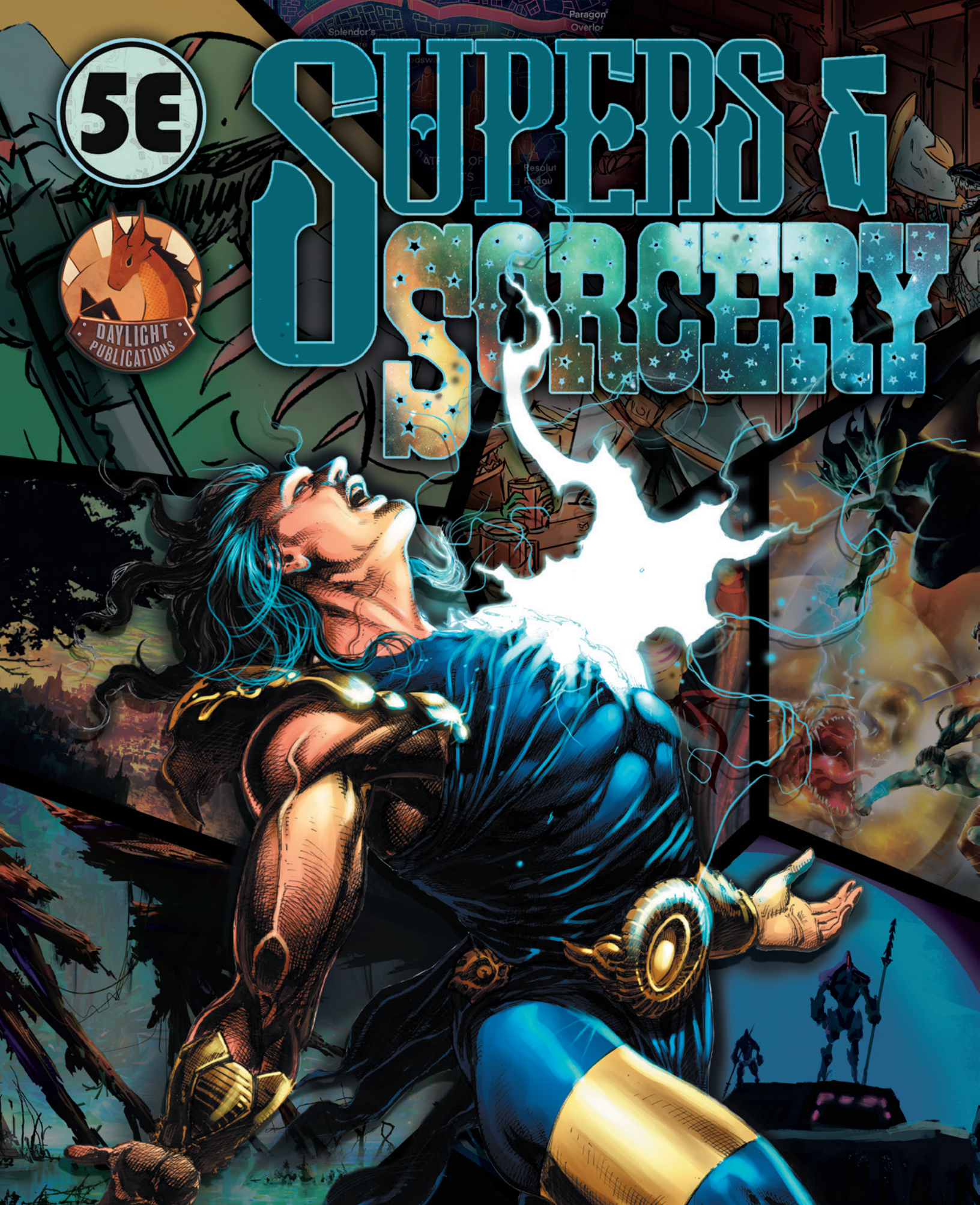


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# SUPERS & MAGICERY



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# SUPERS & SORCERY





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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART 1: YOUR ORIGIN STORY

|  |
|--|
| <b>Chapter 1: Character Options</b> .....8 |
| Race: Chloryfolk..... 8                    |
| Race: Gnobold ..... 11                     |
| Origins.....13                             |
| Class: Archon.....16                       |
| Barbarian: Path of Growth.....25           |
| Bard: College of Soundwaves.....25         |
| Cleric: Emotion Domain.....26              |
| Druid: Circle of the Mark .....27          |
| Fighter: Super.....29                      |
| Monk: Way of the Steel Strike.....29       |
| Paladin: Oath of Gesh .....30              |
| Ranger: Evenfall Rider.....31              |
| Rogue: Gatekeeper .....33                  |
| Sorcerer: Red Right Hand .....33           |
| Warlock: Cosmic Light.....34               |
| Wizard: School of Logomancy ....36         |
| Spells.....38                              |
| Alter Egos .....39                         |
| Feats.....45                               |
| <b>Chapter 2: Sidekicks</b> ..... 46       |
| <b>Chapter 3: Variant Rules</b> ..... 49   |

## PART 2: A WORLD OF HEROES

|   |
|---|
| <b>Chapter 4: Ghaistala and the Ring of Virtue</b> ..... 52 |
| The Saga of the Titans.....52                               |
| The Ring of Virtue .....53                                  |
| The World of Ghaistala.....54                               |
| Welcome to Beacon.....55                                    |
| <b>Chapter 5: City Gazetteer</b> ..... 65                   |
| Beacon, City of Heroes .....65                              |
| Lowcity .....68   |
| Serenity.....70   |
| Argentum Square.....73                                      |
| Paragon's Peak .....75                                      |
| Protectorate Peaks.....77                                   |

|   |
|---|
| <b>Chapter 6: Regional Gazetteer</b> .... 81                  |
| The Darnan Forest .....81                                     |
| The Grey Rise .....82   |
| The Ivory Wilds .....84                                       |
| The Klachton Ocean & Everglint Bay.....85                     |
| The Mirrored Wetlands .....85                                 |
| The Nul Wastes .....86  |
| <b>Chapter 7: Organizations</b> ..... 87                      |
| Armorers' Guild.....87  |
| Artisan Affairs Bureau .....88                                |
| Asha Trading Co.....89  |
| Collegium Beacarus .....90                                    |
| The Court of Empty Night.....90                               |
| Gardeners' Union.....92                                       |
| Guild of Exploration and Reconnaissance (GEAR) .....93        |
| Heroes Guild.....94   |
| The Lamplighters .....95                                      |
| Lenskeepers.....97  |
| The Lookouts.....97   |
| The Scroungers.....98   |
| The Shattered Sons .....100                                   |
| Society for the Preservation of Normalcy and Decency .....100 |
| The Stiltguards (Ganglers) .....102                           |
| Tenebrignis (The Wispers).....103                             |
| Treestridders .....104  |
| <b>Chapter 8: Notable People</b> .....105                     |
| Beefcake.....105  |
| Blorp .....106  |
| Bruúk Grünrack .....107                                       |
| Captain Jetsam "Jet" Passeridae.....108                       |
| Count Abramovich .....109                                     |
| Doors .....111  |
| The Edgcutioner .....113                                      |
| "Ed" Jorino.....115   |
| Idyllia .....117  |
| The Judge.....120   |
| The Muse .....121   |
| Oiji.....122  |
| Scin Schezar .....124   |
| Sideswipe .....124  |
| The Sizzler .....125  |
| Tomas Nailtanhe .....127                                      |
| XX, the Sciencelich.....128                                   |

## PART 3: ADVENTURE TIME

|  |
|--|
| <b>Chapter 9: Running Supers Adventures</b> ..... 132              |
| Teen Heroes .....132   |
| The Superteam.....133  |
| Grimdark Heroes .....135   |
| One Shots.....137  |
| <b>Chapter 10: Secret Origin!</b> ..... 139                        |
| Issue 1: The Fire and The Fury!..... 139                           |
| Issue 2: On the Case..... 142                                      |
| Issue 3: The Ghost Strikes! ..... 148                              |
| Conclusion.....151   |
| <b>Chapter 11: A Study in Life</b> ..... 153                       |
| Issue 1: "No Time for Mourning" ..... 153                          |
| Issue 2: The Right Hand of Death..... 156                          |
| Issue 3: <i>Mors Vincit Omnia</i> ("Death Conquers All") ..... 157 |
| <b>Chapter 12: Hatred of the Hyper-Demon</b> ..... 161             |
| Issue 1: Help Is on the Way!..... 161                              |
| Issue 2: The Lair of the Hyper-Demon..... 163                      |
| Issue 3: The Battle for Beacon. 169                                |
| Epilogue .....171  |
| <b>Chapter 13: Magic Items</b> ..... 172                           |
| <b>Appendix A: Villains &amp; Monsters</b> ..... 176               |
| <b>Appendix B: Lairs &amp; Strongholds</b> ..... 194               |
| <b>Appendix C: Kaiju</b> ..... 207                                 |



# THE COMIC BOOK AGES AND SUPERS & SORCERY

Comic books are North American mythology. This is widely recognized by various literary and historical experts. And like those mythological periods and epochs of the ancient world, comics have had various phases, or “Ages.” So let us start at the beginning, shall we?

We open with the Depression-era United States, ravaged by financial ruin, mass unemployment, the Dust Bowl, locust plagues—you name it. The pulp fiction era of the 1910s and 1920s was starting to gain more traction, but these weren’t really accessible to the majority of folks who were trying to get out of economic ruts. So, comics began to appear—little nickel or dime books crammed with advertisements and mostly aimed at children. But it wasn’t until *Action Comics #1* in July 1938 with the arrival of Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster’s Superman that comics started to explode.

This is where the Golden Age—1935 or so to about 1945—supported the youth of Depression-and-wartime USA. With the arrival of the Golden Age of comics, we see Batman, Wonder Woman, Captain America, and other heroes start to join the universe that Superman set spinning. Superheroes even became spokespeople for the War Department, telling folks to buy bonds and the like—often through rather racist or sexist means. However, after the end of WWII, comics died. GIs came home from war, the Baby Boom began, and no one felt the need to read comics anymore. Comics were for kids and were all about action and adventure; after two world wars, everyone wanted nothing more than domestic tranquility.

Enter the 1960s and its newly formed Marvel Comics, with titles like Spider-Man, The Fantastic Four, and The Astonishing X-Men. The Silver Age was off to a very good start. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby—the legendary team behind

OG Marvel—set about bringing comics back to the limelight. The Silver Age lasts until about the 1980s, twice as long as the Golden Age, and starts to take a more scientific and realistic look at the world. The rose-hued glasses were taken off as comics delved into science, nuclear war, urban crime, drug use, abuse, and a whole slew of other topical subjects. The 70s were the official end of the gung-ho cheeriness of the old days of comics—then we arrive in the Bronze Age.

The Bronze Age was excessive and over-the-top; body proportions weren’t correct, outfits were scanty, pouches were everywhere, antiheroes were the new norm, buxom tall women were in, and muscle-bound men were pop. No one wanted this except for the most... yeah, we will leave it at *no one wanted this*. However, during the 80s and 90s, comic companies were struggling big time. You see the appearance of numerous smaller independent companies, like Dark Horse, Image, Top Cow, Vertigo, Dynamite, and others. The Bronze Age fizzled out spectacularly by the early 2000s.

Today we sit in the Modern Age, which is hard to define because comics today are all over the place. Certainly representation has improved a lot from what it was back in the day, and comics are way more accessible and known to people given the success of the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the boom of online readability as printing costs skyrocket. So, how the fricklefrack do you apply this to Beacon and your game?

## THE COMIC BOOK AGES IN BEACON

This is a fun concept to think about in relationship to running your game in Beacon—how can you shape the feel and quality of the levels of the city itself to emulate one of our



four comic book ages? It's actually pretty easy. All you have to do is look at the main themes of each age and some of the visual motifs and then put the desired feel into your game! Let's start with the Golden Age.

Your Golden Age game in Beacon needs a few key features: larger-than-life heroes, a solid Art Deco tint to everything—buildings, costumes, vehicles, technology, magic—villains who are one-dimensional and clearly evil, and a fawning populace that loves their heroes. Boom. There is your Golden Age, a simple time with simple writing and generic narrative structure. You can have a big ol' team of supers who are shining symbols of truth and justice, all with secret identities and sidekicks. The visual tone of your game may even take on a much more Bruce Timm appearance in-game.

The Silver Age is where it starts to get interesting, as the Silver Age was rooted in science and youth but also began to explore weighty topics, like narcotics and war. What you need is civil unrest of some sort in Beacon, a team of young heroes training under a mentor of sorts, or even sidekicks sick of sitting on the sidelines. Things are dirtier and grungier, and crime is rampant, but there is still a sense of heroic honor.

So... the Bronze Age. "Just be edgy" isn't really enough of a qualifier, so let's look at it this way: antiheroes, pouches, ridiculous and revealing costumes, and violence. The 90s were a violent time in comics, demonstrating the shattering market and a need to completely reinvent the genre. Here, your heroes could be facing a Beacon they no longer recognize, a Beacon that has fallen by the wayside or that has forgotten about heroes and moved into debauchery. You need to take back the city and rebuild it—by any means necessary.

Finally, the Modern Age. The Modern Age brings together a lot of what the prior ages had: a hopefulness from the Golden Age, confronting real-world issues from the Silver Age head-on, and the grim reality of darkness and danger from the Bronze Age. Visually, the Modern Age covers the whole gamut, so the Modern Age could be seen as just your basic beginning Beacon.

However, something we did on purpose with Beacon is design each of the levels to approximate one of the comic book ages:

Lowcity is very Bronze/Silver, Serenity is a hybrid of all four, Argentum Square is quite Silver and Golden with hints of Modern, and Paragon's Peak combines Silver, Golden, and Modern. Lowcity is built to feel gritty, grungy, edgy, industrial, and tough—it has the urban crime and mature talking points of the Silver Age while also lending itself to the profound excess and exploration of antiheroes and heroines that the Bronze Age delved into.

Serenity allows for touching on the mature themes of the Silver Age, like broken homes, crime, and drug abuse, but it still keeps at its core an atmosphere of hope, betterment, and happiness that fills the Golden Age to its core. There are costumed heroes and heroines out in the daylight, interacting with the public on the regular, who are friendly and mentorly.

Argentum Square leans more into the Art Deco nature of the early days of comics, and tends to remain more shining and bright like the Golden and Silver Ages. While it is a place of politics and governance and education, Argentum Square is still very much a place of hope and excitement, but it also pulls on those real-world questions that the Modern Age asks: what is the true role of supers in a world of checks and balances?

And finally, Paragon's Peak is the true city on a hill—glowing, amazing, and ethereal to all who see it, with its white marble walls and gleaming golden halls. Paragon's Peak is everything good and hopeful about the Golden and Silver Ages: truth and justice—where criminals are bad and people are good.

Hopefully, these details give you some ideas for how to run your games in the various levels of Beacon with their related comic book ages in mind.

But remember, you need not hold to what we designed—this is *your Beacon*. You get to choose which ages go where, or completely ignore it and build your own city!

Good luck, gang, and have fun!





# DEDICATION TO CHADWICK BOSEMAN

In February of 2018, I remember waiting with anticipation to go and see Ryan Coogler's *Black Panther*. I had been feeling Marvel fatigue, growing tired of having to deal with the bombardment of movies that were full of mediocre effects, crazy editing, and dull moustache-twirling villains. The trailers were hyping it up, and since I had seen *Captain America: Civil War* my freshman year of college, I had gotten super pumped for seeing the first ever black MCU superhero take his place in the cinematic universe.

When I left the theater, I felt awed. I was amazed by the visuals, the storytelling, the music, the acting, and the revival of the Afrofuturist genre that had been forgotten about for so many decades. But what I remembered most, when we heard the news that Chadwick Boseman had passed away due to colon cancer, was the sight of two young boys walking out with their mom. I remember hearing one of them say, "Now we have a hero, Mommy!" and his brother excitedly making a 'Wakanda forever' crossed-arm pose in front of the massive cardboard cut-out of Boseman.

I was getting ready to head to bed when we all found out on the team. I don't remember exactly who mentioned it, but moments after my sister had texted me, "Did you hear the news?" I think Sadie or Bianca posted in the general channel of the S&S Discord server, simply flabbergasted. We all were shocked and horrified at the news. I read the article before I went to bed, learning that Chadwick had had stage 4 colon cancer and had been diagnosed when he started filming his scenes for *Civil War*.

This man brought to life an icon of black power in an age and time where racial disparity and systemic racism in our country were on the rise, rearing their barred ugly head. And to have the symbol of Black pride, of Afrofuturist culture, die during the most racially charged era since the Civil Rights movement was devastating. The fact that Chadwick had brought to life a character who for decades had been a paragon of equality, heritage, and Black power and royalty was insurmountable. But not only had he been T'Challa, he had also been Jackie Robinson in *42* and Thurgood Marshall in *Marshall*. Chadwick Boseman played heroes, whether they wore an indestructible suit of vibranium, a tailored coat and slacks, or a baseball uniform.

I am a white cis bi man. I am privileged beyond belief; many of us are. In the comic book world, there are few heroes who carry the gravitas that Black Panther does, who can strip away the privilege and reveal to us the humanity of our mortal shells. The fact is we all come from Africa—the science shows we were born and evolved into what we are today because of the steps of the first hominids in Kenya and in the Congo and across Central Africa.

What T'Challa did—what Chadwick did—was open our eyes and bring us all back home. He will be missed, and it is for his contributions to film, comics, and the lives of everyone whom he met or influenced, that *Supers & Sorcery* is dedicated to Mr. Boseman.

Wakanda Forever, inkosi.

*Cameron Day.*



## PART 1

# YOUR ORIGIN STORY

*GOTTA GET TO THE TEAM, I DON'T KNOW WHY THE PARAGANG IS ATTACKING!*



*IF I DON'T MAKE IT ON TIME...*



*THOSE B\*\*\*\*S STARTED WITHOUT ME!?!?*





# CHAPTER 1

# CHARACTER OPTIONS

The metropolis of Beacon is home to a people whose ancestors come from all over the multiverse. This confluence of peoples, cultures, religions, languages, and customs is the lifeblood of the city. The world of Ghaistala offers new fantasy races, backgrounds (here called alter egos), subclasses, spells, and feats. You'll also find Origins, a new option for supers chosen at character creation, and an original class: the Archon.

## RACE: CHLORYFOLK

Originally from Gaia, a world across the stars, the chloryfolk are friendly, boisterous, and amiable. Chloryfolk resemble sentient humanoid plants of different genera and are all nurturing and kind. Some chloryfolk are born wanderers, surveying any world they come to, while others create fonts of growth and life.

### FROM GAIA'S WOMB

It was not until GEAR's trip to the chloryfolk homeworld that it was discovered that Gaia is a slumbering, celestial creature with numerous smaller planets orbiting her. The chloryfolk grew from Gaia herself. They are made of roots, twigs, leaves, petals, stalks, and other natural resources; no two chloryfolk look the same, for they vary from region to region, adopting features of the flora of the area in which they dwell.

All chloryfolk are born within naturally occurring clay pots that burst from the earth's surface. As a chloryfolk grows, these pots crack and expand, forming unique armor pieces or accents to a chloryfolk's body. It is often said that you can tell the story of a chloryfolk by the growth of their pot.

### ALL PART OF THE PATCH

Chloryfolk value family above all else—if you betray or harm your family, you are outcast from the patch. Patches consist of up to one hundred individuals, all members of an immediate and extended family living as one small community. Filled with bright gardens, art, and music, patches are a welcome sight in Beacon and out in the wildernesses of Ghaistala where the chloryfolk have expanded.

An important part of patch life is music. Chloryfolk love acoustic songs and lays, and they belt out gregarious travelling songs, somber love songs, and familial campfire songs. Chloryfolk-made banjos, mandolins, guitars, fiddles, violas, and harps are immensely popular amongst bards, and recently, they have been exploring holding patch-wide music expos.

### CHLORYFOLK NAMES

Chloryfolk take their names from anything around them, primarily from nature, while their last names come from their patch. First names



are gender neutral, as chloryfolk don't have gender, instead associating people with either sun or moon energies.

**First Names:** Acorn, Butternut, Chrysanthemum, Doxie, Eggplant, Fern, Growth, Holly, Icicle

**Patch Names:** Applegate, Boulderrush, Cyclonerunner, Diggingback, Etchingstem, Fiddlehead, Groundchomper, Hilltiller, Inchworm

## CHLORYFOLK TRAITS

Your chloryfolk character has the following traits.

**Ability Score Improvement.** Your Wisdom score increases by 2.

**Age.** Chloryfolk are extremely long-lived, reaching maturity around the age of 4 with some living to the age of 400.

**Alignment.** As tenders of nature, most chloryfolk are neutral, though many take the side of good if it helps others.

**Size.** Chloryfolk come in a variety of sizes, yet the majority often stand between 4 and 5 feet tall and will usually weigh between 60 to 100 pounds. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Out in the Sun.** You are able to draw healing energy from light—sunlight or otherwise. If you rest for 10 minutes in a sunbeam, you can spend up to 2 Hit Dice. For each Hit Die spent in this way, roll the die and add your Constitution modifier to it. You regain hit points equal to the total (minimum of 1). Alternatively, you can take an action to focus on a beam of any other type of light to spend 1 Hit Die.

**Patch Proud.** You have proficiency in the Performance skill with two mystical instruments of your choice.

**Languages.** You read, write, and speak Common, Chlory, and two other languages of your choice.

**Garden Variety.** Chloryfolk adapt to almost any region or biome they live in. Because of this, there are numerous kinds of chloryfolk. Choose one of the following subraces.

## AQUATIC

Aquatic chloryfolk resemble plants like water lilies, algae, seaweed, and other similar flora.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

**Submarine Specialties.** You have a swimming speed of 30 feet and can breathe both air and water.

**Have a Soak.** You may regain 1 Hit Dice by completely submerging in water, akin to your Out in the Sun ability, once per long rest.

**Language of the Deep.** You can communicate in a limited manner with any creature that has an innate swimming speed. They can understand your words, regardless of the language, and you have advantage on Charisma checks made to influence them; however, you have no special ability to understand them in return.





## BIOLUMINESCENT

Fungal chloryfolk are the only type that possess true bioluminescence.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Charisma score increases by 1.

**Light the Path.** As a bonus action, you can focus your energy and cause your body to produce its own light. When you do so, you emit dim light out 40 feet from you. While wearing a full-body covering, like a cloak, you can reduce the light emitted to dim light out to 5 feet.

This light lasts for a number of hours equal to your proficiency bonus, or until you end it as a bonus action. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier and regain expended uses upon finishing a long rest.

**Spore Magic.** Using your bioluminescence, you learn to reproduce the effects of the faerie fire spell. You can cast this spell once with this trait without expending a spell slot or requiring any components. You must finish a long rest before doing so again. Wisdom is your spellcasting modifier for this spell.

## DESERT

Desert chloryfolk resemble cacti, yucca, succulents, and other similar plants.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 1.

**Sandy Strength.** Your body has adapted to function with very few nutrients for extended periods of time. You are able to go without food or water for up to one tenday before needing to consume nutrients. Additionally, the length of time before you suffer exhaustion is tripled.

**Natural Defenses.** Whether small spines, large spikes, or serrated leaves, desert chloryfolk have many bodily defenses. When a creature attempts to grapple you, it rolls with disadvantage—and if it manages to grapple you, it suffers 1d8 piercing or slashing damage (your choice) from your spines, spikes, or leaves.

## MEDICINAL

Medicinal chloryfolk resemble plants like aloe vera, turmeric, elderberry, and other similar flora.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 1.

**Helping Herbs.** After finishing a long rest, you sprout a number of herbs equal to your Constitution modifier. These herbs can be used to stabilize a creature with 0 hit points or to restore 1d4 hit points to a stable creature. The number of hit points this trait can restore increases to 2d4 at 5th level, 3d4 at 10th level, and 4d4 at 15th level.

**Necrotic Resistance.** You have resistance to necrotic damage.

## REDWOOD

Redwood chloryfolk resemble hardwoods like redwoods, oak, ash, and ironwood.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Strength score increases by 1.

**Deep Roots.** Your deep roots allow you to absorb nutrients at a much faster rate than other chloryfolk, making you hardier than usual. Your hit point maximum increases by 1, and it increases by an additional 1 every time you gain a level.

**Ironwood.** Your tough bark gives you a base AC equal to 16 plus your Constitution modifier (your Dexterity modifier doesn't affect this number). You gain no benefit from wearing armor or using a shield.

**Powerful Back.** You count as one size larger for the purposes of lifting and carrying.

## WETLANDS

Wetlands chloryfolk resemble plants like peat, ferns, sedges, and sod.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

**Ever Shifting.** Wetlands are treacherous and dangerous places, with ever-changing surfaces. Whether it's heavy fog on fens, mobile peat bogs, or oozing marshy quagmires, wetlands can prove deadly. As an action, you can make the ground within 50 square feet of you look like one of these environments for 1 minute. Enemies treat it as difficult terrain and have disadvantage on attack rolls. You may use this ability twice per short rest.

**Methane Burst.** Wetlands hide large methane deposits deep beneath them, and you are able to use that energy as a natural weapon. You can innately cast the fire bolt cantrip. Wisdom is your innate spellcasting ability.



## RACE: GNOBOLD

Ages ago, a gnome and a kobold were torn from separate worlds, finding each other—and solace—in the Crater and surviving together. Today, the happy couple—known only as Grangno and Gramko—are respected elders of Scrounger society, the birthplace of their progeny's chaotic creativity. True love finds a way.

### SAY WHAT?

A gnobold emerges from a gemstone-encrusted egg able to speak telepathically, although they cannot receive responses in their mind. This innate ability is magical, similar to a cantrip but requiring no action. It is now known as mumble for the nonsensical verbal component that everyone except the recipient of the message hears.

Gnobolds work best as part of a group. From an outsider's perspective, a gaggle of gnobolds appear to be under the control of some sinister hive mind, spewing gibberish as they complete daunting tasks with unnerving synchronicity. In actuality, they are simply great at teamwork and brainstorming, constantly helping each other and joking around telepathically.

### COBBLESHOP

Before they even take their first steps, gnobolds learn how to use tools and combine objects into something new. Growing up in Grangno and Gramko's Cobbleshop in the Crater means scavenging scrap and crafting creations is a way of life. No self-respecting gnobold would wear clothes or wield a weapon that they did not make themselves. As a principle, function trumps form in all things.

Gnobolds do not fear failure, as every experience is a learning opportunity. This wholesome outlook on life, however, also means gnobolds show no hesitation about combining potentially dangerous items together into something definitely deadly.

### LITTLE SCRAPPERS

As unlikely a combination as one of their cobbled creations, gnobolds are a unique blend



**YOU WANT A TOUGH JOB DONE? SMALL SPACES FULL OF MECHANICAL MUMBO-JUMBO? LOOKING GOOD DOING IT? THAT'S A GNOBOLD'S HAPPY PLACE.**

of gnomish and kobold heritage. Smaller than both ancestors, gnobolds stand under 3 feet tall and weigh less than 40 pounds. Orangish scaly skin covers their body, including their stubby curly tails, and they inherited the gnomes' prodigious noses and the kobolds' tiny horns, which sprout in any direction. Their ears vary in all shapes and sizes, resembling those of dogs more in this regard than other humanoids.



## GNOBOLD NAMES

Gnobolds have no need for names until they leave the Cobbleshop, as they can innately sense who they are speaking to. Other Scroungers in the Crater give gnobolds simple nicknames based on their exploits or personalities.

**Nicknames:** Blasty, Brains, Crash, Frag, Goofster, Heel, Jumble, Kapow, Knack, Muckle, Nuke, Pummelbug, Puree, Rash, Rowdy, Slopski, Speck, Thrash, Whoopsidoozle, Zappster

## GNOBOLD TRAITS

Your gnobold character has the following traits.

**Ability Score Improvement.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

**Age.** Gnobolds can live up to 300 years if they sit back and live a safe and quiet life. But that ain't happening. Gnobolds reach maturity at 13 years old and never look back.

**Alignment.** As with most of the Scrounger family, gnobolds tend to be chaotic good.

**Size.** Gnobolds come in a variety of short shapes. Most stand just under 3 feet tall and average about 35 pounds. Your size is Small.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

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

**Gnome Cunning.** You have advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Pack Tactics.** You have advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of your allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Languages.** You read, write, and understand Common, Draconic, and Gnomish.

**Mumble.** You magically speak telepathically to a recipient of your choosing that can hear the nonsensical verbal component. The recipient can hear your voice in their mind, though they can only understand you if they understand a language you know.

**Subrace.** Most gnobolds are born natural crafters, but once in a generation, an anointed gnobold hatches. Choose one of these subraces.

### ANOINTED GNOBOLD

The Emissary foresaw your birth as a rarefied occasion. You were trained at a young age to develop your intrinsic mental gifts.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

**Gnobold Cunning.** When an ally within 60 feet of you makes an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw against magic, you momentarily use your telepathy to sharpen their mind, giving them advantage on the saving throw. After you use this trait, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Ascended Pack Tactics.** As a reaction to an ally making an attack, you give an ally advantage on one attack roll against a creature if both you and the ally are within 5 feet of the creature and the ally can understand you. After you use this trait, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

### CRAFTER GNOBOLD

You see the full potential of the world around you. With a little elbow grease, you combine everyday objects into inventive new devices used to solve specific problems.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

**Bunker Builder.** You have proficiency with tinker's tools and vehicles (land).

**Cobbled Creation.** As part of a short rest, you combine any nonmagical armor, weapons, or adventuring gear into a new device. Cobbled creations can be used by someone else if that person assists you in creating it. Work with your GM to determine how the cobbled creation functions. For instance, you could cobble together leather armor, a light crossbow, block and tackle, a piton, and 50 feet of rope to create an automatic cliff-climber harness.

Once cobbled, individual items lose their monetary value. Armor and weapons can no longer function for their original purpose once cobbled, though they can be used in other cobbled creations.

**Unstable Creation.** Rolling a 1 while using a cobbled creation causes the device to fall apart.



# ORIGINS

Every superhero has an origin story. Maybe they come from another world, absorbed too much radiant energy, or simply worked really hard to be the best at what they do.

The origin system tells that story through mechanics. It is part of the character creation process and details how a player's character becomes a superhero. This system is represented through game mechanics tied to specific "genres" of origin found in the stories of popular superheroes. While these genres seem to be very specific, one can tell any kind of story using them, or they can tell a completely different story, ignoring the genre and looking at the mechanics alone.

For your Supers & Sorcery campaign, the Game Master may choose to use this section of character creation in addition to character races, they may ignore character races altogether using this section, or they may ignore this section.

## ORIGIN POINTS

You have 6 origin points to spend on origin features for your character. These features fall under one of four different sources of power: alien, magic, science, and skill. You do not have to choose origin features that fall under the same category—you can mix and match if you feel it suits the character you want to play.

You can spend their origin points on the same origin feature more than once if that feature has multiple choices available.

At 11th level, you get an additional 3 points to spend on the remaining options available to you.

## SOURCE OF POWER

There are four sources of power in the world: alien, magic, science, and skill. Each represents a different foundation from which you might draw your super abilities. From sheer natural ability to out-of-this-world phenomena, there are countless combinations of power sources that you can pick, choose, and flavor to detail how you gained your powers.

# ALIEN

Alien sources of power come from outside the world. More often than not, an extraplanar entity, such as a god or a demon, grants you these powers. However, you may have received them by stranger means, like magical illnesses or unknown events.

These are strange powers, and your appearance may reflect these new abilities. Perhaps your form has taken on new shapes. Or perhaps something sinister lurks in the back of your mind.

### 1 POINT

**ALIEN TONGUES.** Choose two languages from among Abyssal, Celestial, Deep Speech, Infernal, and Primordial. You can speak, read, and write these languages.

**DARKVISION.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you 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 gray.

### 2 POINTS

**BLASTS FROM THE BEYOND.** You learn the *dancing lights* and *eldritch blast* cantrips. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

**ENHANCED MIND.** You can telepathically transmit messages to any creature within 30 feet of you that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

### 3 POINTS

**ALIEN SPELLS.** The following spells are added to your class's spell list:

| SPELL LEVEL | SPELL                      |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1st         | <i>bane</i>                |
| 2nd         | <i>misty step</i>          |
| 3rd         | <i>gaseous form</i>        |
| 4th         | <i>black tentacles</i>     |
| 5th         | <i>contact other plane</i> |

### 4 POINTS

**UNEARTHLY MOVEMENT.** As a bonus action, you can teleport up to 5 feet to an unoccupied space you can see, thereby preventing opportunity attacks.

**EXTRADIMENSIONAL RESISTANCE.** You have resistance to necrotic and radiant damage.



## SCIENCE

Scientific powers come from the manipulation of the world by nonmagical means. Artificery is the most common method to do this, but it can also be done through genetic manipulation.

For this origin category, there are two subcategories: mechanic and mutant. Mechanics are inventors who create gadgets and work with tools in order to better themselves. Mutants are genetically modified, either by someone else or by themselves. They have abilities that one might not find in the standard humanoid.

### 1 POINT

**MECHANIC: Beginner's Gadget.** At the end of a long rest, you can create one magic gadget of your choice from among creature repellent, false vermin, nightvision goggles, one-way sending stone, powered gauntlet, and utility belt (see chapter 13). If you use this feature to create a gadget when you already have one, the first is immediately destroyed.

**MUTANT: Minor Mutation.** You gain one of the following features: Climber, Darkvision, or Swimmer.

**CLIMBER.** You gain a climb speed of 30 feet.

**DARKVISION.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you 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 gray.

**SWIMMER.** You gain a swim speed of 30 feet.

### 2 POINTS

**MECHANIC: Tool Expertise.** You gain one tool proficiency of your choice. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses the chosen tool proficiency.

**MUTANT: Expert Form.** You gain proficiency in either Acrobatics or Athletics. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check that uses the chosen ability.

### 3 POINTS

**MECHANIC: Expert's Gadget.** At the end of a long rest, you can create one magic gadget of your choice from among grappling hook, jump jet, radiant crossbow, returnable throwing knife, shield emitter, and speedy sandals (see chapter 13). If you use this feature to create a gadget when you already have one, the first is immediately destroyed.

**MUTANT: Major Mutation.** You gain either the Tough Skin or the Winged Form feature.

**TOUGH SKIN.** When you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 13 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use a shield and still gain this benefit.

**WINGED FORM.** You have a flying speed of 30 feet. To use this speed, you can't be wearing heavy or medium armor.

### 4 POINTS

**MECHANIC: Create Assistant.** At the end of a long rest, you can create a construct in one of the following forms: a **flying assistant** or a **ground assistant** (see appendix A). If you use this feature to create an assistant when you already have one, the first is immediately destroyed. Your assistant acts independently of you, but it always obeys your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn.

**MUTANT: Elemental Mutation.** Choose one of the following mutations: blazing skin, freezing lungs, or venomous blood. You learn a cantrip and a 1st-level spell based on the table below. You can cast the 1st-level spell once with this feature, then can't do so again until you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spellcasting ability for these spells. You also gain resistance to a damage type based on your choice.

| MUTATION       | CANTRIP       | SPELL          | RESISTANCE |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|------------|
| Blazing lungs  | produce flame | hellish rebuke | fire       |
| Freezing skin  | ray of frost  | shield         | cold       |
| Venomous blood | poison spray  | inflict wounds | poison     |



## MAGIC

Magical sources of power are in-world effects that can only be explained by magic. Ghaistala's arkwaves are the most common means of acquiring these powers, but you can get them through possession, genetics, or other means.

**1 POINT** **MYSTIC UNDERSTANDING.** You gain proficiency in one skill from among Arcana, Insight, and Persuasion.

**2 POINTS** **MAGICAL ABILITY.** Choose Wisdom, Intelligence, or Charisma. You learn three cantrips, based on the table below. The chosen ability is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

| ABILITY SCORE | CANTRIPS                                    |
|---------------|---|
| Wisdom        | druidcraft, poison spray, produce flame     |
| Intelligence  | fire bolt, prestidigitation, shocking grasp |
| Charisma      | ray of frost, thaumaturgy, vicious mockery  |

**3 POINTS** **ELEMENTAL RESISTANCE.** After finishing a long rest, you can attune yourself to one of the following elements: cold, fire, lightning, or poison. You gain resistance to the chosen damage type until you finish a long rest.

**4 POINTS** **PURE MAGIC.** You gain a 1st-level spell slot. You can only choose this origin feature if you have the Spellcasting feature.

## SKILL

Powers based on skill represent the peak of humanoid capability. Those who have honed their skills enough to use them as powers are the best they can be—they are tiers above those who are simply good at something.

**1 POINT** **SKILLED.** You gain proficiency in a skill of your choice.

**WEAPONMASTER.** You gain proficiency in two weapons of your choice.

**2 POINTS** **SPEEDY.** Your speed increases by 10 feet.

**3 POINTS** **EXPERTISE.** You gain proficiency in a skill of your choice. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check that uses the chosen skill.

**4 POINTS** **VICIOUS CRITICAL.** When you score a critical hit with a weapon attack, you roll one of the weapon's damage dice an additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

**ALL TRADES.** Whenever you roll an ability check, you add 1d4 to the roll.

THE FIRST ARRIVAL IS ALWAYS TOUGH, TRYING TO ACCLIMATE TO THE NEW ATMOSPHERE AND MAGIC-RICH WEAVE OF GHAISTALA. BUT EVENTUALLY YOU GET USED TO IT.

## EXAMPLE ORIGIN

Janet wants her character, Tess Tuesday, to have both alien features and science features. Janet decides to spend 2 origin points on the alien Enhanced Mind feature and 2 points on the Mutant: Expert Form feature. She spends her remaining 2 points by choosing the Mechanic: Beginner's Gadget feature twice, choosing two different beginner's gadgets.

At 11th level, Janet has 3 more origin points to spend, so she spends them on the Alien Spells feature, giving Tess Tuesday access to the spell list granted by that feature.





## CLASS AND SUBCLASSES: ARCHON

A cloaked figure floats high above the battlefield of villains and heroes. Just as the dastardly team of ne'er-do-wells seems to grab the upper hand, the figure unleashes a wave of bright blue energy. One of the heroes, who before was only super fast, suddenly erupts with a brilliant beam of crackling electricity. Another, who before had only displayed super strength and durability, takes to the skies with gleaming golden wings. The tide has turned.

An unassuming low-level hero stares down a rampaging kaiju. It seems that this beast has taken advantage of another kaiju's attack to sneak into the city. With a gasping shout, the hero summons several spectral copies of the Portaleers. Nodding at them, the hero and the pseudo-portaleers spring into action against the monster. Screaming in rage, a heroine flies with blistering speed against the Court of Empty Night. Growing bold, they've infiltrated Argentum Square and killed a number of bystanders in a break-in gone wrong. Now, they face the wrath of one who commands the very arkwaves that echo through the universe.

No matter the cause, an archon is a force for good in Beacon.

### ARKWAVE EMPOWERED

Archons receive their powers from the arkwaves that wash over Beacon every twenty years. What separates an archon from another hero is the fact that archons generate their own arkwaves. Using these arkwaves, they can imbue another person with fantastical superpowers, if only for a brief moment of time. Archons typically find themselves heavily sought after by other super teams and the Heroes' Guild for these abilities.

### TERRIBLE BURDEN

As a result of being blessed with these awe-inspiring powers, archons often feel a pull towards some sort of ideal or virtue, whether

cosmic or mundane. Archons who commit to a particular ideal find that their powers react, like a living thing, and adapt to this virtue. For this reason, it is difficult to find two archons who use their powers in exactly the same fashion. Even archons who hold the same virtue often express that virtue in vastly different ways.



WE, THE ARCHONS OF BEACON, DO  
SWEAR TO UPHOLD AND PROTECT OUR  
GLORIOUS CITY TILL THE SUN CEASES  
TO BURN AND THE MOONS FADE.



## THE ARCHON

| LEVEL | PROFICIENCY BONUS | FEATURES                              | EMPOWERMENTS KNOWN | PRESENCE ATTACK |
|-------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1st   | +2                | Beacon's Chosen, Communication Skills | –                  | –               |
| 2nd   | +2                | Ark Empowerment, Presence Attack      | 2                  | 2d6             |
| 3rd   | +2                | Principality Choice                   | 2                  | 2d6             |
| 4th   | +2                | Ability Score Increase                | 2                  | 3d6             |
| 5th   | +3                | Force of Personality                  | 4                  | 3d6             |
| 6th   | +3                | Pillar of Vitality                    | 4                  | 4d6             |
| 7th   | +3                | Principality Feature                  | 4                  | 4d6             |
| 8th   | +3                | Ability Score Increase                | 4                  | 5d6             |
| 9th   | +4                | Presence Eruption                     | 4                  | 5d6             |
| 10th  | +4                | Enhanced Mobility                     | 4                  | 6d6             |
| 11th  | +4                | Principality Feature                  | 6                  | 6d6             |
| 12th  | +4                | Ability Score Increase                | 6                  | 7d6             |
| 13th  | +5                | Universal Translator                  | 6                  | 7d6             |
| 14th  | +5                | Principality Feature                  | 6                  | 8d6             |
| 15th  | +5                | Tower of Overpowering Strength        | 6                  | 8d6             |
| 16th  | +5                | Ability Score Increase                | 6                  | 9d6             |
| 17th  | +6                | Confer Mobility                       | 8                  | 9d6             |
| 18th  | +6                | Heroic Willpower                      | 8                  | 10d6            |
| 19th  | +6                | Ability Score Increase                | 8                  | 11d6            |
| 20th  | +6                | Titanic Empowerment                   | 9                  | 12d6            |

## CREATING AN ARCHON

When creating an archon, ask yourself what exactly happened to cause the arkwaves to choose your character? Was it a freak accident, the result of some beneficial cosmic hiccup? Or was your character destined for greatness, even from birth? Additionally, another question to ask while creating your archon would be whether or not their powers have gone to their head. Even the most virtuous of archons still think of themselves as gods, as “more than” than the rest of the citizens of Beacon.

### QUICK BUILD

To quickly create an archon, follow these steps. First, make Charisma your highest score, followed by either Dexterity, if you are planning to be melee focused, or Constitution, if you plan to use your ranged presence attack to engage enemies. Lastly, choose the magic origin.

## CLASS FEATURES

As an archon, you gain the following class features.

### HIT POINTS

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 per archon level

**Hit Points at 1st level:** 8 + your Constitution modifier

**Hit Points at Higher Levels:** 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per archon level after 1st

### PROFICIENCIES

**Armor:** Light armor

**Weapons:** Simple weapons

**Tools:** Alchemy Kit

**Saving Throws:** Constitution, Charisma

**Skills:** Choose three from Athletics, Acrobatics, Arcana, History, Intimidation, Nature, Perception, and Persuasion



## BEACON'S CHOSEN

Starting at 1st level, you reckon with the effects that the latest arkwave has had on your own body. You gain the following benefits:

- You are immune to disease.
- Your Strength and Constitution score cannot be reduced by any means.
- As an action, you can reach out with your arkwave-enhanced senses, granting you advantage on the next Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check you make in the next hour. After you make this check with advantage, the effect ends. You must finish a short or long rest before using this ability again.

## COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Also at 1st level, your arkwave-enhanced mind allows you to communicate with your allies wordlessly. You gain telepathy out to a range of 60 feet. When you speak to a creature in this way, they can understand you regardless of whether or not you share a language, as long as their Intelligence score is 3 or more. To respond, they must share a language with you.

## ARK EMPOWERMENT

Starting at 2nd level, you learn how to harness the arkwave energy residing within you to enhance and defend your allies. As a bonus action, you empower a creature within 120 feet of yourself, choosing from your known Empowerments. You can empower a creature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1), regaining spent uses after you finish a long rest.

## EMPOWERMENTS KNOWN

You know a number of Empowerments equal to the number shown on the Empowerments Known column on the Archon class table, gaining additional empowerments at the levels shown.

## EMPOWERMENT SAVE

If an Empowerment calls for a saving throw, the saving throw equals

$8 + \text{the empowered creature's proficiency bonus} + \text{your Charisma Modifier}$

## PRESENCE ATTACK

Starting at 2nd level, you learn to harness the innate power of your presence and combine it with your connection to the arkwaves to attack your foes. You gain a special spell attack that you can use as an action. This spell attack has a range of 60/180 feet. Charisma is your ability for this feature. On a successful hit, you deal 2d6 force damage. The damage for this attack increases at the levels shown on the Presence Attack Column of the Archon table.

The form that this attack takes is up to the player. For instance, it could manifest as a spectral hand suddenly appearing and smashing your foes, or it could manifest as a beam of brilliant blue arkwave energy.

## VARIANT: FISTICUFFS ATTACK (REPLACES PRESENCE ATTACK)

Starting at 2nd level, you gain proficiency with simple and martial weapons and you can use your Charisma modifier for the attack and damage rolls for those weapons. Additionally, once per turn, when you hit with a simple or martial weapon, you deal an extra 1d6 force damage.


The amount of extra damage you deal increases to 2d6 at 5th level, 3d6 at 11th, and 4d6 at 17th level.

## PRINCIPALITY CHOICE

Starting at 3rd level, you choose a principality of your particular superheroic belief system that you strive to emulate. This choice grants you features at 3rd, 7th, 11th, and 14th level. These choices are the following:

**Hope.** The Principality of Hope strives to be a shining symbol for the people of Beacon. These Principalities can oftentimes be found





"NOT ALL ARCHONS ARE ON THE SAME SIDE. SOME YEARN FOR ORDER, OTHERS REVEAL IN CHAOS. IT'S A DAMN SHAME."

- TREMIERE VAN LOSSEN, DWARVEN ARCHON OF LOWCITY.

in Paragon's Peak, either in a supportive role to the Portaleers or as their own hero.

**Compassion.** The Principality of Compassion seeks to aid and uplift the downtrodden of Beacon. Typically, these Principalities can be found either in Lowcity or in Beacon's many hospitals tending to the wounded.

**Justice.** The Principality of Justice strives to bring the evildoers of Beacon to justice, no matter what. Although the Principalities of Justice can be found all over Beacon, most eventually make their way outside, to the outskirts of the city.

### ABILITY SCORE INCREASE

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

### FORCE OF PERSONALITY

Starting at 5th level you learn to use your empowered presence to defend yourself against attacks. As a reaction to taking damage from

a non-paragite attack, you roll half of your Presence dice, reducing the damage by the amount rolled.

### VARIANT FEATURE: EXTRA ATTACK (REPLACES FORCE OF PERSONALITY)

Starting at 5th level, you learn to rock and sock with the best of them. When you take the Attack action with a melee weapon on your turn, you can attack twice, instead of once.

### PILLAR OF VITALITY

Starting at 6th level, your connection to the ark energy within yourself deepens. At the end of each long rest, you gain an amount of temporary hit points equal to half your archon level.

### WEAPON OF FORCE

Starting at 9th level, you learn to shape your force of presence into more and more refined weaponry. As a bonus action, you cast the *spiritual weapon* spell at 4th level requiring no components. While this weapon is summoned, the damage you deal with your Presence Attack is halved. You must finish a long rest before using this ability again.



## ENHANCED MOBILITY

Starting at 10th level, your connection to your ark energy has allowed you to move about Beacon with ease. Choose one from the following options:

- **Flight.** You gain a flight speed of 60 feet. You can hover while flying.
- **Parkour.** You can take the Dash action as a bonus action. While dashing, you have advantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks made to vault or climb obstacles.
- **Teleportation.** As a bonus action, you can teleport up to 60 feet to a point you can see. You can use this ability a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining spent uses on a short rest.

## UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR

Starting at 13th level, your connection to your ark energy has allowed you to transcend the puny bounds of mortal languages. You can speak and understand all languages.

## TOWER OF OVERPOWERING STRENGTH

Starting at 15th level, you gain proficiency in Strength saving throws. If you already possess proficiency in Strength saving throws, then you gain proficiency in Intelligence saving throws.

## CONFER MOBILITY

Starting at 17th level, as an action, you can confer the benefits of your Enhanced Mobility feature to another willing creature within 5 feet of you for 10 minutes. When you confer this ability to a creature, you lose the benefits of that feature until the 10 minutes have lapsed.

## HEROIC WILLPOWER

Starting at 18th level, if your total for an ability check is less than your Charisma score, you can use that score in place of the total. You must finish a long rest before using this ability again.

## PARAGON'S POWER

Starting at 20th level, you gain the following benefits:

- When you use your bonus action to empower a friendly creature, you can empower two creatures with the same use of your Empowerment.
- When you empower a creature, you can choose to permanently empower them, granting them the benefits of that particular empowerment until you choose to end it as a bonus action.

## PRINCIPALITIES

An archon's chosen principality has everything to do with their outlook on life. Choose one from among the following options.

### PRINCIPALITY OF HOPE

The Principality of Hope is the steady belief that constant optimism and goodwill towards the world will gradually make it a better place. Archons who embody this sort of seemingly foolhardy worldview are typically those who take a more supportive role in Beacon. They are oftentimes seen paired with more offensive or aggressively minded heroes in order to temper or control them. Above all, hope archons strive to be a symbol of a brighter day for the rest of Beacon.

### ECHOES OF HOPE

Starting at 3rd level, when you empower a creature with your Empowerment feature, you can choose to manifest echoes of those that came before you as ghostly apparitions formed from pure ark energy. These echoes take on an appearance appropriate for your character, and they use the henchling stat block (found on page 190). On your turn, you can issue a mental command to all of the echoes within 60 feet of you (no action required). These echoes last for 1 minute or until they are reduced to 0 hit points.

### ECHOES OF INSPIRATION

Starting at 7th level, creatures within 10 feet of you or your echoes have advantage on saving throws against being frightened or charmed.



## ECHOES OF POWER

Starting at 11th level, you learn to enhance your echoes with the power of ark energy. When you manifest your echoes by empowering a creature, your echoes also gain the benefit of that empowerment.

## OVERPOWERING ECHOES

Starting at 14th level, your echoes gain the Pack Tactics feature. Additionally, when they have advantage on an attack roll and hit with a weapon attack they deal an extra 2d6 damage.

## PRINCIPALITY OF COMPASSION

The Principality of Compassion comes from a wellspring of empathy toward and understanding of the citizens of Beacon and the belief that charitable acts and kindness will make it a better place. Archons who embody the Principality of Compassion were most like doctors or some other kind of first responder in their mundane lives before receiving their powers. Compassion archons use the power of the arkwaves to soothe and heal the wounds of citizens and supers alike. They know that without compassion, any heroic act ultimately becomes meaningless gestures, rather than any sort of long-term change.

## HEALING PRESENCE

Starting at 3rd level, you gain a pool of healing energy equal to your Presence Attack dice. As a bonus action, you can touch a willing creature and expend a number of dice less than or equal to your proficiency bonus, healing the creature for the amount rolled. You regain expended dice after finishing a long rest.

## THE NATURE OF COMPASSION

Starting at 7th level, you have advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) checks. Additionally, you are considered to always have a healer's kit on your person.

## SHIELD OF COMPASSION

Starting at 11th level, you learn to shield people with your pure force of will. As an action, you explode with ark energy in a 15-foot radius



COMPASSION IS KEY TO AIDING THOSE SUPERS WHO HAVE LOST IT. THAT IS WHERE FOLKS LIKE ARCHON RAUSTROS STEP IN TO HELP.

around you. Creatures of your choice gain temporary hit points equal to your Presence Attack Dice. You must finish a long rest before using this ability again.

## CONSOLATION

Starting at 14th level, when you use your Healing Presence feature, you can also choose to end one of the following conditions on the creature: poisoned, stunned, paralyzed, or blinded. You must finish a long rest before using this ability again.



## PRINCIPALITY OF JUSTICE

The Principality of Justice comes from a steady and iron-set belief in the notion that the wicked should never be allowed to thrive and that one must stop the spread of evil by any means necessary. Archons who embody this principality often find themselves embittered and cynical toward the world of Beacon because most times they've seen the worst the city has to offer. Why should they show the world their best side when the world has only shown them its ugliest? Justice archons harness arkwaves in order to better cut down evildoers and bring justice to those that it has so long eluded.



JUSTICE IS A DISH BEST SERVED WITH HEALTHY DOSES OF BEATINGS AND INTIMIDATION. OR SO ARCHON ELUVARA SAYS.

## SHARPENED WILLPOWER

Starting at 3rd level, you learn to hone your Presence attack like a knife. You score a critical hit with your Presence attack on a roll of 19 or 20.

## VARIANT FEATURE: OVERBEARING PRESENCE (ENHANCES THE VARIANT PRESENCE ATTACK)

Starting at 3rd level, you learn to force back your opponents with your sheer willpower. When you deal the extra force damage from your Presence Attack, you can use your bonus action to force the target creature to make a Strength saving throw (DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier). On a failure, the creature is either knocked prone or pushed 15 feet away from you.

## PERFECTED PHYSIQUE

Starting at 7th level, your physique becomes more chiseled and angular, truly a rocking bod fit for heroics. You count as one size larger for the purposes of lifting, carrying, and pushing, and you can grapple as a bonus action.

## THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

Starting at 11th level, you learn to erupt with your desire for vengeance in a spectacular fashion. As an action, you manifest 30-foot tendrils of ark energy. You gain the following benefits for 1 minute:

- Ranged attacks made against you and creatures within 30 feet of you are made with disadvantage
- When you take the grapple action as a bonus action, the range is extended to 30 feet and you can use your Charisma modifier in place of your Strength modifier. You can have up to three creatures grappled in this way.

While in this state, you cannot use your Presence attack. You must finish a long rest before using this ability again.

## ARK DETONATION

Starting at 14th level, you summon all the fury and fire you desire to detonate with arkwave energy. When you are reduced to 0 hit points,



you can use your reaction to explode with arkwave energy, dealing 3d10 + your archon level of force damage to every creature within 30 feet of you. You then drop to 1 hit point instead. You must finish a long rest before using this ability again.

## EMPOWERMENTS

Listed below are the available Empowerments:

### ARK INFUSION

The creature's weapon attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical damage. This lasts for 8 hours. You must be 11th level or higher to learn this empowerment.

### AMPHIBIOUS

The creature gains a swimming speed of 30 feet, and it can breathe air and water. This lasts for 10 minutes.

### CLAIRVOYANCE

The creature gains advantage on all skill checks, attack rolls, and saving throws for the next minute. You must be 17th level or higher to learn this Empowerment.

### ENHANCED SYNOPSIS

The creature has advantage on initiative rolls for 1 hour.

### ELEMENTAL EMISSION

The creature gains a special spell attack (using its proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier for the attack roll) that has a range of 30/90 feet. On a hit, this attack deals 1d6 damage, the type of which you choose when you take this ability: lightning, thunder, acid, fire, or cold. You can take this empowerment multiple times, choosing a different element each time. The damage dealt with this empowerment increases to 2d6 at 5th, 3d6 at 11th, and 4d6 at 17th level.

### ELEMENTAL SHIELD

The creature gains resistance to one damage type of your choosing (chosen when you learn this Empowerment): lightning, thunder, acid, fire, or cold. You can take this Empowerment

multiple times, choosing a different element each time. This resistance lasts for 10 minutes.

### FIGHTING PROWESS

When the creature takes the Attack or Multiattack action, it can make one additional attack as a bonus action. This lasts for 1 minute.

### FLY HIGH

The creature gains a flight speed of 30 feet for 1 minute. You must be 5th level or higher to learn this empowerment.

### FORCE FIELD

At the start of the creature's turns, it gains temporary hit points equal to 1d10 + your Charisma modifier. The temporary hit points last for 1 minute. You must be 17th level or higher to learn this Empowerment.

### HEALING FACTOR

At the end of each of the creature's turns, it regains 5 hit points. If the creature takes fire or acid damage, this empowerment ceases to function until the beginning of its next turn. This lasts for 1 minute.

### INSECT MUTATION

The creature gains one of the following benefits:

- **Ovipositor.** The creature gains a long, thin Ovipositor weapon that has the light, one-handed, and finesse properties. As a bonus action, the creature can sheathe or draw the Ovipositor from its hidden pouch on their wrist. When the creature hits with an attack with this Ovipositor, it deals 1d4 piercing damage and the creature must make a Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute.
- **Web Spinnerets.** The creature gains web spinnerets on its jaws. As an action, the creature can launch thick, sticky strands of web filament at a creature within 40 feet of it. The target creature must make a Strength or Dexterity saving throw (its choice) or be restrained for 1 minute.

Regardless of the benefit you confer, the empowerment lasts for 8 hours.





**NOTHING LIKE A QUICK SPRINT THROUGH A COUPLE PORTALS AND THEN BACK IN TIME FOR SUPPER.**

### **INSUBSTANTIAL FORM**

The creature's form becomes hazy and indistinct. For the next 10 minutes, the creature's movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

### **NIGHT VISION**

The creature gains darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. If the creature already possesses darkvision, the range of its darkvision is extended by 60 feet. This lasts for 8 hours.

### **SHAPESHIFTING**

The creature can use its action to polymorph into a beast of CR 1 or lower for 1 minute. The creature chooses the beast when it polymorphs. You must be 5th level or higher to take this empowerment.

### **SIGHT BEYOND SIGHT**

The creature gains truesight out to a range of 60 feet for 10 minutes. You must be 17th level or higher to learn this Empowerment.

### **SIZE CHANGING**

The creature can use a bonus action on its turn for the next 10 minutes to increase or decrease its size by one category. The creature cannot increase its size bigger Huge or decrease its

size smaller than Tiny. You must be 11th level or higher to learn this Empowerment.

### **SUPER SPEED**

The creature's speed increases by 10 feet, and it can take the Dash action as a bonus action. This lasts for 1 minute.

The extra speed conferred by this empowerment increases to 20 feet at 5th level, 30 feet at 11th, and 40 feet at 17th.

### **SUPERIOR DURABILITY**

The creature gains a tough, durable outer shell. Its AC equals 16 + its Constitution modifier while wearing no armor. This lasts for 10 minutes. You must be 11th level or higher to take this Empowerment.

### **SUPERIOR STRENGTH**

The creature's unarmed attacks deal bludgeoning damage equal to 1d4 + its Strength modifier. This effect lasts for 10 minutes.

The damage dealt with this empowerment increases to 1d6 at 5th level, 1d8 at 11th, and 1d10 at 17th level.

### **THICK SKIN**

The creature gains resistance to bludgeoning, slashing, and piercing to nonmagical weapons for 1 minute. You must be 5th level or higher to learn this Empowerment.



## BARBARIAN: PATH OF GROWTH

Barbarians tend to remain one size for their entire adult life—but you are not a regular barbarian. You have tapped into powers unheard of, whether it was caused by excessive radiant damage or by fiddling with the mechanics of reality, your size increases with your rage. Your enemies won't like you when you're raging.

### MASSIVE RAGE

Starting when you choose this path at 3rd level, your size increases when you rage. For the duration of your rage, your size increases by one category—from Medium to Large, for example. While your size is increased this way, your melee weapon reach increases by 5 feet and your speed increases by 10 feet. Everything you are wearing and carrying changes size with you, but any item you drop returns to its normal size at once. Your weapons also grow to match your new size and attacks with them deal an additional 1d4 damage.

### BIG IDEA

Beginning at 6th level, you not only can not only become enormous, but you can understand enormous creatures. You have advantage on Intelligence checks while interacting with or about creatures of size Large or larger. Additionally, you can grapple creatures of any size.

### SIZE MATTERS

At 10th level, you have begun to master techniques involving size, both while raging and not. You have advantage on attacks against creatures of your size or smaller.

### FEAR ME

Beginning at 14th level, a hostile creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier) or be frightened by you for 1 minute. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw is immune to this feature for 1 hour.

## BARD: COLLEGE OF SOUNDWAVES

None know sound better than bards, but bards of the College of Soundwaves take the study to an entirely new forte. Twisting sound into blasts of devastation, stealing words from the lips of others, muffling the sound of an area—these bards have no small presence and are often found where there is plentiful noise to be heard.

Bards of the College of Soundwaves make powerful allies. They can cut through an enemy's war cries, render a spellcaster helpless, and explode in a wave of sound. They demand attention, but for good reason—they are masters of their craft and can command an area, if they choose.

### THUNDEROUS PROFICIENCY

When you join the College of Soundwaves at 3rd level, you gain resistance to thunder damage, you cannot be deafened, and you can cast the *thaumaturgy* cantrip at will, using only the booming voice option with this feature. In addition, due to your expertise in vocal inflection, you gain proficiency in either Persuasion or Insight.

### VOCAL BARRIER

Also at 3rd level, you learn how to manipulate the sound around you to defend others. When a creature that you can see within 60 feet of you casts a spell with a verbal component, you can use your reaction to expend one of your uses of Bardic Inspiration, rolling a Bardic Inspiration die and either subtracting the number rolled from the creature's spell attack roll or adding the number rolled to the spell target's saving throw roll.

You can choose to use this feature after the creature makes its roll, but before the DM determines whether the attack roll or saving throw succeeds or fails.

### INSULATED BOOM

Starting at 6th level, you learn the thunderclap cantrip if you don't already know it, and all your thunder attacks deal an extra 2d6 thunder damage, which increases to 4d6 at 12th level.

Additionally, whenever you cast a spell that deals thunder damage to other creatures





**IT'S SAID THAT MAESTRO SHOJIN LU CAN SENSE THE SMALLEST CHANGE IN THE AIR AROUND HIM, GIVING THE OLD TURTLEFOLK SURPRISINGLY QUICK REFLEXES.**

that you can see, you can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. The chosen creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell, and they take no damage if they would normally take half damage on a success.

### SOUND COMMAND

Starting at 14th level, you can precisely control the sound in an area. As an action, you can create a 30-foot-radius sphere of silence centered on a point you choose within 120 feet. Any creature or object you choose that is entirely inside the sphere is deafened and immune to thunder damage while inside it. Casting a spell that includes a verbal spell component is impossible.

Each affected creature must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC as you put pressure on their inner ear orientation. On

a failure, the creature is dizzy and must use its movement to move in a random direction, and a creature that does not use its movement falls prone. To determine the direction, roll a d8 and assign a direction to each die face. The creature doesn't take an action this turn.

## CLERIC: EMOTION DOMAIN

The Emotion domain focuses on the one thing that ties all creatures together: empathy. You have control over this special power and can use it both to heal by gifting others with positive emotions and to harm by inflicting negative emotions. Any god can be a god of emotion—but it is how their followers use this control over empathy that makes them either good or evil.

### DOMAIN SPELLS

| CLERIC LEVEL | SPELLS                              |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1st          | <i>bane, bless</i>                  |
| 3rd          | <i>calm emotions, zone of truth</i> |
| 5th          | <i>beacon of hope, fear</i>         |
| 7th          | <i>confusion, locate creature</i>   |
| 9th          | <i>awaken, dream</i>                |

### BONUS PROFICIENCY

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain proficiency in the Insight and Persuasion skills if you don't already have it.

### GIFT OF BRAVADO

Also at 1st level, you can grant your allies a bolstering feeling of bravado. At the end of a short rest, you can expend a spell slot and choose up to 5 creatures within 30 feet of you that you can see to gain temporary hit points equal to five times the level of the spell slot expended.

### CHANNEL DIVINITY: CALM PERSON

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to quell irrationality.

As an action, you present your holy symbol and one hostile humanoid of your choice within 30 feet of you must make a Charisma saving



throw, provided that the creature can see or hear you. If the creature fails its saving throw, it becomes indifferent to you and creatures of your choice within range. This effect ends if that creature is attacked or harmed by a spell.

### CHANNEL DIVINITY: ENRAGE PERSON

At 6th level, you can use your Channel Divinity to prompt irrationality.

As an action, you present your holy symbol and one humanoid of your choice that is within 30 feet of you must make a Charisma saving throw, provided that the creature can see or hear you. If the creature fails its saving throw, it becomes hostile to all creatures for 1 minute. During each of its turns, it must use its Action to attack the creature nearest to it, moving to the next nearest creature if it fells its current target.

### EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

At 8th level, whenever you are dealt damage by a creature, you can use your reaction to impose disadvantage on its next saving throw.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier. You regain all expended uses after you finish a long rest.

### CONTROL EMOTION

Starting at 17th level, you can deter would-be attackers. Whenever you are attacked by a creature you can see, you can use your reaction to cause the attack roll to fail or cause that attack to hit one creature of your choice, other than the attacker, that you can see that is within range of the attack.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier. You regain all expended uses after a short or long rest.

## DRUID: CIRCLE OF THE MARK

The Circle of the Mark is composed of those gifted—or cursed—with the scar of an animal attack, taking on the beast's aspects after an arkwave's activating pulse. A bite, scratch, or sting in this druid's past grants the bearer the traits—fangs, claws, or stinger—of what marked them. Druids in this circle are generally reclusive as they adapt to the animal's influence but have been known to create communities that embrace and enhance their bestial abilities.

### NEW NATURE

When you choose this circle at 2nd level, you may choose a beast with CR of 1 or lower to be the basis of your mark. Using your Wild Shape



DEEP WITHIN THE MIRRORED WETLANDS, THE RUMOR OF A YOUNG GIRL AND HER ARKWAVE-INFUSED WOLF FUEL WORRIES. BUT TO THOSE OF THE CIRCLE, SHE IS A CONDUIT OF NATURE.



feature to assume the shape of the chosen creature does not count against your uses. In addition, pick one physical trait of the beast from the following options, which permanently alters your appearance:

- **Aggressive.** Due to your fangs, claws, or stinger, when you make an unarmed strike, you deal extra slashing or piercing damage (your choice) equal to your Wisdom bonus (minimum of +1).
- **Defensive.** Due to your thick skin, fur, or shell, you gain a +1 bonus to your AC.
- **Movement.** Wings increase your movement speed by 10 feet but do not grant you a flying speed. Fins grant you a swimming speed of 10 feet or increase your swimming speed by 10 feet. Insect-based marks grant you a climbing speed equal to your walking speed.
- **Senses.** You gain gills (allowing you to breathe underwater), echolocation (granting you darkvision to a range of 60 feet), or larger ears or eyes (granting you advantage on Perception checks).

## NATURAL FRIEND

Starting at 2nd level, you learn the *animal friendship* and *speak with animals* spells. You always have these spells prepared and they don't count against the number of spells you can prepare each day.

## ADAPTATION

At 6th level, you have accepted your bestial mark. You gain an additional physical trait from the New Nature list of your choice. You can choose to improve your first trait instead of choosing a new one by choosing one of the following options:

- **Aggressive.** When you use the Attack action with an unarmed strike on your turn, you can make an extra unarmed strike attack immediately afterward.
- **Defensive.** The bonus to AC from your thick skin, fur, or shell, increases by 1.
- **Movement.** If your mark beast has a flying or swimming speed, you gain the same speed. Alternatively, insect marks grant you the ability to move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings.

"EYES OF A HAWK NEVER HURT NO ONE...UNTIL IT DID."

- ANDREA SAILWORTH,  
ASPIRING MARK DRUID



- **Senses.** Aquatic marks gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made while underwater. Echolocation grants blindsight to 60 feet in addition to darkvision. Larger ears or eyes give advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that you can see or hear.

As an action, you can concentrate and add one physical trait from your New Nature feature that lasts for 1 hour. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

## EVOLUTION

At 10th level, through the combination of your Wild Shape ability and mark knowledge, you can use an action to temporarily gain one trait of any beast that you are familiar with that has a Challenge Rating of 2 or lower, such as the Keen Smell of a polar bear or the Pounce of a tiger. This bestial trait lasts for 1 hour.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

## MARK MASTERY

There is no longer a line between your original form and your mark. At 14th level, you take



another additional physical trait from your New Nature feature that you can manifest.

Additionally, you know the *conjure fey* spell and can cast it without expending a spell slot. The fey spirit has the appearance of a pack or swarm based on your Marks. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

## FIGHTER: SUPER

Some people are born into it, while others strive for it—but you are super. You are uniquely above average in a way that defies the physical capabilities of humanoids. You are the exception to most, if not all, rules, and it shows. Your powers aren't anything unique among other super individuals, but among those without powers? You are super.

### SUPER STRENGTH

Beginning when you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you have advantage on Strength checks. Once on your turn, you can add a bonus to damage equal to your Strength modifier when you hit with a weapon attack against a creature you are grappling.

### SUPER VISION

Starting at 7th level, you gain proficiency in the Insight and Perception skills. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any check that uses those skills.

### SUPER SPEED

Beginning at 10th level, you can cast the *haste* spell with yourself as a target once with this feature and regain the ability to do so after a short rest. Constitution is your spellcasting ability score for this spell.

### SUPER FLIGHT

At 15th level, you have a flying speed equal to your current walking speed.

### SUPER DURABILITY

Starting at 18th level, whenever you suffer damage, you may use your reaction to reduce that damage by 1d10 + half your fighter level.

## MONK: WAY OF THE STEEL STRIKE

Monks of the Way of the Steel Strike follow a tradition that finds the balance between person and prosthesis. These monks have lost an arm or leg and are fitted with a custom artificial limb that is imbued with a mysterious combination of engineering, arkwaves, and ancient magic. As strong as steel but without the weight, these artifacts are rare and passed down to worthy successors. A magic-imbued tattoo on the socket connects the artifact to the limb. The monastery of the Steel Strike is a place where its monks learn how to maintain the artifacts and build the strength necessary to use them, creating a collaborative and close-knit community.

### ARTIFACT AWAKENED

Starting at 3rd level when you choose this tradition, the mundane artificial limb attunes to you and activates. You gain proficiency with tinker's tools and can use them to maintain your artifact. It requires daily repairs from both everyday wear-and-tear and battle damage.

The artifact must be removed during a long rest, and you must spend 10 minutes during a long rest repairing the artifact if it was worn that day; otherwise, it gains 1 point of disrepair. Finishing a long rest reduces the artifact's disrepair level by 1. If *dispel magic* is cast on the artifact (save DC 20), it becomes mundane for 24 hours.

#### DISREPAIR

| LEVEL | EFFECT  |
|-------|---|
| 1     | Disadvantage on attack rolls                                    |
| 2     | Disadvantage on Dexterity and Strength saving throws            |
| 3     | Artifact is mundane   |
| 4     | Artifact cannot be used and must return to monastery for repair |

Whenever you hit a creature with one of the attacks granted by your Flurry of Blows, you add both your Strength and your Dexterity modifiers to the damage. In addition, you can cast *light*, but only on your artifact, and you have advantage on checks made to grapple.



## ARTIFACT BONDED

At 6th level, the magic of the artifact is attuned to your ki. You can harness the power of your artifact and spend 3 ki points to cast *acid arrow*, *scorching ray*, or *shatter* without providing material components. You can spend additional ki points to increase the level of the spell, provided that the spell has an enhanced effect at higher level. The spell's level increases by 1 for each additional ki point you spend.

The maximum number of ki points you can spend to cast a spell in this way increases to 4 at 11th level and to 5 at 17th level.

## ARTIFACT GUARD

By 11th level, you have learned how to manipulate the magic within the artifact to defend yourself. You can cast *protection from energy* using this feature once per short or long rest, requiring no material components.

## ARTIFACT HARMONY

Beginning at 17th level, you have learned how to share your energy with the artifact. You can store unused ki points, up to a maximum of 6, during your long-rest repairs, and you can spend these stored ki points in addition to your regular ki points.

Additionally, when a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from you, you can use your reaction to cast a spell targeting the creature that provoked the opportunity attack, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

# PALADIN: OATH OF GESH

The followers of the Oath of Gesh believe deeply in the Old Gods of Ghaistala and make a lifetime commitment to the Lord of Water. The paladins—called tidal knights, or the Knights of Gesh—find their calling to the water comes in different ways. Some may have started as fishermen or sailors, others were mysteriously saved from drowning, while some are just drawn to the sea. They believe that the ocean must be protected from natural and fabricated

threats and feel as comfortable beneath the waves as they do on land. A tidal knight is a welcome addition to any travelling group, as they are thought to bring good luck.

## TENETS OF GESH

The tenets of the paladins are shared, but the exact nature of each knight's oath is defined by a parley with Gesh. Through a vision while close to death or a in dream while at sea, Gesh guides each paladin to defend the ocean from threats above and below the water. The edict of harmony encourages a lawful good or neutral alignment.

**Protect the Sea.** Uphold the natural balance of the ocean and defend its inhabitants against cruelty and injustice.

**Maintain the Balance.** Challenge the polluting and overfishing of the sea, and maintain the natural order of predator and prey.

**Aid the Travelers.** People must be protected as they move like the tides. Ensure safe passage across land and water for those who travel with you.

**Punish the Poachers.** Show no mercy to polluters, poachers, or other enemies of the sea.

## OATH SPELLS

| PALADIN LEVEL | SPELLS  |
|---------------|---|
| 3rd           | <i>animal friendship, create or destroy water</i> |
| 5th           | <i>animal messenger, misty step</i>               |
| 9th           | <i>water breathing, water walk</i>                |
| 13th          | <i>control water, dominate beast</i>              |
| 17th          | <i>commune with nature, hallow</i>                |

## CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

**Might of the Ocean.** As an action, you can call upon the force of the sea, using your Channel Divinity. For 1 minute, you add your Charisma modifier to melee attack rolls (with a minimum bonus of +1) and you have advantage on Strength checks made to move objects.

