug smuggler and Balacazar ally in Rivergate.
Linele Cran (563): Linech's thirteen-year-old daughter, became undead after attack on Sallachor Isle.
Liss Satorosh (191): Owns the Cloud Theater.
Lothao Valinth (197): Elf proxy of Doraedian Mythlord and one of the Twelve Commanders.
Lyaele (494): Lunas elf princess impersonated by a doppelganger in Jabel Shammar's dungeons.
Lyala Cooper (320): Owns Rivergate general store.
Lyrasa Contair (144): Fire Brigade's new captain.
Lyrikka (249): Wintersouled vampire guardian.
Mahdoth (337): An ocular tyrant under the effects of a compulsion to run an asylum for mages.
Malasir (277): Efreeti head of Killraven's Nobles' Quarter operations; found in Swordthrower's.
Malegoch Krill (399): Half-fiend sorcerer and Ennin leader in the Dark Market.
The Malificite (389): Formerly Bastion, a planetar angel who helped Danar build the Banewarrens (now corrupted in Jabel Shammar).
Malkeen Balacazar (104): Balacazar family heir.
Malleck Javimal (355): Powerful Ebon Hand priest.
Maloyatas (251): One of the Wintersouled.
Mand Scheben (353): Cleric of Asche and friend to Castle Shard.
Mara von Witten, Sister (542, 583**):** One of the Runewardens, cleric of Lothian.
Maran Desiduo (338): Gnome clothier and expert seamstress.
Marcad Shever (99): Thollos's younger brother.
Mardun Narvesh (180): Tends bar at the Skull and Sword.
Margaetalis Everwood (198): Elf who delights in gossip and intrigue.
Marija Elinek (111): Head Fate Weaver.
Markus Schuk (341): Owns the Welcome Inn with Valene.
Marlow Atrabonc (191): The Cloud Theater's primary director and writer.
Marta Thone (206): Works as a seamstress at Saches clothiers.

Marved Sallin (352): Self-titled campanologist.
Matrenus (96): Devina Kath's husband.
Maystra Balacazar (104): Menon's daughter.
Medre Allaconda (233): Most powerful member of the Covenant of Blood, member of the Forsaken; lives in the Dark Reliquary.
Meither Amost (106): Half-elf North Market crime boss.
Melanope Havan (196): Midtown barber.
Melior Kalen (359): A high priest of Gaen.
Mellintha Springdart (396): Sorcerer wife of Derrence who makes magical torches for sale.
Menaster Orrund (574): A Fate Weaver at Helmut Itlestein's house.
Menon Balacazar (103): Aging crime lord, head of the Balacazar crime family.
Merchael Finetooth (321): Gnome who operates Finelle's Pleasant Diversions.
Mercus Niolonthor (291–292): Minister of Guilds.
Meruk (494): Solar angel imprisoned in Jabel Shammar's dungeons.
Methul Watcher (559): Alias of Helmut Itlestein.
Miaga, Queen (44): Palastani ruler in Trolone.
Migos Foraeth (191): Half-elf proprietor of the Black Swan.
Mooncry (307): Beautiful deva angel with long dark hair at the Pale Tower.
Moondros (393): Nymph ruler of the Slave City.
The Mother (247): Terribly transformed marilith in the Dark Reliquary.
Mother Superior of the Sisterhood of Silence (128): Head of this order of law-enforcing female monks.
Moynath Autumnsong (266): Inverted Pyramid master and friend to Castle Shard.
Muwal (494): Ogre-mage who was a prince of his kind millennia ago; in Jabel Shammar's dungeons.
Myalla Wurt (96): The Kath estate's severe house matron.
Myraeth Tuneweaver (199): Elf wizard and owner of a magical oddities and trinket shop.
Mystia Descri (125): Cofounder of the Order of Iron Might.
Na'haras (104): Ancient human revived as a vampire of the void to be Malkeen Balacazar's bodyguard.
Naeon Ullistri (271): Elf bard at the Conservatory.
Naephos Worldsea (99): Renn Sadar's proxy.
Naequant Navaen (338): Head of the Trueflight family; owns Navaen Bowcraft.
Naevin Swanwing (121): Elf warrior Knight of the Golden Cross.
Nagrus (106): Half-orc Warrens crime boss.
Nalachoserithis (494): Great wyrm gold dragon whose bones lie in the hidden prison of Jabel Shammar's dungeons.
Nalleth Falcron (185): Possessed slayer in the Guildsman District who invented the stone mask.
Nallia Feston (336): Korben Trollone's mistress at Swordthrower's Club.
Nann Krakosh (397): Makes and sells iron rations in the Undercity Market.
