

War of the Burning Sky

Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds

by Andrew Kenrick



A fantasy adventure for 9th-level characters



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An Adventure for 9th-Level Characters
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fifth adventure in the *War of the Burning Sky* campaign saga. Since the start of the war, the heroes have carried mysterious war secrets from the neutral city of Gate Pass, through a living forest fire controlled by a dreamborn monster, to the town of Seaquen, a safe haven for refugee mages, and a beacon of hope for those who want to bring the war to an end. In Seaquen, the heroes achieved fame by thwarting a plan by the Ragesian Empire to destroy the resistance with a magical hurricane, but mysteries remained, for it seemed the Ragesians were aided by a third party.

In this installment, the heroes are dispatched to the distant Monastery of Two Winds, where they will have to defeat an occupying army and traitorous wind mages to earn the support of the monastery's masters. A spooky calm has overtaken the village near the monastery, and as that calm slowly fractures the heroes will have two revelations, and they will learn that the war is far more dangerous than previously expected. If they are brave and daring enough to survive the tempestuous onslaught of their enemies, the heroes just might come out a step ahead of the vengeful Ragesian army.

BACKGROUND

It is now four months or more since the start of the war, and though the spring thaw should have begun, the entire region is still gripped by a fierce chill. Favorable weather only seems to find the Ragesian army, and it marches steadfastly against many foes. Wise and experienced warriors recognize that Ragesia is not trying to conquer – they are simply spread too thin – but rather are scouring the region, searching for the Torch of the Burning Sky, the artifact which let the Ragesian Empire rise to power.

The heroes return to the port of Seaquen, having secured the aid of Dassen in holding back the Third Ragesian Army (or having left the nation in such chaos and disarray that the Ragesians will have a few months of slogging before they get anywhere near Seaquen). Though Seaquen has had some successes,

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

If you are running this episode as a one-shot or as part of your own campaign, you may want to change some of the encounters, since several of them are designed to hint at events that take place later in the saga. In particular the machinations of Pilus may seem a little out of place or lead to an unsatisfactory conclusion.

As a solution, you can either remove Pilus completely, and have Caela be performing these experiments on her own without the knowledge of her masters, or you might simply use Caela's stats to represent Pilus for a final battle, and have Caela herself use the stats of a typical east wind monk. Either way, it is best to excise all references to the airship *The Tempest*, unless you plan to work a mile-long living airship into your own campaign later.

it is becoming clear that if the Ragesians claim the Torch first, it will render all their work pointless.

When Coaltongue died, the land for miles in every direction was covered by a firestorm which has lasted for months, keeping anyone from getting in to find out the Torch's fate. The remnants of Coaltongue's army scattered in the face of this mysterious storm, but now a contingent of them has descended on the Monastery of Two Winds, which lies in the mountains on the border of the long-time rival nations Ostalin and Sindaire. Divinations have hinted that the heads of the monastery, masters of wind magic named Longinus and Pilus, have the power to hold the firestorm at bay.

Led by Second General Signus, the soldiers laid siege, but they did not count on the tenacity of the monks, the cunning of the monastery's leaders, or the presence of a strange soothing magic that has stymied all attempts to assault the monastery and its neighboring village of Eresh. In frustration, Signus has left a garrison and departed to seek reinforcements.

Seeing a window of opportunity, the leaders of Seaquen dispatch the heroes to help the monks repel the Ragesian army and gain their assistance in acquiring the Torch. But the heroes are not the first adventurers dispatched by Seaquen. A previous group was already sent, following clues that pointed to a link between the monastery and the magical tempest that struck Seaquen a month ago. Those agents have stopped reporting, their last message being a strangely calm statement that nothing at all was going on.

Two main mysteries surround the monastery. First, a trillith named Balance had taken up residence in the village of Eresh, and has been using her power to keep the Ragesians and the monks from fighting. Balance has used her power too much, and now many on both sides are degenerating into waking comas, uninterested in anything. Balance is growing weak from holding back so much violence, and if she dies the long held-back aggression will be unleashed.

Second, one of the monastery's two leaders, Pilus, was secretly responsible for the attack on Seaquen a month ago, which he used as a test ground for new offensive magic he plans to unleash in the war. His apprentice, a half-elf woman named Caela, has been taking advantage of the strange lull in combat to abduct people, the raw materials necessary for creating the biomantic monsters Pilus is so proud of. Unknown to his brother Longinus, Pilus has allied with the ruler of Ostalin, and intends to enter the war in the coming months, as soon as his latest monster is fully grown.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The central goal of *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds* is to persuade the heads of the monastery, a pair of monks named Longinus and Pilus, to help the heroes acquire the Torch of the Burning Sky. With their aid, a path will be opened for the heroes to reach the location where Coaltongue was slain, which forms the basis of the next adventure, *Tears of the Burning Sky*.

With the aid of a wayfarer, the heroes teleport into Ostalin, arriving in the city of Yen-Ching, a hundred miles from the monastery itself. After a brief stint in Ostalin, they climb the perilous wintry

trails up the mountains, running across a Ragesian ambush intended to keep anyone from coming to the aid of the monks of the monastery. Additionally, several companies of Ragesian forces have lain siege to the town of Eresh at the foot of the monastery, forcing the heroes to sneak past the soldiers to reach the town.

When the heroes enter Eresh they find out that something is wrong. Soldiers are living peacefully next to the townsfolk, tempers unnaturally calm, to the point that some people have simply sat down, uninterested in even eating. The few who have managed to keep some sense about themselves can explain that people are going missing, though no one is motivated enough to investigate. The disappearances are at the direction of Pilus, whose apprentice Caela is using invisible stalkers to abduct townsfolk as fuel for biomantic experiments.

As the heroes climb the mountain to the monastery they are attacked by air elementals which are tasked with holding back all foreigners. When they do reach the top, Caela refuses them entrance to the monastery until the Ragesians are gone and the village of Eresh is free from its strange curse. Even the cunning Pilus does not know what causes the calm over Eresh, and it worries him. He has a pair of invisible stalkers follow the heroes and observe their activities.

The heroes investigate the disappearances and the unnatural stillness in the town, locating both the trillith Balance and one survivor of the original expedition from Seaquen. Balance is growing weak, and soon will no longer be able to hold back the Ragesians. Meanwhile, the survivor, a ranger named Eril, explains that his group found damning evidence that whoever attacked Seaquen has a base in the nearby Valley of Storms, but soon thereafter his companions vanished, and he hid. The heroes have to decide which threat to address first.

For the Ragesian threat, Second General Signus returns to town at an untimely juncture, and his arrival with a hundred hostile soldiers proves too much, breaking Balance's calm, and killing her unless the heroes can help. Released from her power, the soldiers take out their anger

on the townsfolk, and the heroes must defeat their leader if they are to save the town.

As for the mysterious disappearances, as the heroes trek to the snowy Valley of Storms, they face many obstacles along the way, from perilous climbs to ambushes by monks and strange flesh-crafted monsters. Once they pass these defenses, they can locate Pilus's hidden laboratory, where they battle a powerful guardian, before facing Caela herself, who wishes to protect her master's secrets, even if it means destroying the laboratory.

If the heroes focus first on the Ragesian threat, during the battle Caela's invisible stalkers abduct one of the heroes or their allies, encouraging them to pursue. Should the heroes instead focus first on the Valley of Storms, they arrive just as Signus is arriving. Either way, they should deal with both threats before they have a chance to return to the monastery.

When they do finally gain an audience with the masters of the monastery, they must convince Longinus and Pilus to provide them with assistance in acquiring the Torch of the Burning Sky, a task influenced by their deeds throughout the adventure.

The adventure is divided into five acts – Journey through Ostalin, The Calm Over Eresh, The Ragesian Army, The Valley of Storms, and Audience with Two Winds – and while they work best in this order, you may need to shuffle them based on the heroes' actions.

CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS

If you are playing through the whole of the *War of the Burning Sky* campaign, the heroes should already be embroiled in the grand scheme by now and need only a gentle push in the right direction. This adventure assumes they working with Seaquen in the resistance against Ragesia, but if they are working with another group or hunting for the Torch of the Burning Sky on their own, they could get wind of the divinations which point to the monastery, making it an obvious first step.

If you are running *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds* as a standalone adventure, the information Longinus and Pilus possess could be whatever you desire, and provide a good jumping-off point

PSIONICS IN THE ADVENTURE

As in all of the adventures in the campaign saga, the psionics rules are not necessary in *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds*. Balance is a trillith, and though her dreamborn abilities are inspired by psionic powers, everything you need is provided in this adventure. Likewise, Three Weeping Ravens, an ally that may travel with the heroes, comes from an order of monks with psionic powers (which will come into play again in the seventh adventure, *The Trial of Echoed Souls*), though his stats, too, are presented so you do not need to use the psionic rules.

for whatever adventure you plan to run next. For a one-shot, perhaps on the heroes is a monk from the monastery who receives an urgent *sending* requesting he bring help, or one hero might have relatives living in Eresh and hear rumors about the Ragesian attack.

THE MONASTERY OF TWO WINDS

Fifty years ago, when Ragesian Emperor Drakus Coaltongue first swept through the lands of Sindaire and Ostalin, breaking resistance and ensuring that his rule would never be challenged, two brothers from Ostalin watched their homes set to the torch. The wind carried the flames to other buildings, until their entire village was obliterated. Though they joined the resistance against Ragesia, eventually both realized that the fight was hopeless, and they withdrew, meditating and contemplating on a new path in life.

One brother, Lsi Nu Gon, came to believe that while individual deaths in war are tragic, nothing can truly be destroyed, that souls reach their reward in the afterlife, and that life ultimately endures. Like the gentle west wind, he espoused a philosophy of ascetic detachment, seeking to avoid or endure threats, rather than defeat them.

The other brother, Lsi Pu, lost too many close to him, and developed a philosophy of swift surprise attacks, either as retribution or preemptively to ensure no one was ever powerful enough to threaten

the innocent. Like the fierce east wind, he espoused concealing one's power, striking without warning, when one blow can be the most devastating.

Lsi Pu had always been in love with riddles and puzzles, so when he and his brother were planning to create a monastery to share their new enlightenment, he convinced his brother that they should both change their names. Lsi Nu Gon, who became Longinus, saw this as moving away from a life that was no longer his, while Lsi Pu, who became Pilus, desired only to keep his past secret, the better to hide his true intentions.

The monastery, built in a mountain valley on the border between the enemy nations of Sindaire and Ostalin, attracted many who were seeking escape from suffering, or who wished to be strong enough to defend themselves. Over the decades, the monastery grew, and a village of former monks and curious merchants was established in the bottom of the valley, where favorable weather made life possible in the otherwise inhospitable mountains.

Longinus and Pilus were born only two years apart, but Longinus is now an old man, his face hidden behind an elegant white mask and his voice rasping and wheezy, forcing him to use words sparingly. By contrast, Pilus appears a healthy man in his early forties, dark-haired and dashing. None has seen Longinus's face, so some suspect he merely plays the part of an old man, or that perhaps the two are half-brothers, and that Pilus has elven blood. The truth is more magical: Pilus has cheated death.

PILUS'S PLAN

While Longinus spent his time in meditation and teaching, Pilus gathered a few cunning pupils who could carry the burden of sharing his philosophy, while he spent his time dabbling in countless magical arts, seeking new ways to empower himself. His goal was to take revenge on Coaltongue, and to ensure that none would ever be so powerful or dangerous again. But as Coaltongue was immortal, Pilus knew he would need time, so his first task was to find a way to extend his life, which he did by the age of forty, binding his soul to the elemental air energy of a tempest that had rained perpetually over the nearby sacred Valley of Storms.

Then, with all the time in the world, Pilus developed a grandiose plan to topple the Ragesian Empire. Using biomantic magic he had pioneered, Pilus began to craft monsters, first simple tools and guardians, but slowly working toward his masterpiece – a mile-long living airship, a leviathan of the winds which he named *The Tempest*.

Now Pilus's plans are near completion. He has found allied mages of the other three elements – earth, water, and fire – and he has grown a small army of monstrous warriors. As the adventure begins, he has just used his spectacular persuasive skills to ally with the ruler of Ostalin, a petty warlord named Onamdammín, who wishes only to live up to his warrior father's legacy. Before the year's end, Pilus intends to embark Onamdammín's army aboard *The Tempest*, and with the aid of monsters and sorcery never before seen in the world, lay waste to all the empires and nations of men, until there are no armies left to threaten the innocent.

Of course Pilus is somewhat mad to undertake this plan, but he at least realizes his plan is unorthodox and somewhat excessive. Surprisingly well-grounded for a megalomaniac, Pilus knows enough to keep the climax of his plan a secret, and until that point will gather allies so that when he does strike, none will be able to stop him. He even briefly tricked the Ragesians into allying with him for the destruction of Seaquen, which got him close enough to the leadership of the empire that he was able to learn its weak points.

Pilus recognizes the potential for hypocrisy in his plan, but if his brother has taught him nothing else, Pilus has learned to take the long view of things. If he must kill thousands to give security to millions, he has no qualms.

THE BURNING SKY

As detailed in the *Campaign Guide*, teleportation is hazardous during the adventure due to a strange mishap tied to the Torch of the Burning Sky. Any creature teleporting takes fire damage based on the distance traveled. For more details, see the *Campaign Guide*.

ACT ONE: JOURNEY THROUGH OSTALIN

Act One introduces sets the heroes on their mission and gets them to the valley where Eresh and the monastery lie. If you are not running this adventure as part of the campaign saga, you can skip or shorten the section in Yen-Ching.

AN URGENT MISSION

When the heroes finish their mission in Dassen at the end of *The Mad King's Banquet*, they are called back to Seaquen on urgent business. When the heroes return they are summoned to Simeon's office in Lyceum for an immediate meeting. A light drizzle falls on Seaquen, and distant thunder reminds them of the hurricane that struck a month ago.

When they arrive at Simeon's office, the headmaster is looking out his broad window at the harbor. Kiernan, the defense minister of Lyceum, clears his throat to get Simeon's attention. Unless the heroes brought anyone with them, they are the only other people in the room. Simeon offers them drinks and food, though asks them not to discuss anything important while any serving people are around. He suspects Ragesia has slipped a spy into their midst, and he's not taking any chances.

Before getting on to what their next mission is, Simeon wants to hear in detail about how things went in Dassen. As this conversation is winding down, the door opens, and in step the familiar figure of **Katrina** (N female human sorcerer 10), with a brown-skinned stranger beside her. The man is bald and dressed in simple traveling clothes, with a black tattoo on the back of his left hand and on the back of his head. He has a slight smile, and looks like that expression never leaves his face. If the heroes have visited the refugee monks from Sindaire, they recognize this man as **Three Weeping Ravens** (LG male human monk 4/psychic warrior 5), the spokesperson for his people.

Katrina is a bit displeased they started without her, but she introduces Three Weeping Ravens and the heroes. Three Weeping Ravens is as in the dark right now as the heroes regarding why he has been called here.

THE SPY

Katrina, introduced in adventure three, *Shelter from the Storm*, is a double agent from Ragesia. However, she is not particularly devoted to her masters, and her interactions with the heroes may be swaying her to pick a side.

"Things are going well for now," Simeon says. "Well enough. We haven't died yet, at least. And while our agents are doing their best to gain us allies against the Ragesians, I'm afraid all our trouble might be for nothing. Kiernan?"

Kiernan draws a scroll case and pulls out a map of the region. He points out locations as he speaks.

"This information is all less than a week old, courtesy of *sending* spells. The Third Ragesian army is, by your information, going to be stalled by Dassen for a while. The Fourth Ragesian army is flanking around the mountains into northern Shahalesti. The Western Ragesian Navy is blockading the capital of Sindaire, and the remnants of the First Army, which was with Coaltongue when he died, are scattered throughout Sindaire as well. They are trying to find a way to Castle Korstull, where Coaltongue was slain, which is our best guess to where the Torch of the Burning Sky now lies. However, a firestorm has appeared over the castle, burning for several months now. They cannot get in.

"The Second Ragesian army has taken Gate Pass, but is having trouble holding it. The amount of resistance their facing gives us hope that we can still be some use to them, but is also worrying, since it is the one place the Ragesians are actively trying to hold territory. We're still not sure of their goals there, but we are all but certain that the Ragesians' *primary* goal is covering as much land as possible, looking for the Torch."

Katrina takes over here. "After the hurricane, we sent agents to investigate one of the leads left

after you saved the day, a clue which suggested the Ragesians weren't working alone. Five young men and women headed to the Monastery of Two Winds – it's this order of magic-using monks on the border of Ostalin and Dassen who are skilled with wind magic.

"We received reports, what, every other day? But they were finding nothing of interest, and were confined to the town of Eresh, in a valley near the monastery. The masters of the monastery, two brothers named Longinus and Pilus, have been refusing them entrance. Then, a week ago we received our last message. It was weirdly calm, telling us casually that a company of Ragesian soldiers had arrived at the town and were trying to attack the monastery. Since then we've heard nothing."

Kiernan points again at the map. "It's only a short distance from the monastery to Korstull, but we were curious why the Ragesians were interested in attacking the monastery, especially if they were allies. One divination we performed returned this result: 'No single wind can destroy the Torch's fire, but a second wind could be its ruin.'"

Simeon smiles. "The way I interpret that is, since the monastery's heads are skilled with wind magic, they have the power to clear away the firestorm long enough for a group to get to the castle and retrieve the Torch, or to find out where it was taken. Whatever has happened to it, nobody's using it, but whoever gets their hands on it will have the power to end this war in a matter of days."

Katrina gestures now to Three Weeping Ravens. "Three Weeping Ravens, here, traveled with his people across the mountains and through Ostalin to reach Seaquen, and he has had dealings with the monks of two winds before. You've actually met the masters of the monastery, correct?"

Three Weeping Ravens nods gently. "They refused our plea for sanctuary. They were not hostile. They simply did not want to attract the attention of the Ragesians."

Simeon says, "Regardless, you're the closest we have to an in with them, and you know the way to the monastery."

"If the monastery falls into the Ragesians' hands, we will all be in danger, but if we save them from the Ragesians, well then maybe they'll be willing to lend us aid. It's a nice balanced arrangement. We cannot afford to pass up this opportunity, so I am asking you to go assist the monks."

Between Simeon, Kiernan, and Three Weeping Ravens, the heroes can get answers regarding the monastery. Though the heroes can travel overland if they want, Simeon has arranged for the leader of the Wayfarers Cirque, **Sheena Larkins** (N female half-elf bard 6/rogue 1/wayfarer Cirque 5), a native of Ostalin, to teleport the heroes to Yen-Ching, the nearest major city to the monastery. Sheena is not willing to risk a mishap by trying to teleport somewhere she has only seen via *scrying*, and Yen-Ching is the closest place she is very familiar with.

Sheena can take herself and a party of up to 8 people in one day, though it could be very dangerous. Because of the burning sky effect, teleportation will deal 40d6 points of fire damage to the heroes, and though between Sheena and Kiernan they can protect each traveler with *protection from energy (fire)*, which will stop 120 points of damage, there is a chance the flames could still be too much. Kiernan offers to assist by turning up to six of the heroes into small red dragons with *polymorph* for the trip.

In order to leave Seaquen with teleportation, however, the heroes will have to journey ten miles out into the swamp, since otherwise they will be snagged by the teleportation beacon the Ragesians smuggled into Seaquen. Though it's an inconvenience, for now Simeon is keeping the beacon, using it as a trap in case any Ragesians find a way to circumvent the danger of the fires and actually try to ambush Seaquen.

Simeon encourages the heroes to spend the next day or so preparing for the trip, getting whatever supplies they think they'll need, especially since, if they're successful, their next stop will be in the middle of a firestorm. Three Weeping Ravens makes sure to bring along several hundred feet of rope, saying it will be useful once they get to the mountains.

Sheena will be ready to teleport them at midnight, since that time seems to be least affected

by the burning sky. (Indeed, teleportation will only deal 38d6 points of fire damage at midnight.)

Three Weeping Ravens

Three Weeping Ravens is not particularly outgoing, treating the expedition as a duty, though if anyone speaks with him, particularly to ask about his order of monks or of his people, he responds favorably, since so far few in Seauen have treated them kindly. He makes sure to explain what combat abilities he has before they leave, and asks to know the same of the heroes.

Once the heroes reach Ostalin, Three Weeping Ravens plans a route almost due north from Yen-Ching into the foothills, and then through various circuitous but safe mountain trails, covering a total of about one hundred and ten miles. They can acquire horses in Yen-Ching (teleporting mounts is problematic, such that Kiernan might have to *polymorph* a mount so its size won't ruin Sheena's teleportation), and though some of the roads are steep, the horses should cut the trip down to just about three days.