**Natural Protector.** When a creature that you can see attacks a target other than you that is within 5 feet of you, you can use your Channel Divinity as a reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll.





TO SEE AND FEEL THE GAZE OF GESHS STAR IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE WATERS THEMSELVES.

## AURA OF THE DEPTHS

Starting at 7th level, your connection with water runs so deep that it forms a natural ward while you aren't incapacitated. You and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you have resistance to cold damage from spells, and being underwater imposes no penalties on movement or weapon attacks.

At 18th level, the range of this aura increases to 30 feet.

## SWARM OF THE SEA

Starting at 15th level, you can cast *insect plague* with this feature without expending a spell slot or requiring material components. Instead of locusts, it manifests as a swarm of moray eels, but the spell's effect is the same. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until after you finish a long rest.

## OCEAN MASTER

At 20th level, you command the ocean herself. You can cast *conjure elemental* with this feature without expending a spell slot or requiring material components. You can only conjure a water elemental, but it can be of Challenge Rating 8 or lower.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until after you finish a short or long rest.

# RANGER: EVENFALL RIDER

Unlike most Beaconites, you are intimately familiar with the Court of Empty Night. Your first visit to Lowcity left you dying in the streets after you were attacked by a lycanthrope or vampire. But you did the unexpected: you survived. When you awoke, your now-mentor was tending to your wounds and explained that the real threat to Beacon is those who prey in the dark. You have committed your life to their destruction.

Work with your GM to determine if a lycanthrope or vampire attacked you, and create a description of your mentor and any Evenfall Rider associates.

As part of this archetype, you choose lycanthropes and vampires as your Favored Enemy at level 1.

## SURVIVOR

At 3rd level, surviving the bite of a vampire or lycanthrope has left you with a curse (or gift, depending on your perspective). While you are not changed, you feel the pull that constantly tempts you to take a life against your will. You gain one of these features, depending on the attacker you chose. Starting at 15th level, you have advantage on Wisdom saving throws to resist these effects.

- **Vampires.** Every four days, you feel the thirst when night falls. If you fail a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw, your only motivation is to find blood that night. This DC increases each time you finish a long rest without consuming blood before it.
- **Lycanthropes.** Each full moon, you are tempted by the beast. If you fail a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, your only motivation is to hunt prey for the night's duration and you gain a point of exhaustion.

In addition, your supernatural agility aids you in battle. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an additional 1d6 damage once per turn. In addition, you gain darkvision.

Finally, your mentor has taught you how to create a special bond with a spirit that hunts



beside you. You learn the *find steed* spell and it doesn't count against your list of known spells, and it is a ranger spell for you.

## STALKER

Starting at 7th level, you are known to the Court of Empty Night as a hunter, not prey. You gain one of these features depending on the attacker you chose.

- **Vampires.** You learn the *suggestion* spell, and it doesn't count against your list of known spells.
- **Lycanthropes.** You learn the *invisibility* spell, and it doesn't count against your list of known spells.


In addition, you have advantage on grapple checks against vampires and lycanthropes, and you have advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

## REVENGER

Beginning at 11th level, your name is whispered in the Court and you are infamous among the organization. You gain one of these features depending on the attacker you chose.

- **Vampires.** You learn the *vampiric touch* spell, and it doesn't count against your list of known spells.
- **Lycanthropes.** You learn the *fear* spell, and it doesn't count against your list of known spells.

In addition, you can nimbly dodge out of the way of certain area effects, such as a dragon's fiery breath or an ice spell. When you are subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.



A PACK OF ONE STALKS THE PROTECTORATE PEAKS, SEEKING THE OFFWORLD LYCAN WHO DID THIS TO HER.



## PREDATOR

At 15th level, you are recognizable by members of the Court of Empty Night. Members with a CR of 5 or lower are frightened of you. You gain one of these two abilities depending on the attacker you chose.

- **Vampires.** You learn the *confusion* spell, and it doesn't count against your list of known spells.
- **Lycanthropes.** You learn the *faithful hound* spell, and it doesn't count against your list of known spells. It assumes the appearance of a dire wolf.

In addition, when you successfully hit a creature with a melee attack, you learn how many hit points your target has remaining, expressed as a percentage of a total. If your target is below 25% of their hit point total, you may immediately take up to three weapon attacks against your target. If these attacks don't reduce your target's hit points to 0, your target must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of your next turn. Once you use this feature, you must complete a long rest before using it again.

## ROGUE: GATEKEEPER

When you travelled through the portals to Ghaistala, you absorbed a part of that energy that connects the worlds. As a rogue, you've learned to combine your attacks with teleportation, getting quickly in (and out of) danger.

### FLICKER

Starting at 3rd level, you awaken the teleportation magic within you. When you hit a creature with a melee weapon, you can use a reaction to teleport to an unoccupied space that you can see within a 5-foot radius of your target, and it's not counted against your movement.

## TELEPORTER

When you reach 9th level, you've learned to manipulate portal energy to travel farther distances.

You learn *blink* and can cast it three times a day with this feature, and you learn *misty step* and can cast it five times a day with this feature. You regain expended uses after you finish a long rest.

## SPACE BENDER

At 13th level, you can manipulate space to cause force damage by distorting part of an enemy. You learn *dimension door* and can cast it once a day with this feature. You may use *dimension door* against an unwilling creature that is grappled, inflicting damage equal to that of your Sneak Attack feature when you both appear in an unoccupied space. If the space is occupied, you can't bring the creature and the spell fails as described.

## BOUNDLESS

When you reach 17th level, your mastery of teleportation extends into the planes. You can cast both the *plane shift* and *teleport* spells with this feature. When you cast them with this feature, they don't require components.

The effort of casting these spells drains you of energy. Once you cast either of these spells, you cannot use this feature again for 2d8 days.

## SORCERER: RED RIGHT HAND

Some kids are born lucky, others are just lucky to be born. Sorcerers that display the Red Right Hand are the latter, their blood infused with strange demonic or aberrant energy. Oftentimes, they're the surviving half of a pair of twins, and for this reason they gain notoriety in the magical world as ill omens. This is true; they have extraordinary luck that they siphon from those around them.



## IN THE BLOOD

Starting at 1st level, your demonic blood has influenced you to learn of the powers and principalities of fiendish ilk. You can speak, read, and write Infernal and Abyssal.

Additionally, whenever you make a Charisma check while interacting with fiends, your proficiency bonus is doubled if it applies to the check.

## LUCKY TO BE BORN

Also starting at 1st level, your unique position in the hierarchy has allowed you to twist the strands of potentiality to better favor yourself or inconvenience your foes. As a reaction to a creature within 60 feet of you making an attack roll, skill check, or saving throw, you can impose disadvantage on the roll.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

## HELLFIRE

At 6th level, you learn to harness the power of the hells to boost your magical might in battle. As a reaction to casting a spell, you can spend 3 sorcery points to add +3 to the attack roll or save DC of the spell.

Alternatively, you can spend 1 to 5 sorcery points to add 1d4 per sorcery point spent to the damage roll of a spell. If it wasn't already, the spell's damage type becomes fire.

You must finish a long rest before using either of these abilities again.

## FEAR ITSELF

Starting at 10th level, you narrow your eyes and even the gods feel fear. As an action, you emanate an aura of snarling malice and shadowy bat wings extend from your back. Every creature in a 30-foot radius of you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or become frightened of you until the end of your next turn. While frightened in this way, a creature's speed is reduced to 0 and it is vulnerable to fire damage.

## DREAD LORD

At 18th level, you are at one with your demon blood and learn to assume your rightful form. When you use your Fear Itself feature, you can spend 7 sorcery points to take on the mantle of infernal royalty. Fire flashes from your finger tips at irregular intervals and a crown of bone and thorns rests atop your head. You gain the following benefits for 1 minute:

- Your spells and abilities ignore immunity to the frightened condition.
- You can use an action to perform an act of basic magic without expending a spell slot. This can be anything as simple as unlocking a door or as complicated as putting up a ward to protect your thoughts from being read. Your GM has ultimate say over whether the effect you want to accomplish happens.
- You gain a flight speed of 45 feet.

## WARLOCK: COSMIC LIGHT

Your patron is a force of cosmic energy dedicated to bringing justice to the multiverse. You have been chosen to wield these energies, shaping them according to your will. You may tailor the exact source of this cosmic energy as you see fit, but by default, the Cosmic Light is linked to a multiversal entity that allows you to manipulate arkwave energy as you see fit.

### EXPANDED SPELL LIST

| SPELL LEVEL | SPELLS                                       |
|-------------|--|
| 1st         | <i>detect evil and good, shield of faith</i> |
| 2nd         | <i>darkvision, see invisibility</i>          |
| 3rd         | <i>daylight, spirit guardians</i>            |
| 4th         | <i>arcane eye, resilient sphere</i>          |
| 5th         | <i>flame strike, seeming</i>                 |

## FEARLESS

Starting at 1st level, you are renowned for your ability to overcome fear. You have advantage





on any saving throw made against the frightened condition.

If you do become frightened, your first successful attack against the source of your fear made after the frightened condition has ended deals an additional 1d4 force damage for each round you were frightened.

### ARKWAVE AURA

Starting at 6th level, you have learned to harness your own arkwave energies to form a protective aura. You are immune to the effects of inhaled toxins and have a flying speed of 30 feet.

### WILLFUL

Starting at 10th level, you gain resistance to force damage and are immune to the charmed condition.

### A CORPS OF YOUR OWN

Starting at 14th level, you can summon aid from the Cosmic Light. As an action, choose a target that you can see within 60 feet of you and

cast *eldritch blast*. Ten illusory allies made of Cosmic Light appear randomly within 60 feet of the target and make a ranged spell attack using your ranged spell attack bonus. Each illusory ally's hit deals 1d12 force damage; your spell deals damage as normal. Each illusory ally is considered to have line of sight on your target, and your target does not gain any benefits from cover against the illusory allies' attacks. After this action, your illusory allies vanish.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

## PACT BOON

Warlocks in Ghaistala have the following Pact Boon option, in addition to those in the System Reference Document.

### PACT OF THE RING

At 3rd level, the Cosmic Light bestows upon you a ring that grants you additional control over arkwave energies for as long as the ring is in your possession.

Your ring is magical and cannot be removed against your will. If you are unconscious or sleeping, your ring can be removed. If you lose your ring, conducting a one-hour ritual creates a new ring and causes the old one to disappear. Upon your death, your ring vanishes.

While the ring is in your possession, you gain significantly more control over the *eldritch blast* spell. The energy from the spell can take any form you choose, up to a ten-foot cube in size. Anything created this way can be maintained indefinitely with concentration and deals ranged force damage, as per the *eldritch blast* spell. Energy constructs have an AC of 10, hit points equal to ten times your level, and a Strength modifier of +3.

When *eldritch blast* grants additional blasts at 5th, 11th, and 17th level, you can create that many separate constructs, each up to ten-foot cube in size. Alternatively, you can create a single construct that is proportionally larger and more powerful in tandem with the strength of *eldritch blast*. Combined energy constructs always have an AC of 10. Their hit points increase by 50 percent and their Strength modifier increases by 1 (up to a total of +6) for each combined construct.



# WIZARD: SCHOOL OF LOGOMANCY

Mastering and commanding the inherent power of words, heroes of the Logomancy tradition manipulate their own magic and the magic of others with the languages threaded throughout the world. For gifted logomancers, to bend the spoken word is to bend reality itself.

## BACKWARDS SPEAKING

Beginning when you select this school at 2nd level, when you cast a spell that deals elemental damage, you can speak the spell's name backwards and reverse the damage type, substituting its opposite. The attack deals an additional 1d4 damage of the new type. The Backwards Speaking table shows each damage type's opposite.

| DAMAGE TYPE | DAMAGE TYPE |
|-------------|-------------|
| acid        | poison      |
| fire        | cold        |
| radiant     | necrotic    |
| psychic     | force       |
| thunder     | lightning   |

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier (a minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

The additional damage increases to 1d6 at 6th level, 1d8 at 10th level, 1d10 at 12th level, and 1d12 at 14th level.

## NOW YOU SEE ME...

Beginning at 2nd level, you can use your movement to teleport to a space you can see that is a number of feet away equal to your speed. An illusory duplicate appears in the space you occupied before teleporting and remains until the end of your next turn or it is destroyed. While the illusory duplicate stands, when a creature targets you with an attack, it must make an Intelligence saving throw against your spell save DC to discern the nature of the illusion. On a failure, it believes the illusory duplicate is you. On a success, it knows the duplicate is an illusion. If an attack hits the duplicate, or it is in the area of a spell



LLA KROW DNA ON YALP SEKAM  
GNIDRAZIW A LLUD BOJ.

or ability that deals damage to multiple targets, the duplicate is destroyed.

A creature is unaffected by this feature if it can't see, if it relies on senses other than sight, such as blindsight, or if it can perceive illusions as false, as with truesight. You can use this ability twice, and you regain any expended uses when you finish a short or long rest.

## ...Now You Don't

Starting at 6th level, your stage presence and command of words allows you to pass off your spells as mere parlor tricks to the unsuspecting. When you backwards speak a spell with an immediate casting time, you can cast it without any somatic components. Additionally, a creature attempting to identify your spell with an Intelligence (Arcana) check or by casting *counterspell* must succeed on a Wisdom (Insight) check contested by your Charisma (Deception) check. On a failure, the



creature believes the spell to be *prestidigitation* and its counterspell has a 50% of failure, rolled by the DM.

## MIRROR TRICK

Starting at 10th level, you are able to wield the enemy's words against them. When a creature makes a spell attack against you with a verbal spell component that targets only you, you can make an Intelligence saving throw against the caster's spell save DC to backwards speak it, deflecting it toward the caster. 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.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until after a long rest.

## SHOWSTOPPER

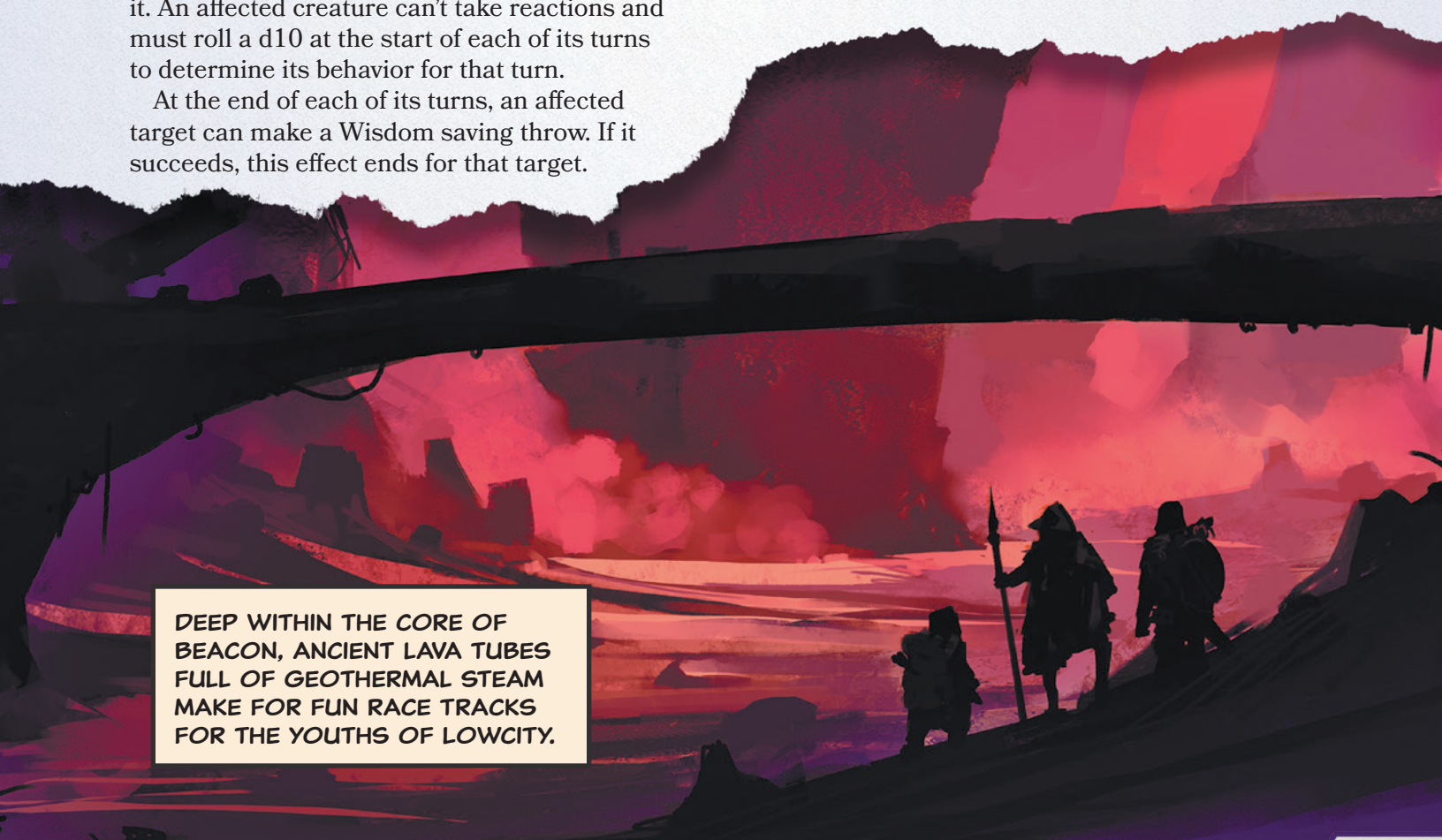
Starting at 14th level, you have learned to backwards-speak words into reality, manipulating the world and twisting it around your enemies. Each creature in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point you choose within 60 feet must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw when you cast this spell or be affected by it. An affected creature can't take reactions and must roll a d10 at the start of each of its turns to determine its behavior for that turn.

At the end of each of its turns, an affected target can make a Wisdom saving throw. If it succeeds, this effect ends for that target.

### D10 BEHAVIOR

- | D10   | BEHAVIOR  |
|-------|---|
| 1     | <b>TUC NI FLAH.</b> The creature envisions that it is being sawed in half, taking 2d12 psychic damage as a result, and doesn't take an action this turn.                          |
| 2-4   | <b>RETAW KNAT.</b> The creature envisions that it is wrapped in chains while submerged in a tank of water. The creature is restrained.  |
| 4-6   | <b>TIBBAR NI A TAH.</b> The creature envisions an infernal rabbit lunging at them from out of a hat. The creature is frightened.  |
| 6-8   | <b>GNIRAEPPASID XOB.</b> The creature disappears into one box and reappears in a new spot of your choosing within 60 feet of its original spot.                                   |
| 8-10  | <b>EFINK SSOT.</b> The creature envisions a massive knife hurtling toward it, pinning it to where it stands. The creature takes 1d10 psychic damage and is considered restrained. |
| 10-12 | <b>YLEVOL TNATSISSA.</b> The creature believes that it is your lovely assistant and is charmed.   |

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until after a short or a long rest.



DEEP WITHIN THE CORE OF BEACON, ANCIENT LAVA TUBES FULL OF GEOTHERMAL STEAM MAKE FOR FUN RACE TRACKS FOR THE YOUTHS OF LOWCITY.



# SPELLS

## HEROIC LANDING

*2nd-level conjuration*

**Casting Time:** 1 reaction

**Range:** Self

**Components:** S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Spell Lists:** Bard, druid, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

When falling more than 30 feet, you can use your reaction to cast heroic landing. Regardless of previous orientation, you stick a three-point landing and suffer no fall damage. Immediately upon landing, a shockwave radiates from your location and each creature within 10 feet must make a Constitution saving throw, taking 3d10 thunder damage on a failed save or half as much on a success.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d10 for each slot above 2nd.

## ICE CUBE

*3rd-level evocation*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 150 feet

**Components:** V S M (a candy wrapper)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Spell Lists:** Sorcerer, wizard

A chunk of ice the size of a hailstone shoots forward from your hand to a point you choose within range and explodes in a storm of ice and sleet. Each creature within a 30-foot-cube centred on that point must make a Constitution saving throw. A target takes 8d6 cold damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a success.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage dealt increases by 1d6 damage for each slot level above 3rd.

## TWIN POWERS, ACTIVATE!

*3rd-level transmutation*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

**Spell Lists:** Druid, wizard

You touch a willing creature that also can cast *twin powers activate!* That creature may use their reaction to cast *twin powers activate!*, expending a 3rd-level spell slot in the process. One of you transforms into a beast of CR 5 or lower and the other transforms into its choice of elemental of CR 5 or lower.

## X-RAY VISION

*2nd-level divination (ritual)*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

**Spell Lists:** Bard, cleric, druid, paladin, ranger, sorcerer, wizard

For the duration, you can see through objects and barriers within 15 feet of you. Everything you see in this way is monochrome.

This spell is blocked by 3 inches of common metal or a thin sheet of lead.





## ALTER EGOS

Mild-mannered or not, these alter egos can serve as secret identities and, much like backgrounds, provide proficiencies, languages, and equipment, as well as a feature and sometimes a variant form.

### ARCANE RESEARCHER

Magic is your life. You are dedicated to studying the arcane, and you scoff at those who find arkwave and Titan research interesting. You believe the true nature of the world can be defined—and manipulated—by magic, and you want to have mastery over it. You are fiercely independent of any organizations in Beacon and answer only to yourself.

Resigned to the fact you are reliant on the Library of the Spire and the Collegium Beacarus to further your knowledge, you keep a polite and professional relationship with those organizations. As you believe all knowledge is valuable and can reveal new insights into magic you haven't discovered, you have a few friends at the Favor Forge and Exalted Gardens. It's in your interest to stay polite, but sometimes you can't keep your temper when the arcane is undervalued.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Arcana, History

**Languages:** Two of your choice

**Equipment:** A bottle of ink, a quill, parchment, and a pouch containing 10 gp

### FEATURE: MAGIC ADEPT

You have a trained eye for the arcane. By focusing for a few minutes, you can tell what school of magic surrounds an object or area. When you hold an object, you can distinguish whether it contains arcane or arkwave energy. You can also recall the names of people you've worked with in relation to your studies within the past two months.

THE PORTAL PLAZA IS A GREAT RESOURCE FOR YOUNG MAGIC USERS SEEKING INTERPLANAR COMPONENTS.

## BEACON HERALD REPORTER

If there's a story to be sniffed out, you're going to be the one that breaks it. You are a veteran reporter for the *Beacon Herald* chapbook, having worked your way up through different beats and learned both the light and dark corners of the city. The Herald sits in Argentum Square and you've found anonymous sources in the Shattered Sons, Lamplighters, GEAR, and the Collegium Beacarus.

Not content just sitting behind a desk, you're often in the thick of shady government dealings, the latest villains and crimes, and covering the news from the Frontier. Since you've seen it all, very little scares you, and you're comfortable with some of the dubious methods you've used to get information in the past.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Choose two from among History, Insight, Investigation, and Persuasion

**Tool Proficiencies:** Forgery kit

**Languages:** One of your choice

**Equipment:** A bottle of black ink, a quill, a small notebook, and a pouch containing 10 gp

### FEATURE: NEWS HOUND

You know how to get around bureaucracies and get access to the inner workings of organizations. This includes access to the Library of the Spire and the *Herald* archives. If you don't know information about a person or location, you know where to get it. You have a few distant contacts in Argentum Square and one contact that you trust with your life.

### VARIANT FEATURE: PORTARAZZO

If your character has a Beacon Herald Reporter background, you may select this background feature instead of News Hound.

You specialize in all things Portaleers. You know their names, you have theories on their secret identities, and you've even had a few friendly chats with the Docent. You are always looking for news, rumors, and secrets on the Portaleers and, if you don't know where they are, you can quickly find out. The Portaleers find you amusing, but you're on the cusp of becoming an annoyance.



## EVERGLINT SAILOR

The call of the open waters is undeniable. You have served on the same ship for several years and developed a gift as a boatswain, navigator, gunner, medic, or cook. Your ship works for Beacon, out on Everglint Bay, fulfilling requests that include fishing, transportation, and—rarely—defending the city. If there's a job to be had on the water, your ship has done it. Your crew has never ventured into the Klachton Ocean, but you've drawn close enough to know it's a dangerous idea.

Collaborate with your GM on creating the type of ship, your role, and the crew's leader. Your ship operates out of the Harbor and you work frequently with Dockmaster Celedor Goodworthy.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Athletics, Survival

**Tool Proficiencies:** Navigator's tools, vehicles (water)

**Equipment:** Navigator's tools, a set of common clothes, fishing tackle, and a pouch containing 10 gp

### FEATURE: LOYAL CREW

Your ship and crew are willing to provide transportation throughout the bay for you and your party for free—but if trouble arises, you're expected to help. If your request is to venture into the Klachton Ocean, you must negotiate with the captain on the job and cost. You have reliable contacts in former crewmates for work that isn't on your ship.

## EXILE

You are no longer welcome in the city of heroes. Beacon has sentenced you to exile, to live what life you can in The Frontier. Perhaps a freak arkwave manifestation resulted in deaths, or you made one wrong choice and hurt innocents, but the result is the same—you are on your own, and you want to return to Beacon. You have focused your time on understanding the events that transpired and what they mean for your future, and afterward you turned to the wisdom of the cosmos.

Collaborate with the GM on why you were exiled. Did you lose control of your powers and now work to gain mastery? Or were you unjustly exiled and you want to clear your name? Has your time alone led to a discovery that could help Beacon? You should have good intentions for returning to the city, which can determine the actions your character takes to earn the favor of Beacon's citizens.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Medicine, Religion

**Tool Proficiencies:** Herbalism kit

**Equipment:** A herbalism kit, a bottle of black ink, a quill, a small notebook, and a pouch containing 5 gp

### FEATURE: MINDFULNESS

You have found peace in learning to be alone. Your dedication to meditation combined with your discoveries on the Frontier has given you new insights on how the world works. You have mastery over your powers that few gain in a lifetime, which has attuned you to arkwave energy. When you touch someone with arkwave-born abilities, you have an understanding of their powers—what they are and their limits.

### VARIANT EXILE: RECLUSE

Rather than being exiled, you chose life as a recluse. Whether inside an isolated city home or out in The Frontier, you want nothing to do with people. You prefer quiet solitude to study your powers and arkwave energy. You are motivated to develop your powers and seek answers from the cosmos. Your motivation changes but the results are the same—you use the Mindfulness feature.

## FRONTIER GUIDE

Growing up outside Beacon isn't the hardship that Beaconites assume; you have thrived living out on the Frontier. You are driven to show people the wonders of Ghaistala—from the Ivory Wilds to the Darnan Forest. You lead caravans between settlements to ensure safe passage and are often tapped to find missing people who braved the Frontier alone.

Whether operating from Beacon out of convenience or making a home in Frontier



outposts, you work for yourself rather than an organization, preferring to be free of what “polite society” expects. You are most comfortable in nature, having learned to feed off the land and make do with little.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Nature, Survival

**Languages:** One of your choice

**Equipment:** A hunter’s knife, a blanket roll, a 50-foot roll of hempen rope, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

## FEATURE: PATHFINDER

You have a strong connection to one outpost or settlement in the Ivory Wilds, the Grey Rise, Darnan Forest, or the Mirrored Wetlands and can navigate to it from almost anywhere. You generally recall the distance and terrain of places you’ve been before and always know which direction is north. You recognize flora and fauna that would be deadly to eat.

## LAMPLIGHTER

You have been a part of the Lamplighters (see chapter 7) for several years, earning promotions by solving some of the stranger mysteries in Beacon. You are good friends and have an excellent working relationship with the team members of your Lamplighter flame. You have been assigned to your Hearth for many years—there’s little you don’t know about it and the residents recognize you and appreciate your dedication to your work.

You fulfill an important role on your team as one of the following: loremaster, chaplain, interpreter, medic, or buster. Your flame may take on all kinds of cases, or your team could specialize in investigating major crimes, homicides, or tracking villains.

As a member of an adventuring party, you may struggle with decisions that dance around, or outright break, the laws of Beacon. You are always mindful to not cross over into vigilantism.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Choose two from among History, Insight, Investigation, and Persuasion

**Tool Proficiencies:** Thieves’ tools, one type of gaming set

**Equipment:** A uniform of your Lamplighter flame, a rank insignia, and a pouch containing 10 gp



"FOLLOW LAMPLIGHTER'S GLOW."

- UNKNOWN, FOUND CHISELED INTO AN OLD PILLAR IN SERENITY.



## FEATURE: FRIENDS IN ALL PLACES

You have connections to almost everybody in your Hearth and know a number of people to contact when you need a favor. Whether it is your keeper, a local merchant family, or a persistent pickpocket you just keep putting away, you have two contacts in Beacon that are willing to help you without cost.

## LOCAL CELEBRITY

At an early age, you discovered the thrill of entertaining an audience. You practiced and refined your crowd-pleasing skills as a singer, dancer, comedian, storyteller, or trouper. You have a deep appreciation for the arts and are energized by the excitement of a crowd. Collaborate with your GM on your productions—including the type of performance, your crew, and other celebrities.

You are established and skilled enough to be recognized in your community. Folks often approach you to compliment your latest production or ask for an autograph.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Performance and choose one from among Acrobatics, Arcana, Persuasion, and Sleight of Hand, as appropriate for your specialty

**Tool Proficiencies:** Disguise kit, one type of musical instrument

**Equipment:** A musical instrument, common clothes, a costume, and a pouch containing 15 gp

## FEATURE: TURN UP THE CHARM

You are at home on any stage, large or small. You can easily convince a tavern to host your production in exchange for a reasonable percentage of revenue. If you are part of a larger production, you receive free room and board in addition to your fee. Strangers who recognize you try to earn your favor and attention. Alternatively, you may have a private patron who ensures your lifestyle is comfortable.

## MOGUL

Whether self-made or from a family inheritance, you are a wealthy individual with a prosperous business. You have lived for several years—if not your whole life—with the power and privilege that comes with money. You have many acquaintances in the Beacon Consul and host a monthly fundraiser gala for public reform. Your wealth is invested through the primary bank in Beacon, the Veil Bank, to encourage a strong economy.

Work with your GM to define your wealth and your goals. Are you from a rich family, and what is your relationship with them? Did you work your way to the top of a large company, or are you an entrepreneur? How much influence do you have over your level or district? What does the public think of you? Why did you choose adventuring if you can have anything money can buy?

**Skill Proficiencies:** Insight, Persuasion

**Tool Proficiencies:** One set of artisan's tools from among a gaming set, a herbalism kit, a musical instrument, tinkerer's tools, or thieves' tools

**Languages:** One of your choice

**Equipment:** Identifier as owner of your company, a set of fine clothes, and a pouch containing 30 gp

## FEATURE: INVESTOR

You can either create your own equipment or pay a private team to do it for you. You can spend time tinkering with merging magical or arkwave energy into unique items, and the time needed to create them is one third the normal amount. These discoveries may be shared with the public to create a stream of revenue for you. Your sharp mind and willingness to support other inventors makes you popular with people who share your interests.

## VARIANT FEATURE: MONARCH

If your character has a mogul alter ego, you may select this background feature instead of Investor.

You or a long-deceased relative escaped to Beacon through the portals and brought some



of your people with you. You are a part of a royal family from a world that no longer exists, and you have adapted to life in Beacon. While you hold no political power within Beacon and it does not recognize your rank, your people are always willing to aid you.

## PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

You know that Beacon doesn't gleam as brightly as everyone claims. You tried serving in the Lamplighters, and it got you nowhere fast. Villains keep coming and leave behind messes that no one else cares to clean up. That is where you come in.

You are a private investigator, ready for hire. For the right price, you pick up a trail the law enforcement abandoned. Or maybe you're still working with the Lamplighters as a fugitive recovery agent and now track down villains. No matter your line of work, you have a good relationship with most of the Lamplighters—at least those who still like you.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Choose two from among Deception, Insight, Intimidation, and Investigation

**Tool Proficiencies:** Disguise kit, thieves' tools

**Equipment:** A disguise kit, a set of fine clothes, and a pouch containing 20 gp

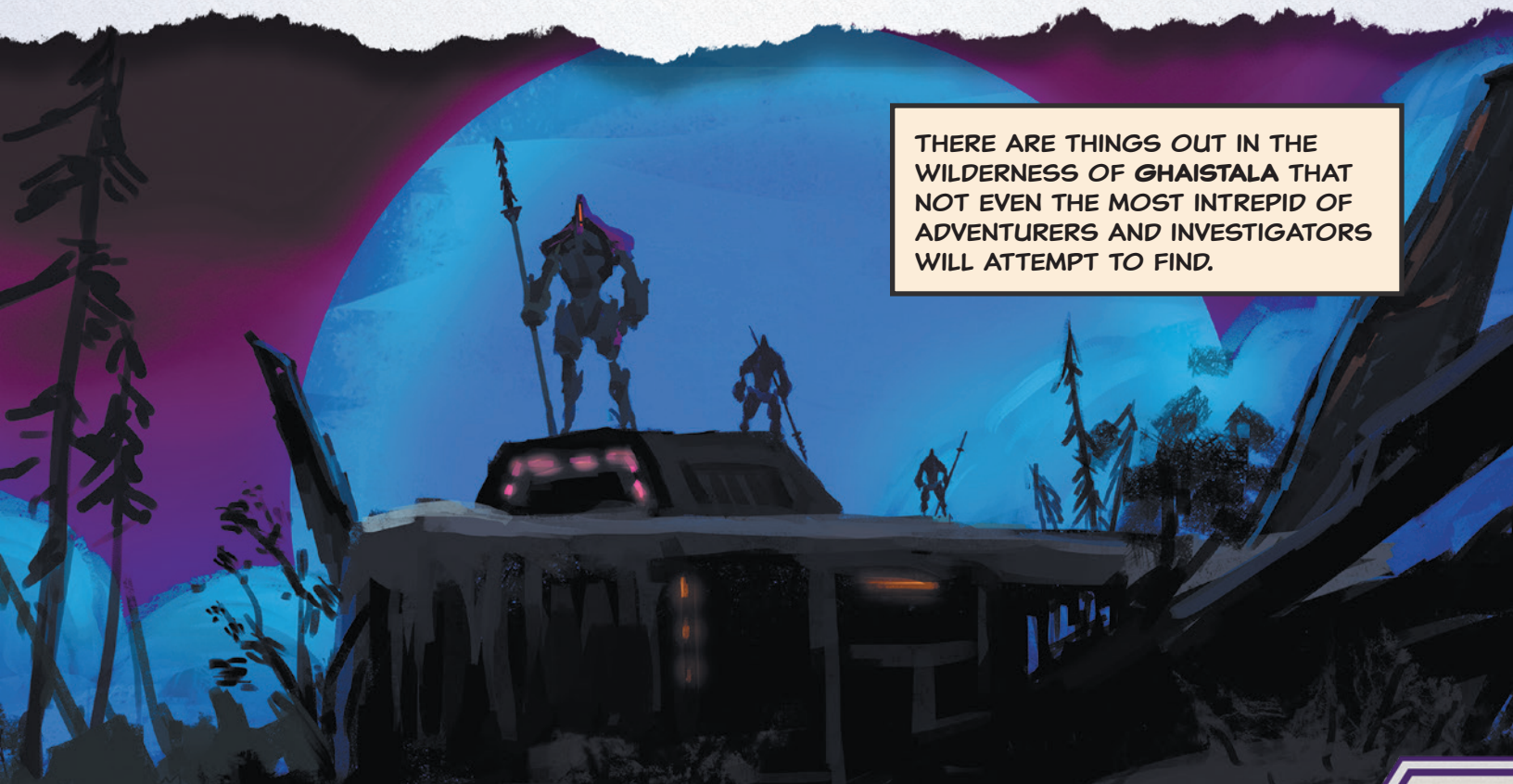
## FEATURE: GENEROUS BENEFACTOR

Someone out there is fond of you. An important member of the Lookouts or the Scroungers provides you with leads, gold, and occasionally special equipment to aid your work. However, you don't know why they are interested in you or what they want in return.

## SHATTERED SON

As a member of the Shattered Sons, you know the greatest problems with Beacon are its government and major corporations. A grim incident in your life has turned you to vigilantism—the only way to get anything done. You only trust other members of the Shattered Sons and have no qualms working against the imbalanced systems in the city.

You take matters into your own hands with little regard for the law. Operating out of Argentum Square, you act on orders from Grindstone to keep the government and corporations in check. You know how to use the shadows to your advantage and take what you need to expose wrongdoing. The kinder side of you that survived your tragedy helps other victims of corruption when you can.



THERE ARE THINGS OUT IN THE WILDERNESS OF GHAISTALA THAT NOT EVEN THE MOST INTREPID OF ADVENTURERS AND INVESTIGATORS WILL ATTEMPT TO FIND.





Collaborate with your GM on the incident that led you to the Shattered Sons. Did you suffer a grave injury, or did you lose a loved one? Did a shady corporation cause you to lose everything and force you onto the streets? Are you willing to kill for your beliefs? Determining your motivations will help you decide the limits of your character's morals.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Sleight of Hand, Stealth

**Tool Proficiencies:** Disguise kit, thieves' tools

**Equipment:** Thieves' tools, a memento related to your old life, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

## FEATURE: URBAN RANGER

You understand Beacon better than almost anyone else. You know the fastest route between districts and the paths of Lamplighter and Stiltguard patrols. You track where prominent business leaders and government officials live. You have access to an uncompromised Shattered Sons safehouse.

## TITAN ARCHEOLOGIST

As a member of the Guild of Exploration and Advanced Reconnaissance (GEAR), you are based out of Argentum Square and are almost never at home. You are driven to understand everything about the Titan civilization that fell—including their art, ruins, and graves. You have an affinity for artifacts that still hold unknown power.

You often take jobs for GEAR to head deep beneath Beacon and sometimes fund your own expeditions into the Frontier. You also have a working relationship with the Collegium Beacarus, which sponsors your excursions in exchange for priceless artifacts.

**Skill Proficiencies:** History, Survival

**Tool Proficiencies:** Cartographer's tools

**Languages:** One of your choice

**Equipment:** Cartographer's tools, traveler's clothes, a Ghaistala map you've annotated, and a pouch containing 15 gp

## FEATURE: TITAN EXPERT

You are at heart an explorer, with the ability to sleep anywhere and a willingness to eat anything that looks edible. When you find an artifact or ruin, you know if it was built by the Titans or someone else and you almost always understand the original intent of a Titan artifact.

## WORKER

Most employers across Ghaistala can be found in Beacon, but many expand their profits by pushing into The Frontier. Depending on where you live and your values, you can earn a living by working for these organizations. You are mostly in it to pay the bills; you don't hold a position of power—yet. You have some insight into how these organizations work and have seen a thing or two that the public doesn't



know. As a worker, you can get into places owned by your employer if it makes sense for you to be there.

## WORKER ORGANIZATIONS OF GHAISTALA

For detailed descriptions of each organization, see chapter 7.

**Asha Trading Co.** Far from Beacon, in the Grey Rise, the Asha Trading Co. employs metal workers, diggers, and tunnelers. It is the main supplier of minerals and metals to Beacon. Your parents worked for Asha and you've worked there your entire life, feeling like the company owns you. This is all you've known, and you've noticed that the Asha Trading Co. cares little about employee lives and has no qualms about breaking laws for its own benefit.

**Gangler.** Your knack for engineering and protective nature led you to the Stiltguards in Lowcity. The Lamplighters can't be everywhere at once, and no one knows Lowcity like you do. You work in a paid position for a mostly volunteer organization, often cleaning up after battles and disasters. You work closely with Anders Rigglin to get the best gangler jobs.

**Guild of Armorers.** You are often found at the Favor Forge in Lowcity, crafting the next set of paragite armor and equipment. Skilled and strong from years of hard smithing, you know where to get materials at cost and always have access to the Forge. You also have a knack for experimenting and creating new items from paragite.

**Lookout.** As part of the Lookouts, you think of all people who live in Lowcity as family under your protection. Something supernatural happened in your past and led you to understand that there are things to fear in the night—and you're the right person to fight them. You know more than most about the Court of Empty Night and you kill vampires on sight.

**Scrounger.** Based in Lowcity, Scroungers work out of the Crater to find, repair, and sell leftover relics from villain battles. You have a knack for making things work, and can see potential, but unintended, uses for objects. You have met Grangno and Gramko once—but otherwise you're one of many nameless faces earning a living from junk.

**Treestrider.** Deep in Darnan Forest, the source of lumber for Beacon, lies the settlement

of Hearthfire. You work as a treestrider, making sure that the forest stays healthy and preventing overcutting. You are especially skilled at scouting for dangers and, when your hands are idle, you whittle pieces of wood into art.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Insight and one Strength, Dexterity, or Intelligence skill of your choice, as appropriate to your organization

**Languages:** One of your choice

**Equipment:** Identification as a worker of your organization, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 20 gp

## FEATURE: INSIDER

Coworkers at your organization tend to look out for each other. If you need a favor at your workplace or a place to stay when you're adventuring, you can count on a coworker for aid. You have reasonable access to your place of employment and know it intimately. If you don't know how to reach areas you shouldn't be in, you know someone who can tell you, or where it's documented. You have a better chance than most at having a conversation with your organization's leadership.

## FEATS

### RESOLUTE

*Prerequisite: Constitution 13 or higher*

Even when you're down, you're not out.

If you are at 0 hit points, you can roll half your remaining Hit Dice and regain hit points equal to the result. If you have fewer than half your total Hit Dice remaining (rounding down), you may not use this feat. Once you have used this feat, you must wait until it recharges before you can use it again.

At the end of each long rest, roll a d6. If the result is a 5 or 6, the feat recharges.

### SUPER FLIGHT

Some acquire flight through magical means. Yours is innate and awoke in you, giving you the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain a flight speed equal to your base walking speed.



# CHAPTER 2

# SIDEKICKS

**W**hat is any good superhero without their trusty sidekick? Sidekicks can be an essential part of a hero's job, whether performing menial tasks or providing timely backup. Using this system, heroes can train their own sidekicks however they wish.

For every full level—level up to level up—that a hero spends training their sidekick, the sidekick gains half of a *sidekick level*. Each sidekick level provides an opportunity to train a sidekick in the skills their heroic mentor values most! Each hero can only take on one sidekick at a time, and they can choose to swap their sidekick for another any time they level up. A sidekick that is swapped for another while in-between sidekick levels loses no experience, and can resume their training with another hero.

All sidekicks begin at level 0 and gain their first sidekick level after only one level worth of training (rather than two). At some levels, there may be features that depend on or are affected by those gained at earlier levels.

All sidekicks start with a d6 for their hit die, and gain hit points equal to 1d6 + their Constitution modifier when they gain a sidekick level. While most sidekicks will likely start using the CR 0 or CR 1/8 stat block, they may start with an appropriate higher level CR stat block at the GM's discretion. All sidekicks begin with a proficiency bonus of +1.

**Gaining Class Levels.** When a sidekick reaches certain levels, they may have the opportunity to gain levels in player classes. The

class they take levels in must be a class in which the training hero has reached at least 3rd level. For class levels, a hero may choose to have one of their allies or party members train with them and their sidekick. In this case, the sidekick can also choose from classes in which the assisting hero has reached at least 3rd level. A sidekick cannot gain levels outside of the sidekick leveling system until they reach the maximum sidekick level. Upon reaching this level, they can no longer gain sidekick levels and must instead gain class levels normally.

## 1ST LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their first sidekick level, they gain two of the following features or proficiencies depending on the training received:

- Proficiency in any one language that the training character is fluent in, including Druidic and thieves' cant.
- Proficiency in any one skill that the training character is proficient in (up to a maximum of 6).
- Proficiency with any one gaming set, musical instrument, or set of artisan's tools that the training character is proficient in.
- Proficiency with any one simple weapon that the training character is proficient with.



## 2ND LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their second sidekick level, they gain one of the following features or proficiencies depending on the training received:

- Any one proficiency that could be gained at 1st level.
- Proficiency with light armor, or medium armor if they are already proficient with light armor.
- Proficiency with any one martial weapon.
- Proficiency with thieves' tools.

## 3RD LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their third sidekick level, they gain one of the following features or proficiencies depending on the training received:

- Any one proficiency that could be gained at lower levels.
- Proficiency with medium armor, or heavy armor if already proficient with medium armor.
- Proficiency in any one saving throw that the training character is proficient in (up to a maximum of 3 saving throw proficiencies).
- Any one cantrip that the training character knows. Cantrips learned this way can only be cast once after finishing a short or long rest. If necessary, the spellcasting ability is the same as that of the training character (up to a maximum of 2 taught cantrips).

Also at their third sidekick level, they gain the following feature. This feature cannot be taken again at higher levels.

- All 1st-level features (but not proficiencies or saving throws) of any one class in which the training character has at least 3 levels. If the class has a hit die higher than 1d6, the sidekick's hit die increases to match. Additionally, the sidekick's proficiency bonus increases from +1 to +2.

## 4TH LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their fourth sidekick level, they gain two of the following features or proficiencies depending on the training received:

- Any one proficiency or feature that could be gained at lower levels, except for those that specify otherwise.
- Proficiency with heavy armor or shields.
- Proficiency with land or water vehicles.
- Expertise with any one skill or tool set learned at lower levels (up to a maximum of 2 skill expertises).
- +2 to any one ability score, or +1 to two ability scores. This feature can only be chosen at 4th level.



A SIDEKICK READIES HERSELF FOR A FIGHT.



## 5TH LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their fifth sidekick level, they gain the following feature. This feature cannot be taken again at a higher level.

- All 2nd-level features of any one class in which the training character has at least 3 levels and of which the sidekick has already taken 1st-level features.

## 6TH LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their sixth sidekick level, they gain one of the following features or proficiencies depending on the training received:

- Any proficiency or feature that could be gained at lower levels, except for those that specify otherwise.
- Any one 1st-level spell that the training character knows. The spellcasting ability is the same as that of the training character. Spells learned this way can be cast once per long rest (up to a maximum of 1 taught spell). This feature can only be chosen if the sidekick does not have the Spellcasting feature.
- The sidekick can learn and prepare any one 1st-level spell that the training character knows. This spell does not count against their known spells, and counts as a spell of the class for which they have spell slots if it is not already (up to a maximum of 2 taught spells). This feature can only be chosen if the sidekick has the Spellcasting feature.

## 7TH LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their seventh sidekick level, they gain the following feature. This feature cannot be taken again at a higher level.

- All 3rd-level features of any one class in which the training character has at least 3 levels, and of which the sidekick has already taken 2nd-level features.

## MENTORSHIP TAKES TIME

When determining whether a companion gains a sidekick level or not, GMs are encouraged to consider how much time was *actually* spent on training that sidekick. A hero who largely ignores their sidekick may find that their sidekick gains levels much slower than the sidekick of a hero who spends all of their downtime teaching theirs.

## 8TH LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their eighth sidekick level, they gain one of the following features or proficiencies, depending on the training received:

- Any proficiency or feature that could be gained at lower levels, except for those that specify otherwise.
- Any one feat (up to a maximum of 1 feat).

## 9TH LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their ninth sidekick level, they gain the following feature. This feature cannot be taken again at a higher level.

- All 4th-level features of any one class in which the training character has at least 3 levels and of which the sidekick has already taken 3rd-level features.

## 10TH LEVEL

Whenever a sidekick gains their tenth sidekick level, they gain the following feature. After 10th level, a sidekick is considered a 5th-level character of the class for which they have gained features and can no longer gain sidekick levels.

- All 5th-level features of any one class in which the training character has at least 3 levels, and of which the sidekick has already taken 4th-level features. Additionally, their proficiency bonus increases from +2 to +3.



# CHAPTER 3

# VARIANT RULES

## MAKE HEROES INTO SUPERHEROES

The following optional rules allow heroes to push themselves to their limits and beyond, letting them accomplish superheroic feats that make their stories the stuff of legend.

Note: Many of these abilities and rules make heroes more powerful than those found in a typical 5e game—this is by design!

### I'M THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT I DO

*The Bowman of Beacon crouches on the rooftop, bow and arrow in hand. Squinting, he carefully aims his shot at a target behind him, closes his eyes, and fires blindly, hitting his target.*

When needed, heroes can hit a bit harder, dodge a bit faster, or just give themselves that slight edge that snatches victory from defeat. To simulate this, heroes may spend a Hit Die in the following ways:

- After hearing the result of a roll, a hero may spend one Hit Die, rolling it and adding that result to their previous total. At 5th level, a hero may spend two Hit Dice, at 10th level they may spend three, and at 15th level and beyond they may spend up to their Hit Dice maximum.
- While rolling for damage, a hero may spend a Hit Die, adding the result to their damage roll. This die is not rolled a second time on a critical hit.
- When an enemy succeeds on a saving throw against a hero's effect, a hero may spend

a Hit Die, subtracting the result from the villain's saving throw result.

If you are using this optional rule, consider granting more opportunities for heroes to regain spent Hit Dice. As a general guideline, anytime a hero would be awarded a point of inspiration, award a Hit Die instead.

### THIS ISN'T EVEN MY FINAL FORM

*Aegis stares down the behemoth before her, feeling vulnerable despite the cool steel of her advanced power armor. As a blow from the beast sends her reeling backwards, she says, "Activate Protocol Seven." She rises as a new energy swirls around her, armor expanding to face the threat.*

A hero's abilities are constantly evolving, and when needed, they can push their potential just a bit further, giving a preview of powers to come. The following abilities can be used by expending points of inspiration awarded by the DM:

- When casting a spell, a hero may expend inspiration to cast a spell at one level higher than the spell slot expended.
- A hero may spend a point of inspiration to use a class feature they have not yet acquired, provided it is available to them within two levels. (For example, a 5th-level paladin can expend inspiration to use a 7th-level paladin feature.)



## I COULD DO THIS ALL DAY

*Exemplar hit the ground hard, spitting blood and feeling her broken ribs. Above her stood the Galactic Tyrant, Scourge of a Dozen Worlds, his voice booming as he prepared to strike again. “Kneel! Kneel, and it’s over.”*

A true hero never gives up—in their time of greatest need, a hero can dig deep and access their inner reserves.

- In exchange for gaining 1 level of exhaustion, a hero may increase any given ability score by 5, up to a maximum of 25, for 3 rounds. The level of exhaustion is gained at the end of the third round.
- In exchange for gaining 1 level of exhaustion, a hero may have advantage on all attack rolls and saving throws for 3 rounds. The exhaustion level is gained at the end of the third round.
- In exchange for gaining 1 level of exhaustion, a hero may turn a villain’s successful saving throw into a failure.

## THROG SMASH!

*Mammoth versus Blockbuster! A contest of champions! The two titans stand, matching each other blow for blow, until a devastating uppercut sends Blockbuster sailing, smashing into—and through—a wall.*

- When a critical hit is scored, in addition to doubling the damage die, the targeted creature is flung a number of feet equal to  $1d6 \times 5$ . They land prone, and if they collide with a solid surface (such as a wall or vehicle), they take 1d6 damage for every 5 feet traveled.

## MILD MANNERED

*“Well, this is just my luck,” Kayla Kroyle thought as she donned the familiar red and blue mask. “Finally score a date with my dream girl, and there just has to be a bank robbery now!”*

For a campaign that wants to have a heavy emphasis on characters balancing their secret

identities with their superhero lives, consider this alternate resting system.

Rather than having the heroes “make camp” or find opportunities to sleep during adventures, heroes gain the benefits of resting from achieving narrative goals. This method of resting works best for episodic one-shot style sessions.

Characters gain the benefit of a short rest whenever they change into their secret identity and have at least one scene where they “check in” with their supporting cast.

Characters gain the benefit of a long rest when a supervillain’s evil plot is foiled.

## HALLWAY BRAWLER

*“Martial artists? I love martial artists!” Desperado grins as he leaps into the fray, surrounded on all sides, brawling with glee.*

While there is fun to be had in overcoming desperate odds against villains far beyond your abilities, a large part of the superhero fantasy is showcasing powers and mopping the floor with petty criminals.

Having one hero face off against a large group of minions can become unmanageable—several hit point pools can be difficult to keep up with, and the action economy means it is conceivable that a group of weak villains could take down a hero with a bit of luck.

To swing the odds in the hero’s favor and to allow them to battle larger groups of weak foes, give all unpowered minion foes one hit point. A single strike from a hero should drop the average minion.

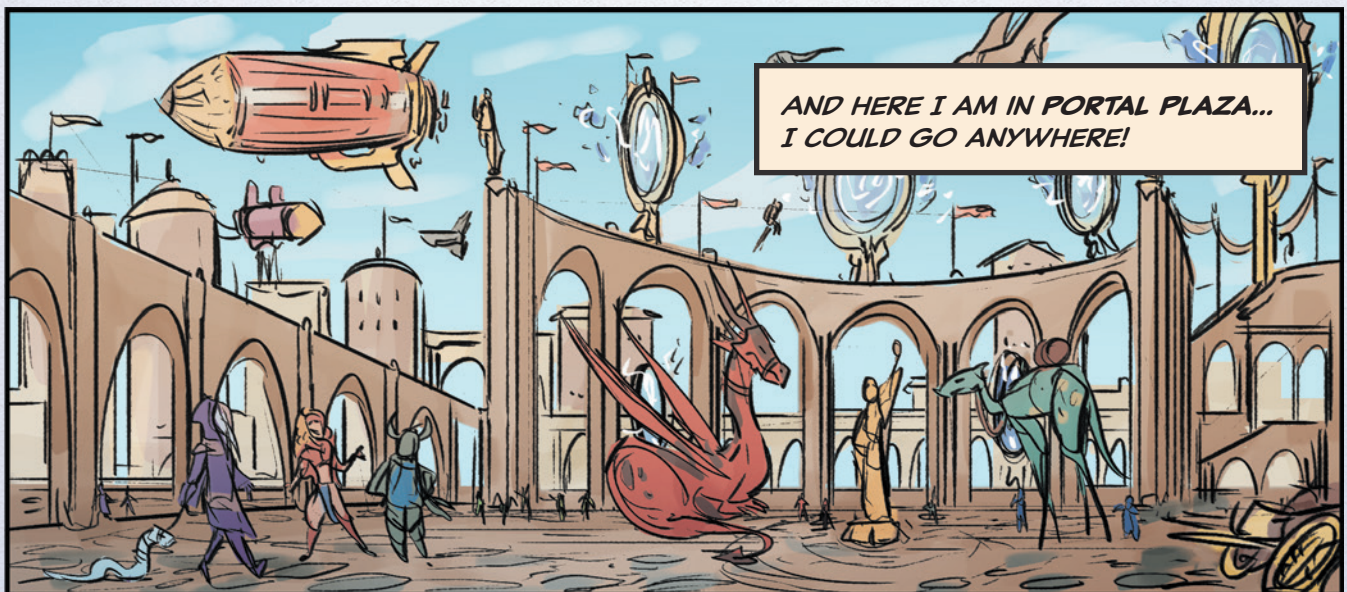
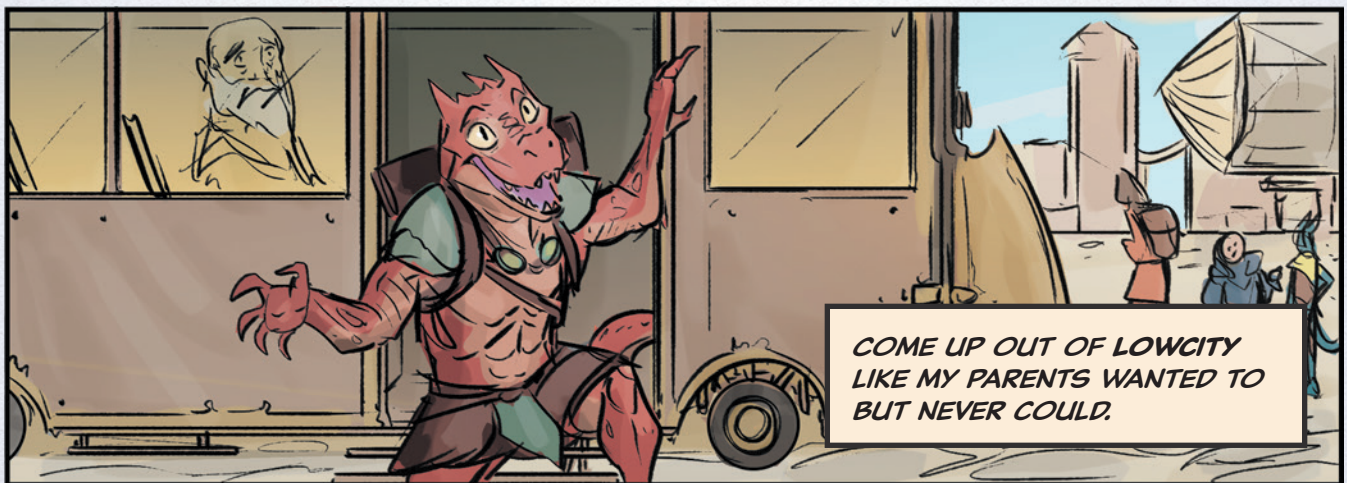
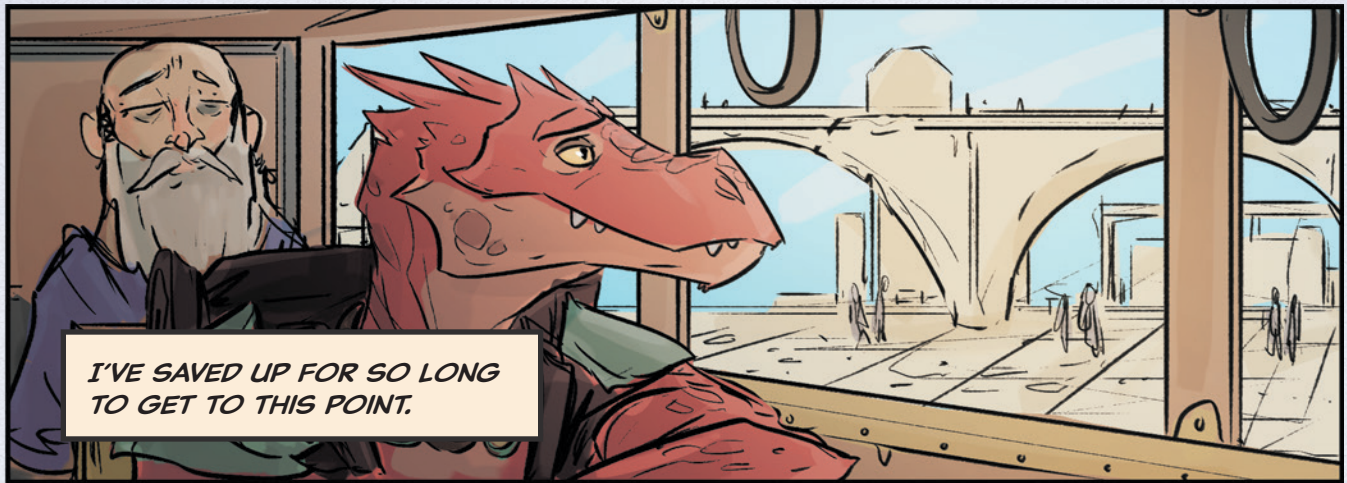
If a hero attacks a group of minions with an ability that requires a saving throw to resist damage, rather than tracking the amount of damage the ability deals out, drop any minion who fails the saving throw, while minions who succeeded in the saving throw remain standing.

See appendix A for more details on minions and how to adapt them.



## PART 2

# A WORLD OF HEROES





## CHAPTER 4

# GHAISTALA AND THE RING OF VIRTUE

The people who currently populate the world of Ghaistala were not its original inhabitants. The key to understanding the mysteries of this world lies in discovering its past.

### THE SAGA OF THE TITANS

It started with darkness, as most things do. Darkness, and then a blossom of light from which they emerged—seven beings of immense power, heroism, humility, kindness, and justice.

First was Paragon, a shining exemplar of truth and justice. Then came Intellect of keen mind and hidden emotion. Next was Honor, proud and strong. After them came Willpower, a lantern of hope, and Heart, ever shifting and ever mighty. Following them was Friendship, swift and jovial. And finally came Duty, stoic and humble.

They were the Titans, bringers of life and honor, creators of what would become the first of many worlds. The Titans came upon a system of eight worlds orbiting a nucleus composed of a great star, three moons, and another, larger world. They came to call this system the Ring of Virtue. The sun they named Hearthfire, the moons Ember, Coal, and Tinder, and the world resting in the bosom of it all was called Ghaistala.

Upon Ghaistala, life reigned supreme as the Titans created water, earth, air, mountains,

trees, and oceans. Soon, they also created the first humanoids, and then monsters and beasts. Eons passed, and life grew wonderful and strong and mighty upon Ghaistala. The Titans, satisfied with their work, each selected one of the outer worlds of the Ring and claimed it as their home.

Paragon stood sentinel over Kkryt, while Intellect brooded upon Gotmah. Honor battled upon Thymia, while Willpower meditated in the canyons of Au. Heart raised a family amid the red hills of Sram, and Friendship raced around the allies and streets of Starcyte. Beyond them all, Duty swam alone within the depths of Atal.

However, something came upon Ghaistala that could not be ignored. Many heroes and villains had risen up as the presence and power of magicks had been discovered, and most had not required the intervention of the Titans. However, one had found terrible power within the cracks of the universe—the power of Nul.

This being became known as the Maddening, and Nul began to foment chaos upon Ghaistala, summoning many to its side and raising legions of demons, devils, and aberrations to fight for it.

The Maddening whispered that the Titans had abandoned the peoples of Ghaistala—that only the power of Nul could save them from eternal ignorance. Yet, while the other Titans were willing to allow Ghaistala to fall to Nul in order to save their worlds, Paragon could not stand by.



Paragon journeyed to Ghaistala to face the Maddening, who took advantage of this, and with a single flick, shattered Kkryt into millions upon millions shards of rock and waste. Enraged, Paragon summoned all their power and unleashed their Toll—an attack so powerful that even the Maddening could not stand against its might. But this claimed Paragon with it, and their bones fell to the surface of Ghaistala.

The Toll of Paragon cleansed Ghaistala of all humanoid life—cities fell to rubble and the land grew over them, turning to mountains. The rest of the Titans were shocked at the destruction of Kkryt, the fall of Paragon, and the devastating loss of humanoid life, but they knew that Ghaistala must heal.

Upon the mountain range beneath which Paragon's bones lay, the Titans built a single towering white obelisk and named it the Beacon. Here, Intellect stored many records and histories of the past, so one day future inhabitants might understand this world and revere Paragon's sacrifice.

After many millennia of restoration, the first portal opened from worlds beyond the Ring—one by one, beings from hundreds upon thousands of universes stepped through.

They had all been drawn by the Beacon, and soon a great city began to form around the massive monument commemorating Paragon's sacrifice. The city was named Beacon by its inhabitants, and to this day, what is known of the story of Paragon is told to all young Beaconites. Now most of Ghaistala is receptive to any hero who has the values of the Titans.

The Titans remember Ghaistala and continue to exert their power and presence, usually by declaring their champions chosen from mortals. Most clerics and paladins who decide to follow a Titan are visited by an avatar of that Titan, who gives them their creed and calling. This is even the case with Paragon; even in death, Paragon's strength manifests in many Paragonic spectres that drift around the world and bestow their powers upon those proven worthy. Some Titans are grandiose with their bestowal of power, while others are more subtle.

## THE RING OF VIRTUE

The Ring of Virtue is the cosmic wheel that makes up the known universe—or what is known to the peoples of Ghaistala, at least. Seven worlds orbit the central sun Hearthfire, the three moons—Ember, Coal, and Tinder—and the great sphere of Ghaistala.

Many eons ago, travel between Ghaistala and the other worlds of the Ring was possible via great portals across the world's surface. However, when Paragon's Toll rang across the planet, these portals were locked away, save for Kkryt's, which was completely destroyed by the Maddening.

Knowledge about each of the worlds within the Ring is recorded in the great library of the Beacon. Only recently, the Guild of Exploration and Advanced Reconnaissance, or GEAR, has begun to seek out the locations of these portals.

Of the worlds, the least is known about Kkryt. From the great observatories of Argentum Square, the remains of Kkryt can be seen as an asteroid belt named the Tears of Paragon. It stretches across the entire night sky and always glows a pale green.

The world of Gotmah is said to be one of deep pine forests, high mountains, and wide winding rivers, home to one austere city named Gaslight. It is here that Intellect protects and guards their people and great vaults of knowledge.

Thymia glows bright gold at night, the brightest star in the sky, and is said to be an eternal battlefield where all glorious dead go once they fall.

The green glow of the world of Au is only seen every several decades as it rotates, revealing the great emerald crevasse where it is said Willpower meditates.

Sram is a bright red star in the heavens, its scarlet hills and mountains and valleys casting a crimson glow that is said to bring warmth to those stargazing.

Starcyte is a silver flash in the sky, said to be a single massive city spanning the whole of an entire world.

And finally, the ocean world of Atal pulses with bioluminescent light every three hundred years as its massive schools of whales migrate.



| TITAN      | ALIGNMENT | DOMAINS                           | SYMBOL  |
|------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Paragon    | LG        | Life, Light                       | A pentagonal shield surrounded by a glowing red and blue nebula                   |
| Intellect  | N         | Knowledge, Trickery               | A swooping black bat clasping a scroll  |
| Honor      | CG        | War                               | A spread-winged eagle holding a sword and spear                                   |
| Heart      | NG        | Emotion*, Life, Tempest, Trickery | A ruby dragon glowing with inner energy   |
| Willpower  | LN        | Emotion*, Light, War              | A jade fist with waves of green energy radiating forth                            |
| Duty       | LN        | Life, Nature, Tempest             | A trident with a squid wrapped around the prongs and two dolphins around the haft |
| Friendship | CG        | Emotion*, Life, Nature, Trickery  | A coatl made of lightning roaring   |

*\*This domain is listed in this book.*



**TO THIS DAY, THE TRUE COST OF PARAGON'S TOLL WILL NEVER FULLY BE UNCOVERED, OR WHY THE GREAT TITAN DID WHAT THEY DID WHEN OTHER ROUTES COULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN.**

Since arriving on Ghaistala, people have tried to find ways to open portals back to these worlds, with little to no avail. Even GEAR struggles to decipher the ancient writings stored within the Beacon. Whether or not there is a reason for this is unknown.

What little is known comes from what has been translated. Among that knowledge is the fact that, every twenty years, the worlds of the Ring release powerful waves of magic, almost like a kettle releasing steam. And it is in these pulses, called arkwaves, that heroes are born.

## THE WORLD OF GHAISTALA

Ghaistala comprises two continents and two larger island nations, yet the names of these ancient lands before Paragon's Toll devastated the world has yet to be deciphered by the chroniclers of the Collegium Beacarus. The city of Beacon sits upon the shores of a large bay on the southern side of the western continent, and its environs are either tropical or temperate.

Some lands to the west and north of the city have been explored and slowly more knowledge is being discovered, yet many are cautious to go too far beyond Beacon's Protectorate Peaks, as tales of colossal monsters, dragons, and giants fill the streets from the outpost caravans. There is an important element endemic to the world of Ghaistala that only a few know of, and that is paragite, a mineral created during Paragon's Toll.





"BEACON IS MY CITY, AN' DA PORTALEERS OUR PROTECTORS. DON' LET NO ONE ELSE TELL YA DIFFERENT!"  
 - SKEE TRUDGE, BUGBEAR PLUMBER.

Paragite is an element that negates arkwave energy. If you derive your power from arkwaves, you suffer the following effects based on how long you are within 10 feet of paragite:

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 0-10 minutes  | Your attacks, magical or otherwise, do half damage.  |
| 11-20 minutes | All damage dealt to you is doubled, in addition to previous effects.                                     |
| 20-30 minutes | You take two levels of exhaustion and take 3d6 damage every minute, in addition to all previous effects. |
| 31+ minutes   | You are unconscious, but stable.   |

Recovering from each level of paragite exposure takes 1 day. Recovering from minor exposure, such as briefly glimpsing paragite, is recovered after you finish a short or long rest. Paragite radiation is blocked by 3 inches of wood, 1 inch of stone or common metal, or a thin sheet of lead.

Paragite vulnerability is defined at character creation. If you derive your abilities from other means or you are from another dimension, you are not subject to paragite vulnerability. These are guidelines that you are welcome to

modify based on your story. Would paragite the size of an asteroid have a larger radius? Does paragite have stronger effects when ingested? Rather than describe every possibility, we formed the base. Your own imagination is the limit in Beacon.

And while many come to Ghaistala to seek wonder and adventure on the frontier, more come to seek shelter within the Protectorate Peaks that encircle the city.

## WELCOME TO BEACON

Your story begins four hundred years since the arrival of the first portaleers. Time is measured here by years since the arrival, or AP—After Portal. And in four hundred years, Beacon has grown extensively. Today, it houses millions of souls, from the highest towers of Paragon's Peak to the deepest mining communities of Lowcity. Beacon is your home: the city of heroes!

No one can quite remember the details of the first portaleers who arrived on Ghaistala. All that is recorded is that they were drawn by the immense power radiating from the



Beacon, and so it was here they began to build their new home.

Over time, portaleers from thousands of different worlds began to arrive and add their own cultures and languages to the mix, creating the megalopolis that would become the grand city of Beacon.

A short time later, the powers started to emerge. Whether because of the residual temporal energy of the portals, the natural magic of Ghaistala, or the scientific experimentation spreading across the city, heroes emerged. Individuals with far from common abilities—heightened strength, intense magical powers, super speed, sonic screams, anything that could have been imagined—found themselves one of dozens manifesting new and beautiful potential.

Soon teams of supers formed, and Beacon became known as the city of heroes across the multiverse. The first team—the ones who still fight for Beacon to this day—are the Portaleers, seven heroes dedicated to representing the values of the Titans.

As with all things, with superheroes came supervillains. Beacon sees as much villainy as it does heroism within its city, yet the city stands firm as a bastion of justice.

Beacon is divided into four levels, all diverse and different. Lowcity sits in a depression in the earth's surface and is home to many dark and mysterious dealings, as well as the burgeoning magma-generator power plants that fuel the growing furnaces and industries of Beacon.

Above Lowcity sits the base level of Serenity, home to mostly residential and artisan buildings. Numerous parks and playgrounds also dot this level.

Next is Argentum Square, home to business and governmental buildings and the site of many gatherings of philosophers and scientists.

And finally, Paragon's Peak, the home of heroes, rises high into the sky. Here, young hopefuls train and learn under the eye of numerous veteran heroes.

But the heroes who all know and many want to emulate—and perhaps even someday join—are the Portaleers.

## THE PORTALEERS

The Portaleers are Beacon's oldest superhero team, having come together only twenty years after the city's founding. The original team took on the Mantles of the Titans, exemplifying the values of each of these creator beings.

The Portaleers were named in honor of their origins, each an immigrant from another plane of existence. Whenever a member dies or chooses to retire from the team, the roster of heroes from across Beacon is reviewed and a new candidate is selected to take up the Mantle of the Portaleer who has left the team's ranks.

The Mantles are special artifacts formed from the very essence of the Titans, each one a magical cohesion and the living embodiment of the creator beings. These artifacts were found by the first Portaleer team as a full set of armor locked within the Beacon's vault. There, their presence awoke it. The armor split into its respective pieces, and each Mantle claimed a person who would come to embody the virtue and values of a corresponding Titan. Over the years, the Mantles have been passed down—occasionally becoming lost for a time—each one reforming and changing to the shape and size that worked best for its present owner.

Should a wearer of a Mantle begin to fail or shirk from their duty, their Mantle rejects them, severing its bond with the hero and immediately signaling to the other Portaleers that something is amiss.

There is a saying that is often heard around Beacon, first spoken in 152 AP by the Mantle of Paragon, a lizardfolk heroine named Scalemother: "There has always been a group of seven, though the creatures who comprise it rise and fall. At first, they were the seven Titans. Then there were the first Portaleers, seven all told. Today, seven mighty heroes still safeguard this world."

The current Portaleer roster consists of Paragon, Nulifier, Scrutiny, Bulwark, Bestie, Andante, and Primeval.



## THE MANTLE OF PARAGON

The Mantle of Paragon is held by a human woman named Miyenki Bakkes. Miyenki owns a shop and clinic in Lowcity, known for its odd combination of rare magical items and affordable medical care via potions and magic. Miyenki herself made her reputation by using her alchemical training and healing magic to soothe the wounds of anyone who came to her, regardless of cause or color.