Naosh (330): Aggah-Shan's half-orc lieutenant and manager of the Cock Pit.
Nara Nayson (397): Assistant to Tirres.
Nara Rau (98): Bellas's wife, an expert in appraising goods and people.
Narasha (266): Rare female satyr at Castle Shard.
Narlu (60, 155): Ornu-Nom consort of Radik.
Narlus Dye (124): Bard at the Pale Tower.
Narris Dallimothan (94–95): Young male silver dragon.
Narya Itlestein (182): Stockyards administrator and Helmut's older sister.
Nastriss (400): Ritter Ratagan's assarai slave-soldier in the Dark Market.
Navanna Vladaam (101): Daughter of Iristul.
Nayvras (350): Oracle at the Shrine of the Oracle.
Neivis Keper (132): One of the Twin Lords Keper.
Nella Schaun (196): Manager of the Griffon.
Neridoc Bittersong (395): Gnome "Arcane Scribe" in the Undercity Market.
Nest Master (414): Albino ratman in the sewers.
Nestlin Ka (95): Majordomo of House Dallimothan.
Niaer Daystep (334): Half-elf owner of Faraway Scents.
Nicalon Regelis (101): Alias of Navanna Vladaam in her guise as a Knight of the Chord.
Nila Finch (272): Captain of the *Vanished Dream* Abanar aeroship.
Nilla Nagel (97): Yarek Nagel's sickly daughter.
Nillis Regarson (292): Minister of Safety.
Nireus Pard (69): Bishop of Ptolus.
Nivae Tamelli (120): Greatest bard in all of Ptolus; also a Knight of the Chord.
Nolvaga Von Meudel (300): University chancellor and Tarsis native.
Nora Dallaster (268): Wife of Rillis.
Nord Steelgrim (292): Minister of Public Works.
Norris Felder (168): Cursed captain with aethel, hiding in the Docks.
Nowen the Horse (397): Human of Nallish heritage at the Sign of the Shovel.
Nyathoch (251): One of the Wintersouled.
Nyatrah (578): Gnoll cleric of Ravvan.
Nyphistree Silvertree (199): Head of the Order of the Bow.
Ochremeshk (589–590): Imprisoned demon prince; can be released using soul magic in Tinareg's tooth.
Odsen Rom (405): Tiefling warden of the Prison.
Ogden Reinhard (140): Well-known warrior and one of the Twelve Commanders.
Ollam Hammersong (299): Dwarf owner of Hammersong Vaults.
Ooshul (242): Drusii's babau lieutenant.
Oracthon (423): Great wyrm black dragon with the remaining essence of Thoggidrum.
Orden Falcron (185): Sociopathic possessor of Nalleth; powerful sorcerer and alchemist.
Oron Bridgemaster (192): Dwarf bartender at Danbury's.
Ortry Gannon (557): One of the Pale Dogs.
Oukina (567): Linech's girlfriend.
Oulgas, King (43): Barbarian ruler of the Eastern Hordes.
Pabos Lendarick (285): Runs a kennel.
Pared Cobart (179): Masons' guildmaster.
Parnell Alster (208): Sheva Callister's ghost friend.
Pauthan Udelis (339): Ramoro's pickpocket brother.
Peliope Erthuo (95): Head of House Erthuo.
Pellandar (198): Friend of Zaetra.
Pevan Shamus (353): Cleric/owner of Taggert's.
Phadian Gess (118): Keepers of the Veil seneschal.
Phon Quartermain (557): Seamstress at Saches.
Phord Dallimothan (94): Kirstol's "father."
Piraloth (307): Half-celestial brooder at the Pale Tower.
Prince of the Church: See *Kirian Ylestos*.
Prince Ironheart (122): A Knight of the Pale.
Quaelin Fillasti (121): Elf wizard and Knight of the Golden Cross.
Quideth Minnisham (218): Onetime companion of Wynn Rabinall.
Quillong (569): Triton scout/spy from Konagis.
Quivor Nox (398): Co-proprietor of Potions and Elixirs.
Radik (155): Ornu-Nom orc from south of Ptolus.
Radolf Cooper (566): Lives in Linech's burrow and works for him.
Raenashal (424): Dark elf mistress of Ul-Sinistar.
Raguel (110): Divine ruler of Hell, now in the Dark Reliquary.
Rajaz Nillotti (203): An Uraqi knife-fighter and Imperial Eyes spy.
Ralelle Noramar (121): A Knight of the Golden Cross.
Ramoro Udelis (339): Runs Ramoro's Bakery.
Rastor (204): Massive litorian with beads tied into his mane who owns Rastor's Weapons.
Raule (96): Sallina Kath's son, a singer and songwriter.
Rebeva Autorth (294): Manages the office of the Bellringers' Guild.
Rechel Pattemon (132): Most experienced Viridian Lord; one of the Twelve Commanders.
Redalla Shever (99): Thollos's wife.

