

War of the Burning Sky

O, Wintry Song of Agony by Jeremy Anderson and Ryan Nock



A fantasy adventure for 15th-level characters

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An Adventure for 15th Level Characters

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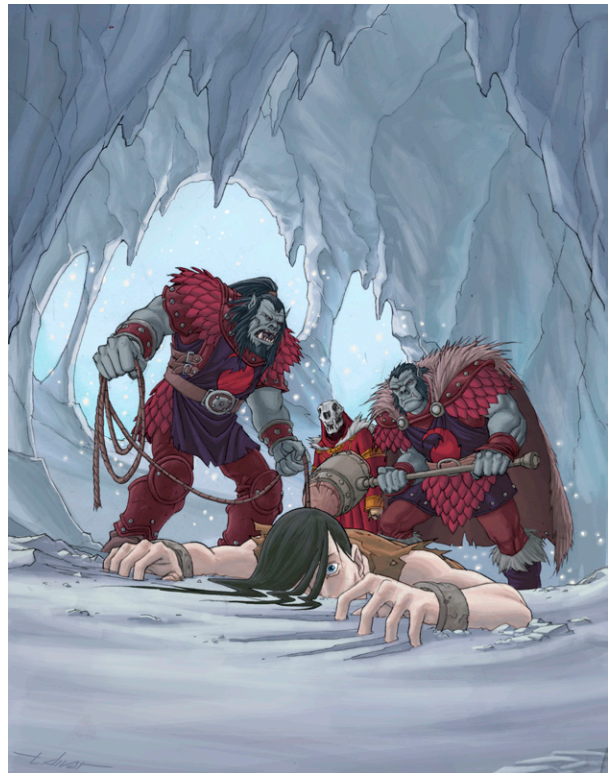
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INTRODUCTION

The saga of *The War of the Burning Sky* continues in its eighth episode, and the stakes continue to rise. The heroes have so far assisted the liberation of nations, overcome the challenges of multiple terrifying dream monsters, and continually done battle with the forces of the tyrannical empire of Ragesia. With help and information from the wind-wielding brothers Longinus and Pilus, the heroes have fought their way through a fortress where the artifact known as the Torch of the Burning Sky first fell from the dead fingers of the former Ragesian emperor. There they found clues which led them to the present location of the Torch, a den of assassins in the haunted forest of Ycengled. After confronting the killers, they reclaimed the Torch and endured an ancient trial in order to restore the artifact's faded power. Though victorious, they emerged with the Torch only partially restored; more importantly, however, the trial revealed visions of the past and secrets of the present.

Most pressing among those secrets is the existence of a new weapon being created by Leska, the current leader of Ragesia. Known to the heroes only as "The Scourge," the nature of this threat is unclear, but it seems it will be ready within the month.

The Scourge is the Ragesian code name for The Koren Obelisk, a magical focus of immense power, that, when complete, would dwarf the power of the Torch itself. While the Torch of the Burning Sky permitted the previous Ragesian emperor to transport his armies anywhere he wished, the Obelisk would give Leska the power to wield her magic directly across any distance. Coupled with her formidable personal spellcasting arsenal, the Obelisk might plunge the entire world into eternal despotism rule under Leska's thumb.

BACKGROUND

The heroes have just learned that the second in command of the Ragesian inquisitors, an infamous man named Kreven, has nearly completed a doomsday device, a magical focus known as the Scourge. Spies and captured military plans reveal

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

O, Wintry Song of Agony works easily as a stand-alone high-level adventure, or as part of a larger campaign. The nature of the fortress works excellently for a villain's stronghold that only the bravest heroes would dare attack. The Ragesian army can be any enemy force, and the Obelisk itself can be any stationary doomsday device. What matters most is this:

- The heroes learn that the villains have built a device of terrifying power and dominance, and that it is near completion. They know where the device is, and have obtained plans for it. Their first course of action is to prepare for an assault, though the enemy is proactive in hindering them, making use of the doomsday weapon.
- The heroes can only travel extra-dimensionally to the edge of the enemy zone, and from there they must travel in a more linear manner. The fortress could be in a demiplane, a magically-resilient tunnel network in deep recesses underground, or – as in the adventure – just be a heavily warded area with high-impassable natural boundaries. Once they arrive, the heroes must fight or sneak past the enemy forces.
- The heroes must then descend into the heart of the vile prison-machine providing the doomsday weapon with its power, and slay or free its living power source.