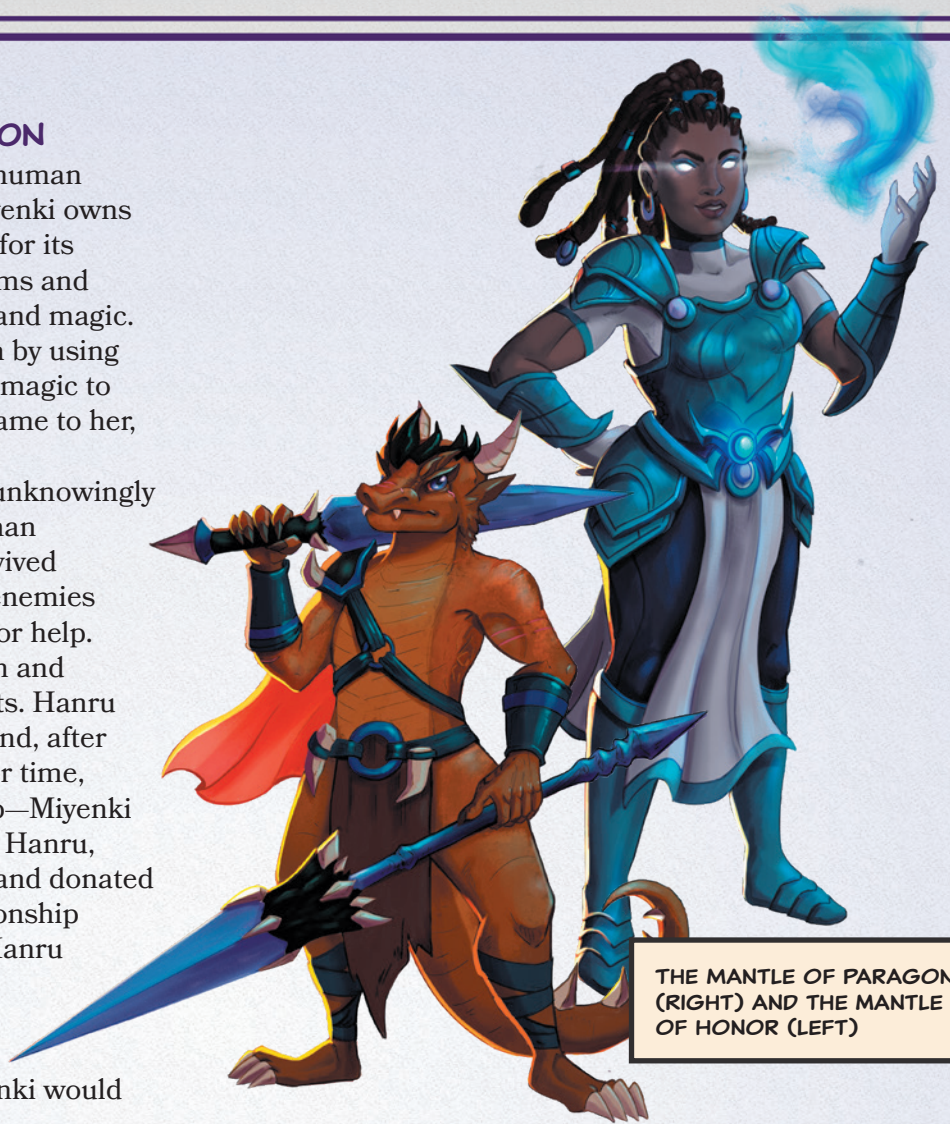
On one fateful occasion, Miyenki unknowingly treated the previous Paragon, a human man named Hanru. He had just survived an encounter with one of his many enemies and staggered into Miyenki's clinic for help. Miyenki had no idea he was Paragon and treated him among her other patients. Hanru was impressed by her selflessness and, after his recovery, reached out to her. Over time, the two formed a sort of relationship—Miyenki learned Hanru was Paragon, and as Hanru, Paragon often assisted in the clinic and donated rare artifacts to the shop. The relationship was never more than platonic, but Hanru did frequently speak to his fellow Portaleers of Miyenki. When Hanru eventually gave his life in battle, it was unanimously decided that Miyenki would be a worthy successor.

Miyenki accepted the Mantle on the condition that she be allowed a secret identity to continue her work without drawing additional threat to her clinic. While she is a competent magician in her own right, the power of Paragon is supreme. She carries it within a locket, and can call forth the power at will.

When she does so, Miyenki transforms, growing slightly taller and broader, with stronger physical might. She wears no mask, but her face widens and her eyes glow with blue arcane fire. Her amulet expands into a belt, igniting with blue fire. As Paragon, she stands ready to defend those who need it most.

## THE MANTLE OF HONOR

The Mantle of Honor is held by a young kobold man named Birmeex. He is the youngest of the Portaleers, bearing heavy responsibility for one so young.



THE MANTLE OF PARAGON (RIGHT) AND THE MANTLE OF HONOR (LEFT)

Unlike the other Portaleers, Birmeex was not chosen by his teammates. When the previous bearer of the Mantle of Honor, Mythia, died in battle, there was significant debate about who should be her replacement. The Portaleers and the people of Beacon reviewed every applicant, but none could be held to the impeccable standard set by Mythia. Of course, this was not true—Mythia was a flawed person just as everyone else is, but she was esteemed by her teammates, and in their grief at her loss, they could not bear to replace her.

For two years, the Mantle of Honor sat unclaimed in the halls of the Atrium of Lights. Meanwhile, Birmeex grew to adolescence miles and miles away among the barbarian tribes of the Nul Wastes. The son of a chieftain, he was trained in battle and survival but was unprepared for treachery. A rival to the throne slew his father and came for Birmeex, who



not only survived, but bested his opponent and granted him a warrior's death despite his treachery. His extraordinary skill in neutralizing his enemies in battle has earned him the moniker "Nulifier."

With this display of warrior's wisdom, the Mantle of Honor awoke in Beacon. The Mantle itself sought out Birmeex, proclaiming him worthy. Today, Birmeex proudly represents those who live on the fringes of Ghaistalan society, but he struggles with the weight of two crowns and such lofty expectations at his young age.

## THE MANTLE OF INTELLECT

The Mantle of Intellect rests on Thuren Khalaza, eldest son of House Khalaza. One of the oldest families in Beacon, the surviving Khalaza slipped through an interplanar portal in a failed attempt to escape a political coup on their homeworld but ended up a dimension away from where they had intended.

Thuren showed no interest in the political or entrepreneurial activities of his family, nor does he possess the powerful innate magic with which most of them were born. Rather, Thuren possesses incredible intelligence and immense self-discipline over his mind, body, and will.

Thuren channeled his energy into studying martial arts, tactical sciences, and investigative skills. He earned his place in school, studying the histories left to Beacon by the first civilization. Thuren became an unparalleled student. Those studies he couldn't access by academic merit he paid for with more tangible assets. He determined that nothing would prevent him from gathering the power he needed to protect Beacon from the fate of his family's homeworld.

Little by little, through great pain and unrivaled discipline, Thuren transformed himself, body and mind, into a tactical force of nature—an investigator and warrior worthy of defending Beacon from all enemies. He became Scrutiny, the shadow defender of Beacon. After he uncovered a number of plots among the political and economic elite of Beacon, he was approached by the current Mantle of Intellect and trained to be their replacement after retirement.

Now he wears the red Stone of Intellect set into the forehead of his mask, a symbol of the

power of the mind. His role is to see the whole battlefield within his mind and anticipate the moves of his enemies. No one casts a more dedicated gaze on Beacon. From Lowcity to Paragon's Peak, Thuren uses all the tools at his disposal to preserve order against the tides of greed and chaos.

No evil escapes the watchful eyes of Scrutiny.

## THE MANTLE OF WILLPOWER

The Mantle of Willpower rests in the capable hands of a middle-aged half-orc woman named Thurga. Thurga first joined the Portaleers as a young hero, a sidekick to the previous Mantle of Willpower, a lizardfolk named Seethseech. When Seethseech was killed battling the alchemist-turned-death knight Dark Visor, the Mantle chose Thurga as Seethseech's successor.

In her sidekick days, Thurga's name was Pebble, but her powers have evolved since taking on the Mantle of Willpower, and her hero name now is Bulwark.



THE MANTLE OF INTELLECT (RIGHT) AND THE MANTLE OF WILLPOWER (LEFT)



Thurga is able to transform her body into living stone of any variety she touches. When she does so, she is capable of withstanding incredible stress and strain. Additionally, she possesses superhuman strength and stamina and often meditates for days on end to hone her stillness of mind. And, with the aid of the Mantle, she is able to fire powerful blasts of blue energy from her hands.

When she is not saving the day as a member of the Portaleers, Thurga owns a glassblowing studio in Serenity. There, she and her dwarven wife raise a family of dworclings. Thurga's wife Aedimaya is also a hero—the Golden Gleam, able to manipulate and create solid light. This makes Thurga a beloved member of the Portaleers; though she carries great powers within, she still is as normal as everyone else in Beacon, with a family, children, a day job, and dreams.

But the reason Willpower chose her was not for those traits, but for the sheer determination that Thurga holds within her. No matter the fight, no matter the stakes, no matter the cost, Thurga always stands firm, a bulwark of Beacon.

## THE MANTLE OF FRIENDSHIP

The Mantle of Friendship rests upon Katiel “Bestie” Karakota, a rock gnome gifted with incredible speed. Super speed doesn't even begin to describe it. Bestie is speed-of-lightning fast. But there is so much more to this girl than running.

Since taking the Mantle of Friendship, Bestie's mind, spirit, and body all react reflexively at supersonic speeds. Bestie possesses the cunning and good nature of her clan with the power and agility of a martial artist and the energy and sweetness of a treanta goodberry frostuccino. It's an overwhelming combination.

Bestie is still trying to figure herself out. She thinks she's probably bisexual, maybe pansexual, but never makes her own love life a priority. She can't tell the difference between friendly and romantic affection, so anyone who displays affection is usually left in the dust. When she does date, Bestie is secretive about it. She sees the good in everyone, which is probably why she's only

attracted to self-destructive villains whom she desperately wants to fix.

According to Bestie, the biggest benefit of the Mantle of Friendship is the ability to share super powers with others. The Mantle was an ancient gauntlet, but for Bestie, the Mantle takes the form of a vibrant pair of bracelets. By passing one of the mantle bracelets to a friend and activating them with the secret handshake, her super speed is shared with anyone who wears the gauntlet—because everything is better with friends, including fighting crime. Sure, her own speed is reduced when sharing her powers, but even half-supersonic is still awesome.

Destiny calls at all hours, as Bestie would put it. Years ago, while meditating alone in her happy place, the previous Friendship appeared in a bloody blur grappling with a vicious fiend. Instincts kicked in, and Bestie jumped to protect the wounded hero. She took the hero's hand as he gave her the gauntlet and showed her the secret handshake. The Mantle's speed unlocked impossible reaches of her physical training. Seeing the scene in slow motion, Bestie finished off the fiend, able to analyze its every possible move in her hyper-focused mind. However, the previous Friendship did not survive.

When the Portaleers arrived on the scene, they recruited Bestie into their ranks. None of the famous heroes had any explanation for Friendship's encounter with the fiend, a mystery that Bestie dedicates some time every day to solving.

Even with their longer life span, most gnomes think life moves too fast. Bestie, moving three times faster than the speed of sound, doesn't have enough hours of the day for her to accomplish everything on her mind. Bubbly, encouraging, optimistic, sweet, and naive, Bestie has speedy senses that know when danger approaches. She's the first to assemble the Portaleers when the time is right and is their biggest cheerleader during the fight.

Her brain moves so fast that her mouth often has trouble keeping up. Her closest friends understand her even when she tries to say five things at once. She wants to spend time with all her friends every single day and doesn't see the problem with popping in on them whenever just to say hi because she doesn't





THE MANTLE OF HEART (TOP), THE MANTLE OF DUTY (LEFT), AND THE MANTLE OF FRIENDSHIP (BOTTOM)

experience the sonic boom and torrent of wind announcing her unexpected arrival.

Don't let the small size deceive. Everything about Bestie is larger than life. Big hair. Big smile. Big heart. Even in the face of danger, she hums a silly song or does a goofball dance. She sports bright, bold colors on the athletic gear that she wears instead of armor.

The Mantle of Friendship takes the form of two bracelets made of oversized glass beads. The beads are vibrant in color and glow, creating a brilliant light show as she runs. The bracelets always orbit around her wrists.

She also wears six homemade friendship bracelets, three on each wrist. She made them all special for each of the other Portaleers. She knows it's okay that the others don't wear the bracelets in combat. Or out of combat. Or ever. Their bracelets are probably in a special place with all their other most personal, sentimental treasures.

## THE MANTLE OF HEART

The Mantle of Heart rests in the long white curls of a pale lavender tiefling named Defirith. Tucked into an elegant hair comb eons ago, the glimmering gem gleams brightly in the sunlight, also catching the splayed light of the glass violin upon which Defirith plays—though not as Defirith. They call her Andante, and she has carried the Mantle of Heart for several years with great honor.

Defirith has always been very *alive*, expressive in every part of her—ironic, then, that she would choose the name Andante, but that is where her humble beginnings are rooted. She was in a run-down orchestra with a shoddy violin when a bestial creature broke into the grand theater and wreaked havoc upon the crowd. The music bled into screaming and thundering feet, but Defirith remembers the thrum of magic in her fingertips, the words peace, peace in the bow string, and hot breath in her face, snarling her hair. She remembers her heart thundering, too, a metronome that calmed through the verse of her music, and she remembers the quelling of the beast as it curled at her feet with a mournful, baying cry.

It is said that the previous Mantle of Heart, an elven man named Auduin, was the one person left sitting in the audience on the day of the beast's slaughter, though the two have never shared the story of their meeting.

They call her Andante—she who soothes, slows, and quiets. Born blind, Defirith's sense of sound has always been sharp, be it to sense the movement of the world around her or to navigate the throes of chaos.

Defirith bolsters allies, soothes the volatile, and lashes out shockwaves of song when her temper flares. She is deeply in tune with the world around her—through her Mantle, she connects more deeply with others and with the world, and combined with her love of music, she touches the masses, body and soul, and is the core of empathy and love within the Portaleers.

Little is known about her past. The melodies she plays are exquisite, expert, and soul-touching, though she never speaks of where she learned, or why so many of her personal songs are touched with sadness.



What is known is that Andante—Defirith to her friends—can often be found in the humblest of places, playing her glass violin, spreading music to the least of those who would expect to hear it.

## THE MANTLE OF DUTY

Urdeir always had a love of the ancient—whether feathered, scale, or furred—and always enjoyed uncovering bits and pieces of the past. This obsession, as it were, led him down the academic route. Always craving adventure, Urdeir found himself roped into many paleontological expeditions over the course of his tenure. On one such expedition, Urdeir came across an artifact embedded in the spine of a long-deceased creature. The artifact called to him, and Urdeir answered.

Urdeir inherited the Mantle of Duty, a primordial force of energy that permeates all creatures—living and deceased. Inheritances often come with caveats, and this inheritance is no exception. Urdeir is now duty bound to protect the world of the living, though he straddles the line between them and death.

Urdeir is a Portaleer now, going by the heroic name Primeval. He continues his sacred duty of defending the still living.

Primeval possesses the Mantle of Duty, which allows him to control the forces of nature—both weather and cosmic forces. Additionally, Primeval also possesses the ability to shapeshift into living and deceased creatures, focusing more on ancient beasts than contemporaries. Lastly, Primeval has gained the ability to fly and possesses immunity to poison and diseases.

As befits a person of his station, Primeval is incredibly surly and gruff. He doesn't really mesh well with the other Portaleers, but he is a loyal and valuable member of the team nonetheless.

## THE DOCENT

The Portaleers' day-to-day life is managed by the Docent, a being constructed out of clay, stone, and iron. The Docent manages the upkeep of Paragon's Peak and often serves as an unofficial advisor to new and veteran heroes alike who seek guidance.

The Docent communicates telepathically with creatures they can see. Their mental "voice" sounds both masculine and feminine at once. The Docent speaks formally with the Portaleers, fulfilling requests and offering suggestions for success.

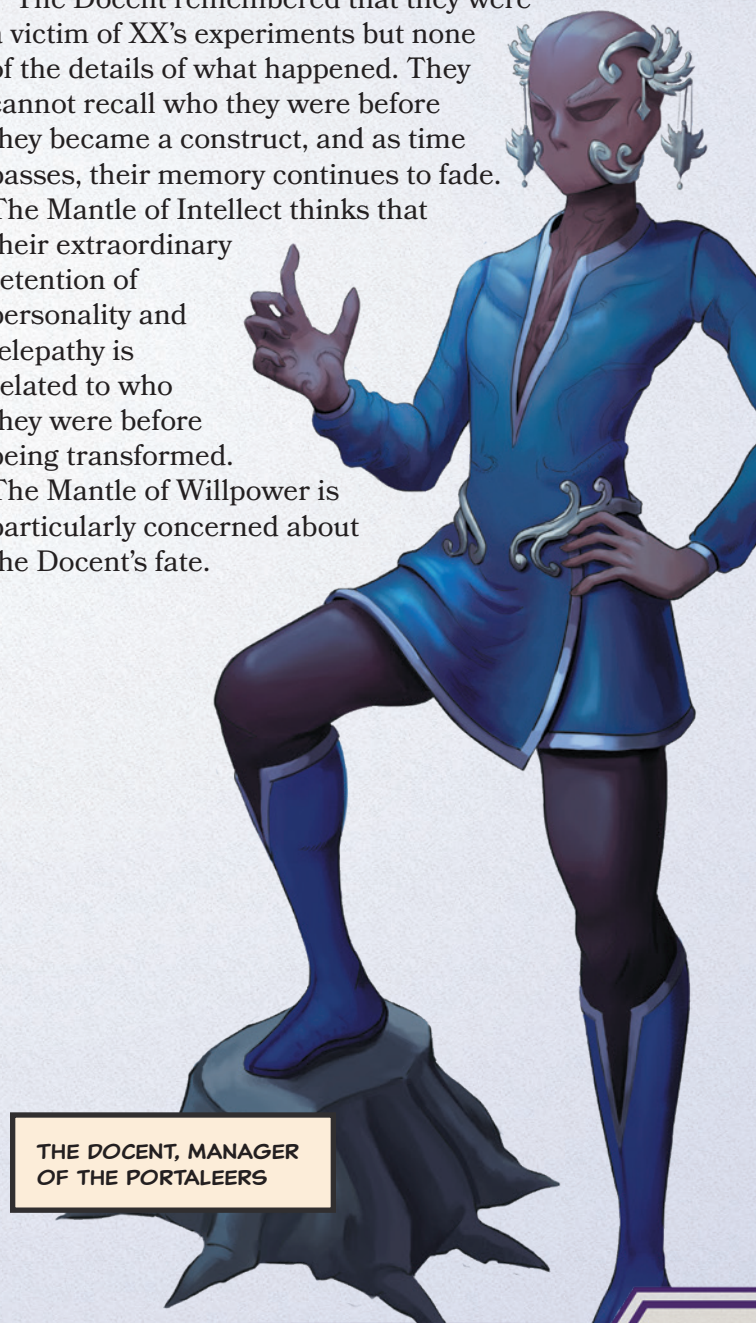
The Docent likes to tease newer heroes by making sarcastic replies to obvious questions. However, they often seem parental around heroes who are struggling with their concerns and responsibilities.

Much of the Docent's history is unknown. They were brought to Paragon's Peak by the first Mantle of Intellect, who found them wandering the streets of Beacon alone and was intrigued by their unique independence.

The Docent remembered that they were a victim of XX's experiments but none of the details of what happened. They cannot recall who they were before they became a construct, and as time passes, their memory continues to fade.

The Mantle of Intellect thinks that their extraordinary retention of personality and telepathy is related to who they were before being transformed.

The Mantle of Willpower is particularly concerned about the Docent's fate.



THE DOCENT, MANAGER OF THE PORTALEERS



## MYTHS OF GHAISTALA

The scholars of Beacon are known to keep secrets, studying the lore found within the Beacon itself for generations. As a result, the public knows very little of the information contained within, but some stories persist. As people came to Beacon from across the multiverse, their beliefs and ideas mingled with those native to Beacon itself, forging new stories and myths. These are but a few.

### THE FOUNDING ECHO

Everyone knows the story of the founding of Beacon: the first portaleers arrived hundreds of years ago, drawn by the power of the Beacon. Finding the welcoming area between the Protectorate Peaks, Beacon was quickly founded. And yet there are whispers among the people: why did the first Portaleers arrive? How did they know where to come?

Some believe the answers lie in the legend of the Founding Echo. According to the tale, an energy pulse emanated from the Beacon, revealing its location to anyone in the multiverse with knowledge of and the ability to traverse the dimensional barriers.

Here the story splits, depending on the teller. There are those who believe the pulse came from the Beacon itself, perhaps emanating from some remnant of Paragon. Others believe the pulse came from something—someone—else. Perhaps some small fragment of the Maddening remained and set a trap for new humanoids to stumble into. Perhaps another Titan, going against their kin, decided the time was right for intelligent life to return to Ghaistala.

Any answers are known only to the deepest scholars of the Beacon—and they aren't known for talking.

### THE FOLDED VEIL

Beacon is known among dimensional travelers as a hub, meaning that many worlds connect to this one.

Obviously, this means a great many cultures get the chance to interact with others, but for many, the question of faith is a troubling one. When you cross universes, do your gods follow?

To the layperson, the answer is yes. Clerics and paladins are known for their divine power; therefore, divinity must persist. Their power is real, but theorists believe it's much more complicated than that. They liken the division between mortal and god to that of a veil or cloth—a thin sheet through which things such as divine energy may pass, but not gods or mortals. But in Beacon, they claim, this veil is “folded.”

It is at this point that most scholars struggle to continue their explanation, but anyone with an evening's patience and coin enough for drink may hear a winding tale. The sheer amount of divine energy concentrated in Beacon, carried over from the many linked dimensions, is somehow warping the division between gods and mortals. No one is quite sure what that means, though some say it's the reason why there are so many super-powerful figures in Beacon. Others theorize it may be easier for gods and mortals to cross their realms into Ghaistala, while still more say the inverse is true.

One thing is certainly true: the influence of gods is felt in Beacon. While their designs are unknowable, even the slightest ripple of their influence has serious repercussions.

### THE CHILDREN OF TITANS

One of the oldest beliefs in Beacon is that the Titans still watch over the people of Ghaistala, even without the mighty Paragon. A religion has formed along this belief, whose followers call themselves the Children of Titans.

The Children believe that the Titans can hear their prayers and intervene on their behalf. Furthermore, the other realms in the Ring of Virtue are heavens of a sort, where the souls of those who dutifully devote themselves to the ideal of a Titan reside for eternity after life on Ghaistala. To the Children, the Portaleers themselves are divine figures as they hold artifacts of the Titans in the form of the Mantles of Virtue.

A schism has developed among the Children regarding the nature of the portals to these realms. Some Children believe that Paragon purposefully locked away paradise so that believers may prove their worth in mortal life on





DEEP WITHIN GHAISTALA, REMNANTS OF NUL AND THE MADDENING'S LEGIONS STILL REMAIN DORMANT...READY TO BE AWAKENED...

Ghaistala. Others believe that unlocking these portals is necessary to reach paradise, a holy calling of scientific discovery.

### DEZZO THE DELVER

Most historians agree that there was a real Dezzo in the early days of reclaiming Ghaistala. However, the figure has passed into legend, used in apocryphal fables relating to everything from dangerous woodlands to ancient civilizations.

In all likelihood, Dezzo was simply an early explorer of Ghaistala. Usually depicted as a dwarf, Dezzo's earliest stories tell of a person who explored the deepest recesses of Ghaistala's caves in search of treasure or the lost secrets of the Titans. These stories grew with each recounting, soon telling of massive recovered rubies and colossal bones of Titans.

Nowadays, most parents use Dezzo as a cautionary tale: "You're no Dezzo!" is frequently heard shouted to any child with wanderlust who dreams of the world beyond the Protectorate Peaks. Most people raised in and around Beacon can recite at least a few tales of Dezzo from memory. Every day, treasure hunters and adventurous souls depart from Beacon in search of the treasures spoken of in the legends of Dezzo the Delver.

### THE AWAKENING FESTIVAL AND AMETHYST STAR

Every 20 years, pulses of magic echo through the Ring of Virtue. While the cause of these pulses—called arkwaves—is not yet understood, they are the most common source of the extraordinary abilities in Beacon, which are already relatively many.

The Awakening Festival is held annually in Beacon on the anniversary of the arkwaves, a sort of "graduation" ceremony for individuals who have come of age in the past year. The exception is on every twentieth year, when the festival is held the day after the arkwave so that anyone who wishes to celebrate any newfound abilities may do so.

A popular story is that of Amethyst Star, a mythological being whose origins, supposedly, can be traced back to writings left behind by the civilization that was wiped out before Beacon's construction. The story goes that Amethyst Star was a mortal who caught the eye of Paragon. So beloved was she that Paragon lifted her up into the sky to meet the other Titans.

The Titans, too, loved Amethyst Star, and war nearly broke out over who deserved Amethyst's



love. Amethyst Star declared that she would not choose, for she loved all the Titans and they could love her in return.

She was gifted a suit made of pure amethyst that enabled her to traverse the Ring of Virtue to visit each Titan in turn.

After the fall of Paragon, the story claims that Amethyst Star never stopped visiting Ghaistala. Instead, she silently passes over the world, searching for people who embody the traits of the Titans she loves so much. She reports the names of those who do to the Titans, thereby deciding who receives the blessings of power from the arkwaves.

To most, Amethyst Star is a fable—a popular character to dress as during the Awakening Festival and an omnipresent observer to keep children on their best behavior. But there are those who swear that on clear nights, they can see streaks of amethyst glittering through the sky over Beacon.

## THE OLD GODS OF GHAISTALA

Few scattered writings remain from the original people of Ghaistala who lived before the Maddening and Paragon wiped the slate clean. These people were as vibrant as any other, and had their own beliefs. The writings are fragmentary, but theologians have assembled an incomplete list of what they believe to be the dominant pantheon of the pre-Maddening era. These gods are:

- Tir na Aether (“Lord of Sky”)
- Tir na Vanther (“Lord of Earth”)
- Tir na Gaan (“Lord of Shelter”)
- Tir na Tsir (“Lord of Mischief”)
- Tir na Jor (“Lord of Fire”)
- Tir na Gesh (“Lord of Water”)

Some believe that these Old Gods lurk in the upper skies above Ghaistala still, hidden or slumbering. Can they be revived?

## A MELTING POT OF BELIEF

People from across the multiverse make their home in Beacon, and their beliefs have traveled with them and twined together. Virtually every known superstition can be found in Beacon, but often with a twist. For example, mothers in Hearthfire are known to set out saucers of milk at night to appease faerie folk whom they believe curse their children with arkwave energy unless treated kindly. Mechanists and inventors commonly ring bells while working their metal to confuse any evil spirits away from their inventions. Miners in the Asha Trading Co. tap every thirteenth support beam in their mine in the belief that the tapping helps soothe the earth titan they are carving into. Like any superstition, many don’t believe the purported origin of these traditions—but in a place like Ghaistala, who can say what’s true?



**IMBYS TORREL, SAID TO BE A CHILD OF INTELLECT, WAS KNOWN FOR HIS SHINING SILVER ARMOR. BUT MANY CENTURIES AGO, HE VANISHED.**



## CHAPTER 5

# CITY GAZETTEER

A figure pierces the azure blanket of the sky, cape billowing like feathered wings, drifting toward the heights of a metal spire. Mining machines rumble like a slow pulse through the crowded neighborhoods. Hoarse voices sing within the sprawling trees, a looming obelisk casting them in shadow. The world of Ghaistala is a booming metropolis surrounded by landscapes of mystery, waiting for heroes to carve a path through it toward everlasting glory.

This chapter presents the world of Ghaistala, broken into seven major regions: the hub city Beacon, the Ivory Wilds, the Grey Rise, the Darnan Forest, the Nul Wastes, the Mirrored Wetlands, and the Klachton Ocean with its bustling Everglint Bay. Each section describes the area's important locations and includes plot hooks for heroes seeking greatness.

The adventure hooks are broken down into recommended ranges of adventuring party level: low level (1–4), mid level (5–10), high level (11–16), and epic level (17–20). Adventure hooks labeled “any level” can be presented at any point in your party’s journey with a little planning. You are welcome to adjust the difficulty of any of these adventure hooks to fit your campaign.

Whether you come to Ghaistala to thrive in the hero’s city or to seek wonder and adventure on the frontier, the gleaming monument of Beacon awaits you.

## BEACON, CITY OF HEROES

*“There is life in Beacon.*

*From bottom to top, there is life—booming, vibrant, effervescent. The bellows from the lungs of Lowcity. The lush scents of stellablooms in the Exalted Gardens. The voices upon voices of heroes in the Atrium of Lights building the foundation of what we call justice.*

*I wander Valleyside and hear the laughter of children discovering who they are. Is there anything more beautiful than that?”*

—Defrith, Mantle of Heart

Sprawling from its towering spire across the Everglint Bay, Beacon stands as a paragon of light against the wilds that surround it. While the Ivory Wilds teem with life and gnaw against the outskirts of Beacon and the Klachton Ocean roars with inscrutable titans, Beacon is a haven, growing upward instead of outward, gathering those that want refuge from the wilds and training them to be heroes that will stand against the dark.

And yet Beacon is not without its own shadows. Enemies scheme in the darkness, and villainy can be found from the bottom Lowcity to the soaring spires above.

Beacon is divided into four levels, each of which has multiple wards: Lowcity, Serenity,



Argentum Square, and Paragon's Peak. Lowcity's roots dig deep into mysterious caverns surrounding the magma-fueled power plant. Deeds and history are captured in the artistry of Serenity. Above, resolute figures and the world's greatest minds make decisions in Argentum Square. And at the height of it all, heroes are made and trained, hoping to one day stand alongside the Portaleers.

The brightest lights cast the darkest shadows. While Beacon is Ghaistala's soaring metropolis, delving into its shadows is a thrilling, rewarding experience for those willing to delve deep.

## LAW AND GOVERNANCE

While the supers do indeed hold a great deal of power within the megacity, Beacon still runs on a powerful democratic body known as the Beacon Consul, who pass laws, build policies, enact taxes and tariffs, and conduct various other political activities.

## THE BEACON CONSUL

The Consul is composed of eighty senators, twenty from each level, from which a leader—or Arbiter, as they are entitled—are elected. Arbiter candidates must present themselves before the people of Beacon, who then pass their vote. By popular vote, the senators of each level then cast the vote of their constituents, and the Arbiter is elected.

Senators are allowed a maximum of four four-year terms, while Arbiters are allowed two four-year terms. No elected official may serve longer. This is to keep fresh minds and fresh faces in the Beacon Consul so nothing ever stagnates or becomes roadblocked.

## PUBLIC SERVANTS

The Lamplighters are the everyday face of Beacon's government and local keepers of the peace. Serving in a five-person team called a flame, Lamplighters assist citizens, watch the





streets, report wrongdoers, and pursue leads. Members of the flame are required to live in the specific community they serve. Each flame reports to a district Keeper, or commander, who in turn reports to a district leader.

## PRISON AND REFORM

Prisons and jail time in Beacon are far different than one would find on other worlds. Here, imprisonment is viewed as a chance to better oneself and truly be rehabilitated. Primarily built in Serenity for common criminals and lower-level villains, with more secured ones built in Paragon's Peak for higher-level villains and criminals, the Beacon Consul funds these centers.

With libraries, schools, gardens, theaters, and sporting grounds, as well as a focus on positive reinforcement, these centers are highly successful. However, not all stories end happily. For those inmates that the centers prove incapable of changing, exile is the next step—throwing them into the wild frontier world beyond the Protectorate Peaks. Some even choose exile as soon as they are arrested, though few are known to survive exile.

However, the Portaleers often report that they have spotted small settlements or outposts out in the unexplored regions of Ghaistala when on patrol. Most settlements remain small and nomadic, but others are slowly growing. It seems many remain hidden from the titanic beasts that wander the vacant world beyond the walls of Beacon.

## THE LEVELS OF BEACON

Beacon is a massive city, home to throngs of individuals from across the stars. Over time, the city gradually expanded beyond the Beacon itself, and formed into four distinct levels: Lowcity, Serenity, Argentum Square, and Paragon's Peak.

Lowcity sits at the base of the high terrace on which the city rises, the technological and industrial gut of Beacon - its smokestacks, long docks, warehouses and factories harsh and strong, yet hiding the impoverished populace. Serenity is the suburban and artisans' hub

of Beacon, full of lush gardens and beautiful museums - yet some worry that Serenity's gentrification might simply make it a second Lowcity in time. Argentum Squares hosts numerous colleges and governmental buildings, all thrumming with the energy of law and order and education. And finally, Paragon's Peak sits high above the rest, home to the young supers who wish to train and become protectors of Beacon.

The levels of Beacon are as diverse as the peoples who dwell within it, and whether this is for good or ill, no one quite knows yet.



"YOU WANNA MAKE IT IN BEACON? YA GOTTA KNOW THE RIGHT PEOPLE."

- RUPPLE SKROUT, BUSINESSMAN



# LOWCITY

**E**zora wandered through the smoky streets of Lowcity littered with scraps of old machines, urchins sitting with cups half filled with coins, and the poor rifling through dumpsters for old magitech batteries. Her cobbled-together rebreather kept out most of the fumes from the paragite refineries, industrial forges and other large factories. Ezora had grown up her entire life living in Lowcity, her family having come to Ghaistala and Beacon from a moldering farm world called Tuton.

However, the young half-elf yearned for something more than what Lowcity offered. She didn't want to be a paragite engineer like her father, or a stilguard like her mother. As she walked, Ezora's mind trailed back to the day she had seen Paragon fighting the Warmonger within the Crater, watched her blue energy flames sear against his armor.

She looked up through the steam and the haze, seeing the glow of the Beacon rising into the skies. Some day, someday...

**Population:** Lowcity makes up approximately 40% of Beacon's population

**Districts:** Banlam Boulevard, Seaspire Crags, Titetown, Valleyside, and "The Harbor"

**Organizations:** The Scroungers, the Court of Empty Night, the Look-Outs, and the Stilguard

Lowcity is a maze of winding alleyways, geothermal vents, lava pits, warehouses, factories, and stacked apartment buildings. Seen as the burgeoning technological hub of Beacon, Lowcity was built around an ancient stone circle that was unearthed by archeologists from Serenity.

This stone circle was made of a mineral crystal that would become known as paragite, a naturally occurring stone that in small

quantities can dampen magical effects, but in larger amounts negate magic entirely.

Due to the commonality of paragite, the residents of burgeoning Lowcity turned to science as their method to contribute to the growing economy of Beacon.

Despite Lowcity's growing importance, it is undeniably home to the slums of Beacon. The huge influx of immigrants into Beacon left the government little recourse but to build tightly-cramped affordable housing in Lowcity. Local criminals capitalizing on the glut of vulnerable people eventually institutionalized Lowcity's problems through bribing district officials. Now, Lowcity is nearly permanently entrenched in crime and corruption that resists even the most altruistic politicians' and stalwart heroes' efforts.

## DISTRICTS

### BANLAM BOULEVARD

This street runs in a slight curve horizontally through most of Lowcity. It represents a neutral "safe zone" between different factions within Lowcity, and most of the area's most prosperous shops line the Boulevard. Banlam Boulevard is one of the few places considered safe to travel to by the people of higher wards, but step off the street and you can quickly find yourself lost.

### THE HARBOR

Officially, Beacon's harbor district is named the Wharf of Respite, but everyone in Beacon simply calls it the Harbor. Since it is the only major port in Ghaistala, most people don't see much point in being specific. Rumors persist of smugglers' boats near the Titetown end of the Harbor, and many seeking adventure choose to set sail in the dangerous Klachton Ocean.



## SEASPIRE CRAGS

Located along the rocky shoreline, the Seaspire can nearly be called mountains in their own right. Buffeted constantly by sea spray, the Seaspire are slick and difficult. Despite these difficulties, the Seaspire remain a popular place to reside—the most expensive within Lowcity. Homes built along the Seaspire tend to have a beautiful view of the rest of Beacon, as well as the nearby harbor. The Seaspire have the highest official guard presence in Lowcity, which has done surprisingly little to stem the tide of crime that plagues the higher-class residents of the area.

## TITETOWN

Short for “stalactite town,” this district is unique because it literally lies beneath other parts of Beacon. When Lowcity was the center of the burgeoning paragite rush, various mines were quickly dug and abandoned. A large natural cave was discovered beneath the Seaspire Crags, where rivers fed by the nearby ocean had carved out a small lake below massive stalactites. Today, Titetown is a smuggler’s paradise—the homes and walkways carved into and around the massive stalactites make a multi-layered jungle of criss-crossing paths and the many small hidden paths into, out of, and under Beacon allow the traffic of almost anything.

## VALLEYSIDE

This residential district was once considered beautiful before it was choked out by manufacturing. Once paragite was discovered in its center, this country vista turned into a construction zone, and the outer streets of Valleyside are where scuffles and threats over resources and property often occur. A few powerful families cling to their rolling hills, though locals are certain their land holds paragite.

## KEY LOCATIONS

**The Coin.** A small silver coin inexplicably floats exactly a foot and a half off of the ground in one of the several back alleys of Lowcity. Beacon’s mightiest have attempted to move the

coin, to no avail. It’s become quite the tourist attraction in recent years.

**Paragite Pub.** Locals like to get a drink here after work. It’s also a good place to find a fence or get a lead on the hidden workings of Lowcity. Rumor has it that some big-time supers come here to drink in the private backroom. For some extra coin, the owner sprinkles paragite dust in the house ale to make a brew that can help you drown your sorrows—even if you are usually immune to alcohol.

**The Wicked Harlequin.** Located in Titetown, the Wicked Harlequin is Beacon’s premiere underground (literally) casino. Taking up the entirety of one of Titetown’s largest hollowed-out stalactites, The Wicked Harlequin is the base of operations for the seediest gangs in Lowcity. The public gambling rooms see all manner of folk from across Beacon, but the tight security farther down the stalactite has led to rumors of a hidden room at the stalactite’s tip with a dark treasure inside.

## LOWCITY ADVENTURES

Lowcity is where heroes can find technology for a steal, people who know people, and those hoping to hire protection.

### **Black Market Deadlings (Low Level).**

Word on the street is that there have been a few scuffles over black market paragite in Valleyside. Check it out and see who’s involved.

### **The Harlequin Heist (Low Level).**

The Wicked Harlequin has been robbed! Instead of their usual shady channels, the casino’s owners have sought out heroes. What theft could be worth involving the forces of justice?

### **Lamplight: Extinguished (Mid Level).**

A squad of Lamplighters were found murdered in an alleyway in Lowcity. Strangely, their uniforms all match the new designs—designs that weren’t supposed to enter production until next month.

### **The Rat Plague (High Level).**

A debilitating sickness is sweeping Lowtown, forcing travel between the districts to be suspended. Medical experts claim that no natural plague could be spreading so fast: the source must be magical. Somewhere, deep beneath Lowtown, a dark ritual has been enacted to bring Beacon to its knees.



# SERENITY

**T**here was something about the streets of Serenity at night that Gestalt loved. The hero had only been operating under the purview of the Beacon Consul for three months now, and they loved being assigned to night patrol in Serenity. The level was full of color and life, its parks vibrant greens and yellows, its brooks and canals deep blue, and its boulevards awash with rainbows from lanterns.

They sat and watched from the top of the highest steeple of the Waymaker's Plaza, looking with wonder upon the place they had come to love. Suddenly, off by the Exalted Gardens, a great mushroom cloud of purple-black gas rose into the air and out stepped out one of the Clockmaker's metal horrors.

Time to defend Serenity, Gestalt thought as they tightened their cape and gloves, beginning to run along the rooftops of the level towards the giant creature.

**Population:** Serenity makes up approximately 30% of Beacon's population

**Districts:** Exalted Gardens, Fields of Bounty, Scholar's Walk, and Waymaker's Plaza

**Organizations:** Guild of Armorers, Artisan Affairs Bureau, and the Gardener's Union

Serenity has been a refuge from the beginning. When Beacon's construction spanned toward the skies, Serenity began with quiet gardens, parks, and open skies. Artisans flourished, raising centers of craft and learning, which gave way to art and trade schools, workshops, and the creative heart of Beacon.

The residents of Serenity enjoy the suburban atmosphere and, despite its status as one of the larger sections of Beacon, take pride in community events and knowing one's neighbors. Tradition and progression meld in this artisan hub; the finest makers pass on their knowledge to generations teeming with

potential. It is not uncommon for a park to be torn apart when supers face off villains, but no one complains—in Serenity, dazzling displays are akin to currency, and the residents know that whatever comes next will be spectacular.

## DISTRICTS

### THE CRATER

Everyone in Beacon knows about the Crater. No matter where you find yourself in the sprawling city, you can't miss it. Straddling the space between Lowcity and Serenity, the Crater is a sprawling blemish on Beacon's cityspace.

The Crater is the site of a historic battle between the original Portaleers and a primordial evil. A combat so colossal it scarred the land. Portaleers throughout the years always aim to draw the most destructive villains out of Beacon and into the Crater to battle it out. Today the Crater is a warzone of twisted metal, charred rock, and deadly debris. And home sweet home to the Scroungers.

### EXALTED GARDENS

These gardens are the remaining historical snapshot of the Serenity that was before Beacon expanded upward. They are immaculately kept, reminiscent of a simpler time, though they act as a haven for those whose powers derive from nature. It is said that when a hero is called to greater heights, they are first taken into the Exalted Garden by a Portaleer to walk through the annals of history—and they are taken to the center of the garden underneath the Cascading Falls, a place that no ordinary visitor has ever been allowed to step into. What lies beyond the gleaming falls is a mystery.



## FIELDS OF BOUNTY

The Fields of Bounty are expansive farmlands that supply the entire population of Beacon with food. While the Fields operate semi-autonomously, technically Serenity governs them. Most of the farms are privately owned but tightly regulated by Beacon, for if they were ever to stop production, Beacon could easily starve. This makes the Fields a constant target of those who seek to control Beacon. Curiously, the Fields are capable of producing more food than is expected—even during difficult weather and seasons, crops continue to flourish. The magic behind this is not fully understood (at least, by the public) and has led to endless rumors—the most prevalent of which is that the spirit of the original Paragon himself provides for the people of Beacon.

## SCHOLAR'S WALK

While its name suggests a district that should find its home in Argentum Square, the Scholar's Walk is named with irony. The Scholar's Walk is a section of Serenity that was destroyed in an attack on Beacon while it was still forming. Here is where heroes find themselves when they doubt. As they wander the memorialized wreckage, the magic-scarred homes and streets, and the craters left behind by devastation, they are reminded of both the necessity of power and its cost.

## WAYMAKER'S PLAZA

Here is the pinnacle of artistry and the shining halls of artisans! The Waymaker's Plaza is known far and wide as the place to get anything you need—common shops sell knock-offs of common heroic displays, while master artisans find themselves with powerful heroes as regular clients to make sure their armor, weapons, and gadgets are in working order. The saying goes, "If you have your wits about you, you can make coin in the Waymaker's Plaza," and for good reason. Business seems to never ebb or fade.

## KEY LOCATIONS

**Beacon Public Library and Archive.** This massive jade, gold, and marble building rises from the heart of Serenity—with branches in every level of Beacon. The library holds

the collected knowledge of all organizations, groups, and creators of the city. The building rises from the center of Serenity, eight stories of books, magidiscs, holorecords, scrolls, and artifacts—full of the collections retrieved from explorations into Ghaistala or from within the Beacon itself.

It is managed and operated by one Sama Hyklen, a tiefling wizard turned chronicler who runs a tight ship and a tighter budget to make the BPLA a well-oiled machine. Recently she has been working to install new magitech storage units called arklogs, large cylinders full of information converted into arcane energy that can be read on holopaper.

### **The Bellows Academy of Metallurgy.**

This sprawling campus began as a simple metalworkers' shop when Beacon was founded. Its founder, Belwog Bellows, was one of the first to study how to properly work paragite. His work is still heavily classified by Beacon's government, but his early contracts set up a reputation and fortune that lasts into today. The Bellows Academy is considered the premiere place to receive an education in metalwork and crafting.

**Club 52.** A small, nondescript red door in an ordinary wall near Scholar's Walk. To those who know, this door is more than a door: it's a portal into a pocket dimension used to throw Beacon's most exclusive parties. There are rumors of other doors linked to Club 52 throughout Beacon, and perhaps even to other dimensions. The top-floor rooms hold the most secret of meetings, drowned out by the thumping bass.

**Commonality.** This tavern is unique, in that it openly welcomes both heroes and villains. It is founded on the belief that the two sides should be able to sit and talk to each other—a delicate balance strictly enforced by some of Beacon's toughest bouncers. Anyone of any creed can come and share a glass at Commonality.

**Favor Forge.** The headquarters of the Guild of Armorers is a large, ornately crafted stone building that evokes a storied university or temple. But a colossal vent for the foundries and forges contained within marks it as a place of work. The heat mirages shimmers above the building during the day. Out front is a sculpture that features a legendary magic sword (or is it



just a sword sculpture?) wrapped in an ornate chain, the pedestal inscribed with guild motto: “The strength of a chain is in the link.”

**Kobold Klub.** Owned and operated by Grick Bright, a former kobold inventor and pilot, the Kobold Klub is home to some of the finest dining and entertainment in Serenity. It is also here that adventurers often find jobs and make connections with the local artisans, but one often finds Bugmum, Grick, and their birdfolk friend KT here waiting for cases. And drinking.

**Maestro Hall.** The novelist Lark Maestro is well known across Beacon for his enigmatic ways and bestselling novels, seen as the individual who ushered in the age of pulp storytelling to Beacon. However, Lark doesn’t actually live in this large estate surrounded by tropical plants and grounds. Instead, it is home to his majordomo Nathan Pheasant Wiggins and local investigator general Samus Bagmum, who often take cases down for Lark. The writer is usually looking for inspiration at the Kobold Klub.

## SERENITY ADVENTURES

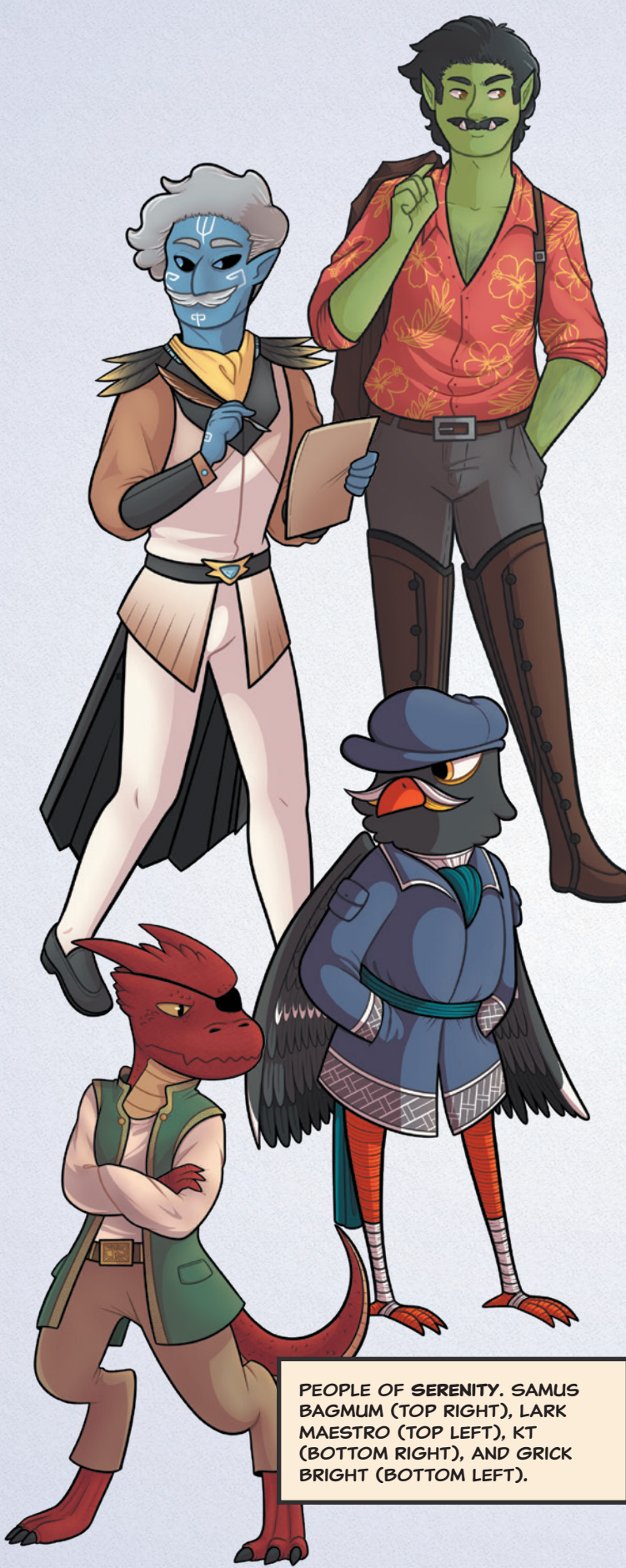
Plentiful dangers lurk behind the peaceful aura of Serenity.

**Bellows Below (Low Level).** An escaped mage, malnourished and terrified, speaks of unholy experiments taking place beneath Bellows Academy. According to this mage, promising students are being held against their will to work on classified paragite tests, attempting to create a magic-proof golem.

**Fields of Power (Low Level).** Doctor Fear has taken control of some of the northern farms in the Fields of Bounty! Heroes are needed to take back control—but Doctor Fear’s lair has unknowingly uncovered a long-secret power source beneath the Fields.

**Mysteries of Ascendance (Mid Level).** What lies in the falls of the Exalted Gardens, and will the PCs ever be taken there?

**Trembling Crater (Epic Level).** Something is stirring in the Scholar’s Walk—an echo of an ancient attack that vibrates with eerie new light.



PEOPLE OF SERENITY. SAMUS BAGMUM (TOP RIGHT), LARK MAESTRO (TOP LEFT), KT (BOTTOM RIGHT), AND GRICK BRIGHT (BOTTOM LEFT).



# ARGENTUM SQUARE

**P**lease, Dalkinius, the position of the constituents of the Scholar's Walk support my position!" Oboritrix, the centaur senator, stamped angrily as he stood upon the Consul floor, looking across at the stout dwarf senator Dalkinius. The Consul had been debating for nearly three hours on whether or not to erect another Beckoning Station within Serenity due to the heightened number of villain attacks.

"And I say to you, Oboritrix, that building another is simply an invitation for more villainous activities within our residential!" Dalkinius barked.

"Please, senators," said a cool voice from the doorway of the audience chamber, and all turned to see a trio of figures clad in splendid purple costumes and wielding strange purple-bladed weapons. The leader—a gaunt man carrying a spear and wearing a nearly floor-length robe—stepped forward and grinned wickedly.

"We were talking about villainy? Why, the Amethyst Cadre specializes in it!"

**Population:** Argentum Square makes up approximately 25% of Beacon's population

**Districts:** The Enlightened Heights, Watcher's Vigil, The Justicarium

**Organizations:** The Shattered Sons

Order is the foundation upon which Argentum Square depends. Those residing in this gleaming faction of Beacon use philosophy, knowledge, and governance in equal measure to command the city's great future. Whereas Lowcity is the seat of technological discovery, Argentum Square is where progress is born, directed, and assured.

If Lowcity is the engine upon which Beacon moves forward and Serenity is the heart in which it thrives, Argentum Square is the decisive hand by which the city acts.

## DISTRICTS

### THE ENLIGHTENED HEIGHTS

With the Soarreal Museum of Arts, the Library of the Spire, and statues of heroism littered throughout every square and standing on every corner, none can deny the artistry of the Enlightened Heights—though they can certainly scoff at its pomp. Here, knowledge rises to its philosophical peak. While art is produced in Serenity, it is decreed art in the Enlightened Heights, and while some would argue that Watcher's Vigil needs more space, others argue that the governmental offices need the minds and tempering forces of the Enlightened Heights to keep them centered.

### THE JUSTICARIUM

The Justicarium houses Beacon's courts of law. A small district, defined by its distinguished buildings and an air of, as residents of Lowcity describe it, "pompous posturing." Beacon strives not to give into cruel and unusual punishments, but an unfortunate fact about a superheroic city is its near-constant flow of supervillainy. The Justicarium deals with these criminals day in and day out, and the Justicars that mete out judgement are some of the most respected members of Beacon society.

### WATCHER'S VIGIL

While this district was primarily built around the gleaming Fresnel House at the start, Watcher's Vigil now encompasses the offices and administrative buildings that make Argentum Square the decisive force it is within Beacon. The layout is orderly, if a little tight, and most of the art has been shifted over to the Enlightened Heights. The one piece of art that remains is an evocative statue of a mobius strip, magically enchanted to seem to shift and loop



depending on where the viewer stands. It was difficult to move without disrupting the delicate spacetime warping, and that is the balance demanded by the forces within Watcher's Vigil to keep the universe in order.

## KEY LOCATIONS

**Fresnel House.** Beacon's seat of government. This massive glass-and-steel building is crafted like a large spire-shaped lens, catching and reflecting the light from the Beacon itself. Multiple layers of shaped glass obfuscate the interior, and much of the secret governmental work is done below ground in hidden chambers. But the building itself stands tall and shining, welcoming all.

**The Furnace.** Lamplighter Headquarters, informally known among Beacon's underworld as the Furnace, lies in the heart of the Justicarium—the kiln by which the first of justice are stoked. While plain and stately on the outside, the interior wears hues of crimson and vibrant orange, a bold declaration of power to those stepping inside without welcome.

**Library of the Spire.** This towering building is designed to evoke the great Beacon of Paragon. It is a library and research facility that contains all of the unclassified works done on Ghaistala's history and on the Beacon itself. Any student or citizen with a legitimate research query can access the lower levels. In the upper levels of the Spire, there is a library reserved for those who are doing the highest level research into the Beacon and into the power of the Toll. There may be some tomes containing troubling secrets about the nature of the Maddening as well.

**The Maddening Mural.** Officially titled "The Grand Victory of Paragon Over the Maddening," this large mural is an artist's rendition of Paragon's light destroying the dark Nul forces of the Maddening. It is placed centrally in Argentum Square, and is considered an essential stop on educational tours.

**Portal Plaza.** This massive plaza is where the first portals into Beacon opened. Today, the portals remain active, and Portal Plaza is the welcoming face that incoming travellers are greeted by. Beacon is known for encouraging

immigration and travel, and that is reflected in the open and pleasant design of Portal Plaza. However, the government does keep a close and vigilant eye on the portaleers that pass through the Plaza, monitoring for trouble before it rises.

**The Soarreal Museum of the Arts.** A large institution, Soarreal is Beacon's premiere place of artistic display. Known for its large halls and extensive exhibiting capabilities, Soarreal is home to both mundane and magical artworks.

## ARGENTUM SQUARE ADVENTURES

Paragon's Peak is where heroes solve the mysteries that the greatest minds cannot.

**Justicar Missing! (Low Level).** Justicar Brexx'dus is missing! Attacking a Justicar is one of Beacon's most reviled crimes, and the Lamplighters are deathly concerned. Brexx'dus disappeared during a hearing: they stepped out for a recess and never returned. Witnesses in the hallway say they never emerged from the courtroom. Where could they have gone?

**Soarreal Sabotage (Mid Level).** Authorities are baffled by the damaging of a rare work of art within Soarreal Museum. The art in question was a faintly magical work by the artist Setiazek. It was a sculpted statue designed to tell a single, deep truth about each person that visited it. That statue has been defaced and somehow its magic has been corrupted, causing the statues to speak endless personal truths about anyone it sees—which, of course, is bad for business. The museum's protective wards have not been disturbed, and the owners are desperate for answers.

**Words of Will (Mid Level).** Jaws of Valor, a book penned by one of the first Mantles of Willpower, was stolen from the Library of the Spire at the same time that a strike was made against the Portaleers—particularly the home of Thurga, the current Mantle of Willpower. Someone is attempting to unseat her for the ways of old. But who?

**Imbalance (Epic Level).** The statue of the mobius strip in the Watcher's Vigil has begun to spin wildly out of control and balance. What is causing it?



# PARAGON'S PEAK

**T**he Docent strode calmly from within the halls of the Atrium of Lights out towards the gaggle of young supers waiting for their tour of the base of operations of the Portaleers. The kids all stared at the golem in awe as they stood before them.

*“Welcome, young ones. Today you are given a great privilege: to see where those who protect our city from its greatest threats reside and train and keep counsel. All I ask is that you stay with me and do not touch anything.”* The group nodded vigorously, and the Docent smiled.

*“Today we are also lucky enough to be joined by one of our own Portaleers: Bulwark!”* A loud rumble filled the foyer, and from the ground grew a humanoid shaped chunk of obsidian, from which Thurga, the Mantle of Willpower stepped out. She winked at her twins in the crowd of student heroes who all were agog.

*“Who’s excited?”* she asked, her powerful voice radiating over the room. The young ones burst out in excitement, and she and the Docent shared entertained looks.

**Population:** Paragon’s Peak makes up approximately 5% of Beacon’s population

**Districts:** Atrium of Lights, Splendor’s Square

**Organizations:** The Portaleers

## DISTRICTS

### ATRIUM OF LIGHTS

The Atrium of Lights is the headquarters of the Portaleers, encompassing both the grandiose building of glass and metal and the well-lit streets surrounding it. The Atrium of Lights is surrounded by trees—casting the only real shadows—so that the lights shining both in and out of the building are more obvious. It is hard to feel small in a place where one feels

almost akin to divinity, bathed in that radiance and standing in a place where the mightiest heroes call home.

### SPLENDOR’S SQUARE

When the master artisans came to craft Paragon’s Peak, this is where they began. From a beautiful plaza made of splaying mosaic tiles to the artful buildings and ornamentations of light that align the paths, this is a living celebration to those who fight every day for Beacon’s peace. Living in Paragon’s Peak is a feat in itself, but Splendor’s Square is another matter entirely. This is where the real heroes reside—the heroes that have proven themselves in feats of valor, sacrifice, and honor.

## KEY LOCATIONS

**Godswatch.** Near the top of Beacon sits the Godswatch: a massive telescope used exclusively by the Collegium Beacarus to study the cosmology of Ghaistala. This exceptional telescope is magically enhanced to be able to see beyond the visual spectrum, and some scholars have found a renewed faith after claiming they saw the face of God in the stars.

**House Khalaza.** The new ancestral home of the Khalaza Family, this mansion is one of the architectural wonders of the city. It’s primary design language is that of the Khalaza’s homeworld from before their accidental entrance through a portal. Now it seamlessly incorporates design elements from the dozens and hundreds of cultures present in Beacon—it is prized as a testament to the melting pot culture of Beacon.

**Paragon’s Overlook.** With a glass-bottom floor and a dizzying height, this spot provides a view over nearly all of lower Beacon. It is well known as possibly the most beautiful, or at least



"HEROES ARE MADE HERE, LEGENDS ARE BORN HERE, AND TALES ARE CRAFTED HERE."

- A CARVING OUTSIDE THE ATRIUM OF LIGHT



most impactful, place in the entire city. On clear days, a queue tends to form of heroes who wish to pensively look out over the city they protect.

**The Resolute Redoubt.** Occasionally, criminals are captured who simply cannot be released. They are too dangerous for an average prison or to be sent into exile. Those prisoners end up in the Resolute Redoubt, Beacon's super-max prison. Built within a fortified section of the Beacon itself, most citizens of the city don't even know the Redoubt exists. Even among the most hardened criminals, it is but a whispered myth. Legends speak of moving floors, inter-dimensional locks, inverted geometry, and a fractal layout that no one could ever escape from. Of course, those are only legends—aren't they?

## PARAGON'S PEAK ADVENTURES

Paragon's Peak is where the most proven heroes go up against dangers untold.

**Backdoor to Heaven (High Level).** A cleaning crew stumbled across a small

unknown hatch in a quiet corner of Paragon's Peak. It seems some mysterious parties have been entering Paragon's Peak unnoticed—but for what purpose?

**Cede the Clouds (High Level).** A perpetual thunderstorm has rolled into Beacon, obscuring and violently electrocuting Paragon's Peak. A rumbling voice from the clouds is demanding that the airspace above Beacon be recognized as a sovereign—and hostile—nation.

**Light Gone Out (High Level).** A hero called Kilnwarden has been murdered—left in the middle of Splendor's Square as a mockery to the finest of heroes. The only clue the Lamplighters have uncovered is a scrap of paper in their pocket that reads, "Douse the beacon douse the beacon douse the beacon douse the beacon," over and over, in furious lines.

**Darkness Rises (Epic Level).** All the lights in the Atrium of Lights have gone out. A voice from the sky bellows, "Goodnight, Beacon," as the darkness races downward, choking out Beacon until the city does dark. Kilnwarden's death was a warning. Now the real threat has arrived.





# PROTECTORATE PEAKS

The mountain range that lines the coast, encircling the seaside valley of Beacon is called the Protectorate Peaks. So called because they keep most monsters at bay, these peaks are snow-covered even at the height of summer. A few mountain passes are serviceable only during the summer months, and even then are prone to avalanche. Scientists discovered that the peaks are growing an inch or two every year, which was welcome news to most Beaconites fearful of what lies beyond their city.

## HOPE'S BASTION

Beneath the Protectorate Peaks lies a massive bunker, built secretly during the early days of Beacon's construction. The story goes that about a hundred years after the first portaleers were drawn by the call of the beacon, four individuals fell through a tear in time and space and disappeared into the mountains.

For years, this was simply a legend until a terrifying mechanical monster broke out of a scientist's base in Lowcity. Four individuals appeared wielding strange weapons and informing the Lamplighters and Stiltguard that this was a creature from the future, a future they four had barely escaped. After the battle, the fighters vanished, reappearing only when something tied to their timeline threatened Beacon.

Hope's Bastion is an incredibly protected fortress, blending into the mountainside perfectly. Built from advanced magitech thousands of years in Ghaistala's future and powered by a powerful nanomental—an elemental comprised of nanobots—named the Magister, the Bastion has living arrangements for its four occupants, as well as a massive armory, training gym, library, nanodisc vault, records hall, and a supposed time-bridge that is in great need of repair. It is said by those who have entered the Bastion, there are hundreds of layers of security.

## THE DENIZENS OF HOPE'S BASTION

### Matthew "Rigging" Daylight Seasons.

Hope's Bastion is quartermastered by one Matthew Daylight Seasons, who usually goes by the moniker Rigging. Rigging comes from Ghaistala 4021 AT (After Toll), a timeline where the Warmonger—a moderate threat to the safety of Beacon in this timeline—manages to kill the entire Portaleer superteam with brainwashed kaiju from the wilds of Ghaistala and goes on to destroy the Mantles. Rigging assembled his three closest allies and returned to the past via an old time-bridge in order to ensure that the Warmonger never succeeded in his mission.

Rigging is a copper dragonborn, the right half of his body comprised of a living alloy. As a child, the Warmonger tried to destroy Rigging due to a prophecy lost to time, and the right half of Rigging's body suffered a horrifying necromantic plague. However, healers were able to bond a quicksilver elemental to Rigging's body, and the two became a powerful symbiotic force. Rigging is a stoic leader, yet is often willing to sacrifice anything to ensure that the future is saved. The burnt and torn stuffed tarrasque on his gunbelt is a reminder of this.

### Nyra "Fate" Thurgon.

Matthew's closest friend and confidant is the half-elf Nyra Thurgon, known by the codename Fate. As a young girl growing up in Ghaistala 4021 AT, she was the daughter of a famed astrologist from GEAR, Dr. Olrik Thurgon. However, when his wife joined him in the observatory of the Fresnel House on the night of the arkwaves, the then-unborn Nyra was infused with intense cosmic powers she was not prepared for: she became able to see the fate of others.

The Warmonger discovered this and captured her, and in truth, it was Nyra's visions that led to the attempted murder of Rigging, though



Nyra would never tell him this horrendous truth. When Rigging freed her and offered her the chance to fight back, Nyra accepted in a heartbeat. Passage through the time-bridge caused her very physiology to change, reacting to the drugs the Warmonger had infused with her to keep her imprisoned. She became quicker, faster, and stronger, and the originally small birthmark over her left eye grew into a massive golden starburst pattern.

Nyra is gentle by nature, but a fierce markswoman and swordfighter, and it is only she who knows how Rigging truly dies.

**Garrik Lane.** Garrik Lane was one of Rigging's closest friends growing up. Both the dwarf and dragonborn ran through the slums of Lowcity collecting salvage. But one day, the two were caught in an accidental explosion in the factory where Lane's father worked, and while Rigging escaped with his life, Lane barely survived, losing arms and legs. Luckily, Rigging knew of a prosthetist named Darksmith—an old and cantankerous lizardfolk who built Lane a new set of legs and arms.

These new limbs grew as Lane did, the magic in them infused with his body and granting him amazing speed, strength, and durability. And when Rigging recruited him into his group to fight back against the Warmonger, Lane more than accepted, not questioning his friend at all.

However, Lane did not want to travel to the past, and only did because, in the fight to the time-bridge, he was bleeding out and unconscious after the fight with the Warmonger's legions. He still harbors a grudge against Rigging for this, his trust deeply damaged. He questions Rigging's true motives, and whether or not it is possible that Rigging and the Warmonger could be connected by more than some old prophecy.

**Theodosia "Polar" Wellmark.** Theodosia grew up with her parents in the Duran Forest, working in one of the massive lumbermills as a repair monkey, scurrying back and forth from saw to saw to fix them if something went wrong. Then one night when she was out wandering, the young tiefling girl found an old werebear



SOME THINK THAT THE PROTECTORATE PEAKS ARE JUST AS OPPRESSIVE AND CONSTRICTING AS THEY ARE COMFORTING AND STRONG.



from the far northern reaches of Ghaistala wandering the woods, injured. She did what she could to heal him up, but unfortunately, she was not skilled enough. However, the old bear, whose name she never learned, told her that he was a vigilante fighting against the Warmonger's oppression but had failed to keep the north safe.

Theodosia, so moved by his tale, asked to take up his mantle and become the next in his line of heroes, willing to take on the curse. And so, with his dying breath, the old bear bit Theodosia, and she became Polar. She gained intense strength and powerful stamina, able to not only fully transform into her werebear form, but also a hybrid of her tiefling and ursine forms.

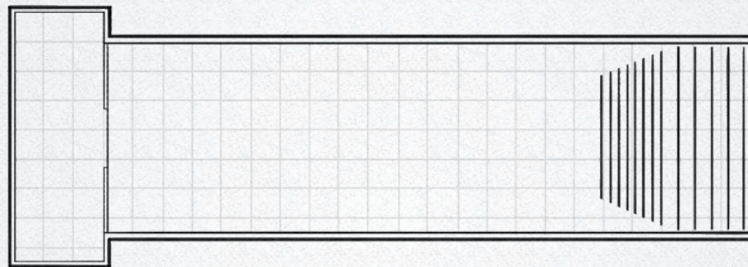
Rigging found her avenging the murder of her parents when their mills were bombed by the Warmonger for harboring fugitives, and Theodosia took up Rigging's banner, swearing to follow him anywhere.

## WITHIN THE BASTION

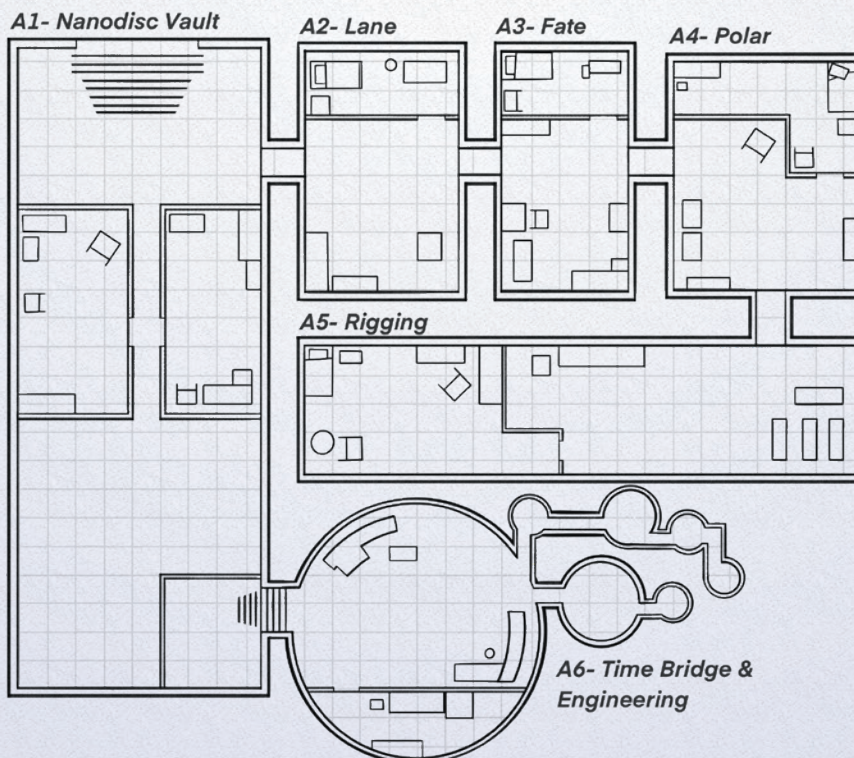
Hope's Bastion is three floors, all monitored and controlled by the Magister, a sentient nanomental that Rigging brought back with him from the future after freeing the creature from the Warmonger. The Magister—or "Mags" as Rigging calls him—keeps track of all actions within the Bastion, able to dispatch deterrents and safety precautions if needed.

**Treasure.** The Bastion is filled with numerous technological and magitech

### HOPE'S BASTION: LEVEL 1



### HOPE'S BASTION: LEVEL 2





achievements, locked away by Rigging and his team to ensure that when the Warmonger begins to rise in power, they can do what is needed to hold the Warmonger back. Among the items here include a photon rifle, an arkwave pulse grenade, and a harness o' pouches.

The following items aren't magical or even magitech, so they don't belong in chapter 13. They are advanced technology from the future. GMs can give them to player characters if they want to introduce a science fiction or futuristic feel to the campaign.

### ARKWAVE PULSE GRENADE (PROJECTILE, RARE)

Arkwave pulse grenades are the bread-and-butter of explosives in the future, converting invisible arkwave radiation into powerful pyrotechnics. The grenade has a range of 60 feet, and targets must make a Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d4 radiant damage or half as much on a success.

**Touchy Tech.** Arkwave pulse grenades are highly unstable and can easily prove dangerous to their owners. If you roll below a 10 on an attack, roll a 1d10. If the result is 5 or higher, the grenade's timer is faulty and cannot be fired for one round. If 2 to 4, the grenade

sparks and goes dead, a dud. If you roll a 1, the grenade explodes, dealing 2d4 fire damage to anyone within 5 feet.

### PHOTON RIFLE (WEAPON, RARE)

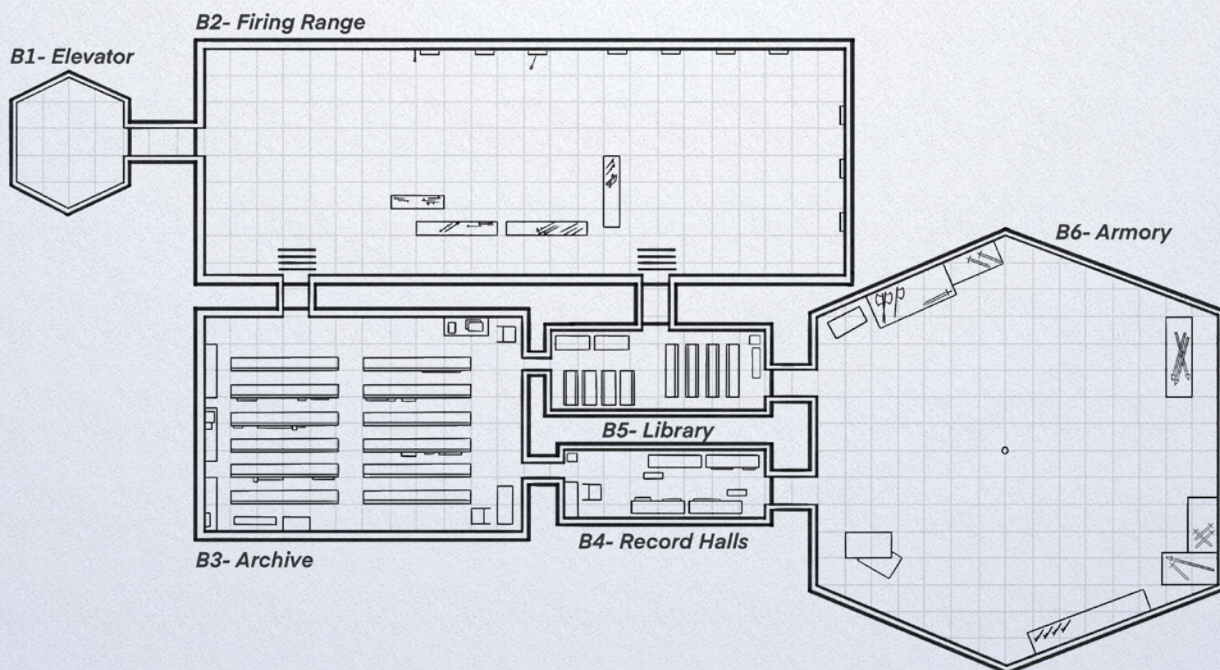
This bulky silver weapon fires powerful photon blasts, a common arm used in the future of Ghaistala. Your attack rolls score a critical hit on a d20 roll of 18 to 20, and it deals 1d10 radiant damage.