Reddis Keper (132): One of the Twin Lords Keper.
Regan Frome (107): Sorcerer with the Brotherhood of Redemption.
Rehoboth Ylestos (91, 269): Holy Emperor of the Church of Lothian; also claims secular throne.
Reinym Ghar (362): The Great Warder; half-elf cleric leader of the Navashtrom/Tardeshou church.
Relinda Chilithon (308): The Guildmaster Sage.
Renala Hotterin (144): Halfling Goldshield administrator.
Renn Sadar (99): Head of House Sadar.
Ressis Kal (181): Half dark elf who runs the Back Room.
Rethicalas (287): Juvenile male red dragon rumored to be among the Harrow elves in the Za'rat.
Rill, Lady (264): Lord of Castle Shard, Bride of Magic.
Rillis Dallaster (268): Spice trade magnate.
Rintha (131, 377): Half-fiend ratcatcher and Vai courier.
Ritter Ratagan (399): Ennin leader in Dark Market.
Robel Pillian (123): A captain in the Commissar's Men.
Roema Ashenwood (353): Elf member of the campanile Sorn cell.
Rona Schuk (341): A daughter of the Welcome Inn's owners.
Ronam Tumblefoot (167): Halfling member of the Longfingers Guild.
Ruballa (183): Orc employee at the Stockyards.
Ruror Greatblade (567): Linech's dwarf bodyguard.
Saeth Watersong (334): Elf employee at Faraway Scents.
Sala Eddaris (332): Wizard investigating Inlios.
Sallina Kath (96): Devina Kath's sister.
Salora Hail (339): Owns a pottery shop.
Salsan (570): Lizardfolk slave ("Sir Jingles") kept in the Balacazar cave complex by the sea.
Sanne (285): Seeks her missing husband, Sebestin.
Savane (127): Shuul leader whose real name is Boris Ilvata.
Savvan (487): Demon lord in the Jewels of Parnaith who has the *cask of frozen dreams*.
Scrud (378): Gutterkings leader.
Seanus Illithan (566): Eager halfling who is Linech's newest employee.
Sebestin (285): Missing husband of Sanne.
Secki (165): Eight-year-old girl who works for the Dockmaster.
Segaci Fellisti (91, 118, 127): Aging councilor who now claims the Lion-Guarded Throne.
Selestical (251): One of the Wintersouled.
Sephranos, the Winged King (124): A solar angel and the leader of the Malkuth.
Serai Lorenci (542): Elf wizard/chaositechnician; a member of the Runewardens and Sercian's twin.
Sercian Lorenci (548): Multitalented elf member of the Company of the Black Lantern; Serai's twin.
Setarsis (472): Aboleth wizard in the Misbegotten Tower of Jabel Shammar.
The Shadow Eyes (323): Mad sorcerer clone of the elf Aelian Fardream.
Shaeshin Twinleaf (198): Elf who hopes to become the new emissary from Dohrinthas.
Shakkar (424): Male dark elf warrior of Ul-Sinistar.
Sheva Callister (208): Famous delver (retired) who found the *Crown of Ki-Lias*.
Shibata (370): Minotaur cleric of Niveral.
Shilukar (545, 563): Dark elf chaositechnician and puppetmaster.
Sholum Feek (191): Blacksmith of the Bull and Bear, with brother Hirus.
Shim (310): A skulk.
Shurrin Delano (542): Carper's Bay rogue who loves Tellith Herdsman; one of the Runewardens.
Silion Ankismar (366–367): One of the heads of the Temple of the Rat God.
Singriosh Notorison (397): Tiefling who runs the knife booth in the Undercity Market.
Siphanon Shatterbright (199): Elf member of the Order of the Bow.
Sissy Cooper (566): Radolf's wife; lives in Linech's burrow and works for him.
Slugashulg (420): King of the locathah caverns.
Smurd (183): An ogre employee at the Stockyards.
Sobac Redwand (212): A well-known elf thief.
Sokalahn (405): Half-demon wizard who wanted the *Black Grail* and became a lich after breaking one of the Gates of Delirium.
Soren Clanstone (419): Dwarf prince of Kaled Del who hangs out at the Black Swan.
Sorum Dandubal (108): Guildmaster Delver.
Spyncer Coil (380): Mad creator of the *Swords of Ptolus*, now hiding with the Pale Dogs.
Ssethenus (393): Lizardfolk former slave who seeks to overthrow Moondros in the Slave City.
Starachele (425): A sorcerer spy in Ul-Sinistar.
Starsochin (434): A Hound once imprisoned by Stonemight dwarves.
Stavislav Felatt (121): Sorcerer/ranger Knight of the Golden Cross.
Steron Vsool (359): Mighty paladin and champion of Gaen whose glowing heart is visible through his chest.
Stillis Covenrow (122): Halfling rogue who serves as the Bladechapel's majordomo.
Sulet (287): Mercenary Harrow elf in the Zar'at.
Sumar (570): Slave from Uraq kept in the Balacazar cave complex by the sea.
Surmoil Rallekred, Shigmaa (229): Forsaken sorcerer.
Synethys (321): Half-dragon Sorn member, claims to be a half-demon.
Synlass Perideth (274): Elf member of House Sadar.
Tabor Danbury (192): Danbury's proprietor.
Tagel Unergart (28): Order of the Dawn leader.
Tal Ingersol (184, 397): Leatherworker in the Guildsman District and the Undercity Market.
Talenta (370): Trumpet archon in the Temple District with viral goodness plague.
Taliestha (424): Female dark elf warrior of Ul-Sinistar.
Tallaeth (96): Ethisha Kath's half-elf husband.
Taltos Urnst (398): Claims to be the Commissar's cousin; runs Urnst, Alchemist.
Tamora Rigan (339): Runs the Rogue Moon Trading Company local office.
Taran Mult (167): Manages the Sailors' Rest bar.
Tarin Ursalatao (194): Talented and charismatic bard at the Ghostly Minstrel.
Tarkus (378): Centaur member of the Pale Dogs, a messenger for Jirraith.
Tashari Lin (339): A main Rogue Moon stockholder; ex-wife of Linech Cran.
Tasilicus Rhendron (307): Wizard at the Pale Tower.
Tellian Riverborn (361, 548): One of the Company of the Black Lantern, a cleric of Navashtrom.
Tellith Herdsman (194): Manages the inn at the Ghostly Minstrel.
Teophia Jewelblade (203): Gnome wizard and friend of the North Point Restaurant's owners.
Terella Spoch, Sister (122): Cleric at the Bladechapel.
Terraeth Whispermoon (309): Harrow elf sorcerer; a specialist in fighting threats to city.
Terrek Nal (208): A student of Golatham Naddershrike who killed him in anger.
Terrik Clanstone (418): Dwarf leader of Kaled Del.
Terros Kallind (293): Human gladiator in Oldtown.
Testusumi (294): Guardian naga at the Citadel of the Golden Cross.
Teyvran Newaster (268): Owner of the Crown Theater.
Themus Wuur (180): Half-orc owner of the Skull and Sword bar.
Therese Urnst (144): Eldest of the Commissar's daughters.
Thollos Shever (99): Head of House Shever.
Thord Questin (575): Recently excommunicated cleric of Melann.
Thorrim Kolvir (212): Centaur paladin in Midtown.