Coincidentally, these three important issues are summaries of the three acts of this adventure.

that the Scourge facility is located in a valley in the frozen northern reaches of Ragesia, and that a massive divination shield wards the entire area. Even though the wayfarer guildmistress could potentially power through even anti-teleportation

wards, teleportation beacons – which divert planar travel – lie scattered around the edge of the valley, so the heroes cannot teleport too close, lest they risk being trapped. The valley’s walls are too steep for a conventional army to traverse except via one route, through a pass called Frost Needle’s Eye.

The valley has long been a strategic fallback point for the Ragesians, but only in the past year has it been converted to its present purpose. Incredible amounts of resources were funneled here, though always done discreetly. It is suspected that not even Emperor Coalongue himself knew about it, and those in charge of the Resistance now suspect Leska arranged his assassination so she could complete her doomsday weapon.

The Resistance had been using scrying to track to this location hundreds of mages who were captured in the early stages of Leska’s bid for power, though their fate now is hidden by the shield. What the Resistance does not know is that the “Scourge” weapon is powered by the collected pain and suffering of these imprisoned mages. Beneath the Scourge fortress is a prison designed to be impregnable to magic-users, with two vitally important prisoners.

The first prisoner is Agony, one of the trillith – nightmare spirits from the underdark who have allied with Leska for their own ends. Agony was not loyal to his brothers, and so was given to Leska for use as her power source. Magically compelled to wield his powers against his fellow prisoners, Agony daily wracks the captured mages with waves of pain. The Koren Obelisk captures this suffering and harnesses it as a power source, and if the heroes can kill or free Agony they will render the Scourge powerless.

The second prisoner is one with a unique relationship with Leska herself. Four decades ago, the forest of Innenotdar, located near the city of Gate Pass, was set alight, killing most of its inhabitants except for a clan of fey known as the Seela, who survived only because of the magical Song of Forms. Trapped in an endlessly burning forest of flame, the Seela sent their strongest, Etinifi, on a quest to find release for them. Etinifi managed to escape the flames, and roamed the world, looking for a way to heal his homeland.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE, CONT'D

Starting the Campaign Here

O, Wintry Song of Agony makes a perfect starting point for a short, high-level campaign. More advice on how to retool the following adventures is included in the free *Game Master’s Guide*, but the focus of this mini-campaign is Leska’s use of the power of the trillith, a strange dream-spawned menace, which she wields in an attempt to conquer the world or, if stymied, to destroy it.

In this version of the campaign, the heroes start as great heroes, called upon by the nations opposed to Ragesia to undertake a strike mission into the Scourge facility. The Koren Obelisk in this version is itself powered by the Torch of the Burning Sky, allowing the heroes to possess it for the rest of the campaign, though its power has been drained to create the obelisk. (The Torch, in the normal version of the campaign, is at reduced power now, and will be until the heroes encounter the Mother of Dreams in adventure ten, *Sleep, Ye Cursed Child*.)

Ending the Campaign Here

If you are not interested in running adventures for near-epic levels, you can retool the campaign to make this adventure the final mission. In this case, Leska herself is at the Scourge fortress to personally oversee the completion of the Koren Obelisk. Lower-powered versions of Leska and Shahalesti ruler Shaaladel appear in Appendix Four.

We encourage you to mine *Return of the Jedi* for ideas of how to run this final conflict, with different forces fighting simultaneous battles. Perhaps the Shahalesti wish to claim the Torch from the heroes while simultaneously defeating Leska, leading to a three-way battle in the Obelisk room, while the two armies outside defeat the Ragesians and then turn on each other.

He learned of the legend of the Aquiline Heart, said to be able to mend any wound and grant immortality, and in his search for it he met Leska, at the time just a young woman assigned the impossible task of finding the supposedly mythical Heart. Together, however, the two discovered the lost trail to the location of the Heart, and slowly grew to love each other. But when they reached their goal, the defenders proved too strong, and to save himself Etinifi betrayed Leska, draining her life force so he could achieve immortality for himself.

Though left as little more than a husk, Leska survived and claimed immortality as well. The betrayal had cut her to the core, and afterward she never cared for anyone again. After using the secret of immortality to gain the favor of then-emperor Coaltongue, Leska tracked down Etinifi, captured him, and devised a prison that would eternally punish the man who had betrayed her. Leska knew how to kill Etinifi despite his immortality, but she chose instead to place him at the bottom of a oubliette that would eventually become the Scourge prison.