Along the way he slowly becomes more comfortable with the heroes, sharing stories of his



THE OTHER PARTY

During *Shelter from the Storm*, Lyceum became aware of a connection between Lee Sidoneth and the Monastery of Two Winds. As the heroes were otherwise disposed, dispatched on a diplomatic mission to Dassen, another party of adventurers was selected by Seauen's General Xavious, and sent to the monastery. They stayed in Eresh for just over a week, unable to gain entrance to the monastery, since the monastery claimed giving them aid would bring the might of the Ragesians down upon them. When the Ragesian army arrived on its own, these five agents from Seauen were also ensnared by Balance's power. Seeing an opportunity to end their prying, Caela sent her invisible stalkers to capture them, and with inadequate information she only got four out of the five. One escaped, and is currently holed up in Eresh.

The agents were Eril (NG male human ranger 4), Metran (N female dwarf paladin 8), Klezmer (N male dwarf bard 8), Shelton (LG male human wizard 8), and Misreth (LN male dwarf cleric 8). Simeon wants the heroes to find out what happened to his men.

people and their legends, explaining that to his people, every soul has power, and the more you know the souls of others, the stronger you can become. This route to power harms no one, but benefits all. Of course, if the heroes don't want to hear him, he keeps his mouth shut, not wanting to irritate.

Three Weeping Ravens spent a week amongs the monks of the Monastery of Two Winds, and he knows them as an honorable group. As for his own group of monks, the Order of Echoed Souls, Three Weeping Ravens tells the heroes that many decades ago, before Ragesia came to power, his order lived in Ycengled Phurrst, a forest in what is now northern Shahalesti. However, one of the order's monks touched a group of souls too dark, and it blighted his own spirit until he sought to reshape himself into an entity of callous evil. He achieved his goal, and in

LET'S WALK

If the heroes don't want to teleport, they can travel the traditional way, which adds another three hundred miles to their trip. There's no smart reason for them to do this.

If the heroes were captured in the previous adventure, you might want to eschew the cage in this encounter, and not require the heroes hand over their gear. With most groups, you can only capture them once; capture them twice and they start complaining that the game's not fun.

so doing destroyed the Temple of Echoed Souls and scattered the surviving monks. This story lays the groundwork for the heroes' eventual journey to the temple in adventure seven, *The Trial of Echoed Souls*.

ARRIVING IN OSTALIN

Sheena Larkins intends to deposit the heroes in a private garden that belongs to an old family friend at the edge of Yen-Ching. Instead, when the fire clears, Sheena and the heroes are inside a cage with an 8-ft. tall white pillar that looks strikingly similar to the one the heroes found in the steam tunnels under Seaquen. Archers atop four surrounding towers are pointing arrows at them. A woman on one tower shouts down, "Identify yourself or die."

If the heroes look ready to start something, Sheena shouts, "Don't attack!" looking more at her allies than at the soldiers.

The mages of Ostalin were developing a defense against the Torch, and these teleportation beacons are the first version. Any creature teleporting to or from a point within ten miles of such a beacon (if the distance traveled is more than a mile) is drawn to a space adjacent to the beacon. The military garrison of Yen-Ching has surrounded their beacon with a 20-ft. wide cage, with bars for the ceiling. The heroes are the first to actually fall into the trap, but the soldiers are quite ready to pincushion anyone who appears a threat.

The defenders are set up on four 20-ft. high, 20-ft. square towers in the center of a cluster of military

barracks. A portcullis gate blocks exit along the ground between the towers. Four archers (N male human fighter 4; ranged +9 composite longbow (1d8+4; ×3)) and one priest who acts as a commander (LN female half-elf cleric 5) stand on each tower. The whole area is warded with a *hallow* spell tied to *dimensional anchor*, so teleporting out is not an option. The beacon delays the teleporter's arrival and sounds an alarm, so each of the archers has a readied action to attack if one of the priests orders it.

Finally, the floor of the cage can be dropped by any of the priests with a lever, opening to a 30-ft. drop to a floor lined with spikes. A second pull of the lever releases a spray of acid, lasting for three rounds, dealing 2d6 points of damage per round (Reflex DC 15 negates).

Should the heroes provoke a fight, they are frankly doomed, as the towers are reinforced by hundreds of nearby troops. On the other hand, if the heroes explain themselves, the lead priest, a stern militant woman named **Felpan (Fau Lu Pan)** explains that in a war it pays to be cautious, and says that her lord will want to speak with them. Until that time she requests they hand over their arms and spell components. She promises that if they do not instigate a fight, their gear will be returned and they will be free to leave within a day. Then she formally welcomes them to Yen-Ching.

Yen-Ching (Small City): Conventional; AL N; Population 10,000; 15,000 gp limit; Assets 7,500,000 gp; Mixed (70% human, 10% elf, 10% orc, 5% half-elf, 4% half-orc, 1% other).

The Half-Breed Warlord (EL 8)

The heroes are asked to come along, and are escorted (forcibly if necessary) to a small villa at the edge of the barracks. The villa is exquisitely decorated, and guarded by dozens of silent, still watchmen who are almost invisible in the night, each holding a blood red falchion. Felpan quietly explains that they are very lucky to have arrived when they did, for her lord was set to leave in the morning.

Finally the heroes are brought to a soft, comfortable room with dozens of plush beds and

beautiful veils pulled away to make a conference space. The air is strong with incense, and the ceiling is a massive polished bronze mirror.

Standing in the room's center is a tall, dark-haired young man, barely twenty-five years old, dressed in regal garb with red and silver gemstone patterns and a cut similar to a warrior's uniform. The man's short dark hair is slicked back, and a strange beard follows his jawline and the edge of his smile, but not his chin. Something about his face is strange, making his actual race hard to place. His eyebrows are long and slender like an elf, his ears faintly pointed, but his brow is strong and his chin thick, vaguely like a half-orc. His nose is small, almost cat-like.

Your guide bows reverently, then straightens but keeps her head down. "I present to you the ruler of Ostalin, the grand Khagan, my lord Onamdammín."

Onamdammín nods once to dismiss your escort, then frowns.

"I apologize for my appearance. The hour is late, so let us keep this brief."

Onamdammín (LN male half-elf fighter 4/wizard 5/eldritch knight 5) has been curious about the status of Seaquen, and whether they are worth allying with, so when the heroes unexpectedly arrive during his inspection visit to the garrison in Yen-Ching, Onamdammín sees it as providence.

The Khagan is not strong like his father. The half-elf son of a strong human man, raised in a world dominated by a half-orc emperor, Onamdammín always saw a weakness in his flesh, and so instead of mastering the arts of war, Onamdammín dabbled in spellcraft and biomancy, seeking to recraft his body into something pure. He has never been satisfied with the results of his magic, and was horrified recently when a fey prisoner gifted into his harem attempted to 'heal' him with her innate powers, restoring his face and body to its natural appearance. Onamdammín had the woman petrified as punishment and withdrew in shock, refusing to govern his nation until he was visited

by Pilus, one of the masters of the Monastery of Two Winds.

Pilus, a master of biomancy, promised Onamdammín the perfection he desired, as well as a path to power – up to the standard his father had set. Onamdammín agreed, pledging his nation's army to Pilus's mission, expecting his reward to be one of beauty, power, and conquest. The Khagan is not aware of Pilus's ultimate goal, but even what he does know he will keep secret, for he has been dazzled by the charm of the master of the east wind.

Onamdammín is considering allying with Seaquen against Ragesia, but he wants to know first whether his respected friend Pilus approves of the heroes. He tells them that, if after their mission Pilus tells him that they were honorable and worthy, then he will pledge his nation to the fight against Ragesia. If the heroes ask for help or claim that the monastery is in peril, Onamdammín scoffs, saying that Pilus is a mighty mage, and that no mere Ragesian thugs can ever be a threat to him. He fully expects that Pilus will ensure that no Ragesians ever escape the mountains to reach the lowlands of Ostalin.

This encounter has no grandiose purpose, instead simply hinting at a connection between Pilus and the ruler of Ostalin. After a few moments of talking, Onamdammín explains that he is tired and will retire, but he offers them an evening with his harem. The heroes should come away with a sense that Onamdammín is not quite normal – not crazy, but perhaps akin to a rich child with too many toys.

Information Gathering: If the heroes do spend the evening with the harem – which consists of dozens of women and men of great diversity and talent – they can learn the story behind Onamdammín's obsession with perfecting his flesh, and his recent contact with Pilus, though none in the harem know of the substance of that meeting. They also speak fearfully of Onamdammín's rage after the incident with the faerie, saying that rumors suggest the Khagan decreed all fey found in his borders are to be turned to stone and brought to his palace in Kistan as trophies.

Getting Violent: If a fight breaks out, the heroes will be hard-pressed to escape without teleporting. Hundreds of soldiers will answer any alarm, and the Khagan himself is no push-over, even without his magical gear. Bodyguards are discreetly watching through various mirrors throughout the room, and if the heroes cast any offensive spells, only the Khagan's mercy will save them.

Exploring Yen-Ching: By noon the next day, the heroes are forced to leave the barracks and the Khagan's manor if they have not already. Yen-Ching itself is a dry city in a flat valley, built over tombs of kings older than the current nation of Ostalin. The city is opulent, despite having to import almost all its food. Massive aqueducts stretch between rugged multi-storied homes, watering the city with snow from the nearby mountains. Numerous schools of philosophy and warcraft vie for dominance, and hippogriff squadrons practice at noon, when the winter temperatures rise to bearable levels.

Magic is not nearly as common in Yen-Ching as in Seaquen, but curious heroes can easily find anything a good soldier would want, from exotic weapons and mounts to masterful martial arts techniques and tomes of cunning swordplay. Most likely they will want to acquire mounts and set out. Sheena rides with them to ten miles outside the city, then teleports back to Seaquen, wishing them good luck, and thanking them for giving her a chance to meet her nation's ruler.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes survive this scene, reward them for a CR 8 challenge.

INTO THE MOUNTAINS

After a few days of rolling plains, the mountains begin to rise up in the distance, snow covering them and clouds hiding their heights. Progress is slow due to the unnatural winter, with heavy snow and ice abounding, and although the passes remain traversable, the heroes are the only travelers on the roads. A few small villages lie in the lower foot-hills,

but once the heroes get more than five miles into the mountains they are completely alone.

The roads are steep, and in some parts the mountains become practically impassible, so that the only paths are old, hand-carved stairways rising at a 45-degree angle between jagged cliffs. This slope is easy enough for people to climb, but for mounts and beasts of burden, the natives of the mountains have installed simple winches to assist ascent. A person who climbs the stairs can tie a rope onto the winch, then attach the other end of the rope to an animal's harness, using the winch's crank to keep the animal from slipping and falling down the icy steps. The winches lock as they turn, and so cannot slip if their operator lets go; they must be manually released.

When the heroes are four miles from Eresh and the monastery, they reach the third of these stairways, except that in this one, the stairs have been destroyed somehow, leaving in their place a slope of rough scree. Here is where the Ragesian army has set up a watchpost to make sure no reinforcements come from Ostalin, and if the heroes aren't observant they'll fall into a trap.

The Long Arm of Ragesia (EL 11)

Before leaving the monastery for good, Second General Signus had his new pet demolish the last set of stairs on the road. The resulting slope is climbable but difficult; sheer cliffs surround it, and it is nearly ten miles through trackless mountains to the next clear path. A small group of Ragesians has prepared an ambush here; they change shifts once every eight hours, though their "leader" is always present.

Though not really a soldier, the goblin **Menchi the Headless** (NE male goblin battle sorcerer 8) is a very enthusiastic volunteer, and he's itching for a fight. His *alarm* spell a quarter-mile down the road gives him advance warning of the heroes' approach, so he has plenty of time to get his soldiers ready and prep for the ambush.

When the heroes reach the base of this stairway, call for Spot checks. Anyone who beats DC 25 notices signs of traffic at the top of the stairs. A check that beats DC 10 notices what appear to be wolf tracks at the base of the stairs, heading up a

winding and steep path to the top. Everyone else simply spots that at least the winch at the top of the stairs looks to be in order. If someone can get up there, it wouldn't be too hard to pull the other's up, even with the scree.

Once at least half of the heroes are within 10 ft. of the base of the stairs, Menchi squeals and casts his *wall of fire*, springing the ambush. All foes' stats are presented in Appendix One.

Ragesian Infiltrators (2, CR 5): hp 32.

Experienced Ragesian Soldiers (4, CR 4): hp 35.

Veteran Ragesian Soldier (CR 6): hp 50.

Menchi the Headless (CR 8): hp 59.

Ekseru, Worg Familiar (CR —): hp 30.

Tactics: The hyperactive Menchi squeals as he rides through combat, thinking this is delightfully fun. If the Ragesians are aware of the heroes' approach, Menchi prepares for their arrival by casting *mirror image*, *shield*, and *jump* on himself, which also affect his worg familiar mount Ekseru through his share spells ability. Then as the heroes come within range he casts *wall of fire* behind them to drive them up the slope. He follows up with *haste* on the Ragesians.

Then, itching to get into battle, Menchi spurs Ekseru down the slope, leaping from plateau to plateau, making himself an enticing target. The worg has a +48 Jump modifier at this point (+3 Strength, +20 from hasted speed of 80 ft., +20 from *jump*, +5 from ring), enough to go up 10 ft. with a running start, or down 10 ft. without getting hurt. He can even clear the gap where the scree is with minimal effort. As they ride through combat, Menchi creates multiple *flaming spheres*, directing them to chase heroes and keep them from stopping on the plateau. Indeed, unless he sees a particularly good opportunity otherwise (such as by *greasing* a wall that someone is climbing), he just keeps making more *flaming spheres*.

Meanwhile, the Ragesian soldiers pepper the heroes with arrows, readying actions if necessary to attack heroes when they break from cover. The infiltrators head down the slope stealthily and try to flank the heroes, hoping to take out a spellcaster.

Aftermath: Captured soldiers will, with a little persuasion, tell the heroes about the disposition of Ragesian forces in the area. They know that the majority of the army left with Second General Signus a little over a week ago and have yet to return, and that the remaining garrison is acting a little oddly. Some of the soldiers here actually prefer being out in the cold here, where at least they feel like themselves.

If any of the soldiers escape the heroes and flee into the mountains, they will eventually meet up with Signus, who will be forewarned when he returns to Eresh in a few days, perhaps dispatching a force to specifically hunt down the heroes.

The Siege (EL 17)

The heroes may be disappointed when they see the Ragesian garrison that is supposedly laying siege to Eresh. Though the camp is filled with crimson and gold tents and efficiently-erected wooden watchtowers cut from the nearby forests, the hundred and fifty soldiers in the camp – mostly humans and half-orcs, with a few orcs and dwarves – are not really besieging anything. They go about their duties, oil weapons and patrol walls, but show no sign of being interested in fighting. Indeed, if the heroes want, they could simply walk through the garrison, garnering little more than displeased calls of, "Stop. You can't go into Eresh."

Lieutenant Kormus, Elite Ragesian Soldier (CR 8): hp 65.

Typical Ragesian Soldiers (128, CR 2): hp 20.

Experienced Ragesian Soldiers (32, CR 4): hp 35.

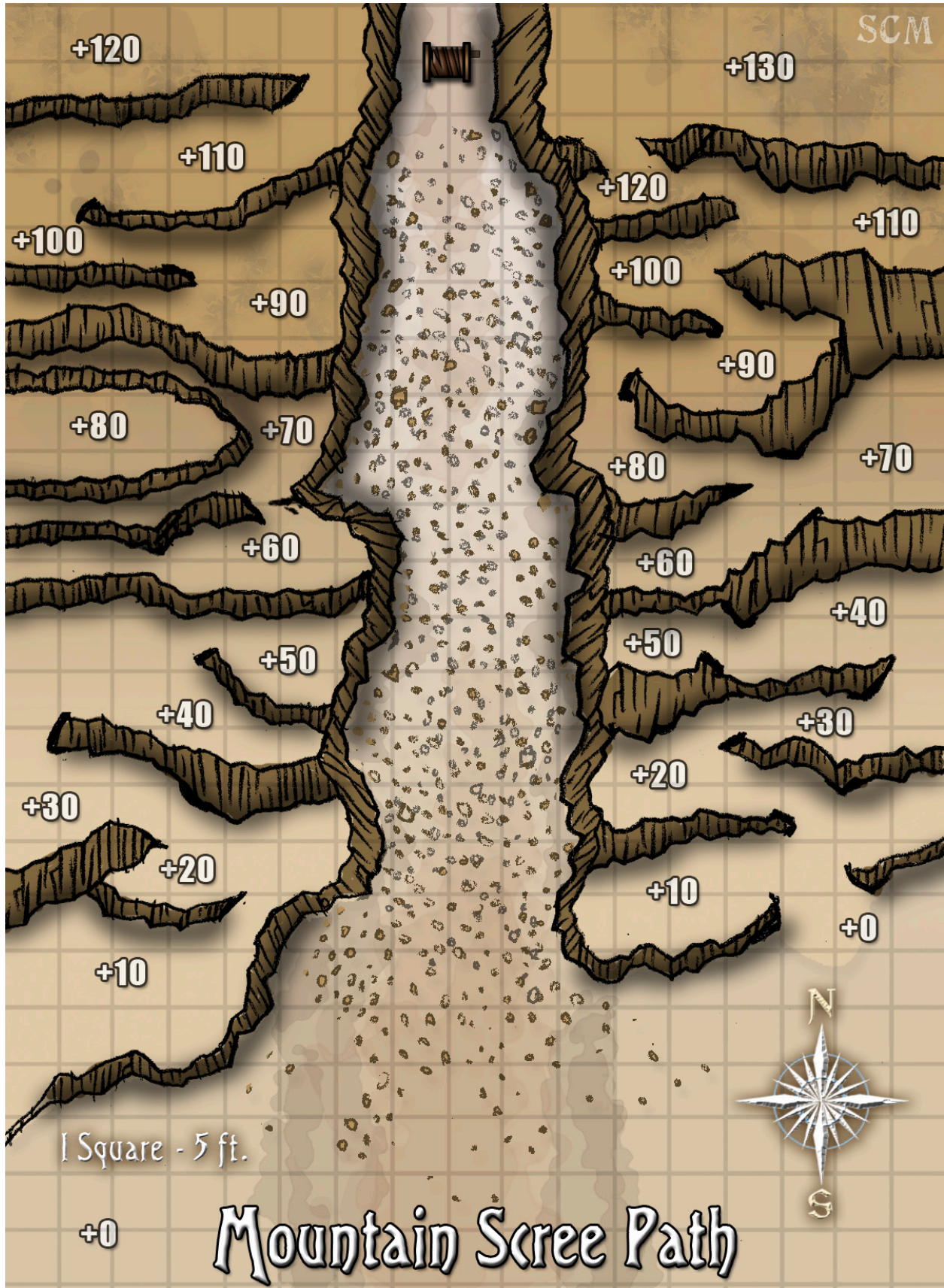
Veteran Ragesian Soldiers (4, CR 6): hp 50.

Ragesian Infiltrators (8, CR 5): hp 32.

Hellhounds (8, CR 3): hp 22, MM.

The current leader of the detachment is the drunken Lieutenant Kormus, who sees his unit losing its grip, and realizes he lacks the willpower to care. He suspects he'll be executed when Second General Signus returns.

The soldiers here are not as bad off as the people in Eresh, and relatively few of them are catatonic. The heroes could actually gather information here,



if they wanted. Several weeks earlier the soldiers arrived with Signus and prepared to lay siege to the town. After their inquisitor was killed during his ascent to the monastery, Signus gave the order to raze Eresh. The soldiers surged through the gate, reached the first building, and then milled around, only using their torches unenthusiastically when Signus rode in on his destrachan mount and directly ordered them. However, they were unable to motivate themselves to fight, and the villagers weren't interested in attacking them, so eventually they went back to their camp where it was warm.

Signus tried again the next day, thinking perhaps it was a spell that might wear off, but even he was not very interested in the attack. He left in fear of being trapped, taking a score of men with him, saying he would return with reinforcements. They suspect he should be returning any day.

If the heroes pick a fight, anyone they attack can attack back freely, but the others lack the will to fight. See the Balance's Calm section in the next act for more information. Otherwise, they can simply walk through the garrison to Eresh.

ACT TWO: THE CALM OVER ERESH

In Act Two the heroes investigate the mysteries of Eresh, and decide where to go next to find answers. The assumed progress of this act is that the heroes arrive in Eresh, realize odd things are going on, and then ascend to the monastery where they are rebuked. Then they investigate the oddities in the village while being watched by invisible agents of the monastery. They locate the survivor of the original Lyceian expedition, then discover that the trillith Balance – the source of the strange calm that pervades Eresh – is dying. After saving her (or leaving her to die), reinforcements of the Ragesian army arrive, provoking the events of the next act.

This act also contains additional events that may happen after the events of the later acts, but because they occur in Eresh and might take place in a different order, we present them here.