Thuela Nasarini (120): Halfling (spider-creature) crime boss for Killraven in Oldtown.
Thurman Rees (310): Proprietor of the White House in Oldtown; cousin of Barras Noven.
Thurvan Rashong (305): Daersidian Ringsire's friend; stole the *box of shadows* and was corrupted.
Tiel Lawley (371): Well-known warrior and worshipper of Battle.
Tillian Dallaster (268): Daughter of Rillis and Nora.
Timerian, Velator (392): Insane leader of the Order of the Legacy beneath Ptolus.
Tinareg (238): Old half-orc in the Dark Reliquary's prison whose tooth has Ochremeshk's symbol.
Tinerias Edren (297): A philosopher.
Tirres (397): Centaur weaponsmith in the Undercity Market with a workshop in the South Market.
Tissakal (379): Dark elf murderer in the Warrens.
Toman Etherin (191): A commoner with a missing daughter in Midtown.
Torel Sellek (178): Longdraught Brewery worker.
Toridan Cran (559): Half-orc criminal brother of Linech.
Travinor Rem (398): Rogue proprietor of Scouts, Guides, and Porters; also runs the Dark Market.
Tuea Severwing (121): Harrow elf paladin Knight of the Golden Cross.
Tully Boltcrafter (193): Ebbert's brother; took one too many blows to the head in his adventuring days.
Tussi Moheath (183): Runs Tabby's Den.
Tyonaeth Glittersprite (398): Elf sorcerer and co-proprietor of Potions and Elixirs.
Tyrese Anvilfist (114): Tinsmiths' dwarf guildmaster.
Tyrus Green (166): A ghost at Pier Five in the Docks.
Tyrus Marphel (144): Fired from the Fire Brigade following a scandal.
Udalaag (542): Abused half-dragon burrower rescued by the Runewardens and turned to good.
Uetha Wolanat (121): Half-elf cleric of the Elder Gods and Knight of the Golden Cross.
Ularis Gadare (120): Killraven's half-elf rogue lieutenant in the Guildsman District.
Uldrick Kord (106): Guildsman District crime boss.
Ulithik (473): A monstrous, tentacled sorcerer in the Misbegotten Tower.
Ulti (231): One of two night hags (with Ilti) in the Dark Reliquary.
Unirthom the Blue (115): An Inverted Pyramid master.
Urak Nar (337): Mahdoth's Asylum administrator.
Urasta, Shigmaa (113): Tiefling Forsaken leader.
Uris Donnel (331): Falles's son, runs a leather shop in the South Market.
Urlenius (361): Ogre-mage Star of Navashtrom.
Urnest Ankismar (366–367): A wererat and one of the heads of the Temple of the Rat God.
Ursaon Brightfall (397): Half-elf pawnbroker at Ursaon's Used.
Urshanna (379): Dark elf priestess who runs Madame Kaethea's House.
Utha Aryen (285): Co-owns the Red Stallion Pub.
Uthlachiman the Elder (425): Blue dragon who leads a sorcerer cabal in Ul-Sinistar.
Utresh Dallimothan (94): Adult bronze dragon.
Uyethicas (251): One of the Wintersouled.
Vaethir Erthuo (95): Elf member of House Erthuo.
Vagger Nulus (558): Small-time hood with big ambitions.
Vala Ivansk (167): Owns the Sailors' Rest bar.
Valene Schuk (341): Owns the Welcome Inn with Markus.
Vanum Vaal (323): Alias for the Shadow Eyes in his guise as a witch and Killraven ally.
Vard Hillman (194): Owner of the Ghostly Minstrel.
Varen (487): Ruler of Av.
Varthis Starborn (198): Gnome squatter at Iridithil's Home.
Vatur (397): Lizardfolk who repairs damaged equipment from his Undercity Market booth.
Veda Medaris (178, 381): Head of the Ironworkers' Guild.
Velator: See *Timerian*.
Verrana Rau (98): Head of House Rau.
Vestra Totharson (294): Paladin with the Order of Dayra; friend of Dierna at the Bladechapel.
Vexander Sangreal (548): Elf mage and a member of the Company of the Black Lantern.
Vissuine (424): Dark elf evoker in Ul-Sinistar.
Vladimir Urnst (398): Claims to be the Commissar's cousin; helps run Urnst, Alchemist.
Waeven Iosanil (313): Elf philosopher.
Wandering Smith (341): Avatar of the Iron God in the South Market.
Wareth Naddershrike (322): Brother of the murdered wizard Golathan.
The Warhound (239): Unique demon in the Dark Reliquary.
Wilhemara (494): Cloud giant queen in the dungeons of Jabel Shammar.
Winistar "Winnie" Potter (204): Owns Potter's inn.
Winteril (347): Cherubim elf at the Celestial Conclave.
Wuntad, Shigmaa (77): Seeks to unite the chaos cults for the Night of Dissolution.
Wynn Rabinall (349): Powerful monk and leader of the Order of the Fist.
Wynthaes (169): Cherubim elf spy who seeks out slavers in the Docks.
Yahn Runhald (184): One of Ullar's sons.
Yallis Kether (285): Co-owns the Red Stallion Pub.
Yarek Nagel (97): A doddering noble uncle.
Yarrana Montass (292): Minister of Trade.
Yavan Helliscon (277): Owns Swordthrower's Club; a member of House Abanar.
Yavil Totharson (294, 322): A retired soldier at Jangave's Training Hall; brother of Vestra.
Yavos Nared (321): Evil Sorn cell leader at Darksoul House.
Ylouil (572): Demon spirit possessing Linech's pocketwatch.
Ymrik (303): Frost giant who stole the *box of shadows*.
Yorid Glitterfist (140): A representative of Kaled Del among the Twelve Commanders.
Yuethi Mooncircle (107): Vies for leadership of the Brotherhood of Redemption.
Yul Havan (196): A Barber and owner at Havan's Haven.
Yula Falass (309): Abjurer known as a security specialist.
Yurikin Falahoff (334): Fabric Market manager.
Zachean (435): Dark elf vampire in Dwarvenhearth.
Zade Kenevan (194): Gruff and skinny bartender at the Ghostly Minstrel.
Zaetra (198): Cherubim elf and a close friend of Doraedian Mythlord.
Zairic Westridon (337): Mahdoth's gnome wizard assistant who hangs out at Danbury's.
Zalisartaram (321): Harrow elf games expert.
Zastanix (227): A flylike demon in the Dark Reliquary.
Zathiriax (458): Sorcerer and leader of the Sorn-Ulth beneath the Nobles' Quarter near Goth Gulgamel.
Zavere, Lord (264): A Lord of Castle Shard.
Znaam (486): Bloated insectlike ruler of Imn.
Zophas Adhar (122, 542): Aasimar paladin and Knight of the Pale; member of the Runewardens.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS FROM HISTORY