Today, Etinifi and Agony are bound in the same chamber at the bottom of the Scourge prison. Etinifi has little left of himself other than the Song of Forms from his homeland, which can hold at bay the power of Agony. Inevitably, however, his song always falters, unleashing waves of pain throughout the prison.

If the heroes can manage to destroy the Koren Obelisk and free Etinifi, they can learn the secret to defeating Leska (which will lead to the campaign's climax in adventure twelve, *The Beating of the Aquiline Heart*). However, the man's prolonged torment has left him mad, longing for nothing more than an end to his existence, and unfortunately, the only way he knows to do that will kill everyone else in the process. This sets the stage for the next adventure, *The Festival of Dreams*.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

While the heroes meet with their allies to discuss how to attack and destroy this "Scourge," they are attacked by the power of the Koren Obelisk, devastating a swath of Seaquen and making it clear that this is a threat that must be dealt with

immediately. Not only is its power great enough to ruin any other military offensive they might make, divinations suggest that power stems from the despair of hundreds of tortured people, making its very existence an abomination.

The heroes must disable the power source, and then break the Obelisk itself. Leska is no fool, however. She has set an entire army to the task of guarding the compound, and between the Burning Sky making teleportation deadly and the vast power of the Obelisk itself, any traditional assault seems impossible.

Thanks to the heroes' efforts, however, all is not lost. The Torch of the Burning Sky, while not fully functional, will let the heroes teleport their allies' armies close enough to the Obelisk to attack the Frost Needle's Eye watchpost, where they will draw out the forces guarding the main fortress. Allied general Xavious Foebane recommends that while the armies battle for ground, the heroes take advantage of the distraction to attack the fortress itself.

In a bunker fortress beneath the vast, guarded icy wasteland of a valley, Kreven and his staff work tirelessly on improving the Obelisk. His wife Koren works beneath them in the Chamber, taking already-tormented victims from the Halls of Pain and weaponizing them for the Ragesian army. And beneath this lovely couple, the Halls themselves await, full of crazed wizards who fight for what little relief they can find, and the cell of Agony and Etinifi.

For now, the Obelisk itself is protected from attack by incredible wards. To destroy it, first the heroes must infiltrate the facility and reach the antimagic "clean room" that leads to the prison. Inside

USING THE OBELISK

Controlling the Obelisk requires knowledge of dozens of secret tricks and arcane insights which the heroes lack, though that's not to say they can't try. You might let them use it one time at the end of this adventure, but after that their meddling should cause it to overload and destroy itself.

KREVEN LORE

Bardic Knowledge, Gather Information, or Knowledge (arcana) check.

DC Information

25 Kreven is the second in command of the inquisitors, a brilliant human spellcaster who is zealously devoted to Leska.

30 Kreven is married to a woman named Koren, a former Wayfarer who served at the pleasure of the Ragesian emperor.

35 In truth, Kreven is not a cleric like most inquisitors, but a sorcerer. He has developed a personal spell which can easily slice off limbs or cut a man in half.

the prison they locate the source of the Obelisk's power and remove it, either by killing or freeing Agony. Without the misery caused by Agony's powers, the Obelisk's defenses are weakened. Not only will the wards around the valley be dropped – opening a path for the Resistance army – the mighty Koren Obelisk itself will be rendered nothing more than a block of bloody ice.

DEVELOPMENTS

If you have played the whole campaign saga to this point, the heroes likely have many allies and enemies from the previous seven adventures. The following NPCs might be of use to them, or could prove dangerous enemies.

Tiljann. This Seela woman, from the Innenotdar fire forest, may have accompanied the heroes to Seaquen after the second adventure. If she did, she has made herself useful in the war, becoming a wayfarer (CG female seela bard 3/seela paragon 2/sorcerer 1/wayfarer *cirqueliste* 9), and so can replace the role of wayfarer guildmistress Sheena Larkins (N female half-elf bard 6/rogue 1/wayfarer *cirqueliste* 9). Tiljann's presence can remind the heroes of the Song of Forms, and of the Seela legend of the Longwalker, a hero named Etinifi who left to find a way to defeat the fire beast, but never returned.