**Overheating.** While photon rifles are indeed powerful weapons, they can prove temperamental. Should you roll less than a 10 on an attack, roll 1d10. If the result is 5 or higher, the rifle overheats and cannot be fired for one round. If 2 to 4, the rifle sparks and goes dead, overwhelmed. If you roll a 1, the rifle explodes, dealing 1d12 fire damage to anyone within 5 feet.

### ADVENTURE SEED

Something is amiss within the bunker: a virus from the future has infected Hope's Bastion's central computer system, the Magister. You find him forced into a physical biotech body, removed from the system, as a new AI—the Conqueror—begins to supplant control upon the bunker. Can you help Mags get back to the bunker's stacks and into the data to fight against the Conqueror, or will the war for the future be lost in the past?

#### HOPE'S BASTION: LEVEL 3





# CHAPTER 6

# REGIONAL GAZETTEER

**B**eacon is the main hub on the world of Ghaistala and the site of countless adventures. But if the heroes ever want a taste for what lies beyond the Protectorate Peaks, here is a guide to the regions beyond.

## THE DARNAN FOREST

Along the southwestern ridge of the Grey Rise, the Darnan Forest blooms. Hearthfire is located within the Forest, the source of most of Beacon's lumber (see: Hearthfire).

The Darnan Forest is large, running along most of the Grey Rise. All manner of beasts and insects may be found within, and locals tell of strange lights that dance through the trees at dusk.

### DARNAN FOREST ADVENTURES

***Lycanthrope Hope (Mid Tier).*** Lycanthropes are not altogether uncommon in and around Beacon, so long as they can control their bestial side. But a small enclave of werewolves has taken root in the Darnan Forest, in search of a rare herb they believe will end their curse.

***The Spider-Queen (High Tier).*** Giant spiders have long been a nuisance in the Darnan Forest, and most view them as an obstacle to overcome. But from deep in the webbed wood, an emissary has emerged: a half-man, half-spider creature who claims that the Spider-Queen seeks an audience with the champions of Beacon.

## HEARTHFIRE

**Location:** Darnan Forest

**Population:** 14,760

**Government:** Bearer Bilquis Gamon runs the town with a small council of elected locals.

**Defense:** Local militia keep the town secure from local threats, but a sizable force of Lamplighters are kept in reserve nearby to protect the town from any larger problems.

**Commerce:** Hearthfire is the primary source of wood and lumber for Beacon. Most basic supplies are available in its shops and markets, but any truly exotic or valuable materials only arrive through trade with Beacon.

**Organizations:** Treestridders

Hearthfire is possibly the most successful settlement outside of Beacon. There are few major threats, and the mountainous terrain is known to provide beautiful vistas. So much so, in fact, that wealthy socialites from Beacon are beginning to buy up land in and around Hearthfire for their holiday homes.

***Local Pride.*** Many of the locals of Hearthfire take pride in simply being “not Beacon.” To them, Beacon is an overstuffed metropolis unable to enjoy the simple things in life. Hearthfire natives, or “Hearthies,” tend to enjoy the slower pace of their life outside the big city. This has led to some significant local tension as



Beaconites have begun buying up the beautiful Hearthfire land for their own private enjoyment.

**Wood, and More Wood.** Life in Hearthfire centers almost completely around lumber. Every Hearthie child is comfortable with tree-climbing, and most find their work in the mills. Annual carving contests draw people even from Beacon, and the works of art created are proudly displayed around town.

## HEARTHFIRE ADVENTURES

**Encroaching Ivory (Mid Tier).** The Treestridders have discovered a small patch of white choker vines growing in the Darnan Forest. A more tropical plant from the Ivory Wilds, the white choker vines could not have taken root naturally. Who is behind this new threat?

**Scary Faerie (High Tier).** People have begun following the dancing lights of the Darnan Forest, never to be seen again. Suddenly, the old wives' tales about hags living in the darker parts of the forest don't seem so foolhardy.

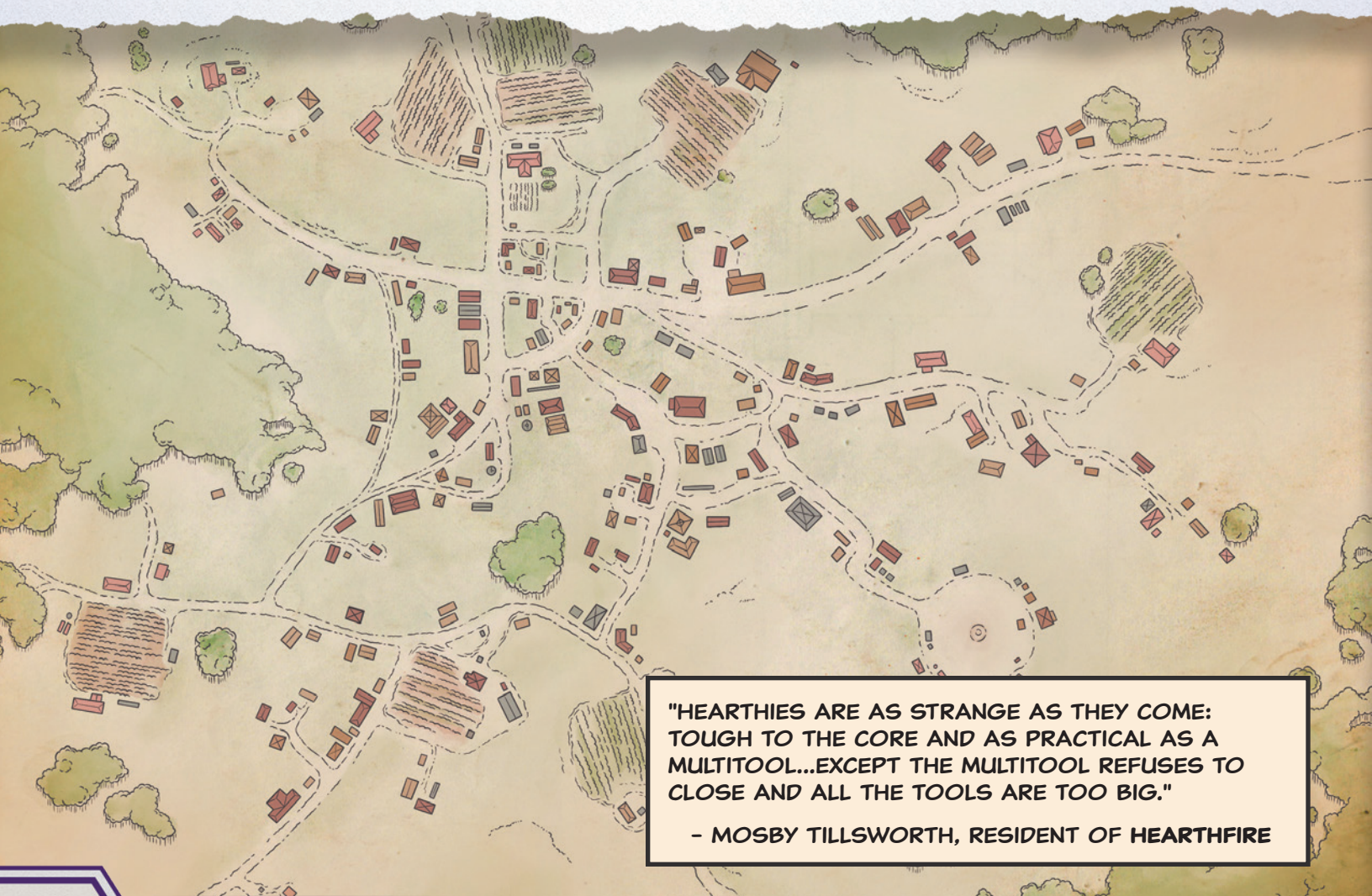
## THE GREY RISE

A mountain range northwest of Beacon. The mountains seem to grow larger the farther away from Beacon they are. The nearby sections of the Grey Rise are home to several of Beacon's most profitable mining operations, and more daring explorers are attempting to conquer the farthest peaks. The highest mountain is known as Pinnacle, and its peak rises above the clouds.

## GREY RISE ADVENTURES

**Billy Goat Gruff (Low Tier).** A family of hill giants seeks to make their own home in the Grey Rise, but a particularly frustrating goat keeps destroying their campsites and forcing them away. It may sound strange that a goat can force out giants, but this goat is somewhat unique: it keeps bleating out fireballs.

**At the Mountains of Madding (Mid Tier).** A researcher from the Collegium Beacarus believes a translated document from Beacon is



"HEARTHIES ARE AS STRANGE AS THEY COME: TOUGH TO THE CORE AND AS PRACTICAL AS A MULTITOOL...EXCEPT THE MULTITOOL REFUSES TO CLOSE AND ALL THE TOOLS ARE TOO BIG."

- MOSBY TILLSWORTH, RESIDENT OF HEARTHFIRE



pointing to an ancient power source deep in the Grey Rise, but what awaits their expedition is something much darker.

## THE ASHA TRADING CO.

**Location:** The Grey Rise

**Population:** 7,380

**Government:** The Asha Trading Co. is run with an iron fist by the Asha family.

**Defense:** Hired guards patrol iron-reinforced walls equipped with top-of-the-line weapons and armor.


**Commerce:** The Asha Trading Co. sells much more than it purchases. They are a major supplier of metals and minerals to Beacon but rarely bring any luxury goods in.

The Asha Trading Co. was one of the earliest businesses founded in Ghaistala. Its founder, Barkhoum Asha, was a dwarf and one of the earliest Portaleers. He quickly seized control

of valuable land rights in the Grey Rise, and in the intervening years, the family has grown to envelop many of its competitors. There is no solid proof of any wrongdoing, but the workers often whisper of underhanded deals made to force competitors out of business.


Today the Trading Co. has grown large enough to rightly be considered its own settlement, though one under strict control. All 'citizens' of Asha Trading Co. are employees, so any trade, travel, and visitors are monitored closely by the company. Very few outside vendors and goods are allowed entry—just enough that the workers can say there's something to their life besides the company. Even so, vendors pay the Trading Co. a steep tax to operate there, and in turn, the Trading Co. pays Beacon to be left alone. For some workers, all their family has known for generations is life for the Asha Trading Co.

**Skilled Metalworkers.** The advantage of only doing one thing is that you learn to do it very



BARKHOUM ASHA IS FAMOUS FOR TWO THINGS: FORMING THE ASHA TRADING CO., AND MAKING SURE IT SURVIVED.





THERE ARE A FEW PLACES IN THE IVORY WILDS WHERE FALLEN GIANTS LAY RISING FROM THE MARSHES. REMNANTS OF AN AGE BEFORE THE WHITE CHOKER VINE ARRIVED.

well. The people of Asha Trading Co. are, with very few exceptions, skilled diggers, tunnelers, and metal workers.

**The Waking Dark.** When a group of people spend most days under the earth, inevitably rumors crop up—if indeed they are rumors. Tales are spreading among the workers of something they’re calling “The Waking Dark” that whispers to them in the deep recesses of the mines. Officially, the Asha Trading Co. has no stance on these rumors. Unofficially, it would take more than a few dead workers for the Trading Co. to take action.

## ADVENTURES IN ASHA TRADING Co.

**The Peoples’ Man (Low Tier).** A hero named Coalstriker has sprung up in the Asha Trading Co. They claim to be fighting for the rights of the people, but the people are afraid that Coalstriker’s antics—which tend to result in property damage—will get everyone punished. Can fresh heroes navigate the political difficulties of doing what’s right?

**Superheavy (Epic Tier).** A new metal has been discovered, deep in the darkest part of Asha Trading Co.’s mines. A single nugget of it is so dense that it takes six sturdy people to lift it. None of the miners can see the invisible tendril that connects the nugget to something much more powerful that has been waiting in the darkness.

## THE IVORY WILDS

Directly west of Beacon lie the Ivory Wilds, a dense jungle that few have dared journey into. The region’s name comes from the unique flora that dominates the jungle: the white choker vine.

White choker vines criss-cross the jungle. Over long periods of time, the vines shift from green to a sickly off-white color. Fortunately, when the vines are white, it means they are safe to pass. Unfortunately, it means they have stopped producing chlorophyll because they captured another form of sustenance: meat. When white choker vines are green, they are nearly indistinguishable from other nearby vegetation, waiting for prey to venture too close and be crushed by the strong vines.

Despite the risks, some have managed to brave some of the Ivory Wilds. The ecosystem within is very potent, especially in regards to poultices and potions. The poisons distilled from plants in the Ivory Wilds are the strongest in Ghaistala, and rumors persist of plants with strong enough healing effects to create everlasting life.

Near the southwestern edge of the Ivory Wilds is Venompeak: a small mountain, lush with plant life, just visible over the treetops. As of yet, no known explorer has reached even the base of Venompeak alive, but those who





THE MIRRORED WETLANDS FEEL LIKE THE FORGOTTEN GARDEN OR MEDITATION POND OF SOME LONG LOST GARGANTUAN BEING.

have tried tell stories of something massive moving around the mountain, slithering like a massive snake.

## IVORY WILDS ADVENTURES

***A Drop of Blood (Mid Level).*** The Gardener's Union has requested a living sample of white choker vine to study for potential use in the Fields of Bounty. Of the team they sent, no one returned except its leader, carrying a jug of blood. They have not spoken to anyone since.

***Venompeak Calling (Epic Level).*** Across Beacon, approximately one in every hundred people has begun hearing a voice in their head. It's always the same voice with the same message: "I'm trapped. Please, help me." Each person who hears it describes a pull to the west and dreams of Venompeak.

## THE KLACHTON OCEAN & EVERGLINT BAY

Beacon itself sits by Everglint Bay, so named for the constant twinkle of Beacon's light in the waters. The Everglint, like the land of Beacon itself, represents a small oasis amid the chaos of Klachton Ocean. Any sailors daring enough to venture too far from the shoreline rarely return—and those who do speak of massive shapes moving under the waves and

islands that seem to move by the day. Beacon itself obviously boasts the largest harbor on Ghaistala, with small trade routes ferrying goods up and down the coastline to settlements and outposts. Pirate attacks are common, for the call of an untamed ocean is a powerful one to those with adventure in their hearts.

## KLACHTON OCEAN ADVENTURES

***The Gleaming Scythe (Mid Tier).*** Across the Klachton Ocean, The Gleaming Scythe strikes fear into the hearts of sailors. A pirate ship known for its unique glowing sails, The Gleaming Scythe is becoming a true menace. Rumors swirl of a dangerous artifact hunted by this ship that could turn the entire ocean against Beacon.

***The Missing Islands (Epic Tier).*** Islands don't move—right? Sailors who have dared to leave the safety of Klachton's coastline claim that islands exist that move from place to place. Now, one has begun to obviously move: toward Beacon. A villain has wrested control of this mysterious island force and is now driving a tsunami directly towards the heart of civilization!

## THE MIRRORED WETLANDS

South of Beacon, this small swamp seems serene and calm. It is known for its reflective



water—so reflective, in fact, that birds often mistake it for sky and fly right in. Local predators have evolved to simply wait until the water breaks before viciously striking.

Passage through the Mirrored Wetlands is possible on flat, slow boats with caution taken to be quiet and unobtrusive. Any guides only travel during the day, however—for at night, they claim, the waters no longer reflect the sky above—but something much darker.

## MIRRORED WETLANDS ADVENTURES

**Snakeskin (Low Tier).** Bodies have been found in the Mirrored Wetlands—well, what appear to be bodies, anyway. Empty husks of humanoids, like old empty snakeskin, have been found floating in the water. Who—or what—is leaving them behind?

**The Dead Don't Float (Mid Tier).** In a shady corner of the Mirrored Wetlands lies the Diver's Grave, a small area where corpses, strangely, do not float. It has been used for ritualistic burial by locals for a generation, but lately strange lights have been seen in the area. Those brave or foolish enough to follow them say that the dead of the Diver's Grave don't float...but they do look angry.


## THE NUL WASTES

North of the Grey Rise lay the Nul Wastes. While the climate is temperate, nothing but the most resilient plants and animals can survive this barren landscape. There is no known reason for the barrenness, but the most common story is that this is the location from which the Maddening launched their attack on Kkryt. Today, the ground is dry and cracked, with odd rock formations that seem to grow from the ground. A few bands of barbarians, exiled from the civilized life of Beacon, have carved out a slim existence among the Wastes—but they are just as fearsome as the land itself.

## NUL WASTES ADVENTURES

**Survival? Here? (Low Tier).** Survival takes priority in the Nul Wastes, and for most forms of life in the multiverse, that means water. Unfortunately, the only oasis within fifty miles has come under control of a strange woman who shares a kinship with unknown—and deadly—new animals.

**The Maddening Gyre (High Tier).** When the Maddening fell, it left a scar on the world. In the Nul Wastes, this scar represents a weak point that Nul can use to escape—unless, of course, heroes guard the border.



THOSE WHO ENTER THE NUL WASTES  
RARELY RETURN, AND IF THEY DO...  
THEY ARE NEVER THE SAME.



## CHAPTER 7

# ORGANIZATIONS

Wherever people congregate in large numbers, people of like minds and values find each other. As you would expect, Beacon is home to dozens of organizations, big and small. The most famous among these is the Portaleers superhero team, but heroes are bound to encounter many more. These can be allies, quest-givers, or antagonists. In addition, if the players express interest in their characters joining one or more of the groups, GMs can help them get initiated.

### ARMORERS' GUILD

**Motto:** "The strength of a chain is in the links."

**Beliefs:** You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. The enemy of my enemy is my friend. There's a mutually beneficial solution, most of the time. All debts must be paid.

**Goals:** As an organization, the Armorers' Guild wants the safety and security they need to pursue their craft at the highest level. But each member of the guild has personal goals and debts as well. They are often not forthcoming about their reasoning and so have an air of inscrutable mystery to those with whom they strike bargains.

### NOTABLE MEMBERS

#### HROTHGAR BOLDHAND

Hrothgar specializes in magic items that aid survival and exploration. This dwarf's

personal goal is to see Ghaistala settled and Beacon expanded. He gives quests that support interests outside of the city and is particularly sympathetic to the outposts that choose to reside beyond the Protectorate Peaks, seeing them as potential footholds for expansion.


#### AELISE BROOKSTONE

Aelise is an elf who specializes in elemental magic, especially those delivered by ranged weapons. Their personal goal is to wield power at the highest level, so they send adventurers on tasks to collect information about powerful people for blackmail or to place them in Aelise's debt.

#### FERDINAND "THE DOVE" FRANCISCO

The Dove, a human mage, is known for their love of peace and specializes in armor and magic defense. They are capable of producing weapons but would not choose to do so except in response to a grave danger that could only be dealt with through violence. They hire adventurers in order to prevent conflicts and violence, often by facilitating agreements between warring groups or individuals. They might also make it conditional that their hires not harm anyone while performing favors for them.





"ONLY GOOD ARTIST IS AN INDIE ARTIST."  
- REGENCY LOVETHISTLE, HALFING POET

## ADVENTURES IN THE ARMORERS' GUILD

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**Emissary of Peace: (Low Tier)** The Shattered Son's have been given intelligence that a Guild Hero is corrupt and intend to assassinate them. The Dove asks your PCs to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the conflict in exchange for a little something to keep them protected on future adventures.

**Enemy of A Friend: (Mid Tier)** Aelise Broostone is working with a Lowcity scientist on experiments with energy manipulation and a local gang is disrupting the operation by breaking into the lab. She asks you to deal with the brigands in exchange for a favor owed.

**Map to Glory: (Epic Tier)** Hrothgar Boldhand has an interest in legends that tell of an ancient ruin that lies somewhere in the vastness of Ghaistala beyond Beacon's borders. Kaiju have been congregating in the region of the supposed site and he wants the PCs to investigate and map the ruins in exchange for some of his renowned forge work. Who knows what beasts they will meet along the way.

## ARTISAN AFFAIRS BUREAU

The Artisan Affairs Bureau is a perfect example of bureaucracy where there needs to be none. When one wants to open a museum or studio or art gallery or public garden, they must come to the AAB and ask for a permit to do so. Why this is even necessary is unknown; however, the bureau does help keep the number

of these Serenity locales to a balanced and manageable number. In fact, the AAB creates a catalog of these places and distributes them across Beacon to attract more revenue to the district. Led by a stuffy dwarf named Ul Muro, the AAB is both a blessing and a curse to the people of Serenity.

**Motto:** "Art has an order."

**Beliefs:** We are gatekeepers of the true art world within Beacon, acting as a conduit and channel for all other artists. Art comes with a cost, be it monetary or otherwise. We are a conduit for the worthy artist. The Bureau is a place of learning.

**Goals:** The main goal of the AAB is to act as a conduit for art to enter the world and become part of the great canvas that is Beacon. While it is often an arm and a leg to even be considered for approval by the AAB, they strive to ensure that the art displayed in their museums, galleries, and public exhibitions is truly amazing.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

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### UL MURO

Ul Muro is the prefect and manager of the AAB, and while his exterior is rather curmudgeonly and stuffy, he is truly an amazing artist—crafting beautiful landscapes out of stained glass that fill the halls and windows across Beacon.

Several others, such as the famed sculptor Zeezee Twalk—a gnome known for their outlandish pieces—or Maestro Juvanaya Losbroc—an esteemed dragonborn glassblower—frequent the halls of the AAB, offering classes and tutelage.



## ADVENTURE HOOKS

### ***Strikingly Good Doubles (Low Tier).***

Paintings and sculptures are going missing from the museum overnight, replaced with near identical doubles. The heroes are called in and the curator begs them to stake out the museum during the night to catch the culprit. Nothing creepy about being amidst paintings and statues all night, surely.

### ***It Blinked, I Swear! (Mid Tier).***

Zeezee Twalk was cleaning up after a class and saw the statue blink at them! The bureau has taken an extensive look, but only a few members are reporting seeing the blinking and subtle movements in the artwork. What dastardly scheme is afoot?

***Grand Theft Art-o (Epic Tier).*** The bureau is in chaos—now an entire exhibit is gone! An art gallery was just about to open in Serenity called the Arkwave Archives, displaying the works of people who were trying to capture the mysteries of the Arkwave in visual form. The entire building has vanished, leaving behind only a placard that reads, “The mysteries of the universe are not for its ants.” What in *Beacon* is going on?

## ASHA TRADING CO.

The Asha Trading Co. is an exceedingly powerful merchant company that operates outside of Beacon. They wholly own the settlement of Asha Trading Co. and all the employee-citizens within. It is an open secret around Beacon that the Asha Trading Co. is entirely corrupt, working its miners to death to save a coin.

**Motto:** “Work to live, live to work.”

**Beliefs:** Those in control of the company follow only one god: greed. Ghaistala is a lush, fertile world with many valuable resources—which means the first person to grab them all wins.

**Goals:** The Asha Trading Co. seeks to expand their empire and maintain their autonomy. A careful alliance with Beacon is maintained, based on mutual need and bribes, but the power-hungry Asha family will always seek to better themselves above all.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### DOUMOUL ASHA

Current CEO of the Asha Trading Co., and therefore leader of the outpost. A greedy and cruel man, his only religion is to his profits. He is just wise enough to keep his corruption barely obscured, but as soon as prying eyes look away, he shows his true cruelty.

### NAEBË ASHA

COO of the Asha Trading Co. and considered by most to be the brains behind the outpost, Naebë is loyal to her family—and therefore the Company—but understands politics much better than any of her family. It is her influence that keeps Beacon happy and out of Asha business. She has her ear to the ground via a spy network among the miners, bribing them with perks and rewards for turning on their fellow workers.

### OLÍVIE SIKOROVÁ

De facto leader of the unofficial workers’ union in the Asha Trading Co., Olívie grew up in the Company. She understands well that her people are little more than indentured servants, considered expendable. She hides a brilliant mind behind a facade of righteous anger, riling up workers secretly in the depths of the mines. She waits only for an opportunity to create a better future for her people and cares little from where such an opportunity may originate.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

***Anti-capitalist (Low Tier).*** Heroes are made an offer: all the gold they want in exchange for putting down a miner’s strike and keeping them in line. By the laws of Asha Trading Co., the strikes are illegal—but does morality end with the law?

***Possession is Nine-Tenths (Mid Tier).*** A supernatural force is sweeping through the workers of Asha Trading Co., briefly possessing them to act in strange ways. The force has worked its way up the hierarchy to take control



over one of the cruel Asha family, but do they deserve to be saved?

***Nothing is Beneath Me (Epic Tier).*** A secret plan of the Asha family is revealed: a massive diamond drill to dig beneath Beacon and take control of the source of paragite. But if the drill makes its way under Beacon, the foundation of the city itself could be demolished!

## COLLEGIUM BEACARUS

The Collegium Beacarus is the center of learning in Beacon—specifically, the center of learning about *the* Beacon. The Beacon itself was left full of locked knowledge by the Titans, and those at the Collegium work to decipher this ancient lore. The most intelligent people in Beacon all likely studied at the Collegium, though not all of them have fond memories of it. The Collegium is very insular, and many are driven to frustration when they learn that knowledge only begets more questions.

**Motto:** “Blessed are the learned.”

**Beliefs:** Founded to study the mysteries and histories left within the Beacon itself, the Collegium has evolved into a quasi-religious organization. Deeper knowledge of the Beacon tends to lead to only more mysteries, and a cult-like way of thinking has emerged: to study is divine, to become the knowledge itself, and to ascend towards the Ring of Virtue. Many among the Collegium have become zealous with their knowledge, hoarding it as if sharing it would dilute its value. However, those in control of the Collegium maintain that knowledge should be shared, and have survived countless attempts on their lives by those who disagree.

**Goals:** To understand the history of Beacon and Ghaistala, as well as the powers hidden away by the Titans eons ago.

### NOTABLE MEMBERS

#### IMKO PIENAAR

Scholar Primus of the Collegium Beacarus. He is the foremost scholar for the Titans and the

Beacon itself, having devoted most of his eighty years to their study. He is difficult to meet, but he is known to share secrets with any student devoted enough to track him down.

### ADVENTURE HOOKS

***Brain Drain (Low Tier).*** Knowledge from the deep archives of Beacon has been appearing in the shops of local booksellers. The Collegium is desperate to understand how this is happening and to reclaim the information before something secret slips out.

***Those Who Came Before (Mid Tier).*** Little is publicly known about the civilization that inhabited Ghaistala before the fall of Paragon. But a strange-looking person has appeared just outside of Beacon, claiming to be a survivor of the old world who has travelled forward in time in search of a way to stop the Maddening. At the same time, a second figure claiming the same appeared in Paragon’s Peak. Each claims the other is a liar and an agent of the Maddening sent to infect the future. To find the truth, heroes may need to return to the past to find answers that could save their future.

***The History of the World, Part 1 (Epic Tier).*** The deepest secrets of Beacon have already been discovered, but they are kept secret by those in power. At least, that’s what those in power think. A lowly scribe has retranslated a common scroll, uncovering a new interpretation of the Beacon’s place in the universal cosmology. Dark forces about the Collegium are working against the scribe, who may not make it to tomorrow without help.

## THE COURT OF EMPTY NIGHT

It is in the nature of predators to seek solidarity and safety in numbers, and magical predators are no exception. The children of the darkness wish to be free to sup and dine as they please on the unsuspecting portaleers of Lowcity. Increasingly the night is filled with fools of the light, and the creatures of darkness are not as safe as they would like to be. To that end, the Court of Empty Night was established, with the heads of the three most powerful lineages



establishing themselves as the leaders. Their plan? Topple the society of Beacon, and reduce humanity to scrounging herds of cattle.

**Motto:** “We are what goes bump in the night.”

**Beliefs:** We must abase humanity, and send them back to the dark ages. There are only two things humanity is good for: food and sport. With matters that would reveal our organization, the more discretion and secrecy the better.

**Goals:** The goals of the Court are simple: return humanity to its “natural” state of livestock, discourage any would-be heroes in Lowcity, and accumulate enough power while still remaining an urban legend in the minds of the citizens.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### COUNT ABRAMOVICH

A centuries-old vampire and one of the most powerful spellcasters in Beacon, the Count is the brains behind the Court of Empty Night. The Count views the “children of the light” as nothing more than fruit flies, things to be killed at his leisure. Imagine his surprise when he arrived home one dark and stormy night to find nearly all of his brood brutally wiped out by the children of the light. It was the Count who reached out to the other families, and it was the Count who finagled and schemed his way to the head of the Court of Empty Night.

### THE ALPHA

When the three moons of Ghaistala do not hang in the night sky, the Alpha is simply Dracon Alphasis, an inexplicably wealthy warehouse manager. However, when the lunar orbs shine, Dracon transforms into a ravaging beast of terrifying proportions. It was previously thought that Dracon had no memory of his time as the Alpha, but it has since been revealed that not only is he in control of the beast’s rampages, he enjoys the slaughter that comes with them. Many heroes have tried, and all of them have failed, to bring down the Alpha. Swords, fist, and spell all bounce off the pelt of this beast while their wielder eventually falls to the blows and bites of the Alpha. If Dracon wanted to, he could take over the Court of Empty Night by force, or so he believes. Arrogance, it seems, is Dracon’s weakness.

### HEROES INTERFECTOR

*“It just... walked out of the mists one day. Nothing’s come out of there for half a millenia and it just... strolled out. And death came with it.”*

—the eye witness to the Hero Killer’s first arrival

Heroes InterfeCTOR, or as it's more commonly known, the Hero Killer, is a late arrival to the Court of Empty Night, yet it remains one of the most powerful and mysterious members. The only ones who know its true name are those who whisper it in their prayers for

**“THE COURT...IT EXISTS AND DOES NOT EXIST, LIVES AND DIES. IT IS GONE WITH THE SUN AND ARRIVES WITH THE MOON. IT IS AS IF IT WERE A LIVING THING...”**

**- UGABA TROKA,  
DRAGONBORN SEER**



"YOU KNOW A GARDENER, YOU  
KNOW THE ROAD OF LIFE."

- BEACONITE SAYING



deliverance or who shriek it in their final terrifying moments. Strangely enough, the Hero Killer never seems to target normal folk, only hunting down and slaying any would-be heroes in Lowcity. This has obviously garnered it its nickname: the Hero Killer.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

***A Night of Fright (Low Tier).*** Rumors have been circulating lately around the Wicked Harlequin. A vampire has been taking up residence in the storage yard of the Alphas Warehouse. What will the party do when sent to investigate, only to find a werewolf, not a vampire stalking the yard?

***Wolf in Sheep's Clothing (Mid Tier).*** A strange man comes to the party, begging for help to rescind a curse that causes him to lose control under the full moons, transforming into a terrifying nightmare of a beast. Unbeknownst to the party, the man is not who he claims to be and a deadly trap awaits them.

***The Hero's Graveyard (Epic Tier).*** Another bright light of Beacon extinguished, torn limb from limb by some otherworldly beast. In an effort to bring peace to his widow, the party is conscripted to retrieve his body from the Heroes Graveyard, a mist-filled cave underneath Beacon.

## GARDENERS' UNION

The Gardeners' Union is a place where all who love things green go to meet, discuss, and learn from others. Brought together due to their love of gardening and parks, these jovial folks work to manage, clean, and proliferate all levels of Beacon with flora from across Ghaistala and the cosmos. Whether it is the flowering jussle root in the sand parks of Argentum Square, the Liliktryv dybbletrak plant in hanging baskets along Banlam Boulevard, or the jumping toadstools that often meander through Paragon's Peak—these are all the closely nurtured work of the Gardeners' Union. And, given the multidimensional individuals who live within Beacon and the wide variety of unusual interplanar seeds that deposit all over the city, some plants just up and wander.



**Motto:** “Life is one garden.”

**Beliefs:** We are nurturing and loving, focusing on growth and development both of the people of Beacon and her parks and gardens. Everyone should have a garden, it helps connect one with the world. Growth is important; clean away the dead leaves and buds, and water the new ones. We must make our city beautiful.

**Goals:** The Gardeners’ Union is meant to be a place where all lovers of gardening come together to unite and share their love of green and growing things with the rest of the megacity. With goals to build gardens in every level and district of Beacon, as well as to promote gardening and herbology courses across the city, the Gardeners’ Union strives to bring the love of planting to all.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### XODR

The GU is unofficially led by a treant named Xodr, who resembles a large banyan tree. She is friendly and warm, willing to teach. Others include Scuthyr Dex, the world-known succulent expert, or Leyla Wimble, the resident herbalist. Many gardeners wander the grounds and halls.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Plants vs. Heroes (Low Tier).** Gardens across the city are being defaced, and now horrific Nul-mutated plants are bursting forth! Snapping at and entrapping any unsuspecting wanderers, these dangerous weeds are too volatile for the Gardeners’ Union—their poor morning waterer has been gone for hours!

**Armored Arbor (Mid Tier).** A sprawling tree has sprung up overnight over Serenity—all of Serenity. This peaceful district is now caught under the shadows of a colossal tree, its bark hard as stone and its leaves razor-sharp. Some claim the tree to be a protective force, and others claim they feel magic within its core. The Gardeners’ Union is far more suspicious than most about its origins and intent.

**The Necroculturist (Epic Tier).** The undead are roaming the streets of Beacon—and

they smell amazing. These floral shambling corpses, bearing all manner of deadly blooms in brooding displays of color, are overtaking every neighborhood and business district. With nearly every graveyard upturned, Beacon is in a panic. What necroculturist has all of Beacon’s deceased under their green thumb?!

## GUILD OF EXPLORATION AND RECONNAISSANCE (GEAR)

The Guild of Exploration and Reconnaissance, or GEAR, was one of the oldest institutions founded in Beacon. Its early explorers mapped the surrounding regions, seeking any safe harbor outside the city and cataloguing any unknown threats. Years later, Ghaistala still has many unknown secrets and those with a lust for adventure often join GEAR for the thrill of the unknown.

**Motto:** 『可能性の世界。』 (“Many worlds of possibility.”)

**Beliefs:** Science is the ultimate shaper of reality. Everything has rules and can be bound by order, including magic. Ghaistala is a unique and challenging environment, but it can be understood and tamed through the work of skilled individuals.

**Goals:** To explore the furthest reaches of Ghaistala and understand its workings. To find the portals to the other worlds in the Ring of Virtue and control their immeasurable power. To truly understand how the multiversal portals to Beacon work, and how and why they originated.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### MÓNICA BATISTA

Head of the Guild of Exploration and Advanced Reconnaissance (GEAR). A short and fiery woman, she is a determined seeker of truth in the multiverse. Woe unto anyone who stands between her and her ambitions.





KAIJU ATTACKS AREN'T TERRIBLY COMMON, BUT ANY YOUNG HERO HOPES TO BE TAKEN ALONG WHEN THE ALARM IS SOUNDED AND THE PORTALEERS HEAD OFF.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Strange Adventures (Low Tier).** A mysterious flying person arrives in Beacon claiming to be from beyond the stars with dire warnings of imminent global doom. It does not take long for GEAR to debunk their claims, but the truth of this person reveals frightening hidden truths about the stars above Ghaistala.

**Mirror World (Mid Tier).** GEAR operatives have been tracking a strange section of the Mirrored Wetlands, where things keep disappearing—including a scouting team. Investigating heroes find more than they bargained for when it turns out an unknown multiversal portal beneath the calm water leads to a parallel dimension where everything is backwards!

**Portal Hoppers (Epic Tier).** GEAR has picked up a signal coming from a site they've long suspected to hold a portal to one of Ghaistala's sister planets. It's an exceedingly dangerous journey, which is why the site has gone unclaimed—but the power levels there indicate that something has activated the portal.

It's impossible to know if it is friend or foe, but something is entering Ghaistala with the power to crack a continent in half.

## HEROES GUILD

The Heroes Guild works to coordinate heroes with Beacon's government. This legitimizes the heroes and provides them certain benefits such as pay and backup. However, it also comes with a requirement: that heroes arrive when called upon as a super-militia to defend Beacon.

**Motto:** "Et nos unum sumus." ("We are one.")

**Beliefs:** Right makes might. True good and true evil exist and for civilization to exist, evil must be stopped. Those who would oppose evil are obligated to do so, thus fulfilling their function in a healthy society.

**Goals:** To defend the people of Beacon, but particularly the heroes of Beacon. The Heroes Guild works as a sort of collective bargaining organization to keep the balance between Beacon's powered and unpowered individuals, especially at the governmental level.



## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### BRAZEN BULLET

This costumed hero wears a skintight suit of impenetrable armor. They made a name for themselves busting up gangs in Lowcity with a trademark brash attitude, and eventually took a leadership position in the Heroes Guild. Ten years later, they're the lead representative for heroes among Beacon's government. They have maintained their harsh demeanor, using it to muscle their way into getting what they want, but secretly they're tired of being angry and want nothing more than to retire. If only they had someone they could trust to continue the fight.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Adventure Awaits! (Low Tier).** Welcome to Beacon! As a registered powered individual, please report to the Heroes Guild for your initial assessment and assignment. They're just over the hill—look out! Creatures are bursting from the falling meteors hitting the city!

**It's All Political (Mid Tier).** The call has come in, and heroes registered with the Guild must answer—but what if the call is a bit more complicated? In an unprecedented move, the Guild has ordered the assassination of the Dreamweaver, whose mental manipulations threaten to tear Beacon itself apart.

**Call to Glory (High Tier).** The ocean cracks as a massive beast begins walking out of the Klachton Ocean towards Beacon. The Heroes Guild is mobilized to contain the threat! But when it is revealed that the monster was drawn by a signal within the city, who can be trusted?

## THE LAMPLIGHTERS

The Lamplighters are public servants and an everyday sight for the residents of Beacon. Well-trained and well-organized,

Lamplighters work in groups called flames, composed of five members all with varied skills and backgrounds.

Lamplighter flames are composed of a loremaster, chaplain, interpreter, medic, and buster. The loremaster is traditionally the leader of the flame; a trained historian, archeologist, and anthropologist versed in the history of Beacon and its various peoples, districts, and neighborhoods. The chaplain is an expert in the numerous religions filling the megacity, while the interpreter is a powerful polyglot and cultural aficionado. The medic is there in case folks need healing or medical assistance. The buster is muscle just in case.

All Lamplighter flames belong to one of the Hearths, or guardhouses, within each district and report to their Keepers, or commanders, of the guardhouse. Each Hearth has a board of five Keepers, each with similar roles as their Lamplighter flames. From among the Keepers, a Torch is chosen to represent the entire level's Hearths to the Beacon Consul.

**Motto:** "We are as lamps in the darkness, lighting the way for others."

**Beliefs:** We act as a flame, not as an individual. The community is our charge, and we act as they need us to. Never turn your back on your Hearth or your Keepers.

**Goals:** The purpose of the Lamplighters is simple; patrol Beacon and help where they can. This can be tracking down old cold cases that need reinvestigating, collecting late tithes or rents, assisting with small community projects, or hunting down escaped criminals. The Lamplighters are at the sole disposal of the people of Beacon.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### KEEPER SOLZIN TYVR

A young copper dragon who spends most of their time wandering the city in their dwarven form, Solzin Tyvr came to Beacon after their nest was destroyed in a purge by elves on their world. Solzin was drawn to the Lamplighters



as they sensed a presence of true community devotion. In fact, Solzin is the oldest Keeper of the Lamplighters, and while their appearance is youthful, the dragon is nearly three thousand years old.

## VOLRICK THUND

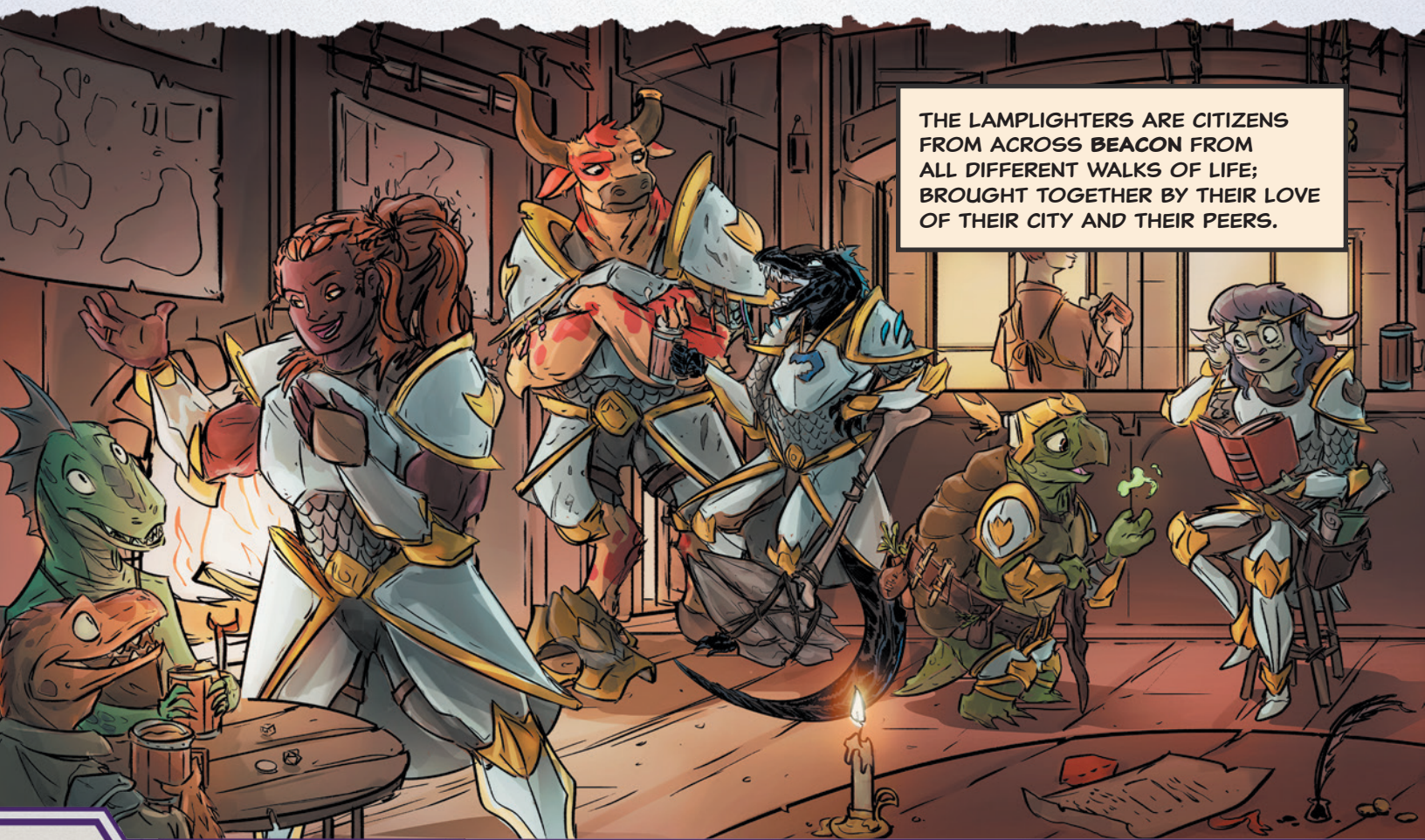
A proud member of the Serenity Hearth, Interpreter Volrick Thund and his husband Stevek Thund act as the defacto leaders of Flame #21 within Serenity. Known for often having sweets and toys for children as well as drinks and food for adults, the cheery tiefling has made himself well-loved across the level and has often been rumored to be a favorite to run for senator.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Collection Services (Low Tier).** The Lamplighters need to traverse into a dangerous part of Beacon to collect some late rent payments, but they're short a few hands. They ask the heroes to act as escorts for what should be a simple enforcement. But things are rarely, if ever, straightforward—why is this whole district late on their rent?

**Out of Time (Mid Tier).** A nearly 50-year-old cold case is suddenly reopened when a string of murders sends Serenity into an uproar. The victims? All burgeoning heroes with powers related to time. The MO? All of the victims have been left with something that cannot be found anymore—a book out of print, an extinct plant, something lost to time—and a smashed pocket watch that is frozen at their time of death. After failing to solve this 50 years ago, the Lamplighters have no new leads and beg the heroes for help.

**Shadowed Light (Epic Tier).** A strange whisper begins to traverse Beacon's darkest corners, though no one knows where it began. "Quench the lamp. Smother the lamp. Choke the lamp." It seems as if the Lamplighters are under attack; Beacon is on high alert. Unbeknownst to the heroes as they prepare to defend the Lamplighters, it is not a threat, it is a *warning*. Solzin Tyvr has been replaced by a duplicate, and this simulacrum has the entirety of the Lamplighters at his command. If the duplicate is not discovered and stopped, it is only a matter of time before the Lamplighters are a formidable regime of power and evil.





## LENSKEEPERS

Beacon's architecture has long been full of stained glass, created to reflect and refract the light of the Beacon itself. In the halls and homes of the rich and powerful, the windows witness the whispers of everything important in Ghaistala. Very often the Lenskeepers hear it too and pass it along to those who need to hear it. Originally created simply as a custodial service to clean and maintain the glass art around the city, the Lenskeepers have slowly evolved into an intelligence-gathering organization that works in the background to help the Portaleers and others working for the good of the city.

The Lenskeepers rely on anonymity, appearing as humble janitors, window washers, and craftspeople charged with keeping the city gleaming. They are beneath the notice of those on whom they spy. In order to maintain the secrecy necessary for their organization to survive and function, they follow strict rules for communication, working only through intermediaries and covert means to relay information. Very often a hero or lamplighter does not even know from whom came the tip they needed to solve a case. They just find an envelope on the desk of their office with leads and evidence.

**Motto:** "We are the unseen eyes that watch the world."

**Beliefs:** Complete knowledge is ultimate power. Only by remaining independent and anonymous can we truly serve justice. Trust, but verify. Always watch and learn true character and intentions before working with anyone.

**Goals:** The Lenskeepers want to promote stability and justice. They do that by monitoring the activities of those who wield power, and pass valuable information to those who can act to prevent injustice. They are especially interested in limiting the amount of power any one individual or group can command in Beacon. Just as with the production of a stained glass window, they believe that balance in the composition is paramount.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### SAMUEL "SAM" HODGES

Samuel "Sam" Hodges is the leader of the Lenskeepers. He is a retirement-age Fresnel House janitor who specializes in maintaining the stained glass windows. Though he has worked there longer than many of the officials that occupy the offices, no one takes special notice of Sam. He has maintained his secret trade by only ever communicating about sensitive information with Lenskeepers under his leadership and with the Mantle of Intellect. Only Scrutiny himself would have a more complete and accurate picture of the world-wide power dynamics in Ghaistalia than Sam.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**"Foreign" Policy (Low Tier).** A Senator from Argentum Square has been getting some traction with talks about bringing law and order to the Crater. The heroes are approached by a Lenskeeper with information that what the senator is really after is a powerful crystal discovered by the Scroungers.

**Power Corrupts (Mid Tier).** The heroes hear rumors of an extremely powerful magic weapon, but as they search for it enemies continuously block their way. They always seem to be a step ahead of the party.

**Unholy Knowledge (Epic Tier).** Scrutiny is missing. Sam Hodges himself comes to the heroes with intelligence that he has been kidnapped by a villain operating out of Lowcity. If Scrutiny's knowledge of the Portaleer's operations in the city falls into the wrong hands Beacon could be overrun.

## THE LOOKOUTS

The Lookouts, first formed when the Court of Empty Night made their nest in Lowcity, are a close-knit group of peacekeeping Agents with only loose ties to the government. Because of the inherent danger of operating in Lowcity, they are, for the most part, clandestine agents. Still, when civilians disappear in the dead of night and when demons walk the streets, the Lookouts are ready to lend a hand. They mostly





THERE ARE STORIES OF A LOOKOUT NAMED RASP, A MUMMY WHO WANDERS THE STREETS, TAKING MORE EXTREME MEASURES AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD VIOLATE BEACON'S PEACE. THEIR CALLING CARD: HUSK-LIKE CORPSES.

consist of low- to mid-tier heroes, although they are rumored to have some heavy hitters in their ranks.

**Motto:** "We are the ones who shed light in the dark corners of the world."

**Beliefs:** The common man must be protected from secrets they were not meant to know. Operate in the shadows, lest we be found and wiped out by the adversary. Open war would devastate Lowcity and spread to the rest of Beacon. Keep direct conflict to a minimum.

**Goals:** The Lookouts seek to defend and protect the vulnerable citizens of Lowcity from any supernatural threat. Their primary opponents are the Court of Empty Night, and they are constantly researching new ways to combat the ever increasing influence of the Court.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### DWELVER

A treasure hunter by day, Dwelver is the intel gatherer of the Lookouts and a frontman. Any communications with the Stranger go through Dwelver. He wields a plethora of magical items and artifacts in combat.

### WASTREL

A young orphaned haffling that Dwelver took in off of the streets of Lowcity, Wastrel was struck by an Arkwave, granting him superior speed and an active camouflage ability. Wastrel assists Dwelver in gathering information and disseminating it to the other Lookouts.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Relay Race (Low Tier).** Wastrel has been ambushed delivering a message from one Lookout to another. Now it falls to the party to keep up communication to the spread out organization while Wastrel heals.

**The Most Dangerous Game (Mid Tier).** A particularly dangerous member of the Court of Empty Night seeks to move their operations to Argentium Square. Stop them by any means necessary.

**Blackest Night Falls (Epic Tier).** Permanent darkness falls over Beacon. The Portaleers are incapacitated by powerful dark magic. Vampires, werewolves, and fiends run free on the streets. This is the nightmare scenario.

## THE SCROUNGERS

A scrappy society of survivalists and tinkerers that use the carnage of the Crater to create their own way of life, the Scroungers comb the super-powered wreckage littering the Crater after epic battles. They use anything and everything they find to craft innovative new items, structures, vehicles, you name it. Whatever item you've got, the Scroungers have one made one from junk. Theirs probably works better than yours, but yours probably won't randomly explode.

Anyone unhinged enough to fit in with the Scroungers is welcome. Those of smaller stature have particularly useful skills. Neutral



monstrous creatures even have a special place, like the xorn that sniffs out treasure among the rubble. The Scroungers are one big happy family; it's just that their version of 'happy' looks a lot like chaos. Thanks to their reputation, they rarely need to fight. If you mess with one Scrounger, you'll have to deal with the entire crew. Life in the Crater means danger no longer phases them. They all share a dark sense of humor about supers and enjoy actively betting on which hero or villain is the next to bite the dust when fights break out.

Thanks to the magical visions of their emissary, they are always prepared for the Portaleers' arrival at the Crater. The entire village's looming stacked metal buildings are rigged to mechanically and magically retract into the Crater at a moment's notice. While the Portaleers take on Ghaistala's latest threat, the Scroungers have a front row seat to the action and wait patiently to pick up the scraps.

**Motto:** "Finders keepers, losers dead!"

**Beliefs:** We never start the fight, we wait for the fight to finish. Let nothing go to waste, especially a life. Worth is a measure of usefulness, not gold.

**Goals:** Recover and claim everything in the Crater, regardless of perceived monetary value. Invent new defensive measures to protect ourselves from supers.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### GRANGNO AND GRAMKO

Village elders and great-great-great-grandparents to the gnome-kobold family who handles most of the tinkering and engineering. Each of their progeny is born from a gemstone egg innately knowing the message cantrip. From an outsider's perspective, these 'gnobolds' appear to be under the control of some sinister hive mind, never speaking, only cackling as they complete daunting tasks with unnerving synchronicity. In actuality, they are just really great at teamwork and brainstorming, constantly talking and joking around in their minds.

### THE RETIRED HERO

A former heroic super who ended his first and only battle in the Crater with a bang! His superpower is off-the-charts dangerous and extremely unstable when activated. He somehow survived the explosion—the only survivor. The Scroungers discovered him and nursed him back to health. He stayed with them, his new family, vowing to never to return to Beacon. The Crater is the only thing keeping the city safe from him.

### THE EMISSARY

Crystal spheres orbiting her body, scrap metal shield guardian at her side, the Emissary handles all Scrounger business outside the Crater. With her many scrying sensors and her divination wizardry, she knows exactly who's arriving and what they ate for breakfast. Constant scouting of potential future disasters in every potential future is time consuming, so the Emissary has zero patience for smooth talkers trying to pull one over on the Scroungers.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

### *Where Did You Have It Last? (Low Tier).*

After the party's first major combat in the Crater, one hero's vital magic item is missing. They must return to the Crater to recover it before the Scroungers lay claim to this prized possession.

*The Instigator (Mid Tier).* A prolonged period of peace means no new scrap for the Scrounger tinkerers to play with. A rogue gnobold of the family left the Crater to instigate fights between heroes and villains in Beacon.

*Jackpot! (High Tier).* A superpowered science experiment crash landed in the Crater and could not be recovered. That technology in the inventive hands of the Scroungers could elevate them to an unprecedented threat level. Go recover it by any means necessary.



# THE SHATTERED SONS

A group of anti-authoritarian supers who shun the path of legality, members of the Shattered Sons have been burned before by the long and terrible arm of the state and now swear to never let government overreach harm another again. They see the various petty crimes of minor supervillains to be merely byproducts of the negligence of the government, as they seek to further their lot in life rather than provide any systemic improvements to the lot of the common folk. Their main area of operations is the Argentum Square, home to many corrupt businessmen and government folk alike.

**Motto:** “While one of us suffers, we all do.”

**Beliefs:** We bow to no one. Those who sit in power will inevitably seek to abuse that power to their own ends. It is our job to foster a culture that holds those in power accountable for the atrocities they commit.

**Goals:** The Shattered Sons seek to be the counterweight to the growing power of the government, especially as so many heroes begin to ally themselves with it.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### THE MARQUIS

The leader of the Shattered Sons, and one of the many victims of those who sit in power, the Marquis has forsaken his civilian identity in order to dedicate his life to fighting authoritarianism. The Marquis commands a powerful force called the Retaliation, which allows him to control heat and fire, as well as granting him enormous bursts of physical prowess.

### GRINDSTONE

The second in command and muscle of the Shattered Sons, Grindstone began life as a mild mannered barista in a hole-in-the-wall Argentum coffee shop, before a magically charged attack changed her life forever. As the square exploded around her, she felt the magic attach itself to her form, altering it to become

stronger and more durable. After witnessing the zeal and glee with which the Argentum bankers threw her and the other employees aside, refusing to pay just compensation or medical bills, she aligned herself with the Shattered Sons in an effort to bring justice to those that would disregard the lives of the innocent for personal gain.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Breakout (Low Tier).** The city erupts into chaos as a rogue super rampages in Argentum Square. The super claims to be the product of some sort of shady government experiment, who was stolen and granted powers with the hopes of controlling them.

**On the Run (Mid Tier).** A Lamplighter shows up on the doorstep of the Shattered Sons secret base. His squad was asked to abduct a Beacon citizen, and upon refusal, all but himself was killed.

**Whispers of Dread (Epic Tier).** A play is made against the Shattered Sons. An ambush against their base. They're trapped like rats, only able to hear the steady trickle of footsteps as sleeper agents surround their bunker. Rescue them, before the mind controlled supers break down the last resistance of Beacon.

## SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NORMALCY AND DECENCY

Not everyone in Beacon has powers. Not everyone who has powers in Beacon wants them. There are those who believe that the key to a happy Beacon is to rid the city of supers and their powers altogether and seek to lead normal, decent lives instead. Promoting this way of life is ostensibly the reason the SPND exists, and low-level “normies” spend their time attending meetings, reading books, and writing pamphlets to that aim.

But beneath the veil there is more at stake for the SPND. There is an alternate history of how Beacon came to be. Some believe that the



“Maddening” was trying to free Ghaistalia from the tyrannical grip of the Titans and that the Portaleers are only puppets of evil forces trying to keep Ghaistala enslaved. The top leadership of the SPND are seeking not merely to promote “unpowered” culture, but also to eradicate all those who possess superpowers and to rewrite history with the Titans as the villains and the Maddening as the hero.

**Motto:** “We have everything we need.”

**Beliefs:** “Honest” labor without powers is the superior way of life. Supers do more damage than good. If everyone laid down the use of powers, we wouldn’t even need heroes. [Secret belief] If we don’t eradicate supers, then the Null will return and all will be lost.

**Goals:** Rank-and-file members just use the Society as a platform for venting frustrations with superhero activity and their associated collateral damage. The organization’s real goal (and the use to which leaders put the membership dues) is the large-scale eradication of powered individuals.


## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### MALACH MOORERUSH

Malach is the face of the SPND, and spends time in public forums (often standing before the mural in Argentum Square) eloquently casting visions of an idyllic future without powers and debating about the cost/benefit of allowing heroes to operate. The halfling Malach is very convincing to those who are already predisposed to agree with him.


### HAGARD THORNHEART

Hagard is a half-elven assassin with strong illusory magic that they have had since adolescence. They have been recruited by Malach and other high-ranking members of the SPND to strategically hunt down and eliminate heroes in order to further the aims of the organization. Though they possess powers and use them, they despise supers. They view the use of powers as the cause of a great personal tragedy.



THE DAY OF TOLMOK'S AWAKENING CAUSE CHAOS THROUGHOUT THE SPND, ONE OF THEIR YOUNGEST AND MOST HOPEFUL MEMBERS FALLING FROM GRACE.





THE STILTGUARDS ARE SIMPLE FOLKS; NEIGHBORS, MECHANICS, WORKERS, ENGINEERS, DOCTORS - ALWAYS THINKING OF THEIR MANTRA: "LIFT THE DEBRIS, LIFT LOWCITY."

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

### ***There's Something in the Water (Low Tier).***

A large supply of paragite has gone missing and some low-level supers have been showing signs of its powersapping effects. The trail leads to the SPDN.

***A Battle of Wits (Mid Tier).*** Malach Moorerush is out to prove that the world doesn't need supers. He's sponsoring an all-comers tournament in which ordinary folk can battle it out with heroes and villains—provided they all agree not to use powers.

***Rumble in the Jungle (Epic Tier).*** Primeval is dead. Rumor is that an assassin got the drop on them and now the race is on to find the killer and bring them to justice before another Portaleer falls. A mysterious note found in one of the heroes' pockets says "Thornheart."

## THE STILTGUARDS (GANGLERS)

The Stiltguards are a relief and repair agency within Lowcity, having built impressive clockwork and steam mechanized stilt-suits to patrol the various heights and districts of Lowcity. The majority of the Stiltguards are

volunteer workers with only a few full-timers who come out to fix up and clear away debris from super conflicts, factory explosions, or storms. Led by a half-elf named Ryta Zoryt, the Stiltguards are always on patrol, ensuring that some form of order is kept alive in the chaos that is Lowcity. Rarely do you see one of the Stiltguards in other levels of Beacon, but often children in Serenity or Argentum Square try to sneak down to the walls of Lowcity to see them walking about.

**Motto:** "Lift the debris, lift Lowcity."

**Beliefs:** The Stiltguards are utilitarian, simple, and straight-forward in their thinking, proving that you do not need to be from some high-and-mighty academy to know how to help your community. We are organized from volunteers, and therefore, our service is to the common folk. The stilts are only as good as the pilot. Never forget we are here to help and serve.

**Goals:** The Stiltguards have been less than impressed with the efficiency of the Lamplighters for helping clean up from fights in Lowcity, especially with the heightened number of supers active in the other levels and their lack of presence in Lowcity. The Stiltguards are just there to help their friends and families, not handle supers.



## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### RYTA ZORYT

Ryta Zoryt is the stern commander of the Stiltguards, and does her best to run a tight and organized crew. A half-elf of almost eighty years old, Ryta has helped many relief missions across Lowcity, as well as in different levels of Beacon. Aided by her second-in-command Anders Rigglin—a hotheaded young tiefling ex-wrestler—Ryta keeps the Ganglers in line and focused on their relief and aid missions around Lowcity.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Someone's Been Busy (Low Tier).** A spree of vandalism and arson has spread the Ganglers out too thin. They don't have time to clean it all up, let alone figure out who's got it out for this section of Lowcity. What've they got against mining?

**Among the Wreckage (Mid Tier).** A Gangler has gone missing, and their supplies have been found mangled in a factory scrapyard. It was made to look like an accident—this stuff happens all the time to Ganglers, right? No. Ryta knows this was no accident, and she's hellbent on figuring out who kidnapped or killed one of her own.

**One Man's Trash (Epic Tier).** One of the Ganglers has been hoarding magi-tech found during clean-up; posing as an innocent Stiltguards gets them access to the best stuff. They get away with it for a few months before they unearth a portal generator, and they've finally figured it out, hoping to summon powerful beasts through the rift—epic heroes are needed to stop this thing from tearing Beacon apart!

## TENEBRIGNIS (THE WISPERS)

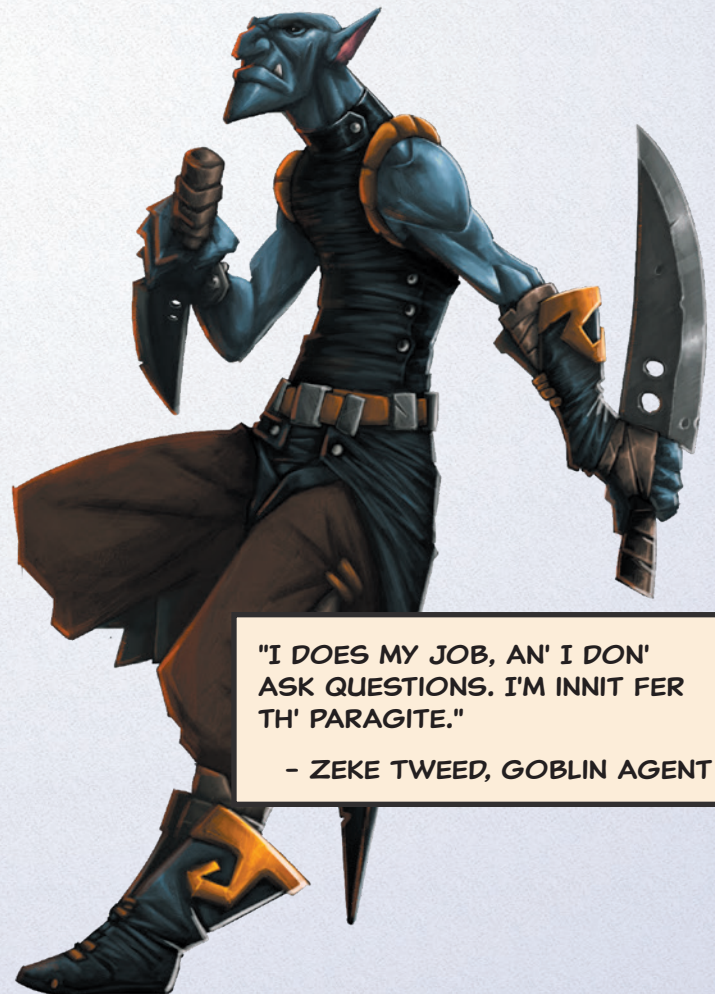
Tenebrignis is a secretive organization with some sort of tie to Beacon's government. Their agents, known as Wispers, are almost entirely unknown. Their operations are heavily classified, but rumors persist linking

Tenebrignis to everything from monsters run amok to illegal super-experiments. Some insist that Tenebrignis is the real power in Beacon while others believe it to only be a rogue cell of scientists and magicians. The truth is likely buried too deep to ever be revealed.

**Motto:** "In Lux Tenebris." ("In the light, darkness.")

**Beliefs:** The wild energies of Ghaistala can be controlled. There are secrets on this planet that would devastate the common people which must never come to light. Where there the hidden secrets burn at civilization's kindling, we will snuff the flame.

**Goals:** The goals of Tenebrignis are difficult to pin down. To those who have dared to look, it seems as though one part of Tenebrignis may be so out of step with another as to be in direct opposition. Is it mismanagement, rogue operatives, or is some deeper game being played? All anyone can agree on is that when it comes to Beacon's deepest secrets, Tenebrignis is always nearby.



"I DOES MY JOB, AN' I DON'  
ASK QUESTIONS. I'M INNIT FER  
TH' PARAGITE."

- ZEKE TWEED, GOBLIN AGENT



## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### EVENING LIGHT CRESTING OVER THE HORIZON

More colloquially known as Horizon, this shadowy individual is somehow related to the secret aspects of Beacon's governance, Tenebrignis. Very little personal information is known about this individual, and some suspect they may be more than one person—but they seem to always appear when the government's secrets need to be kept.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Task Force Ten (Mid Tier).** An unusual string of villain attacks have shaken Lowcity. The villains seem to have a unique and detailed knowledge of their targets, and they keep disappearing without a trace. The underworld is abuzz with a single rumor: that Tenebrignis is using the villains to do their dirty work.

**And Then There Were None (Mid Tier).** Heroes have begun to disappear into unmarked black vehicles across Beacon. Tenebrignis reaches out to help find them—but can they be trusted to be telling the truth?

**The Shadow Archive (High Tier).** A routine villain bust has led to an amazing discovery: a secret vault constructed in the heart of Paragon's Peak. Before Tenebrignis is able to lock the area down, the discovering heroes make a chilling discovery: pods containing identical duplicates of themselves.

## TREESTRIDERS

Based in Hearthfire in the Darnan Forest, the Treestridders maintain the ecological stability of the forest and its surrounding areas. An independent organization, the Treestridders are generally perceived as peaceful and necessary, but some unfortunate poachers that have found themselves at the end of a Treestrider's arrow would disagree. While the organization's

goals are certainly noble, their members work independently and often conduct their business in whatever manner they see fit.

**Motto:** "Ghaistala provides."

**Beliefs:** Ghaistala is a magical place, capable of providing for a great many people.

However, the balance is delicate—taking too much could result in irrevocable ecological devastation. The Nul Wastes are proof of the damage that can be caused, and the Darnan Forest shall not suffer the same fate no matter the cost.

**Goals:** The Treestridders protect the Darnan Forest and its ecosystem at any cost. As a neutral and independent organization, they are often consulted on ecological initiatives, but just as often their opinions are heard later when they violently shut down operations they believe go too far.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

### TREESTRIDER KURISU NAIZEN

Leader of the Treestridders, those responsible for scouting and maintaining the Darnan Forest to ensure ecological stability. Kurisu is resentful of Beacon's influence over Hearthfire and seems to have a mysterious connection to the Darnan forest that goes beyond simple knowledge.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires (Low Tier).** An arsonist has been tearing apart Darnan Forest. The Treestridders need help—especially once they discover the culprit is one of their own.

**Darnan's Secret Heart (Mid Tier).** Every Treestrider in the Darnan Forest, in unison, has turned towards a central point of the forest and begun an ominous melodic hum. To save them, heroes have to venture into the deepest parts of the first and learn the devastating secret at the heart of the Treestrider's initiation rituals.



# CHAPTER 8

# NOTABLE PEOPLE

The metropolis of Beacon is filled to the brim with interesting people. Many are supers themselves, with heroism in their hearts or the depravity of villains. Use this chapter when you need an interesting ally, quest-giver, or antagonist to flesh out the world.

## BEEFCAKE

This sculpted marbled steak of a man was the original golem prototype by a young XX, the Sciencelich. Created entirely out of cuts of steak, Beefcake required too much upkeep to maintain. The scientist quickly moved on to inorganic materials, but this specimen was too perfect to discard. He was frozen flexing his multitude of muscles and placed on display at the Soarreal Museum. Over many years, the exhibit grew to be a highlight for art aficionados—who nicknamed him Beefcake—and many toured the museum just to gaze upon his beautiful beefy body.

One day, the golem began to thaw. No one knows for certain why, but one theory suggests errant heat waves from a brash upstart villain in the area, while another proposes that Beefcake was activated by his creator for some unknown, nefarious purpose.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR BEEFCAKE

Beefcake uses the **flesh golem** stat block with these additions:

- **Damage Immunities.** fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine.
- **Aversion to Cold.** If Beefcake takes cold damage, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of his next turn.
- **Fire Absorption.** Whenever Beefcake is subjected to fire damage, he takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.

## MOTIVATION

Beefcake now stampedes through the streets, causing distraction and destruction. He seems to enjoy compliments about his meaty body, but the flattery turns frightening when Beefcake goes berserk. There is no pattern to his actions, leaving his motives up for speculation. Is he looking for his creator? Is he looking for love? Is he looking for a pair of pants? Nobody knows.

## PERSONALITY

After decades frozen in a museum watching others watch him, Beefcake is experiencing life for the first time. It can be scary, and Beefcake's



emotions tend to overwhelm him, especially anger—but when he’s not smashing, he takes great pleasures in the simple things in life.

Most of all, however, Beefcake is afraid of anything cold. He dreads being frozen and trapped in his own body again; a harmless ice cream cone is as terrifying to him as a sinister ice spell.

## RISING THREAT STORY HOOKS

Subpar villains grow more dangerous the longer they are left unchecked.

- **A Chilly Appetizer.** Beefcake is rampaging through the Exalted Gardens of Serenity after the first snowfall. (Low Level)
- **Broiled, Not Fried.** The Bellows Academy of Metallurgy needs help removing a trespasser from the campus. Beefcake is relaxing in a vat of molten metal and refuses to leave. (Mid Level)
- **Dinnertime Tantrum.** Distress calls from an Hearthfire outpost! Beefcake walked all the way there because it sounded like a warm place. It wasn’t. Beefcake is tired and frustrated and needs something to smash. Send help! (High Level)
- **Four-Course Escape.** Beefcake teams up with another subpar villain to smash up the Resolute Reddoubt. His partner is nice and makes Beefcake feel warm—Beefcake will crush anything to make his new partner happy. (Epic Level)

## BLORP

One day, enough acidic gunk built up in the sewer system and formed a cube. This cube, through a freak accident, gained sentience and magical abilities. It had one thought on its mind: consume.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR BLORP

Blorp uses the **gelatinous cube** stat block with these modifications:

- Its alignment is chaotic evil.
- Its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma each increase to 10 (+0).
- **Skills** Intimidation +2
- **Languages** Common
- **Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** Blorp’s innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 10). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *mage hand, shield*

1/day each: *hold person, teleport*

## PERSONALITY

Blorp, a gelatinous cube, is an eldritch entity that only wishes to consume Beacon and its inhabitants. Thus, it tends to be a very antisocial creature, and on the rare occasion Blorp is in the mood to converse, it does so begrudgingly. Blorp can be convinced to speak by offering it an amount of organic material roughly the size of two humanoids—but it would rather just eat everything, including those offering the food.

## MOTIVATION

Blorp’s only motivation is the consumption of life. It has had to be crafty to survive in a city like Beacon. While it doesn’t have allies, it understands the use of other evil beings and it uses them as it sees fit.

## VILLAINOUS STORY HOOKS

- **Sinister Slime.** People have been going missing near the sewer entrances. The only clue to their location is a slimy, acidic trail leading deep into the sewer system.
- **All You Can Eat!** Blorp has emerged from the sewers! It has begun feasting



on the people of Beacon and is doing an expert job of it.

- **Gelatinous Goon.** Blorp has allied itself with a powerful benefactor. Someone is willingly feeding Blorp the populace of Beacon, and only the heroes can find out who is offering the buffet.

## BRUÚK GRÜNRACK

Bruúk Grünrack is a dwarven prince who left home to experience an adventure or two before being stuck upon a throne. He traveled his home world for many years before encountering an interdimensional portal and stepping through into the city of Beacon. Bruúk plans to return to his native world someday, but for now, he's content to explore and experience this exciting new place.

After encountering the arkwaves on Ghaistala, his charisma and loyalty have manifested extraordinary qualities. He's also befriended a baby **owlbear**, an owlbear with these changes: its size is Small, its Strength is 13 (+1), and its speed is 30 feet. It has 26 (4d6 + 12) hit points. The little one is named Terror, and it follows Bruúk everywhere.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR BRUÚK GRÜNRACK

Bruúk is a **noble**, with these changes:

- Bruúk is neutral good.
- Bruúk's Strength is 16 (+3) and his Charisma is 18 (+4).
- Instead of a rapier, Bruúk wields a spear.
- He has these racial traits: His walking speed is 25 feet. He has advantage on saving throws against poison and resistance to poison damage. He has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. He speaks Common and Dwarvish.
- Creatures within 10 feet of Bruúk can sense his emotions and motives,

along with the radiant optimism in his heart. Friendly creatures within range gain a +2 bonus to AC and can't be frightened while they are conscious.

### MOTIVATION

The young dwarven prince is very happy and loves to make new friends. But if anyone should hurt his allies, he stops at nothing to protect them. Bruúk is proud and brave to a fault and would walk up to introduce himself to a dragon if he thinks he can make a friend.

### QUEST-GIVER STORY HOOKS

- **A Kind Face.** People tend to confide in Bruúk. He's discovered a plot to assassinate a senator and rushes to tell you.
- **Time to Go Home.** After discovering from a recent arrival that his parents have both died, Bruúk feels it's time to return to his home world and assume the throne. The only problem is that the portal that ushered him to Ghaistala has disappeared. Can you help him find another that will send him home?