ERESH

The town of Eresh lies at the foot of the mountain atop which stands the Monastery of Two Winds, at one end of a broad, healthy valley. With a population little more than 1000, Eresh is able to support itself on locally-grown crops, aided by the gentle weathers of Longinus and by *plant growth* spells from local priests. Scattered copper mines provide for slight income in trade with the outside world, and many buildings are decorated with copper adornments of birds or iconic depictions of lesser wind gods. Though normally the weather would be temperate even in the dark of winter, for some reason the monastery has been unable or unwilling to aid Eresh this year, and so the entire village is below freezing at all times.

Eresh (Small Town): Conventional; AL LN; Population 1,100; 800 gp limit; Assets 44,000 gp; Isolated (96% human, 2% half-elf, 1% half-orc, 1% other).

There is only one road into Eresh from the outside world, although two roads carry on beyond it – one up a winding cliff path to the monastery, the other to a forbidden valley to the east said to

BALANCE'S CALM

Living creatures that enter Eresh or linger within a mile of it are affected by the power of the trillith Balance, which acts as a *suggestion* to be calm and take no aggressive action (Will DC 25 negates). Balance renews this effect each morning, forcing new saving throws for those who resisted, and those who failed do not get a chance to break free. If a creature affected by this spell is attacked in any way, the creature is freed from the spell until Balance renews it the next morning.

Creatures with the air descriptor are immune to this effect.

be inhabited by the gods, the Valley of Storms. An unnamed river flows down from this valley, though it is frozen and shallow now. An old stone wall blocks the entrance into Eresh, but it is unguarded, and would be under control of the Ragesians if they cared enough. The gate currently hangs open.

Eresh is made up of dour but sturdily built stone houses, clustered together on the mountainside, often leaning precariously out from long terraced slopes. Narrow roads run between buildings, and a few of the townsfolk keep their own gardens, but the buildings are tightly packed, though divided into several large groups.

Snow and rock dominate the landscape, with a few scattered copses of pine trees. The only colors in the grey landscape are the countless brightly colored pennants and flags that flutter in the breeze from the tops of each of the houses. If asked what these mean, locals will point to the mountain peaks to the east and west and explain that the flags are offerings and prayers to the gods of air and weather.

The town functions similar to a commune, with respected elders deciding on policy, but there being no law enforcement or taxes. During the course of this adventure, nearly all the citizens are too caught up in Balance's power to be of assistance, though

the heroes will be contacted by one of the elders, a former monk of the west wind turned baker named **Bechus (Bei Ksu)** (LG venerable male human monk 2/cleric 5).

About fifty Ragesian soldiers wander through the streets of Eresh, most of them congregating around the inn, the Peak's Shadow. Affected by Balance, they act as if they are on leave, but they never seem to enjoy themselves, are remain suspicious of the townsfolk, since consciously they know they are among enemies.

- A. **Wall and Garrison:** The people of Eresh do not go here, and never really used the wall for defense, so it is not particularly strong.
- B. **Fire Shrine:** Four shrines revere the four elements, one at each corner of Eresh. Though the monastery is devoted to wind, its monks respect the need for balance among the elements. Each shrine is a simple one-story building with an elegantly sloping roof and hundreds of banners of the appropriate color, bearing words in the appropriate elemental language.

This shrine, however, has been destroyed, burned down by the Ragesians in their first and only offensive action. A magic-user who meditates in these scorched ruins for 15 minutes can prepare or cast one additional spell of his highest spell level in the next day, if the spell has the fire descriptor. This does not grant knowledge of fire spells to those who cannot already cast them.
- C. **Library:** The library of Eresh encourages visitors to bring a book from the outside world to add to the collection, in exchange for which the monks here will scribe a copy of any of the library's current holdings. The monks also can scribe magical scrolls for the normal prices. Any of the new spells detailed in this adventure can be located here. The library's books are eclectic, and possess no particularly vital information.
- D. **Neighborhoods:** Atop these terraced slopes are the majority of the houses of Eresh's citizens. A typical house holds a family of four to ten,

and also includes some sort of shop, since most families provides crafts or services for the rest of the town.

In the southern neighborhood, one building stands out, its roof a shiny copper that has never tarnished over decades of rain and snow. This is the Eresh healing house, where monks of the west wind use their magic to tend the sick and injured, and to study strange methods of non-magical healing.

- E. **Peak's Shadow:** This inn, the only in town, services the needs of townsfolk and the rare visitors. It lies at the base of a sharp spire of rock a hundred feet high, which can be ascended through a narrow and steep circling path of steps which terminate at a small shrine. A large gong hangs in the shrine, and when struck its sound can be heard as far away as the monastery. Traditionally the gong is sounded once at sunrise and again at sunset, and multiple times on various holidays, but it has been silent for weeks, ever since Signus attacked.

The owner of the inn is a foreigner, **Thashalanos** (N male elf ranger 5), a Shahalesti expatriate and retired soldier who lacked the discipline for the monastery, but who liked the weather and the people.
- F. **Mountain Shrine:** As with the other shrines, if a magic-user meditates at the underground chamber in the center of this sturdy shrine, he can cast one additional spell that day if it has the earth descriptor.
- G. **River Shrine:** The monks here coated the walls with water which froze, giving the shrine a glistening shine. A mage meditating in a boat on the frozen river can cast one additional water spell that day.
- H. **Farms:** The farmland of Eresh cannot grow in this weather, and the fields have sprouted no crops. Thankfully, the wise monks stored more than enough food for a year of winter.
- I. **Wind Shrine:** A mage who meditates on the roof of this monastery can cast *two* additional air spells that day.



The Peak's Shadow

Three Weeping Ravens recommends the Peak's Shadow as a good starting point, both to find lodging and to learn what is going on in the town. The inn, Eresh's only one, is built from stone carved from the rock of the nearby stony outcropping, and it always lies in the shade at sunrise, giving its drunks more than enough time to stagger home without too much bright light, though among the disciplined families of former monks, excessive drinking is typically reserved only for special occasions.

Presently it is crowded day and night, though not at all boisterous. Both townsfolk and soldiers laze about here, several of them practically unconscious. The owner, Thashalanos, has managed so far to resist slipping that far, and he recognizes that something is amiss.

A hub of sorts for the village, it won't be hard for the heroes to notice a relatively high amount of traffic in and out of the inn. When the heroes arrive, Thashalanos is actually excited for a moment to see them, and then he sighs. Heroes looking for information about goings on in the town could do worse than starting here.

About Town

Though many of the residents of Eresh are former monks, there are also a couple of current monks in Eresh itself, having come down to purchase supplies. They are now trapped in the soporific daze of Balance's magic, unwilling to muster up the energy to make the climb back up to the monastery. Their absence has been noticed by the other monks, and is part of the reason that no one else is allowed into or out of the monastery.

These monks, **Jamira (Jei Mi Rao)** (LN female human monk 2/cleric 3) and **Bellock (Bi Lu Kai)** (LN male human monk 2/sorcerer 3) spend their time talking about philosophy at the inn, and are iconic representations of their chosen paths. The monks are unable to tell the heroes any of the recent goings on at the monastery, but can tell them about monastery and the order. They can give the heroes an insight into the politics of the monastery,

PEAK'S SHADOW GATHER INFORMATION RESULTS

DC Result

- 10 "All this began when the Ragesians tried to attack. They did not get far, as if they did not care, and in truth either did we care. Everyone appears alright with the situation, but my customers have complained that they have not had any dreams or nightmares since that day. This is not normal, but is probably nothing important."
- 15 "There was another group of strangers recently, come from some port city to the east. They came in a lot, asking questions, sometimes with Bechus, one of the town elders. They have not been in since the day after the Ragesian attack."
- 20 "I heard the Ragesians wanted to get to the forbidden valley, the Valley of Storms. They were trying to capture the spirits there to force the monastery to surrender." (This is false.)
- 25 "Some of the monks from the healing house along Notus road have come by to collect those too calm to care for themselves." Also, "Maybe it is just my imagination, but I think some of the townsfolk have vanished in the past week."

highlighting the divisions between Longinus and Pilus, and telling them about Caela, Pilus's chosen apprentice, who originally followed the west wind path before being swayed by Pilus's charm.

Perhaps most importantly, the monks will warn the heroes about the elementals that guard the approach to the monastery, providing them with the code word to allow safe passage – "Eshu." Caela has, of course, overridden the code, instructing the elementals to attack anyone who approaches the monastery, but this information will at least allow the heroes to be alert and unsurprised when attacked.

If asked, the monks will accompany the heroes up to the monastery, although because they are still seen as unclean and cursed, they are not allowed in.

Once on the road to the monastery, however, they break free of Balance's hold, so they might at least be of aid in combat.

The Balance of Power

Some time before the heroes first head to the monastery, they have an initial encounter with the trillith Balance.

Unlike the trillith that the heroes might have encountered before, Balance is not an enemy.

She is something of a kindred spirit to the monks at the monastery, eager to meditate and withdraw from the world. She emerged from the caverns below Gate Pass twenty years ago and wandered the world, eventually finding her place at the monastery, and though she did not study with them, she was comfortable here, able to pursue enlightenment, and to be free from the pain and strife of her birthplace in the great below.

Balance is averse to emotions of any kind, embracing a sort of emotionless void, promoting a mellow, relaxed and ultimately apathetic existence where sorrow and joy, bravery and fear, are unheard of. She wants simply to be part of the world, not a slave or master. She recognizes that, like her trillith brethren, she does desire that the world be more like her own nature (in this case, balanced), but she believes that the proper path is not to interfere, not even to teach. She rejected the machinations of her fellow trillith.

When the war came, Balance sought to keep Eresh at peace, feeling fear that the refuge she had

found would be destroyed. Her powers have been stretched to breaking point since the arrival of the warmongering Ragesian army, and Balance has found her control slipping as she begins to doubt herself. She wonders now if perhaps peace is the imbalance, and that war is the natural state of the world.

Townfolk have not only stopped feeling, but they have also stopped doing, overwhelmed with a sense of apathy and futility. People have stopped working, and instead sit around eating, drinking and smoking in relative silence, not because they enjoy doing so, but because they have nothing better to do.

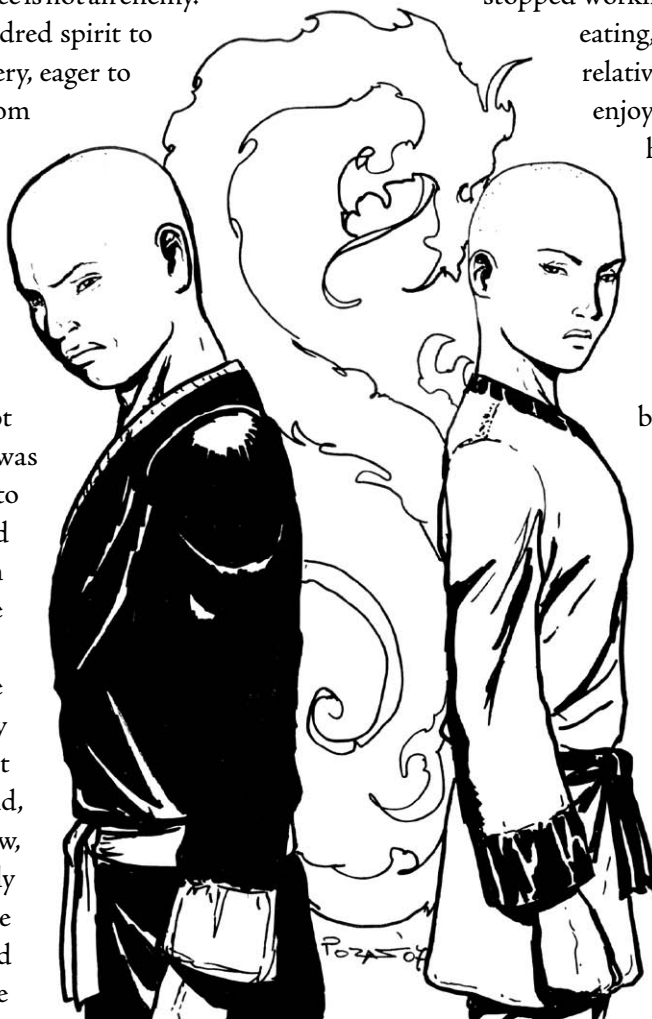
If the effect continues for much longer people will start to go permanently insane, and when Balance's control finally breaks, the backlash will be severe.

In day to day affairs, Balance appears as a bald woman and man, Agneth and Boren, though only one is present at any time. During conversations Balance will sometimes speak from a second body, drawing listeners' gazes to the new form as the old one dissipates. In her true form she is a wispy serpentine dragon with a head at

each end, resembling a zephyr wind. (We use the feminine pronoun because it's easier.)

Spooky Meeting

Balance lives in a house of her own near the wind shrine, which the heroes will invariably pass on their way to the monastery. As they are preparing to go up to the monastery, the heroes spot her standing at



her door, watching them. She recognizes that they're new, and that their presence might be the catalyst for disaster, so she waits for them to approach, beckoning them if necessary, then retreats into her home as they near.

If the heroes follow, they find the house empty except for veils hanging ceiling to floor. It looks like no one actually lives there (though intense searching can discover footprints). Then, a female voice calls to them from behind the veils.

"We are Balance," the woman says, "and you have met our kin."

Her form is difficult to see through the veils, and as you move closer for a better look a man's voice speaks from behind you.

"The scale weighs heavy, and your actions will tip it."

The new speaker is also hidden by veils, and when you glance back at the woman, she is gone. Then, when you look for the man, he too has vanished.

Unless the heroes immediately begin singing the Song of Forms (originally detailed in adventure two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*), Balance slips away. If they sing the song and she fails her save, she does not panic or flee, but instead stands to speak, her form shifting between male and female. In this case, see *Interacting with the Dream*, below.

Fractured Calm (EL 6)

The heroes' arrival upsets Balance's control of her powers, as she senses great conflict coming. By the time the heroes return from the monastery the first time, there are already signs that the calm is fading. A few Ragesian soldiers hustle away from the center of the town, looking nervously at everyone around them. Townsfolk wander the streets, calling out for missing friends and family. Some comatose people sit up suddenly and begin punching the nearest inanimate object while laughing and crying in joy and rage.

When they return to town, each of the heroes makes a Will save (DC 15) to resist the power of a weakened Balance. They are not the only ones who

can feel emotions, however, for a group of soldiers has also shrugged off Balance's powers and are taking it out on the townsfolk. As the heroes near the Peak's Shadow, they come across a group of soldiers beating up an innocent passer-by with an alarming amount of brutality, screaming with unleashed glee.

Typical Ragesian Soldiers (4, CR 2): hp 20.

The battle will no doubt be short, but it is only a prelude. After killing or driving off the Ragesians, Bechus (see *Hideaway*, below) approaches from a crowd that had gathered to watch.

Interacting with a Dream

Balance will not speak with the heroes again until after they go to the monastery (not for any personal reason; simply because it's better for the narrative flow). Feeling weak after coming into contact with the heroes, Balance travels to the healing house, seeking aid, though the monks there have no idea how to treat a creature of her sort. Later, when the heroes return to the town (preferably after they witness signs of Balance's control slipping, and just after they locate and speak with Eril; see *Hideaway* below), a monk from the healing house comes to find them, saying that one of the patients wants to speak to them. Alternately, this scene can happen if the heroes manage to trap Balance with the Song of Forms.

Balance will answer any questions the heroes might have, responding in a dreamy, faraway tone. In particular, she has key information about the following topics.

What are you? "We are a dream, born in the darkness below the world where our mother eternally sleeping lies. You have met our kin, we can sense: the wayward elder Indomitability, and others perhaps. Our kind each is born in a dream or nightmare, which determines its nature and powers. We call ourselves the trillith."

What do you want? "Our kin have many desires, the nature of which we do not know. We ourselves left home twenty years past, passing

through the Gate to the sunlit world, where we sought a home, a quest which eventually led here. Today, we only seek to maintain the calm, but we grow weak from too much strife. Our home is in peril, and we do not wish the minions of the Torch to destroy it.”

What else is going on here? “The lesser east wind serves her master in this valley and beyond. Stalking claws, invisible and loyal, have siezed those we unwittingly laid low, and carried them away to lie beneath the Tempest to the east. The storm that has gathered for decades will not long idly lie, we sense. Be warned: children of the wind are strong here, too strong for our boon to calm them.”

Can you please stop speaking in metaphors? “Your eyes see a world of solids, a world we cannot grasp. Your words confuse me as well. We are at a balance.”

What happens if you die? “We cannot survive much longer, and when we pass, the scale will collapse, and discord will reign.”

How can we help you? “We are too weak to withdraw our boon from so many, and we will not forsake our beliefs, even if our fleshless spirit be eternally destroyed. Help us by going in peace, leaving, and raising neither sword nor spell in battle.”

Restoring Balance (EL 10)

Once the heroes meet with the sick Balance, they may seek to save her, not wanting a potential ally to simply let herself die. In order to survive, Balance must be taken away from the soldiers. Since she has no body, either one of the heroes will have to sing the Song of Forms long enough for them to carry her away (she’s too weak to resist), or they will have to convince her to endow her power to a creature, entering that creature’s body. She starts as Unfriendly to this idea, and will have to be made Helpful, since she views it as abandoning her beliefs.

VARIANT TIMELINE

If the heroes manage to speak to Balance early on, she does not know to warn them about Caela, and after a few questions begins to cough, too weak to speak any more. She manages to say that she will not harm them, and that they do not need to hold her. Unless the heroes kill her, eventually they will have to release her, at which point she vanishes.

Then, the heroes next see her when a monk from the healing house asks them to come to see the dying trillith, as chaos is slowly breaking out.

The heroes can more easily sway her if they use some metaphorical speech, like saying that they will briefly let the scale tip to violence, but that when they are done everything will balance out; or by explaining that she herself has unbalanced things too much in favor of peace.

Perhaps the most cunning solution the heroes could come up with would be to take Balance with them to the Valley of Storms as they go to confront Caela, since Balance is a powerful ally, capable of changing the emotions of those around her at a whim, inspiring fear or bravery, joy or sorrow. Of course, as soon as the heroes get Balance more than a mile from Eresh, the soldiers in the garrison quickly snap out of the calm, and prepare for an attack.

If the heroes do not think to help Balance, or if they do not want to, she grows weak through their conversation and eventually begins to mutter that she cannot hold them back, that too much is coming. Within an hour (or the next morning, if it is night), she begins to spasm, her form shifting from female to male and back, occasionally even flickering to her true draconic form, before finally screaming and dying as she futilely tries one last time to maintain the calm. If Balance dies this way, no one gains her boon, since she effectively died of negative levels.

Once Balance is no longer maintaining the calm – whether she lives or dies – at this juncture, news comes that Second General Signus has

returned with reinforcements, and that his army is preparing to attack the village.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes save Balance, reward them for a CR 10 encounter.

Missing People

Townfolk and soldiers alike have been going missing over the week, amounting to several dozen people, taken away by two invisible stalkers working for Caela, Pilus's apprentice. The invisible stalkers are delivering them away to Pilus' laboratory in the Valley of Storms. Pilus uses these people as fuel for his biomancy experiments, either burning their life force to make spells permanent (i.e., paying XP costs for crafting creatures) or as raw materials for the creatures' actual bodies.

Because of the apathy afflicting the town, little has been done about this. If the heroes choose to stay in Eresh for more than a day, they should become aware of the disappearances. If they have struck up conversation with one of the townfolk, then he could go missing, though the heroes themselves are not targets until they visit the monastery.

In the assumed timeline that the Ragesian attack occurs before the heroes go to the Valley of Storms, during the conflict these invisible stalkers attempt to carry off a wounded or unconscious hero, or perhaps Three Weeping Ravens, giving the heroes an urgent motivation to go to the valley as soon as the battle is done. If the heroes set out on their own to the Valley of Storms, they clearly don't need any encouragement, and so you can skip this scene.

Hideaway

At some point during the heroes' time in Eresh, preferably after going to the monastery, when Balance's deterioration has caused small bursts of violence to break out (see *Fractured Calm*, above), one of the townfolk approaches them, an old man who looks like he's having trouble keeping focused. He introduces himself as **Bechus** (LG venerable male human monk 2/cleric 5), a baker and former monk, and implores the heroes to help him. Bechus has been sheltering the only surviving member of the previous adventuring party from Seaquen, their

guide, **Eril** (NG male human ranger 4), who has been in hiding since the Ragesians attacked and the rest of his party disappeared. Bechus wants the heroes to get take Eril away, before he is found by the Ragesians.

Bechus takes the heroes to his home in the northern neighborhood, and leads them to his cellar, where the ranger from Seaquen has been hiding. Eril has seen better days and is thin, tired, and half-insane, having kept himself from falling under the sway of Balance's calm by cutting his skin and refusing to sleep. Despite this, when he sees the heroes he can barely manage a smile.