Katrina. A Ragesian spy, Katrina (N sorcerer 14) may have betrayed the heroes in the previous adventure,

or could have turned on her masters, depending on how the heroes interacted with her. If she is still alive, she can offer knowledge about Kreven.

Simeon and Kiernan. Headmaster Simeon of the Lyceum (LG male middle-aged human diviner 7/lorekeeper 7) is in charge of the Resistance, but as a diviner he is not suited for direct conflict. His place is in Seaquen, with his trusted guard Kiernan (LN male dwarf abjurer 13) beside him. However, these men can provide aid in the form of defensive and divination magic while the heroes are in Seaquen.

King Steppengard, Duke Gallo, or Lord Iz. Depending on how well the heroes did in the fourth adventure, one of these is in charge of the nation of Dassen, which could be one of the Resistance's greatest allies. If Dassen is an ally, its ruler devotes one of his armies to this mission, hoping to use the power of the Scourge to strike down the Ragesian armies who are attacking his lands.

Longinus and Pilus. The two brothers in charge of the Monastery of Two Winds play a small role in this adventure unless the heroes are actively hostile to them. Longinus will offer a few of his monks for the battle, as well as *air walk* or *wind walk* spells to help the heroes bypass the first line of defense at the Frost Needle's Eye.

DREAM MAGIC, NOT PSIONICS

While Agony wields psionic abilities, the psionics rules are not necessary to this adventure. Agony is one of many trillith, dreamborn monsters that play an important role in the campaign saga of *War of the Burning Sky*. While many of their abilities are inspired by psionic powers, they can just as easily be portrayed as unique dream magic. If you are using psionics, psychically sensitive characters will recognize Agony as a psychic being at a moment's glance and will probably recognize the power filling the Halls of Pain as a psionic effect. However, we present his powers as spell-like and supernatural abilities for ease of play.

Pilus also plays a role in this adventure, and his involvement foreshadows what the heroes will have to face in adventure eleven, *Under the Eye of the Tempest*. Pilus has created a massive living airship named *The Tempest*, and he has allied with Khagan Onamdammín, ruler of the nation of Ostalin. Pilus is not ready to start destroying everything in his path yet, but he has spies too, and he realizes the danger posed by the Scourge. He will offer his airship's powerful weapons to clear the way for the heroes.

Shaloshá and the Shahalesti Elves. The daughter of the ruler of the elves, Shaloshá (CG female elf commander 1/wizard 6/eldritch knight 7) can get soldiers to aid the main assault, and might accompany the heroes if she has a particularly close bond with any of them. If you are ending the campaign saga with this adventure, for closure's sake it is best to also include Lord Shaaladel (N middle-aged male elf fighter 4/commander 16), who will lead his forces himself.

Drakus Coaltongue. If the heroes retrieved Emperor Coaltongue (LN male venerable immortal half-orc fighter 4/commander 20) and restored him to life, the former ruler of Ragesia wants to be involved in toppling Leska, but most of the heroes' allies were not particularly fond of Coaltongue before he was assassinated. Not wanting to be imprisoned or killed again, Coaltongue is willing to play a minor role for now, offering to contact various military leaders from Ragesia to convince them to turn against Leska. His plan is to declare a formal successor, who will rule Ragesia, but not the outlying lands that used to be independent countries.

Either way, Coaltongue will have little to do with this adventure unless the heroes want to trust him in battle. After all, he is a high-level warrior, and immortal to boot. The forces at the Scourge fortress are all loyal to Leska, but the sight of their old emperor might break their morale.

Other Allies. Even if the heroes have failed at just about everything, Seaquen still has an alliance with the nation of Sindaire, whose legions are the backbone of the conventional forces for this mission.

As for other allies, we suggest you come up with other elements of the Scourge's defense that require

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*.

their attention, rather than have them accompany the heroes. While their allies open a path for them and keep the army occupied, the heroes' focus is the Koren Obelisk. For example, if the heroes have the aid of the drow assassins from the previous adventure, those two might sneak into the Frost Needle's Eye and take out some initial defenders.

Also, remember that despite having a *teleportation circle* to get them to the edge of the Scourge's valley, the heroes's allies still need to get to the same place so they can teleport together. There is a certain paucity of spellcasters who can even cast *teleportation circle*.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

If the heroes failed at the end of the last adventure, their enemies claimed the Torch for themselves, and may have taken the heroes as prisoners. Bound by powerful charms and wards to prevent them from using magic, captured heroes were taken to the Scourge prison, interrogated by Kreven, and tossed into the gulag like wood fuel into a furnace.