BRUÚK GRÜNRACK



# CAPTAIN JETSAM "JET" PASSERIDAE

Captain Jet appears to be an elf in sea captain's clothing, black eyepatch and all. They own the Paradise Falcon, an expertly crafted airship that's been converted into a floating tavern. If you're willing to listen to their tale over a meal, Captain Jet explains how their airship had just delivered a city's complement of refugees when the ship was caught in a wild storm. They and their crewmates were thrown off course, and an interdimensional portal swallowed them up, ship and all. The next thing they knew, the ship was hovering over Beacon with the sun shining and nary a breeze in the sail.

Beacon didn't have much use for an airship. Ferrying people from level to level didn't have the same thrill as the transcontinental flights Captain Jet ran on their homeworld. And the Asha Trading Co. and Hearthfire were only interested in cargo haulers. For a time, Captain Jet didn't know what to do.



CAPTAIN JETSAM "JET" PASSERIDAE

## MODIFICATIONS FOR CAPTAIN JET

Captain Jetsam Passeridae is a **spy** with the following changes:

- Jet is chaotic good.
- Jet's Intelligence is 18, her Wisdom is 17, and her Charisma is 18.
- Jet speaks Common, Draconic, and Elvish.
- Jet has the Telekinetic Fling feature. They choose a Small or smaller object that isn't being worn or carried that they can see within 60 feet of them, and they magically hurl the object at a creature they can see within 60 feet of the object. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage.

## MOTIVATION

Captain Jet found new purpose for their crew, their boat, and themselves when they outfitted the airship for unforgettable dining experiences instead of just passage from here to there. They still get to meet interesting people from all over the multiverse, take them aboard their ship, and give them a ride—and a meal—that patrons don't soon forget.

One secret the captain won't tell even their faithful crew is that they are really an ancient sapphire dragon stuck in a humanoid body, and they're over 1,000 years old. How they lost their transformative powers is a mystery, even to them.

## CREWMATES

- Rain on Leaves is a catfolk **mage** and first mate to Captain Jet. Patrons can sometimes spot Rain's familiar, a fey flying lemur named Dr. Ferris Buttons, Esq., gliding through the tavern.
- Ozar is a **lizardfolk** who worships dragons. If only they knew the identity of their ship captain!
- Solario Sartor is a **noble** turned tavern bookkeeper and accountant. He unmistakably has a touch of angelic ancestry.





COUNT ABRAMOVICH

## QUEST-GIVER STORY HOOKS

- **Find My Old Crewmate.** Captain Jet lost a cook and crewmate when Ozar went missing. She fears an old enemy of theirs made it through the portal to Beacon.
- **True to Form.** Captain Jet has finally decided she wants to find a way to revert to her true form. She's willing to hire heroes to find another sapphire dragon who might be able to help.

## COUNT ABRAMOVICH

It is rumored that the Count first crawled his way out of the muck and mire of the ruined planet shortly after Paragon's Toll, a cruel amalgamation of concentrated evil and

leftover energy from the Toll. The rumors go on to say how Count Abramovich is really a shard of Nul that developed its own sentience and grew a body.

Of course, if one were to ask the Count about these rumors, he would fastidiously dismiss them as pure fiction. He insists that he merely stumbled out of an interdimensional portal one day, and all his efforts thus far have been about returning to his native plane of existence. Then again, he doesn't seem to be in any hurry getting back—and as the Court of Empty Night can attest, doesn't plan on leaving any time soon.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR COUNT ABRAMOVICH

Count Abramovich uses the **vampire** spellcaster stat block with these additions:

- **Flight.** Count Abramovich has a flight speed of 40 feet.
- **Spellcasting.** The Count's spellcasting trait is modified to replace the original spells with the following:
  - Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *poison spray*, *vicious mockery* (as a bonus action)
  - 1st level (4 slots): *absorb elements*, *bane*, *hellish rebuke*
  - 2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *misty step*, *hold person*
  - 3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *bestow curse*, *counterspell*
  - 4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *dimension door*, *greater invisibility*
  - 5th level (2 slots): *geas*, *wall of force*, *scrying*
- **Scorched Sun.** Count Abramovich carries *Scorched Sun*, a +2 shortsword. While in possession of this sword, he deals an extra 2d4 radiant damage on all his attacks and he loses his Sunlight Hypersensitivity trait.
- **Parry (Reaction).** Count Abramovich adds 5 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, the Count must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon. He must be wielding *Scorched Sun* to use this feature.



## PERSONALITY

If one didn't know that the Count is a centuries-old vampire crime lord, one would think he was downright charming. Many heroes find themselves face-to-face not with a vicious monster from beyond the grave, but with a kindly silver fox with a delightful taste for sweet tea, biscuits, and small talk. Of course, they find later that this gentleman also has an acquired taste for gullible heroes.

## MOTIVATION

The Count is old—far older than nearly anyone else in Beacon. He still remembers a time when the mortal races were terrified of the dark, a time when his people were free to feast on them to their blackened heart's content. He seeks to revert the world to this state, with himself on top. At the core of the Count's motives lies a desire to reclaim something that is deeply important to him. No one knows what it is the Count so desperately desires, and it's rumored that the Count doesn't quite know either.

## THREE EVIL PLOT STORY HOOKS

- ***Thralls of the Night.*** Low-powered superheroes have been disappearing off the streets of Lowcity with alarming frequency. Finally, one of the heroes turns up, in the dead of night and as pale as the moon—a vampire. Find out who is turning these heroes to the side of evil and stop them.
- ***So-larceny!*** The Staff of the Forgotten Sun has gone missing from an Argentum Square museum. The only clues as to the culprit is one security guard who is dead by exsanguination and another who is locked in a permanent trance. While the suspect is obvious, the motivation is unknown. Why would a vampire need a staff powered by the soul of a solar?
- ***The Marquis and the Count.*** Chaos has erupted on the streets of Lowcity, as the Shattered Sons descend upon the Court's

territory. The reason for this intrusion? The Marquis has been captured by the Court of Empty Night, and the Shattered Sons believe that the Count aims to steal the Marquis's radiant powers. Get to the bottom of this kidnapping.

## ROSTER OF MINIONS

### SECOND IN COMMAND: THE SLAYER

The Slayer was once the greatest vampire hunter that ever lived, his exploits regaled throughout the centuries as the hunter that brought the once mighty vampire empire to its knees. This isn't the case, however. During the climactic fight between the Slayer and Count Abramovich, the Slayer was struck by a debilitating spell and defeated. He spent the next 15 years as a prisoner of Count Abramovich, who eventually broke the poor orc's mind. Now the Slayer serves as the faithful attack thrall of the Court, the Count now wielding the Slayer's weapon of light as a symbol of his ultimate dominion.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR THE SLAYER

The Slayer uses any **assassin** stat block with these additions:

- ***Slayer's Blade.*** The Slayer possesses the *Blade of Unmatched Sorrow*, a +1 *greatsword* with the *finesse* property. He cannot attack with this weapon unless he first uses his *Blade of Unmatched Sorrow* feature.
- ***Blade of Unmatched Sorrow (1/Day).*** When reduced to 0 hit points, as a reaction, the Slayer regains a certain measure of his former self. He instead drops to 1 hit point, gains 38 (7d10) temporary hit points, loses his *shortsword* and *light crossbow* actions, and can attack with his +1 *greatsword*. Additionally, he can take either the *Dash* or *Dodge* action as a bonus action.



## HENCHMEN: VAMPIRE WHELPS

These vampires have just recently been turned, and only partially, granting the Count a greater measure of control over them. They exist in a hellish state of constant pain and suffering, and they follow the Count's orders in the hopes that he will either fully convert them to vampirism or finally release them from their unending agony.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR THE VAMPIRE WHELPS

The Vampire Whelps use any CR 1 or lower humanoid stat block with these additions:

- **Curse of the Sun.** The vampire whelp has vulnerability to radiant damage.
- **Vampiric Hardiness.** The vampire whelp has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

## LEGENDARY VILLAINY

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Count has the following legendary action.

**Sun Bolt.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. Hit: 10 (3d6) radiant damage. The Count must be holding Scorched Sun to use this legendary action.

### LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Count takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The Count can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- Screams echo throughout the lair as the souls of the Count's victims rise. Each creature of the Count's choice must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained until the start of their next turn.
- Black fire fills the room. Each creature of the Count's choice must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage, or half as much damage on a success.
- The Count summons 1d4 vampire whelps (CR 1/4).

## REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region surrounding the Count's territory seems to be corrupted by his very evil, which creatures one or more of the following effects:

- Stray dogs, rats, and cats become more aggressive and agitated within a 2-mile radius of the Count's presence. These animals attack small children and any other creature they deem too weak to fight back.
- The night overtakes the area within a 1-mile radius of the Count's territory. The day is 1d4 hours shorter, dawning later and dusking earlier. The length of any spell that creates magical darkness has twice the normal duration.
- Worms and cockroaches overtake any food or drink left unattended in a 1-mile radius of the Count's territory.

## DOORS

Ander Kobb was once a pale changeling living on the world of Rhol. Like so many others after them, Ander stepped through an interdimensional portal to the world of Ghaistala. Unlike the others, they were one of the first to arrive after Paragon's Toll, and before the portal between his world and Ghaistala was fixed and stable.

Ander began to plane hop between his own world and Ghaistala with regularity, carrying goods to trade on either side. It just so happens, they were on their way through the portal when the first recorded arkwaves hit Ghaistala. The energies banded together, causing Ander's body to change and giving them insight into why Beacon is so alluring to many across the multiverse.

After their transformation, Ander took nearly three hundred years to land back in Beacon, its cityscape built out and the topography and populace drastically changed. Some could say not all of Ander, now called Doors, made it back through the portal. If time had moved while they were away, they hadn't felt it. They did know



one thing though: this once beautiful landscape had been destroyed. Abused and misused by its inhabitants, Ghaistala was crying out and must have brought them here to help it.

Doors tried again and again to use the portals to return to an earlier time. But to no avail.... As time passed, they learned of their powers: their understanding of the portals was ingrained in them as if innate. But still they could not conjure a portal to take them back through time, and strangely they could not use any that Ghaistala itself provided. To get anywhere new, they would have to make their own doors.

## PERSONALITY

Doors's personality is as changing as the portals of Beacon. They can be amused and light-hearted one instant and furious the next. If there is one constant, it's that Doors is single-minded about their goal.

## MOTIVATION

Doors wants to restore Beacon to its primeval state. They are convinced that the way to do this is to cut off Ghaistala from all other worlds. Perhaps that would unleash interdimensional energies that would allow them to travel back to their time, a time when the world was new. Barring that, Doors wants to be the one who decides who can stay in Beacon and who must be turned back at the gates.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR DOORS

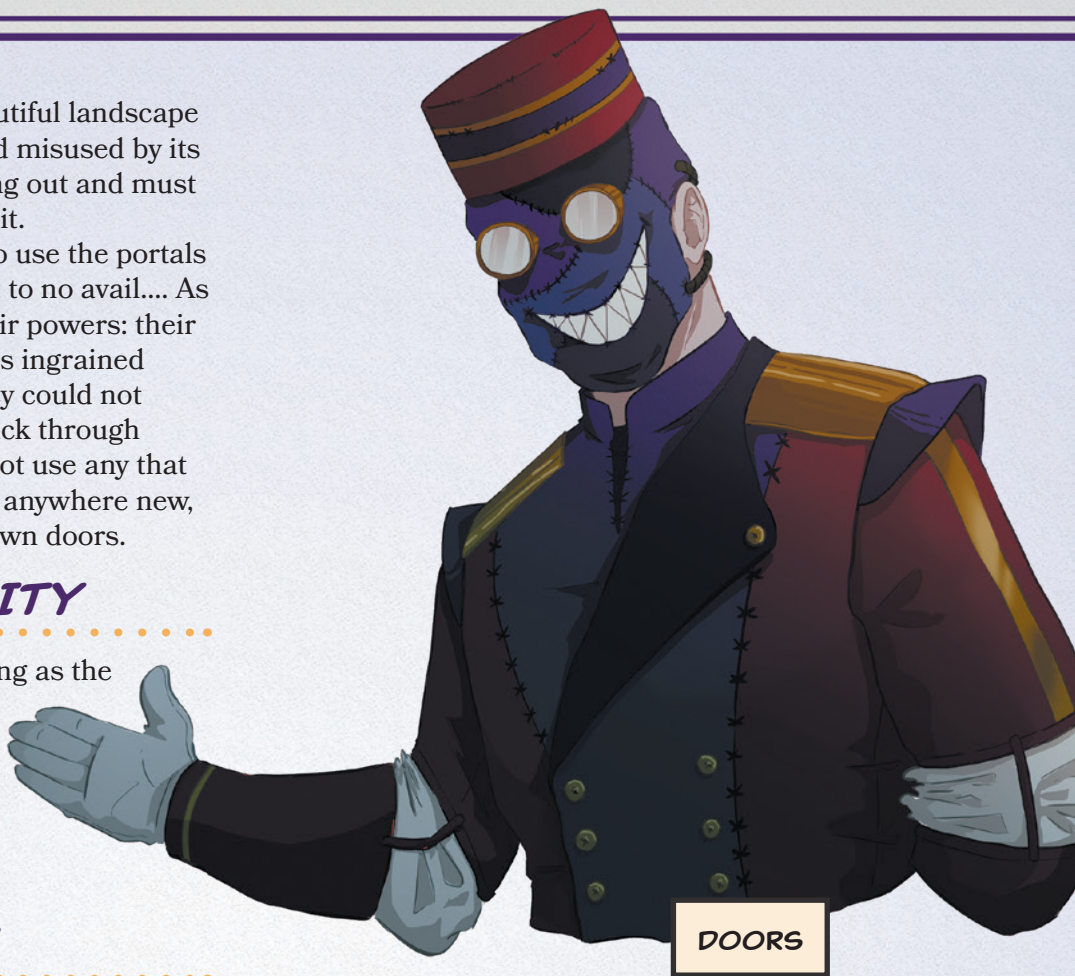
Doors uses the **assassin** stat block with these additions:

- **Innate Spellcasting.** Doors's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence. They can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *misty step*

3/day: *dimension door*

- **Banish.** Doors can attempt to send one creature that they can see within range to another plane of existence (Doors's choice).



The target must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or be banished.

The target remains there for 24 hours or for as long as Doors maintains concentration on this spell-like effect, whichever is longer, at which point the target reappears in the space it left or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied.

## RISING THREAT STORY HOOKS

Subpar villains grow more dangerous the longer they are left unchecked.

- **Not Up for Reelection.** In the middle of a speech, a Beacon politician disappears into thin air! (He reappears a day later.) Doors takes the stage and outlines their worldview to the horrified crowd. (Mid Level)
- **Entry Denied.** Doors shows up at Portal Plaza and begins forcibly closing interdimensional portals, sometimes just as



a person is stepping through, severing them in half! (High Level)

- **Point of No Return.** Doors teams up with another villain! But Doors is beginning to have second thoughts about the company they're keeping and their ally's methods. (Epic Level)

## THE EDGECTIONER

Atop the clouds overlooking Ghaistala, higher than even the top of Paragon's Peak, the Law vigilantly watches. The Law is a divine constant that prosecutes crimes that are not illegal. Supervillains blatantly break the rules and draw the attention of heroes, but when selfish politicians and industrialists write the rules, their victims have no one to blame.

Some heroes wishing to right wrongs feel the need for justice—others, vengeance. In the glaring eyes of the two celestial beings who call themselves “The Law,” justice and vengeance are one and the same. If no one is above the Law, can the Law ever be trusted?

A **gynosphinx** seer in her Clouded Eye Courthouse lair sees any creature committing an unseen crime. The victims may not even know they were wronged, but the Law knows. She never leaves her lair, remaining ever vigilant. She is the Prosecutor of the Law.

The moment a crime against the Law unfolds, the creature perpetrating the crime becomes the Accused. An extremist and lawful **solar**, armed to the teeth descends from the clouds to indict the Accused. An armory of great weapons hover at his side, bandolers of bolts for his *slaying heavy crossbow* cascade down his impossibly muscular body like angelic ribbons, and his intimidating wings of dagger feathers create a deadly court for the Accused to stand trial. He is the Judge, Jury, and Executioner of the Law.

The gynosphinx and solar have no actual names. They both refer to themselves and each other as “We,” which is short for “We are The Law.” After years of brutal, public killings, citizens of Beacon know the solar only as the Edgectitioner.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR THE EDGECTIONER

The Edgectitioner uses the **solar** stat block with these additions:

- Replace the slaying longbow attack with the following: **Slaying Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* + 13 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 27 (6d8) radiant damage. If the target is a creature that has 100 hit points or fewer, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or die.
- **Motive Damage.** The Edgectitioner's weapon attacks can deal slashing, piercing, or bludgeoning damage (its choice). The amount of damage remains the same.

## PERSONALITY

The Edgectitioner wields a different weapon, depending on the type of crime he is punishing:

- **Greatsword.** The crime was premeditated.
- **Greataxe.** The crime was done in the passion of the moment.
- **Maul.** The crime was unintentional.

Every interaction the Edgectitioner has with an Accused is exactly the same. A blade barrier isolates the Accused while the solar recites the tenants of The Law:

“We are The Law. None are above us. We prosecute unseen crimes with unaware victims. No leniency. The only sentence ordered shall be death. (name of Accused). You are charged with (name of crimes). How do you plead?”

(Guilty).

“Very well.”

(Execution)

(Not Guilty).

“Very well. You shall now stand trial by combat.”

(Roll initiative)

The Edgectitioner never intervenes to prevent a crime. If heroes are attempting to apprehend an Accused when the Edgectitioner arrives, he observes and waits for combat to end before making his approach. If the Accused was killed in combat, the Edgectitioner uses his Healing



Touch feature to bring them back to life in order to stand trial.

Whether they agree with the Edgecutioner's extreme form of justice, heroes on the scene are thanked for doing their duty to uphold the Law. If any hero demonstrates a respect for his methods, the Edgecutioner gifts a dagger feather capable of brilliant radiance. A hero that repeatedly acts in accordance with the Law by showing no leniency could be extended an invitation to the Clouded Eye Courthouse.

The only other way into the lair of the Law is through an appeal. If someone killed by the Edgecutioner is brought back to life, that person receives a celestial scroll summons to appear at the Clouded Eye Courthouse to stand trial in front of a jury of their peers. This defendant may choose anyone to act as their defender in this trial by combat. The jury is composed of randomly selected citizens of beacon who are transformed into priests wearing regalia of the Law.

## MOTIVATION

The Law is a constant of all realities, or so "We" believe. Once someone stands Accused, they are guilty until proven innocent by defeating the solar in combat. Unlike most laws, there are no varying degrees of crimes or punishments.

Crimes with clear victims are the jurisdiction of heroes and the Lampkeepers. Corrupted souls freely causing harm because it's not prohibited are the jurisdiction of the Law. Heroes and the Fresnel House justice system often work harder to only apprehend villains, hoping to reform them. The Edgecutioner has no time for hope.

These morally corrupt acts that cause seemingly nice people to be Accused usually find their way into the public eye after the trial. For this reason, the Edgecutioner is especially feared by the politicians of Argentum Square.

## VILLAINOUS STORY HOOKS

- **Quid Pro Quo.** The heroes return from a quest to witness their quest giver—a high-ranking Fresnel House official—being

obliterated by the Edgecutioner. The official has measures in place to resurrect himself from the dead, thus invoking an appeal. The official receives a summons to the Clouded Eye Courthouse and chooses the heroes as their defenders.

- **Amicus Curiae.** An ally is revealed to be Lampkeeper Veda undercover using her Change Shape ability. She makes a hard sell to a single party member to join her at the lair of the Law.
- **De Facto Indictment.** Reports of the Edgecutioner rapidly multiply. Each new victim is found innocent of any evil acts. A divination wizard confirms that these citizens are being judged for crimes they would have committed in the future.

## ROSTER OF MINIONS

### SECOND IN COMMAND: LAMPKEEPER VEDA

Villians in the streets of Lowcity know not to mess with Lampkeeper Veda. She's tougher than any other tiefling and meaner than every other lampkeeper. Make one step out of line and she will kill you, raise you from the dead, and kill you again. Now it's even worse—she's undercover. Don't trust anyone.

Veda is the first lampkeeper to uphold the Law well enough to be invited to Clouded Eye Courthouse. There she was given a portion of the Law's divine power and tasked with keeping the Law on the streets of Beacon. She wears one of the Edgecutioner's dagger feathers on her lampkeeper uniform like a badge of honor. She is the Bailiff of the Law.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR LAMPKEEPER VEDA

Lampkeeper Veda is a tiefling. She uses the **deva** stat block with these additions:

- **Damage Resistances** fire
- **Innate Spellcasting.** Lampkeeper Veda knows the *thaumaturgy* cantrip. In addition, she can cast the *darkness* and *hellish rebuke* spells each once per day.



## HENCHMEN: NONE

Vigilante pretenders often invoke the Edgectitioner as a validation for their own bloodlust. They always end up Accused.

## LEGENDARY VILLAINY

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Edgectitioner has the following additional legendary action.

- **Perjury Curse.** The Edgectitioner curses a creature that has lied in the last minute. The creature has disadvantage on saving throws until the start of the Edgectitioner's turn.

## LAIR: CLOUDED EYE COURTHOUSE

This ancient temple of justice hidden in the clouds is accessible only by direct invitation from The Law (see appendix B). The severe courthouse interior is a stark contrast to the billowing air concealing the lair. From the Extreme Court, the gynosphinx obsessively spies on the citizens of Beacon, hunting every detail of a crime far beyond a reasonable doubt.

### LAIR ACTIONS

Heroes in the Clouded Eye Courthouse are regarded as colleagues, even if the heroes oppose the Law or are aggressive toward the gynosphinx or the solar. In such cases, the gynosphinx engages in ethical discourse, using lair actions to gain the upper hand.

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the gynosphinx takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- The gynosphinx posits a moral dilemma question with two possible answers. The heroes are under the effects of slow until everyone has answered. Heroes that do not choose one of the two answers must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or the effects are permanent until it is ended by a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell.
- The gynosphinx shows each hero a vision of everyone who has ever committed a crime against them without their knowledge. Heroes must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma

saving throw to willingly remove this knowledge from their memory.

- The gynosphinx shifts itself and up to seven creatures it can see within its lair anywhere on Ghaistala to a point in time within 10 years, past or future (the gynosphinx's choice). Once outside its lair, the sphinx can't use lair actions, but it can return to its lair as a bonus action on its turn, taking up to seven creatures with it.

## "ED" JORINO

Edronic-Mefreet Jorino, "Ed" for short, grew up in the lowest part of Lowcity. He clawed his way to power, learning how to control through manipulation along the way. At a young age, Ed founded a small gang, the Green Dragon Gang, with fellow Lowcity dwellers—and through this gang, he created his empire. While some say he conspired with devils and demons to get ahead others rumor that he himself is a green dragon and he named the organization after himself. Whatever the truth, Ed Jorino and the Green Dragons always come out on top.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR ED JORINO

Ed Jorino uses the **bandit captain** stat block with these modifications:

- His alignment is lawful evil.
- His size is Small.
- **Hit Points** 55 (10d6 + 20)
- **Skills** Deception +4, History +4, Insight +2, Intimidation +4, Performance +4, Persuasion +4
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.
- **Languages** Common, Draconic, Elvish
- **Improved Critical.** Ed Jorino scores a critical hit on a roll of 18, 19, or 20.
- **Pack Tactics.** Ed Jorino has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### PERSONALITY

Ed Jorino is a friend to all... if they are willing to serve him. While polite and matter-of-fact, he is the archetypal mob boss—an expert manipulator with friends in both high and low



places. Like the archetypal kobold, Ed focuses on trapping heroes, but his traps involve threats and blackmail rather than crude inventions and brute force. However, he does not hesitate to use brutality—or get someone to use brutality for him—if he feels that he or his organization is threatened, though prefers it to not come to that. If too many voices are silenced by the Green Dragons, Ed fears someone might feel the need to end the organization—something he does not want.

## MOTIVATION

Ed Jorino craves control and feels that he and he alone should be in charge of Beacon. Whether through official means or unofficial channels, Ed Jorino believes that he and his organization are good for the city.

## VILLAINOUS STORY HOOKS

- **Empty Warehouses.** The Green Dragons have bought several warehouses throughout the city and are using them to hold... nothing. There are no records of what is being stored inside and the warehouses are heavily



ED JORINO

guarded by mercenaries employed by the gang. These warehouses were previously owned by a businessperson named Blat Markinson, who provoked Ed Jorino. In an act of revenge, the Jorino family used the Green Dragons to put Markinson out of business to prove their control over the city.

- **Murder in Lowcity!** Several members of a rival criminal organization have been outed and put down by the Green Dragons. Witnesses report Ed Jorino personally attending these crimes—but, as usual, he has a perfect alibi.
- **Execute the Plan.** It is rumored that the Green Dragons are planning a heist. Against whom? No one knows—but it is happening soon, and it will be big.

## SECOND IN COMMAND: FAX JORINO

Ed Jorino's adopted daughter Fax is a former human who, after suffering from an illness, had her mind and soul transferred into a construct. Despite her harsh appearance, Fax is a surprisingly jovial person and delights herself in the wonders of the business management world. She is in charge of the various goings-on among the Green Dragons and makes sure she knows every member by name—as well as all of their loved ones and acquaintances. If a member of the organization steps out of line, she typically punishes them with a sudden death in the family.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR FAX JORINO

Fax Jorino uses the **animated armor** stat block with these additions:

- Her alignment is lawful evil.
- Her Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma each increase to 14 (+2).
- **Languages** Common, Draconic, Elvish
- **Pack Tactics.** Fax Jorino has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of her allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.



## THE TWINS

Ed Jorino's twin half-kobold, half-elven kids play a very specific part in the Green Dragons. While Fax handles the operations of the gang, the twins work as a team answering only to their father. Elricio Jorino's strengths are in bribing, threatening, and otherwise controlling the upper crust of society, while Jekrel Jorino follows up on Elricio's threats with literal strength—cleverly keeping victims alive while breaking body parts.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR ELRICIO JORINO

Elricio Jorino uses the **spy** stat block with these additions:

- **Skills** Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Performance +5, Persuasion +5
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.
- **Languages** Common, Draconic, Elvish
- **Fey Ancestry.** Elricio Jorino has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.
- **Pack Tactics.** Elricio Jorino has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR JEKREL JORINO

Jekrel Jorino uses the **spy** stat block with these additions:

- Her Strength increases to 15 (+2)
- **Skills** Athletics +4, Intimidation +5, Performance +5, Persuasion +5
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.
- **Languages** Common, Draconic, Elvish
- **Fey Ancestry.** Jekrel Jorino has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.
- **Pack Tactics.** Jekrel Jorino has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of her allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

## HENCHPERSONS: THE DRAGONS

No specific people are recruited as members of the Green Dragons. Rather, the criminal organization has a diverse roster. All members are known as Dragons, even if there is nothing draconic about them.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR THE DRAGONS

The Green Dragon members use any CR 1/2 or lower humanoid stat block with these additions:

- **Pack Tactics.** The Green Dragon member has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of their allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

## IDYLLIA

Idyllia slipped through the portals of Beacon long before the city rose, yet she still remembers the watery utopia of her homeworld and her connection to every living being blissfully swimming together in harmony. Now in a city built from fragments of countless worlds, she is heartbroken by the many lives she's touched. For every one super that fulfills their greatest potential, there are a hundred more that dreamed big but never even took a chance to achieve their goals.

As time moved on, the dreams of those unremarkable souls were lost to history, but Idyllia remembers everything. Worse, she feels everything: every doubt, every insecurity, every moment of self-defeat.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR IDYLLIA

Idyllia uses the **aboleth** stat block with these additions:

- **Psychic Sate.** Idyllia's Psychic Drain legendary action causes charmed creatures to regain temporary hit points equal to twice the damage the creature takes. The creature is emboldened with the belief that their greatest desire is just within their grasp.
- **Supportive.** Idyllia can cast guidance at will.
- **Spokesperson.** As an action, Idyllia can create a humanoid-hybrid watery illusioned





IDYLLIA

image of herself within 1 mile of the lair. The copy can appear at any location Idyllia has seen before or in any location a creature charmed by Idyllia can currently see. Once created, the image lasts for as long as Idyllia maintains concentration, as if concentrating on a spell. The image is tangible and feels like water. It looks, sounds, and moves like a Medium humanoid-aboleth hybrid. Idyllia can sense, speak, and use telepathy from the image's position as if present at that position. If the image takes any damage, it reacts as if injured, drawing the ire of all nearby Imparted.

## PERSONALITY

Does any villain truly think themselves evil? Aside from the little detail of dominating countless minds and removing their free will, Idyllia is very good. She is pleasant and positive, using her powers to bring people joy and boost

their community—she never kills anyone under her control. The aboleth mind control abilities are so innate that she sees absolutely nothing wrong with using them on anyone. Her unique gifts let her know a heart's desire and remove a mind's negativity, allowing everyone she touches to chase their dreams with newfound passion.

Idyllia never manipulates anyone to do anything against their own will. Even those who think her methods are evil are met with open tentacles for a big hug. She believes her natural charm is more powerful than her enchantment powers. Since she is so used to doing the thinking for everyone in her life, she lives in an echo chamber with no one to tell her the error of her ways.

Idyllia goes for a swim in the ocean every dawn. It is the only time each day that she isn't surrounded by her Imparted, the citizens of the Trieye Co-Op.

## MOTIVATION

Idyllia wants everyone to achieve their dream—if they won't do it themselves, she's going to have to do it for them. To that end, she founded the Trieye Co-Op in one of the most dilapidated ports in Lowcity. Her mission is to invite new residents into the community, inspire them to greatness, and teach them to improve their lives.

Through her tireless optimism—and aberrant telepathic control—the Trieye Co-Op is now flourishing. And expanding....

## THREE VILLAINOUS PLOT STORY HOOKS

- **A Brand-New Benefactor.** A high-ranking member of the Artisan's Affairs Bureau in Serenity recently joined the Trieye Co-Op. The bureau's resources are being diverted into Lowcity to expand Idyllia's lair.
- **Splash Park Extravaganza!** The Trieye Co-Op expanded to the north and a handful of gnobolds are now Imparted. Idyllia has the inventive crafters building an intricate system of water tunnel slides throughout



Lowcity for her citizens to enjoy. Idyllia also uses the tunnels to quickly navigate the city and expand her lair's reach.

- **Suspiciously Sudden Redemption Arc.** The Wicked Harlequin casino in Titetown no longer offers gambling games, and its seedy clientele has cleaned up their act. Now all the games are fun and give out tickets to be exchanged for prizes—and everybody wins! Powerful crime lords from all over Beacon that frequented the Wicked Harlequin are now Imparted and trying to turn over a new leaf. One crime lord escaped with their free will intact and needs help getting to the bottom of this development.

## ROSTER OF MINIONS

### SECOND IN COMMAND: SECOND CHANCE

A petty Lowcity criminal infamous for getting caught by supers. This could be any villain that the heroes previously encountered and defeated. Now guided by the wisdom of the Trieve Co-Op, their life and personality are completely reformed. They owe their life to Idyllia and would do anything to protect her and further her plans.

Second Chance is highly suspicious. If outsiders are visiting the Trieve Co-Op, Second Chance never leaves Idyllia's side.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR SECOND CHANCE

Second Chance uses any CR 5 or lower humanoid stat block with these additions:

- **Hopelessly Deluded.** Second Chance is charmed by Idyllia's Enslave action. If Second Chance succeeds on the saving throw to end the charmed effect as a result of taking damage, there is a 90% chance they become aggressive to their attacker, begging to go back under Idyllia's control.
- **Psychic Sanguinity.** Second Chance currently has half their maximum hit points. They have temporary hit points equal to double the amount missing.

## HENCHMEN: THE IMPARTED

Every resident of the Trieve Co-Op left their old life behind to embrace the three I's (Invite! Inspire! Improve!) after personally meeting Idyllia. They now work tirelessly and cheerfully to better themselves and the community.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR THE IMPARTED

The Imparted use any CR 2 or lower humanoid stat block with these additions:

- **Deluded.** The creature is charmed by Idyllia's Enslave action. If the Imparted succeeds on the saving throw to end the charmed effect as a result of taking damage, there is a 50% chance they will become aggressive to their attacker, begging to go back under Idyllia's control.
- **Psychic Sanguinity.** The creature currently has half their maximum hit points. They have temporary hit points equal to double the amount missing.

## LEGENDARY VILLAINY

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Idyllia has the following legendary action.

- **Psychic Sate.** Idyllia's Psychic Drain legendary action causes charmed creatures to regain temporary hit points equal to twice the damage the creature takes. The creature is emboldened with the belief that their greatest desire is just within their grasp.

### LAIR ACTIONS

When fighting inside her lair of the Trieve Co-Op, Idyllia can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the aboleth takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Idyllia simultaneously casts *guidance* and *bane* (no components required) on any number of creatures she can see within 60 feet of her. While maintaining concentration on these effects, the aboleth can't take other lair actions. If a target succeeds on



the saving throw of *bane*, it does not gain the effects of *guidance*. If a target succeeds on the saving throw or if the bane effect ends for it, the target is immune to this lair action for the next 24 hours, although such a creature can choose to be affected.

- Idyllia uses her Enslave action at extended range, within 5 feet of any creature she has charmed. Idyllia can't use this lair action again until she has used a different one.
- Water in Idyllia's lair magically becomes a conduit for the creature's relentless optimism. Idyllia can target any number of creatures she can see in such water within 90 feet of her. A target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or take 7 (2d6) psychic damage and gain double this amount as temporary hit points. Creatures with temporary hit points gained in this manner have disadvantage on saving throws versus being charmed. Idyllia can't use this lair action again until she has used a different one.

## REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing an aboleth's lair is warped by the creature's presence, which creates one or more of the following effects:

- The Trieve Co-Op constantly gains territory in Lowcity—buildings are freshly renovated and the area is heavily populated with Imparted. The Co-Op's borders creep slowly but surely outward toward the rest of Beacon, gaining more territory each day.
- Water sources within 1 mile of the lair are supernaturally flavored. Creatures not currently charmed by Idyllia that drink such water vomit within minutes of drinking water from any other source.

If Idyllia dies, the effects fade over the course of 3d10 days.

## THE JUDGE

The Judge is an intelligent troll who has worked for several crime organizations in Beacon, but currently finds himself employed by Ms Sharp,



the boss of a crime family that is growing so fast it even makes Ed Jorino nervous. The Judge's name comes from the phrase "judge, jury, and executioner" because he is quick and efficient in taking out anyone who betrays Ms Sharp or sells her secrets to rival gangs. He also works as a bodyguard for Ms Sharp and her immediate family members, should the need arise. But the Judge wasn't always this way.

The Judge was once an ordinary troll living among the foothills of the Protectorate Peaks. One day, he happened upon an awakened tree. For sport, he killed it. Because of his voracious appetite, he ate it. Doing so infused his mind with a keener intellect and his body with more robust regenerative powers. Tired of living among his own kind, he descended into Lowcity to sate his curiosity and make his fortune.



## PERSONALITY

The Judge is a snappy dresser. He likes to wear the latest fashions and finest threads, along with whatever hat is in vogue. He's also a gourmet, dining at the best restaurants and buying the most expensive spirits. When he's feeling down in the dumps, he still sometimes splurges on whatever street food he can find, whether it's from a street vendor or just trash he finds in a narrow alleyway. While fine wine and fancy dress are both status symbols, he enjoys them purely for their own sake too.

The Judge is taller than most trolls, but probably only because he stands up straight. And his deep voice has no hint of an accent. Despite appearances, the Judge is friendly and outgoing. A job's a job, so he performs savage acts of violence when necessary, but otherwise he's a laid back guy.

## MOTIVATION

The Judge enjoys his life full of the finer things in life. And he wants to keep living it. Anyone who threatens his employer threatens his livelihood, so he's happy to deal whatever violence the situation merits to keep his discretionary funds flowing.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR THE JUDGE

The Judge is a **troll**, with these changes:

- The Judge is lawful evil.
- The Judge has an Intelligence of 11 (+0).
- The Judge gains 20 hit points at the start of his turn, instead of 10.
- The Judge 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 the Judge that isn't incapacitated and the Judge doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.
- The Judge wields a rapier and hand crossbow.

## RISING THREAT STORY HOOKS

Subpar villains grow more dangerous the longer they are left unchecked.

- **Judge.** A tall man in a dark trench coat approaches you, saying Ms Smart would like an audience with you. You've caught her eye. When you look into his eyes, a green troll's face looks back at you. (Mid Level)
- **Jury.** The Judge is standing as a key witness in a high-profile crime trial in Argentum Square. But it turns out, appearing for a trial was just a way to get close to the prosecutor, whom Ms Smart has sent the Judge to murder. He plans on breaking out a few employees of Ms Smart's while he's at it. (High Level)
- **Executioner.** The rivalry between Ed Jorino and Ms Smart has become open warfare with supervillains fighting in the streets. The Judge wants things quiet again and approaches you about putting things the way they were before. (Epic Level)

## THE MUSE

The Muse is a superhero born and raised in Argentum Square who has the power to manipulate sound waves. With this arkwave-given gift, they can create vibrations and push objects with force.

Since the Muse was noble-born, they grew up with a mixture of resentment against and jealousy toward most of the world outside of their gilded cage. However, one day while traveling the city with their mother as a child, Muse found themselves separated from her. The Muse wandered from Serenity to Lowcity and saw suffering and felt fear they'd never experienced before. At last, a poor woman comforted Muse and kept them safe, and when the Lamplighter and Muse's mother found them, turned down all rewards offered. This moment inspired the Muse to help and inspire others.



## MOTIVATION

Above all, the Muse hopes to inspire others to do good. They want to embody the generous goodwill of the woman who found them that day they got lost all those years ago. The Muse would also like to one day find that kind woman to thank her for seeing a better path.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR THE MUSE

The Muse is a half-elf **noble** with the following changes:

- The Muse is neutral good. They have these racial traits: They have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep. They have darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. They speak Common and Elvish.
- The Muse is resistant to thunder damage and immune to the deafened condition.
- The Muse's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. They can innately cast the *thaumaturgy* cantrip at will, using only the booming voice option, and the *thunderwave* spell three times per day.
- As an action, the Muse targets a creature or unattended object within 30 feet of them. A creature must be Medium or smaller to be affected by this ability, and an object can weigh up to 150 pounds. If the target is a creature, the Muse makes a Charisma check contested by the target's Strength check. If the Muse wins the contest, they hurl the target up to 30 feet in any direction, including upward. If the target then comes into contact with a hard surface or heavy object, the target takes 1d6 damage per 10 feet moved. If the target is an object that isn't being worn or carried, the Muse hurls it up to 30 feet in any direction. The Muse can use the object as a ranged weapon, attacking one creature along the object's path (+4 to hit) and dealing 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage on a hit.
- When dealing thunder damage, the Muse deals double damage to objects and structures.



## ALLY STORY HOOKS

- The Muse has angered all the wrong people in their zeal to do the right thing, no matter the personal cost. The heroes notice hired assassins tailing the Muse as they make their way home to Argentum Square.
- The Muse has discovered the woman, now elderly, who helped them all those years ago. It turns out, she is none other than Ms Sharp, a mob boss! Help Muse navigate their painful emotions about this revelation and bring Ms Sharp to justice!

## OIJI

In a faraway world, there was a forgotten mountain with frosty villages among its peaks. There lived humans ruled by a family of oni, fierce creatures that demanded great tribute from their vassals. One of those oni was a four-armed, one-eyed prince named Oiji.

Under the rule of Oiji's grandfather Rusgar the Two Horn, their clan and bloodline were noble and great among all oni. However, Two





OIJI

Horn was not immortal, and a human priest rose to challenge his reign. Soon, village after village was freed from Two Horn's iron grip before the mere mortal struck Two Horn down.

With their leader ashamed and defeated, the oni retreated back to the top of the mountain, leaving the humans free from poverty and fear. Oiji, the runt of his father's children and calmer in heart and mind than his grandfather, championed the idea that oni work together with humans. Grombarg the Large of the Three Horn bloodline, Oiji's father, finally agreed and sent the first envoy to the human villages to negotiate peace and trade. Oiji was among them. But Grombarg's son never returned.

Oiji and the rest of the envoy encountered a portal and stepped through it to the world of Ghaistala, leaving behind all they knew.

Arriving in the dead of night in the middle of an enormous city, they immediately made for the Protectorate Peaks surrounding Beacon and built a small settlement there. Yet again, they find the need to ally themselves with the people below in order to ensure their survival.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR OIJI

Oiji is an **oni** with the following changes:

- Oiji is neutral good.
- His Strength is 21 (+5) and his Dexterity is 15 (+2).
- Oiji has resistance to bludgeoning and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.
- Instead of a glaive, he wields a magical kanabo, which gives its wielder a Strength of 21. **Kanabo. Melee Weapon Attack:** +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage in Small or Medium form.
- Oiji has four arms, so he makes four attacks: four with his claws, or two with his claws and one with his kanabo. He deals an extra 1d4 fire damage with each claw attack.

## MOTIVATION

Oiji knows he's travelled to a different place, but he doesn't yet know that it's a different world entirely. He feels responsible for the small band of oni who look to him as a leader, even while he is fascinated by the bustling city below. His followers are content to change shape when they make small forays into the outskirts of the city. But Oiji wants to reveal himself as he really is and see if he can't live among the Beaconites as one of them.

## ALLY STORY HOOKS

- **Who's That?** When the heroes are battling an open threat to Beacon, a young warrior with crimson skin, four arms, and one large eye joins them. Who is this mysterious fighter? And what does he want?
- **Where's My Son?** The grieving Grombarg the Large, in search of his son, also stepped through the portal. But with an army of oni to destroy whoever took his son from him.



## SCIN SCHEZAR

Scin Schezar has stayed hidden in plain sight in Beacon for many years by working as an ambitious defense lawyer and recently declaring a run for office as a senator. A charming tiefling, Scin has made friends in all areas of society, including the Portaleers of Paragon's Peak and the villains he has successfully defended in court. He hosts fundraisers and galas regularly at his home in Argentum Square.

Scin is an incubus that has no ties to a master; his only interest is in his own goals. He has been careful to ensure that no one knows his true nature and hasn't changed his form in many years. He corrupts both his clients and "conquests" over time and has sent many souls to the Lower Planes. A couple of his clients mysteriously died while awaiting an almost-guaranteed guilty verdict, keeping his record immaculate.

The pattern of disappearing defendants has captured the interest of the Lamplighters, who have quietly begun an investigation into Scin for any patterns that may lead to more evidence. A group of heroes may want to assist—especially if one of the villains they captured now walks free.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR SCIN

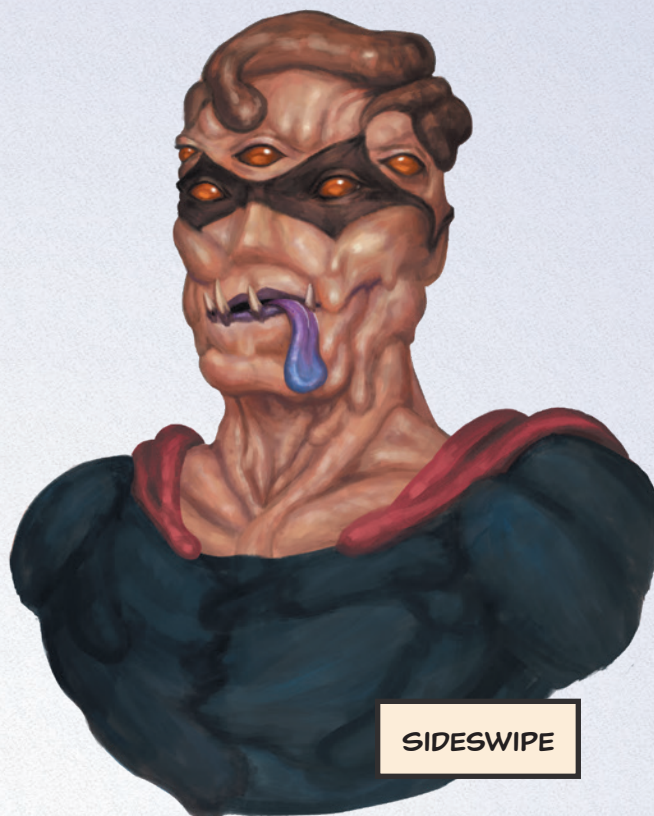
Scin uses the **succubus/incubus** stat block, except that his alignment is chaotic evil.

### CORRUPT DEVOTION

Scin has access to ten villains (underlings) of varying abilities. All ten are clients who were wrongly found innocent in court. They have all been corrupted by him and serve him without question.

## SIDESWIPE

A lonely mimic hidden in plain sight in the Atrium of Lights watched supers become heroes. With its basic needs met by recharging with the moon cycles, the mimic strived for greatness and slowly developed the ability to take on the appearance of the heroes it so admired.



The mimic, nicknamed Sideswipe, has a reputation among heroes as a nuisance. The imperfect imitation is flattering at first, but heroes soon realize that fighting at the side of an adhesive mimic is a sticky situation.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR SIDESWIPE

Sideswipe uses the mimic stat block with these additions:

- **Adaptive Acid (Super Form Only).** When Sideswipe observes the creature it is copying dealing cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison, or radiant damage, it can replace the acid damage from its bite attack with that damage type.
- **Always Adhesive.** The mimic adheres to anything it touches in object form and super form.
- **Super Form.** Sideswipe can use its Shapechanger feature to polymorph into any superpowered creature that it sees. It retains its Medium size regardless of the size of the creature it is copying. Sideswipe retains its bulbous orange eyes in its polymorphed





THE SIZZLER

form. It has disadvantage on any attempt to pass for the creature it is copying.

- **Languages (Super Form Only).** Sideswipe can speak anything it has heard the creature it is copying say. Its voice is both unnatural and enthusiastic.

## PERSONALITY

When Sideswipe transforms, it never looks completely like the super it is imitating. The multiple orange, bulbous eyes are a dead giveaway.

Sideswipe does its best to move and act like the super, even extending its pseudopod to try to match signature weapons or spell effects. Remarkably, even the mimic's natural acid can adapt to different elements in certain situations—but no matter how the attack looks, it still hits like a pile of teeth.

## MOTIVATION

Longing to become a sidekick, the mimic follows heroes wherever they go and tries its best to assist in the fight against villainy—but its enthusiasm becomes problematic when it gets too close to the heroes it's trying to defend.

Sideswipe fully devotes itself to whichever super it's copying at the time, protecting them like a guard dog and letting nothing come between it and the hero. More often than not, however, the mimic ends up accidentally stuck to the hero, impeding the super from saving the day.

## RISING THREAT PLOT STORY HOOKS

Subpar villains grow more dangerous the longer they are left unchecked by heroes.

- **Try Not to Get Too Attached.** Sideswipe admires a random hero in the middle of an important mission. (Low Level)
- **Doing Their Dirty Work.** Sideswipe takes on the form of a member of the Shattered Sons and is working for them. (Mid Level)
- **A Jumbled Attraction.** At the Awakening Festival, Sideswipe goes on a shapeshifting spree and gets stuck as an agglomeration of multiple different supers. (High Level)
- **Right-Hand Mimic.** Sideswipe teams up with another subpar villain who is plotting to free all the villains in the Resolute Redoubt. Secretly, Sideswipe is acting as a double agent, posing as the villain's lieutenant. It plans to turn on the villain when the time is right, but may be in way over its head. (Epic Level)

## THE SIZZLER

At the age of nine, Barry Beaumont was certain the arkwaves would grant him superpowers.

He was wrong—and he spent the next twenty years blaming everyone and everything else for his unremarkable life. His bedroom window let



in too much sun in the morning. His shirt was always either too short or too wide. His friends teased him when he tried to hug them. All of this had to be the reason his superpowers never awakened, because it certainly wasn't his fault.

It was a blistering Awakening Festival when the arkwaves were set to return, twenty years later. Barry ditched his unremarkable job to sneak into Paragon's Peak and climb to the highest point in the Atrium of Lights. If the arkwaves came from the sky, they would reach Barry first.

All day and all night he waited there, but Barry felt no magical echo pulse—just sweat stinging his eyes and the maddening itch of his sunburned pink skin. When morning broke and the citizens of Beacon began celebrating newfound superpowers, Barry snapped.

Citizens at the Awaking Festival ran for their lives at the sight of a hot pink, wild-eyed young man melting everything in sight. Barry was too enraged to realize that he did have powers, and his anger created massive heat waves, scorching the air like an invisible inferno.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR THE SIZZLER

The Sizzler uses the **mage** stat block with these additions:

- The Sizzler's Intelligence is 11, and his Charisma is 17.
- **Heated Body.** A creature that touches the Sizzler or hits him with a melee attack while within 5 feet of him takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.
- **Heat Waves.** Fire damage from the Sizzler's spells is caused by heat waves, not flames. Its visible effect is wavering air. Flammable items hit by the Sizzler's spells do not ignite. Items with a melting point melt.
- **Spellcasting.** The Sizzler is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following sorcerer spells prepared:  
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, sacred flame, true strike*  
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, hellish rebuke, feather fall, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *blur, gust of wind, heat metal, scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *fear, fireball, haste*

4th level (3 slots): *fire shield, wall of fire*

5th level (1 slot): *conjure elemental* (only fire elementals)

- **Sorcery Points.** The Sizzler has 9 sorcery points. He regains all his spent sorcery points when he finishes a long rest. He can spend his sorcery points on the following options:
- **Quickened Spell.** When the Sizzler casts a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, he can spend 2 sorcery points to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this round.
- **Subtle Spell.** When the Sizzler casts a spell, he can spend 1 sorcery point to cast the spell without any somatic or verbal components.

## PERSONALITY

The Sizzler thinks he's hot stuff. After a lifetime of not getting his way, his powers give him a newfound arrogance. However, while he melts any object without a moment's hesitation, he has yet to actually directly target another creature. Instead, he destroys property and intimidates citizens into getting what he wants.

But what does the Sizzler want? After twenty years of wanting one single thing and finally getting it, now what?

Being so hot is starting to have its drawbacks. He's pushed away everyone in his life and he can't get close to anyone new without burning them. While he takes whatever he needs to get by, all he wants is someone to hug.

## MOTIVATION

Barry was finally ready for his new life to begin. Upon realizing his new potential for devastation, he burned bridges with everyone in his old life that ever had the audacity to mock his dream of being super.

After melting the building of his old job, Barry found a new line of work in villainy. He embraced his public moniker—the Sizzler, named for the constant sound of his sweat evaporating off his blazing pink skin.



## RISING THREAT PLOT STORY HOOKS

Subpar villains grow more dangerous the longer they are left unchecked by heroes.

- **A Flash in the Pan.** The Sizzler crashes the Awakening Festival, melting all the decorations and cackling maniacally. (Low Level)
- **Melting the Past.** The Maddening Mural in Argentum Square is under attack by the Sizzler, who remembered a terrible field trip to the historic painting as a child. The paints slurp and slop as they melt. (Mid Level)
- **Unauthorized Crop Melting.** All the crops in the Fields of Bounty are withered and wilted. It seems like the work of the Sizzler—but there is no evidence. (High Level)
- **Hotshots and Jailbreaks.** The Sizzler and one other subpar villain launch a direct assault on the Resolute Redoubt to free as many prisoners as they can and finally solidify their reputation as supervillains. (Epic Level)

## TOMAS NAILTANHE

Tomas Nailtanhe can be found hawking second-rate paragite in Lowcity when he's not trying to pass worthless baubles off as real treasures in Serenity's farmer markets. Tomas is a huckster, and a good one at that.

The arkwaves altered Tomas's body in a unique way. Instead of infusing him with great strength or speed, they gave him the uncanny ability to temporarily alter the look and feel of metal. Tomas was initially disappointed, until his mind got to working as to how that could be used to his advantage. His best con is selling worthless objects as seemingly precious stones or gems, only to disappear before anyone notices the counterfeit.

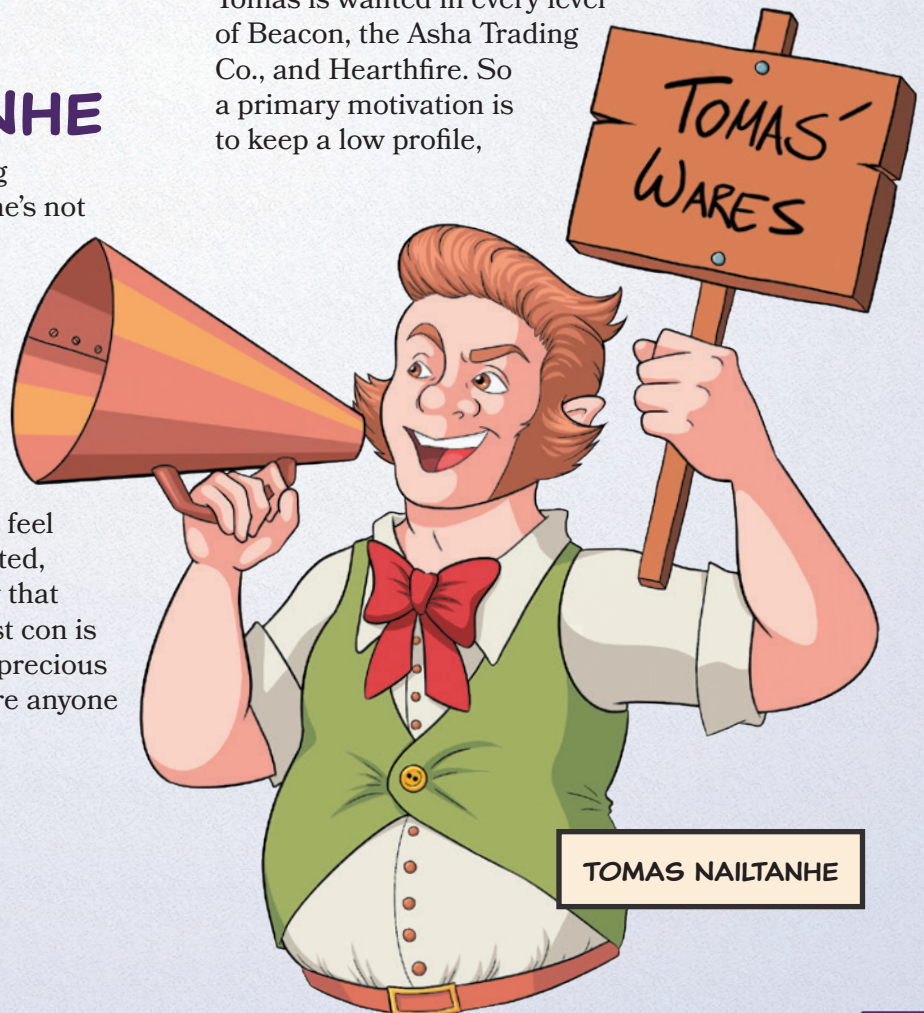
## MODIFICATIONS FOR TOMAS NAILTANHE

Tomas is a **bandit**, with these changes:

- Tomas is chaotic neutral.
- His Charisma score is 15 (+2), and he is proficient in the Deception (+4), Persuasion (+4), Sleight of Hand (+3), and Stealth (+3) skills.
- Tomas has these racial traits: He can move through the space of a Medium or larger creature. He has advantage on saving throws against being frightened. He speaks Common and Halfling.
- As an action, Tomas can make up to a pound of any metal or mineral take on the appearance and feel of any other metal or mineral for 1 minute. Nothing short of a *detect magic* spell or other magic can detect the counterfeit.

## MOTIVATION

Tomas is wanted in every level of Beacon, the Asha Trading Co., and Hearthfire. So a primary motivation is to keep a low profile,



TOMAS NAILTANHE



second only to his need to keep coin in his pocket without having to do any actual physical labor.

## **RISING THREAT STORY HOOKS**

Subpar villains grow more dangerous the longer they are left unchecked.

- ***Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing.*** Tomas is wary of superheroes. He can make most things look like paragite, but that doesn't mean he can make them have the power-dampening effect of the real thing. If he tries to sell you any in the marketplace, he bolts as soon as he realizes you're supers. (Low Level)
- ***Wanted Ads.*** Things are quiet enough for the city leaders to want to finally make an example of Tomas. They've put a bounty on his head. But he's caught wind of it and has called in a huge list of favors to make sure he's never caught. (Mid Level)
- ***Wrong Mark.*** Tomas might be over his head now. He duped Ed Jorino himself into buying a ruby the size of your fist that turned out to be a hunk of granite. Now the mob is after him. Tomas may be a con artist, but he doesn't deserve to die! (High Level)

## **XX, THE SCIENCELICH**

XX was once the brightest young mind Beacon had to offer. His theory of interspatial parabolic intersectionality proved to be a massive breakthrough for portal stabilization and he was awarded five consecutive lifetime achievement awards in pseudointellectuallism.

He came to Beacon long ago, longer than anyone can remember. His origins are obscure: some say he was created in a lab, but the only mind capable of creating someone of his intellect would be his own. Others whisper he is from another world, and Beacon is just

his own elaborate science experiment. Yet others still claim he was a super who lived long enough to become a villain. As his true name is redacted from all recorded history, no one is certain of the truth.

Whenever, or however, he arrived in Beacon, here are the facts: XX was involved in the creation of many technological breakthroughs that are now a standard way of life, and despite his age, he still appears to be a nineteen-year-old human.

XX has upgraded his own body with each passing technological innovation. He has replaced his forearms with two smooth, metal ovals that allow him to retract his hands and in favor of limitless tool and weapon configurations. They act as an arcane foci for the purpose of spellcasting, although it is a severe oversimplification to compare this sophisticated ingenuity to a magical twig.

His eyes are also synthetically enhanced to view his surroundings in their macroscopic and molecular reality.

## **MODIFICATIONS FOR XX**

XX uses the **lich** stat block with these additions:

- ***Freeze Ray.*** XX can forgo the cold damage from his Paralyzing Touch attack and extend the range to 30 feet. It's not an ice beam.
- ***Spellcasting.*** XX has mastery over cold, lightning, and necrotic damage. He knows the *chill touch* and *shocking grasp* cantrips and can cast them at will.

## **PERSONALITY**

XX is outspoken, smarmy, and condescending. He goes to great lengths to make sure everyone is aware he is the smartest person in the room.

His disdain for life is not vengeful; "life" is a conceptual construct. His superior intelligence obligates him to analyze this concept by deconstructing lifeforms and his actions are only deemed evil in the eyes of lesser minds that cannot comprehend the entire scope of their own existence. Reducing life down to



its very essence is the only way to improve on nature's many miscalculations.

Regulating the evolutionary energy of the arkwaves was necessary for XX to accurately chart the progress of life enhancement and predict future trends. At the time of its creation, the Docent was the pinnacle of the scientist's research in Life Essence. The most recent crop of life-enhanced test subjects, or supers as they call themselves, may prove to be the most intriguing specimens to date.

## MOTIVATION

XX was once the lab assistant to the first Portaleer to possess the Mantle of Intellect. The roles reversed when it was clear who was smarter—but when the experiments turned out to be a massive failure and monsters that were accidentally created escaped, XX blamed the Portaleer. It was their job—their only job—to find the test subjects. Clearly, it was sabotage.

XX was stripped of official titles. Forced to take his work underground, he set up secret experiments all over the city. These experiments keep him forever young. They also keep the monsters alive—or rather, bring them back to life each time they're killed.

The monsters and XX are locked in an eternal cycle. The monsters attack the city, he kills the monsters, and the city thanks him. Then the monsters eventually come back. Repeat. Citizens with short memories or lifespans hail him as a hero, a protector of Beacon. Those who've been around long enough know the truth.

XX keeps to his work and only shows up when one of the three monsters returns. Always publicly deriding the Portaleers and claiming that he is saving the city faster than them, XX denies that he is controlling these monsters, no matter what the old-timers say. Strictly speaking, he's correct—but XX knows exactly when and where the monsters will resurrect and is able to manipulate the core energies that attract the monsters, essentially dictating where

they go. He is also uniquely resistant to their specific energy signatures.

One day, the Portaleers will reveal an irregularity in their group cohesion. On that day, XX will be there to dissolve their bond once and for all!

## THREE VILLAINOUS PLOT STORY HOOKS: FAILED EXPERIMENTS ARISE

- **Death Defied!** On an unnaturally hazy day, seven Serenity citizens drop dead in Waymaker's Plaza and rise as specters under the control of the Failed Experiment No. 1: wraith.
- **Limitless Lightning!** In Argentum Square, the Library of the Spire lights up the night sky when attacked by a massive, writhing electrical storm monster. Failed Experiment No. 2: behir.
- **Consuming Cold!** The gleaming heights of Paragon's Peak grow dimly dark and deadly cold under a mysterious snowy dome. Failed Experiment No. 3: ice devil.

In each encounter, decide when and how XX enters the scene. Perhaps he has the situation under control but loses the upper hand when the characters arrive; alternatively, he waits to observe the character in action and assess their threat level. XX emerges whenever he intends to and takes all credit for saving the day.

## ROSTER OF MINIONS

### SECOND IN COMMAND: DOCENT 2.0

Docent 2.0 is a fully upgraded version of the synthetic humanoid that assists the Portaleers. As the creator of the original Docent, XX was able to make considerable upgrades to the new model. With his new and improved Docent, he declined to imprint his own memories into the artificial intelligence learning simulator. The difference in their personality is palpable. Its



telepathic voice still sounds simultaneously male and female, but all humanity is removed. Docent 2.0 is all business.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR DOCENT 2.0

Docent 2.0 uses the **stone golem** stat block with these additions:

- **Languages.** Docent 2.0 has telepathy out to 120 feet.
- **Evolving Linguistics.** Docent 2.0 learns the language of anyone it communicates with telepathically. It currently understands all known languages.

### HENCHMEN: NONE

XX trusts his brilliant plans with no one.

### LEGENDARY VILLAINY

#### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

XX has the following additional legendary action.

- **Freeze Ray (Costs 2 Actions).** XX uses his Paralyzing Touch at a range of 30 feet. It does no cold damage. It's not an ice beam.

#### LAIR ACTIONS

When fighting inside his secret laboratory, XX can utilize his many inventions to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), XX takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; XX can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- XX rolls a d8 and regains a spell slot of that level or lower. If he has no spent spell slots of that level or lower, he gains the amount rolled as temporary hit points.
- XX targets one creature he can see within 30 feet of him. A coiling metallic cord injects into both XX and the target. Whenever XX takes damage, the target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, XX takes half the damage (rounded down), and the target takes the remaining damage. Any healing the target received is also halved, and XX is healed for the remaining amount. The tether lasts until initiative count



XX, THE SCIENCELICH

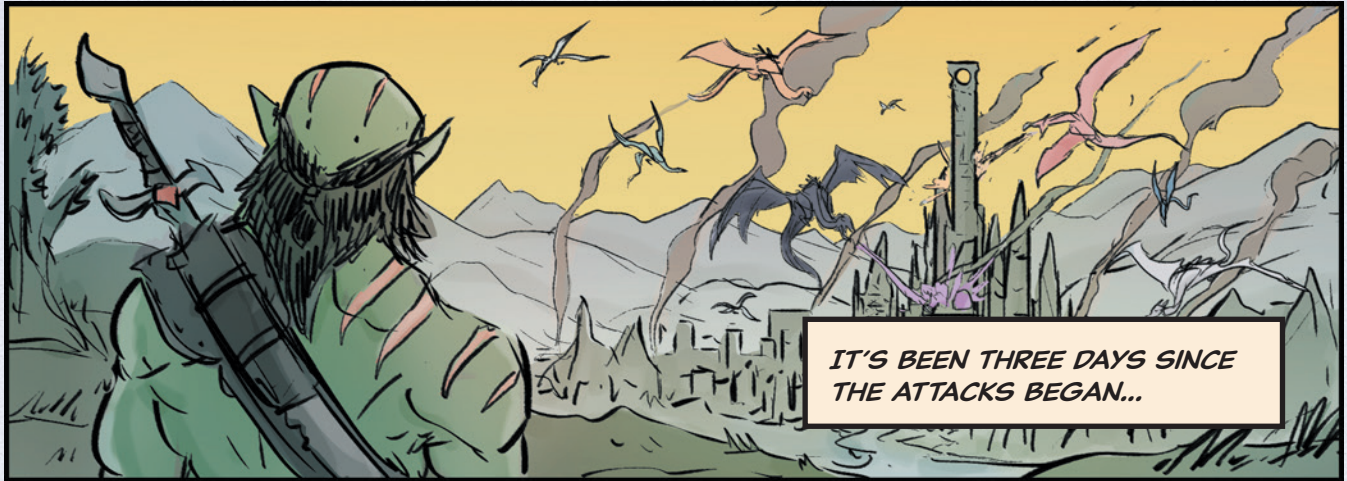
20 on the next round or until XX or the target is no longer in the Abstrusatorium.

- XX activates a hyper beam charged with cold, lightning, or necrotic energy. The hyper beam auto-targeting locks onto one creature XX can see within 60 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 52 (15d6) cold, lightning, or necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success. Once the hyper beam is activated with one energy type, it cannot be activated with that same energy type until all other energy types are activated.
- XX rerolls initiative and chooses whether to use the new initiative this round. XX cannot use this lair action if he has already used his action this round (initiative was higher than 20). Analyzing combat tendency data of his enemies allows him to predict their movement and react accordingly.



## PART 3

# ADVENTURE TIME



*IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS SINCE  
THE ATTACKS BEGAN...*



*NOW IT IS UP TO THOSE OF  
US WHO SURVIVED...*



*TO TAKE BACK BEACON!*



## CHAPTER 9

# RUNNING SUPERS ADVENTURES

To help guide your superhero adventures and differentiate this campaign from a standard 5e dungeon-crawling one, consider the following three rough campaign outlines:

### TEEN HEROES

**Run A Campaign like This If Your Players Enjoy** *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Young Justice*, *Harry Potter*, *The Runaways*

**The Pitch:** Growing up and finding your own place in the world is hard enough for a teen—now add superpowers to the mix.

**Setting Considerations:** Teenage superheroes offer several possibilities for a core setting. Ask yourself—and your players!—these questions before settling on one.

- Are these heroes in a special school exclusively designed for the training of future heroes? Or are these superpowered teens at a “normal” school and happen to find each other? Make a decision based on how much you want secret identities—and the fear of their powers being discovered—to be prevalent in your campaign.
- Is this a sanctioned teenage team under the wing of an adult team? Or is this a team that forms on their own? Mentors can play a role in the campaign either way, but “officially sanctioned” as opposed to “meddling kids” can give a different feel to the interactions with mentors.

**Making Heroes:** Ask your players to make their heroes with the following considerations in mind.

- Pick a major flaw. Teenagers still have some growing up to do, and a teen hero campaign emphasizes that by adding more weight to the hero’s flaw. Have this flaw be a core component of the hero’s personality. For added thematic weight, consider having the flaw somehow tie into and effect the hero’s superpower. For example, a hero in a codependent relationship may believe their powers only work while near their partner. An overly impulsive hero may have super speed, making the consequences of their actions catch up faster. Someone struggling with addiction may believe their powers only work while under the influence of their vice. (As with all things, make sure everyone is comfortable with the material being presented at the table—some flaws may hit too close to home.)
- Design a mentor. Note that this does not necessarily have to be a mentor in the strictest sense of the word, but there should be an adult whose opinion of the hero affects the hero’s behavior. Perhaps the hero is a sidekick to the mentor—the hero wants to impress them. Or the hero could have taken the mantle from a deceased hero and is trying to live up to their legacy. Or the hero’s “mentor” could also be a villain—the hero could be trying to redeem their parent, for



example. Do not shy away from using the Portaleers—expanding on their story and making it your own.

- Romance! If everyone at the table is comfortable with it, consider setting up love triangles, either between heroes and other heroes, or heroes and nonplayer characters. Romantic relationships tend to play a major role in teen superhero fiction, and if clear boundaries are set and everyone at the table is comfortable, love triangles and potential romantic relationships can help add to the feel.

## **THE FIRST ARC: GROWING PAINS**

The first arc of your campaign focuses on the heroes overcoming their flaws and starting to prove themselves as heroes. In general, keep the threats small-scale—we are giving these heroes room to grow. Primarily focus on the teen heroes battling teen villains for now. When possible, to add thematic weight, try to tie in the villains' abilities with an insecurity or social issue the villain is facing. For example, an invisible enemy could be a teen who feels forgotten or unnoticed by society, while an anonymous bully could be a literal troll. Create situations where the heroes' solving the problem may be more about being empathetic than having a slugfest—helping other teens deal with their problems can be the thing that helps the heroes overcome their own. This arc ends when each hero has overcome their main character flaw.

## **THE SECOND ARC: DAMN THE MAN**

In the second arc of your teen hero campaign, the heroes find themselves disillusioned, or even in direct opposition to, their mentors. Their mentors may turn out to have been secretly evil the entire time, or perhaps a systemic issue presents itself that the mentors are unwilling or unable to deal with. Have

these be the new major threat of the campaign, moving away from the self-contained weekly threats from the first arc, and touch on the new major threat each session. Remove every safety net possible from the heroes: pull them away from their mentors, expel them from their school, etc. This is when they step up and deal with problems completely on their own. This arc has no more teenage villains. Instead, present more complex problems and larger threats.

## **THE THIRD ARC: THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT**

In the final teen hero arc, bring things full circle, and let the heroes step up and become mentors themselves. Give them more opportunities to save the city or the world as the new prominent heroes of the setting, and then introduce new, young, powered NPCs who share the same or similar flaws as the heroes had in the first arc. The campaign ends as the heroes step up and succeed where their own mentors failed.

## **THE SUPERTEAM**

**Run a Campaign like This If Your Players Enjoy** *The Avengers, Justice League, Guardians of the Galaxy*

**The Pitch:** Beacon's mightiest heroes (you!) gather because together, you can face threats too great to battle alone!

**Setting Considerations:** To capture the feel of a superhero team, heroes should start this campaign mid- to high-level. However, consider where they stand in comparison to other teams operating in Beacon. Do the Portaleers, or any other major heroes, exist in your version of the setting? If so, what is their relationship to the team you're telling stories about? If a super team more powerful than the one being played by your heroes exists, consider why they aren't helping every week. Are they always busy? Have they been gone for years in a deep space mission? Do your heroes resent the larger team and want to outshine them? Or are their



missions delegated by a larger team? Have they all been recently killed, with the heroes stepping up to fill in the void? Decide before the campaign how this new team relates to the Portaleers, or if the Portaleers exist at all in your setting.

**Making Heroes:** Ask your players to make their heroes with the following considerations in mind:

- Describe a time your hero saved the city. As the campaign begins, heroes are already well established, and they each should have saved the city on their own at least once.
- Who is your archenemy? Each hero should have an established archenemy that they have personal enmity toward. Players may choose a villain from the book or design their own that conflict with elements of their hero. This can be a singular villain or an organization the hero frequently butts heads with. Encourage your hero to come up with

two to three villains they've faced in the past, if possible, drawing both from their own ideas and the book. Archenemies should not have history with the team's other heroes—the goal is to build a solo history of the hero before bringing them into a team.

- Have players put careful thought into their hero's bond. The most important element of the bond is that the hero prioritizes it above being in a team, and it's best if this is a bond the GM can use to divert the hero's attention away from the team. For example, perhaps the hero has a missing sidekick, so whenever a lead to the sidekick comes up, the hero is inclined to abandon the team's mission and follow it up. Or perhaps the hero's secret identity carries a lot of obligations, and the hero values meeting them to keep a semblance of a normal life. Encourage players to create a bond that can complicate also being in a team.



THERE ARE MANY HIDDEN MACHINATIONS DEEP WITHIN THE CORE OF GHAISTALA, MANY OF WHICH SHOULD REMAIN FORGOTTEN.



## ***THE FIRST ARC: THERE WAS AN IDEA***

The first arc of the superteam campaign focuses on the heroes learning to put their own needs aside to form a larger team. In most sessions, your goal as a GM is to create a conflict between one member of the team wanting to pursue their bond, in opposition to the rest of the team potentially wanting to deal with the new threat.

While planning this campaign, look over the bonds of each hero, and try to come up with two to three events that can resolve this bond. For example, if a hero has a missing sidekick, the first event could be the hero finding out there is a villain that has a lead, the second event could be a rescue mission, and the third event could be some task the sidekick needs done before they can reintegrate into society.

In each session, establish a threat where a hero's archenemy or other villain has a plan to attack or endanger the city or region. At the same time, introduce a B-plot where a separate hero's bond comes into play, and they have an opportunity to resolve it. Introduce a timed element to the villain threat and the bond—heroes have to either split up or make tough choices.

The first arc ends when the heroes have resolved their outside bonds and have fully come together as a well oiled team. Consider allowing heroes to change the bonds on their character sheet to reflect their new dedication.