Eril tells the heroes the story of his party's downfall:

"We had been refused entrance to the monastery for more than a week. We had spoken with Caela at the door, but she was enigmatic and more than a little unhelpful, suggesting that we would offend her masters by suggesting they'd had something to do with the hurricane. We told her that we had found evidence that something was going on in the valley to the east, the one they say is forbidden. Some divinations suggested that whatever magic keeps the storm there going forever was used to create the storm over Seaquen. Caela sneered when we told her this, and told us we were pissing her off. Well, not in so many words. She told us to leave.

"But then the Ragesians attacked, and we suddenly weren't very interested in doing much of anything. But the next day a message was delivered to us by a silver raven, inviting us to the monastery. I wasn't interested in going, and then the next thing I realized, days had passed, and my companions had not returned.

"It cleared my head enough for me to come here for Bechus's help, and I've been hiding ever since, hoping the Lyceum would send someone else."

This should alert the heroes that Caela is a threat, and encourage them to go to the Valley of Storms. Though healing could restore Eril's health,

and magic could free him from the compulsion of Balance, he has truly lost interest in risking his life. He didn't realize how dangerous this would be, and now he just wants to survive, even if that means running away. He will be of little use to the heroes.

ASCENT TO THE MONASTERY

The Monastery of Two Winds is perched atop a low peak at the edge of this valley, with yet higher mountains beyond. Visible from anywhere in Eresh, it is an impressive sight, a massive, red-roofed edifice hundreds of feet across, comprised of many wings that have an orderly sprawl atop the uneven mountain peak. The site is made all the more vivid by the pale snowy mountain peaks in the distance.

Hundreds of brightly colored banners and flags flutter from the rooftops and hang from the walls, flapping violently in the strong wind that whistles about the peak. Flocks of unusual white birds wheel about the monastery. Occasionally one of these birds will flap close to the heroes, allowing them to see the unnatural creature close up. It has three wings, and sharp claws clearly designed to grip onto something. Its beak appears upside down, curving upwards rather than downwards. Its flight is somewhat erratic, its third wing allowing it to change direction suddenly or hover in place.

These birds are one of Pilus's earliest, but more successful creations, called remora birds, designed to clean the monastery's walls, and more recently adapted to clean the mighty skin of *The Tempest*. Heroes will not recognize the significance of them yet, but whenever they glimpse *The Tempest* in the future they might catch a glimpse of flocks of white birds flying nearby.

The monastery wall is pierced in many places with narrow slits and holes, designed to funnel the wind through them, creating various sounds based on the direction of the wind. At dawn and dusk, the wind currents seem to sing here. Some of these holes are large enough for a Tiny creature to squeeze through.

Once inside, the true scale of the building is impressive. More palace than humble temple, the tiered building is a maze of corridors, courtyards,

and chambers, connected by interior and exterior staircases. Within, the monastery is light and airy, many small windows and slits in the roof allowing shafts of light to illuminate the rooms. Most chambers lead off open-aired courtyards and gardens, linked by corridors and colonnades. Clever use of ducts and angled vents draw air through the monastery, creating wind to whistle through the interior of the building, to the amazement of visitors.

The monastery is home to a few hundred monks, with vast open arenas designed for training aerial and acrobatic combat, and elegant open-air gardens for meditation. Visitors are occasionally allowed to the monastery, but in general the monks create everything need, only going to Eresh to purchase food, or to trade with the occasional foreign merchant.

Amazingly enough, the enormous monastery was built in only eight years.

The highest step of the monastery is for the private chambers and court of the masters of the monastery, Pilus and Longinus, as well as a small number of aides and servants. It is here that the heroes will be eventually granted an audience with the masters in Act Five.

The Ascent

Accessible only by a narrow path that winds its way up several hundred feet, the monastery is defended by powerful air elementals, two of which are active at any given time. The ascent is like a series of massive steps, rather than a single gentle slope, and though a trail leads all the way up, strong winds occasionally whip around the mountain, spiraling down from the peak and threatening to pitch travelers from the path to their deaths. In places the path has been eroded by the elements and travelers must step lightly or risk it collapsing under their feet. With a steady pace, the climb takes about an hour.

The path is dotted with brightly colored flags and banners that flap wildly in the constant gales. Each time the cloth flaps against the flagpole, it is said a prayer is uttered to the gods of the wind and the sky.

Guardians (EL 11)

As the heroes clamber up the path, they reach a particularly crumbly section of the trail, where the path has been obscured by snow, forcing them to risk stepping into hollow pockets and plunging into 20-ft. deep rifts. At this point they are 600 ft. above the level of the village, and about 300 ft. from the front of the monastery. The ground has a gentle slope, but is icy, with a few scattered rifts. It is while passing through this dangerous area that the monastery's air elemental guardians attack.

Two-Wind Huge Air Elementals (2, CR 9): hp 178.

The air elementals have been instructed to attack any intruders, since the monastery has sealed itself until the curse upon Eresh is broken. Unlike normal air elementals, these do not have the whirlwind ability, instead possessing the power to fire intense gusts of wind each round as a swift action.

Tactics: The two-wind elementals swoop in, strike, then move so they are 30 ft. away from their enemies, waiting to use their gale ability to stymie enemies who try to approach. Occasionally they use tag-team tactics, one elemental descending amid the enemies while the other bull rushes a foe through the first elemental's threatened space, or the two of them flanking an entire group of enemies so that anyone who tries to flee (or who is knocked away with a burst of wind) incurs attacks of opportunity.

As long as they are not being severely hurt they enjoy themselves, looking for fun tactics, even occasionally grappling foes and carrying them into the air. If either is reduced below 30 hit points, they retreat. Alternately, if the heroes are on the verge of defeat they withdraw, called back by Longinus.

Terrain: The icy rifts are 5- or 10-ft. wide and up to 40-ft. long, usually 20-ft. deep. Hidden by a layer of snow and ice, a creature stepping on the surface above a rift realizes that the ground is treacherous. If he stops his movement on such a space, it breaks, and he must succeed a Reflex save (DC 15) to leap to an adjacent square, landing prone. Failure drops the hero 20 ft., and getting out is difficult, requiring a Climb check (DC 25).

The elementals have a bird's eye view and can easily spot these rifts, and so like to bull rush enemies into them.

Cold Welcome

The large double door to the monastery is shut tightly. Heroes who knock and wait will get a feeling they are being watched, and an Intelligence check (DC 20) detects a scrying sensor floating nearby. Heroes who knock further, or indicate to the sensor that they have seen it, will find a small vision slit opened eventually by Caela.

Caela (Cai Lei Wsu) (CR 15): hp 97.

Caela seems more than a little displeased to see the heroes, barking at them curtly.

"Begone with your curse!" the woman says, "The masters have said outsiders are not welcome."

If the heroes try to explain themselves, Caela frowns skeptically but will not open the door.

"There are strange things afoot in the valley below," she says, "ever since you outsiders brought your curse into the town. We know your origin and your task, and that your allies were harbingers of the unnatural stillness. It cannot be allowed to



spread to the monastery, so you shall have to stay out there and we shall remain in here.

"Now, if you really want to see the masters, you'll have to make yourself useful first and sort out the mess down there. We will endure, for the wind will not be rushed. You, though, might want to hurry. Come again once the curse is lifted, and I will speak on your behalf, asking that my masters grant you an audience."

Caela closes the vision slit, but will open it again to (briefly) answer their questions. She mostly sees the heroes as a threat, but hopes perhaps to use them to ensure the Ragesians don't find out what's going on in the Valley of Storms.

Pilus and Longinus: Caela is respectful most of the time to her masters, but heroes might be able to discern that she is rather more loyal to Pilus than Longinus by the tone of her voice. She will speak of Pilus far more than she will Longinus, and give them the impression that Pilus is the more powerful of the two.

The Torch: Caela knows the legends surrounding the torch, and has a hunch that Longinus and Pilus know far more. She knows the Ragesians desire her masters to clear the firestorm, but proudly claims they will never bow to the demands of warbringers.

The Ragesian Garrison: Caela is more than a little nervous about the garrison. She is confident that Pilus has a plan to deal with them, but is uncertain whether it includes her or not, and is therefore keen to get the heroes to deal with them. She knows more about the army than she should be able to, unless she has left the monastery recently (which she has), though she claims her masters have divined the army's nature.

Caela knows that Second General Signus will return soon, and knows he has a reputation for cunning. If the people of Eresh were free to defend themselves, they outnumber the

company here, and many have some combat skills, but she suspects it will be a slaughter. She warns the heroes that they will find no refuge in the monastery if they flee here.

Caela will not admit that the current mount Signus rides, a destrachan, was crafted by Pilus a year ago.

Balance: Caela knows nothing about the trillith, and certainly doesn't intend to go and find what's causing the strange happenings in Eresh herself. Mentioning her piques the woman's interest, however, and ensures that the heroes will be watched closely by her invisible stalkers when they return to Eresh.

The Disappearances: Caela is complicit in the disappearances, but will lie to the heroes (she has a Bluff check of +20), blaming them on the army. "You know these Ragesians, infamous for their brutality. No doubt they have an internment camp somewhere in the town where the missing are going. They consort with devils, and such cursed creatures would naturally be immune to whatever curse *your* kind has brought here."

The Other Party: She admits that they came to the monastery, and were refused because they were disrespectful. As for their disappearance, she lies, remarking, "They spoke of going to the forbidden valley. It is forbidden for a reason. I suggest you strike from your mind any thought of going there if you do not wish to gain the ire of my lords."

Breaking and Entering

Heroes might decide to bypass or ignore Caela altogether, breaking or sneaking into the monastery by other means. They will have to be very careful if doing so, as the place is full of monks. Although the monks are not necessarily hostile, they are wary of intruders and will attack without asking too many questions.

Heroes who are sloppy will find themselves in the midst of a fully-alert monastery, and quickly

confronted by a large number of monks in an environment they are perfectly suited to. This could easily turn into a running battle, made up of a series of fights with groups of monks, as the heroes battle through courtyards, gardens, armories, dormitories and kitchens. Or it could end swiftly with each hero being struck by multiple stunning fists, then being pummeled into unconsciousness.

Heroes who successfully sneak (or fight) their way past the monks can get a premature audience with Longinus (if you're feeling generous) or Pilus (if you're feeling mean). However, the two masters are not willing to deal with the heroes right now – Longinus because he worries for Eresh; Pilus

because he is busy with finalizing the growth of *The Tempest*. Longinus will make the same demand of the heroes, whereas Pilus will sense in the heroes a strong spirit he appreciates.

If the heroes find Pilus, he'll tell them that he cannot speak to them officially, since his brother will never support any agreements he makes, but that he will lend some aid to them. He will order a single two-winds huge air elemental to accompany them, flying quietly overhead in Eresh, ready to come to their aid against the Ragesians (and equally ready to betray them if the heroes go into battle against monastery monks). He encourages them to solve the mystery, and promises his aid in advance.

ACT THREE: THE RAGESIAN ARMY

This act focuses on the attack by the Ragesian garrison after Second General Signus returns.

RETURN OF THE GENERAL

After leaving Eresh in frustration, Signus linked up with his commander, General Magdus, in Sindaire, where he persuaded the General to lend him a large detachment so he could break through the defenses of the monastery and hopefully force the monks to aid them in reclaiming the Torch.

Fresh and ready for a fight, Signus rides back into town as Balance nears death, accompanied by nearly a hundred extra soldiers, as well as some of the few surviving wyvern knights in the First Army.

The general is not pleased to find the monastery still standing, and his garrison practically insensible. Of course, before he has the opportunity to bash heads together, the new tide of aggression breaks Balance's control, killing her, and utter chaos breaks loose almost immediately.

Within minutes of Balance's death, horns are sounding as the garrison gathers and prepares for an attack. Nearly three hundred soldiers prepare to assault a town of just over a thousand, and though the people of Eresh possess the strength to stop the assault, they are confused and ill-prepared. The heroes have a chance to rally them, either with words or deeds, but time is short.

The Panic (EL 10)

As soon as Balance is dead, the town erupts into chaos as a wave of emotions overwhelms the townsfolk, driving some of them briefly mad with rage, joy, and sorrow. The soldiers still in the town's limits are the most overcome by these emotions, rampaging through the streets without direction, attacking wildly. Terrified townsfolk emerge from the neighborhoods, looking out toward the open field near the Peak's Shadow, where most of the soldiers are.

Experienced Ragesian Soldiers (4, CR 4): hp 35.

Typical Ragesian Soldiers (8, CR 2): hp 20.

Most of the townsfolk are paralyzed with confusion as the Ragesians cut down several panicking patrons of the inn, then proceed to drag out the owner for a public execution. Though the heroes might be a half mile away, word travels fast in a town with *message* spells, and wherever they are they hear horrified reports of what's going on.

The soldiers intend to take their time, enjoying themselves and beating Thashalanos for a few minutes before killing him by dragging him up to the top of the 100-ft. high peak and throwing him off.

If the heroes do nothing, the elf's death sets off a total panic in the village, and when the Ragesians sound the official attack a few minutes later, the result is a slaughter. If, however, the heroes manage to defeat the Ragesians and save Thashalanos's life – or make a commanding enough speech in the aftermath of his death (Diplomacy or Perform (oratory) DC 30), they can rally the townsfolk, preparing them for battle.

Other Options: The heroes could handle this situation several ways that don't involve combat.

They might try to help as many of the townsfolk as they can, barricading them into the sturdy cellars of the inn, library, and various shops, all while fending off angry soldiers. At this critical juncture, the fearful Eril finds his courage, and rises to help the heroes as best he can.

They might lead the townsfolk up to the monastery, and despite Caela's threats, when the elementals fly out it is only to attack the Ragesians. The heroes will be met by a different monk at the door, who tells them that Caela is gone. He is willing to let the refugees in, though the heroes will be expected to aid the defense of the monastery when Signus arrives.

More melodramatic heroes might climb to the top of the peak and ring the gong, calling for aid from the monastery, which will manifest in a sudden thunderstorm and precisely-placed lightning bolts, arriving just in time to give the heroes a break so they can regroup and press their advantage (the monastery's aid, though impressive, should not overwhelm the heroes' contribution).

The heroes might even try the diplomatic

approach and attempt to parlay with Signus. This requires an exceptional argument, since Signus is purely Hostile, and he's the sort of man who will kill someone he's Indifferent to if he has been given orders, which in this case he has. Alternately, some sort of mesmerizing performance from a bard, or raw *domination* might work, though the general's guard are keen to such tricks, and will target spellcasters aggressively.

The Valiant Counter-Attack

The heroes' best chance for victory – not just in this battle but in their mission overall – is to convince the townsfolk to fight the Ragesians. Between their greater numbers and intermittent martial arts experience and magical powers, the populace of Eresh is enough of a match for the Ragesians that the army will have a fight ahead of it.

The deciding factor will be the heroes. Unless the heroes have gone out of their way to hide their presence, Signus is aware of them, and he sallies forth with his personal guard, intending to defeat the heroes himself. If the heroes win his fight, the morale of the Ragesians will break, and they will flee into the mountains.

Signus prefers to battle the heroes amid buildings or near ledges, to give his pet destrachan toys to shatter, though he goes wherever the heroes are waiting. A runner could even come to the heroes and alert them that the enemy commander is calling for them. This is a challenging encounter, but give your players a chance to use their wits by choosing their own battleground. Perhaps the best place for the heroes to hole up is in the healing house, where a half-dozen clerics (use west wind monk stats) will stand ready to keep them alive and in the fight, aided by a large supply of *cure light wounds* wands.

Waves: If you want some build-up to this climax (or if you have a group larger than four and want to provide them with some additional XP), you can assault the heroes with additional waves, or you can skip straight to the arrival of Signus. Between any given wave, the heroes should have a minute to regroup and heal, as the enemy army slowly sweeps through the valley, looking for signs of the rabble rousers.

Optional Wave 1 (EL 10): The soldiers form two lines, advancing to within 80 ft. The front line uses its tower shields to provide total cover, protecting against most attacks. The second line carry no shields, and have bows ready. Once in position, the archers ready an action to shoot, and the front line lowers its shields. The archers fire, and then the front line raises their shields again. Meanwhile, the hellhounds charge in suicidally, and two infiltrators sneak around to flank the heroes and take out their mages. This scene best occurs in a street, where houses keep the heroes from simply running around the shield wall.

Typical Ragesian Soldiers (10, CR 2): hp 20. Half carry tower shields (AC 21, Melee +5 (1d8+3, x3)).

Hellhounds (2, CR 3): hp 22.

Ragesian Infiltrators (2, CR 5): hp 32.

Optional Wave 2 (EL 10): While the heroes are outdoors, particularly if they haven't chosen a location to make their stand against Signus, a pair of Ragesian wyvern knights spots them. They fly by and take potshots with their crossbows, and if one of the heroes is away from the rest of the group the wyvern may dive and attempt to snatch and drop the hero. One knight will try to drop a dragonbomb amid the heroes, while the other will conserve his, so that if the heroes try to take cover indoors he can set the building on fire and drive them out.

Ragesian Wyvern Knights (2, CR 6): hp 50.

Wyverns (2, CR 6): hp 59.

Final Wave (EL 13): Signus loves his destrachan mount, and takes full advantage of it; though because Loper is not properly built for being ridden, Signus's Ride checks take a –5 penalty. Signus begins the battle by shouting his battle cry, "Give 'em thunder, men!" to which his soldiers reply by roaring in unison. His first attack is to ride forward amidst his enemies, so Loper can release a burst of destructive harmonics. Then the other soldiers charge in, and Loper restricts himself to cone attacks thereafter. If Signus wants to release a burst again, he uses his Maneuver Leader feat to get his men to scatter first.

Before this battle, Signus used his leadership performance to give himself and his allies +2 to attack and weapon damage rolls and saves against fear effects, which lasts for the first 5 rounds of combat. He chooses his Direct Orders options so as best to defend against the heroes' tactics, and likes to find opportunities to use Spirited Charge.

Second General Signus (CR 12): hp 75.

Loper, destrachan (CR 8): hp 60.

Typical Ragesian Soldiers (4, CR 2): hp 20.

Veteran Ragesian Soldiers (2, CR 6): hp 50.

Elite Ragesian Soldier (CR 8): hp 65.

When Signus is reduced below 20 hit points, if he is low on allies he throws down his sword and asks to surrender. Similarly, if one of the heroes looks badly injured he will shout, "Surrender and receive mercy." He does his best to have Loper not kill anyone who has surrendered or fallen unconscious, but the destrachan has a mean streak. If Signus is taken alive, he can order a retreat for his army.

Snatched Away (EL 9)

When the heroes are close to triumphing, Caela's two invisible stalkers fly in and carry off a wounded or weak hero, or possibly Three Weeping Ravens. Should this ploy fail to get the heroes to go to the Valley of Storms, a reminder my Eril or Three Weeping Ravens that the rest of the original expedition may be captives could work.

This encounter is designed to provoke the heroes into going to the Valley of Storms, and should only occur after the heroes have gone to the monastery and met with Balance at least once. If they seem motivated

enough to go on their own, this scene is unnecessary.

The invisible stalkers work together, surrounding their victim so if he flees he provokes attacks from both. They strike to subdue, intending to carry their unconscious victim away to Pilus's laboratory in the Valley of Storms. Pilus has of course realized the heroes are a threat, and plans an ambush for them. This leads to the events in Act Four.

Invisible Stalkers (2, CR 7): hp 52.

Victory

If the heroes have rallied the townsfolk and manage to defeat Signus, they can watch in pleasure as the Ragesians slowly break off and retreat. If the townsfolk panic but the heroes manage to capture Signus, he will order a retreat, which rallies the townsfolk and averts a complete defeat.

Otherwise, the heroes will be able to escape because the Ragesians are afraid of them, but the town of Eresh is doomed.

The survivors are immensely thankful to the heroes, and enough minor mages are present that the heroes will be able to depart on their expedition to the Valley of Storms fully healed, though perhaps depleted of spells and items. The loot, however, is substantial.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes manage to save Eresh decisively, preventing a massive panic that causes the townsfolk to be cut down, reward them for a CR 11 encounter. If they only manage to save the day after letting panic break out, reward them only for a CR 9 encounter.

Failure: Should the heroes fail, a few minutes after their defeat, Longinus and Pilus call down a powerful snowstorm to blanket the entire valley, freezing the Ragesians as well as the locals.



ACT FOUR: THE VALLEY OF STORMS

Act Four is the climax of the adventure, as the heroes leave the town behind and climb into the mountains to deal with the less immediate but perhaps more dangerous threat – Caela. Of course, it is entirely possible that the heroes will head here early on – let them, in which case the climax shifts to the showdown with the Ragesian army.

Preferably, the heroes should be tenth level before starting this act.

THE VALLEY

Pilus's laboratory and workshop is hidden high up in the remote Valley of Storms. Local legend has long held that this is a particularly holy site where the gods of the weather live. When Pilus first built his laboratory here he took advantage of these legends to maintain his secrecy, and developed methods for tapping the air elemental energy of the storm which perpetually hangs over the area, shrouding the valley in rain clouds and foreboding mists. If the heroes ask about the valley they will be urged away from it by the locals, who seem genuinely fearful of what lies there.