In this course of events, the heroes must find their way out of the prison, re-equip themselves, and fight their way out of the prison, destroying the Koren Obelisk on the way out. You may have various allies come to their aid, since even without the Torch, the Resistance could find a way to open a *teleportation circle* and attack. You can also make the Torch a component of the Obelisk, so that the heroes can retrieve it when they defeat Kreven.

ACT ONE: A HANGING SWORD

In this act, Seaquen is attacked by the power of the Koren Obelisk, and the heroes help the Resistance plan its assault on the Scourge fortress.

The stat blocks for creatures in this act, as well as later acts, are either located in the core rules, or in Appendix One.

THE SECOND WAR COUNCIL

The heroes have recovered the Torch of the Burning Sky, and while the Resistance wants to begin to liberate lands overrun by the Ragesians, a more pressing matter hangs over the leadership. Months have passed since the heroes brought a case of coded plans to Seaquen, and the code has finally been cracked, just as the heroes return from the Temple of Echoed Souls with clues of a looming threat.

The heroes are called back to Seaquen to report, and though Simeon wants to speak to the heroes in relative privacy at first, it does not take long before their return is noticed. Throughout the city rumors are buzzing with their return that the tide is about to turn, and that they are about to bring the fight to Ragesia.

Let the heroes have an initial discussion with Simeon and various trusted allies, discussing what they have learned and briefly vetting plans for the near future. Simeon explains that he has finally managed to decipher the coded documents the heroes brought many months ago – he briefly looks wistful at the memory – and says that the news is not good. The Ragesians have been working on a superweapon for more than a year now, code-named the Scourge, and combined with the clues the heroes bring from the temple, it seems that it won't be long before this weapon is turned against them.

While Simeon would like to maintain secrecy and strike with a surprise attack, to destroy the Scourge superweapon he knows they'll need a large force. He'll set his most trusted guards to protecting the heroes, and within a few days they should have the necessary precautions in place to have an honest to god war council. The idea seems to excite Simeon.

Mission Planning (EL 15)

Soon enough, it is time for the heroes to go to the council of war. When the heroes arrive in Simeon's conference room at the Lyceum academy, they find dozens of major players in the war gathered. Their many allies or representatives thereof are present, along with overwhelming amounts of security, intended to keep anyone from trying to steal the Torch away.

By a large table at one end of the room are Headmaster Simeon, Kiernan, and the elderly dwarf commander Xavious Foebane. At nearby tables sit representatives of Dassen (most likely Duke Gallo), Sindaire (most likely Ambassador Numhaut), and the wayfarers (probably Guildmistress Larkins), with seats reserved for the heroes. All others who are in attendance sit on step seating at the edge of the room, with guards – swordsmen and sorcerers – watching every entrance. Exactly who is present depends heavily on the heroes' progress so far.

The heroes should notice that two of the representatives from Ostalin are dressed like monks from the Monastery of Two Winds.

Everyone tries to call out to the heroes and to see the Torch, but Simeon has warned them that his nerves are raw right now, and that anyone accosting the heroes will be treated as an enemy and attacked without question. Give the heroes a chance to meet with whoever most interests them, but the meeting is starting soon, so they should take their seats.

Most everyone else is being quiet, so you might want to encourage the heroes to keep their voices low until it comes time to speak up. However, players seldom like to be spectators, so don't worry if they interrupt. It just means they want to be involved.

Simeon calls the meeting to order, and Kiernan places his black stone scepter on the table, which you know will keep the nearby area safe from attack. Simeon nods thanks to Kiernan, then speaks.

"Alright, friends," Simeon says, "let's get to business. You all should have been briefed about the situation. We have the Torch in our possession,

though it appears that it's not quite as strong as it was when it belonged to Coaltongue. I know you all want us to start attacking the Rags in your neck of the woods, but we have a more urgent matter."

He looks at you.

"The papers you brought us make several references to Kreven, the biggest dog on Leska's leash. He is the head of the inquisitors now that she has become emperor. It seems the reason we have not seen much of him recently is that Leska placed him in charge of a new project. The chief inquisitor's mastery of magic is now providing a sort of focus to a magical device the Ragesians have worked up. They referred to it by the code name of 'The Scourge.' Kiernan can give you more details."