Abesh Runihan (111, 347): Hero who defeated the ghost-lich Kagrisos but died in doing so.

Addares X (Von Tessel) (31, 89): The Empress who instituted the need for firearm permits.

Alchestrin (218, 263): Human wizard and former lord of Castle Shard.

Arlian (111): A friend of Abesh Runihan; like Nitham, could see fates.

Bared Stonefist (430): Dwarvenhearth's Day King at time of Sokalahn.

Barris Deeperstone (430): Dwarven general in first dark elf war, won at Cabled Rock.

Brusk (347): The half-orc warrior who slew the tarrasque.

Cheroboth Ylestos (141): Former Emperor of the Church (657 IA).

Cordaris (392): A woman of long ago who found the Legacy and created the Order of the Legacy.

Danar Rotansin (28, 79–82, 384): Good cleric who created the Banewarrens to rid the world of evil artifacts but was corrupted by one of them and became Eslathagos Malkith. Dwelled in Mosul Pearl. Husband of Parnaith.

Delian Von Tessel (28, 30, 66–67, 84, 87, 90, 347): The first Emperor of the Lion-Guarded Throne.

Derrick Stonefist (429): The first Day King in Dwarvenhearth.

Derrin Darkbirth (174–175): Founded an asylum in the Guildsman District.

Dionys (85, 348): A human warrior-druid and member of the Great Seven who killed Ghul.

The Dread One: See *Eslathagos Malkith*.

Eriskal (85, 348): Elf rogue and member of the Great Seven who killed Ghul.

Eslathagos Malkith (28, 79–81, 389): Evil overlord who sought to conquer the world and the planes beyond thousands of years ago. Also called the Dread One. Dwelled in Jabel Shammar. See *Danar Rotansin*.

Ethylassir (263): A powerful mage of long-ago Castle Shard.

Faranastra the Faithful (487): Slain ruler of the Jewel of Ath.

Gerris Hin (308): A loremaster and historian from ages past.

Ghul (28, 30–31, 83): Claimed to descend from the Dread One and sought to emulate his conquest hundreds of years ago. Built the fortress of Goth Gulgamel halfway up the Spire. Created the Utterdark and many new evil creatures and ruled much of the world for centuries before he fell to the Brightfather's Day forces.

The Gilded Angel (64): Sent to judge Praemus's creation; created or bequeathed the Legacy.

The Half God: See *Ghul*.

Hathol Hammersmith (429): The first Night King in Dwarvenhearth.

Iridithil (197): Legendary Elder Elf known for sheltering the needy.

Jan Dalen (297): Prustan general in the Ghulwar.

Kagrisos (28, 111): Ghost-lich that threatened to unleash a disease on the world; killed by Abesh Runihan.

Kam (85, 348): Halfling monk and a member of the Great Seven who killed Ghul.

Karalada (393): Sorcerer sister of Karanosin near the Slave City; foe to Father Claw.

Karanosin (393): Sorcerer sister of Karalada near the Slave City; foe to Father Claw.

Kaval Stardelve (431): One of the last Day Kings, and probably one of the greatest.

Khelaeson (85, 130): Elf wizard who banished the Utterdark.

The Last King: See Rissathion, King.

Lukas Mikolic (221): Prince of the Church when Ptolus became the heir's home, buried in the Necropolis.

Maeritha Moonrise (348): Created the Quaan and helped slay Eslathagos Malkith.

Maven Balacazar (102): Menon's great-great-grandmother; ran the crime family circa 547 IA.

Mrathrach (62): A Vested of the Galchutt who sought to imprison the Gilded Angel to destroy the world.

Nitham (111): A friend of Abesh Runihan; like Arlian, could see fates.

Norrid Favanar (114): Onetime Commissar of Ptolus.

Palabosh, Holy Emperor (269): Uncle of current Holy Emperor Rehoboth Ylestos.

Parnaith (28, 485): Powerful mage who created the Seven Jewels (along with the Wizard-Priests of Ni-Gorth). Tried and failed to reverse the corruption of her husband, Danar.

Polemith (483): A former lieutenant of the Dread One; created the Dire Song.

Radlov Von Tessel (30): Nephew of first Emperor; become the second Emperor.

Rissathion, King (84, 272): The Last King of Palastan, slain by Ghul.

Rudolf Von Tessel (84): Main Purveyor of Law and former Emperor.

Runshallot (85, 348): Human cleric of Gaen and a member of the Great Seven who killed Ghul.

Saerth (85, 348): Elf wizard-rogue and a member of the Great Seven who killed Ghul.

Saggarintys the Silver King (79, 389): Silver dragon who helped Danar in the Banewarrens.

Shay Orridar (86): Recreated the Knights of the Golden Cross.

Silver Sisters: See *Karalada* and *Karanosin*.

Skull-King: See *Ghul*.

Tomas Storocek (222): Former leader of the Keepers of the Veil.

Tacheron Kint (28, 348): A famous warrior and explorer who rescued children from the Shadow of Ptolus.

Tarbenthis Frome (300): A corrupt Commissar in 547 IA; Maven Balacazar had him in her pocket.

Thadeus Koll (212, 303): Discovered the Shadow of Ptolus.

Thoggidrum (62): A Vested of the Galchutt who received the Dreaming Stone; now Oracthon.

Thoy Champous (348): A human paladin of Ahaar, now in the Hall of Heroes.

Tirestian (272, 306): Aasimar wizard who designed the Tower of House Dallimothan and the Pale Tower.

Uthegos (85, 348): Dwarf warrior and a member of the Great Seven who killed Ghul.

Vaklav Von Tibbitz (117): Founded the Keepers of the Veil.

Vladaam (62): A Vested of the Galchutt; rent the veil between life and death to bring forth the undead.

Yllistro (85, 348): Half-elf sorcerer-ranger and a member of the Great Seven who killed Ghul.

Yrkyth Vladaam (28, 100): A mad wizard who built the Enigma Engine.

Zachary Hedron (348): Fighter who died rescuing people in the Great Fire of 701 IA.

FRIENDS AND FOES

If you're looking for enemies or allies for your player characters, check the appropriate level in this list, then refer back to the NPC glossary for the page number where you can read more about the character.

FRIENDS

LOW-POWER FRIENDS

Bermund Thorn (cleric of Ahaar)
Cardilion Brunner (Knight of the Pale at the Bladechapel)
Chuster Nogol (Bankers' guildmaster)
Dartalius Estalon (new Knight of the Pale at the Bladechapel)
Derrence Springdart (sells magical torches in Undercity Market)
Dessis Palath (gnome Knight of the Golden Cross)
Fabitor Thisk, Brother (chaplain of St. Gustav's)
Gorti Jurgen (Delver's Guild's Undercity Market representative)
Igor Reichstav (friend to flies in the Necropolis)
Mand Scheben (cleric of Asche, friend of Castle Shard)
Migos Foraeth (half-elf proprietor of the Black Swan)
Myraeth Tuneweaver (elf wizard Oddities shopkeeper)
Nyphistree Silvertree (head of Order of the Bow)
Oron Bridgemaster (bartender at Danbury's)
Rastor (litorian weapon shopkeeper)
Salora Hail (potter and gossip in South Market)
Seanus Illithan (drug lord Linech's newest employee)
Tal Ingersol (leatherworker in the Guildsman District and Undercity Market)
Tellith Herdsman (manages the inn at the Ghostly Minstrel)
Terros Kallind (gladiator in Oldtown)
Thorrim Kolvir (centaur paladin in Midtown)
Vatur (lizardfolk, repairs damaged equipment in Undercity Market)