If pressed, they will say that an ancient road leads straight to the valley, though it has not been used in ages, and that those who go there never return.

The valley is ten miles away to the east, meaning a journey of at least a day for travelers unable to fly. As the heroes get close, they notice that the weather is oddly warmer here, despite the higher altitude. Wet mists hang over the mountains, and though the weather is still barely above freezing, the foliage here is like a thick pine rainforest.

Defenders of the Sacred Valley (EL 11+)

Finally the heroes have a chance to face the monks of the order of two winds. Pilus anticipates the heroes will head in this direction, and has sent loyal monks to guard the path. Air spirits silently watch the mountainside and alert the monks to the heroes' activities, so the heroes cannot easily avoid this ambush.

As they pass through the misty mountain forest, a mile from the valley, clear visibility is reduced to

30 ft., and everything has concealment out to 60 ft., beyond which it is impossible to see. Have the heroes make Spot checks (DC 18) to notice white robed monks clinging to the trees 30 ft. overhead. If they are spotted, they attack. Otherwise, the heroes hear soft, confusing whispers in the trees as the monks alert each other in Auran, just before they attack.

East wind monks (4, CR 5): hp 26.

West wind monks (4, CR 5): hp 35.

Tactics: Two west wind monks glide down from the trees (using a turn undead attempt so they have a fly speed), striking with their bladed whips before ascending back to balance on branches twenty feet up. The other two throw a flurry of shuriken that have had *light* cast on them, aiming one at each hero. Then the east wind monks, hidden 50 ft. away on the ground, each use their *scroll of lightning bolt*, targeting the general area of the glowing shuriken.

After this, the west wind monks continue strafing with their whips for two rounds before descending, while the east wind monks travel in a cluster through the trees, casting *magic missile* against a single target at a time, *en masse*.

Terrain: The ground here has a gentle slope, and the trees are large enough to provide partial cover, but not so large to fill entire squares. The trees easily extend 50 ft. up, with branches starting at 20 ft.

Development: When more than half of the monks are down, one of the survivors shouts, "Lords of the two winds, bring down your fury!" A distant roar answers, and in two rounds heavy wing beats become audible. Two rounds later, the forest is shaken by intense winds, and the mist is blown clear, revealing a massive green draconic beast swooping into battle.

Mantidrake (CR 10): hp 135.

The mantidrake tries slightly to avoid catching the monks in its breath weapon, but it understands the nimble monks have a fair chance of surviving.

However, each blast of the breath weapon shakes the trees, and if a given section of the forest takes more than 35 points of sonic damage, the trees there shatter and begin to topple, requiring those in the area to make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid 2d6 points of damage. Thereafter, the ground becomes difficult terrain.

Aftermath: These monks know only that the heroes were heading to the forbidden valley. They know nothing of Pilus's laboratory.

Valley of the Damned (EL 10)

Some of Pilus's less successful creations have been turned out of the laboratory and roam the higher reaches of the valley, posing a threat to those who brave the climb. Although rejected by Pilus, these creatures still think of the laboratory as home and tirelessly guard it. Occasionally, out of pity, Pilus or one of his servants will throw them a body or two to consume.

As the heroes near the lip of the valley, four large and misshapen shapes rise up from behind nearby boulderings, looming ominously in the mist, bellowing in rage and pain. The sound of eight voices meet the heroes, though as the creatures shamle forward they see that each of the four giant beings has two heads, as well as three non-functional feathered wings growing from their backs at odd angles. Once monks who learned too much of Pilus's secrets, they now mindlessly guard the valley.

Valley of Storm Ettins (4, CR 6): hp 65.

THE LABORATORY

When the heroes come over the edge of the valley, they can vaguely make out a tower in the distance, sticking out 60 ft. high, above the treetops. No other particularly dangerous creatures fill the valley, though they might pass by strange biomanced creatures which are strong enough to live, but not escape. The tower is about a quarter mile away, just slightly up the slope of the far side of the valley.

When the heroes reach the tower, they see that it is surrounded by a clearing of icy ground and jagged rocks. The tower is 60 ft. high and 20-ft. in

diameter, and has only two apparent entrances – a single door on the ground floor, and a balcony and broad curtained window on the top floor. There are no apparent guards. Strong winds blow down from above, making flight here impossible, but heroes might try to teleport or climb up to the balcony.

Unfortunately, the entire tower is a *permanent illusion* (Will DC 22 negates if interacted with), covering a vast chasm, 60-ft. deep. The real laboratory is underground, and though a little over a hundred feet away there is a glass skylight that peeks up from the ground, this too is concealed by a *permanent illusion* of ground.

The Pit (EL 10)

A hero who gets within 5 ft. of the illusory tower plummets into the icy chasm. A Reflex save (DC 25) lets him catch himself, but the ground is icy and windswept, and climbing out is difficult (Climb DC 22). A hero who falls lands in a 20-ft. wide field of icy spikes, 60 ft. down. (Someone who teleports to the non-existent balcony is in for quite a fall.) Then, at the bottom of the pit, the hero is attacked by one last group of monsters – the mishaps.

Though these creatures appear to once have been humans and dwarves, their flesh appears fused to muscles of living ice, and their eyes are frozen. The result is vaguely reminiscent of the aquatic skum the heroes faced in the prison under Seaquen over a month ago, though possessed of more powerful magic.

Well-Camouflaged Spiked Pit Trap (CR 8): DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 60 ft. deep (6d6 fall) plus spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes for 1d4+5 each); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC n/a.

Mishaps (4, CR 4): hp 33.

These creatures were, until very recently, the first party dispatched by Seaquen to investigate the monastery. Caela killed them after they asked too many questions, then used them to create these creatures. Though not up to the level of her master's creations, Caela still takes pleasure in adding to her master's lab's defenses, and she appreciates the irony

of setting former spies to work as guards.

A strong ladder has been cut into the ice, ascending to the top of the pit.

Laboratory Entrance

One wall of the bottom of the chasm is dominated with an ornate façade for Pilus's laboratory, depicting the ancient spirits of wind and storm being bound and trapped in mortal flesh. A single broad doorway leads inside, currently locked and warded with a magical trap. A creature opening the door without first saying "I am the wind's master" in Auran triggers the trap. It resets after one hour.

Chain Lightning Trap (CR 7): Magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*chain lightning*, 11th-level wizard, 11d6 electricity to target who triggered it, plus 5d6 electricity to each of up to eleven secondary targets, DC 19 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

As soon as the heroes enter, a silent *alarm* alerts Caela in Pilus's study.

The interior of the laboratory is eerily silent and monolithically large. Along the walls of the foyer, vials of strangely colored liquids boil away on unattended burners, while beyond a stairway descends to a pit full of dozens of square glass tanks filled with viscous green fluid. Each tank is placed on a 5-ft. high metal frame, and a dimly glowing sphere feeds numerous fleshy hoses into the tank. The tanks themselves vary in size, though most are either 5-ft. square and 5-ft. deep, or 10-ft. square and 10-ft. deep. From the entryway it is possible to see dark shapes floating in the vats, some of them twitching in their bubbling beds.

Eerie green light filters into the room through the vats, filling the vast chamber with an unearthly haze. The pit is 20 ft. beneath the entrance level, while stairs lead to catwalks 10 ft. higher. The ceiling is 10 ft. above the catwalk, making the entire room 40 ft. high. Numerous metal runners and chains crisscross the ceiling, designed to lift creatures out of the vats or move the tanks themselves.

On the right side of the great pit is one single

enormous tank, over 70 ft. long. Ominously, it is empty, and the slimy fluid within it is low, but with signs that it was once much more full, like whatever was growing in it has left.

The laboratory is laid out orderly and deliberately, with drawers and cabinets set into the walls, painstakingly marked in a strange anagrammatic cypher (Decipher Script DC 30). The same code, marked on small paper placards, identifies the contents of each tank. There is an entry place for 'Purchased by,' though on all these tanks that space is blank, since Pilus is only creating monsters for himself now.

At the far side of the room another stairway leads up to a pair of double doors. There is apparently no one here, though if the heroes explore the lab they will find creatures growing in vats at different stages of development. Some look to have only been placed in recently, with only the slightest change. Six of these people could be rescued and healed with a *restoration* or greater healing spell. The rest are beyond reclamation.

As the heroes creep about the laboratory, they get a sense they're not alone. A strange whistling fills the air, and they have a moment's chance to spot the lab's guardian before it attacks. A Listen or Spot check (DC 14) detects Aurus's presence just before he attacks.

When Pilus and Caela are absent, they leave the laboratory guarded by Aurus, one of Pilus's first successful experiments in marrying elemental and physical form. The windborn minotaur spends most of his time as a soft breeze, but when the laboratory is threatened he fearlessly manifests and attacks.

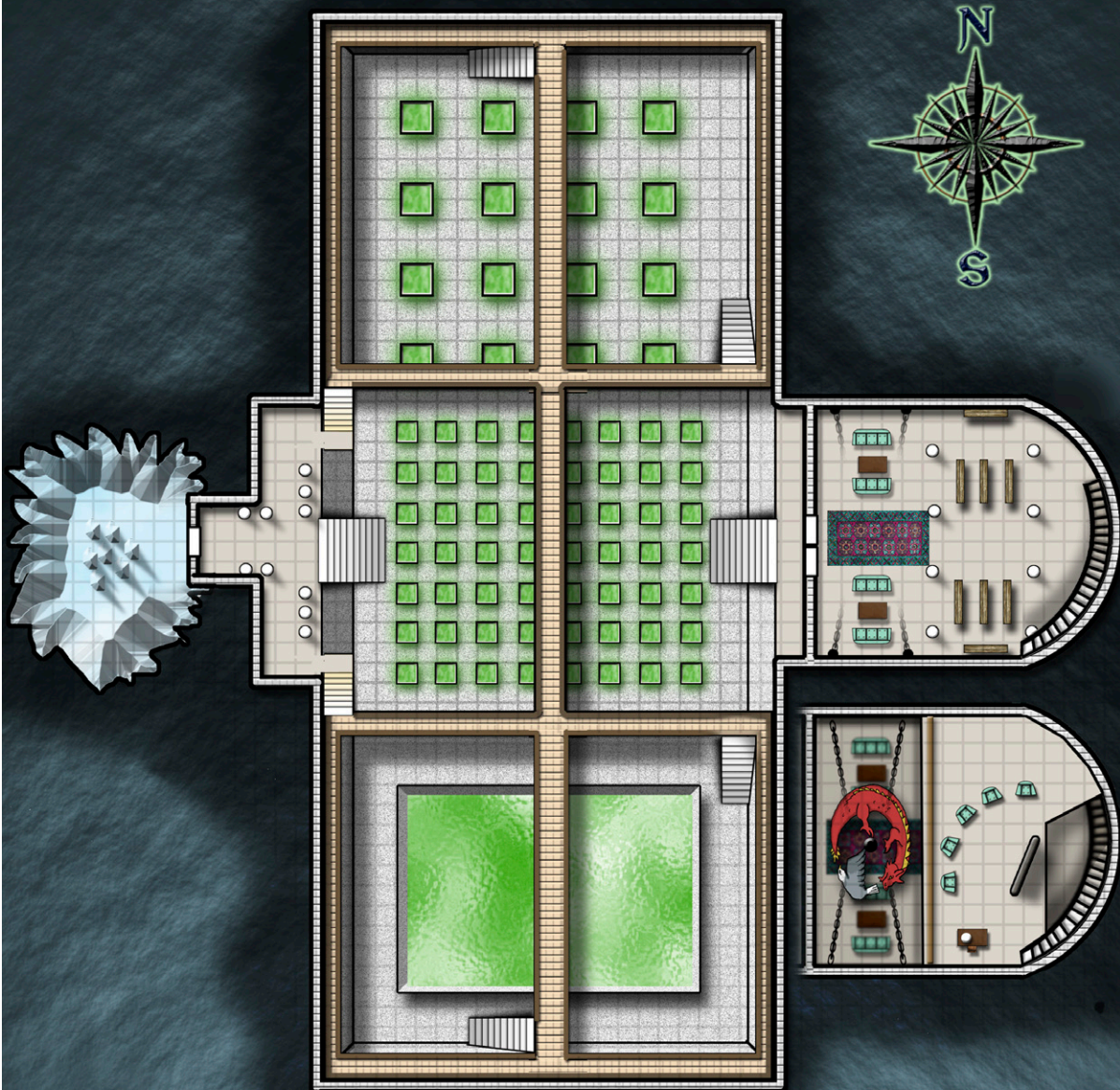
Aurus, windborn minotaur (CR 10): hp 139.

Tactics: At the start of combat, Aurus's wispy form casts a shadow through a nearby vat just as he begins to attack, whirlwind attacking to strike a hero and shatter a handful of tanks.

Thereafter, Aurus normally floats to the nearest foe and pummels him, but if ever two enemies are in a straight line with him he uses his overwhelming charge to strike them both. Be sure to make a big deal

Pilus's Laboratory

1 Square - 5 ft.



SCM



of just what provokes Aurus to use this attack. In the middle of combat he pauses for a fraction of a second, glances at those foes who have so conveniently lined up, then briefly grins and cocks his head from side to side as he aims his charge. Optimally, the heroes will recognize this pattern in Aurus's attacks, and take advantage of it, luring him into a charge that will leave him vulnerable.

Terrain: The smaller tanks are filled with different medium-sized creatures grown from humanoid stock, though none are fully formed, so they have the stats of skum. The larger tanks have various more powerful creatures growing in them. Should any of the tanks be shattered (25 points of damage, or Break DC 23), the creature spills out. The skum are healthy enough to fight, though they are stunned for a round after being expelled from the tank. The larger creatures are unable to support themselves, and simply flail about while slowly dying.

Skum (variable numbers, CR 2): hp 22, see MM.

Aurus cares nothing for these creatures, and will kill any that get in his way. They will attack the nearest creature, even if it is him.

Pilus's Study (EL 15)

At the other side of the laboratory is Pilus's personal study, an ornate two-story chamber topped with a magnificent glass domed roof. Directly over the entry way is a stunning sculpture of an eagle and a dragon pursuing each other in a circle, crafted of metal and ceramic, and suspended by four chains tied to the walls.

Pilus is exceptionally organized for a supervillain, belying his lawful nature. Parallel pairs of couches and coffee tables sit near opposite walls, and columns support the second floor, with shelves of neatly lined books between them. At the back wall stairway curves gently up 20 ft. to the second floor.

On the second floor, Pilus's desk is clear of clutter, any incriminating messages having been studiously destroyed, and all his notes and records having been meticulously stored on his own person in an extradimensional pocket, akin to a *handy haversack*. The only things on his desk are an ink well and quill, made from the tail feather of a remora bird. A row of chairs are set up in front of the desk, aligned to show off a slate chalkboard set up in a stand.

The chalk has been wiped away and the slate washed clean, but if an inquisitive hero manages to use magic to see what was on it, they see a map of the region, detailed troop counts of military units in different locations, and a force comparison listing the soldiers of Ostalin – a mock presentation for when Pilus was preparing to convince Onamdamin to ally with him.

The glass domed roof is designed to give the onlooker the impression that it is a giant goldfish bowl, an aquarium for the sky. The first person to look up catches a glimpse of what seems to be a great shark in the clouds, but the view is hidden a moment later.

Directly inside the entryway, a beautiful rug covers the floor. When activated (as it has been now), the rug triggers as soon as a creature sets foot on it. The rug grabs creatures that fail a Reflex save (DC 15), and functions like an *entangle* spell (caster level 1st).

If the heroes are coming to find an ally or friend, that person is unconscious and tied up, lying on the second floor next to the banister. Also, Pilus's

apprentice is waiting for them, invisible. Floating 10 ft. above the carpet, she waits for the first hero to step into the room, then begins her speech. She only says the first line, then casts her first attack spell, *like lightning*. Thereafter, she continues with another sentence each round.

"You don't understand the concept of 'Forbidden Valley,' do you? The others who came before were as tenacious as you, though not nearly as useful. You defeated scores of Ragesians, which earns you the favor of my master. But all your predecessors accomplished was to guard the entrance to this laboratory for a few days, before you killed them. When this is over, for those of you I haven't killed, I shall be creative when crafting your new form.

"A pity – if you hadn't come here, you might have managed to retrieve the Torch. With that in his possession, no empire could stand against my master. There has long been too much war and suffering in this world. It is time we ended it."

Caela (Cai Lei Wsu) CR 15

This black-haired half elf woman flashes a sneering grin as she leaps at you, her hands humming with blue arcs of electricity. Her black cloak, lined with gray stormcloud designs, snaps in an intense wind as she soars through combat, and she moves with the speed of a lightning strike.

Female half-elf monk 4/cleric
1/sorcerer 10

LE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; Senses Listen +1, Spot +1, low-light vision

Languages Common, Auran, Elvish

AC 22, touch 21, flat-footed 22 (+8 w/mage armor and storm shield)

hp 97 (15 HD)

Fort +11, Ref +14, Will +17; +4 vs. enchantment; evasion

Immune sleep

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +15/+10 unarmed strike (1d8–1), +13/+13/+8 flurry (1d8–1)

Base Atk +8; Grp +7

Combat Gear potion bracer (free action to draw potions), *potion of cure serious wounds* ×4, *potion of cure light wounds* ×6, *feather token (whip)* ×2

Combat Options stunning fist (6/day, Fort DC 19

negates), rebuke undead (5/day, 1d20+2, 2d6+3 HD),

turn earth or rebuke air creatures (5/day, 1d20+2, 2d6+3 HD), deflect arrows

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 1st)

1st – cure minor wounds

0th – cure minor wounds ×3

Domains Air, Luck

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 10th)

5th (3/day) – *like lightning** (DC 17)

4th (5/day) – *storm shield** (DC 16), *telekinetic thrust** (DC 16)

3rd (6/day) – *dispel magic*, *fly*, *vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day) – *gust of wind*, *invisibility*, *resist energy*, *shatter* (DC 14)

1st (7/day) – *charm person* (DC 13), *mage armor*, *shocking grasp*, *silent image*, *unseen servant*

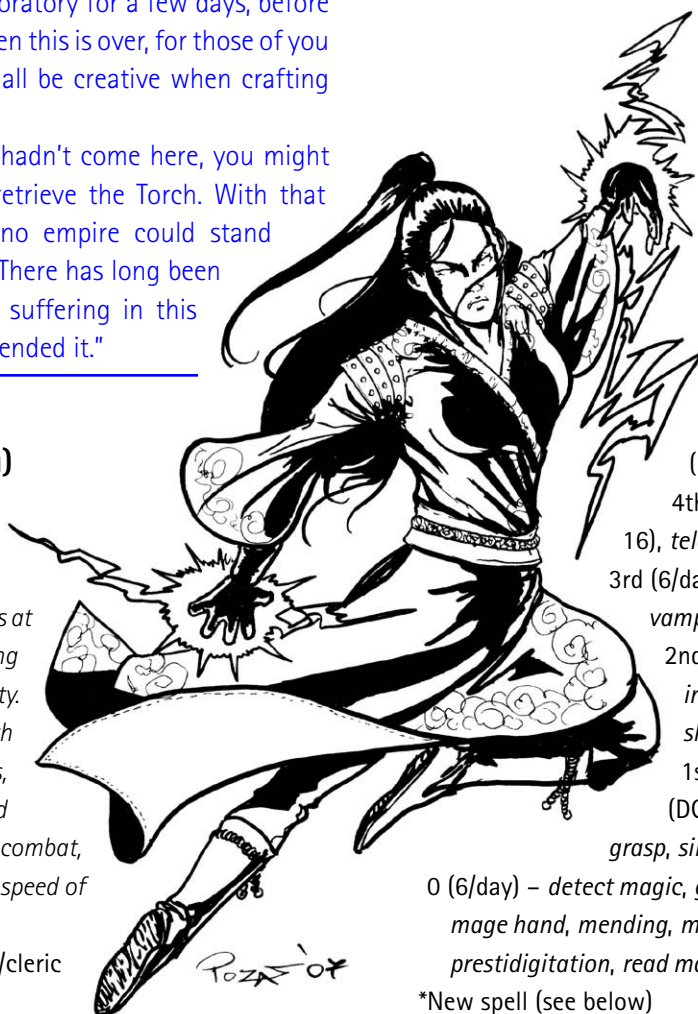
0 (6/day) – *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

*New spell (see below)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 15

SQ half-elf traits, slow fall 20 ft., east wind style, luck domain, two winds weapon training, west wind style

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Deflect Arrows, East Wind Style, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Skill Focus



(Concentration), Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (unarmed), West Wind Style
 Skills Balance +10, Bluff +20, Concentration +24, Diplomacy +9, Escape Artist +18, Jump +9, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +6, Tumble +15
 Possessions *cloak of charisma* +2 and *resistance* +2 of the mountebank (market value 18,800 gp), *ring of protection* +2 and *counterspelling* (market value 12,000 gp; contains some spell the heroes are fond of that could take her out of combat with a failed save; otherwise contains *hold monster*), *gloves of dexterity* +4, *potion bracer*, *zephyr shirt* (+1 natural armor, +2 Con, +5 Escape Artist; market value 8,500 gp)

East Wind Style (Su): Whenever Caela makes a stunning fist attack, her unarmed strike deals +1d6 points of electricity damage. Additionally, she can expend a use of stunning fist to cast *shocking grasp* as a swift action (the *shocking grasp* occurs instead of the normal stunning effect), or expend two stunning fist uses to both cast *shocking grasp* and *stun*, dealing 1d8–1 plus 6d6 electricity plus stunning (Fort DC 19 negates)

Luck Domain (Ex): Once per day, Caela can reroll any one roll.