## ***THE SECOND ARC: ESCALATION***

In the second arc of your superteam campaign, now that the heroes are a well-coordinated team and interior issues have been resolved, the exterior threats to the team become more severe. Bring together all of the archenemies established by the players in the “Making Heroes” section, and assemble them as a villain supergroup. The bulk of this arc focuses on the

heroes trying to foil plans from the villainous team, either one long plan that takes up the entire arc or a series of smaller plans. Raise the stakes in the second arc: if the city was often under threat in the first arc, the villains forming a team should threaten the world. The second arc ends when the villain supergroup has been stopped for good.

To establish a contrast from the first arc, and to reward the heroes for coming together as a team, look for ways to give the heroes opportunities to drive wedges between villains in the group. In the first arc, heroes likely found ways to compromise and work together to help everyone in the team get what they want. Make sure the heroes understand that the villains are incapable of this.

## ***THE THIRD ARC: INFINITY***

In the final superteam arc, let heroes fully soak in the fun and enjoyment of being the prominent super team of the city. Bring in high concept, cinematic threats that endanger the very fabric of reality itself. Pit the heroes against alien tyrants, kaiju, and the gods, giving them the tools to triumph. This campaign ends when the heroes save all of reality and pass into legend.

## **GRIMDARK HEROES**

***Run a Campaign like This If Your Players Enjoy*** *The Boys*, *Watchmen*, *Authority*

**The Pitch:** Superheroes aren't so super when you take a closer look...

**Setting Considerations:** This campaign presents a more cynical, darker side of superheroism. Consider carefully whether you plan on running future superhero campaigns and what effect setting foundations established here can have on that. Once you've established a dark and cynical tone for Beacon, it then becomes difficult to run a more conventional superhero campaign later. If you prefer that tone for all campaigns, or only plan on running a Beacon-set storyline once, this doesn't present an issue. However, if you've already established



a lighter-toned Beacon, or may want to run a more classical feeling superhero campaign later, consider presenting this campaign as a different world or alternate timeline.

**Making Heroes:** Ask your players to make their heroes with the following considerations in mind.

- While they design their hero, give players more freedom to lean into blatant parody or satire. Having the heroes of this campaign be exaggerated versions of an already established hero can help add humor to what has the potential to be a darker campaign, and skilled roleplayers may be able to explore archetypes from new perspectives to add thematic depth to their heroes.
- Have the players think very carefully about their hero's ideal. This ideal should form the core of the hero's concept and personality. To establish contrast with the setting, develop an ideal that would be more at home in a campier, conventional setting. Things like "Cheaters never win" or "Trust your government—they know what's best!" The simpler and less complex the ideal, the easier it is to juxtapose.

## ***THE FIRST ARC: BRUISED IDEALISM***

While planning this campaign, look carefully over the ideals of the heroes. Then, look over the prominent superteam of your setting, and work out how two to three members of the team violate or subvert the ideal of the hero. For instance, if a hero has the ideal "The government knows what's best," give a member of the more prominent superteam a patriotic theme but a closer look should show this hero is demonstrating the negative effects of nationalism and isolationism.

In the first grimdark arc, your job as a GM is to work with the players to completely break down their hero's idealism. Have prominent, respected superheroes disappoint and subvert their ideals, and also introduce villains who provide more reasonable alternatives. For example, a villain battling a "patriotic" nationalist hero may simply be considered

a villain due to thought crimes, such as questioning the status quo so they draw the attention of a nationalist hero.

The first arc ends when the heroes realize the prominent superteam of the setting are complete shams. Once their idealism is broken and they realize the villains may have the right idea, move onto the second arc.

## ***THE SECOND ARC: BURN IT ALL DOWN***

In the second arc of your grimdark campaign, the heroes have a chance to strike back against the prominent, disappointing heroes of the setting. For each disappointing prominent hero, come up with two to three weaknesses. It's best to provide a variety of weaknesses, allowing for a variety of approaches. As a general guideline, give each prominent hero a physical weakness that can be exploited (a weapon that weakens them or some set of conditions that makes their powers function unreliability), a social weakness (secret identity information that can be used for blackmail or coercion), and an exploitable vice.


Give this list of weaknesses to the heroes. It could be gathered by the villains, blurted out by another prominent hero, or tipped by a government agency that wants the prominent heroes out of the picture. However, once heroes have the list of weaknesses, set them loose and let them burn down the setting. This arc ends when the prominent heroes of the setting die, retire, or disband.

## ***THE THIRD ARC: BUILD IT BACK UP***

In the final grimdark arc, the heroes have taken over society. Now there's a chance to build something better. The heroes are feared, respected, and in possession of the political cache to make some stringent demands. Allow the players an opportunity to reshape the setting.

In an optimistic campaign, allow this to work, and end the arc while letting the players





FROM BEACON, THE OLD LAVA TUBES EXPAND OUT ACROSS THE PLANET AND HOST NUMEROUS CREATURES AND BIOMES.

narrate their new utopia. For a darker or nihilistic ending, find ways to illustrate how the flaws of the heroes' character sheet seep into society as a whole. The arc ends as a new group of formerly idealistic heroes start to repeat the cycle.

## ONE SHOTS

To spice up your weekly adventures, consider any of these one shot concepts.

**Body Swap!** Have your players trade character sheets as their heroes switch bodies. This provides players an opportunity to try out a different power set, but also provides rich roleplaying opportunities. Make sure the heroes who have switched have contrasting personalities, and create situations where they have to “play along” and act against their normal type. In a teenager campaign where the heroes have very different home lives, contrasting the situations can create depth and bring the heroes closer.

**It's Good to Be Bad.** If the plot dictates that the villains must succeed in a certain element of their plan, consider allowing your players to be the villains for a session. If they pull the heist

or summon the elder god on their own, they can hardly complain to you about railroading, and it can be a lot of fun giving them a sneak preview of what their heroes will have to face.

**What If?** If a session had a memorable choice that could have gone either way, consider running a one-shot “What If” session where the heroes see another way the situation could have played out.

**Another World.** Have your players create alternative, evil versions of their heroes! Reverse their flaws, bonds, and ideals, and run an adventure in an alternate universe version of your setting where they battle heroic versions of your campaign's villains. For a bit of extra fun, end the adventure with the alternate versions “crossing over” into your core setting.

**Crossover!** Once you've run more than one campaign, consider a crossover adventure bringing in multiple campaign heroes together. Have half the party play as heroes from their current campaign, while the other half plays heroes from the previous campaign to allow new team ups. In the second part of the adventure, trade off who is playing older heroes and who is playing newer ones.





THE PORTALEERS PREPARE TO TAKE BACK BEACON.



# CHAPTER 10

# SECRET ORIGIN!

This adventure acts as an introduction to Beacon, drawing fledgling heroes into a mystery. What seems to be a simple dragon attack is revealed to be much more nefarious—as the heroes sleuth Beacon’s corners, they discover that mind control technology is at the heart of it. Not only that, a much bigger assault is being prepared. If they don’t hurry, Beacon will fall prey to the Ghost’s dastardly plan!

This adventure is divided into three Issues and is intended to be played in over two to three 4-hour sessions.

**Issue 1: *The Fire and the Fury!*** In this issue, heroes gather to help fight back against dragons invading the city! But is there more at play than meets the eye?

**Issue 2: *On the Case.*** In the second act, our heroes peel back the mystery, investigating the true villain behind the dragon attack while learning more about our fair city!

**Issue 3: *The Ghost Strikes!*** In the final part, our scoundrel is finally revealed—but can our heroes stop their fiendish plot in time?

## ISSUE 1: THE FIRE AND THE FURY!

### ISSUE SUMMARY

Our heroes help the Portaleers repel an attack from a red dragon! While the Portaleers battle the red dragon in the skies above Beacon,

the heroes must find creative ways to protect civilians from the consequences of the dragon attack before battling a wyrmling. As they protect the city, our heroes can discover that the red dragon is being mind controlled from a remote location—giving them the edge they need to help the Portaleers stop the red dragon’s reign of terror and save Beacon!

Notes for the GM:

- Ideally, heroes should be level 1 for this issue. For higher-level heroes, increase the difficulty of all skill checks and add extra wyrmlings to contend with.
- The goal of this issue is to present a cinematic, high-action opening to start the adventure off with a bang! Keep a fast pace—when in doubt about a rule, make a quick decision and look it up later.
- Help your heroes feel super heroic! This issue presents a variety of challenges for the heroes and gives room for creative solutions, so lean into your heroes’ off-the-wall ideas! In early sections, focus on a fun and empowering experience. But don’t fret—later sections will put the heroes to the test.

To start the adventure, read or summarize the following:

- Argentum Square! Here lies the beating heart of Beacon—Arts! Politics! Commerce! And today... peril! In the skies above our fair city, an ancient red dragon rages, fury in its eyes. Surely the Portaleers are assembling to stop it, but will they be enough?



## MILD MANNERED

If your campaign emphasizes secret identities, run a series of quick solo scenes in which the heroes have to quickly slip away before starting “A Call to Action.” The specifics of these scenes depend on each hero’s concept and supporting cast, but use the following suggestions as guidelines:

**Set the Scene!** Present the hero in their secret identity with a supporting character at a location important to them.

**Establish a Stake!** Create a situation where sneaking off to become a hero involves a small personal sacrifice or some level of awkwardness. For example, a hero whose secret identity is a politician could be about to make an important speech, a working-class hero may be on the job, or a high school student could have an important date or quiz.

**Show the Threat!** The hero can spot the ancient red dragon assaulting the city—it’s hard to miss!—or one of the situations presented in the “A Call to Action” section.

**Distraction or Excuse!** Heroes must come up with either a way to distract the supporting character or an excuse to leave so they can slip away for hero work! Do not require any skill checks for this—assume success. As you may be running multiple secret identity scenes, you don’t want to drag them out;

### PORTALEERS

In the default *Supers & Sorcery* setting, the Portaleers are brave, noble, and true. The chaos happening in Beacon isn’t because the Portaleers don’t care about the consequences of the fight. Show that the Portaleers are focused on the dragon instead of civilians because they’ve noticed the PC heroes and trust them! Find moments for the Portaleers to acknowledge the PC heroes and their work so they feel involved rather than relegated to clean-up duty—after all, this is a team effort!

However, if you are building a storyline where the Portaleers are traitors, replaced by evil twins, or otherwise morally compromised, this sequence is an opportunity to lay clues of their true intentions by leaning into their lack of concern about the streets below.

supporting characters can be confused or disappointed, but at this stage, avoid them overly questioning the hero. Similar scenes can be much more compelling and difficult for the hero later in the campaign as they grow closer to the supporting cast, but for now, treat this as quick seasoning before getting into the action.

## A CALL TO ACTION

• The red dragon unleashes its fire upon the city!  
• But there, in the distance—hope! The Portaleers  
• arrive, racing towards the dragon, ready to face  
• impossible odds yet again. But the battle raging  
• above brings consequences below—will new  
• heroes step forward?

As the **ancient red dragon** razes Beacon, three Portaleers—Paragon, Willpower, and Heart—hasten to combat the threat.

While the battle rages above, the civilians beneath are in danger. Choose one or more of the problems presented below and give your heroes a chance to solve it. Keeping the heroes separated gives each hero a chance to be in the spotlight—they can narrate their arrival, including their costume and cinematic entrance.

Allow heroes leeway in how they solve the crises. Later sections offer more opportunities to challenge and push the heroes to their limits—for now, encourage creative solutions. Quick resolutions feel heroic!

**Building Aflame!** An inferno consumes a small shop with a family trapped inside. The fire blazes nearer with each passing second!

**Shattered Glass!** As the dragon swoops past a building, the aftershocks shatter the glass windows of a skyscraper—and shards pelt fleeing civilians.

**Mobsters!** Two mobster **thugs** are looting an abandoned storefront in the chaos. They are Green Dragons, a gang answering to kobold mob boss “Ed” Jorino.

**Collapsing Bridge!** A solid punch from Willpower sends the red dragon tumbling towards a bridge crowded with people.

**Meddling Kids!** A few children clambered onto a crumbling roof to spectate the fight,



but one has slipped and is dangerously close to falling.

**Falling Portaleer!** A mighty strike of the dragon's tail sends Heart hurtling to the ground—and she's going to crash into a fleeing magitech bus!

## ASSEMBLE!

Once every hero has resolved a situation from “A Call to Action,” it's time to bring the team together.

- In the distance—screams of panic! The
- source: a copper dragon wyrmling terrorizes
- the town square!

## WYRMLING FAST FACTS

**Acid Breath!** As the heroes enter the scene, the **copper dragon wyrmling** is using its acid breath weapon, causing general mayhem.

**Strange Device!** A hero with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 10 or higher notices a small mechanical device affixed to the back of the wyrmling's neck. If the copper wyrmling is knocked out or killed, the device on her neck shorts out moments later—if Heroes keep the debris, it is collected by Intellect during the “Debriefing with Intellect” section.

**Contraption Confusion!** If the device is deactivated or destroyed (See “A Nefarious Device”, below), the wyrmling, Chyraxis, expresses horror and confusion at her own behavior—and shock at the actions of the red dragon above, whom she calls Carl.

## A NEFARIOUS DEVICE

The collars wrapped around the wyrmling's and dragon's necks are receptors, allowing the villain to exert control of the creatures over long distances. This device has an AC of 12 and 10 hit points—if destroyed, creatures are freed from the Ghost's influence.

Heroes may attempt alternate means to disable or remove the device from creatures—reward almost any effort. As a general guideline, a reasonably justified spell that exerts a spell slot can disable the device, and a reasonably justified skill check can disable the device with a successful DC 12 check.



THE DRAGONS OF GHAISTALA ARE TRULY TERRIFYING AND AWE-INSPIRING ALL IN THE SAME BREATH.

## HERO UP!

- With a mighty crash, the legendary beast
- creates a crater as it slams into the ground. The
- massive shockwave shatters every window within
- a mile! Beacon holds its breath—is the threat
- over? No! The beast lets out a mighty roar! The
- Portaleers dive into the crater, shouting to our
- heroes, “We've got to take this thing down!”

If the heroes did not notice the device or the dragon's strange behavior, Intellect steps out from the shadows to quickly brief them. “That device seems to be controlling the dragon—disable it!”

However, if the heroes put together the significance of the device, Intellect observes



them from a distance, and jumps in to assist if our heroes fall.

The device has an AC of 10 and 15 hit points—however, because the dragon is thrashing back and forth, heroes have disadvantage on attacks made against the device. They can attempt to restrain the dragon by creatively using their powers or skills to take better aim.

During this encounter, the dragon focuses on the Portaleers in a thrilling back-and-forth battle, each side gaining ground, only to lose it. Should your heroes enjoy a deadly game, the dragon can attempt to kill the Portaleers—then turn its furious gaze onto the heroes!

The heroes have four rounds to destroy or disable the device before the dragon breaks free and barrels into the skies.

### IF THE DRAGON ESCAPES

- The dragon soars off into the distance.
- The Portaleers rally to chase it, leaving our heroes behind. As his teammates hasten after the escaping beast, Intellect steps out from the shadows....

From here, move to “Debriefing with Intellect.”

### IF THE DEVICE IS DESTROYED OR DISABLED

- The ancient red dragon shakes his head. His eyes clear, a look of sorrow crossing his features as he sees the devastation wrought....

The red dragon introduces himself as Carl. He mourns what has happened—he has no memory of the past several hours. As the dragon and the Portaleers begin to repair the damage and assist first responders, Intellect steps out from the shadows, approaching the heroes.

### DEBRIEFING WITH INTELLECT

Intellect gathers the individual components of the destroyed device for study, then turns to face the heroes. He admires the work they did in the midst of chaos and asks them to report to

the headquarters of the Portaleers, the Atrium of Lights, at dawn tomorrow.

The heroes should now advance to 2nd level.

## ISSUE 2: ON THE CASE

### ISSUE SUMMARY

In this issue, heroes report to the Atrium of Lights, where they can learn more about the Portaleers and Beacon’s history. There, they are given three assignments to help them investigate the cause of the attack on the city.

In the first assignment, the heroes shake down a crime boss in the Lowcity for information. In the second assignment, the heroes visit a potential suspect—a college professor who had a promising student studying the intersection between mind control and paranormal possessions. This investigation leads them to the secret lab of the culprit. In the third assignment, heroes meet a scientific contact, who uses the remaining components of the device to locate the culprit’s base.

### MILD MANNERED: REDUX

If your game heavily emphasizes secret identities, this is a great opportunity to check in with the supporting cast.

The heroes can arrive at the Portaleers’ base at their leisure; they don’t need a “quick escape” situation. But you can reinforce awkwardness from issue 1 by having NPCs from the heroes’ backstories question the heroes who had a flimsy excuse to leave.

You can use the secret identity scenes here to set up issue 3—get the hero to agree to an important appointment, meeting, or activity. Establishing a future activity for the hero can serve two purposes in issue 3:

- The hero will have to agree to miss this opportunity in order to save the day in issue 3.
- When the city is threatened in issue 3, the specific event or opportunity the hero is offered here can be in the firing line, raising the stakes.



## GRAND TOUR

- The Atrium of Lights stands tall, the glass and steel building serving as a symbol for all of Beacon to rally around!

If this adventure begins a long-term campaign, the Atrium of Lights can provide information about the setting. Heroes arriving at the atrium see a large statue of the Portaleers out front. A small crowd gathers around the statue to listen to the tour guide's presentation on Beacon.

Any heroes eavesdropping on the tour on the way to their appointment with Intellect overhear the following information. For a long-term campaign, seed any other relevant information from the city gazetteer (chapter 5) that supports your story.

**The Great War.** Seven powerful Titans shaped the world. A devastating war was fought between Titans and a host called the Maddening that destroyed all life.

**The Gathering of Worlds.** After millennia past, life returned—portals opened from infinite universes, and many shepherded their people into this reborn world, founding the city of Beacon.

**The Arkwaves.** Powerful waves of magic energy, called arkwaves, occasionally wash over Beacon, awakening amazing powers in some.

**The Portaleers.** The seven Portaleers, legacy heroes in homage to the Titans who created the world, protect Beacon as its mightiest defenders.

After the tour guide conveys any additional information, the heroes are escorted to Intellect's lab beneath the Atrium of Lights.

## YOUR MISSION, SHOULD YOU ACCEPT IT

Intellect has had an opportunity to study the device salvaged off of the wyrmling and dragon and has put together three potential leads. While the core Portaleers bolster defenses to prepare for a second attack on the city, Intellect asks the heroes to investigate these

leads. After witnessing their fight against the wyrmling, he trusts them—if the heroes can trace the problem, they are authorized and encouraged to stop it.

If the heroes ask about a reward, Intellect is initially taken aback—he thought they were heroes, not mercenaries. However, if they press the issue, he reveals he is considering sponsoring the team—if they perform admirably, they could receive sponsorship from the Portaleers. This would open up their resources, granting them access to the headquarters, vehicles, and gadgets of the Portaleers, as well as intangible rewards, such as cache with the public and authority figures.

It all depends on this investigation, of course—they should chase the leads before the culprit slips out of reach.

## THE LEADS

Heroes can pursue the leads in any order and do not need to investigate all of them. For example, visiting Doctor Amano gives the heroes the location of the villain's headquarters, leading them straight to issue 3. Pursuing each lead, however, grants additional bonuses in the climactic encounter against the Ghost.

### THE GANG

The Green Dragon Gang, a criminal enterprise operating out of Lowcity, recently pulled a heist and stole the technology to create the dragon's mind-control device. Intellect believes this job was commissioned by the culprit behind the attack. The heroes must go to the Scarlett Obelisk, a jazz club acting as a front for gang activity, and ask around for information—discreetly, preferably.

### THE PROFESSOR

Professor Kedrick Faulkner, a half-orc teacher at a university in Argentum Square, was awarded a research grant to study similar mind-control technology in the past. He is a suspect.

### THE SCIENTIST

Doctor Jocelyn Amano is a halfling scientist operating in Paragon's Peak. She has assisted the Portaleers in the past—Intellect believes that if she is given the tech to study, she can ascertain more information from it.



## INVESTIGATION #1: CRIME PAYS

This portion of the investigation brings the heroes to Lowcity, the seedy underbelly of Beacon. A maze of alleyways, factories, and cramped apartment buildings, Lowcity serves as a shocking contrast to the gleaming, high-tech district of Argentum Square.

For a one-shot adventure, you can send the heroes directly to the Scarlett Obelisk, but for a long-term campaign, consider using one or more of the following random encounters to help build the atmosphere of this district. Additional information that can enhance these encounters can be found in the city gazetteer (chapter 5).



"PROFESSOR FAULKNER?  
STRANGE ONE, HIM."

- PROFESSOR TIBRY LIMSCH

**Inebriated Impropriety!** Airborne, a mid-level superhero and an influential spokesperson for the youth of Beacon, is drunk for the first time. His super endurance usually keeps him sober, but a few shots of a specially brewed whiskey at a local bar has him flying erratically and smashing into buildings, endangering both property and people. Can the heroes get him under control and save his reputation?

**Crooked Casino!** A group of goons is attacking a tiefling in a nearby alleyway. The tiefling has pulled a successful casino scam, earning the goons' brutish ire. The authorities have been paid off to leave the casino be; interfering could make an enemy of both the local law enforcement and the casino's underbelly. Can the heroes find a better way to mete out justice?

**Corrupt Confiscators!** A team of Lamplighters is preparing to raid a smuggler's cove along Titetown, but heroes offering to help might be surprised to find these are imposters. The criminals are posing as Lamplighters as a ploy to keep the smuggled goods for themselves. Can the heroes get wise to their scheme in time?

## THE SCARLETT OBELISK

• The Scarlett Obelisk! This juice joint is filled with  
• molls, goons, grifters, and ne'er-do-wells, and  
• the jazz band in the corner is the cat's meow.  
• But all eyes are on the kobold in the corner  
• booth—"Ed" Jorino is here, and anyone who's  
• anyone knows he's the cat with the inside scoop.

For more information on Ed Jorino and his gangsters, see chapter 8. The heroes can approach Ed Jorino any number of ways, but the following are possibilities to draw from.

**A Heroic Approach.** If the heroes enter in costume, they are recognized as the ones who aided in the dragon attack against Beacon. They are instantly confronted by five bouncers—see Green Dragons in chapter 8—who want them gone. If the heroes defeat the bouncers, Ed Jorino offers to tell them what they want to know in exchange for them leaving the club—he doesn't want any heat tonight.



**A Bargaining Approach.** If heroes attempt to bargain with Ed Jorino, he offers information in exchange for a favor—taking out a rising crime lord. Dealing with the new mob boss would do good for the city, but it also benefits Ed. They are directed to the turf of Romero “Three Fingers” Meoli (**gladiator**), where they find him collecting protection money from a Lowcity grocer.

**A Subtle Approach.** If the heroes are not recognized, they can “rough up” Ed for information. If they quickly gain the upper hand, Ed tells them what he knows—after all, he wants to enjoy a relaxing night at the club.

## THE SCORE

Once the heroes convince Ed to tell them what he knows, he reveals the following information: Ed’s gang, the Green Dragon, contracted with a new villain known as the Ghost, who plans to use their tech to coordinate some kind of terrorist attack on Beacon. In exchange, the Ghost gave Ed the details of when and where the attack would happen. This allows Ed to direct targeted looting during the attack—a fair bargain, as far as he’s concerned.

If the heroes report this information to the Portaleers, they reinforce the city and coordinate evacuations in the endangered sections. (See “The Ghost Strikes” in issue 3 for the mechanical advantages.)

## INVESTIGATION #2: SCHOOL DAYS

This portion of the investigation brings heroes to Argentum Square, the center of Beacon’s government. For a long-term campaign, consider using one or more of the following random encounters to establish the atmosphere of the district before the heroes encounter Professor Faulkner.

**Justice Never Sleeps!** A Justicar flags down the heroes—he’s late for a case! Can the heroes get the Justicar to the court on time through traffic, poor weather, and a targeted supervillain attack?

**An Artist’s Eye!** A sculptor in the Enlightened Heights is desperate to make a name for himself, and new heroes are his perceived ticket. The sculptor follows and harangues the heroes, begging them to stop and pose for a statue.

**High Flying Action!** A new arrival comes through a portal—a woman wearing a magitech jetpack, bomber jacket, and goggles. She is disoriented, confused, and flying as fast as she can away from government immigration. Can the heroes catch up to her and calm her down?

## MEETING THE PROFESSOR

Kedrick Faulkner is a college professor and research scientist who wrote his thesis on the effects of mind control on brain chemistry. Intellect provides the heroes with his home address, lecture schedule, and office hours on campus.

There are many ways to investigate Professor Faulkner. A gritty, vigilante-type hero may wish to approach his home at night for intimidation purposes, while an investigative hero may approach him on campus—either in his office or after a lecture—as their secret identity. Whatever approach they take, Faulkner is open to giving information.

## ROLEPLAYING FAULKNER

Doctor Faulkner’s personality is almost completely dependent on who he is talking to. Faulkner is cold and dismissive of anyone he doesn’t have respect for. However, it is worth noting Faulkner does not judge someone based on their perceived intelligence, but rather on their willingness to learn. Someone who others may write off as a simple brute gains Faulkner’s respect if they display curiosity and a willingness to learn.

**Ideal:** Only science allows us to understand this incredible world we’re in.

**Flaw:** I have no respect for those who can’t display intellectual acumen.

**Bond:** I will prepare my students for the world.



## FAULKNER'S PROTEGE

When questioned about the mind-control technology, Faulkner reveals the following information:

**The Student.** One of his students, Harlan Alder, was conducting studies comparing how brain chemistry behaves under the effects of mind-control magic versus how brain chemistry behaves during ghostly possession—both somewhat surprisingly common occurrences in Beacon.

**A Falling Out.** Faulkner and Alder collaborated for a time on their research into mind control's effects on brain chemistry, but they had a falling out once Faulkner learned they were working to very different ends. Faulkner's studies were to help society build immunities to mind control. Faulkner also believed that proving that brain chemistry changes could help those suffering guilt for actions committed while under mind control, as it provides further evidence these actions were not the victim's fault. Harlan Alder, however, was using this research to identify what traits could make someone more susceptible to mind control. Once Faulkner revealed this to an ethics board, the funding was pulled and Alder lost his scholarship.

**Harlan's Home.** Faulkner knows where Harlan lives—a small building in Lowcity—and gives the heroes the address. Faulkner asks the heroes to return with any scientific journals they can find. Under Faulkner's keen eye it may help the investigation.

## HARLAN'S LAB

This building seems dilapidated and decayed from the outside, but hidden within lies a scientific marvel! Advanced scientific equipment, scrounged from scraps, spills over the tables. Piled in a corner are scrolls and journals detailing extensive stages of experimentation. From behind you, Harlan speaks in a voice not his own: "My research! It's mine. Leave it be!"

**A Possessed Foe.** Harlan has been possessed by **the Ghost** (appendix A), who is intent on protecting his research from prying eyes. Harlan uses the **commoner** stat block, but

has access to the Ghost's Ecto Blast action. (Note: The Ghosts stat block does not contain a Possession action. He is able to possess the heroes due to the controlling device in the room boosting his abilities.)

**Last-Ditch Effort.** If Harlan is reduced to 0 hit points, the Ghost attempts to possess the nearest hero who must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw. On a success, they resist the attempt and the Ghost dissipates. On a failure, the hero is possessed by the Ghost. A hero possessed by the Ghost uses the Ecto-Blast action every turn, attempting to knock out the other heroes. If all heroes are knocked unconscious, the Ghost destroys his scientific journals, covering his tracks.

**The Controlling Device.** A hero with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 notices a collar device on a table. Destroying this device causes the Ghost to dissipate.

Once the heroes have dispatched the Ghost, they can read the scientific journals to learn the following information:

**Chemistry Research.** Harlan performed in-depth studies about how the chemistry of the mind is affected by ghostly possessions and mind control. Any hero with an Intelligence score of 18 or higher cannot understand the *exact* specifics but gleans that some of the calculations seem incorrect.

**Possession Field.** Harlan believed that, with proper focus and training, a ghost could extend its awareness and possess multiple creatures at once. The range is somewhat limited, but any one of the collars that Harlan constructed creates a field that extends it.

**Astral Body.** Harlan, desperate to test his theory, created a device that simulates the *astral projection* spell, targeting only one creature (himself) instead of eight. A malfunction in the device instantly cut the cord connecting Harlan's astral body to his physical one. Harlan lost the ability to return to his physical form, but his research and understanding of metaphysics granted him new abilities.

Heroes who complete this investigation are given an *astral blocking bracelet* from Faulkner, which gives them advantage on their Intelligence saving throws against being charmed by the Ghost.



## INVESTIGATION #3: SCIENCE!

• Paragon's Peak! All citizens of Beacon look above  
• at the splendor and majesty of this domain,  
• but few get to set foot upon it. As you return  
• to Paragon's Peak in full daylight, you take in the  
• sights of the sharpest minds and the brightest  
• lights of Beacon.

For a long-term campaign, use one or more of the following random encounters to build the atmosphere of Paragon's Peak:

**Battling for Glory.** In Splendor's Square, two new sidekicks, the Awesome Jackal and Captain Macho Snail, have started a playful competition in an attempt to prove their worth. However, they are fiercely competitive; the situation is quickly escalating, and the conflict devolves to blows if the heroes don't step in.

**A Pensive Outlook.** A long line has formed on Paragon's Overlook, where the best views of Beacon's splendor are said to inspire. Getting a look at the city these heroes long to protect would be incredible, but time is short—can they talk their way to the front of the line before meeting with Doctor Amano?

**Shaming the Stargazers.** After hearing rumors that the face of God can be seen through Godswatch, a massive telescope, a group of protestors have gathered. They believe that looking for any proof of God is blasphemy, as confirmation of faith removes the need for faith. They have linked arms to form a chain and stop any from approaching the telescope—can the heroes find a way to defuse the debate before it potentially spills over into violence?

### WHAT'S UP, DOC?

Heroes visiting Doctor Jocelyn Amano find themselves in a well-stocked laboratory. The following scientific materials can be found within:

**Healing Potions.** Three bubbling potions are arranged on a table. A successful DC 12

Intelligence (Investigation) check identifies these as potions of healing. Dr. Amano parts with one, if asked.

**Arkwave Energy.** A glass vat contains arkwave energy. If the vat is damaged, the energy leaks out. Characters exposed to the energy leak have advantage on all ability checks, weapon attacks, and saving throws for one hour, and all attacks deal the maximum amount of damage.

**The Device.** Dr. Amano has what was salvaged from the device—given to her by Intellect—attached to a strange circular device.

Dr. Amano conveys the results of her research: the device boosts the effects of mind-control abilities, increasing their range and effectiveness and allowing the culprit to control multiple creatures at once. By reverse-engineering the collar, she believes she can track the signal to its source.

## MENAGERIE MADNESS

• As Doctor Amano begins to trace the signal, the  
• skylight shatters! Collared animals, under the  
• thrall of some fiendish mastermind, beeline for  
• Doctor Amano's tracking device, attempting to  
• cover their cruel master's tracks!

An **ape**, **black bear**, **crocodile**, and **giant rat** all burst in—the four creatures are under the control of the Ghost and are wholly focused on destroying Doctor Amano's tracking device. If their collars are destroyed or disabled (as described in issue 1), the creatures instead attack the most obvious threat or attempt to flee if reduced to half of their hit point maximum.

Doctor Amano's tracking device has an AC of 11 and 20 hit points. If it operates for four rounds without interruption, the device is successful in tracking the Ghost's base—located within the Ivory Wilds. If the device is destroyed before the four rounds have elapsed, Doctor Amano is able to trace the source to within a two-mile radius, but the heroes must explore the Ivory Wilds to find the exact location.

Once the heroes have finished conducting their investigation, they advance to 3rd level.



# ISSUE 3: THE GHOST STRIKES!

Beacon holds its breath, knowing that, at any moment, more legendary beasts under the control of the Ghost may strike! The Portaleers have assembled, watching and waiting, ready to put their lives on the line to defend Beacon yet again. But our eyes turn to the Ivory Wilds—there, the Ghost plots and plans from his secret lab. Our heroes will finally face the mind behind these schemes!

## MILD MANNERED: REDUX OF THE REDUX

If a hero agreed to a secret identity obligation in issue 2, force the hero to cancel the obligation in order to save the day. The consequences should grow with each new adventure, the personal ramifications stretching into future arcs as the heroes struggle to keep their lives separate.

## TRUST ME, I'M A DOCTOR

If the heroes ask Professor Faulkner or Doctor Amano about the possibility of freeing the Ghost from the astral body he is trapped in, they both believe that doing so is beyond their current scientific knowledge. However, should the heroes introduce the scientists to each other, they theorize that if they put their heads together and speak to the Ghost, they can save him.

## THE IVORY WILDS

To the west of the great city of Beacon lie the Ivory Wilds, a vast and untamed wilderness. Somewhere within this great forest, among the natural hazards and unimaginable beasts, lies the lair of the Ghost!

## ON THE HUNT!

As the heroes travel to the Ghost's lair, consider using one or more of the following encounters to help build the atmosphere of the Ivory Wilds:

**Remnants of the Dead.** Skeletal remains, wrapped up in white choker vines, clutch a book with a faint arcane aura. Heroes who battle past the dangerous vines and recover the book gain the recipe for a *potion of greater healing*.

**Prowling Colossus.** A massive purple worm slithers from the base of Venompeak toward the heroes. This creature is beyond their ability—they must hide from or outrun the beast...or face overwhelming odds.

## FEED ME, SEYMOUR

There, among the underbrush—metal peeks out from behind grass, a structure standing in defiance of nature. Surely this must be the Ghost's lab! But what terror protects it?

Before entering the base, heroes do battle with **It That Lurks in the Woods** (appendix A).

- Due to thick underbrush, the area is considered difficult terrain.
- It That Lurks in the Woods primarily focuses on using its Vine Grasp feature to grapple spellcasters, while attacking melee heroes with its slam attack.
- If damaged by fire two rounds in a row, It That Lurks in the Woods attempts to flee due to its survival instinct, but focusing all attacks on the hero who dealt fire damage if it is unable to do so.

## A RACE AGAINST TIME

As the heroes enter the base, they see a flight of dragons soar overhead, bearing down towards Beacon—time to move!



## DON'T MIND THE STAFF

- What foul plans does the Ghost hold for the future?! Before you lies a grim spectacle—men, women, and children under the Ghost's sway, mass-producing collars for further fiendish plots!

Twenty **commoners**, all collared and under the control of the Ghost, are constructing more devices in an assembly line. If the heroes are noticed, the mind-controlled crowd speaks in unison. *"No, I'm too close now—do not interfere!"*

The workers, under the control of the Ghost, attempt to delay or kill the heroes, buying the Ghost time to complete his attack on Beacon.

The core challenge is to subdue the workers without hurting them, whether by destroying their collars or through other means. There could be significant long-term ramifications if the heroes hurt the workers—see "Continuing the Campaign."

For a more challenging encounter, have the workers use the Ghost's Ecto Blast action. This will tax healing resources, thus tempting the heroes to knock out the commoners rather than subdue them.

For a less challenging encounter, have the workers grapple the heroes, slowing their approach to the Ghost.

## VIEWING AREA

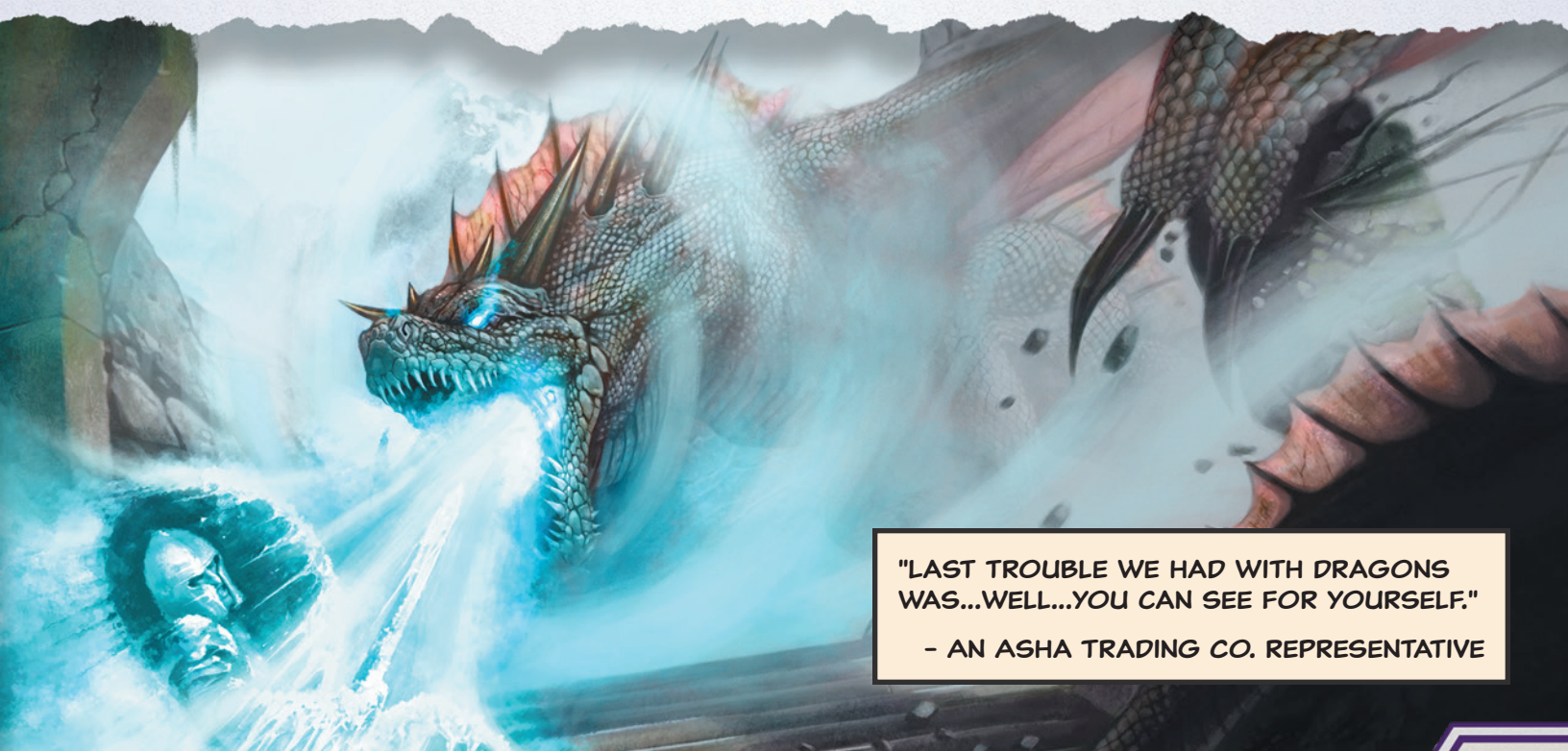
- A screen takes up an entire wall. Beacon is projected on it, as well as the approaching threat—a fleet of dragons, with the Portaleers waiting to meet them head on! And watching this grim spectacle—a veritable who's-who of movers, shakers, and scoundrels!

The Ghost has invited several faction leaders to view the attack on the city from a safe distance. If this grand assault impresses them, they will purchase his services for mercenary work.

These faction leaders have no interest in interacting with, helping, or hindering the heroes. They wish to let the demonstration play out, assuming that hero interference is par for the course.

For a long-term campaign, one of these faction leaders can serve as a future archenemy, and they may take note of the heroes as they go after the Ghost. Selecting just one faction leader allows for more focused interactions. Some faction leader suggestions are listed below:

**Doumoul Asha.** As the CEO of the Asha Trading Co., Doumoul has a large interest in mind-control technology. If questioned, he



"LAST TROUBLE WE HAD WITH DRAGONS WAS...WELL...YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF."

- AN ASHA TRADING CO. REPRESENTATIVE



admits he is interested in purchasing Ghost's skills for the purpose of slave labor—his “employees” can be worked to the bone under mind control, without any pesky complaints.

**Count Abramovich.** As leader of the Court of Empty Night, Count Abramovich knows this technology could make victims more docile and easy to hunt.

**The Marquis.** The cunning head of the Shattered Sons, the Marquis plans to use the Ghost's technology to control high-ranking government officials and collapse the system from the inside.

To involve secret identities, use the screen to personalize the assault on Beacon—rather than the cityscape, show the supporting cast fleeing from the assault as the dragons descend on the city.

## THE LAB OF THE GHOST

At long last, the astral body of Harlan Alder stands before you—the time has come to stop him, one way or another! On a screen behind him, you see time has nearly run out. The Portaleers charge the flying dragons, with the fate of Beacon hanging in the balance!

As Heroes battle or negotiate with the Ghost, they see the battle between the Portaleers and dragons playing out on the screen behind him. The longer this battle plays out, the more likely it is that Beacon will be destroyed!

- If the situation is resolved in less than 5 rounds, the city faces no damage.
- If the situation is resolved in 5-10 rounds, the city is mildly damaged.
- If the situation is resolved in 10-15 rounds, the city faces massive damage.
- If the situation is resolved in 15-20 rounds or more, the city faces catastrophic damage.

If heroes resolved the “Crime Pays” portion (issue 2) of the investigation, relevant sections of the city have been reinforced or evacuated. The timetable is moved up by one

category—for example, 10-15 rounds is now mildly damaged—and the city cannot face catastrophic damage.

The Ghost floats in the middle of his lab, mentally controlling the dragons heading toward Beacon. Three henchmen (civilians possessed by the Ghost—use the **commoner** stat block, but add the Ecto-Blast ability) are also controlled, serving as muscle.

Use the following information to run the the social and combat aspects of this encounter:

**Motivations.** If the heroes demand to know his motivation, he answers immediately. Harlan—now the Ghost—turned to crime to make the money necessary to further his experimentation. He is furious that his funding was pulled—furious enough to experiment on himself. He needs further research to rescue himself



GHAISTALAN UNDEAD ARE EITHER INCREDIBLY VOCAL, OR OBTUSELY SILENT. THERE IS NO IN-BETWEEN.





from this astral body. If Professor Faulkner accompanied the heroes, he asks for Harlan's motivations himself.

**Freeing Harlan.** If the heroes brought Professor Faulkner and Doctor Amano with them, the two scientists attempt to convince the Ghost that they can free him—he simply had to ask! There was no need for crime! The Ghost is skeptical, but with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the heroes can appeal to the Ghost and convince him to call off the attack.

**Fighting Harlan.** If the heroes don't attempt to save him, the Ghost battles the team until he is reduced to 0 hit points. Tactically, he tries to charm heroes and turn them against their comrades—if these attempts are unsuccessful, he focuses on his Ecto Blast attacks. If reduced to 0 hit points, the Ghost dissipates, apparently destroyed.

**Allies.** Any henchman freed by the heroes joins the attack against Ghost.

**The Good Doctors.** If Professor Faulkner and Doctor Amano fail in their attempts to convince Harlan to call off the attack, they participate in combat in the following manner:

- On his round, Professor Faulkner continues to attempt to appeal to the Ghost's better nature. On a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the Ghost has a moment of doubt and has disadvantage on his next attack or saving throw.
- On her round, Doctor Amano attempts to operate the Ghost's machinery. On a successful DC 10 Intelligence check, she may free one minion or hero from the Ghost's control or cause a feedback loop dealing 10 points of lightning damage to the Ghost.

## CONCLUSION

Once the Ghost has been saved or subdued, the attack on Beacon ends. The dragons help repair any damage done, and the faction leaders make a quick escape as soon as the plan goes south.

The Portaleers thank the heroes personally and introduce them as honorary members

to the public during a press conference in Argentum Square the next day. The Portaleers offer the heroes their sponsorship—their headquarters, their resources, and their help and advice whenever possible.

One Portaleer serves as a patron, checking in on the heroes—this is the DM's choice, although Intellect, Heart, and Friendship are likely to offer.

## CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

Depending on how this adventure is resolved, there are several possible ways to add future storylines:

**Return of the Ghost.** If the Ghost was defeated in combat, he will one day return to exact his revenge! Wanting to operate on a larger scale, the Ghost takes over a laboratory and uses the staff to create a magitech satellite. If launched, the satellite allows the Ghost to mind control all of Beacon! If the Ghost was reformed, another criminal could recreate his experiment, taking on the mantle of the Ghost and exacting a similar plan.

**The Little People.** Any mind-controlled civilian harmed by the heroes during the attack on the Ghost's lab swears revenge. They begin a campaign, turning public opinion against the heroes, condemning how often the average person is collateral damage in superheroic grudge matches. They could steal technology, recreate a lab experiment, or gain powers, all in preparation to face the heroes head-on.

**You've Made an Enemy In Me.** Over the course of the adventure, the heroes could have made an enemy out of the crime lord in issue 2 or any of the faction leaders they met in the Ghost's base. The faction leaders plot their revenge, or proactive heroes can decide to preemptively take down these criminal elements once and for all.

**The New Portaleers.** The heroes have now been introduced as honorary Portaleers. If anything happens to the core team, the heroes need to step up and fill their shoes.





"YOU CAN TELL A LOT ABOUT A PERSON BY THEIR ROOM.  
ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE OF VILLAINOUS INTENT."  
- UNKNOWN



# CHAPTER 11

# A STUDY IN LIFE

This is a mid-tier adventure for heroes who have gained some renown and a good deal of respect from the Guild of Heroes and the Portaleers. At this point, they have forged some powerful allies and have access to valuable resources via those connections. They need to make good use of those resources to survive. Heroes should be 10th level when they begin this adventure, and the GM should note that XX poses a significant challenge, especially if encountered in his lair. This adventure is meant to be played in one 4-hour session.

**Issue 1: “No Time for Mourning”** In this issue, our heroes must investigate the disappearance of several heroes. They encounter both disturbing truths and eerily familiar enemies!

**Issue 2: “The Right Hand of Death”** In this issue, the plot thickens as the heroes’ investigation leads to the temporary base of operations of a powerful villainous sidekick: Docent 2.0!

**Issue 3: “Mors Vincit Omnia”** In this issue, our heroes must come face-to-face with death as they battle XX. This evil genius has mastered the forces of life to the point that he cannot die from the passage of time. He won’t go down without a fight!

## ISSUE 1: “NO TIME FOR MOURNING”

In this issue, heroes investigate the reanimation of a newly empowered arkwave hero named Lifewake who was recently killed in action. She crashes her own funeral as an uncontrollable, raging undead version of herself. Their investigation reveals the disappearance of a number of individuals.

Notes for GM:

- You need one to three empowered NPCs from the team’s past to integrate into this storyline. If your group has been together for some time, former allied NPCs that were meaningful to the party are excellent choices. If you have a newly formed group, request ahead of the first session that they provide you former allies from their backstories.
- Arkwaves are powerful energy waves unique to Beacon that come every 20 years and often empower new heroes. The supervillain of this adventure, XX, is a brilliant lich scientist obsessed with unraveling the mystery of life by deconstructing lifeforms. His latest line of research is arkwave heroes, so the heroes need to make the connection



that everyone abducted for study is somehow connected to the last arkwave.

- If the team attempts to contact the Docent at any time prior to the conclusion of the fight with XX in issue 3, they are turned away from the Atrium of Lights. Only upon re-establishing contact with Intellect after the encounter does the Docent appear to aid in deciphering XX's research.

• A pall covers Beacon today. Many attend the passing rites of one of the city's newest heroes, Lifewake. She was a gentle and brave soul, a powerful healer empowered in the last arkwave. As Heart takes her place on stage to speak some words of comfort and eulogy, screams erupt from the back of the crowd, as Lifewake appears floating above their heads. Her pale skin and glowing eyes show that something isn't right!

## CALL TO ACTION!

### LIFEWAKE BATTLE

Lifewake hovers 30 feet above the crowd, head slightly askew and green glowing eyes vacant of human expression. She faces Heart who stands at the podium. Lifewake's body wrenches doubles over backward as if in response to shocking pain and she screams, "Trapped!" Roll a d8 on the Dangerous Science feature in Lifewake's stat block to see what happens. Roll on this feature every time Lifewake takes damage.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that part of Lifewake is seeking to avoid confrontation and is in some way resisting the necrotic forces at work in her. On the first round of the encounter, a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that attempting to calm her emotions in conjunction with a personal appeal helps Lifewake break the hold of the destructive energy. The DC reduces by 5 each round.

If a hero alleviates Lifewake's emotional distress by casting a spell like *calm emotions* or an effective personal appeal, she collapses.

Reducing her to 0 hit points also causes her to collapse. Go on to (Un)Official Commission.

After 6 rounds of combat, any hero with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or higher notices that Lifewake always reorients herself towards Heart at the beginning of her turn. If they suggest to Heart that she draw Lifewake away, Heart leads Lifewake towards the Wastelands where the Portaleers can deal with her. Go to (Un)Official Commission.

### (UN)OFFICIAL COMMISSION

Following the battle, Intellect and Heart ask the team to uncover the cause of Lifewake's resurrection and transformation.

After the encounter with the undead Lifewake, Intellect approaches the party and says, "Thank you for your initiative back there. I maintain a dossier on all active powered individuals in Beacon and I know that there were between 500 and 1000 powered individuals of Lifewake's threat level or higher created in the last Arkwave. The city will be put at considerable risk if this incident with Lifewake is repeated on that scale. I'd like your group to find out what's happening here."

If the party accepts, go on to Known Associates. If they hesitate or ask about rewards, Intellect looks frustrated and is about to speak when they hear Heart speak from behind them.

"What do you want? Name it." Heart is visibly shaken, not from the combat so much as from a desire for justice and peace for Lifewake. If Heart has led Lifewake away, have Intellect say this same line with slight irritation.

"If this threat is as grave as we suspect and you stop it, you have the grateful thanks of an entire city. What's more, Lifewake was very dear to me. Do this well and I promise you'll be rewarded.

"Not to mention," continues Intellect, "You would probably not survive a conflict 1000 times the scale of the one we just experienced. It's in our universal best interest to work this out.

"Here's a list of Lifewake's known associates. There's not much here, I'm afraid. She's only been active a few weeks. The last arkwave was



incredibly potent, so those affected by it have extreme power potential, but they're really little more than civilians in every other way. Get some rest and go at this fresh."

- Lifewake (Sarah Dauphine)
- Jon and Marjorie Dauphine (Waymaker's Plaza, Serenity)
- Dracs Gnormaz (Enlightened Heights, Argentum Square)
- Julio Gravitz, (Lowcity)

## KNOWN ASSOCIATES

The heroes talk with those on the list provided by Intellect, eventually leading them to Paragite Pub in Lowcity and the start of issue 2.

**Note to GMs.** Feel free to substitute your own NPCs as Lifewake's known associates here. The key information the team needs to glean from their investigation at this stage is that Lifewake was investigating the disappearances of several of her friends who were empowered in the last arkwave. To save time you can reveal all of that information in the interview with her parents, or you can give each NPC a piece of the puzzle and have the heroes slowly roleplay their way to the Paragite Pub.

**Option 1: Dracs Gnormaz, Sorreal Museum.** Anyone on the street in Argentum Square can direct the heroes to the Sorreal if they ask about Dracs Gnormaz. If the heroes proceed to the museum, the closest lead to the encounter with Lifewake, they are greeted by Dracs.

He did not know Lifewake well, but tells the team that she came to the museum searching for missing friends who were reported to have been seen around the museum late at night. He can't verify if they were there because he goes home after closing, and he doesn't personally know any of the individuals for whom she was looking.

If they investigate the museum, the heroes find a number of beautiful and priceless works of art, including one incredibly detailed model of Beacon. Its information plaque reads, "Living Beacon, artist Unknown." The docent explains that this particular piece is of

unknown origin and is one of the oldest in the Sorreal collection. It possesses some kind of primitive adaptive consciousness that is able to represent an accurate, up-to-date model of Beacon as it currently exists. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals tiny models of the heroes themselves looking at the model exhibit through the window of the model Sorreal. Dracs remarks that no one knows how it works, but that it is rumored to have been designed by the same genius responsible for the creation of the Docent, aide-de-camp to the Portaleers.

### **Option 2: Julio Gravitz, Paragite Pub.**

As the heroes approach the Lowcity pub, read the following:

- Grimy windows show a warm glow from within.
- Parasite Pub is the right kind of place on the wrong side of town. Anyone looking for a reprieve from the pressures of life can come here safely, provided they keep their wits there and back again. Decent food, fine spirits, and even information are for sale here.

Julio is head barkeep at Paragite Pub. Everyone in the district knows him. If the heroes go to Paragite Pub first, Julio responds to a bribe of 10 gp or a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. He says that a fellow called Jon, a craftsperson from Serenity, was spying on Lifewake the week before her death. He won't say more, insisting that they find this "Jon." He is very nervous and, if pressed further, calls for Lamplighters to remove the team from the bar.

If the heroes are returning from their interview with Jon and Marjorie, Julio is reluctant to share information regarding his conversation with Lifewake but comes around with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check. He says that Lifewake was looking for three of her friends and tells the heroes that he believes they were pressed into service at sea. He heard of three individuals matching their descriptions being herded into a warehouse down by the wharves, not far from Paragite Pub. Julio shows the heroes the location on a map. He couldn't tell them earlier because someone was watching him talk with



them. A hooded figure in a long black robe that completely obscured their identity.

Option 3: Jon and Marjorie Dauphine, Serenity. Jon and Marjorie are Lifewake's parents. Marjorie is warm and inviting, but shaken by the recent events. Jon is gruff and dismissive. If the heroes come here first, only a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check gets Jon to tell the heroes up front that his daughter was investigating the mysterious disappearances of several of her friends, all of whom were empowered by the same arkwave. (Coming here from Paragite Pub and bringing up to Jon their conversation with Julio results in an automatic success on the Persuasion check.)

Jon is reluctant to work with the heroes because he believes the Portaleers exposed Lifewake to unnecessary risk. One night, Jon followed his daughter to the Paragite Pub while she was investigating and observed her having a meeting with a figure he believed to be the Docent. At this point, Marjorie remarks that the Docent came to pay their respects to Sarah after the wake.

On a failed check, Jon simply dismisses the heroes as working with "them" and orders them to leave. Marjorie reproves him for being rude to the guests and remarks, "They're trying to help. And besides, it's what Sarah would have wanted. She was going to be a Portaleer one day. She must have meant a great deal to them. The Docent even came by my workshop after the wake wanting to pay respects to Sarah before they took her for the funeral."

Upon hearing this remark, Jon becomes agitated and relays his experience observing Lifewake with the Docent at Paragite Pub before she died.

**Cloaked Figure.** No matter what order the heroes chose to do their interviews, they should end up in Paragite Pub and learn that Lifewake was looking for missing friends near a warehouse in the harbor districts nearby.

When Julio relays this information, an individual in the corner of the pub wearing a black robe and hood that completely obscures their appearance gets up and walks out of the room into the street, headed for the harbor.

The figure does not respond to any attempt at communication, cannot take damage, and cannot be restrained in any way. A successful DC 25 Intelligence check reveals that the figure is some kind of advanced magitech reconnaissance device, probably sent to watch Julio.

The team advances to 11th level. Move on to issue 2.

## ISSUE 2: THE RIGHT HAND OF DEATH

In this issue the heroes' leads have brought them to a warehouse in Lowcity near the harbor. Inside, they find the villainous sidekick Docent 2.0 operating a remote experiment site linked to the lair of XX. They must fight them and either defeat them or survive the awakened experimental subjects following their flight.

**Note to GMs.** The Docent 2.0 is an "upgrade" of the Docent, a synthetic individual who works with the Portaleers. Both were designed by XX. If the heroes question the Docent 2.0 about their identity or act as if they believe that the Docent 2.0 is the Docent of the Portaleers, Docent 2.0 replies that they are an upgrade in every way—stronger, faster, smarter, and most importantly, unencumbered by the greatest weakness of all: a soul.

**Docent 2.0.** The heroes' investigation leads them to the temporary lab of the Docent 2.0, villainous sidekick of XX.

Following the figure leads the heroes to a warehouse in the location that Julio marked on the map. Once within 5 feet of the door, the figure disappears. When the heroes come to the warehouse, they find what appears to be a normal industrial door, but a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that it is only a façade covering a sophisticated magitech door. The door can be opened with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. The door cannot be broken, but the warehouse wall is thin iron over wood and the



hinges that hold the door into the frame can be. (The wall holding the hinges has an AC 17 and 50 hit points.) There is also a third-story catwalk that connects the warehouse to the building next door via small inspection hatches. Gaining unnoticed access via the hatches requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check to maintain balance and DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check to keep quiet.

Inside, if the heroes succeed in gaining entrance to the warehouse stealthily, they can observe 3 to 5 inert bodies on autopsy tables and hooked up to various diagnostic instruments. The room is aglow with the same light in Lifewake's eyes.

If their skill checks were successful or they were able to open the door using tools, they see a creature resembling the Docent at the far end of the room working over a body to connect it to a set of diagnostic equipment. The Docent 2.0 is surprised.

If they forced their way in then, they see the Docent 2.0 standing between them and the bodies, prepared to fight. The Docent 2.0 uses the **stone golem** stat block with these additions:

- The Docent 2.0 has telepathy out to 120 feet.
- The Docent 2.0 learns the language of anyone it communicates with telepathically. It currently understands all known languages.

If the team successfully incapacitates or destroys the Docent 2.0, they activate a distress signal immediately before that alerts supervillain XX who later fights them in the open (see issue 3, Death on the Streets).

If the heroes are in danger of losing the encounter, Lamplighters raise the alarm across Lowcity. The Docent 2.0 activates a data wipe on the lab equipment and deactivates the diagnostic equipment. A number of bodies equal to two per team member rise from the tables as **ghasts**.

After the ghastly encounter is over, a hero who examines what is left of the equipment, succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence check, learns that the data transfer was routed toward the Soreall museum. Deciding to go back to the museum moves the heroes to issue 3: option 2.

The party advances to 12th level after their next long rest. Go on to issue 3.



OLD CONSTRUCTS, ONES WHO HAVE GONE OFF THE DEEP END, ARE NOT COMMON IN BEACON, BUT ENOUGH OF A DANGER THAT IT'S ONE TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR.

## ISSUE 3: MORS VINCIT OMNIA ("DEATH CONQUERS ALL")

In this issue, the heroes fight XX, the legendary mastermind who has leveraged his vast scientific knowledge to conquer his own death. Depending on the outcome of issue 2, XX either fights the heroes in his lair or finds them out in the open. Defeating XX reveals the purpose of his research and reaps great rewards. Allowing him to escape yields valuable intelligence but forebodes great trouble.

If the heroes succeeded in defeating the Docent 2.0, as soon as they have had a long



rest and are outside isolated from other supers, proceed to Superfight: XX the Sciencelich.

If the Docent 2.0 escaped and the heroes are following the lead back to the Sorreal Museum, proceed to “Darkness Below.”

### ***Darkness Below: The Sciencelich Lair.***

As the party returns to the Museum, they are greeted by an excited Dracs who describes how the “Living Beacon” sculpture was behaving strangely during the night (at the same time as the data transfer happened).

It is currently glowing with bright green light, and the model shows a beam like a signal light emanating from within the model Sorreal. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that there appears to be a hatch beneath the installment. A successful DC 20 Strength check moves the installment over to reveal a spiral staircase leading to one of many entrances to XX’s lair. Proceed to Superfight: XX the Sciencelich and note that the encounter takes place within XX’s Abstrusatorium (see appendix B).

## ***SUPERFIGHT: XX THE SCIENCELICH***

• The atmosphere grows dark and heavy as a sickly green light glows from everywhere and nowhere. Our heroes feel a cold dread fill their hearts as if the eerie glow chills from within. A voice cries out!

“IMPUDENT FOOLS! With your ridiculously insignificant powers and pitiful shortsighted “morality.” You are like children playing in the workshop of a master craftsperson. You bang with hammers and strew paint about with no notion even of your own actions, much less what priceless work you are destroying! I will not let you microintelligent parasites stand in the way of discovery. Let me teach you a lesson in death even you cannot fail to comprehend!”

**Note to GMs.** If your players have provided you with important missing individuals from their backstories, you can include them here as undead pawns of XX, using the henchling rules. Following the method set up in issue 1 with Lifewake, a personal appeal paired with an effect used to suppress strong emotions causes the bodies to fall limp. Otherwise, 1 hit

point of damage or one failed saving throw kills these henchlings.

XX uses the **lich** stat block with these additions:

- XX can forgo the cold damage from his Paralyzing Touch attack and extend the range to 30 feet. It’s not an ice beam.
- XX has mastery over cold, lightning, and necrotic damage. He knows the *chill touch* and *shocking grasp* cantrips and can cast them at will.

If the party is successful in incapacitating or killing XX, then go on to Reading Up.

If they are in danger of a total party kill, Intellect appears from the shadows of the lab and executes a stunning strike on XX. If after three rounds of combat with Intellect’s assistance, the party is still in danger of losing, Intellect says, “Even if you manage to kill us, your research project is over. I’ve activated my distress signal and the rest of the Portaleers will be here soon.”

Intellect is an **assassin** with these changes:

- *Peak Performance.* Intellect’s Strength, Dexterity, and Intelligence are all 20 (+5).
- *Falling with Style.* Intellect doesn’t fly, but neither does he take fall damage. If Intellect falls and comes within 5 feet of any structure at any point during his fall he can use the Monk’s Slow Fall feature, reducing damage by up to 100 hit points.
- *Master of Movement.* As a legendary action, Intellect can take the Disengage, Hide or Dash action at the end of another creature’s turn.
- *Student of Physiology.* Whenever Intellect uses his Sneak Attack feature, he can choose to target a weak point of the target’s nervous system. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of Intellect’s next turn.

XX responds coldly, “I don’t want to kill you, fools! I want to do important work in peace. I’m trying to understand the very fabric.... But alas, I waste my breath. You would not be capable of understanding even one tenth of what I am attempting, even if I explained it! It’s so frustrating suffering you imbeciles to live alongside me! If only you would stay out of the way when I’m trying to help us all!”



With that, he escapes into the darkness of the lair and is gone. Go on to Reading Up.

**Reading Up.** After the encounter, an investigation of XX's lair reveals indecipherable research. When the party returns to the Atrium of Lights to reestablish contact with Intellect, he approaches them with the Docent and invites them to assist in the research. The Docent is able to decipher the research even though they cannot remember knowing the language.

The result reveals that XX was attempting to quantify how the Arkwave affected the weave of life in individuals who received their powers in the most recent, particularly powerful arkwave. His goal was to harness and control that power



INTELLECT IS A PORTALEER WHO IS NOT TO BE CHALLENGED, HIS MIND AND TACTICAL SKILL UNPARALLELED.

## GUILD COINS

Guild coins also represent a ripe opportunity for players to pursue interesting lines of character development. There are a number of Beaconite characters who would be willing to do them a favor in exchange for a guild coin from a Portaleer.

so that he could create arkwave-empowered individuals at will. His experiments failed, and the result was either death or uncontrolled effusion of power, as in Lifewake's case.

Their investigation also reveals that XX was the Docent's original creator.

If the fight with XX was successful, go on to Heroes' Rewards. If not, go on to Looking Long-Term.

**Heroes' Rewards.** Following the events of Reading Up, Intellect takes the heroes to the Atrium of Lights where they are offered 10,000 gp apiece and an official relationship with the Atrium of Lights as honorary Portaleers. They can keep the gold whether they accept the position or not. If any member of the team accepts the position but not the gold, the Mantle of Heart presents them with guild coins from the Favor Forge with her insignia on them. They are redeemable for magic items or services worth at least 10,000 gp.

**Looking Long-term.** After Reading Up, the heroes can recover with a long rest at the Atrium sickbay where Intellect approaches them.

"That didn't go as planned," he says. "It was partially my fault. I should have known that someone that powerful was operating right here in Argentum Square. But you did show courage, resolve, and some raw talent for this kind of work. I would like to offer you each an official connection to the Portaleers. You would be under my supervision to be trained and equipped for further work. I'd also be willing to provide you personally with funding for equipment upgrades."

If they accept, they become probationary associates of the Portaleers and Intellect pays each 5,000 gp. If they refuse, he presses into their hands 1,000 gp each and tells them to at least think about upgrading equipment or paying for some advanced training.

The party advances to 13th level when they finish their next long rest.





THE HYPER DEMON IS A BEAST KNOWN ONLY TO HORROR STORIES OF BEACONITE CHILDREN.



# CHAPTER 12

# HATRED OF THE HYPER-DEMON

This adventure is intended to be the ultimate challenge for Beacon's most elite heroes. The Hyper-Demon has captured the Portaleers and is threatening to sink Beacon into the sea. Yet this is only a ruse for their true plan: harness the incredible energies of the Portaleers and the heroes who come for them to rip a hole in the very fabric of spacetime, unleashing ancient evils from the dawn of time! This adventure is divided into three issues and is intended to be played in a single 4-hour session:

**Issue 1: Help is on the Way!** In this issue, heroes are called to evacuate Lowcity before the tidal generator can flood the area.

**Issue 2: The Lair of the Hyper-Demon.** Heroes must venture out to a flying base high above the Everglint Bay to penetrate the Hyper-Demon's mechanisms, learning terrible secrets about the Hyper-Demon's plans and tidal generator.

**Issue 3: Leviathan.** The horrible truth uncovered, heroes must find a way to stop the Hyper-Demon—and their awful machine!

## ISSUE 1: HELP IS ON THE WAY!

Notes for the GM:

- Heroes should be level 20 at the start of this issue. This is a very difficult challenge!
- The first two issues do not present much physical challenge for strong heroes, but they do offer an opportunity to drain

some of the heroes' resources before the battle in issue 3.

- An ordinary day in Lowcity! The birds squawk overhead, circling the Everglint Bay's majestic waters. The waves roll in, lapping at the shore. The piers creak and moan as the waves grow larger. Ships begin to jostle together, leaning in the growing waves! The waters of the bay begin to recede! What is happening!? Suddenly, the call goes out: S.O.S.! Heroes needed!

## CALL TO ACTION

By level 20, the heroes are well-established in Beacon. No matter how secret their identities, the government of Beacon has noticed their power levels and reaches out to them in this time of crisis. Nobody yet understands why, but the Portaleers are not responding to their urgent summons, so the government is desperately reaching out to other heroes of similar power levels. Depending on the circumstances of your heroic party, this can be accomplished in any way of your choosing. Some examples include the following:

- Official government communication via messenger
- Direct telepathic communication
- A signal in the sky
- Heroes may jump into action themselves, once they recognize the screams from Lowcity. In this instance, they likely realize by the opening of issue 2 that the Portaleers should have been present by then.



## THE EVACUATION OF LOWCITY

By the time heroes arrive, moderate waves are beginning to slam into the Harbor. Sailors are scrambling to get their boats out to sea, out of the path of the increasingly dangerous waves. Some smaller boats have already capsized, and the docks are beginning to suffer serious damage. Waves are starting to extend past the docks, growing larger each time, and people are starting to panic and flee towards higher districts of Beacon. Nearly a mile away, a floating ship can be spotted in the sky above the bay, pulsing with angry red energy that coincides with the waters receding before a new wave appears.

This issue is optional. Heroes could make their way directly to the Hyper-Demon's ship above the bay, but doing so would certainly result in loss of life as the waves continue to pummel Lowcity. Heroes should be able to recognize this truth based on the crowded, panicking streets and the increasing property damage from the rising waves.

This issue is intended to be a series of skill challenges combined with creative uses of powers and abilities. Some examples of problems and solutions are provided below, but you may develop your own as needed. If heroes are in direct contact with Beacon's

government, any of these challenges may be directly given by them.

- The waves are rising. One hero could attempt to slow the waves, buying the others time to evacuate citizens. This could be accomplished by raising higher and stronger barricades, either in the bay or on the shore, or significantly blunting or otherwise diverting the waves themselves.
- Ships are beginning to bottleneck as they all attempt to move out of harm's way at once. Getting them clear would certainly save lives and ships. This could be accomplished by physically moving ships further out into the bay (thus getting behind the waves), or convincing people to consolidate onto a few large ships (abandoning the smaller vessels).
- A panicked crowd is blocking main passageways to higher districts of the city. These areas must be cleared and orderly if people are to escape in time. This could be accomplished by literally moving people to higher ground or by somehow convincing people to calm down and move in an orderly fashion.
- Buildings nearest the bay are getting damaged and beginning to collapse. People are trapped inside, and if left alone, they will surely drown! Saving them could be accomplished by stabilizing the building or moving the people to a safer area without becoming trapped with them.

### FLYING

The lair of the Hyper-Demon is flying nearly 200 feet above the bay; therefore, the heroes need to somehow reach that themselves. If heroes are unable to fly, several spells they may have at their disposal may get them far enough out into the bay—perhaps on a particularly brave ship! Most expedient, however, would be the use of the fly spell. If the heroes are in contact with the government, an official Heroes Guild member can easily provide a spell to cover at least most of the party. If heroes are independent operatives, a lower-level hero could provide a similar service, as they recognize the party's need. The Hyper-Demon's ship is far enough out to sea that it will take 8 of the fly spell's 10-minute duration to reach the ship if the heroes leave from the Harbor.



Eventually, once the heroes have expended some resources, it becomes obvious that the waves are only growing larger and that no stronger heroes are immediately arriving. Lesser heroes begin taking over the remaining evacuation, leaving the party to deal with the greater threat.

## ISSUE 2: THE LAIR OF THE HYPER-DEMON

This issue begins when heroes decide to venture out towards the floating ship above the bay, regardless of the status of the evacuation in Lowcity.

- A booming static cuts through the terror in the streets, and a massive projection appears in front of the small ship floating over the bay. Glaring out at Beacon is the image of the Hyper-Demon, flaming eyes illuminating the scarred flaps of skin that still cling to the broken skull that is the demon's face. In a voice that sounds of scraping metal, loud enough to be heard across Beacon, the demon yells: "Beacon! Your time has ended. The Hyper-Demon has declared your lives forfeit." The image fades and a brief calm sets over Beacon as the waters recede once more. Then a new wave, larger than any before, rises—and the panic across the city mounts!

### HYPER-DEMON'S LAIR: GENERAL FEATURES

The following features apply throughout the lair:

**Doors.** Every door in the lair is locked, requiring a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to unlock. The doors are made of heavy stone and may be destroyed after taking 100 points of damage. The doors are resistant to nonmagical piercing and slashing damage

**Hot Floors.** The floor of the lair is supernaturally hot. Any hero in contact with the ground who remains in one spot for more than thirty seconds takes 7 (2d6) fire damage per round. This effect ends when a hero moves.

## ENTERING THE LAIR

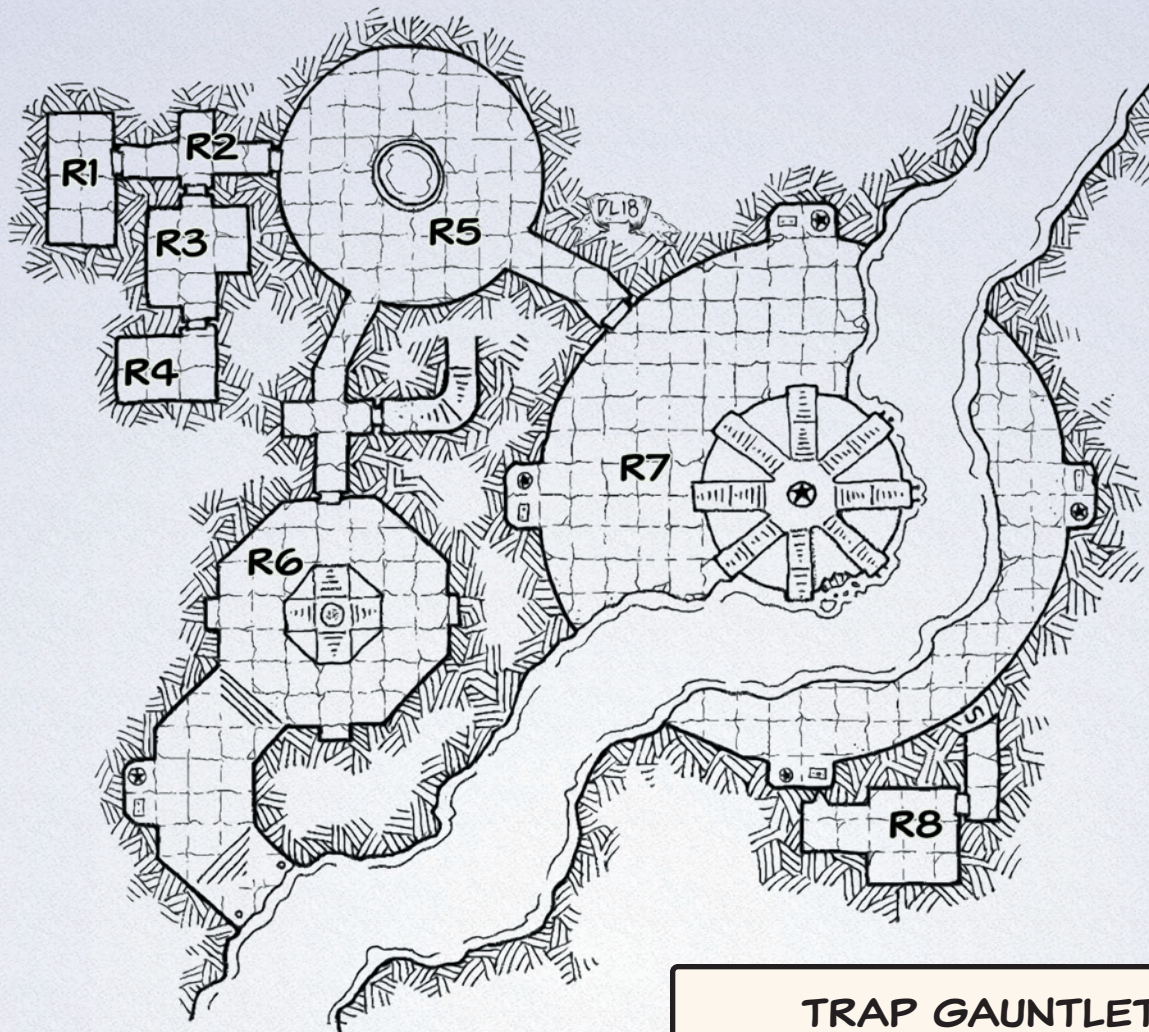
The Hyper-Demon's floating lair is roughly rhombus-shaped, made entirely of metal, and has only one obvious entrance. At the bottom of the ship stands a glowing red construct that pulses, sending energy downward and causing the waters to recede.