MID-POWER FRIENDS

Aran Boturr (high priest of Navashtrom)
Beck Von Tibbitz (Keepers of the Veil leader)
Brig Stoneheart (a Knight of the Pale)
Brusselt Airmol (halfling master thief)
Cerrinthan "Cerry" Sanserra (Balacazar diplomat)
Daersidian Ringsire (elf battle mage)
Darthalis Temester (information broker in North Market)
Devina Kath (head of House Kath and Conservatory chancellor)
Doraedian Mythlord (master of Iridithil's Home)
Erred (centaur Fate Weaver)
Esgilar Masters (leader of the Order of the Steadfast Heart)
Falstef (deva angel in Dark Reliquary)
Felaer (deva angel at the Pale Tower)
Fransin Nagel (head of House Nagel)
Hallusiun Everfar (a Knight of the Chord)
Jallek Pedastan (a Knight of the Golden Cross)
Jevicca Nor (well-known Inverted Pyramid mage)
Kaira Swanwing (leader of Knights of the Golden Cross)
Liessa Vergan (high priestess of Celestial Conclave)
Naevin Swanwing (a Knight of the Golden Cross)
Nara Rau (expert in appraising goods and people)
Narlus Dye (bard at the Pale Tower)
Neridoc Bittersong (the Arcane Scribe in the Undercity Market)
Phadian Gess (Keepers of the Veil seneschal)
Prince Ironheart (Knight of the Pale)
Quaelin Fillasti (Knight of the Golden Cross)
Ralelle Noramar (Knight of the Golden Cross)
Rill, Lady (Lord of Castle Shard, Bride of Magic)
Sheva Callister (famous delver, retired)
Soren Clanstone (dwarf prince)
Tasilicus Rhendron (wizard at the Pale Tower)
Tiel Lawley (warrior and priest of Battle)
Tuea Severwing (Knight of the Golden Cross)
Urlenius (ogre-mage Star of Navashtrom)
Zaetra (Cherubim elf wizard)
Zairic Westridon (assistant to Mahdoth)
Zalisartaram (Harrow elf games expert)
Zavere, Lord (Lord of Castle Shard)

HIGH-POWER FRIENDS

Adlam Theobold (Lothianite archbishop in St. Valien's Cathedral)
Andach (druid master of Clasthamus Isle)
Ashby Gerard (one of the Twelve Commanders)
Barit Calomar (a high priest of Gaen)
Dierna Hillerchaun (Knights of the Pale leader)
Kadiradel (solar angel Malkuth high-up)
Melior Kalen (a high priest of Gaen)
Nivae Tamelli (greatest bard in Ptolus)
Steron Vsool (champion of Gaen and the city's greatest paladin)
Veda Medaris (head of Ironworkers' Guild)
Wynn Rabinall (head of Order of the Fist)

FOES

LOW-POWER FOES

Bartel Denton (crooked South Market Watch captain)
Cravish Nathed (Nobles' Quarter crime boss)
Derral Fank (Pale Dog)
Dollin Ebonhome (North Market crime boss)
Durant (troglodyte Killraven operative)
Elga Kord (Rivergate crime boss)
Eyvind (ambitious fugitive in the Slave City)
Ferrid Naphon (Docks crime boss)
Korben Trollone (South Market crime boss)
Lerthan Dergstrom (Oldtown crime boss)
Linech Cran (drug smuggler in Rivergate)
Malleck Javimal (powerful Ebon Hand priest)
Meither Amost (North Market crime boss)
Nagrus (Warrens crime boss)
Nalleth Falcron (possessed slayer in Guildsman District)
Ortry Gannon (Pale Dog)
Scrud (Gutterkings leader)
Shilukar (dark elf chaositech puppetmaster)
Silion Ankismar (a head of the Temple of the Rat God)
Synethys (Sorn half-dragon)
Thuela Nasarini (Oldtown crime boss)
Tissakal (dark elf killer in the Warrens)
Toridan Cran (half-orc criminal)
Uldrick Kord (Guildsman District crime boss)
Urnest Ankismar (wererat head of Rat God Temple)
Vagger Nulus (small-time hood with big ambitions)

MID-POWER FOES

Aggah-Shan (lich owner of the White House)
Alevolenz (dark elf ruler of House Vrama)
Aliaster Vladaam (arcanist son of Iristul)
Ander Von Yelsin (dubious Conservatory instructor)
Araki Chipestiro (Yearsend child and runecaster)
Arkhall Vaugn (infamous Balacazar wizard)
Erda Schenk (crooked Oldtown Watch captain)
Feegus, Doctor (Shuul creator of the Prajdall)
Gattara Vladaam (Iristul's daughter)
Godfred Vladaam (Iristul's son)
Hadrien Runihan (Covenant of Blood vampire)
Helmut Itlestein (republican leader)
Jirraith (Pale Dog crime lord and doppelganger)
Karee (Harrow elf vampire and member of the Covenant of Blood)
Krag (warrior in the Cock Pit's arena)
Lackie (the Beggar King)
Laithe Silksong (manages drug traffic through the Spice Market)
Malasir (efreeti Killraven operative)
Malegoch Krill (Ennin leader in Dark Market)
Malkeen Balacazar (Balacazar heir)
Maystra Balacazar (Menon's daughter)
Navanna Vladaam (noblewoman arcanist seeking *Banewarrens key*)
Odsen Rom (Prison warden)
Pared Cobart (Masons guildmaster)
Ritter Ratagan (Ennin leader)
Surmoil Rallekred (Forsaken sorcerer and shigmaa)
Talenta (trumpet archon with viral goodness plague)
Thurvan Rashong (holds the *box of shadows*)
Vanum Vaal (the Shadow Eyes's witch identity)
Wuntad, Shigmaa (uniting the chaos cults for Night of Dissolution)
Yavos Nared (evil Sorn cell leader)
Zachean (dark elf vampire in Dwarvenhearth)