West Wind Style (Su): Caela can expend a use of stunning fist or turn undead as a free action to gain the ability to Fly 40 (Good), lasting for one round. If she continues to expend stunning fist or turn undead uses round after round, she does not fall between her turns. When she uses this ability, she can also grant three willing creatures within 30 ft. a fly speed equal to their land speeds.

Before Combat: Caela likely knows the heroes are coming a few minutes before they see her, so well before combat she casts *resist energy* against fire, plus any energy types she has learned the heroes favor. When the heroes breach the laboratory, a silent alarm alerts her since she is in Pilus's study. The alarm also notifies Pilus, far away in the monastery, and he casts *greater scrying* on Caela to watch the coming battle.

Caela prepares for their arrival by casting *storm shield*, *mage armor*, *invisibility*, and *fly*, and then finally using the *feather token (whip)*.

Tactics: As the climax of the adventure, Caela is designed to last for several rounds of combat, and to encourage the heroes to fight on the run, rather than simply standing still. This combat can be frustrating for groups that aren't geared for mobility or ranged combat, so if the heroes are having trouble hurting Caela, you might have her start to get confident and too aggressive.

When the heroes arrive, Caela is floating 10 ft. off the ground over the carpet, invisible. She taunts them for a moment, then begins to cast *like lightning* for her initial strike. She strikes as many of the heroes as possible, simultaneously using Flyby Attack and her East Wind Style attack to deliver a stunning fist and *shocking grasp* (against a healer if she can). She tries to pass through the group and end up in the vat chamber, floating 20 ft. off the ground, out of reach.

Thereafter, Caela flies 10 ft. off the ground – high enough to stay out of reach (and to get a bonus for attacking from higher ground), but low enough to use the vats as cover against ranged attacks. Mobility is her greatest weapon: she seeks to string out her foes, flinging them one or two at a time into vats with *telekinetic thrust*, or using *like lightning* to strike multiple foes if they stick close together. If an enemy is standing on a catwalk, she might use *shatter* to break the support that let it hang from the ceiling, dropping a 10-ft. section and anyone standing on it.

If she's injured and doesn't have more tempting targets, she'll strike with *vampiric touch*, tumbling in and out with Flyby Attack. Unless she's alone with a lightly-armored foe, she doesn't make full attacks.

If reduced to less than 30 hit points, Caela uses

CR 15? ISN'T THAT A LITTLE MUCH?

Though Caela is a 15th level character, we feel that she is not actually equal to a normal CR 15 encounter. Her Challenge Rating also includes the danger of Escaping the Laboratory (see below), and a bit of narrative reward for defeating the main foe of the adventure. She's been designed to deliver a dynamic, interesting fight that lasts several rounds, rather than to simply tear the heroes to pieces.

her cloak's mountebank ability to *dimension door* back into Pilus's office (with *resist energy (fire)* she should be able to safely teleport 300 ft. or so). Her arrival is easily visible as a burst of fire. She takes time to heal and rebuff, though does not dally unless she has taken out at least one foe, preferably a healer, since she doesn't want to give her foes an opportunity to heal.

If the heroes return to Pilus's office, she might cast *shatter* on the glass skylight, destroying it and raining massive sheets of broken glass down on the entire room. Creatures in the area must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid taking 2d6 points of damage from the glass. Thereafter the storm overhead rains into the room, and strong winds make ranged combat difficult. Alternately, she might *shatter* the chains holding up the dragon-and-eagle sculpture. If she destroys all four chains, the sculpture falls, dealing 10d6 damage on anyone beneath it (Reflex DC 15 negates). If she only destroys two chains, the sculpture swings, bull rushing creatures in its path (effective Strength modifier of +13).

Finally, the shattered ceiling gives her an escape route if she thinks she has lost.

Escaping the Laboratory

If Caela is defeated, Pilus (watching via *greater scrying*) likely decides to finish off the meddling heroes before they can escape, even if Caela is simply captured and not killed. He uses the *control wand* for his *lesser orb of storms*, and directs the storm over the Valley of Storms to transform to tornados and terrible winds. Over the next ten minutes the winds intensify, and eventually the eerie growl of a tornado can be heard even in the underground complex.

The tornado rattles the building, tearing open the roof and knocking over furniture and biomancy vats. Lightning crackles and lashes out with frightening proximity. Dust and debris strikes viciously and painfully, as even pebbles become deadly projectiles. It should be clear that if the heroes do not leave quickly, they'll be destroyed by the storm.

The escape should be exciting, but not actually life-threatening, and we recommend not slowing things down with too many rolls. As the heroes make their way out, simply come up with three

events to impede their progress, such as collapsing lab equipment, or sprays of shattered glass picked up in the wind, or toppling sections of the roof, or small avalanches knocking them about. Once out of the lab the heroes must still contend with strong winds, making progress difficult. The safest place is low ground, and as the storm sets off minor avalanches the heroes might even use wreckage of the laboratory as makeshift sledges to race away down into the valley.

Let the heroes use their skills and powers to escape, but don't punish them as long as they are making intelligent (or at least dramatic) attempts to escape. Encourage novel plans, but explain that if they try to stay put (perhaps with a *rope trick*), they'll end up trapped under a mountain of snow as an avalanche fills in the hole where the lab is.

Heroes who choose not to escape are eventually caught in a full tornado. They must succeed a Fortitude save (DC 30) each round or be picked up and whirled around for 1d10 rounds, taking 6d6 points of damage per round, before being violently expelled from a dangerous height.

As the heroes get to safety, there's one more surprise in store for them. Read or paraphrase the following:

The howling winds have died to a safe flurry, and as you take a moment to rest you feel something watching you from above.

You scan the skies cautiously and there, miles up, directly above the now-annihilated laboratory, you glimpse something impossibly large, so massive that its silhouette is visible even through the clouds of the fading storm. Lightning flashes intermittently, giving you a hint of its form.

It must be colossal, the size of a small city, floating in the tempest like a shark in the dark seas. Massive horns adorn its head, and its body stretches backward at sharp angles, like the wings of a swooping raptor or the fins of an ancient sea predator. Its body tapers to a forked tail, but even that must be hundreds of feet wide. You see what might be a flock of birds sweeping past it, white birds flying erratically like those at the monastery,



and then the clouds begin to roll back in. You know in a moment it will be hidden from you, if it truly exists now.

The last you see of the stormy vision is a

glowing disk on its underbelly, and as it vanishes back into the tempest, you realize the disk, farther across than even the largest dragon from maw to tail, was an eye. And it was watching you.

ACT FIVE: AUDIENCE WITH TWO WINDS

The denouement of the adventure comes after the heroes have defeated the two threats, and they go to negotiate finally with the masters of the monastery. Having defeated the Ragesians, the heroes have earned an audience with Longinus and Pilus, and now that Caela is defeated there is no one to stand in their way any longer.

TWO MASTERS

Once the heroes return, a grateful and curious Longinus invites them to the monastery. An honor guard greets them outside the entrance to the monastery and escorts them to the masters' chamber. Pilus is cautiously prepared for their arrival, uncertain how much they know, and how much he will have to lie. The two brothers sit on cushions near the wall of a sparse chamber seemingly intended for meditation more than command. A cushion for each of the heroes has been placed on the floor in front of the two masters.

Longinus wears a white mask with blue highlights, and the rest of his body is hidden by gloves and a hooded white robe, etched with gold and black feathers, representing the Stormchaser Eagle. Pilus, by contrast, wears a robe with patterns of two entwined, stormy dragons, and his expression is clear and open, though he has a somewhat amused posture, like he is not devoting his full attention to the proceedings.

Longinus, wheezy and soft-spoken, thanks them, asks them to sit, and then asks they present their request for the boon so many desire.

Easy Answers

If the heroes do not cause a fuss, they can ask for the monastery's aid in reaching Castle Korstull, to which Longinus nods. Pilus then proceeds to explain why they have decided to become involved at this time, a task requiring much speaking which Longinus is disinclined to do.

Their reasons, in brief, are that this war seems to have gone beyond any prior conflict, both in scope and power. Longinus worries that the world itself might be threatened, particularly given the strange planar

fluctuations regarding teleporation. Pilus, on the other hand, sees that this juncture holds the opportunity to bring down the Ragesian Empire, a nation which is far too powerful, a bully among kings.

Pilus and Longinus both expect that the Torch will need to be used to end the war, but they warn that its power is corrupting. While the heroes go to retrieve the Torch, the brothers will devote their efforts to finding a way to destroy it, so once it has served its purpose it will no longer be a threat.

Pilus explains that they can provide the heroes with an orb that will keep the storm at bay, though it will only work for a few days, given the unnatural strength of the firestorm. This should be more than enough time to cross the twenty mile stretch of land to Korstull, explore the ruins, and get out. The hole in the storm will be centered over the heroes, but there is a chance others might follow them, and the Ragesians are just waiting for this opportunity.



The orb can be ready in a week. Until that time, the heroes are welcome to stay, rest, and train. The two masters, however, are not interested in long conversations, and so they end their meeting by offering hot rice wine to seal their alliance. Then they nod graciously, and return to their meditations.

Hard Questions

Of course, the heroes may be less than pleased with the two monks, as evidence paints Pilus as something of a villain, behind the hurricane at Seaquen and experiments upon the townsfolk in Eresh. Pilus handles this in an unusual way, admitting almost the full extent of his plans, with a handful of lies at the right places.

His main defense is that he is acting for the greater good, having learned to appreciate a broad view of events courtesy of his brother. He admits that he has allied with Khagan Onamdamin, and intends to use his biomanced creations in the coming battles. He says that he needed to learn the weaknesses of the Ragesian Empire, and at the time he did not realize the importance of Seaquen, so he feigned an alliance with them temporarily, the hurricane in Seaquen being the result. He apologizes for that, and says that he sees now what a critical role Seaquen will play.

As for the experiments on the Eresh townsfolk, and the deaths of the previous expedition, Pilus has Caela as a convenient scapegoat. He admits that he had Caela take some of the townsfolk, though only with the intention of discovering what afflicted them. She told him, he says, that there was no way to help them, and that several had died upon leaving the village. He suspects now that she was using his biomancy laboratory to grow monsters to sell as warbeasts. He admits to not being the judge of character that his brother.

Pilus's total Bluff bonus is +29. He's very good at lying, but if caught in a lie he admits to it, saying that he's uncertain whether trusting the heroes is a good thing, and that they are, after all, in a war. He trusts them, he says, but not completely, not yet.

If possible, Pilus would like the heroes as allies, but if that is not possible, he does his best to make sure they do not become his enemies. He will not

oppose his brother's decision to help them, and is exceedingly immune to insults and anger.

A Showdown with Pilus (EL n/a)

Of course, suspecting that Pilus was behind the disappearances, and knowing that he was responsible for the hurricane that ravaged Seaquen, the heroes might not be content to let him get away with it. Pilus is far too powerful for the heroes to have a fair chance of victory (he is, after all, intended to be the main foe in adventure eleven, *Under the Eye of the Tempest*, intended for parties of 17th level or higher), but the heroes might try to take a swing at him here and now anyway.

If they look set on a fight, Pilus invariably survives their first attacks. On his turn he looks to his brother for aid, and sees none. Sneering, he casts *time stop* and teleports away. Though he's powerful, he sees no reason to risk dying stupidly. His timetable pushed forward only slightly, the master of the east wind flies to his airship, marks Seaquen on his list of places to obliterate, and then reluctantly decides he will have to kill his own brother and destroy the monastery. From time to time in the future he will contact the heroes via *sending*, presenting himself as misunderstood and not hostile, hoping eventually to sway the heroes to his side.

If somehow the heroes do manage to slay Pilus (when he has no printed stats, to boot!), he will still return later to haunt them, since his bond with *The Tempest* will let him return to life.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of how things go down with Pilus, Longinus respects the heroes' actions, and wishes to help them. He can promise them protection while in this valley, and asks that they stay while he prepares the orb for their journey to Castle Korstull. While they stay here, he encourages them to consider the nature of balance, and that sometimes a challenge with multiple dangers must be resolved one piece at a time, to avoid completely disaster. Hopefully the heroes come away with a bit of wisdom, which will guide them to make the right choices on the road ahead.

APPENDIX ONE: COMBAT STATS

This appendix contains all the statblocks from the fifth adventure of the War of the Burning Sky, *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds*, to make it easier to find the combat stats you need for a particular encounter without having to flip between pages. Some characters possess new feats, which are marked with an asterisk and detailed in Appendix Two. New items are detailed with their appropriate characters, and are also compiled in Appendix Three.

These stats are divided into three sections – Allies and Neutral NPCs, Ragesian Foes, and Monastery Foes.

ALLIES AND NEUTRAL NPCs

Three Weeping Ravens

CR 9

Short, wiry and young, with dark brown skin and shaved black hair, Three Weeping Ravens has a relaxed and disarming air, wearing a constant slight smile with never shows teeth. Two ravens are tattooed on his left hand and the back of his head, but the third raven must be hidden somewhere beneath his loose-fitting brown and grey monk robes.

Male human monk 4/psychic warrior 5

LG Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Common

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +4 Wis, +1 monk)

hp 53 (9 HD)

Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +9; +2 vs. enchantment; evasion

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +10/+5 unarmed strike (1d8+3), or +8/+8/+3 flurry (1d8+3)

Ranged +8/+3 shuriken (1d2+3; range increment 10 ft.)

Base Atk +6; Grp +9

Combat Gear ten *potions of cure light wounds*

Combat Options combat reflexes, spring attack, stunning fist (5/day, DC 18)

Psionics (CL 5th; 17 pp)

2nd (3 pp each) – *lion's charge, painful strike*

1st (1 pp each) – *detect psionics, force screen, inertial armor*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 8

SQ ki strike (magic), psionic focus, slow fall 20 ft., soul echo, totem shape

Feats Aligned Strike, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Soul Echo*, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Totem Shape (raven)*, Up the Walls, Weapon Focus (unarmed)

Skills Balance +15, Concentration +11, Jump +20, Listen +8, Spot +8, Tumble +15

Possessions 20 shuriken, *raven tattoo of strength +2* (hand), *raven tattoo of wisdom +2* (head), *raven tattoo of dexterity +2* (foot)

Psionic Focus (Ex): As a full-round action, Three Weeping Ravens can make a Concentration check (DC 20) to attain focus. While focused, he can use his Up the Walls feat to travel up vertical surfaces as easily as on the ground, though at the end of his turn if he is not on a horizontal surface he falls.

Alternately, Three Weeping Ravens can expend his focus as a free action to use his Aligned Strike feat to deal an extra 1d6 damage with an attack, and to have that attack count as a lawful weapon.

Soul Echo (Sp): Once each per day, Three Weeping Ravens can use *animal affinity* and *sense link*, augmented with power points equal to his manifester level.

Totem Shape (Sp): Once per day, Three Weeping Ravens can transform into a raven, as with a druid's wild shape ability, lasting nine hours.

Tactics: Three Weeping Ravens never remains still for long in combat, using Tumble and Up the Walls to move about freely, lending support to allies who need it most. If things get tough, or if he needs to move about the battle swiftly, he will use his Totem Shape feat to turn into a raven and fly about, repositioning himself or withdrawing to use one of his potions.

SOUL MAGIC, NOT PSIONICS

If you are not using the psionics rules, this simplified version covers all you need to handle Three Weeping Ravens's powers.

Psionics (Sp): When Three Weeping Ravens uses one of these powers, there is no special sound or visual display, but those around him are simply aware that he has tapped a power, as clearly as they would notice someone casting a spell. The caster level for all these abilities is 5th.

Five times per day he can use one of the following – *detect magic*, *mage armor*, or *shield*.

Four times per day he can use one of the following – *lion's charge* or *painful strike* (see below).

Once per day he can use any one of *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *eagle's splendor*, *fox's cunning*, or *owl's wisdom*. While so affected, he takes on minor physical traits of the appropriate creature.

Once per day he can use *sense link* (see below).

Lion's charge – You gain the powerful charging ability of a lion. You can use this ability as a swift action, and may make a full attack at the end of a charge. This is the equivalent of a 2nd level spell.

Painful strike – For the next 5 rounds each successful attack you make with a natural weapon deals an extra 1d6 points of nonlethal damage to the target as he feels the pain of other wounded creatures. This is the equivalent of a 2nd level spell.

Sense link – You forge a connection with one willing creature within 150 ft. For as long as he concentrates, up to 1 minute per level, he perceives what it perceives for any two senses. Alternately, he can have the creature perceive one of his senses for the duration. This is the equivalent of a 1st level spell.

Balance**CR 8**

In humanoid form, Balance appears as a pair of beautiful, fey-like figures, one male and one female, Agneth and Boren, both with bald heads and flowing robes that seem to drift in an invisible breeze surrounding them. Although Balance speaks telepathically with sentient creatures, they perceive her as speaking to them in their own language with a charming, distant voice. Only one of Balance's forms is ever present at once, but she subtly shifts between the two from time to time, one form vanishing while onlookers are distracted, the other form appearing from the corner of their eyes.

Balance has chosen never to assume a monstrous form, having abandoned that element of her heritage. However, if seen via true seeing she appears as a ghostly blue-white draconic serpent, whose body is made up of strands of intertwined energy, silk and gossamer threads.

LN Medium Aberration (trillith, incorporeal)

Init +1; Senses Listen +4, Spot +4, darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Telepathy 100 ft.

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+4 natural, +1 Dexterity, +4 Wisdom)

hp 47 (8 HD); DR 10/emotion

Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +12

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), Fly 30 ft. (Perfect)

Melee +5 unarmed strike (1d6+1 nonlethal)

Base Atk +4; Grp +5

Abilities Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 18

SQ improved uncanny dodge, spell-like abilities, balanced spirit, embody, endow, grant boon

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Unarmed StrikeB, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Balance +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Sense Motive +15

Damage Reduction (Ex): Balance has DR 10/emotion.

This damage reduction can only be bypassed by creatures filled with emotion, be it rage, hatred, grief or passion. Although Balance is a master of controlling other people's emotions, she remains vulnerable to those who truly feel something.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): Caster level 8th. Balance can simultaneously cast any of the following pairs of spells as a single standard action, each up to three times an hour: *crushing despair* (DC 17) and *good hope* (DC 17), *daze monster* (DC 16) and *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *deep slumber* (DC 17) and *rage* (DC 17), or *fear* (DC 18) and *heroism* (DC 17).

Balance can also cast *calm emotions* (DC 16) at will.

Balanced Spirit (Su): Balance is immune to effects that create emotions, and cannot be tripped, overrun, or bull rushed. She has the improved uncanny dodge class feature, and cannot be flanked except by a rogue of 12th level or higher.

Embody (Su): Balance is naturally incorporeal and so cannot do much to harm her foes other than to use her spell-like abilities. However, as a full round action, Balance can create a corporeal form for herself, manifesting a solid body that matches her normal appearance. This is different from most trillith, which need to animate objects to create a body.

While embodied, Balance loses the incorporeal subtype, and loses her fly speed. Balance can leave this body as a standard action. Any damage dealt to the embodied form affects Balance normally, and stays with her even once she returns to incorporeality.

If Balance is affected by the fey Song of Forms (see Adventure Two, The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar), she spontaneously embodies. If she is already embodied she cannot leave her body.

Endow (Su): As a full round action while incorporeal, Balance can grant her power to any living creature within 30 ft. When she does so, she vanishes, effectively absorbed by the creature. At will, or when the creature dies, Balance reappears within 30 ft. of the creature, unharmed by the ordeal. The endowed creature gains Balance's boon.

A trillith that is endowing a creature can be targeted and affected by mind-affecting effects, and can be driven out with remove curse, break enchantment, or a similar effect. However, the trillith itself cannot be harmed while endowing a creature, except by mind-affecting effects.

Grant Boon (Su): Balance can lend her power to several creatures at once without actually entering their bodies. To do so she must touch each creature. She gains a negative level, and the creature gains immunity to effects that create emotions, and cannot be tripped, overrun, or bull rushed. This boon is the equivalent of a magic item with market value 6,000 gp.