In reality, this construct magically controls a sea serpent beneath the water, whose motions are causing the tidal waves. The construct itself is heavily shielded by magic. It may be attacked—it has 200 hit points—but with its shields active, it has an AC of 30 and is resistant to all forms of damage. These shields may be disabled within the lair, or with a successful casting of the *dispel magic* spell (DC 20). If heroes manage to do significant damage to the construct, proceed to issue 3.

The only obvious entrance to the lair is a hatch on the top of the lair that leads to R1. This hatch is locked and trapped: a successful DC 25 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check unlocks the hatch, DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check locates the trap and a successful DC 30 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check disarms it. If the disarming check fails or the hatch is opened without disarming the trap, every hero within 10 feet of the hatch must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) force damage plus 7 (3d4) poison damage and become poisoned as a magical toxin is explosively released. Any hero who succeeds on this save takes half damage but still gains the poisoned condition.

If heroes are unable to open the hatch or decide against it, they may also break their way into the Hyper-Demon's lair. The metal walls of the lair are several inches thick and difficult to penetrate: after taking 100 points of damage in any one spot, the metal gives way. The structure is also susceptible to heat-based magic such as the *heat metal* spell. Regardless of the manner of entry, heroes arrive in R1 due to the magical nature of the craft, as detailed below.





## THE LAIR

The interior of the Hyper-Demon's lair exists within a pocket dimension and is much bigger than it seems on the outside. It appears as a technologically-enhanced cave system, with lava flows bubbling and dark energies sparking across wires and pipes woven into natural walls. The walls of the caves seem to shift slightly, as though organic in nature, but close inspection reveals them to be solid stone. Any heroes closely investigating get a sense of vertigo as their minds try to process the conflicting information.

Regardless of how heroes enter the lair, they always appear in room 1 and their entrance magically closes behind them. If clever heroes attempt to split the party and keep the door open by keeping someone or something outside, then the party is split! Anyone left outside the entrance sees the entrance sealing after twenty seconds with themselves trapped outside and away from their party.

## TRAP GAUNTLET

Rooms 1-4 comprise an optional trap gauntlet, designed to wear down heroes and punish people exploring the lair. However, it may not be fun for everyone to be repeatedly worn down by traps. Read your table and communicate with your players; if they would prefer to skip some gauntlets, Rooms 3 and 4 can be completely removed from the map as to remove even the optional possibility of unwanted trapping.

## R1: ENTRANCE

Regardless of how heroes enter the lair, they arrive in this room and the entrance seals magically behind them, appearing as solid rock. The lair is literally in a different dimensional space than Beacon; there is no obvious exit back to Beacon from here.

## TRAPS: LITERALLY EVERYTHING

Literally everything in this room is trapped. The door, the floor, the ceiling, the walls—every bit of techno-organic rock that makes up this



## PARAGITE

Paragite only affects individuals who receive their powers from arkwaves, as determined at character creation. Affected heroes suffer the following effects based on how long they are within 10 feet of paragite:

- 0-10 minutes: All attacks, magical or otherwise, do half damage.
- 11-20 minutes: All damage dealt to you is doubled, in addition to previous effects.
- 20-30 minutes: You take two levels of exhaustion and take 3d6 damage every minute, in addition to all previous effects.
- 31+ minutes: You are unconscious, but stable.

Each level of paragite exposure takes 1 day to recover from. Minor exposure, such as briefly glimpsing paragite, may be recovered from over a short rest. Paragite radiation is blocked by 3 inches of wood, 1 inch of stone or common metal, or a thin sheet of lead.

room is rigged to release a puff of paragite gas if interacted with in any way. Each trap must be individually disarmed. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines how a trap works, but once one such roll succeeds, the rest follow the same pattern and thus further identical checks are unnecessary. Once discovered, each trap requires a successful DC 25 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to disarm. Each trap must be individually disarmed.

Paragite gas affects every creature within 5 feet of its release. An affected creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned by paragite. This causes the poisoned condition, along with the effects of paragite as noted in the Paragite sidebar and fully detailed in Part 2: History.

## R2: BLADE HALLWAY

This narrow stone hallway seems deceptively normal.

### TRAP: ENERGY BLADES

Every five feet lies a gap in the stone, hidden by illusion magic, from which a blade made of pure arkwave energy swings. These blades swing whenever a creature passes over them. As there is no mechanical component,

these traps cannot be disarmed and may only be detected through careful physical examination of the space with a successful DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The magical nature of these blades can be deactivated with a successful *dispel magic* spell (DC 16). These blades cannot be blocked or interrupted in any way.

Any creature attempting to pass over an energy blade must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) lightning damage. This damage does not interrupt movement; heroes may proceed through the blades even on a failed saving throw.

## R3: CRUSHINATOR

Every surface in this room is divided into 5-foot square columns, which lightly float as if suspended in air.

### TRAP: SMASHING COLUMNS

This whole section's a real trap gauntlet. Can't stop now! Any column that is touched, including the floor, walls, and ceiling, immediately propels itself to slam into the opposite wall. Each column resets one round after launching.

Any hero that comes in contact with any surface in this room for any reason except being pushed by a column must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or be pushed to the opposite surface and take 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage.

## R4: TRAP CONTROL

This unworked stone room is completely empty, except for a small console with two buttons. One button is labeled "MERCY" and the other is labeled "NO MERCY."

**Mercy.** When this button is pressed, any heroes in this room are magically propelled through a mystic hell-dimension. They take 21 (6d6) psychic damage and reappear in R1. All the traps in rooms 1–4 have now been disarmed.

**No Mercy.** When this button is pressed, heroes are magically propelled through a mystic hell-dimension. They take 35 (10d6) psychic damage and reappear in R1. All the traps have been reset.



## R5: SCRYING ROOM

This is the first large cave in the lair, with a grand 30-foot-high ceiling dotted with stalactites dropping molten rock into small pools below. In the center of the room is a massive techno-organic scrying pool filled with hot water. Through it, heroes can observe the kaiju that is causing the tidal waves—its name is given on a digital readout as Cavois the Wave-Maker. There is no way to affect the creature from this room, but the water glows red whenever the Hyper-Demon sends a pulse of energy to the creature, causing it to convulse and create waves.

The stairway to the south leads, paradoxically, back to R1.

## R6: PARASITE PROCESSING

This room is more technological than the rest of the lair and is completely built around a central pedestal holding a large chunk of paragite. Wires, cables, and machinery form links between this pedestal and a small flowing river accessible via small descending ramps. The paragite is contained within the same shielding as the lair's exterior, giving it an AC of 30 and

## THE HYPER-DEMON WHISPERS

Throughout the lair, the Hyper-Demon can be magically heard muttering and whispering. The demon is aware of this. Most of the mutterings are meaningless babble about “the true shape of reality” and “the ripping fabric of time,” but sometimes useful or pertinent information breaks through. Feel free to create your own, but here are some sample lines:

“Did you think the Hyper-Demon’s lair so simple? No-no-no-no! I have shaped my reality, and soon yours splits in half! Hahaha!” [Intent: Slightly explaining the techno-magical nature of the lair]

“The darkness called, and the Hyper-Demon searched for it. I found it there, just outside the skin of the world, waiting to be brought home!” [Intent: Hinting that the Hyper-Demon has connected with Nul, outside of space and time.]

“Reality upon reality, so many folds, the gods and demons all together, crashing, smashing, bursting at the seams! Such glory to be found when it all crumbles again!” [Intent: Hinting that the multiversal portals in Beacon are causing damage to its reality, and it’s only a matter of time before a cataclysm comes.]

“So many places to see. Secret tunnels, my private maze, running from cheese to cheese, building my collection, keeping it secret, tucked away from the prying eyes above the world!” [Intent: Hinting that the Hyper-Demon has visited many worlds, some via unknown multiversal portals, to gather their strength and abilities.]

**"SPEND TOO MUCH TIME AROUND PARAGITE, AND EVEN IF YOU AREN'T A SUPER, IT WILL START TO EAT AWAY AT YOU."**

**- XAKOL, PARAGITE PROCESSOR**



## ENEMY HORDE

This is a lot of enemies to fight! It may be difficult to track using regular combat rules. Instead, see this as an opportunity to let players feel super. A 20th-level hero can take out lots of CR 2 enemies—let them! Allow players to get creative with their powers. There is likely no significant challenge to them until at least 5 rounds have passed, at which point you can roll group attacks and damage for enemies and heroes. Remember to keep track of paragite exposure throughout!

resistance to all damage. These shields may be deactivated in R8 or with a successful *dispel magic* spell (DC 20).

Interdimensional tears lie at the east, south, and west points of this room. Each portal is connected to a hell dimension under the Hyper-Demon's control. As the heroes enter the room, waves of enemies begin to flood out of the portals to attack, their difficulty increasing over time, as described in the chart below. These portals cannot be entered from the lair and cannot be damaged by physical attacks. They may be destroyed after taking 100 points of magical damage or with a successful *dispel magic* spell (DC 15).

Where the machinery meets water, the water has undergone an alchemical reaction to turn blue and glowing as it is irradiated with paragite. A small control panel is accessible between the machinery and water. This panel can be used to deactivate the paragite flow but, like so much in the Hyper-Demon's lair, is also rigged as a trap. A successful DC 30

Intelligence (Arcana) check is required to successfully decipher the panel's strange mix of technology and magic and deactivate it. A failure on this check, or any damage to the panel or its attached machinery, causes the paragite flow to increase to toxic levels. Extreme damage to the machinery eventually stops the flow of paragite radiation.

If the paragite is stopped or destroyed, the Hyper-Demon needs the heroes to complete their plans, as described in R7. The Hyper-Demon's whispers become fervent, saying things like, "My paragite! No-no-no, that won't do. Now my controls—they come for my controls, to find the portal-heroes—can't let them. Mustn't let them!" In this instance, the Hyper-Demon creates portals of demons as described in R7 immediately upon heroes entering it instead of when they begin to interact with the control panels.

## R7: PORTALEER PRISON

This cave is the central room of the Hyper-Demon's lair. It has a high number of magical technologies sprawled in a disorganized fashion over its high ceilings. The central focus of the room is a raised dais with seven pods, each storing an unconscious Portaleer. This dais is taking in paragite-infused water from R6, causing some sort of interaction between the paragite and the Portaleers before the water leaves the dais and continues flowing, now sparking with bright electrical energy. Four control panels at the four points of the room are connected via wires to the dais.

## ENEMY HORDE

| ROUNDS PRESENT IN ROOM | ENEMY HP | ENEMY AC | ENEMY ATTACK BONUS | ENEMY DAMAGE | NUMBER OF ENEMIES |
|------------------------|----------|----------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1                      | 33       | 13       | 5                  | 2d6          | 10                |
| 2                      | 50       | 14       | 5                  | 3d6          | 8                 |
| 3                      | 75       | 15       | 6                  | 3d8          | 6                 |
| 4                      | 95       | 16       | 7                  | 3d10         | 5                 |
| 5                      | 120      | 17       | 8                  | 3d12         | 4                 |
| 6                      | 150      | 17       | 9                  | 5d12         | 3                 |
| 7                      | 185      | 18       | 10                 | 8d12         | 2                 |



**Water.** The water flowing into this room has the same effects as paragite. The water leaving the dais has the effects of paragite and deals 21 (6d6) lightning damage upon touch. The water leaves this room in a sheer waterfall that seems to disappear in a black void. Any hero who falls over this waterfall must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be subject to horrific visions of the Hyper-Demon ravaging Beacon before landing back in R7 and taking 55 (10d10) psychic damage. This damage is halved on a successful saving throw.

**Portaleers.** The Hyper-Demon's force fields guard the Portaleers' pods, giving them and all machinery on the dais an AC of 30 and resistance to all damage. These force fields can be deactivated in R8 or with a successful *dispel magic* spell (DC 20). The Portaleers are unconscious and unresponsive. There seems to be tubes running directly into their bodies that are connected to the flowing paragite water.

The machinery and water are stripping arkwave energy from the Portaleers and giving it to the Hyper-Demon. The longer the Portaleers are here, the stronger the Hyper-Demon becomes! Any significant damage to or accessing any of the machinery on the dais causes the Hyper-Demon to react. Skip to issue 3.

**Control Panels.** These control panels are built to appear as though they free the Portaleers, when in actuality they are—like so much in this lair—traps for the heroes. The Hyper-Demon's siphoning of the Portaleers is working, but slowly. A willing sacrifice of power would be a much more effective way, and the Hyper-Demon is clever enough to build that possibility into this lair. Each control panel has only two obvious options: a hand-sized panel and a red light. If a hero touches the panel while using some kind of heroic ability, the light turns green.

Heroes might figure this out on their own, as there are many possible “heroic abilities” for the Hyper-Demon to siphon from, and the DM may use their discretion to determine if a hero's interaction is sufficient. If heroes are struggling, remember the Hyper-Demon whispers throughout the lair. It could be as simple as mumbling something along the lines of “Fool heroes, never solve the hyper-puzzle! Never

use their power, never! Hehehe!” If heroes are particularly suspicious, activating a panel could cause a Portaleer's pod to open. In this instance, the Portaleer remains unconscious and behind a force field—it is merely a lure to get heroes to interact with more panels.

As the heroes start interacting with panels, the Hyper-Demon feigns fear. They want heroes to think that interacting with the panels is the correct option, so they begin opening portals full of demons when the panels are interacted with. The demons are weak, only useful for fodder against the heroes. They pose little challenge except in extreme numbers. As heroes progress, throw as many demons at them as you wish to create an epic feel. See the “Enemy Horde” table and sidebar in R6 for guidance.

The panels must be interacted with simultaneously. If a hero steps away from the panel, the light turns red once more. In a game with fewer than four heroes, this requirement may be ignored. When all four panels are active, issue 3 begins.

## R8: SECRET CONTROL ROOM

The entrance to this room is hidden behind a powerful illusion combined with a strong lock. To even discover the existence of this door, a hero must specifically search the walls of room 7 and succeed on a DC 30 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Discovering there is an illusion is only part of the dilemma—they must now unlock the door without being able to see it through the illusion. This requires a DC 30 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check made at disadvantage. The illusion over this door may be dispelled with a successful *dispel magic* spell (DC 17), but as it is partially technological, it cannot be detected with *detect magic*.

This room is clearly technological in nature, as opposed to the semi-technological nature of most of the lair. Controls for the Hyper-Demon's force fields are hidden in this room and may be deactivated with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check or by inflicting 100 points of damage on the equipment. These



controls simultaneously disable the force fields protecting the paragite in R6, the Portaleers in R7, and the kaiju-controlling construct outside of the lair.

Disabling the force fields immediately triggers issue 3 but reduces the Hyper-Demon's AC by 3.

## ISSUE 3: THE BATTLE FOR BEACON

This issue, regardless of how it is triggered, opens with a bang.

- *Our heroes are stunned as the Hyper-Demon's lair begins to split! Pulled open like a tin can by the gigantic hands of the Hyper-Demon himself! A white light blinds our heroes as they begin to fall with the shifting gravity—and they find themselves tumbling out of the lair! The Hyper-Demon, now normal-sized, floats outside, magically holding the pods containing the Portaleers aloft! A portal above them bathes them in strange waters! As our heroes re-enter reality, the Hyper-Demon cackles, "You fools! Now your reality will end!"*

Outside the lair, it looks like it did before: a floating metal box, now with its bottom torn open to dangle freely. Chunks of metal float randomly all around, conveniently catching any falling heroes who cannot fly under their own power. The inside of the lair now looks like a white void from the outside. A determined hero who flies into the void finds themselves reappearing within the Hyper-Demon's lair, which now has no floor. On the dangling bottom of the lair, the construct controlling Cavsoi the Wave-Maker is still active. Below, the tidal waves are growing significantly in size and threaten all of Beacon. The head of the kaiju is now visible in the receding water, where a techno-magical collar is obvious.

### THE HYPER-DEMON

The Hyper-Demon appears strange though roughly humanoid in shape. Standing nearly seven feet tall, their most notable feature is a flaming skull, pulsing with dark energy, floating above where their head should be. A dark

## HYPER-DEMON'S STRENGTH

This encounter is written as though heroes successfully activated all four control panels in room 7 of Hyper-Demon's lair. If heroes instead found the secret control room and deactivated the controls there, the same effects happen, but they are significantly reduced in strength (narratively, not mechanically) and the Hyper-Demon's AC is reduced by 3.

cloak interlaced with organic, magical, and technological parts swirls around them while constantly generating an ash cloud. Flames seem to lick the edges of their clothing.

**Control Rod.** The Hyper-Demon holds the control rod for Cavsoi the Wave-Maker's collar—likely the easiest way to free or stop the kaiju if the Hyper-Demon's force fields were not deactivated. The Hyper-Demon must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw any time their hand is specifically targeted by a hero (+3 AC to specifically target the hand), or they drop the control rod. Heroes may also use other means to disarm the Hyper-Demon, which the Hyper-Demon contest with the stats given in their stat block.

## THE HYPER-DEMON AS A SUPER ENCOUNTER

When the Hyper-Demon's hit points reach 0, they do not fall unconscious or die. Instead, they give themselves over to the power of Nul, becoming a vessel for ancient chaos. When this happens, they gain new abilities as detailed in their stat block, and they immediately lose all interest in the kaiju. The control rod is dropped, and Cavsoi the Wave-Maker may go free if it has not already been released. If heroes are presently engaged with the kaiju, it likely keeps fighting to save itself—at the DM's discretion.

## LAIR ACTIONS

**Reality Ripples.** Waves of reality-tearing energy expel from the Hyper-Demon. These waves show glimpses of other realities bleeding into this one as the Hyper-Demon is tearing apart the multiversal barriers. Occasionally, something dark and unmistakably evil can be



glimpsed. These waves grow stronger every combat round, especially as the Hyper-Demon uses their Energy Drain ability. If the Hyper-Demon is not stopped within 12 rounds, minus one round per every successful use of Energy Drain, the veil between dimensions breaks and Nul returns to the world as Beacon's reality collapses.

Each creature of the Hyper-Demon's choice that is within 120 feet of the Hyper-Demon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns or upon taking damage, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends on it, the creature is immune to Reality Ripples for the next 24 hours.

**Tidal Waves.** Every combat round on initiative 20, Cavsoi the Wave-Maker thrashes as the Hyper-Demon's control rod, lair construct, and kaiju collar glow red. Each round, this thrash creates a larger wave. In 6 rounds, these waves cause irreparable damage to Beacon and cost untold lives. Every round after 6, Beacon becomes more and more damaged as more innocent lives are lost. After 12 rounds, Beacon is considerably damaged and the Hyper-Demon has won.

**Cavsoi the Wave-Maker.** This kaiju is being controlled against its will by the Hyper-Demon. The massive white sea serpent is nearly two hundred feet long; its head is visible above the waters and is itself nearly forty feet long. It crackles with electrical energy, and its thrashing obviously causes the tidal waves. The collar around its neck glows in unison with the construct on the bottom of the lair and with the control rod in the Hyper-Demon's hand. If the Hyper-Demon's force fields were not disabled, they are still active around both the lair construct and the kaiju collar, giving both mechanisms an AC of 30. The lair construct has 200 hit points and resistance to all forms of damage. The kaiju collar has 150 hit points but no resistances.

Cavsoi the Wave-Maker is here against its will, but it defends itself. Any time heroes attack it, it thrashes and attacks them to protect itself from further harm. Cavsoi the Wave-Maker's

Tail attack has a +16 to hit, a range of 60 feet, and deals 21 (3d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage plus 13 (3d8) lightning damage. Cavsoi the Wave-Maker can attack up to two heroes per round in this manner. If heroes attempt to remove or destroy its collar, it likely confuses their attempts for an attack and reacts accordingly. If it is freed by disabling the collar, lair construct, or control rod, it quickly flees back into the ocean, ceasing the waves.

Heroes could also use the control rod for themselves and direct Cavsoi the Wave-Maker to do their will, such as attacking the Hyper-Demon. This action would help save Beacon, but causes the kaiju obvious pain. If the kaiju is directly controlled by a hero for more than five rounds, it dies. This is considered a villainous act.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

**Flying Terrain.** This is an aerial battle.

Chunks of metal and terrain have begun to float and spiral around the Hyper-Demon's reality warping abilities, creating a potential path for heroes unable to fly to reach their target. Heroes must move half-speed to navigate the floating terrain. If they choose to move full speed, they must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to maintain their balance on the floating rocks or they begin to fall 80–100 feet into the water below. The terrain generally spirals around the Hyper-Demon, regardless of where they move, creating nonlinear paths of the DM's discretion.

**Healing Waters.** The Hyper-Demon floats within the waterfall pouring out of a portal in the sky. This is the paragite-infused water from its lair, and at the start of every turn that the Hyper-Demon begins in this water, they heal 4d6 hit points. Any hero who comes into contact with this water suffers the effects of paragite. The portal from which the water flows may be removed with a successful *dispel magic* (DC 15).

If the heroes have disabled the flow of paragite radiation inside the lair, this is just ordinary water that has no effect on anyone.



## COUNTDOWN TO MULTIVERSAL COLLAPSE

The Hyper-Demon's goal is to break reality, allowing Nul's return and shattering the multiversal barriers. This takes 12 combat rounds, minus one round for every successful Energy Drain. When the Hyper-Demon activates Nul Vessel, they use some of their stored multiversal power to transform into an avatar of Nul. When Nul Vessel is activated, add 4 rounds to the remaining total rounds before multiversal collapse.

### EPILOGUE

• With a final gasp, the Hyper-Demon begins to  
• fade! Shimmering, the darkness of its form  
• begins to splinter, revealing glimpses of strange  
• places, futures, things never meant to be  
• seen by mortal eyes. The very light of creation  
• itself breaks through their essence, and with  
• a mighty flash, the skies around Beacon clear  
• and calm returns.

Once the Hyper-Demon and Cavsoi the Wave-Maker have been stopped, Beacon is safe once more. The waters of the bay return to normal, and the rebuilding begins. Heroes may assist with cleanup if they wish. Lowcity especially is in serious disrepair, and there are many people still in need of aid. The Portaleers require minor surgical aid to be safely removed from the Hyper-Demon's machine, but they are freed and soon resume active duty.

Eventually, things return to normal, though questions linger. Was the Hyper-Demon in contact with Nul? Were the Hyper-Demon's energies safely dissipated? Is Beacon in danger of imminent dimensional collapse? For now, those questions have to wait. Heroes are commended for their efforts and in recognition of their extraordinary service are offered official and permanent positions alongside the Portaleers. Perhaps together, the next threat can be quelled more easily.

THE CULTS DEDICATED TO NUL SCATTERED ACROSS GHAISTALA ARE LAUGHABLE AT BEST ON THEIR OWN - BUT TOGETHER, THEY ARE A CONSIDERABLE THREAT.





# CHAPTER 13

# MAGIC ITEMS

Some heroes are born with greatness. Others have greatness thrust into their hands. Even if you don't get powers from arkwaves or radioactive animal bites, these magic items can make you feel super.

## BLADE OF NEW HORIZONS

*Weapon (longsword), rare (requires attunement)*

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Before making an attack with this blade, you can teleport up to 15 feet to an unoccupied space you can see.

## BLASTING ROD OF THE SLUMBERING BEAST

*Rod, very rare*

This rod functions as a magic mace that grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. Instead of dealing bludgeoning damage on a hit, the rod deals fire or lightning damage (your choice).

Alternatively, the rod can be used to deliver a ranged spell attack that deals 4d6 fire or lightning damage (your choice) plus the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 10 feet or knocked prone (your choice).

## CAPE OF FLYING

*Wondrous item, rare*

While wearing this cape, you have a flying speed of 50 feet and can hover. Even while standing still on a calm day, the cape always billows.

In addition, while wearing this cape, you can use a bonus action to make the cape transform into any clothing item or set of clothes that then appears on your body. The style, color, and quality of the clothes is yours to choose. Regardless of its appearance, the cape's weight doesn't change. Although the cape can duplicate the appearance of magical clothing, cloaks, or capes, it doesn't gain their magical properties.

## CREATURE REPELLENT

*Wondrous item, common*

As an action, you can spray this repellent on a creature within 5 feet of you. That creature must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 10 + half your level). On a failed save, the creature is frightened of you for 1 minute. It can repeat this saving throw as an action on each of its turns, ending the effect early on a success.

This repellent can be sprayed 3 times. The repellent magically replenishes 1d3 expended sprays daily at dawn.



## FALSE VERMIN

*Wondrous item, common*

As an action, you send this fake rodent scurrying up to 30 feet away from you. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the rodent must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 10 + half your level) or use the Attack action to attack this object on their next turn. This object is immune to all damage. You can retrieve this item after using it, but it is completely inanimate until the next dawn.

## GRAPPLING HOOK

*Wondrous item, common*

You can use an action to designate an unoccupied location within 20 feet of you. The grappling hook pulls you to the location. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

In addition, you can use an action to designate an item not being carried or worn within 20 feet of you. The grappling hook pulls the item to you.

## GRINDER

*Weapon (warhammer), legendary (requires attunement)*

Only a creature that shares an alignment with the hammer's maker can attune to this weapon. A creature not attuned to this hammer cannot even lift it.

You are immune to lightning and thunder damage while holding the hammer. Whenever it deals damage to a creature, you can point the hammer in a direction of your choice and cause it to emit a bolt of lightning in a 30-foot line. Each creature in that area takes 10 (3d6) lightning damage.

Additionally, when holding this hammer, you have a flying speed of 50 feet.

## HELM OF NEW FOREST

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

As an action, you activate the *helm of new forest*, causing thick, thorny roots to erupt out

of the ground around you in a 30-foot radius. Any creature in the radius must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, each creature takes 21 (6d6) piercing damage and is restrained for 1 minute. On a success, it takes half damage and is not restrained. On subsequent turns, creatures can repeat the saving throw, ending the condition on a success.

You can't use this property again until you finish a long rest.

## JUMP JET

*Wondrous item, common*

While wearing this item, you can use your action to fly up to 30 feet. If you end your turn in the air, you fall as normal.

## LESSER CAPE OF FLYING

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

While wearing this cape, you have a flying speed equal to your base walking speed. You fall at the end of a turn if you're airborne and the only thing holding you aloft is your flying speed. Even while standing still on a calm day, the cape always billows.

In addition, while wearing this cape, you can use a bonus action to make the cape transform into any clothing item or set of clothes that then appears on your body. The style, color, and quality of the clothes is yours to choose. Regardless of its appearance, the cape's weight doesn't change. Although the cape can duplicate the appearance of magical clothing, cloaks, or capes, it doesn't gain their magical properties.

## NIGHTVISION GOGGLES

*Wondrous item, common*

While wearing these goggles, you have darkvision out to a range of 30 feet. If you already have darkvision, wearing the goggles increases its range by 30 feet.



## KNUCKLEDUSTER OF DEMONIC STRENGTH

*Weapon (brass knuckles), very rare (requires attunement)*

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this set of magic brass knuckles. If you hit with them, you deal bludgeoning damage equal to 3d10 + your Strength modifier, instead of the normal bludgeoning damage for an unarmed strike.

## ONE-WAY SENDING STONE

*Wondrous item, common (requires attunement)*

As an action, you can form a link between this stone and up to four creatures you can see. Thereafter, as a bonus action, you can telepathically communicate with one or more of the creatures (your choice) if they are on the same plane of existence, but they can't telepathically respond.

## POWERED GAUNTLET

*Wondrous item, common*

While wearing this gauntlet, roll 1d6 in place of the normal damage for your unarmed strike.

## RADIANT CROSSBOW

*Weapon (hand crossbow), common*

This weapon deals radiant damage instead of piercing damage. While wielding it, you can cast the *light* cantrip at will.

## RAYGUN OF AMAZING TRANSFORMATIONS!

*Weapon (palm pistol), very rare (requires attunement)*

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Instead of using ball and powder, this handheld firearm magically emits one of the following rays (your choice). You use Intelligence for attack rolls made with this weapon.

- **Bodacious Beasto-morph Ray!** The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be transformed into a boar, cat, or chicken. While transformed, the target's game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the beast, except it retains its alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. The transformation lasts until dispelled or until the target's new form is reduced to 0 hit points.
- **Dapper Density-Altering Ray!** The target must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the target creature takes 45 (10d8) force damage and becomes ethereal for 1 minute. While ethereal, nonmagical weapon attacks against the creature have disadvantage. Additionally, the creature 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. On a success, the creature takes half damage and does not become ethereal. Affected creatures can make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw on subsequent turns, ending the effect on a success.
- **Frigid Freeze Ray!** The target must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the target creature takes 45 (10d8) cold damage and is restrained and stunned for 1 minute. On a success, the target takes half damage and does not become restrained and stunned. While frozen, the target gains 40 temporary hit points and vulnerability to fire damage. If these temporary hit points are depleted, the creature is no longer restrained or stunned.
- **Spicy Sizzler Ray!** The target creature must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. It takes 45 (10d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- **Stupendous Size-Changing Ray!** The target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, you choose whether the target's size becomes Tiny (suffering disadvantage on Strength checks, saving throws, and weapon attacks) or Gargantuan (dealing an extra dice of damage on melee attacks). On a success, its size remains the same. This change lasts until dispelled or until struck with the opposite effect from the stupendous size-changing ray.



## RETURNABLE THROWING KNIFE

*Weapon (dagger), common*

If this dagger is within 30 feet of you, you can use your bonus action to return it to your hand.

## SHIELD EMITTER

*Wondrous item, common*

While holding this item, you can use an action to shield yourself from unexpected attacks. Until the start of your next turn, you have a +5 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.

## SPEEDY SANDALS

*Wondrous item, common*

While wearing these sandals, you can use your action to move up to 15 feet without provoking opportunity attacks.

## THROWING SHIELD

*Armor (shield), rare (requires attunement)*

While holding this circular shield, you gain a +2 bonus to AC. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC.

Additionally, you can use this shield to make a melee or ranged weapon attack out to a range of 30 feet. The shield has the thrown property and deals 1d6 damage. You can target an otherwise visible creature or object that's around a corner with this shield. The shield's attack damage increases by 1d6 when the creature attuned to it reaches 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

The shield unfailingly rebounds off the target to return to your hand by the end of your turn.

While attuned to this shield, your Strength score is 15. The shield has no effect on your ability score if your Strength without the shield is equal to or greater than 15.

## ULNA CULVERIN

*Wondrous item, legendary  
(requires attunement)*

This sleek, lightweight metal cuff encompasses your forearm from wrist to elbow, auto-calibrating for your size. The device's touchscreen tracks and displays the following information: location, current and maximum hit points, distance traveled, body temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and breathing rate. This data is secretly uploaded to XX the Scienclich's Abstrusatorium for analysis.

This device has 7 charges. While wearing it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast a wizard spell listed in the **lich** stat block from it. This list is displayed on the device. For 1 charge, you cast the 1st-level version of a spell. You can increase the spell slot level or the level of spell by one for each additional charge you expend. Each spell may only be cast once per day.

The device regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the device's last charge, you suffer the effects of the *finger of death* spell. If you are attuned to the device for 7 or more days, you have disadvantage on the Constitution saving throw. If killed while attuned to it, you rise as a zombie permanently under XX the Scienclich's command.

## UTILITY BELT

*Wondrous item, common*

This belt has six small pouches on it. The inside of each of these pouches is much larger than the outside. Each pouch can hold up to 25 pounds, not exceeding a volume of 16 cubic feet. Retrieving an item from these pouches requires an action.

## VIGILANTE COWL

*Wondrous item, common*

While wearing this frightening cowl, you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.



# APPENDIX A: VILLAINS & MONSTERS

## AMELIA KASSRAM

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

**ARMOR CLASS** 17 (half plate)

**HIT POINTS** 112 (15d8 + 45)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 21 (+5) | 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 15 (+2) |

**SAVING THROWS** Str +8, Dex +5, Con +6

**SKILLS** Athletics +11

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

**SENSES** passive Perception 11

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 7 (2,900 XP)

**BRAVE.** Amelia has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

**BRUTE.** A melee weapon deals an extra die of its damage when Amelia hits with it (included in the attack).

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Amelia makes two unarmed strike attacks.

**UNARMED STRIKE.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 11 (2d10) force damage. On a critical hit, Amelia also inadvertently deals 5 (1d10) force damage to all objects and creatures within 5 feet of her.

## REACTIONS

**PARRY.** Amelia adds 3 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Amelia must see the attacker.

It's hard juggling high school with the demands of superhero life. While Amelia studies to become an engineer, she moonlights as a superhero.



AMELIA KASSRAM

Amelia didn't think she was old enough for the arkwaves to affect her. She'd only heard of adults gaining powers from those cosmic forces. So when the arkwave gave her super strength, she was caught off guard, though she decided to make the most of it.

Amelia may be small, but her punch packs a punch of its own. The only problem is she hasn't quite gotten the hang of her powers, which is why she sometimes leaves small craters in the ground when beating up baddies. Some of the other superheroes cautioned her about the collateral damage she seems to keep leaving in her wake, which is why she tries to keep her identity a secret for now. And she keeps at the problem, since that's what engineers do.

For now, she uses her fists and feet to fight villainy. Her super strength behind a longsword or battleaxe was unrivaled power she just couldn't control. When she's saved the day, she just hopes she's not late for class. Again.



# ASSISTANT, FLYING

*Tiny construct, unaligned*

**ARMOR CLASS** 12

**HIT POINTS** 2 (1d4)

**SPEED** 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 3 (-4) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) |

**SKILLS** Perception +5

**SENSES** passive Perception 15

**LANGUAGES** understands the languages you speak

**CHALLENGE** 0 (10 XP)

**FLYBY.** The flying assistant doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

## ACTIONS

**BITE.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

# ASSISTANT, GROUND

*Tiny construct, unaligned*

**ARMOR CLASS** 12

**HIT POINTS** 4 (1d4 + 2)

**SPEED** 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 3 (-4) | 14 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

**SKILLS** Stealth +4

**SENSES** passive Perception 10

**LANGUAGES** understands the languages you speak

**CHALLENGE** 0 (10 XP)

## ACTIONS

**BITE.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

# CIRCE, MASTER OF MAGI-TECH!

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil*

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (studded leather)

**HIT POINTS** 97 (15d8 + 30)

**SPEED** 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 13 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 20 (+5) | 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) |

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +8, Con +7, Wis +5

**SKILLS** Arcana +10, Investigation +10, Perception +5, Persuasion +7

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** acid, fire, lightning, thunder

**SENSES** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**LANGUAGES** all

**CHALLENGE** 16 (15,000 XP)

**WONDRIOUS INVENTIONS!** Circe has a number of magical technological inventions that she employs in combat. These include the following:

- *Gorgeous Goggles of All-Seeing.* Circe has truesight out to 120 ft.
- *Baffling Blouse of the Elements.* Circe has immunity to fire, lightning, acid, and thunder damage.
- *Effervescent Earpiece of All-Speak.* Circe can speak all languages.
- *Fabulous Flying Shoes.* Circe has a flying speed of 40 feet.

These changes are included in Circe's statblock. Targeting one of these devices with dispel magic can temporarily suppress the effect for 1 minute.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Circe makes two attacks with her raygun of amazing transformations! She cannot choose the same benefit twice in one multiattack.

**RAYGUN OF AMAZING TRANSFORMATIONS!** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 45/90 ft., one creature. *Hit:* Circe can choose one of the following effects:

- *Bodacious Beasto-morph Ray!* The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be transformed into a boar, cat, or chicken. While transformed, the creature's game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the beast, except it retains its alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. The transformation lasts until dispelled or until the target's new form is reduced to 0 hit points.
- *Dapper Density-Altering Ray!* The target must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the target creature takes 45 (10d8) force damage and becomes ethereal for 1 minute. While ethereal, nonmagical weapon attacks against the creature have



disadvantage. Additionally, the creature 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. On a success, the creature takes half damage and does not become ethereal. Affected creatures can make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw on subsequent turns, ending the effect on a success.

- **Frigid Freeze Ray!** The target must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the target creature takes 45 (10d8) cold damage and is restrained and stunned for 1 minute. On a success, the target takes half damage and does not become restrained and stunned. While frozen, the target gains 40 temporary hit points and vulnerability to fire damage. If these temporary hit points are depleted, then the creature is no longer restrained or stunned.
- **Spicy Sizzler Ray!** The target creature must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. It takes 45 (10d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- **Stupendous Size-Changing Ray!** The target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, Circe can change its size to either Tiny (suffering disadvantage on Strength checks, saving throws, and weapon attacks) or Gargantuan (dealing an extra dice of damage on melee attacks). On a success, its size remains the same. This change lasts until dispelled or until struck with the opposite effect from the stupendous size-changing ray.

## DWELVER

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good

**ARMOR CLASS** 16 (breastplate)

**HIT POINTS** 209 (38d8 + 38)

**SPEED** 40 ft.

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| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 11 (+0) |

---

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +6, Con +4

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +9, Arcana +6, Persuasion +3, Stealth +6

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common, Elvish

**CHALLENGE** 8 (3,900 XP)

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**CUNNING ACTION.** On each of his turns, Dwelver can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**EYE FOR DETAIL.** Dwelver has advantage on Arcana and Investigation checks made to identify magic items and artifacts.

**FEY ANCESTRY.** Dwelver has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

**LOOKOUT STONE.** Dwelver possesses the lookout stone. This allows him to cast the message cantrip, ignoring range restrictions and only targeting those in possession of a lookout stone.

**WEAPON CACHE.** Dwelver possesses a number of magical weapons and items. When he takes the attack action, he can switch freely between these weapons. Dwelver also ignores attunement restrictions for magic items.

## ACTIONS

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**MULTIATTACK.** Dwelver makes three attacks, choosing from his weapon cache.

**BLADE OF NEW HORIZONS.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage. Before making an attack with the blade of new horizons, Dwelver can teleport up to 15 feet. This is a magic weapon attack.

**BLASTING ROD OF THE SLUMBERING BEAST.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) fire or lightning damage (Dwelver's choice).

**BLASTING ROD OF THE SLUMBERING BEAST (BLAST ATTACK).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120/200 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) fire or lightning damage (Dwelver's choice). On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 10 feet or knocked prone (Dwelver's choice).

**KNUCKLEDUSTER OF DEMONIC STRENGTH (RECHARGE 5-6).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage. On a hit, the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of Dwelver's next turn. This is a magic weapon attack.

**HELM OF NEW FOREST (1/DAY).** Dwelver activates the helm of new forest, causing thick, thorny roots to erupt out of the ground around him in a 30-foot radius. Each creature in the radius must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, it takes 21 (6d6) magical piercing damage and is restrained for 1 minute. On a success, it takes half damage and is not restrained. On subsequent turns, creatures can repeat the saving throw, ending the condition on a success.



# THE GHOST

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 90 (12d8 + 36)

**SPEED** 30 ft., 20 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 19 (+4) | 15 (+2) | 18 (+4) |

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +5, Int +7, Wis +5

**SKILLS** Arcana +7, Perception +5, Persuasion +7, Stealth +5

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**LANGUAGES** Common, Draconic, Elvish

**CHALLENGE** 6 (2,300 XP)

**ENHANCED THRALLS.** Thralls that are within 30 feet of the Ghost gain the ability to use his Ecto Blast attack, using the Ghost's Intelligence modifier for the attack and damage rolls.

**INCORPOREAL MOVEMENT.** The Ghost can move 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.

**INCORPOREAL SHIELD.** Whenever a creature makes a weapon attack with a nonmagical weapon attack, roll a d8. On a 7 or higher, the attack misses, regardless of whether the attack hit.

**OVERPOWERING ID.** Creatures within 5 feet of the Ghost have disadvantage on Intelligence saving throws.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** The Ghost makes two Ecto Blast attacks. The Ghost can replace one or both Ecto Blasts with his Command Thrall action.

**ECTO BLAST.** Ranged Spell Attack: +7 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) necrotic damage.

**COMMAND THRALL.** The Ghost targets one of its thralls to make one attack as a reaction.

**COORDINATE ATTACK.** The Ghost targets all of his thralls within 60 feet of him to make one attack as a reaction.

**CREATE THRALL.** The Ghost targets one creature within 15 feet of him. The creature must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be charmed by the Ghost for a number of minutes equal to 10 minus the CR of the target creature (minimum of 1 minute).

# HAGARD THORNHEART

Medium humanoid (half-elf), lawful evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 17 (+1 studded leather)

**HIT POINTS** 214 (33d8 + 66)

**SPEED** 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 19 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) |

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +8, Wis +6, Cha +7

**SKILLS** Investigation +8, Perception +10, Persuasion +7, Stealth +12

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

**LANGUAGES** Common, Elvish

**CHALLENGE** 11 (7,200 XP)

**FEY ANCESTRY.** Hagard has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

**INNATE SPELLCASTING.** Hagard's innate spellcasting attribute is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *disguise self*, *minor illusion*, *knock*, *prestidigitation*, *thaumaturgy*

2/day each: *major image*, *silence*, *silent image*

1/day: *greater invisibility*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *programmed illusion*

**MASTER OF ILLUSION.** Creatures within 10 feet of Hagard suffer disadvantage on saving throws against his spells.

**SLIPPERY COMBATANT.** Hagard can take the Dash, Disengage, and Hide actions as bonus actions.

**VICIOUS ASSAILANT (1/TURN).** When Hagard hits with a melee weapon attack, he can deal an extra 17 (5d6) weapon damage.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Hagard makes two attacks: one with his paragite dagger and one with his false touch.

**PARAGITE DAGGER.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing or slashing damage (DM's choice). If the target is a creature, this attack ignores any resistances the target has.

**FALSE TOUCH.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) psychic damage. On a hit, the target must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of the target's next turn.



# HEROES INTERFECTOR

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 19 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 446 (47d10 + 188)

**SPEED** 50 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS    | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| 22 (+6) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 11 (+0) | 7 (-2) | 20 (+5) |

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +9, Con +11, Wis +5

**SKILLS** Athletics +13, Intimidation +12, Stealth +16

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** fire, necrotic

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons; poison

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**SENSES** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 8

**LANGUAGES** Abyssal, Common, Infernal

**CHALLENGE** 22 (41,000 XP)

**ANTIMAGIC AURA.** Heroes InterfeCTOR emanates an aura of antimagic in a 10-foot radius. Any creature or magic item that enters this aura is subject to the effects of an antimagic field spell until it leaves the aura.

**INNATE SPELLCASTING.** Heroes InterfeCTOR's innate spellcasting attribute is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell). They can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *shield*, *charm person*, *eldritch blast* (4 beams, adding +5 to damage roll of each beam)

2/day: *animate dead* (as a 5th-level spell), *blight*, *inflict wounds* (as a 5th-level spell)

1/day: *plane shift*, *power word kill*

**MAGIC RESISTANCE.** Heroes InterfeCTOR has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Heroes InterfeCTOR makes four attacks: two with its claws, one with its bite, and one with its stinger.

**CLAWS.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage. On a hit, the target is grappled (escape DC 20). The Heroes InterfeCTOR can only grapple two creatures in this way.

**BITE.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage. On a critical hit, the Heroes InterfeCTOR can choose to sever a limb

from the target creature, with the effect of such loss determined by the DM.

**STINGER.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d12 + 6) type damage. On a hit, the target creature must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Heroes InterfeCTOR 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. Heroes InterfeCTOR regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**ATTACK.** Heroes InterfeCTOR makes one claw or bite attack. **THROUGH THE DARKNESS (2 ACTIONS).** Heroes

InterfeCTOR emanates an aura of magical darkness in a 15-foot radius, then teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied spot it can see. The aura of magical darkness persists in its previous location until the end of Heroes InterfeCTOR's next turn.

**SPELL (3 ACTIONS).** Heroes InterfeCTOR casts a spell from its Innate Spellcasting feature.

## THE HYPER-DEMON

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 22 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 241 (21d12 + 105)

**SPEED** 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20 (+5) | 16 (+3) | 20 (+5) | 26 (+8) | 15 (+2) | 18 (+4) |

**SAVING THROWS** Con +12, Int +15, Wis +9

**SKILLS** Perception +16

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**SENSES** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 26

**LANGUAGES** Common, Infernal

**CHALLENGE** 23 (50,000 XP)

**LEGENDARY RESISTANCE (3/DAY).** If the Hyper-Demon fails a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead.

**NUL VESSEL (SUPER).** When the Hyper-Demon's hit points reach 0, they do not die or fall unconscious. Instead, their physical body explodes, reforming as one of pure shifting black energy, transforming into a vessel of Nul with only the flaming skull remaining of the Hyper-Demon that was. The Hyper-Demon gains 300 hit points,



their AC becomes 22, and they may now use their super actions. Additionally, any heroes that start their turn within 5 feet of the Hyper-Demon take 10 (2d10) necrotic damage.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** The Hyper-Demon can use their Energy Drain feature. They then make three attacks: two with their plasma blast and one with their atomic fist.

**PLASMA BLAST.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +15 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d6 + 9) force damage.

**ATOMIC FIST.** Melee Weapon Attack: +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 20 (2d10 + 9) force damage plus 11 (2d10) necrotic damage.

**ENERGY DRAIN (RECHARGE 5-6).** The Hyper-Demon targets a creature and attempts to siphon its energy. The target creature must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) psychic damage and a level of exhaustion on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. (Failing this saving throw also removes 1 round from the countdown to the destruction of Beacon.)

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

**PLASMA BLAST.** The Hyper-Demon makes a plasma blast attack.

**NUL WAVE (COSTS 2 ACTIONS).** The Hyper-Demon unleashes a pulse of Nul energy. Each creature within 15 feet of the Hyper-Demon must succeed on a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw or take 16 (2d6 + 9) necrotic damage and be knocked prone. The Hyper-Demon can then move up to half their flying speed.

## SUPER ACTIONS

The Hyper-Demon can use these actions as legendary actions for 1 hour after using Nul Vessel.

**NUL GRASP.** The Hyper-Demon chooses one target that has been affected by Energy Drain within the last round. That target must make a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or have their maximum health points reduced by 10 (3d6) on a failure, or twice as much on a successful save. If the target's maximum hit points are reduced to 0 by this, the target dies.

**UNIVERSAL DARK (COSTS 2 ACTIONS).** The Hyper-Demon chooses up to six targets it can see. Each target must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or be blinded until the end of their next turn.

**GLIMPSE OF THE VOID (COSTS 2 ACTIONS).** The Hyper-Demon peels back the multiversal curtain, revealing a nightmarish hell-dimension. Each creature within fifteen feet of the Hyper-Demon must make a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw, taking 16 (2d10 + 5) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success.

# IT THAT LURKS IN THE WOODS

Huge plant, unaligned

**ARMOR CLASS** 13 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 76 (8d12 + 24)

**SPEED** 20 ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 16 (+3) | 7 (-2) | 16 (+3) | 8 (-1) | 14 (+2) | 6 (-2) |

**SAVING THROWS** Str +5, Con +5

**SKILLS** Athletics +5, Perception +4

**DAMAGE VULNERABILITIES** fire

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**SENSES** passive Perception 14

**LANGUAGES** -

**CHALLENGE** 3 (700 XP)

**ANTIMAGIC BARK.** It That Lurks in the Woods has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** It That Lurks in the Woods makes two attacks: one with its slam and one with its vine grasp.

**SLAM.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**VINE GRASP.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 13). A creature grappled this way cannot cast spells.



IT THAT LURKS IN THE WOODS



# LIFEWAKE

Medium undead, neutral good

**ARMOR CLASS** 18 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 170 (20d8 + 80)

**SPEED** 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 21 (+5) | 14 (+2) |

**SAVING THROWS** Str +8, Wis +9

**SKILLS** Investigation +6, Medicine +9

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** necrotic

**SENSES** passive Perception 15

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 10 (5,900 XP)

**DANGEROUS SCIENCE.** As a result of XX's failed experiment, Lifewake no longer has complete conscious control of her actions. Whenever she takes damage, she uses her reaction, if available, to succumb to one of the following effects, determined by rolling a d8:

1: The green light in Lifewake's eyes flickers out for the briefest moment, and she looks piteously at Heart as if for help.

2: As she shrieks in pain, an expanding sphere of force extends to a 15-foot radius centered on Lifewake. Unsecured objects that are not worn or carried and weigh less than 100 pounds are thrown by the wave of force. Each creature in the field's radius must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 5 (2d4) force damage and is pushed 10 feet away from Lifewake. On a success, the creature takes the force damage but is not pushed back.

3: Lifewake uses her Mass Inflict Wounds action as a reaction, or Mass Harming Word if she has expended all charges of Mass Inflict Wounds.

4: Brilliant green light erupts from Lifewake. Each creature other than Lifewake within 30 feet is blinded until the end of its next turn.

5: She screams "Help!" and doubles over in pain, taking 9 (2d8) radiant damage. Reroll.

6: A beam of necrotic energy 30 feet long and 5 feet wide erupts from her body in a random direction. Each creature in the line must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

7: She flies wildly towards the most recent source of damage dealt to her, attempting to strike it with an unarmed attack. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the beginning of its next turn.

8: She lets out an immensely powerful shriek. Each creature within 30 feet of Lifewake must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be deafened until the start of its next turn.

# ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Lifewake makes two unarmed strike attacks.

**UNARMED STRIKE.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**MASS INFLECT WOUNDS (3/DAY).** A wave of negative energy washes out from a point Lifewake chooses within 60 feet of her. Each creature within a 30-foot radius must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**MASS HARMING WORD (3/DAY).** Lifewake shrieks in pain. The 6 creatures closest to her within 60 feet that she can see must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (2d4 + 5) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

# THE MARQUIS

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

**ARMOR CLASS** 14

**HIT POINTS** 133 (14d8 + 70)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 20 (+5) | 15 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 19 (+4) |

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +8, Cha +8

**SKILLS** Investigation +6, Perception +8, Stealth +8

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** fire, radiant

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

**LANGUAGES** Common, Draconic, Giant

**CHALLENGE** 11 (7,200 XP)

**AURA OF VENGEANCE.** As a bonus action, the Marquis erupts with blistering rage. At the start of each of the Marquis's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 7 (2d6) fire damage, and flammable objects in the aura that aren't being worn or carried ignite. A creature that touches the Marquis or hits him with a melee attack while within 5 feet of him takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

**ALL CONSUMING FIRE.** For every 34 points of damage the Marquis takes, the following effects happen:

- The Aura of Vengeance feature's area of effect increases by 5 feet.
- The fire damage from the Aura of Vengeance feature increases by 7 (2d6).
- The Marquis' AC increases by 1.

**SPELLCASTING (ARCANE).** The Marquis is an 11th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell



save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He regains his expended spell slots when he finishes a short or long rest. He knows the following spells:

At will: *fire bolt*, *flame blade*, *light*  
1st-5th level (3 5th-level slots): *fireball*, *fire shield*, *flame strike*, *fly* (self only)

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** The Marquis makes two burning longsword attacks and one fist attack.

**BURNING LONGSWORD.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) fire damage.

**FIST.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus an amount of fire damage equal to the current damage from the *Aura of Vengeance* feature.

**VENGEANCE PULSE (RECHARGE 6).** The Marquis harnesses the full power of vengeance, if only for a moment. He unleashes a burning swath of energy in an 80-foot cone. Each creature in the area of effect must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) radiant damage and 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failure and half as much damage on a success. A creature that fails the initial saving throw repeats it at the end of its initial turn. It takes 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, and the effect ends on a successful one.

## THE PIRATE KING

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (studded leather)

**HIT POINTS** 65 (10d8 + 20)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) |

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +5, Cha +5

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +7, Perception +6, Performance +7

**SENSES** passive Perception 16

**LANGUAGES** Common, Elvish

**CHALLENGE** 2 (450 XP)

**CUNNING ACTION.** On each of his turns, the Pirate King can use a bonus action to take the *Dash*, *Disengage*, or *Hide* action.

**SNEAK ATTACK.** Once per turn, the Pirate King deals an extra 7 (2d6) 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 the Pirate King that isn't incapacitated and the Pirate King doesn't have disadvantage on the roll.

**SONG OF REST.** The Pirate King can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. The Pirate King can confer this benefit on himself as well.



THE PIRATE KING

**SPELLCASTING.** The Pirate King is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*  
1st level (4 slots): *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *hideous laughter*, *identify*, *thunderwave*  
2nd level (3 slots): *locate object*, *shatter*

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** The Pirate King makes two rapier attacks.

**RAPIER.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

The Pirate King and his crew sail the *Silence Dread* in Everglint Bay under a black skull-and-crossbones flag. This two-deck caravel with a wooden mermaid at the bow draws more chuckles than gasps of fear from veteran Beacon sailors when it is sighted.

The Pirate King was once a clever sailor, but having grown bored with the laws of Beacon and displaying a penchant for singing, he took up piracy. He wears a rapier at his side and a white billowy shirt tucked into tight black pants with thigh-high black boots. He often stops ships in the bay and demands payment of gold and treasure but is easily swayed by tales of sadness and poverty. He is, at heart, a good man but wants the swashbuckling drama that comes from being the captain of a pirate ship.

The Pirate King defends himself and his crew if attacked. If he is befriended, he often performs for new allies and can be called upon for aid.



# POPPET

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**HIT POINTS** 60 (11d8 + 11)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 17 (+3) |

**SAVING THROWS** Int +6, Wis +6

**SKILLS** Deception +7, Insight +6, Performance +7, Persuasion +11

**SENSES** passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 7 (2,900 XP)

**ETHEREAL PORTAL (1/DAY).** As a bonus action, Poppet can create a portal that bridges the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane. The portal remains for 1 minute.

**SPELLCASTING.** Poppet is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Poppet has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, friends, mage hand, mending, message*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, mage armor, magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, invisibility, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball, haste, tongues*

4th level (3 slots): *dominate beast, stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *hold monster*

## ACTIONS

**DAGGER.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

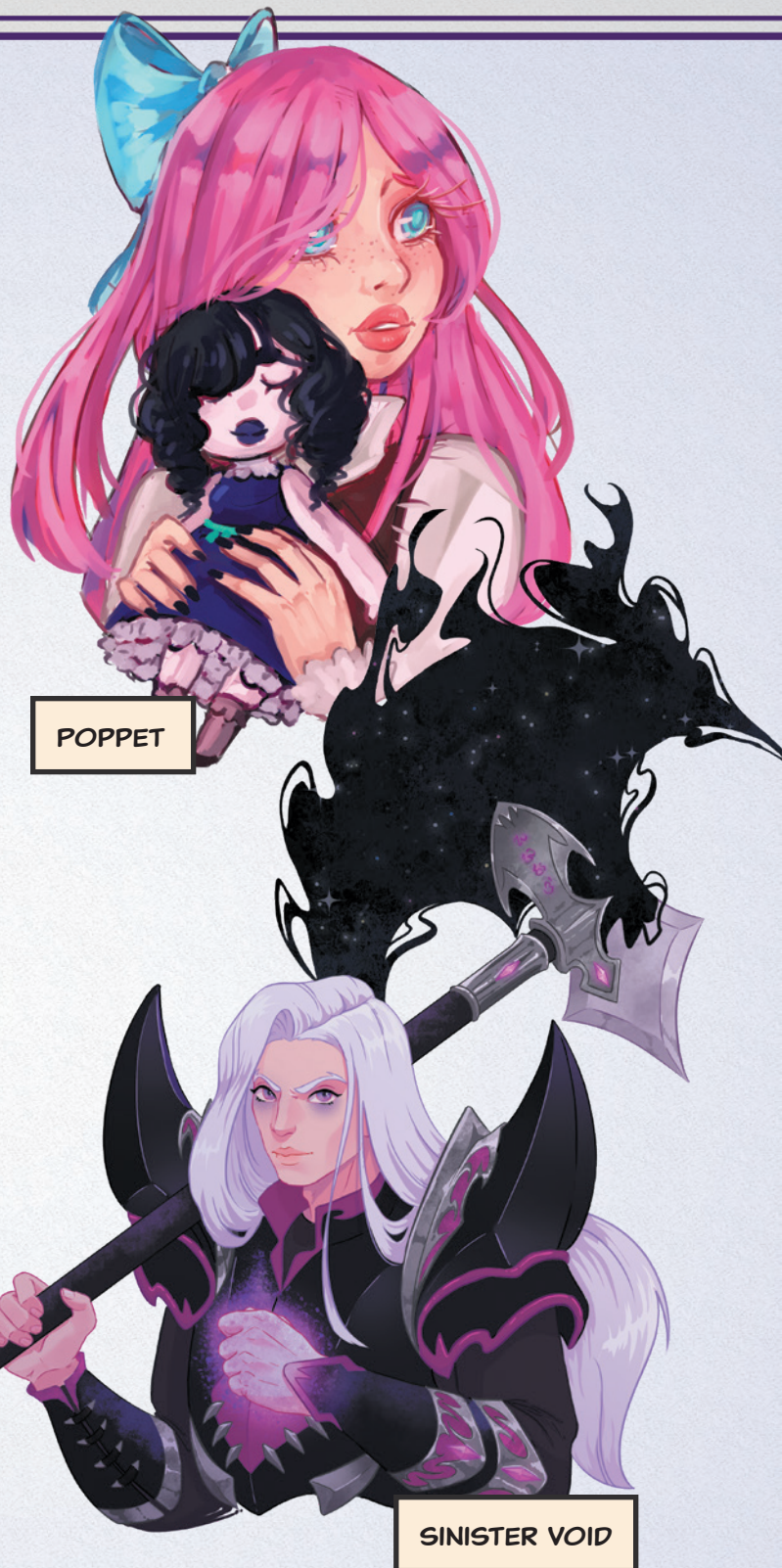
**LOVELY POPPET.** Poppet can cast *dominate person* (DC 15) as a 6th-level spell, using a poppet doll as the material component. If the target fails its saving throw, Poppet can control its actions by manipulating the doll in her hands.

## REACTIONS

**PSYCHIC PARRY.** When a creature makes an attack against Poppet, the attacker must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or lose the attack.

Poppet is an antihero who uses poppet dolls to control and manipulate people into doing what she wants them to do. People are like marionettes on strings to her, but she prefers dolls to puppets.

Poppet was born on the Ethereal Plane to a human parent who plane shifted and couldn't



find a way back. In the Border Ethereal, Poppet was raised observing the people of the Material Plane but unable to interact with them. Eventually, she mastered the principles of the Ethereal Plane as only a native can, opened



a portal, and made her debut on the Material Plane in the city of Beacon.

Poppet is fiercely confident, knowing she has the upper hand in almost any situation, but she chooses to hide her confidence behind a shy demeanor. She listens and watches for the openings and times to gain the upper hand with her abilities and knowledge. She has much to learn about the Material Plane and people living there, but she knows she'll master it, as she did the Border Ethereal.

## SINISTER VOID

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 18 (plate)

**HIT POINTS** 150 (20d8 + 60)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 20 (+5) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

**SAVING THROWS** Con +10, Int +12, Wis +8

**SKILLS** Arcana +19, History +12, Insight +8, Perception +8

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** cold, lightning, poison

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**SENSES** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 18

**LANGUAGES** Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish, Halfling, Infernal

**CHALLENGE** 21 (33,000 XP)

**LEGENDARY RESISTANCE (3/DAY).** If Sinister Void fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**REGENERATION.** Sinister Void regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

**SPELLCASTING.** Sinister Void is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*  
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *acid arrow*, *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *dimension door*

5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill*, *screaming*

6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate*, *globe of invulnerability*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*, *plane shift*

8th level (1 slot): *dominate monster*, *power word stun*

9th level (1 slot): *power word kill*

## ACTIONS

**ANTIMATTER GREATAXE.** Melee Spell Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 17 (4d6 + 3) slashing damage, plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Sinister Void 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. Sinister Void regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**CANTRIP.** Sinister Void casts a cantrip.

**ANTIMATTER GREATAXE (COSTS 2 ACTIONS).** Sinister Void attacks with his antimatter greataxe.

**FRIGHTENING GAZE (COSTS 2 ACTIONS).** Sinister Void fixes his gaze on one creature he can see within 10 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened for 1 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 Sinister Void's gaze for the next 24 hours.

**ANTIMATTER BLAST (COSTS 3 ACTIONS).** Each living creature within 20 feet of Sinister Void must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Sinister Void was once a sage exploring antimatter and the dark universe. He was close to a breakthrough when a hero disrupted his research and his body was infused with antimatter. Today, he uses dark energy and miasma powers and goes by the name Sinister Void. All he wants is to continue his research, no matter the collateral damage, and get revenge on anyone who gets in his way.



# SPECTACLE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

**ARMOR CLASS** 11 (14 with mage armor)

**HIT POINTS** 49 (11d8)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 12 (+1) | 13 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) |

**SAVING THROWS** Wis +3, Cha +6

**SKILLS** Arcana +2, Athletics +3, Persuasion +6

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed

**SENSES** passive Perception 11

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 4 (1,100 XP)

**CONTAGIOUS ENTHUSIASM.** Creatures friendly toward the Spectacle gain a +2 bonus to AC while they are within 10 feet of him.

**FRIEND IN NEED.** The Spectacle gains a bonus to AC, attack rolls, and damage rolls that is equal to the number of friendly creatures that the Spectacle can see and hear.

**INNATE SPELLCASTING.** The Spectacle's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. He can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:

At will: *bless*, *disguise self*, *mage armor* (self only), *silent image*  
1/day: *contingency*

**SPELLCASTING.** The Spectacle is an 11th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He regains his expended spell slots when he finishes a short or long rest. He knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*, *prestidigitation*, *true strike*  
1st–5th level (3 5th-level slots): *aid*, *arcane hand*, *banishment*, *beacon of hope*, *black tentacles*, *contact other plane*, *expeditious retreat*, *heroism*, *hunter's mark*, *fly*, *shatter*

## ACTIONS

**UNARMED STRIKE.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

## REACTIONS

**BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE.** With a word of encouragement from a friendly creature within 30 feet of the Spectacle that he can hear, he can regain 16 (1d10 + 11) hit points. There is no maximum number of times the Spectacle can use this ability, but for the next 24 hours more encouragement from the same creature has no effect on the Spectacle.

The Spectacle believes in himself. And he wants you to believe in him too. Because if you believe in him, then he believes in himself even more.

That's not just feel-good hooplah. The arkwaves transformed his body into a receptacle of goodwill and well-wishes. The more people around the Spectacle who believe in him, the stronger and tougher he becomes. More than once he's been on the ropes when a kid in the crowd has said, "Hey, you can do it!" and he is reinvigorated again.



SPECTACLE



# SZU-AHN

Medium humanoid (aasimar), neutral good

**ARMOR CLASS** 16 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 120 (16d8 + 48)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 21 (+5) | 22 (+6) |

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +6, Con +8, Cha +11

**SKILLS** Insight +10, Nature +6, Perception +10, Persuasion +11

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** radiant

**SENSES** truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 20

**LANGUAGES** Celestial, Common, telepathy 60 ft.

**CHALLENGE** 7 (2,900 XP)

**DAY AT THE CABIN (1/DAY).** By linking arms with a group of up to 5 other creatures, Szu-Ahn can teleport them all to a demiplane that appears to be a furnished wood cabin 50 feet in each dimension. Comfortable hammocks or cots await them, along with a long table with a feast of fresh fruits and vegetables and cooked foods. The observable weather outside the cabin is always serene.

After 24 hours, the cabin disappears, and each creature or object inside the demiplane reappears in the last space it occupied, or if that space is occupied, the nearest unoccupied space.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Szu-Ahn's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bless*

**LEGENDARY RESISTANCE (3/DAY).** If Szu-Ahn fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**ROSE VALLEY (1/DAY).** A spring of pure water magically bursts from the earth, creating a 1-foot diameter puddle of infinite clean potable water that remains for 8 hours. In addition, every creature within 15 feet of the spring is blessed as if with the *protection from good and evil* spell.

**SPELLCASTING.** Szu-Ahn is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, guidance, produce flame*

1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship, cure wounds, speak with animals, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *darkvision, hold person*

## ACTIONS

**GRAMMY SUE GROWL.** Szu-Ahn emits a growl directed at one creature within 10 feet of her. The target must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw, or for 1 minute, the target can't take reactions and must roll a d6 at the start of each of its turns to determine its behavior during the turn:

1–4. The target takes no action or bonus action and uses all of its movement to move in a random direction.

5–6. The target doesn't move, and the only thing it can do on its turn is make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## REACTIONS

**REFLEXIVE TELEPORT.** When Szu-Ahn takes damage, she can teleport to an unoccupied space she can see within 30 feet. Alternatively, she can use this ability on a friendly creature she can see within 10 feet of her that takes damage.

In a small wooded valley nestled among the Protectorate Peaks, there is a tiny village named the Trout's Run that is watched over by a powerful angelic being called Szu-Ahn.





Her house rests on a wooded mountainside overlooking the village, below a cemetery and just above the community shrine.

Trusted steward of the land, Szu-Ahn's compassion is renowned among those in her care, so that all who meet her affectionately call her "Grammy Sue." She keeps her nature magic a secret even to those closest to her, using her gifts to help others reach their full potential.

**Blessed Progeny.** Szu-Ahn's descendants invariably find a feather bracelet sometime in their childhood. Wearing this bracelet, which only a descendant of Szu-Ahn can use, grants them the ability to cast *bles*s at will and to use the Day at the Cabin and Rose Valley features twice per month.

## THE WANDERER

Medium humanoid (human shapechanger), neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 14 (hide armor)

**HIT POINTS** 135 (18d8 + 54)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 19 (+4) | 18 (+4) | 17 (+3) | 11 (+0) | 15 (+2) | 12 (+1) |

**SKILLS** Perception +8, Survival +8

**SENSES** passive Perception 18

**LANGUAGES** Common (can't speak in beast form)

**CHALLENGE** 5 (1,800 XP)

**KEEN SMELL.** The Wanderer has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**SHAPECHANGER.** The Wanderer can use his action to magically polymorph into a beast he has seen, or back into his true form. Any equipment the Wanderer is wearing or carrying is absorbed by the new form. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

**SPEAK WITH BEASTS.** The Wanderer can communicate with beasts as if they shared a language.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** The Wanderer makes two attacks with his longbow, or three attacks with his whip.

**LONGBOW.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**WHIP.** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage.



THE WANDERER

Nobody knows when the Wanderer first appeared. One day, stories about a mysterious figure in the forested Protectorate Peak foothills began reaching the ears of the common folk. These stories told of this figure single-handedly taking down a bandit camp, leading lost folk to safety, and even helping put out wildfires. The name of this individual remains a mystery, but everyone calls him the Wanderer.

Apart from protecting the forest, the Wanderer's goal is to find someone who was separated from him shortly after he arrived on Ghaistala. On the rare occasions when he is spotted outside the forest, he is following up on a lead.

The Wanderer has an agreement with most Serenity farmers to lend aid in exchange for possible information about his missing person. What's more, recently, word has begun to spread that the Wanderer has taken on an apprentice, both of whom have been seen accompanied by a pair of **blink dogs**.

## ZEPHON OTHAENYA

Medium humanoid (aasimar, tiefling, shapechanger), neutral good

**ARMOR CLASS** 16 in mundane form or 19 (enchanted costume) in superhero form

**HIT POINTS** 162 (25d8 + 50)

**SPEED** 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 20 (+5) |



**SAVING THROWS** Wis +9, Cha +11

**SKILLS** Insight +9, Investigation +7, Perception +15, Persuasion +11, Stealth +15

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** cold, fire, necrotic, radiant

**DAMAGE VULNERABILITIES** lightning, thunder

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 25

**LANGUAGES** Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal

**CHALLENGE** 11 (7,200 XP)

**INNATE SPELLCASTING.** Zephon's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *detect evil and good, light, sacred flame*  
1/day: *sunbeam*

**SPELLCASTING.** Zephon is a 19th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, heroism, hunter's mark, protection from evil and good, shield of faith*  
2nd level (3 slots): *aid, branding smite, magic weapon, misty step, zone of truth*  
3rd level (3 slots): *beacon of hope, daylight, dispel magic, haste, magic circle, revivify*  
4th level (3 slots): *banishment, dimension door, freedom of movement, locate creature*  
5th level (2 slots): *dispel evil and good, flame strike, hold monster, raise dead*

**UNRECOGNIZABLE.** Although his build and facial features never change, Zephon's diametrically opposed superhero aspects are difficult to recognize as one and the same person. A sighted creature that sees any two of Zephon's three aspects must succeed on a DC 30 passive Wisdom (Perception) check to discern that both are aspects of the same person. Each subsequent attempt lowers the DC by 1. Magic and truesight do not reveal Zephon's dual nature. Creatures who do not perceive by sight automatically succeed the check. A creature that makes the discovery cannot share it and be believed. Zephon himself revealing the truth is an automatic success.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Zephon makes two melee weapon attacks.

**GREATSWORD.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage, plus 11 (2d10) psychic or radiant damage (Zephon's choice).

**MACE.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**HEAVY CROSSBOW.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

**DAGGER.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

**SCIMITAR.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**DUAL ASPECT.** Zephon can polymorph into his infernal superhero aspect at night, his celestial superhero aspect in the day, or back into his true form, a mundane hybrid aspect, at any time. His statistics, other than his AC, are the same in each aspect. He reverts to his true form if he dies. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (Zephon's choice).

**ETHEREALNESS (INFERNAL ASPECT ONLY).** Zephon magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.

**HEALING TOUCH (3/DAY; CELESTIAL ASPECT ONLY).** Zephon touches another creature. The target magically regains 14 (2d8 + 5) hit points and is freed from any curse, disease, poison, blindness, or deafness.

Kind, generous, and empathetic, Zephon Othaenya and his husband, Tagen Nachtel, a half-elf wizard, own and operate a magically warded public library and bookshop in Beacon.





Zephon is the offspring of two paladins, a justice-serving half-human and half-deva man and a freedom-loving half-human and half-procubus (a gender-nonbinary fiend akin to a succubus or incubus). The constant struggle between the contradictory natures of his ancestries taxes Zephon frequently.

Fleeing persecution on their native homeworld for their relationship, Zephon's parents were drawn to Beacon, like so many others. A few years after their arrival and shortly after an arkwave event, they received unexpected news. Against all odds, they had conceived a child. They soon learned that their newborn child had superpowers and raised him to use them for good.

Appearing mostly human, Zephon stands just over five and a half feet tall, with an athletic, agile, and muscular build. In his mundane aspect, he has gray skin and silver-gray eyes. His closely-trimmed salt-and-pepper hair, mustache, and beard neatly frame his handsome face. He appears to be a young adult, but he is actually in his fifties.

Zephon has inherited traits from both parents, some of which have combined in unusual ways. He has small, gray, vestigial wings splayed from his shoulder blades. The undersides are leathery while the tops are feathered. A peaceful, comforting glow radiates from Zephon's eyes, and the faint scent of smoldering cedar and sandalwood lingers on him.

Zephon is also a shapechanger, but this ability is limited. He can change into only two other forms—his superhero identities. During the day, Zephon can assume a horned deva-like aspect, one with azure skin, black hair, pale blue eyes, and white feathered wings. At night, Zephon can change into a haloed incubus-like form, one with orange skin, white hair, red eyes, a long sinuous tail, and black leathery wings.

The public calls the daytime aspect Darkday and the nighttime aspect Nightlight, not realizing the two are the same person. Only Zephon's parents and husband know that the two are he, and they keep Zephon's secret.

As Darkday, Zephon is a vengeful persecutor of the villainous and evil, a dark day for

wrongdoers indeed. As Nightlight, he becomes a devoted protector of the innocent and good, a light of hope in the dark night. Regardless of which aspect he assumes, Zephon is always a staunch defender of those in need.