HIGH-POWER FOES

Dered Abanar (head of House Abanar)
Derresh (greatest assassin in Ptolus)
Drusii (marilith in Dark Reliquary)
Erediana (dark elf ruler of Nluguran and House Thess)
Keper, Lords (twins Reddis Keper and Neivis Keper of the Vai)
Kevris Killraven (hag crime lord)
Lilith (leader of the Fallen)
Medre Allaconda (head of the Covenant of Blood)
Menon Balacazar (head of the crime family)
Raenashal (dark elf mistress of Ul-Sinistar)
Renn Sadar (head of House Sadar)
The Shadow Eyes (sorcerer clone of Aelian Fardream)
Travinor Rem (runs the Dark Market)
Urasta, Shigmaa (Forsaken leader)

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FANTASY GLOSSARY

Ptolus is "fantasy gaming with the volume turned all the way up," and this book uses a lot of terms that might not be familiar to someone who isn't as steeped in the lore of the game. This Fantasy Glossary defines a lot of words used throughout this book, particularly words relating to player characters (such as "cleric" and "sorcerer") and various monsters from the extensive history of fantasy RPGs. Note that the glossary doesn't include definitions of common fantasy monsters such as chimeras or vampires; if there's a word in this book that you don't recognize, and it's not explained here, an internet search should provide the information you need.

Aasimar: A humanoid whose ancestry is mingled with celestials. Aasimars are often the result of half-celestials crossbreeding with normal mortal humanoids.

Aberration: An alien creature, usually from a strange, distant dimension or primordial times.

Abjurer: A wizard specializing in defensive magic.

Aboleth: An intelligent, malevolent, eel-like aberration with potent psychic abilities. It easily reaches 20 feet long or more.

Adamantine: A rare and incredibly hard metal, prized for use as armor.

Angel: A general type of celestial that includes devas, planetars, and solars. Common folk may use "angel" and "celestial" interchangeably.

Ankheg: A bear-sized burrowing insect, known for devouring livestock.

Annis hag: A large hag with iron nails and teeth who loves creating paranoia and fear.

Arcane spellcaster: A person whose magic comes from something other than prayer or devotion to a deity or natural force; the opposite of a divine spellcaster. Examples are bards, sorcerers, warlocks, and wizards.

Arcanist: An arcane spellcaster.

Balor: A huge fiery demon wielding a sword and whip, often a general of demonic armies.

Barbarian: A warrior who can go berserk in battle.

Bard: A person whose magic comes from music, song, poetry, or similar skills.

Belker: Evil, wraithlike smoke creatures from the Elemental Plane of Air.

Bugbear: Big, brutish, sneaky, hairy goblin-humanoids who often work as mercenaries for evil creatures.

Bulette: A bear-sized burrowing predator resembling a cross between an armadillo and a snapping turtle, sometimes called a "land shark."

Cantrip: A very minor spell, easy enough for an apprentice or dabbler to learn.

Celestial: An inherently good creature from the Upper Planes. Angels are celestials.

Choker: A gangly, skulking aberration that ambushes foes and chokes them with starfish-like hands on the ends of its rubbery arms.

Chromatic dragon: One of five types of dragons that tend to be evil, each with scales of a different color. Their scale color indicates what their breath weapon is (black is acid, blue is lightning, green is poison, red is fire, and white is cold).

Chuul: A semi-intelligent lobster creature, able to move on land.

Cleric: A divine spellcaster who is a warrior and a priest (as opposed to a more scholarly priest who doesn't use armor or weapons).

Cloaker: A flying manta-like aberration with eerie magical abilities.

Conjurer: A wizard specializing in magic that transports or produces creatures or objects.

Construct: A creature that was made rather than born, such as a golem, magically animated statue, or clockwork machine.

Corporeal: A physical creature, like a human or an ogre (the opposite of incorporeal). Creatures like air elementals and fire elementals (whose bodies aren't flesh and bone) are still corporeal beings.

Dark elf: A magical type of elf that prefers darkness and living underground. They usually have obsidian-black skin and white or yellow hair.

Demiplane: Another dimension, usually smaller than an essentially infinite true plane (although "smaller" might mean anything from the size of a house to that of an island or continent).

Destrachan: A blind quasi-humanoid aberration that creates destructive blasts of sound and can sense its environment with keen hearing.

Deva: A silver-skinned angel who takes humanoid form and carries messages to the mortal realms or watches over mortals on behalf of godly beings.

Devourer: A horrible, gaunt, ogre-sized undead that traps souls in its chest cavity and uses them to fuel its own magic.

Dire animal: A large, tough, ferocious variety of a normal creature such as a wolf, boar, rat, or bear, often twice the size of a normal specimen.

Divine spellcaster: A person whose magic comes from prayer or devotion to a deity or natural force; the opposite of an arcane spellcaster. Examples are clerics, druids, paladins, and rangers.

Diviner: A wizard specializing in magic about knowledge and secrets.

Doppelganger: A creature with the natural ability to imitate humanoid shapes and read thoughts, allowing them to pretend to be other people.

Dragon turtle: A huge, turtle-like, water-dwelling dragon, known for overturning boats and breathing deadly clouds of steam.

Druid: A divine spellcaster whose power comes from devotion to nature or a nature deity. Their magic focuses on animals, plants, the sun, and the moons.

Dweomer: Another word for a spell, magical effect, or the aura of magic that can be detected by people with the right knowledge.

Elemental: Creatures native to the Elemental Plane of Air, Earth, Fire, or Water. Semi-intelligent creatures such as fire elementals are elementals, as are magically talented creatures such as genies.

Enchanter: A wizard specializing in magic that affects or controls minds.

Erinyes: A beautiful devil with feathery wings whose role in Hell is to punish those who disobey.

Ettercap: A spider-like humanoid that can spin webs and communicate with normal and giant spiders.

Evoker: A wizard specializing in magic that creates cold, electricity, fire, and similar things.

Extradimensional space: A very small area in another dimension, larger on the inside than it appears to be on the outside, often the result of a spell or magic item (such as a backpack that can easily hold two adult humans).

Fiend: An inherently evil creature from the Lower Planes. Demons and devils are fiends.

Fighter: A warrior who masters the use of weapons, armor, and fighting techniques.

Gibbering mouther: A crazed, blob-like aberration covered in dozens of eyes and mouths, whose constant babbling confuses foes.