If Balance is slain while affected by the Song of Forms, the nearest eight intelligent creatures within 150 ft. gain her boon, which is permanent unless dispelled. Balance can grant this boon to up to eight creatures. (Note that, during the course of this adventure, Balance effectively has seven negative levels, and so even if she is killed, only one creature gains her boon.)

Rejuvenation (Ex): As Balance is a creature of dream and not of flesh, she is hard to kill. While incorporeal or while embodied, if Balance is destroyed she does not die, but instead reforms 1d6 days later.

Balance can only be truly slain two ways. If her body dies while she is trapped by the Song of Forms or similar magic, she dies, and her corpse remains even after the magic ends.

Alternately, if Balance is destroyed and all the damage is caused by mind-affecting or negative energy effects, the trillith's spirit is obliterated. In this case, no creature gains the benefits of Balance's boon.

RAGESIAN FOES

Second General Signus

CR 12

This middle-aged knight sits saddled atop a bipedal, eyeless reptilian mount. The knight wears a commander's cloak and holds himself with a confident, fearless bearing. His voice is gruff, his face scarred and pitted from countless battles.

Male middle-aged human commander 12

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, Orc

AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+9 armor, +4 shield, +1 deflection, +1 natural)

hp 75 (12 HD)

Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +8

Resist 25% chance to ignore extra damage from critical hits and sneak attacks

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +14/+9 +1 *bastard sword* (1d10+4, 17–20/x2)

Ranged +10/+5 *masterwork two-tined trident* (1d8+3, 20/x3; range increment 10 ft.)

Base Atk +9; Grp +12

Combat Options leadership performance, direct orders, power attack, spirited charge

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 18, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 16

SQ battle cry, initiative bonus, chain of command

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*bastard sword*), Fearless Leader, Improved Critical (*bastard sword*), Iron Will, Leadership Performance, Maneuver Leader, Mounted Combat, Mounted Strafe*, Power Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (*bastard sword*)

Skills Bluff +6, Diplomacy +20, Handle Animal +18, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +16, Perform (oratory) +18, Ride +15 (+10 on Loper), Sense Motive +15

Possessions *cloak of charisma* +2, *gloves of strength* +2, +1 *full plate of light fortification*, +2 *heavy shield*, *ring of deflection* +1, *amulet of natural armor* +1, +1 *bastard sword*, *masterwork two-tined trident*

Leadership Performances (Ex): Three times per day, Signus can inspire or direct his allies (within 50 ft.) in one the following ways.

- Give a one-minute speech to grant himself and allies who hear it +2 to attack and weapon damage rolls and saves against fear effects, lasting for the first 5 rounds of combat in the next hour.
- Give a one-minute speech and make a Perform check. He and all his allies can use the result of his Perform check in place of the first saving throw they make against fear in the next hour.
- As a standard action, grant every ally within 50 ft. an immediate move action. This does not affect Signus himself.
- As a standard action, grant a single ally within 50 ft. an immediate extra attack at its full base attack bonus.
- As a standard action, make a Perform check. Every ally within 50 ft. currently under the influence of a fear effect makes a new save against that effect, using your Perform check in place of their Will save. Signus can only do this if he himself did not fail his save against the same effect.

Direct Orders (Ex): As a swift action each round Signus can choose to grant all allies within 50 ft. a +3 bonus to one of the following types of checks until his next turn. He can also spend an immediate action to replace his current orders with a different type of bonus.

- Attack rolls to confirm critical hits.
- Attack rolls while charging.
- Caster level checks.
- Disarm attempts, both to make and resist.
- Fortitude, Reflex, or Will saves (choose one).
- Grapple checks.
- Sunder attempts, both to make and resist.
- Trip attempts, both to make and resist.

Battle Cry: Once per hour as a free action, Signus can shout an iconic battle cry (such as "Give 'em thunder, men!" to which his soldiers reply by roaring in unison) to gain an additional leadership performance, which must be used during that combat.

Initiative Bonus: Allies within 50 ft. of Signus gain a +3 bonus to initiative checks.

Chain of Command: Signus can expend one of his leadership performances to let a subordinate be able to use it instead, for one hour. This loaned performance functions as if Signus himself had used it.

Loper, Destrachan**CR 8**

NE Large Aberration

Init +5; Senses Listen +25, blindsight 100 ft.

Languages Common (understands, but cannot speak)

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17

hp 60 (8 HD)

Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +10; +4 vs. sonic attacks

Immune gaze attacks, visual illusions

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares) or 30 ft. while carrying Signus

Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.

Melee +9 two claws (1d6+4)

Base Atk +6; Grp +14

Combat Options destructive harmonics

Abilities Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 12

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Hide +8, Jump +13 (+6 while carrying Signus),

Listen +25, Move Silently +7, Survival +9

Possessions anklets of striding and springing

Destructive Harmonics (Su): Loper can blast sonic energy in a cone up to 80 feet long. It can also use this attack to affect any creatures or objects within a 30-foot radius. It can tune the harmonics of this destructive power to affect different types of targets.

Flesh – Disrupting tissue and rending bone, this attack deals 4d6 points of damage to all within the area (Reflex DC 15 half).

Nerves – A destrachan can focus its harmonics to knock out foes rather than slay them. This attack deals 6d6 points of nonlethal damage to all within the area (Reflex DC 15 half).

Material – When using this form of harmonics, a destrachan chooses wood, stone, metal, or glass. All objects made of that material within the area must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or shatter. Objects (or portions of objects) that have up to 30 hit points are potentially affected by this attack.

Special Note: As long as General Signus is mounted on Loper's back, he is not affected if Loper uses its destructive harmonics centered on itself.

Tactics: Signus loves his new mount Loper, and takes full advantage of it. However, since Loper is not properly built for riding, the general's Ride checks take a –5 penalty. Signus will usually direct his men to keep between 35 and 50 ft. away (so they can benefit from his command, without being caught in Loper's attacks) as he rides into masses of enemies and has the destrachan release blast after blast of destructive harmonics.

Menchi the Headless**CR 8**

Grimacing moronically atop a black worg, this goblin's arms and waist are adorned with heavy bangles and pouches, and though he wears a vest of chain armor, his chest is bare, revealing a massive – and seemingly once-fatal – scar across his neck and torso.

Male goblin battle sorcerer 8 (UA)

NE Small humanoid (goblin)

Init +3; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0, darkvision 60

Languages Common, Goblin

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15

hp 59 (8 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +6/+1 small trident (1d6–1)

Ranged +10/+5 small trident (1d6–1; range incr. 10 ft.)

Base Atk +6; Grp +1

Combat Gear *gloves of arrow snaring*

Combat Options mounted combat

Spells Known (CL 8th)

4th (2/day) – *wall of fire*3rd (4/day) – *haste*2nd (6/day) – *flaming sphere* (DC 14), *mirror image*1st (6/day) – *alarm, grease, jump, shield*0 (5/day) – *daze, detect magic, disrupt undead, mage hand, mending, message, open/close*Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14

SQ goblin traits

Feats Improved Familiar (worg), Mounted Combat, Obedient Fire*

Skills Concentration +13, Intimidate +3, Ride +12

Possessions four small tridents, small chain shirt

Obedient Fire (Su): Menchi can direct any number of *flaming sphere* spells he has cast as a single move action.

Ekseru, Worg Familiar

NE Medium magical beast

Init +2; Senses Listen +6, Spot +6, low-light vision, scent

Languages Worg

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16

hp 30 (8 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee +7 bite (1d6+4 plus trip)

Base Atk +4; Grp +7

Combat Options trip

Abilities Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 10

SQ familiar traits

Feats Alertness, Track

Skills Hide +4, Jump +16, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6, Survival +2 (+6 when tracking by scent)

Possessions *ring of jumping* +5

Trip (Ex): If Ekseru hits with her bite, she can attempt to trip as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, her opponent cannot react to trip her.

CR — Ragesian Infiltrator

Male half-orc rogue 3/fighter 2

LN Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +2; Senses Listen +6, Spot +6, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 32 (5 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1; evasion

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +9 masterwork shortsword (1d6+3, 19–20/x2), or +7 unarmed strike (1d3+3); or +7/+7 two masterwork shortswords (1d6+3/1d6+1, 19–20/x2)

Ranged +7 masterwork shortbow (1d6, x3)

Base Atk +4; Grp +11

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (shortsword)

Skills Climb +11, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Open Locks +8, Spot +6

Possessions masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, two masterwork shortswords, masterwork shortbow with 20 arrows, 5 days of rations, climbing kit

Tactics: Infiltrators typically work in pairs, sneaking into an area. When they catch a sentry off guard one grapples the man and holds him while the other delivers multiple sneak attacks. They are very aggressive, often rushing at anyone who spots them before he can call for help.

Ragesian Soldier, Typical

Male half-orc fighter 2
LN Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +1; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision
Languages Common, orc
AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19
hp 20 (2 HD)
Fort +7, Ref +1, Will -1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +7 masterwork battleaxe (1d8+3, ×3)
Ranged +4 masterwork shortbow (1d6, ×3)
Base Atk +2; Grp +5
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10
Feats Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)
Skills Intimidate +2, Ride +3
Possessions half-plate, heavy shield, masterwork battleaxe, masterwork shortbow with 20 arrows, 5 days of rations

CR 2

Ragesian Soldier, Experienced

Male half-orc fighter 4
LN Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +5; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision
Languages Common, orc

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20
hp 35 (4 HD)
Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +0

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +10 masterwork battleaxe (1d8+6, ×3) or +8 shortsword (1d6+4, 19-20/×2)
Ranged +6 masterwork composite shortbow (1d6+4, ×3)
Base Atk +4; Grp +8
Combat Gear three *potions of cure light wounds*, *potion of cure serious wounds*

Combat Options power attack

Abilities Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe)
Skills Intimidate +4, Ride +3
Possessions full plate, heavy shield, masterwork battleaxe, masterwork composite shortbow [Str +4] with 20 arrows, shortsword, 5 days of rations

CR 4

Ragesian Soldier, Veteran

CR 6

Male half-orc fighter 6
LN Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +5; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision
Languages Common, orc

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20
hp 50 (6 HD)
Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +12 *+1 battleaxe* (1d8+7, x3) or +10 silver
shortsword (1d6+3, 19-20/x2)
Ranged +8 masterwork composite shortbow (1d6+4, x3)
Base Atk +6; Grp +10
Combat Gear three *potions of cure light wounds*, *potions of cure serious wounds*
Combat Options power attack

Abilities Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe)
Skills Intimidate +4, Ride +5
Possessions full plate, cold iron heavy shield, *+1 battleaxe*, masterwork composite shortbow [Str +4] with 20 arrows, silver shortsword, 5 days of rations, heavy warhorse, chain shirt barding

Ragesian Soldier, Elite

CR 8

Male half-orc fighter 8
LN Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +5; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision
Languages Common, orc

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20
hp 65 (8 HD)
Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +16 *+1 battleaxe* (1d8+9, x3) or +14 silver
shortsword (1d6+5, 19-20/x2)
Ranged +10 masterwork composite shortbow (1d6+4, x3)
Base Atk +8; Grp +12
Combat Gear three *potions of cure light wounds*, three *potions of cure serious wounds*, *potions of fly*
Combat Options power attack

Abilities Str 19, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10
Feats Elite Training (battleaxe)*, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe)
Skills Intimidate +4, Ride +7
Possessions full plate, cold iron heavy shield, *+1 battleaxe*, masterwork composite shortbow [Str +4] with 20 arrows, 10 *+1 human bane arrows*, silver shortsword, 5 days of rations.

Ragesian Wyvern Knight**CR 6**

Male human fighter 6

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, draconic, orc

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

hp 50 (6 HD)

Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); Ride 60 ft. (flight, poor, 12 squares)

Melee +8/+3 masterwork shortsword (1d6+1, 19–20/x2)

Ranged +11/+6 masterwork light crossbow (1d8+2, 19–20/x2), rapid reload

Base Atk +6; Grp +7

Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *oil of magic weapon*, Ragesian dragonbomb

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Mounted Strafe*, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Weapon Specialization (light crossbow)

Skills Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (history) +5, Ride +14

Possessions mithral chain shirt, buckler, masterwork shortsword, masterwork light crossbow with 60 bolts (40 normal, 10 cold iron, 10 silver), wyvern mount, exotic military saddle, Ragesian dragonbomb

NEW ITEM

Ragesian Dragonbomb: This weapon is dropped by wyvern riders, functioning as a grenade-like weapon. Because the weapon simply drops, the rider makes a ranged touch attack, with a –2 penalty per 20 ft. of altitude. If the attack misses, the bomb strikes in a random direction, and the distance from its intended target is equal to half the speed the attacker flew that round (minimum 10 ft.).

A dragonbomb is 10 flasks of oil, 5 alchemist fire flasks, and a thunderstone in a clay shell that shatters on impact. When it strikes, it creates a deafening boom as a normal thunderstone. Alchemist fire coats everything within 5 feet of the target, dealing 1d6 fire damage for two rounds. Additionally, burning oil spreads a further 5 ft., dealing 1d3 fire damage for two rounds. The alchemicals typically last long enough to set fire to flammable objects, which burn on their own.

Cost 150 gp. Weight 20 lb.

Wyvern**CR 6**

N Large Dragon

Init +1; Senses Listen +13, Spot +16, darkvision 60, low-light vision

Languages Draconic

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17

hp 59 (7 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 60 ft. (poor)

Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.

Melee +10 sting (1d6+4 plus poison) and +8 bite (2d8+4) and 2 wings (1d8+2). If using flyby attack, 2 talons (2d6+4)

Base Atk +7; Grp +15

Combat Gear hurling bracers

Combat Options flyby attack, improved grab

Abilities Str 19, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 19

SQ poison

Feats Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Flyby Attack, Multiattack

Skills Hide +7, Listen +13, Move Silently +11, Spot +16

Possessions hurling bracers

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the wyvern must hit with its talons. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and stings.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fort DC 17, initial and secondary 2d6 Con.

Rake (Ex): +11 melee, 1d6+2.

NEW ITEM

Hurling Bracers: These items can be activated as a swift action once per day. For one round, the wearer is treated as one size category larger for purposes of lifting capacity, grappling, and what sort of weapons the creature can wield. If being treated as larger would be a detriment for any given effect, it may use its normal size instead. (For instance, a human would not suddenly be unable to use a Medium dagger just because he counts as being Large). Typically wyverns use these bracers to pick up enemies during a flyby attack (taking a –20 penalty to their grapple check so they can keep moving), and then drop them before the bonus wears off.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph*; Price 2000 gp; weight 1 lb.

MONASTERY FOES

Two-Wind Huge Air Elementals

CR 9

N Huge elemental (air, extraplanar)

Init +14; Senses Listen +12, Spot +12, darkvision 60

Languages Auran

AC 26, touch 18, flat-footed 16

hp 178 (21 HD); DR 10/-

Fort +11, Ref +22, Will +9

Immune critical hits, paralysis, poison, stunning; cannot be flanked

Speed Fly 100 ft. (perfect)

Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.

Melee +23 two slams (2d8+5)

Base Atk +15; Grp +28

Combat Options gale, improved bull rush, power attack, spring attack

Abilities Str 20, Dex 31, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 11

SQ air mastery, elemental traits

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Listen +12, Spot +12

Gale (Su): As an immediate action, a two-winds air elemental can release a blast of severe wind, 5-ft. wide and 60-ft. long. This can be used to deflect incoming ranged attacks, incurring a –4 penalty to the attack roll, or to knock down a Small creature or check a Medium creature that fails a Fortitude save (DC 25).

Air Mastery (Ex): Airborne creatures take a –1 penalty on attack and damage rolls against a two-winds air elemental.

Invisible Stalkers

CR 7

N Large elemental (air, extraplanar)

Init +8; Senses Listen +13, Spot +13, darkvision 60

Languages Auran, Common (understand only)

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 13

hp 52 (8 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +4

Immune critical hits, paralysis, poison, stunning; cannot be flanked

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.

Melee +10 two slams (2d6+4)

Base Atk +6; Grp +14

Combat Options combat reflexes

Abilities Str 18, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 11

SQ elemental traits, improved tracking, natural invisibility

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Listen +13, Move Silently +15, Search +13, Spot +13

Natural Invisibility (Su): This ability is constant, allowing a stalker to remain invisible even when attacking. This ability is inherent and not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell.

Improved Tracking (Ex): Invisible stalkers make Spot checks instead of Survival when tracking.

Typical East Wind Monk

CR 5

Slender in black and brown peasant's robes, this woman's hair sways in a constant slight breeze.

Female human monk 2/sorcerer 3

LN Medium humanoid

Init +7; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Auran, Common

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+1 armor, +3 Dex, +2 Cha)

hp 26 (5 HD)

Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +6; evasion

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +6 unarmed strike (1d6–1), or +4/+4 flurry (1d6–1)

Ranged +5 shuriken (1d2–1; range increment 10 ft.), or +1/+1 flurry (1d2–1)

Base Atk +2; Grp +1

Combat Gear *potion of fly, scroll of lightning bolt* ×2

Combat Options stunning fist (2/day; Fort DC 14 negates)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd)

1st (6/day) – *magic missile, shield, shocking grasp*

0th (6/day) – *dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, message*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14

SQ east wind style

Feats Craft Wand, East Wind Style, Improved Initiative, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (unarmed)

Skills Balance +8, Bluff +5, Concentration +9, Craft (various) +6, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Profession (various) +5, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +4

Possessions 20 shuriken, *bracers of armor +1*, mundane clothes, tools

East Wind Style (Su): Whenever the monk makes a stunning fist attack, her unarmed strike deals +1d6 points of electricity damage.

Tactics: East wind monks rely more on their magical abilities than melee, and do not like protracted battles. Groups of monks learn to remain scattered while focusing their ranged attacks (typically *magic missiles*) on a single target. If an enemy does close to melee, the scattered monks charge in and deliver multiple stunning fist attacks.

Typical West Wind Monk**CR 5**

Clad in a simple white and blue peasant's clothes, this man's martial skill is betrayed by a jagged-bladed whip worn coiled at his hip. He moves with an airy grace, as if his feet barely touch the ground.

Male human monk 2/cleric 3

LN Medium humanoid

Init +0; Senses Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Auran, Common**AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Wis)**hp** 32 (5 HD)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8; evasion**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** +6 unarmed strike (1d6+3), or +4/+4 flurry (1d6+3)**Melee** +7 masterwork bladed whip (1d6+3, 19–20/x2), or +5/+5 flurry (1d6+3, 19–20/x2)**Ranged** +3 shuriken (1d2+3; range increment 10 ft.), or +1/+1 flurry (1d2+3)**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +6**Combat Gear** *potion of fly, scroll of dispel magic, wand of cure light wounds***Combat Options** combat expertise, improved trip, stunning fist (2/day, Fort DC 14 negates), flyby attack, turn undead (2/day, 1d20–1, 2d6 HD), turn earth or rebuke air creatures (2/day, 1d20–1, 2d6 HD)**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd)2nd – *aid, bull's strength, hold person* (DC 14)1st – *bless, command* (DC 13), *obscuring mist, sanctuary* (DC 13)0th – *detect magic, guidance, mending, purify food and drink***Domains** Air, Luck**Abilities** Str 16, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 8**SQ** luck domain, west wind style**Feats** Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, Flyby Attack, Melee Lash*, Stunning Fist, West Wind Style**Skills** Balance +5, Concentration +9, Craft (various) +6, Knowledge (religion) +9, Profession (various) +7, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +4**Possessions** 20 shuriken, masterwork bladed whip, mundane clothes, tools**Luck Domain (Ex):** Once per day, the monk can reroll any one roll.

West Wind Style (Su): The monk can expend a use of stunning fist or turn undead as a free action to gain the ability to Fly 30 (Good), lasting for one round. If he continues to expend stunning fist or turn undead uses round after round, he does not fall between his turns. We he uses this ability, he can also grant a willing creature within 30 ft. a fly speed equal to its land speed.

Tactics: West wind monks use their momentary flight powers to gain the higher ground, using their bladed whips to trip or disarm foes. When teamed with east wind monks, the west wind students keep warriors occupied while the east wind students attempt to bring down mages and more nimble enemies with their magic.

Valley of Storms Ettin**CR 6**

CE Large Giant

Init +4; Senses Listen +10, Spot +10, low-light vision

Languages Auran, Common**AC** 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (–1 size, +7 natural, +2 Wisdom)**hp** 65 (10 HD)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares), Fly 10 ft. (clumsy)**Melee** +12/+7 unarmed strike (1d8+6 plus 1d6 electricity) and +12/+7 bladed whip (1d8+6)**Base Atk** +7; **Grp** +17**Space/Reach** 10 ft./10 ft. (25 ft. w/whip, but does not threaten)**Combat Options** power attack**Abilities** Str 23, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 8**SQ** superior two-weapon fighting**Feats** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bladed whip), Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack**Skills** Listen +10, Search +1, Spot +10**Possessions** large bladed whip

Mantidrake

CR 10

A roar more powerful than anything you've ever heard announces the presence of this creature as it swoops over the hill toward you. Green-scaled with wings and claws like a dragon, its tail is a cluster of a shimmering black spikes.