## UNDERLINGS

Goons, henchfolk, stooges—it doesn't matter what you call them. An underling is fodder for the heroes of the story. They are meant to be easy to defeat. They exist to demonstrate how the heroes are more powerful than the average, run-of-the-mill criminal. Mechanically, they are creatures that always go down in one damaging hit. The heroes should feel powerful as they mow through these faceless antagonists.

The following stat block, a generic humanoid, is designed as a template you can make changes to. Attach one or more templates to it—or jazz it up yourself—to create unique, flavorful underlings for any villain.

### UNDERLING

*Medium humanoid, any alignment*

**ARMOR CLASS** 11

**HIT POINTS** 1

**SPEED** 30 ft.

---

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

---

**SENSES** passive Perception 11

**LANGUAGES** any

**CHALLENGE** 1/8 (25 XP)

---

**MINION.** The underling deals fixed damage and has 1 hitpoint. It takes no damage on successful saving throws, even when the spell would normally deal half damage.

### ACTIONS

---

The templates below determine what attacks the underling can make.



## ADAPTING UNDERLINGS

Underlings are made to be versatile, with plentiful ways to adapt underlings for the situation or villain they serve. This section provides many possible adaptations.

### CHANGING DAMAGE VALUES

Underlings always assign a fixed damage value. In the templates shown below, they deal the average damage for the weapon or spell they are using plus the relevant ability score modifier. (In the case of underlings, each ability score modifier besides Constitution is +1.) You can increase or decrease the damage by any value. You can even change it to a roll of the die again if you enjoy rolling lots of dice!

### CHANGING SURVIVABILITY

Underlings, made to go down easily, only have 1 hit point. For villains with more powerful underlings, add the following feature to allow them to survive one extra turn.

**Shield (Recharges after a Short Rest).** The underling's shield absorbs all damage the first time the underling takes damage.

### SUPERPOWERS

Want your villains to be crafty? Have them employ supers of their own. Superpowered underlings can be whatever you want them to be, based on another creature's abilities, spell effects, class abilities, status effects—or whatever your imagination can come up with.

### TEMPLATES

The following templates can be applied to the standard underling stat block to create different minions for your villains to order around. You can add as many templates to the underling stat block as you please.

HUNTING OUTSIDE BEACON IS A DANGEROUS GAME, NEVER KNOW IF YOU WILL WAKE A KAIJU UP OR COME ACROSS A SUPER BATTLE. BEST NOT TO DO IT AT ALL REALLY.





## DRUIDIC UNDERLING

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Hide Armor.** The creature's AC increases to 13.

**New Action: Shillelagh.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 bludgeoning damage.

## MAGIC UNDERLING

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Darkvision** 60 ft.

**Elemental Resistance.** The creature is immune to cold and fire damage.

**New Action: Fire Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +3 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 fire damage.

**New Action: Ray of Frost.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +3 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 cold damage. The target's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the start of the creature's next turn.

## MELEE UNDERLING

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Chain Mail.** The creature's AC increases to 16.

**New Action: Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 piercing damage.

## PRIESTLY UNDERLING

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Chain Mail.** The creature's AC increases to 16.

**Holy Resistance.** The creature is immune to radiant damage.

**New Action: Smiting Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 bludgeoning damage plus 2 radiant damage.

## RANGED UNDERLING

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Leather Armor.** The creature's AC increases to 12.

**New Action: Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft., one target. Hit: 4 piercing damage.

## UNDEADLING

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Unholy Endurance (Recharges after a Short Rest).** The creature absorbs all damage the first time the creature takes damage.

**Unholy Resistance.** The creature is immune to necrotic damage and vulnerable to radiant damage.

**New Action: Slam of Undeath.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 bludgeoning damage plus 2 necrotic damage.

## SUPERPOWER: CRYOKINESIS

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Leather Armor.** The creature's AC increases to 12.

**New Action: Cryoblast (Recharge 5-6).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 60 ft., three targets. Hit: 7 cold damage, plus the targets' speed is reduced by 10 feet until the underling's next turn.

## SUPERPOWER: ENDURANCE

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Hardened Skin.** The creature's AC increases to 13.

**Mighty Endurance (Recharges after a Short Rest).** The creature absorbs all damage the first time the creature takes damage.

## SUPERPOWER: FLIGHT

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Flight.** The creature has a flying speed of 30 feet.

## SUPERPOWER: PYROKINESIS

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Pyro-Immunity.** The creature is immune to fire damage.

**New Action: Pyroblast (Recharge 5-6).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 120 ft., three targets. Hit: 8 fire damage.



## SUPERPOWER: SPEED

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Speedster.** The creature's speed is increased by 30 feet.

## SUPERPOWER: STRENGTH

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Strong Arms.** The creature has advantage on Strength ability checks.

**New Action: Super Punch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 bludgeoning damage.

## SUPERPOWER: TELEPATHY

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**Resilient Mind.** The creature is immune to psychic damage.

**New Action: Psy-Burst (Recharge 5-6).** The creature reaches out to the minds of its enemies within a 20-foot sphere centered on the underling. Each creature in this area must make a DC 11 Intelligence saving throw or take 7 psychic damage.

## SUPERPOWER: TELEPORTATION

The following changes are applied to the underling stat block:

**New Action: Slow Teleport.** This creature can teleport up to 15 feet to an unoccupied spot it can see.

**New Bonus Action: Fast Teleport (Recharge 5-6).** This creature can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied spot it can see.

## UNDERLINGS AT HIGHER TIERS OF PLAY

Due to the leveling system, underlings are not going to be anything more than a nuisance most of the time. Their ability to cause reasonable damage to the heroes is diminished by 5th level. By 11th level, they won't be a problem at all. To get around this, increase the underlings' damage and have them employ better tactics at higher levels—rather than getting mowed down in waves, they can coordinate a clever ambush!



ANY GOOD THUG OR CRIME BOSS IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THEIR UNDERLINGS.

## OTHER NAMES FOR UNDERLINGS

Don't like underlings? Or perhaps you like to vary up what you refer to the heroes' enemies as. Have no fear, a non-exhaustive list is here!

The following list provides a bundle of names for you to refer to underlings as if you would prefer not to say the word "underling" over and over again.

- Minions
- Henchmen
- Henchwomen
- Henchpersons
- Henchfolk
- Henchlings
- Goons
- Baddies
- Right-hand persons
- Left-hand persons
- Ambiguously-directioned-hand persons
- Stooges
- Bodyguards
- Lackeys
- Toadies
- Badguys
- Badgals
- Badfolks
- Assholes
- Hired Muscle



# APPENDIX B: LAIRS & STRONGHOLDS

## CLOUD CASTLE

The Cloud Castle is balanced for characters of 7th level or higher, though lower-level characters who are friendly toward the giant who lives there also stand a good chance of surviving. The Cloud Castle is a good place to receive training between levels or to learn a new skill or proficiency. Heroes might instead want to test themselves against the challenges the giant sets up.

### LOCATION OVERVIEW

Unlike most castles, which rise up from the ground, the Cloud Castle hangs suspended from the underside of a stormcloud. Home to an elderly **cloud giant** known only as the Host and those he is training, this castle is mobile and can be found in the skies anywhere above Ghaistala. Heroes in the making seek out this floating fortress to test their skills or acquire new ones.

Besides the giant and his trainees, the other occupants of this mighty marble fortress are **giant owls** that nest in some of the upside-down towers and have their own comings and goings. Their dwellings and interests are mostly quite separate from those of the castle's humanoids.

• As you ascend, a large bank of dark, heavy sheet clouds, the kind you get as either snow or heavy rainfall rolls in, comes into view. Beneath the cloud hang multiple marble towers of assorted colors, like green, pink, and yellow stalactites. The towers are lit with magical lights, as if perpetually shining with dusk or dawn's light, and give off a surreal glow.

The Host is an old cloud giant, his white beard encrusted with hoarfrost. The giant is obsessed with training up heroes, helping them approach their personal perfection. His secret motive is that he relishes being the best trainer as much as supers relish becoming better heroes. The Host believes that heart is the best measure of a hero and carefully weighs a potential trainee's inner self as much as their outward powers.

The Host makes a big show of greeting newcomers, appearing as imposing and grand as possible, hoping to impress new recruits and scare off troublemakers. His immediate goal is to determine which potential heroes show promise and are worthy of his training, which are already accomplished champions who might stand a chance against his gauntlet of challenges, and which need to be taught a hard lesson about trespassing where they don't belong.

### MODIFICATIONS FOR THE HOST

The host uses the **cloud giant** with this modification:

- The Host looks at a creature and magically knows the creature's current emotional state. If the target fails a DC 15 Charisma saving throw, the Host also knows the creature's alignment. Celestials, fiends, and undead automatically fail the saving throw.
- The Host is magically alerted when a creature of Small size or larger enters the castle by way of the grand entrance doors.



## CLOUD CASTLE LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Cloud Castle.

### A1. GRAND ENTRANCE

Behind double doors large enough to permit creatures as large as giants, griffons, or sphinxes, the grand entrance is a double-tiered, high-ceilinged, cavernous chamber. The two levels are separated by a series of stone steps draped in a sumptuous carpet. The upper level is where the Host stands to greet visitors and new residents.

### A2. GUEST HEARTH

Guests are shown to this enormous hearth that almost always is lit by a roaring fire. Here the Host gets acquainted with newcomers, asking questions and giving answers. When he feels

satisfied he knows the heart of the newcomer, he offers training, challenges, or aid, depending on the needs and wishes of his guests. If he sees malice in their hearts, he attacks.

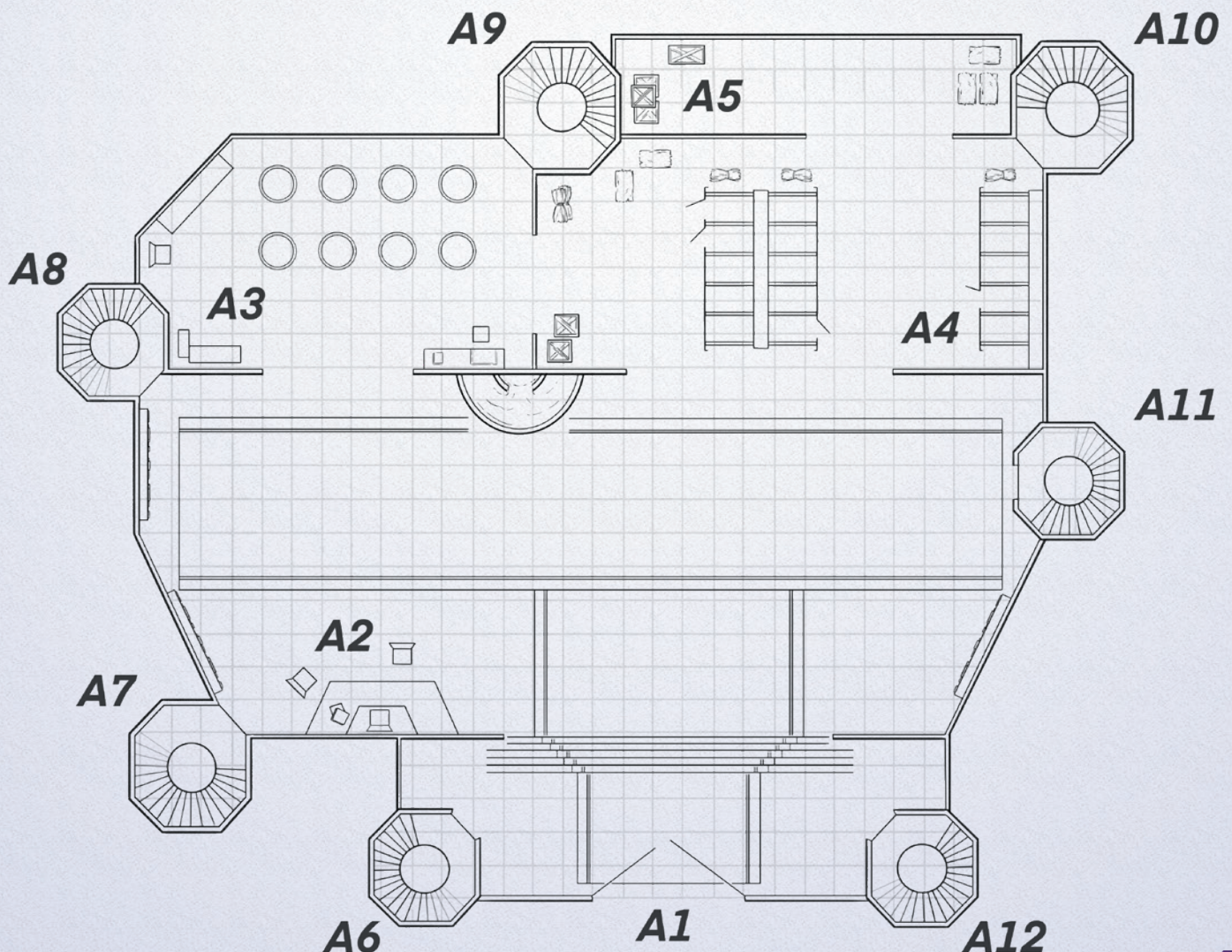
### A3. TELEPORTATION ROOM

For the exclusive use of invited guests and residents of the Cloud Castle, this room has eight portals created by the *gate* spell and made permanent. They are linked to portals spread throughout Ghaistala, including at least two that lead to Beacon.

The Host sometimes uses this room to seek out worthy heroes who are slow to find their way to him.

### A4. FANTASTICAL STABLES

Flying mounts, such as griffons, hippogriffs, pegasi, young dragons, and more can find provender and stalls in these luxurious stables.





## A5. STORAGE ROOM

This wide storage room is filled with supplies for the stables. It smells of straw and the iron tang of fresh meat.

## A6-12. STAIRCASES

The seven towers house spiral staircases that lead up to the residences, training halls, champions' arena, giant owlries, and, presumably, treasure rooms.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Smooth Things Over.** A guest of the castle, through accident or maliciousness, has caused damage to one of the towers. He fled before the Host found out and has asked the heroes to travel to the cloud and speak to the owner on the former guest's behalf.

**Go Home!** A bored young noble has decided that they should be patronized by the giant and have managed to stow away in the castle. Their parents want them returned.

## CLOUDED EYE COURTHOUSE

Clouded Eye Courthouse is balanced for characters of 11th to 16th level. High-level characters can return if they gain a reputation as successful defenders. Low-level characters have no chance of finding the hidden courthouse, unless they are explicitly invited by the Edgecutioner, Beacon's extremely lawful **solar**.

### LOCATION OVERVIEW

Clouded Eye Courthouse hovers high in the atmosphere over Beacon. Even on a clear, sunny day, it is always hidden above the city, scanning for anyone breaking the law. Inside is a simple yet severe courthouse adorned with colossal cloud columns.

**Adventure Hook.** A high-ranking Fresnel House official named Squibly Millworth was killed by the Edgecutioner, then brought back to life with a spell. Millworth received a celestial summons to appear at the Clouded

Eye Courthouse to stand trial. Millworth has named the heroes as his defenders, and in an instant, everyone was teleported into the clouds thousands of feet above Beacon.

- Clouded Eye Courthouse! The lucky ones get
- to lay their eyes on this heavenly house of the
- Law. Anyone with pockets deep enough can
- cheat death once. Only the truly powerful can
- cheat the Law. Heroes get a first hand look at
- the stark difference between "innocent" and
- "not guilty"...

To uphold Millworth's appeal and spare his life, the heroes prepare for a multistage trial by combat. The bailiff Lampkeeper Veda, a **deva**, guards the defendant at all costs, ensuring they are not harmed and do not interfere in the trial.

Twelve randomly abducted citizens of Beacon, transformed into **priests**, comprise the jury. They've been tasked with new powers to fight with zeal and uphold the law.

A **gynosphinx** who sees all discretions against the law serves as judge. She tests the heroes' morality with her lair actions.

Anyone who makes it past the judge and jury must contend with the Edgecutioner, a **solar** who fights with fury and passion. If he loses, it means the Law is fallible. The Edgecutioner has never lost an appeal, but if he loses, he goes celestial supernova and destroys the entire Clouded Eye Courthouse. The defendants are then safely returned, and the courthouse no longer watches over Beacon.

### CLOUDED EYE COURTHOUSE LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of Clouded Eye Courthouse.

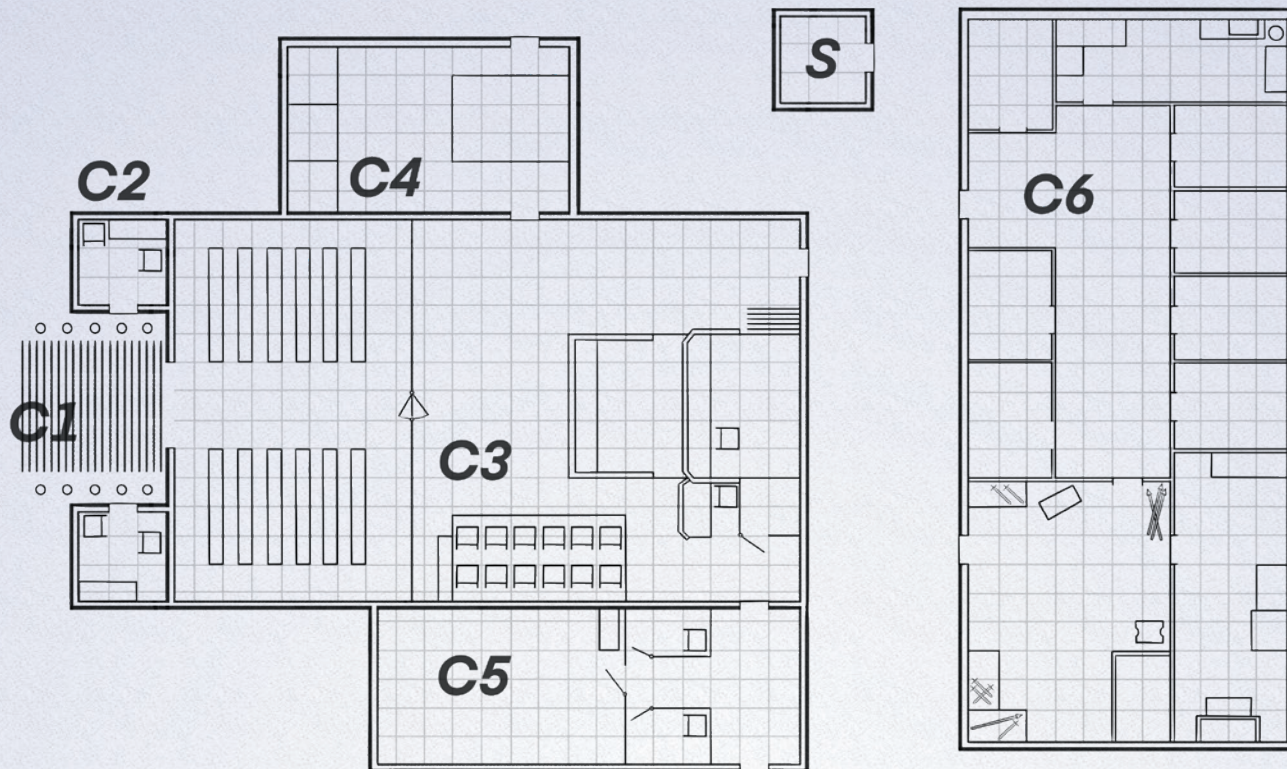
#### C1. GRAND ENTRANCE

Massive cloud columns and a widespread staircase lead into the courthouse, which is breathtaking in its beauty.

#### C2. BLIND EYE CONFERENCE ROOMS

These conference rooms are only spots in all of Beacon where the Law cannot see. Here, defendants can freely discuss strategy for the upcoming trial by combat.





### C3. THE EXTREME COURT

Bloodshed of past trials stain the rich hardwood details of this courtroom a deep red. The imposing walls extend upwards into the clouds. Lampkeeper Veda, the bailiff **deva**, asks all to rise as the **gynosphinx** enters the courtroom and takes her place behind the judge's bench.

### C4. COURTROOM HOLDING CELLS

Millworth is imprisoned here unless their presence is requested in area C2 or C3.

### C5. JURY TRANSFORMATION CHAMBER

Prior to the trial, twelve random citizens of Beacon are teleported here and transformed into **priests** to form the jury. The defendants must defeat the jury in trial by combat before facing the judge. While transformed, these citizens are visibly altered, their eyes clouded, and they fight with regimented zeal.

This selection is the duty of all citizens of Beacon. If a defendant has a change of heart about killing twelve innocent people just to save their own life, they can plead "guilty" at any time and end the trial.

### C6. PRIVATE QUARTERS

This area is accessible only after defeating the gynosphinx and the Edgecutioner, or by their invitation. It consists of humble living quarters, an armory, and an angelic forge. Here the solar sharpens his weapons, waiting for the gynosphinx to emerge from her scrying chamber with the name and location of the accused.

### S. SCRYING CHAMBER

This chamber is not hidden, but it is magically locked. The gynosphinx wears a pendant which opens the door. Hundreds of gleaming, ornate silver mirrors line the walls of the chamber. These mirrors show flashes of citizens from all of Beacon going about their business. If someone is detected breaking the law, that mirror instantly tarnishes, cracks, and locks on to the corresponding citizen.

**Treasure.** An untarnished mirror can act as a focus to cast *scrying*. The Edgecutioner keeps an armory of his handcrafted angelic weapons, the room arrayed with one of each martial weapon. The angelic weapons are magical. On a hit, the weapon deals an extra 6d8 radiant damage. These weapons are as extreme as their maker, however—on a miss, the wielder of the angelic weapon takes 6d8 radiant damage.



## THE HALL OF THE FORGOTTEN SUN

The Hall of the Forgotten Sun is balanced for characters of 11th level or higher. Any lower level characters are likely to visit this location during the day, when they would be turned away from the warehouse by security guards.

### LOCATION OVERVIEW

The Hall of the Forgotten Sun rests below the Alphas Warehouse by the Harbor. This series of ancient carved stone tunnels and rooms serves as a repository of magical items for Count Abramovich, a **vampire spellcaster**, and as a safehouse in times of great trouble or attention for the Court. The count resides in the Meeting Hall, where he is sometimes joined by the Alpha and the rest of the Court of Empty Night.

Scattered throughout the lair are **vampire whelps** in various states of agony or being harassed by **vampire spawn**. The **Slayer** is also in this lair, residing in the Proving Ground. A single **gelatinous cube** roams the hallway, cleaning up any leftover mess from the count's feedings.

As you reconcile the antediluvian set piece in front of you with the industrial domain you left behind, you notice several things about this structure. First, the intricate stonework that decorates the hallways suggests someone spent a great amount of time designing this place, and by the looks of the wear and tear, they started a long time ago. Secondly, the lack of any sort of filth suggests that someone still lives here, and they are fastidiously clean.

## THE HALL OF THE FORGOTTEN SUN

### THE ANTECHAMBER

This is the entrance to this ancient dwelling place. This small receiving room leads to the spoils room via a 50-foot downward sloping hallway. In this hallway, the **gelatinous cube** resides.

### THE SPOILS ROOM

Rows of glass cases arranged in a perfect grid formation decorate this large room. As the heroes proceed, they can see relics of both heroes and villains past. Any attempts to remove these items from their containers fail unless the party happens to have the *scorched sun* shortsword, which unlocks the case housing the Slayer's old breastplate, the *torchbearer's plate*. The spoils room leads to both the barracks (left hallway), the proving grounds (right hallway), or the meeting hall (through the large double doors straight ahead).

### THE BARRACKS

Dozens of **vampire whelps** scrounge around in this pitch black room awaiting their master's call. Unless the party succeeds on a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check, the whelps try to maul them.

### THE PROVING GROUNDS

A circular underground fighting arena. The broken bodies of would-be heroes and freshly turned vampire whelps litter the entrance as a warning. Dozens of gleaming and polished weapons hang from the rafters, no doubt once in the hands of the unfortunate corpses. The **Slayer** resides here and viciously attacks anything that steps foot into the room, preferring to ambush the heroes rather than charge them. He attacks like a rabid dog, with no regard for his personal safety.

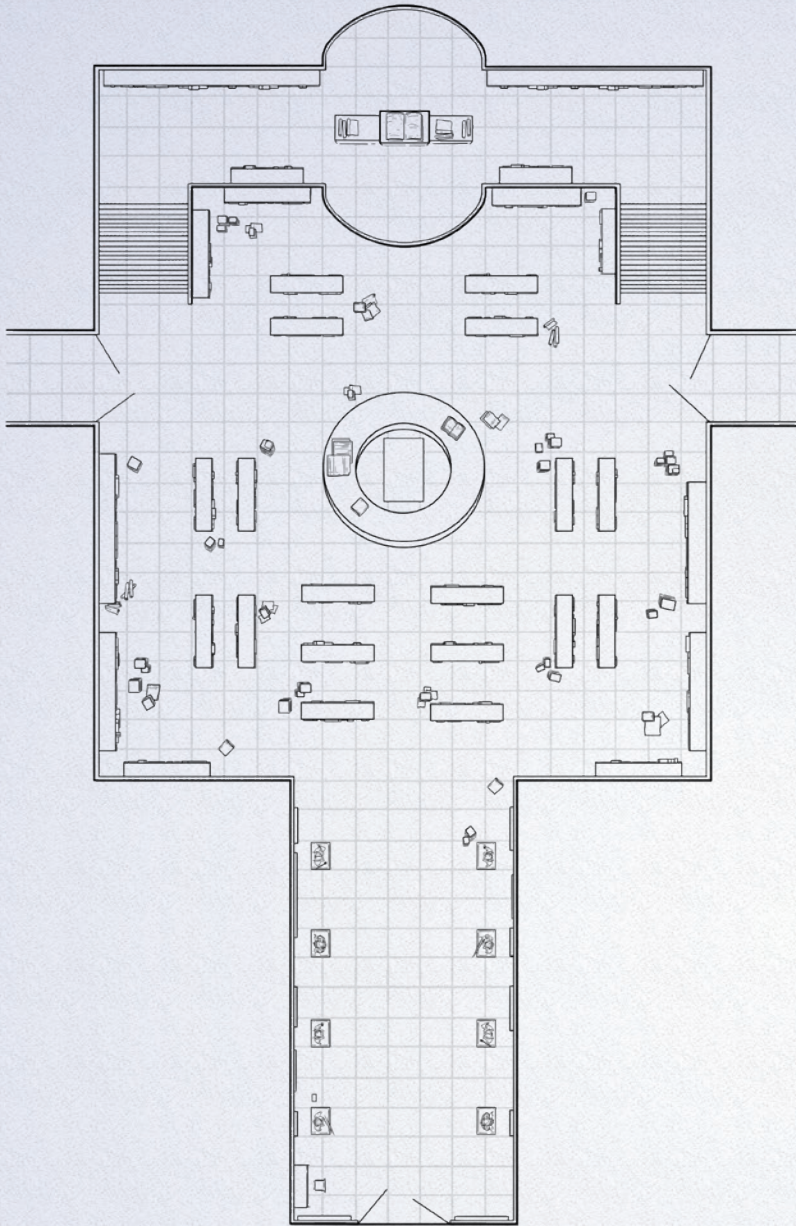
### THE MEETING HALL

The meeting hall is a long 40-foot-by-15-foot meeting room. **Count Abramovich** resides within the meeting hall, sitting upon the throne of prescience at the very end of the room-spanning meeting table.

## SCRIPTORIUM

It is said that in any library in the city, whether it be public or privately owned, there is a hidden doorway to a wondrous place. These doorways are always moving and are often heavily warded because the place where they lead contains unfathomable knowledge. This place is the





Scriptorium, a repository for all of Ghaistala's knowledge. Whether that knowledge is used for good or evil is in the hands of any lucky enough to visit.

## LOCATION OVERVIEW

The Scriptorium is an art-deco style demiplane library that hosts nearly endless hallways of books and scrolls. That is because whenever a book or scroll enters Ghaistala from an

interdimensional portal, a copy of it is magically created and shelved among the Scriptorium's infinite holdings. From books of fiction to grimoires of eldritch horror to children's diaries, it's all here.

This makes the Scriptorium a very valuable place. If a book containing a powerful or dangerous secret is destroyed elsewhere on Ghaistala, there is another copy stored in the library. This plane is ruled by a powerful sphinx simply known as the Librarian and staffed by countless servants of knowledge known as scribes.

But this place is not easy to find, for knowledge must be earned. To enter safely, a person needs a magical library card to move past the wards that defend the Scriptorium. And even within the realm, there are rules to abide by. Listed on a giant obsidian monolith in golden script that can be read in any language are the four rules that govern the magical realm.

1. **Silence is golden, Cacophony is blasphemous.** Apart from the lecture halls, all people within Scriptorium must maintain a whisper. Loud noises of any kind show disrespect to the solemn nature of learning and research. Punishments are varied, depending on the severity of the situation. Repeat offenders might be banished for a set period of time, have their card revoked and be forbidden to return, or simply attacked.
2. **Research can leave, books must remain.** Unlike lending libraries, the Scriptorium does not allow books to leave the demiplane. If they were to become damaged or altered, then they alter the reality of the world itself. For example, an aspiring author could pass another's lost work off as their own. If a person wants to take the knowledge they find in the books of the library with them, they have to bring their own way of recording the information and leave with just that.
3. **Books are sacred, mortal lives are not.** Destruction of any kind in the



library grounds is forbidden. Defacing or destroying the works in the Scriptorium is an act punishable by death, as is attempting to steal them. The demiplane is magical, but that magic is limited, and it is hard to undo the damage done by such acts. If too much damage is done, then human knowledge suffers an untold loss. It is for this reason that the Librarian and the Scribes are willing to kill to keep it safe.

4. **Stay as long as desired, for time holds no power here.** Both the most innocent and yet most dangerous of the rules is the last. Only the most intelligent or wise can discern the meaning of this rule. As seekers of knowledge enter the library, time flows normally. The world outside continues at the same pace, but as they travel deeper into the archives for older and older knowledge, time slows down for them as the world outside continues to move. This time dilation has been the doom of many. They go too deep and lose track of time. What seems like hours or days end up being years, decades, or even centuries outside the demiplane. There are arcane methods of leaving the library and returning to the exact time and place they entered, but these are often hidden portals whose locations are locked behind riddles, puzzles, and traps to weed out the unworthy. If the heroes are very lucky and able to befriend the Librarian, he may grant them the ability to leave in such a manner anytime they wish, but this is rare.

## IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

The Librarian is a neutral **androsphinx** and the undisputed ruler of the Scriptorium. He oversees the magic behind recreating the books and other retainers of knowledge. Even when whispering, his voice reverberates with the power and knowledge he has attained over the

countless eons of his watch. Some believe that he was the first to find the Scriptorium, while others think he created it long before Paragon's Toll. Still others theorize that Scriptorium is a living thing and the Librarian is simply an avatar of the realm to interact with mortals and enforce the laws. Whatever the case, the Librarian is not a force to be reckoned with. The Librarian appears as a living sphinx statue with metallic wings and nails stained with ink.

The Scribes are neutral **cult fanatics** who perform the Librarian's bidding. They look like armored monks with robes wearing masks that vaguely depict an owl aspect. If visitors to the Scriptorium break the rules, they may have to fight the Scribes or accept punishment.

The Historian is a lawful evil human **archmage** who has been a resident of the Scriptorium an untold number of years. No one knows where he hails from or how he arrived. He appears as a warmage, in hooded armor and wearing a graeco-roman play mask whose features change to suit his mood—smiling, frowning, angry, and stoic. He has spent most of his time in the lowest sections of the library researching the most ancient of magic. This means that while it has been only years for him, the city he came from has long since crumbled to dust. His origins are shrouded in mystery but his desire is clear: to find the most powerful and forgotten magic and return to his homeland as a conqueror.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The heroes awaken one morning to find they are the most wanted criminals in the city. Someone has altered their narratives to ensure they are seen as the worst villains. They must find the book that contains their now altered fates and return it to the library to fix what has been done to them.
- The Scribes are prowling the city, viciously hounding a young woman who has stolen from the library. She comes to the heroes and asks them to keep her safe. She says she stole a book that chronicled her family history and revealed the name of the person



responsible for the murder of her parents and siblings. She plans to use the book as evidence of a conspiracy and to seek justice for her loved ones, but if the heroes take her side, they risk the wrath of the Librarian

- Word on the street is that there is to be an underground auction of illegal artifacts and magic. This is nothing new when it comes to the seedy underbelly of the city, but this one is different. Amongst the objects being sold are three journals of research done in the Scriptorium. These contain secret and lost knowledge. The first is a book that categorized and mapped all the secret passageways and locations in Beacon, giving the owner the ability to hide anywhere and move undetected. The second is a necromancer's grimoire that recorded the language of the dead, giving its reader power over any undead creature. And finally, there's a list of secret identities of every major hero, vigilante, and supervillain in Beacon. These journals could cause untold chaos in the wrong hands.

## SCROUNGERS' CRATER

Scroungers' Crater is balanced for characters of 3rd to 5th level. Higher-level heroes might need to visit this location to trade with the Scroungers for siege weapons or vehicles—or return to use the Crater for their own epic battles!

### LOCATION OVERVIEW

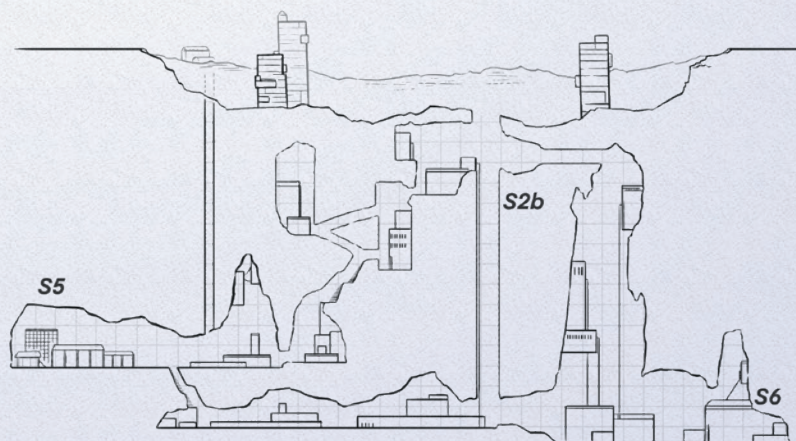
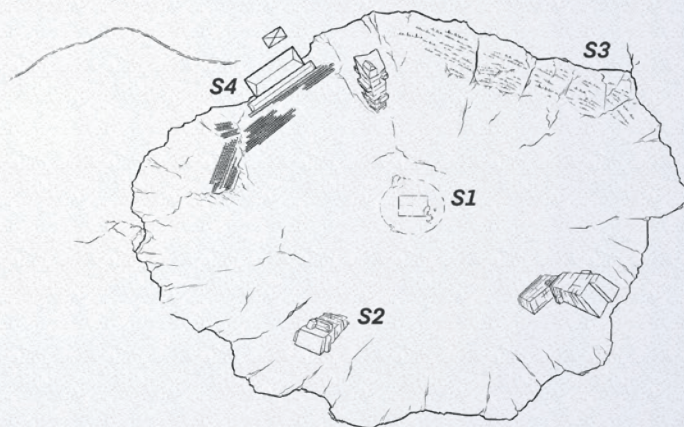
The Crater lies just outside of Beacon. A site of earth-shaking battles, the Crater's titular landmark formed when the original Portaleers battled a primordial evil, and it continues to be a relatively safe place to battle behemoths. It's a mutually beneficial arrangement—Beacon is spared wanton destruction, and the Scroungers pick up the super-powered

scraps. The Scroungers live here in looming retractable towers made up of their transportable tank homes.

One day, the Emissary requests aid when a pair of wild **triceratops** starts running amuck in the Crater. Some gnobolds were trying to tame the huge beasts and fit them with plate armor, which the terrible lizards thought was an awful idea.

- *The Crater! Home to the Scroungers... a warzone to everyone else! Discarded items and people are both rebuilt to become so much more in the Crater. Scroungers never let anything go to waste, especially a life.*

While the Scroungers as a whole are capable of dealing with the triceratops themselves, the Emissary sensed a larger unknown threat in the future that would require the assistance of heroes for the Scroungers to survive. She put out this distress call to learn which heroes would be eager to help. If the heroes prove





themselves, the Scroungers have an easier time trusting the outsiders when it counts.

## SCROUNGERS' CRATER LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of Scroungers' Crater.

### S1. CRASH CORE

The dead center of the Crater is the arena for super-powered battles. After a combat clears out, the Scroungers sweep the area looking for useful or unusual debris.

### S2. RETRACTABLE TANK TOWERS

Every Scrounger sleeps in their own vessel, a slow-moving block tank designed by gnobolds to stack together into fortified towers. Scavenging enough scrap to build a tank is a rite of passage in Scrounger society. Towers reform daily, befitting the chaotic lifestyle of the Crater.

### S2B. RETRACTABLE TANK TOWER SHAFTS

When an outside threat enters the Crater, the towers retract safely underground. A series of tunnels connects the tower shafts, Spectrum Seating (area S4), the stables (area S5), and Gnobold Cobbleshop (area S6).

### S3. SHADE GRAVES

The sun somehow never shines on this corner of the crater, a memorial site where all fallen Scroungers are laid to rest. Their most prized possession serves as the only grave marker. For this reason, there are no heirlooms in Scrounger society; the elders Grangno and Gramko believe this spurs constant innovation.

### S4. SPECTRUM SEATING

The Spectrum is the best seat in the house when a battle breaks out. Scroungers cheer and jeer the combatants over loudspeakers from fortified bleachers. They love betting on the

battles' outcomes; the makeshift scoreboard is usually destroyed in the revelry and enthusiasm.

### S5. THE STABLES

The Scroungers keep all sorts of dangerous creatures that serve useful functions. For instance, bulettes burrow to form the tunnels, and xorns sniff out shiny rocks to trade with outsiders. The Retired Hero spends their days here tending to the creatures.

### S6. GNOBOLD COBBLESHOP

Scrounger elders Grangno and Gramko and their gaggle of gnobold progeny work all hours here, creating new contraptions for life in the Crater. The Cobbleshop is well-stocked with materials. Non-gnobold Scroungers tend to steer clear of the Cobbleshop, for work-in-progress gnobold inventions are more dangerous than the Crater itself.

**Treasure.** For doing a service to the Scroungers, Grangno and Gramko offer the talents of a spunky young gnobold who leaves the Crater to become a sidekick to the heroes. Whether or not the heroes accept, the sidekick can use their Cobble trait to create an interesting new item as a reward.

## THE SILENCE DREAD

Sailors in the Everglint Bay have learned to fear the approach of the *Silence Dread*. Legends say that these pirates slip close in dim and foggy waters, raiding boats and looting coin and treasure from gullible travelers. Low-level heroes should find taking on the entire crew challenging. The ship might be commandeered by teams of 5th level or higher.

### LOCATION OVERVIEW

The *Silence Dread* is a caravel (sailing ship) run by the Pirate King and an extremely loyal crew of approximately 20 underlings. It can hold up to 20 passengers and can carry up to 100 tons of cargo.



## THE SILENCE DREAD LOCATIONS

### FORECASTLE DECK

The Pirate King oftens stands here with the navigator to control the ship's heading.

### CAPTAIN'S CABIN

In this spacious room, a bed, wardrobe, and desk hide many secrets of conquest and treasure.

### DOORS TO CARGO HOLD

Two large double doors, cross-hatched by wood, provide access to the storage area in the deck below.

### CREW QUARTERS

Double beds, hammocks, and straw beds creatively placed throughout the room provide sleeping arrangements.

### STORAGE

Typical supplies for a vessel at sea for weeks at a time are organized on shelves.

### CARGO HOLD

The cargo hold is typically empty but clean.

### GALLEY

The well-stocked kitchen is run by a surprisingly skilled chef named Ruth (human **underling**).

**Treasure.** Fine clothing worth 20 gp is in the captain's cabin. Two chests containing 200 gp are stored in the cargo hold. Hardtack, barrels of water, ropes, and other sailing supplies are in the storage room.

## TRIEYE CO-OP

"Trieve Co-Op" is balanced for characters of 7th to 8th level or higher. Lower-level characters are more likely to think the area looks like a lovely place to live and decide they never want to leave—the life of Idyllia's **Imparted** is certainly blissful.

## LOCATION OVERVIEW

The Trieve Co-Op is Lowcity's fastest-growing neighborhood. Citizens from all over Beacon are moving in at an alarming rate. The streets are cleaner. The buildings are brighter. Even the water tastes sweeter.

Everyone at the co-op works together in harmony under the guidance of Idyllia, an **aboeth**. To question her intentions would be an affront to the **Imparted**, those citizens charmed by the aboeth's cheerful mind control. Idyllia strolls around town in her illusory hybrid-humanoid form, making sure everything is perfect at all times. Her true aboeth form is hidden away in an unknown underwater cavern.

• Trieve Co-Op! The cute little town that ain't so  
• little anymore. This place is growin' like a weed in  
• Lowcity—one of them weeds with pretty flowers  
• you can't quite tell is poisonous. It must be nice,  
• 'cause every single person that wanders in here  
• leaves with a smile. If they leave at all...

## TRIEYE CO-OP LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of Trieve Co-Op.

### T1. FANTASY FOUNTAIN

A fountain of magical drinking water tainted by Idyllia to keep the **Imparted** under her control. Newcomers to the co-op are encouraged to take a drink and watch their dreams come true.

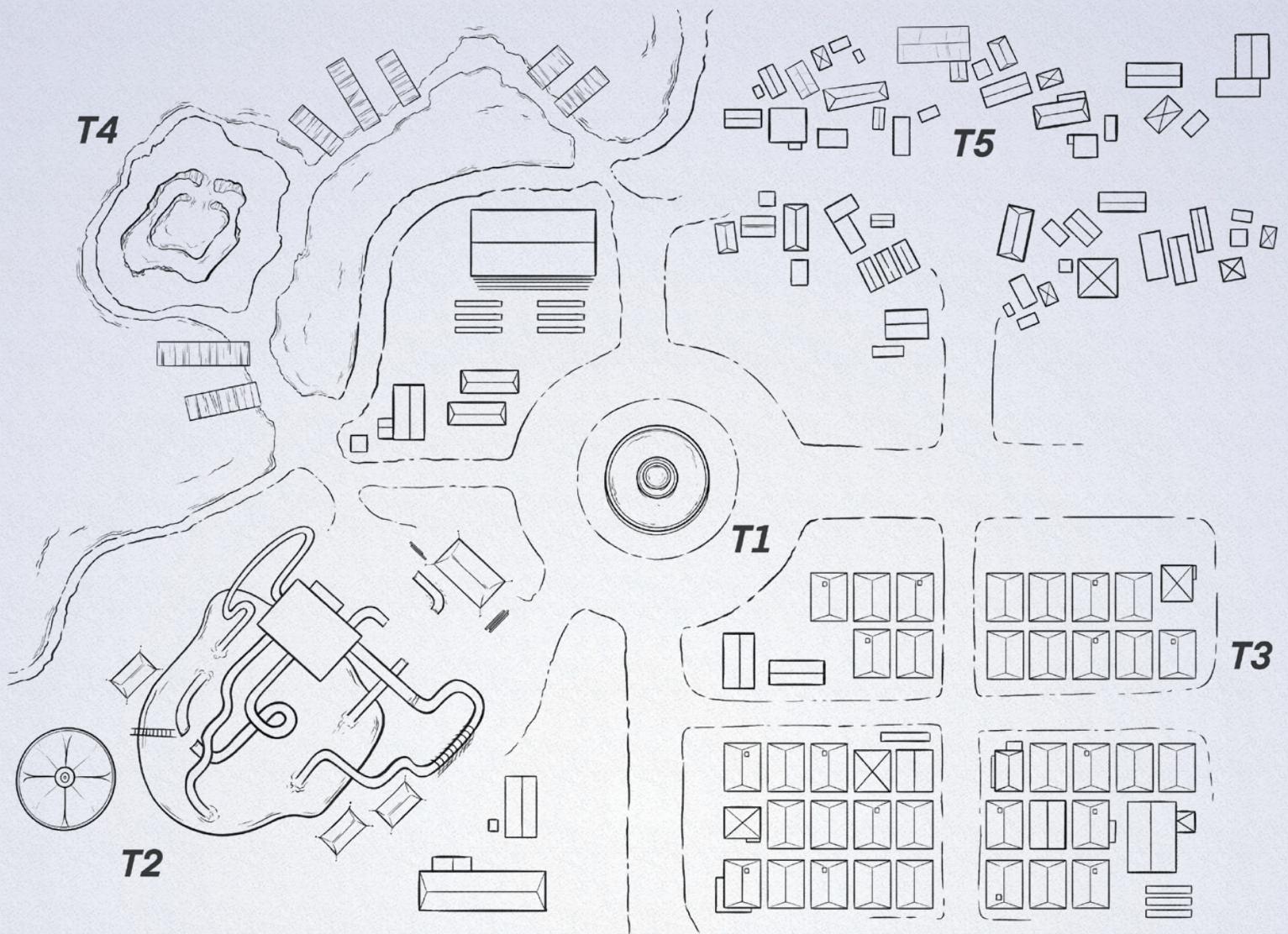
### T2. SPLASHTASTIC!

A water-themed amusement park currently under construction. Waterslide tubes expand out in all directions.

### T3. SUNNY SLOPE

An adorable rustic chic downtown main street. The area is heavily populated by cheerful **Imparted** at all times.





## T4. DEEP BLUE HOLE

An underwater sinkhole causing a mysterious waterfall ring just off the docks. The **Imparted** dare not let anyone approach. They know the hole is dangerous but don't know why. Idyllia in her **aboleth** form lurks at the bottom of the hole.

## T5. LOWCITY

The grim streets of Lowcity. In time, this too will transform and become part of the Trieve Co-Op.

**Treasure.** All of the hip yet friendly shops trade goods and services with each other. Shopkeepers offer an unbelievably good deal on wares to any visitor.

## XX'S ABSTRUSATORIUM

XX's Abstrusatorium is balanced for characters of 11th level or higher. Heroes must bypass XX the **lich's** latest evil creation, the Dead Ringers—simulacrum of the heroes themselves! Docent 2.0, the **stone golem**, constantly assesses the threat level and increases the secret laboratory's defenses accordingly. Lower-level heroes who somehow stumble into the Abstrusatorium risk instant disintegration or becoming an undead test subject.



## LOCATION OVERVIEW

The Abstrusatorium is a high-tech research and development laboratory bunker hidden deep underground in Beacon. Here XX the Sciencelich experiments with new and unstable technology to harness the power of the arkwaves. The Docent 2.0 assists in all ways, including fortifying the lab with rapidly adaptable AI defenses.

The entrance portal hidden in the mobius strip sculpture in Watcher's Vigil is visible and accessible only to creatures whose DNA sample is on file in the Abstrusatorium. One day, after receiving complimentary services at Power Parlor Salon and Spa, this entrance portal reveals itself to the heroes. Power Parlor is operated entirely by delightful hovering constructs designed by XX. The salon and spa is merely a ruse to gather the hair and fingernail samples needed to create simulacrum of Beacon's many heroes.

- The Abstrusatorium! Under Beacon, XX
- the Sciencelich's maniacal mind manifests
- mechanical machinations! The dark Docent 2.0
- delivers deadly defenses! Are our heroes here
- to bust the bunker and claim victory over the
- villain? Or are they unwitting test subjects for
- XX's latest lair upgrade...?

The Dead Ringers were created with the *simulacrum* spell—in all appearances, they are the same as the originals, though they prove to be weaker synthetic duplicates. The Dead Ringers all use sleek steel and laser-styled *+1 weapons and armor* of the same type the original wields. This gear functions only for constructs.

Both XX and the Docent 2.0 are in the Recharger Chambers (area A9) when the heroes emerge through the Teleportatrium (area A1). Docent 2.0's dual voices ring

throughout the lair, coldly prepping the heroes to begin the live simulation. Docent 2.0 observes the heroes' every movement. If any threat in the lair seems too easy, XX is eager to increase the difficulty level.

## MODIFICATIONS FOR THE DEAD RINGERS

The Dead Ringers use the character sheets of the heroes with these modifications:

- Their creature type is construct.
- Hit Points: The Dead Ringers have half the hit point maximum of the original heroes.

## THE ABSTRUSATORIUM LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Abstrusatorium.

### A1. TELEPORTATRIUM

A permanent *teleportation circle* is the only way in or out of the underground Abstrusatorium. XX uses the Teleportatrium to access his phylactery engines throughout Beacon. A creature whose DNA is not on file at the Abstrusatorium attempting to use this *teleportation circle* automatically suffers a mishap.

### A2-A6. RESEARCH STAGE ROOMS

Each room shows the Dead Ringer project in varying stages of development and is trapped with increasingly deadly obstacles. Nanotech metal molecules in the walls rearrange to form doorways to the next room only after a trap is triggered or disarmed. The DC to detect and disarm the traps increases by 1 in each consecutive room. If the heroes pass through a



room unscathed, the DC to detect and disarm traps increases by 3 instead.

Each room contains a trap that casts a wizard spell prepared in the **lich** stat block when triggered. For each consecutive room, the level of the spell increases by one. Use the spell that deals the most damage at each level or swap spells to create your own trap. For instance, a 3rd-level trap could release a devastating *fireball* or awaken nearby cadavers with *animate dead*. Invent your own ingenious traps that would impress XX the Scienclich.

## A7. INNOVATION STATION

An expansive workshop where XX experiments with the undead and arcane on an erudite academic level. The room is filled with steel lab tables, surgical and robotic instruments, and assorted alchemical concoctions.

## HB. HYPER BEAM

A massive triple cannon suspended from the ceiling, charged with cold, lightning, and necrotic energy. XX can fire the hyperbeam as a lair action. There are two corridors in area A7 where the hyperbeam cannot reach.

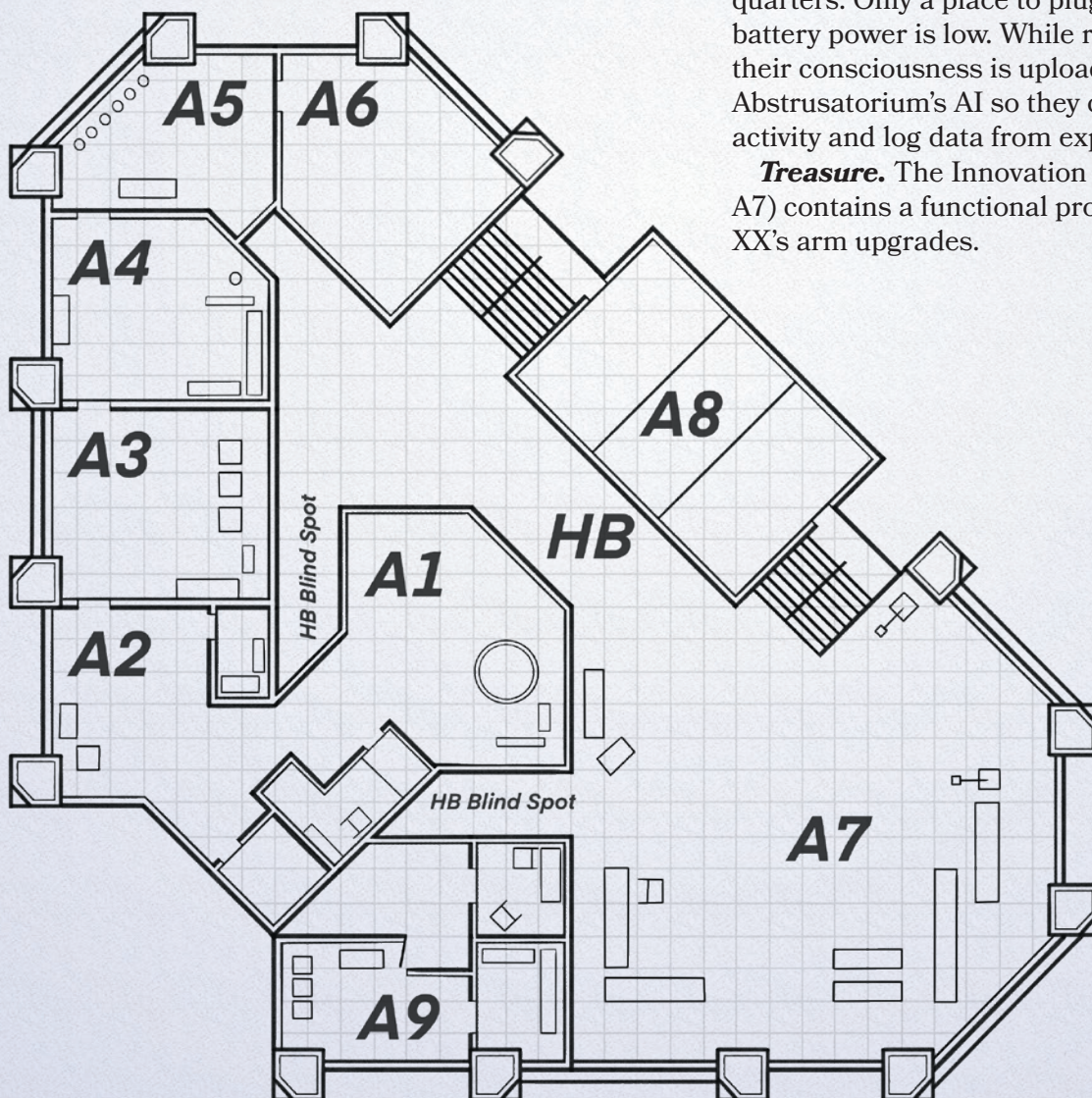
## A8. HYPER BEAM POWER CELLS

Three large translucent tanks, each filled with one of the hyperbeam's power sources. The tanks are secured to a platform 10 feet off the ground with stairs on either end. Each power cell has AC 19 and 32 hit points. If a power cell is reduced to 0 hit points, the hyperbeam can no longer fire that energy type.

## A9. RECHARGER CHAMBERS

XX and the Docent 2.0 do not require living quarters. Only a place to plug in when battery power is low. While recharging, their consciousness is uploaded to the Abstrusatorium's AI so they can monitor all activity and log data from experiments.

**Treasure.** The Innovation Station (area A7) contains a functional prototype of XX's arm upgrades.





# APPENDIX C: KAIJU

Outside the borders of Beacon and beyond the Protectorate Peaks, gargantuan creatures with indescribable power roam the far reaches of Ghaistala. These ancient beings are the kaiju, as enigmatic as they are mind-blowing.

## BLODYNBREN, THE LOTUS MOTHER

Blodynbren was born in the wildest parts of Ghaistala. The legend goes that a powerful druid placed their fox companion within a protective grove of lotus flowers just before the destruction of Paragon's Toll, hoping that the little kit would be protected.

Protected she was indeed, and for the next four hundred years after the Toll, the kit slept, nourished by the powerful wash of magic unleashed by the dying Titan. When she rose from the grove, awakened from her rest by the opening of the first portals, Blodynbren had been transformed into a colossal nine-tailed fox made of lotus leaves.

Blodynbren towers almost 300 feet tall and 500 feet long, with her tails almost triple that. Her body is composed of myriad lotus petals, with numerous druidic runes glowing throughout. Her tails emit a soft light, almost like an aurora borealis, and above her brow floats a crown of raw crystal and vine.

### AGGRESSION LEVEL

Blodynbren is a pacifist, ignoring all but the most violent of attacks. She refuses to attack anyone unless her groves are endangered, and it is then that her wrath—that of the elements themselves—are unleashed. Otherwise, Blodynbren ignores any who try to fight her, simply vanishing in a blast of wind.

### REGIONAL EFFECTS

Wherever Blodynbren walks, nature grows as it has never grown before. Small plants or flowers grow to the size of trees, fallow fields fill to overabundance, and the sick and weary feel new health and power. And most importantly, when she rests in a single place for a time, great groves of lotus blossoms grow, fonts of nature's will.

### MINIONS

While Blodynbren has no minions, small creatures known as lokits often manifest in her energy and wander the land, bringing wisdom and harmony wherever they go. Lokits are only able to stray a few hundred miles from their mother before they simply transform into little bulbs and plant themselves in the earth.

### TACTICS

Blodynbren does everything she can to avoid outright combat, often turning into a large windstorm or cyclone of lotus blossoms and petals. If driven to fight, she does everything in her power to disorientate her opponent with buffeting winds of plants and petals before firing beams of sunlight from her tails.

### ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Come to Mother's Aid.** A lokit finds you and beckons for you to follow it, bringing you to where the great Blodynbren lies injured and hurt. Something is corrupting the natural world around her, and she needs your aid.

**Beauty Corrupted.** The local lotus grove, a gift from the Lotus Mother, has become infected and seems to be somehow poisoning the land around it.



# BLODYNBREN, THE LOTUS MOTHER

*Gargantuan fey, lawful neutral*

**ARMOR CLASS** 19 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 270 (20d20 + 60)

**SPEED** 60 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 24 (+7) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 22 (+6) | 17 (+3) |

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +16, Int +10, Cha +12

**SKILLS** Arcana +10, Nature +10, Survival +15, Persuasion +12

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** acid, poison

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** bludgeoning, slashing, and piercing from nonmagical weapons

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**SENSES** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**LANGUAGES** all

**CHALLENGE** 30 (155,000 XP)

**REGENERATION.** At the end of Blodynbren's turns, she regains 20 hit points. If Blodynbren takes fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of Blodynbren's next turn.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Blodynbren makes two gust attacks and one solar ray attack.

**SOLAR RAY.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +15 to hit, range 150/300 ft., one target. Hit: 32 (4d12 + 6) radiant damage.

**GUST.** Melee Spell Attack: +15 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (4d4 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the target is pushed back 30 feet and knocked prone.

**PETAL SHIELD (RECHARGE 6).** Blodynbren causes petals to spring up and whirl around her. Until the end of her next turn, all ranged attacks and spells cast within a 30-foot radius of Blodynbren are deflected back to its origin.

"HEAR US, LOTUS MOTHER, AND ACCEPT US INTO YOUR PACK! TAKE US FROM THIS CURSED SOIL!"

- JUNTARA MYTHRIM, SPEAKER OF THE SISTERHOOD OF ETERNAL SPRING



# GOLGOMARAUTH, THE DREAD HAND OF DEATH

Gargantuan aberration, unaligned

**ARMOR CLASS** 18 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 666 (36d20 + 288)

**SPEED** 40 ft., swim 60 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 23 (+6) | 18 (+4) | 26 (+8) | 6 (-2) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) |

**SAVING THROWS** Str +14, Con +16, Int +6, Cha +9

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +12, Intimidation +9

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** acid, fire, thunder

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** paralyzed, restrained, stunned

**SENSES** blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** –

**CHALLENGE** 27 (105,000 XP)

**AQUATIC SUPERIORITY.** While swimming, Golgomarauth gains a +2 bonus to AC, and it can take the Dash action as a bonus action.

**BORN TO GLIDE.** If Golgomarauth moves at least 20 feet in a straight line, it can jump and gain a flight speed of 70 feet. until the beginning of its next turn. If it ends this movement in air, it falls.

**DOUBLE HEADED.** Golgomarauth can't be surprised, and it has advantage on saving throws against being knocked unconscious.

**DUAL FORM.** Golgomarauth is an energy being inhabiting a flesh-and-blood suit. When it is reduced to 0 hit points, it detonates violently. Every creature within 60 feet of Golgomarauth takes 56 (16d6) force damage. Golgomarauth then reforms its physical body in 1d4 days.

**NATURAL CAMOUFLAGE.** While in dim light, or within the treeline, Golgomarauth has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Golgomarauth makes four megaton punch attacks or two pressure stream attacks.

**MEGATON PUNCH.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target or two targets within 15 ft. of each other. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage to one target or 17 (2d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage each to two targets.

**PRESSURE STREAM.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 120/300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (4d12 + 6) piercing damage.

**DEVOUR ENERGY.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6 + 6) piercing damage. On a hit, the target creature must make a DC 24 Constitution



GOLGOMARAUTH

saving throw. On a failure, it loses the ability to cast one spell of 5th level or lower (Golgomarauth's choice). Golgomarauth can then cast that spell without expending a spell slot on a subsequent turn. The spell is then returned to the target creature.

**PARAGITE BEAM (RECHARGE 5-6).** Golgomarauth exhales a stream of pure paragite energy in an 80-foot line. Each creature that can cast spells in the area of effect must make a DC 24 saving throw, the type of which is the creature's spellcasting ability. On a failure, they lose the ability to cast spells for 1 minute. Affected creatures can repeat the saving throw on subsequent turns, ending the effect on a success.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

**ATTACK.** Golgomarauth makes one megaton punch attack.

**SLITHERING STRIDE.** Golgomarauth moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**DEVOUR ENERGY (COSTS 2 ACTIONS).** Golgomarauth uses its devour energy attack or casts the spell it devoured.



# KARYU, THE TERROR FROM BEYOND THE STARS

Long before the first citizens of Ghaistala emerged from the portals, a comet—one covered in golden scales and emanating strange energy—crashed into the Grey Wastes. The comet sank to the bottom of a sinkhole for some time before the interdimensional energies of the first portaleers awakened it. Hatching in its adult form, Karyu began its reign of terror across Ghaistala.

## AGGRESSION LEVEL

Karyu is extremely aggressive. It is drawn to the interdimensional energies that the portaleers emanate, seeing this energy as a potent food and energy resource. Out of all the kaiju that live in Ghaistala, Karyu is the most persistent and unyielding.

## REGIONAL EFFECTS

A mile-wide lightning storm surges around Karyu as it flies around Ghaistala, with the eye centered directly on the golden Kaiju. For every minute the heroes spend in the lightning storm, roll a d100. On a 90 or above, one of the heroes is struck by lightning, dealing 16 (3d10) lightning damage. A successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw can halve the damage taken.

## MINIONS

Karyu is worshipped by the Cult of the Gathering Heavens, a fringe group in Beacon.

The cultists of the Cult of the Gathering Heavens use the **air elemental** stat block with this addition:

**Innate Spellcasting.** The cultist's spellcasting ability modifier is Constitution (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

1/day each: *fog cloud*, *lightning bolt*, *thunderwave*

## TACTICS

First and foremost, Karyu targets the closest spellcaster, and failing that, they target any supers with the magic origin. Karyu is, above all, a hit-and-run monster, perfectly fine with flying just out of reach of the heroes after peppering them with energy blasts and spells from their innate spellcasting ability. With their superior wisdom, Karyu knows the exact time to strike to carry off a spellcaster or magic origin hero to drain them of energy. If Karyu absorbs enough energy to go into overload form, they become much more willing to go toe-to-toe with the heroes, using their Thunder Shield and Thunder Pulse features to create space and defense when they begin to take a beating. If Karyu feels that they are about to be reduced to 0 hit points before their next turn, they fly or teleport into the midst of the heroes, aiming to get within 40 feet of at least three or more of the heroes in order to subject them to its Meltdown feature.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A particularly boastful member of the Asha Trading Co. claims that she can tame the wild Karyu and harness its energy manipulation to revolutionize the mining business. Stop this obviously foolhardy quest before someone (probably the Asha Trading Co.) gets destroyed.
- XX the Sciencelich has perfected his kaiju mind-control ray. After taking it out for a test run, XX succeeded in controlling Karyu only to lose control moments later. Honing in on the ray's signal, Karyu seems to hold a special vendetta against the scientist. It's time to save the bad guy it seems.
- In a rare turn of events, Karyu has nested with another kaiju: Gologomarauth the Dread Hand of Death. Both being creatures forged of pure energy, many Beaconite scientists are speculating that they will be successful in procreating. Break up this terrible twosome before they unleash something truly awful onto Beacon.



# KARYU, THE TERROR BEYOND THE STARS

*Gargantuan aberration, chaotic evil*

**ARMOR CLASS** 18 (natural armor), 20 (overload form)

**HIT POINTS** 449 (31d20 + 124)

**SPEED** 35 ft., fly 220 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 22 (+6) | 19 (+4) | 11 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 23 (+6) |

**SAVING THROWS** Str +9, Int +9, Con +13

**SKILLS** Stealth +15, Perception +12

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** thunder

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, frightened, paralyzed

**SENSES** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22

**LANGUAGES** Abyssal

**CHALLENGE** 30 (155,000 XP)

**OVERLOAD FORM.** Every time Karyu would be subject to lightning damage, it instead gains temporary hit points equal to half the damage it would have taken. These temporary hit points stack with each other.

Once Karyu gains temporary hit points equal to half of its maximum hit points, it transforms into its overload form, gaining the features and traits associated with that form. Once Karyu enters into its overload form, it cannot gain temporary hit points in this way until it finishes a long rest.

**FLESH SUIT.** Karyu is an energy being inhabiting a flesh-and-blood suit. If Karyu is reduced to 0 hit points, then it reforms its physical body in 1d10 days.

**INNATE SPELLCASTING.** Karyu's innate spellcasting attribute is Charisma (spell save DC 23, +15 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *shocking grasp*, *thunderwave* (at 4th level)

3/day: *chain lightning*, *control weather*, *dimension door*

1/day: *storm of vengeance*

**MELTDOWN (OVERLOAD FORM).** When Karyu is reduced to 0 hit points, it explodes in a shower of lightning and thunder. Each creature in a 40-foot radius of Karyu must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) lightning damage and 35 (10d6) thunder damage on a failed save and half as much on a success.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Karyu uses its draining pedipalp attacks, then makes two claw attacks and one stinger tail attack.

**DRAINING PEDIPALPS.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 25 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) necrotic damage and the target must make a DC 23 Constitution save or lose half of its remaining hit dice. Karyu regains hit points equal to the number of hit dice lost.

**CLAW.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) lightning damage (overload form only).

**STINGER TAIL.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) piercing damage, plus 16 (3d10) lightning damage (overload form only).

**LIGHTNING LANCE (RECHARGE 5-6).** Karyu fires a beam of lightning from its pedipalps at 240-foot line. Each creature in the area of effect must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) lightning damage on a failure and half as much damage on a success.

**THUNDER PULSE (OVERLOAD FORM ONLY) (RECHARGE 6).** Karyu erupts with deadly fury in a 120-foot radius. Every creature in the area of effect must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 91 (26d6) thunder damage and being hurled away 30 feet on a failure. On a success, they take half damage and are not hurled.

## REACTIONS

**UNIVERSAL ABSORPTION.** Whenever Karyu takes radiant, thunder, cold, or fire damage, it can use its reaction to change that damage type to lightning.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

**ATTACK.** Karyu makes a Claw attack.

**FLYBY.** Karyu flies up to half its flying speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**HOT WIRE (COSTS 3 ACTIONS).** Karyu recharges its lightning lance attack, then uses it.

In overload form, the following legendary actions are added to Karyu's usual ones:

**ATTACK.** Karyu makes one draining pedipalps attack or one stinger tail attack.

**TELEPORT.** Karyu teleports up to 120 feet to a point it can see.

**THUNDER SHIELD (COSTS 2 ACTIONS).** Each creature within 15 feet of Karyu must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage on a failure and half as much damage on a success. Until the end of Karyu's next turn, it adds +2 to its AC.



# XORT, THE WARM EMBRACE

The gargantuan being known as Xort is actually two organisms living in symbiosis with each other: Xai, a titanic earth elemental with an almost indestructible ore hide, and Orthax, a sentient slime-mold ooze. Originally, they entered into this symbiosis as part of Orthax's plan to subsume all life on Ghaistala. When Orthax found that he could not absorb Xai, an arrangement was made—one of mutual protection.

While they both live on as Xort, they have unprecedented levels of psychic power. In addition, if enough damage is applied to Xai's carapace, she vomits Orthax forth to wreak havoc with his pseudopod and absorption attacks. Many a heroic team has celebrated victory at the appearance of the bright orange ooze, mistaking it for the death throes of the kaiju, only to be swept up and subsumed by Orthax.

## AGGRESSION LEVEL

Xort finds himself inexplicably drawn to Beacon, perhaps sensing the interdimensional energy emanating from the city. Orthax's extreme intelligence prompts him to tactically attack Beacon at its weakest moments, oftentimes in the middle of another kaiju attack.

## REGIONAL EFFECTS

Any beast with an Intelligence score of 3 or lower finds itself in a stupor while within a half mile of Xort due to the kaiju's extreme psychic influence on weak-minded creatures.

## MINIONS

Xort is worshipped by the Cult of Unity, a group that believes that Xort is the next step in mortal evolution. These cultists can oftentimes be found throwing themselves into the scarlett ooze of Xort, hoping to bond with the kaiju and ascend to the next level.

The cultists are **bandit captains** with these changes:

- **Ooze Meister:** As a bonus action, the cultist can polymorph into an ooze with a Challenge Rating of 7 or lower. This transformation lasts until the ooze is reduced to 0 hit points or the cultist ends it as a bonus action. While transformed, the cultist retains its mental ability scores.
- **Oozing Wounds:** The cultist deals an extra 7 (2d6) acid damage on all weapon attacks.

## TACTICS

At first, Xort fights like a seemingly unintelligent creature, wading into the middle of a pack of enemies and dividing up their slam attacks among random targets. However, this carefully planned ruse gets Xort surrounded and tires out their enemies. Once Xort has taken enough damage, they shift into their Mutual Aid form—it is there that the fun begins. Targeting the most physically frail creatures (using Orthax's extreme intelligence to narrow down who exactly that is), they systematically restrain and absorb everything around them.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A prominent member of Beacon's government calls a meeting of the most powerful people in Beacon, political and otherwise. As he stands to give his speech, he suddenly melts into a pile of orange goop. The earth shakes as a titanic earth elemental erupts from the ground of the capital. It's a trap!
- A battle rages in the skies above Beacon. The kaiju Karyu is going toe to toe with the Portaleers, but that isn't the main concern. Xort has taken advantage of the distraction to mount their own offensive against Beacon. You must stop them before they breach the wall and begin to absorb the innocent civilians.
- For the first time in a while, Beacon isn't in mortal danger. However, the grove that houses the nature spirit Blodynbren is under siege by the kaiju Xort. Stop them, before they absorb the apocalyptic power of the grove.



# XORT, THE WARM EMBRACE

Gargantuan elemental (ooze), chaotic neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 25 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 451 (22d20 + 220)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON      | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|--------|
| 27 (+8) | 10 (+0) | 30 (+10) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 8 (-1) |

**SAVING THROWS** Str +17, Con +19, Cha +8

**SKILLS** Arcana +11, Perception +10

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** fire

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious

**SENSES** blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 20

**LANGUAGES** telepathy 1 mile

**CHALLENGE** 30 (155,000 XP)

**HARDENED CARAPACE.** When Xort is hit, they can ignore up to 10 points of damage.

**MUTUAL AID.** When Xort is reduced to below half their maximum hit points, their carapace cracks open and Xai vomits Orthax to defend both of them. As the ooze surrounds the vulnerable carapace, Xort gains temporary hit points equal to half their maximum. While these temporary hit points last, they gain the benefits that are labelled “Mutual Aid Form” and the Hardened Carapace feature ceases to function.

**FLAGELLANT (MUTUAL AID FORM).** When Xort takes the Attack action or the Multiattack action, they can make two pseudopod attacks or one absorb attack as a bonus action.

**SPLASHBACK (MUTUAL AID FORM).** Whenever Xort takes damage from a melee weapon or spell attack, the offending creature takes 22 (4d10) acid damage.

## ACTIONS

**MULTIATTACK.** Xort makes two slam attacks.

**SLAM.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage. If Xort is using their Mutual Aid form, they can choose to deal acid damage instead.

**PSEUDOPOD.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 45 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) acid damage, and the creature is grappled (escape DC 20). Xort can grapple six creatures in this way, one for each pseudopod. A creature that starts its turn grappled by Xort takes 18 (4d8) acid damage.

**ABSORB (RECHARGE 6).** Xort targets one creature grappled by them, attempting to subsume them into their consciousness. The target creature must make a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 55 (10d10) psychic damage and is permanently absorbed into Orthax if it is reduced to 0 hit points. On a success, the creature takes half damage and is not absorbed. A creature absorbed in this way cannot be resurrected by any means short of divine intervention or a wish spell.

**CREATE THRALL.** Orthax secretes a small amount of his ooze, making a perfect copy of a creature that he has absorbed. This copy retains all of the memories, personality traits, abilities, and hit points of the original, except it is completely and zealously devoted to Orthax. In combat, this copy takes its turn directly after Xort, obeying its mental commands as best as it can (no action required on Xort's part). This copy persists until its hit points are reduced to 0, or it is reabsorbed by Xort as an action.

Xort can create up to six thralls in this way, mentally commanding them as a free action as long as they stay within 10 miles of them.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

**SLAM.** Xort makes one slam attack.

**KNOCKBACK.** Xort makes a slam attack. On a hit, instead of dealing damage, Xort can hurl the creature up to 50 feet away.

**REPOSITION (COSTS 2 ACTIONS).** Xort burrows under the earth and reappears in an unoccupied spot up to 120 feet away.



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# HEROES! VILLAINS! MAGITECH! KAIJU! ALL SUPERS, ALL SORCERY!

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