GM: Game master. The person who creates adventures for the player characters, runs the NPCs and creatures, and helps make sure everyone has fun playing the game.

Gnoll: A tall, hyena-like humanoid corrupted by demonic power, savage and bloodthirsty.

Hag: A wicked kind of creature native to the fairy realms, usually in the form of an old woman, with magical power and physical might.
Half-celestial: A creature with strong celestial ancestry; the opposite of a half-fiend. Not all half-celestials are humanoids.
Half-fiend: A creature with strong fiendish ancestry. A half-fiend humanoid is often called a cambion. A tiefling is often the result of a cambion crossbreeding with a normal humanoid mortal.
Hellfire giant: A fiery giant infused with hellish energy.
Hezrou: An ogre-sized, anthropomorphic toad demon.
Humanoid: A creature with the same general shape as a human—two arms, two legs, a head, and so on. Dwarves, elves, gnomes, goblins, halflings, orcs, and similar creatures are humanoids.
Illusionist: A wizard specializing in illusion magic.
Incorporeal: A nonphysical creature like a ghost or specter; the opposite of corporeal.
***Ioun stone*:** A magical gem that orbits its owner's head. Each type has a different magical power (strength, protection, and so on).
Lamia: An evil creature with the upper body of a human and the lower body of a lion, skilled in the magic of curses and illusions.
Lammasu: A good-hearted, intelligent winged lion with a human head and magical powers.
Locathah: A primitive fishlike humanoid who lives in coastal waters and is generally distrustful of surface dwellers.
Mage: An arcane spellcaster.
Manticore: An aggressive, stupid lion-like creature with bat wings, a spiked tail, and a toothy human head.
Marilith: A powerful demon with the upper body of a six-armed woman and the lower body of a giant snake.
Medusa: A magical creature with a humanlike body and snakes for hair; its magical gaze turns creatures to stone.
Metallic dragon: One of five types of dragons that tend to be good, each with scales of a different metal. Their scale color indicates what their breath weapon is (brass is cold or sleep, bronze is lightning or repulsion, copper is acid or slowing, gold is fire or weakness, silver is cold or paralysis).
Mithral: A bright metal as strong as steel but much lighter.
Mohrg: A zombie-like undead creature that is the animated corpse of a mass murderer, with a long, grasping tongue.
Monk: A martial artist who channels their internal mystical energy (ki) to perform amazing feats.
Naga: A creature resembling a large snake with a vaguely humanlike face and magical powers.
Nalfeshnee: An ogre-sized winged demon resembling an ape and a boar, intelligent and cunning.
Necromancer: A wizard specializing in the magic of life, death, and undeath.
Nightcrawler: A huge undead worm that can summon shadowy minions.
Nightshade: A type of powerful undead made of darkness and evil magic. Nightcrawlers, nightwalkers, and nightwings are nightshades.
Nightwalker: A 20-foot-tall undead giant.
Nightwing: A huge, shadowy bat-like undead with spells and the power to destroy magic items.
Ogre mage: A somewhat ignorant term for an oni.
Oni: An intelligent ogre-like creature with magical powers and blue or green skin.
Ooze: A type of amorphous creature, generally mindless, that can dissolve flesh and objects by touch.
***Orb of dragonkind*:** A powerful artifact created to lure and command dragons, but tainted with evil and prone to corrupt its owner.
Otyugh: A strange, semi-intelligent aberration the size of a bear, with tentacles and three legs; it lives in garbage and waste, and allies with other creatures willing to supply it with food.
Outsider: A term for all creatures native to another dimension, whether they are celestials, elementals, or fiends.
Owlbear: A vicious, bad-tempered predator that is a mix of owl and bear.
Paladin: A holy warrior of good and law who relies primarily on physical might instead of spells.
Plane: A dimension, whether the "normal world" where humans and similar creatures live (sometimes called the Material Plane), or a stranger place like the native homes of angels (the Upper Planes), elementals (the Elemental Planes), or demons and devils (the Lower Planes). Ptolus is on a planet called Praemal, which is contained within its own plane and bounded by the Ethereal Sea.
Planetar: A large, powerful angel with opalescent green skin. It enacts the will of the deity it serves.
Planetouched: A mortal (usually a humanoid) who has celestial, elemental, or fiend ancestry. Aasimars and tieflings are planetouched.
Ranger: A skilled hunter and tracker who knows some nature magic.
Rast: A flying, blood-draining, spider-like elemental made of ash and cinder, native to the Elemental Plane of Fire.
Rogue: A person skilled at subtle combat, subterfuge, and stealth, such as a cat burglar or thief.
Rust monster: A squat, armored insect-like creature whose touch instantly turns metal into rust, which it eats.
Sahuagin: An evil fish-like humanoid that lives in ocean shallows and deeps, and who can communicate with sharks. Sometimes called a "sea devil."
Salamander: An evil serpentine elemental with dark red scales and a humanlike head and arms.
Scrying: A type of divination magic that sees and hears things that are far away.
Shadowdancer: A rare kind of warrior who mixes shadow magic and stealth.
Skum: A humanoid transformed into a fish-like slave-creature by an aboleth.
Solar: An incredibly powerful kind of angel, often the general of a deity's army.
Sorcerer: An arcane spellcaster whose talent for manipulating magic comes from innate ability rather than study or a supernatural pact with another entity.
Succubus: An attractive, humanlike female fiend who uses seduction and temptation to control and corrupt mortals. In male form, it is called an incubus.
Summoning: A type of magic that creates or brings a creature to the spellcaster, usually to fight on the caster's behalf. A summoned creature normally vanishes when the magic that summoned it runs out.
Tiefling: A humanoid whose ancestry is mingled with fiends. Tieflings are often the result of half-fiends crossbreeding with normal mortal humanoids.
Transmuter: A wizard specializing in magic that transforms energy and matter.
Troglodyte: A subterranean, reptilian humanoid whose skin produces a smelly slime.
True angel: A category of celestials that includes devas, planetars, and solars.
Warlock: An arcane spellcaster whose magic comes from a pact made with a powerful mystical entity.
Wizard: An arcane spellcaster whose magic comes from study and practice.
Yeth hound: An evil, flying doglike fiend whose howls incite fear.

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