Neutral Huge Dragon (Air)

Init +1; Senses Listen +15, Spot +19, darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent

Languages Draconic

AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 19

HP 135 (10 HD)

Immune sleep, paralysis, sonic

Fort +14 Ref +8 Will +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (clumsy)

Melee +20 two claws (1d8+12) and bite +18 (2d6+6)

Ranged +11 six spikes (1d8+6, 19–20/x2)

Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.

Base Atk +10; Grp +27

Combat Options cleave, flyby attack, power attack, devastating roar (30-ft. cone of, 6d6 sonic; Ref DC 22 half, every 1d4 rounds)

Abilities Str 34, Dex 13, Con 25, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 11

Feats Cleave, Flyby Attack, Multi-Attack, Power Attack, TrackB

Skills Intimidate +13, Listen +15, Spot +19, Survival +15

Spikes (Ex): A mantidrake can release a volley of spikes as a standard action, attacking up to 6 targets within 30 ft. of each other. The attack has a range of 180 ft. with no range increment. It can release up to twenty-four spikes in a given day.

Breath Weapon (Su): The mantidrake can unleash a devastating roar once every 1d4 rounds, a 30-ft. cone of sonic energy dealing 6d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 22 half).

Mishap

CR 4

Though these creatures appear to once have been humans and dwarves, their flesh appears fused to muscles of living ice, and their eyes are frozen.

CE Medium Aberration (air, cold)

Init +1; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0, darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Auran, Common

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 36 (6 HD)

Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5

Immune cold

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), Fly 40 ft. (Average)

Melee +9 two claws (1d4+5 plus 1d6 cold)

Base Atk +3; Grp +8

Combat Options cold blast

Abilities Str 20, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6

SQ mishap

Feats Ability Focus (cold blast), Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Hide +5, Move Silently +6

Cold Blast (Su): Once per round as a standard action, a mishap can fire a 30-ft. line of chilling wind, dealing 4d6 points of cold damage (Reflex DC 16 half).

Mishap (Su): A mishap's body is suffused with disruptive magical energy. If a mishap touches another creature at all, the next time that creature casts a spell or uses a spell-like ability it must make a Will save (DC 11) or the spell or ability fails, and the creature takes damage equal to the spell's level. Multiple touches do not stack, affecting only the single next spell or spell-like ability used.

A creature which has been touched by a mishap can spend one minute and make a Spellcraft check (DC 15) to clear the disruption.

Aurus, Windborn Minotaur**CR 10**

Through the distorting green fluid of the nearest vat you spot something moving, its form indistinct, so silent you wonder whether it's just a trick of the light. Larger than a man, horns stretching out from its head, you realize suddenly that it is charging straight for you. The vat shatters, and toxic slime sprays you as a bull-headed humanoid bursts through, roaring and swinging a massive hammer. Its skin is icy white, verging on blue, its body nothing more than wisps of vapor beneath the waist.

LE Large monstrous humanoid (air)

Init +0; Senses Listen +17, Spot +7, darkvision 60, scent

Languages Auran

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed n/a (never flat-footed)

hp 150 (12 HD); DR 10/–

Fort +14, Ref +7, Will +7

Speed Fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.

Melee +19/+14 *Kiano* (3d6+13, ×3) and +13 gore (1d8+4)

Base Atk +12; Grp +22

Combat Options flyby attack, overwhelming charge, whirlwind attack

Abilities Str 28, Dex 10, Con 22, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ air mastery, natural cunning, windborn

Feats Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (greathammer), Whirlwind Attack^B

Skills Intimidate +3, Listen +17, Search +2, Spot +7

Possessions *Kiano*

Overwhelming Charge (Ex): As a full round action, Aurus can surge in an overwhelming moving attacking, driven by pummeling gusts of wind, striking everything in his path. He can travel up to twice his base speed in a straight line. Every time he enters the square of a creature or object, he may attack with his greathammer *Kiano* (+19 attack bonus; 3d6+13, ×3). Creatures struck in this way must make a Strength check (DC 21) or be knocked prone. Objects struck this way take triple normal damage, because of Aurus's greathammer (which is pretty much enough to destroy anything in the lab). Aurus provokes attacks of opportunity for this movement as normal, and for entering opponent's squares.

If a creature in Aurus's path resists being knocked down, or an object in his path is not destroyed, Aurus's movement ends. If he shatters one of the vats and attempts to pass through it, each square costs quadruple normal movement rates as the draining fluid slows him down. At the end of his charge, Aurus is dazed and he loses the benefit of his windborn defenses for one round as his body turns mostly solid.

Air Mastery (Ex): Airborne creatures take a –1 penalty on attack and damage rolls against Aurus.

Natural Cunning (Ex): Aurus is immune to *maze* spells, cannot get lost, and is never flat-footed.

Windborn (Ex): Because of Aurus's dual nature, part solid creature and part air elemental, he has DR 10/– and ignores any poison, sleep, paralysis, or stunning effect, as well as extra damage from critical hits and sneak attacks. He can still be flanked. For one round after he uses his overwhelming charge ability, he loses these defenses.

Tactics: Normally Aurus simply floats to the nearest foe and pummels him, but if ever two enemies are in a straight line with him, he uses his overwhelming charge to strike them both. Be sure to make a big deal of just what provokes Aurus to use this attack. In the middle of combat he pauses for a fraction of a second, glances at those foes who have so conveniently lined up, then briefly grins and cocks his head from side to side as he aims his charge. Optimally, the heroes will recognize this pattern in Aurus's attacks, and take advantage of it, luring him into a charge that will leave him vulnerable.

NEW ITEM

Kiano: Kiano is a +1 large greathammer (effectively a two-handed warhammer). It deals triple damage against inanimate objects.

Strong evocation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *shatter*; Price 9,305 gp; weight 80 lb.

Caela (Cai Lei Wsu)

CR 15

This black-haired half elf woman flashes a sneering grin as she leaps at you, her hands humming with blue arcs of electricity. Her black cloak, lined with gray stormcloud designs, snaps in an intense wind as she soars through combat, and she moves with the speed of a lightning strike.

Female half-elf monk 4/cleric 1/sorcerer 10

LE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; Senses Listen +1, Spot +1, low-light vision

Languages Common, Auran, Elvish

AC 22, touch 21, flat-footed 22 (+8 w/mage armor and storm shield)

hp 97 (15 HD)

Fort +11, Ref +14, Will +17; +4 vs. enchantment; evasion

Immune sleep

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +15/+10 unarmed strike (1d8–1), +13/+13/+8 flurry (1d8–1)

Base Atk +8; Grp +7

Combat Gear potion bracer (free action to draw potions), *potion of cure serious wounds* ×4, *potion of cure light wounds* ×6, *feather token (whip)* ×2

Combat Options stunning fist (6/day, Fort DC 19 negates), rebuke undead (5/day, 1d20+2, 2d6+3 HD), turn earth or rebuke air creatures (5/day, 1d20+2, 2d6+3 HD), deflect arrows

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 1st)

1st – cure minor wounds

0th – cure minor wounds ×3

Domains Air, Luck

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 10th)

5th (3/day) – *like lightning** (DC 17)

4th (5/day) – *storm shield** (DC 16), *telekinetic thrust** (DC 16)

3rd (6/day) – *dispel magic*, *fly*, *vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day) – *gust of wind*, *invisibility*, *resist energy*, *shatter* (DC 14)

1st (7/day) – *charm person* (DC 13), *mage armor*, *shocking grasp*, *silent image*, *unseen servant*

0 (6/day) – *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

*New spell (see Appendix Four)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 15

SQ half-elf traits, slow fall 20 ft., east wind style, luck domain, two winds weapon training, west wind style

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Deflect Arrows, East Wind Style, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Concentration), Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (unarmed), West Wind Style

Skills Balance +10, Bluff +20, Concentration +24, Diplomacy +9, Escape Artist +18, Jump +9, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +6, Tumble +15

Possessions *cloak of charisma* +2 and *resistance +2 of the mountebank* (market value 18,800 gp), *ring of protection* +2 and *counterspelling* (market value 12,000 gp; contains some spell the heroes are fond of that could take her out of combat with a failed save; otherwise contains *hold monster*), *gloves of dexterity* +4, *potion bracer*, *zephyr shirt* (+1 natural armor, +2 Con, +5 Escape Artist; market value 8,500 gp)

East Wind Style (Su): Whenever Caela makes a stunning fist attack, her unarmed strike deals +1d6 points of electricity damage. Additionally, she can expend a use of stunning fist to cast *shocking grasp* as a swift action (the *shocking grasp* occurs instead of the normal stunning effect), or expend two stunning fist uses to both cast *shocking grasp* and stun, dealing 1d8–1 plus 6d6 electricity plus stunning (Fort DC 19 negates)

Luck Domain (Ex): Once per day, Caela can reroll any one roll.

West Wind Style (Su): Caela can expend a use of stunning fist or turn undead as a free action to gain the ability to Fly 40 (Good), lasting for one round. If she continues to expend stunning fist or turn undead uses round after round, she does not fall between her turns. When she uses this ability, she can also grant three willing creatures within 30 ft. a fly speed equal to their land speeds.

APPENDIX TWO: NEW FEATS

Several of the characters in this adventure have new feats. Feats affiliated with the Monastery of Two Winds are presented on the next page.

GENERAL FEATS

Elite Training [Fighter]

Choose a weapon you have weapon specialization in. You are elitley trained with weapons of that type.

Prerequisite: Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, Fighter level 8th (or Fighter level 4th and base attack bonus +10).

Benefit: With the chosen weapon and all weapons with the same damage type, you gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage. If the weapon has multiple damage types, choose one of its damage types.

Melee Lash [Fighter]

You threaten the area around you with a whip.

Prerequisite: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: When armed with a whip or other whip-like weapon, you threaten an area around you equal to your normal unarmed reach. You can make attacks of opportunity with the whip within that area. Additionally, you don't incur attacks of opportunity by using a whip in combat, or by any other use of a whip, such as with the Third Hand feat.

Normal: A whip has 15-ft. reach, but does not threaten that area. Using a whip provokes an attack of opportunity, just as if you had used a ranged weapon.

Special: You can qualify for this feat if you are proficient in any whip-like weapon.

Mounted Strafe [Fighter]

You can attack as you ride past your foe.

Prerequisites: Ride 5 ranks, Mounted Combat

Benefit: When mounted, you may perform a standard action at any point during your mount's movement. When you attack a creature in melee

when mounted, for the movement to and from that creature, neither you nor your mount provoke attacks of opportunity from that creature.

If you perform a charge action while mounted, you can attack any creature adjacent to or along the line of your movement. Your mount must still move in a straight line, but you can choose to attack a creature as you pass it by.

Normal: You can only make melee attacks while mounted at the beginning or end of your mount's movement. You can only make ranged attacks while mounted at the beginning, end, or precise middle of your mount's movement.

Special: You may use this feat to qualify for feats and prestige classes as if it were Ride-By Attack.

Soul Echo [Psionic]

You can tap the souls of other creatures to experience their lives.

Prerequisite: Wis 13, Caster level 3rd.

Benefit: You can manifest the psionic powers *animal affinity* and *sense link* once each per day, with a manifester level equal to your caster level. They are augmented as if you had spent power points equal to your caster level.

If you are not using the psionics rules, instead once per day you can gain a +4 enhancement bonus to any ability score, lasting 1 minute per caster level. Additionally once per day you can forge a connection with one willing creature within 150 ft. For as long as you concentrate, up to 1 minute per character level, you sense what it senses for any one of sight, hearing, touch, or olfactory senses.

Totem Shape [General]

You can assume the form of a totem animal.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks.

Benefit: Choose a Medium or smaller animal with a challenge rating no greater than one-third your character level. Once per day, you can transform into that animal, as with a druid's wild shape ability, lasting one hour per level.

MONASTERY OF TWO WINDS FEATS

The Monastery of Two Winds teaches two different approaches to air magic: the gentle west wind style and the fierce east wind style. Sample monks of each style are presented in Appendix One.

Alternate Class Ability – East Wind Training

Level: Sorcerer 1.

Replaces: You do not gain a familiar.

Benefit: You gain East Wind Style as a bonus feat, detailed below, if you fulfill the prerequisite.

Alternate Class Ability – West Wind Training

Level: Cleric 1.

Replaces: You do not gain armor or shield proficiency.

Benefit: You gain West Wind Style as a bonus feat, detailed below, if you fulfill the prerequisite.

Alternate Class Ability – Two Winds Weapon Training

Level: Monk 1.

Replaces: You do not gain proficiency in normal monk weapons. You have a poor Fortitude saving throw progression (+1 per three levels) instead of a good one (+2 base +1 every even level).

Benefit: The weapons you are proficient with are bladed whip, club, dagger, javelin, kama, longbow (normal or composite), nunchaku, quarterstaff, shortbow (normal or composite), shuriken, and whip. You can flurry with any of those weapons, as well as with unarmed strikes.

At 1st level, for your monk bonus feats you can only choose Stunning Fist. At 2nd level you can select Combat Expertise or Weapon Finesse. At 6th level you can select Improved Disarm or Improved Trip.

East Wind Style [General]

You have learned the techniques of the Monastery of Two Winds. Your vicious, tempestuous fighting style makes you a storm upon your foes.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast *shocking grasp* spontaneously.

Benefit: You can multiclass freely between sorcerer and monk. If you have monk levels, you can

apply your Charisma modifier to your monk's AC bonus and to the DC of your stunning fist attacks instead of your Wisdom modifier. You cannot cast sorcerer spells with the [earth] descriptor.

If you have the Stunning Fist feat, whenever you make a stunning fist attack, your unarmed strike deals +1d6 points of electricity damage. If you possess the *ki strike* ability, you can expend a use of stunning fist to cast *shocking grasp* as a swift action (the *shocking grasp* occurs instead of the normal stunning effect). This does not count against the normal limit of using stunning fist only once a round, so you could choose to expend two stunning fist uses to cast *shocking grasp* and deliver a powerful stunning strike infused with electricity.

You may select Auran as a bonus language.

West Wind Style [General]

You have learned the techniques of the Monastery of Two Winds. Your graceful, windy fighting style makes you a breeze amidst your foes.

Prerequisite: Access to the Air clerical domain.

Benefit: You can multiclass freely between cleric and monk. Add *fly* to your cleric spell list as a 3rd level spell, and *overland flight* as a 5th level spell. You cannot cast cleric spells with the [earth] descriptor.

If you have the Stunning Fist feat, you can expend a use of stunning fist or turn undead as a free action to gain a fly speed equal to your land speed (good maneuverability) lasting for one round. If you continue to expend stunning fist or turn undead uses round after round, you do not fall between your turns. If you possess the slow fall ability, you can expend a stunning fist or turn undead use when you fall to take no damage from the fall, and you land safely on your feet.

As you gain levels, you can grant additional creatures the ability to fly. When you use this ability to let yourself fly, you can grant a fly speed to one additional willing creature within 30 ft. for every 5 character levels you possess. Each creature's fly speed is determined by its own land speed. For instance, a monk 2/cleric 8 could use one stunning fist attempt to give a fly speed to himself and two allies.

You may select Auran as a bonus language.

APPENDIX THREE: NEW ITEMS

Several of the characters in this adventure have new items, magical or otherwise.

MUNDANE ITEMS

Bladed Whip: Exotic melee weapon.

Dmg (S/M) 1d4/1d6. Crit 19–20/x2.

Wt. 3 lb. Type S. Cost 25 gp.

This weapon is constructed much like a whip, only that the plaited strands of the whip also include several specially designed metal strips with slashing edges, and that the fall consists of either a blade or sharpened chain segments. Alternately, a bladed whip might be covered in spikes, thorns, or other jagged edges.

Unlike a normal whip, a bladed whip deals real damage, and can harm creatures even if they have an armor bonus of +1 or higher, or a natural armor bonus of +3 or higher. A bladed whip has hardness 3. In all other ways, a bladed whip is just like a normal whip.

Ragesian Dragonbomb: This weapon is dropped by wyvern riders, functioning as a grenade-like weapon. Because the weapon simply drops, the rider makes a ranged touch attack, with a –2 penalty per 20 ft. of altitude. If the attack misses, the bomb strikes in a random direction, and the distance from its intended target is equal to half the speed the attacker flew that round (minimum 10 ft.).

A dragonbomb consists of little more than a compilation of existing alchemicals. It has 10 flasks of oil, 5 alchemist fire flasks, and a thunderstone in a clay shell that shatters on impact. In addition to whatever damage the bomb inflicts by striking its target, it also creates a deafening boom as a normal thunderstone. Alchemist fire coats everything within 5 feet of the target, dealing 1d6 fire damage for two rounds. Additionally, burning oil spreads a further 5 ft., dealing 1d3 fire damage for two rounds. The alchemicals typically last long enough to set fire to flammable objects, which burn on their own.

Cost 150 gp. Weight 20 lb.

MAGIC ITEMS

Hurling Bracers: These items can be activated as a swift action once per day. For one round, the wearer is treated as one size category larger for purposes of lifting capacity, grappling, and what sort of weapons the creature can wield. If being treated as larger would be a detriment for any given effect, it may use its normal size instead. (For instance, a human would not suddenly be unable to use a Medium dagger just because he counts as being Large). Typically wyverns use these bracers to pick up enemies during a flyby attack (taking a –20 penalty to their grapple check so they can keep moving), and then drop them before the bonus wears off.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph*; Price 2000 gp; weight 1 lb.

APPENDIX FOUR: NEW SPELLS

Like Lightning

Evocation/Transmutation [Electricity]

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: See text.

You transform your body into lightning and fly a distance up to twice your land speed (perfect maneuverability). You do not provoke attacks of opportunity for this movement, and can travel through spaces occupied by creatures. Whenever you pass through a creature's space, that creature must succeed a Reflex saving throw or take 1d6 points of electricity damage per two caster levels (maximum 10d6). Passing through a creature's space more than once does not deal extra damage. Creatures with spell resistance have a chance to resist being affected by your lightning entirely. Once you have moved up to twice your base speed, you return to normal, and your turn ends.

If you have the Flyby Attack or Spring Attack feat, at one point during your movement you may briefly turn solid again so you can make a single melee attack. If you do this, your movement is limited to your land speed instead of twice your land speed.

If you have already moved in your turn before casting this spell, that movement counts against your limit for the spell.

Storm Shield

Abjuration/Evocation [Air, Electricity, Force]

Level: Drd 5, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: See text.

You are protected by the fury of a thunderstorm. This spell functions like *shield*, granting a +4 shield bonus to AC and protecting against *magic missiles*. Additionally, whenever you are struck in melee combat, thunder, lightning, and wind blasts your attacker. If that creature fails a Reflex save, it takes 1d6 points of electricity damage and is knocked back 5 ft. Spell resistance applies to this effect.

Telekinetic Thrust

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One or more objects or creatures with a total weight of 50 lbs./level or less.

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

You can affect one or more objects or creatures by concentrating your mind upon them, sending them in a deadly hail at your foes – or simply by hurling your foe! You can hurl one object or creature per level (maximum fifteen separate targets), as long as all are within range and each is no more than 10 feet away from any other one. Each object or creature can be hurled a maximum distance of 10 feet per level.

You must succeed on ranged attack rolls (one per creature or object thrown) to hit a target of the hurled items with the items, applying your Intelligence modifier (or Charisma modifier if a sorcerer) to the attack roll instead of your Dexterity modifier. Hurling weapons deal their standard damage (your Strength bonus does not apply; arrows or bolts deal damage as daggers of their size when used in this manner). Other objects deal damage ranging from 1 point per 25 pounds of weight (for less dangerous objects such as an empty barrel) to 1d6 points per 25 pounds of weight (for hard, dense objects such as a boulder).

Creatures are allowed Will saves (and spell resistance) to negate the effect, as are those whose held possessions are targeted by this power. If you use this power to hurl a creature against a solid surface, it takes damage as if it had fallen 10 feet (1d6 points). If you hurl one creature into another, both take the damage.

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War of the Burning Sky

Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds

by Andrew Kenrick

As the war spreads to new nations, the heroes set out to the Monastery of Two Winds, whose leaders — two enigmatic brothers — can guide the way to retrieving the lost Torch of the Burning Sky, which will tip the balance of power.

But two enemies threaten the order. From without, remnants of the army of Emperor Coaltongue besiege the mountain monastery.

From within, one of the order's own is kidnapping innocents for cruel biomantic experiments.

Great danger and precious revelations await the heroes in their mission to the Monastery of Two Winds.

A fantasy adventure for 9th-level characters

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