The dwarf steps up, and when he speaks his tone is one of measured concern.

"The papers make numerous references to a subterranean prison in an icy wasteland near a landmark called the Frost Needle's Eye. The eye is the entrance to a steep-walled valley in northern Ragesia. We believe this prison is where all of the mages captured by the Ragesians have been taken for the past several months, and the Scourge is built over that prison, somehow drawing their power into an eldritch device.

"This sword Ragesia has hanging over our heads is more formally called the Koren Obelisk. It is a pillar of ice, designed to focus and empower magic. A spellcaster who knows the secrets of its use could send a spell through its icy heart to emerge practically anywhere, and to affect many more targets than normal. If Leska could simply snuff the life from the heads of state in every city she dislikes...well, the war ends, doesn't it? We lose.

"Being as our streets do not yet run red with blood, clearly the Scourge has not been finished yet. Evidence points to it being nearly done, and we expect they have entered the fine-tuning phase of their work. Traditional divinations are useless, because the entire facility where it is housed is warded against such magic, but through

unorthodox channels we have learned that Kreven has been summoning devils and sending them on far-ranging missions to test the Obelisk's ability to target and strike from afar. We suspect we have a month at the absolute most."

Kiernan steps back, and Simeon nods thanks, then gestures for the other dwarf, Xavious Foebane, to speak. The man stands, and gestures to the center of the room. An aide standing nearby chants a spell, conjuring an illusion of a vast valley and surrounding terrain.

"This is the Scourge fortress's valley," Xavious says, "at least as it looked a few years ago. We've modified it with information from the stolen plans and knowledge gleaned from soldiers abducted outside the scourge valley. The place is not huge, just four miles across, but has cliff walls too steep to bring an army through, and only one avenue of approach, through the Frost Needle's Eye, which has been fortified. An ice sheet beneath that fortress is used to scry on the entire valley, detecting those who breach its borders. It seems that the divination shield does not hinder the Ragesians' own magic, and that there are many other wards.

"The Scourge fortress has its own self-sufficient army of elite soldiers. Many are inquisitors. Apparently the inner lands are interwoven with magic fields that strike down those who are not loyal to Ragesia. Likewise, direct teleportation into the valley simply fails.

"These defenses are mighty, but not impregnable. As works of magic, they can be dispelled, suppressed, and claimed as our own.

"In the center of the valley is a bunker, with the prison dug deep into stone beneath it. The Obelisk is inside this bunker, no doubt heavily guarded. Even if we could get an army into the valley, overwhelming forces win us nothing against such a small target. So we have a different approach.

"The Torch will not let us teleport an entire army in one swoop, though if we use it in conjunction with the power of the wayfarers, we will be able to create a temporary teleportation circle,

and those passing through it will be protected from the heat of the Burning Sky. With proper preparation, we can easily get a force of several thousand into position outside the valley, though we have no illusions about avoiding detection by the Ragesians. Indeed, that is part of the plan.

"The army will march against the Frost Needle's Eye and claim the scrying sheet, which will blind the Ragesians. We hope to draw out the bulk of those forces guarding the inner bunker, while a strike force sneaks into the valley and attacks the bunker directly."

Xavious looks to you.

"If our ruse works, you should be able to enter the prison practically unchallenged and destroy their machine. Who will you be bringing with you?"

At this point, Xavious turns to the heroes and addresses their leader by name. He asks who they want to bring along with them, stressing that the heroes will need to make an appearance at the initial attack on the Eye. The Ragesians know about them now, and will be suspicious if they are not present. Once the scrying sheet is disabled, they'll be able to slip away and make for the main fortress.

Before a full discussion of war plans can start, however, the two monks from the Monastery of Two Winds stand and interrupt, their voices magically amplified so that everyone turns to pay attention.

"Please pardon our interruption," says a white robed monk. "We have information that you are lacking, that should influence your plans. If you'll permit us to deliver a message from our master?"

Some in the council look nervous, but none protest. After a moment, the black-robed monk pulls out an expressionless black mask and holds it in the air. He releases it, and the mask hovers, slowly taking on a vaguely human countenance, resembling the master of the east wind, Pilus.

"You have done a very good job. I'd applaud if my hands were there. However, you have not seen the current defenses of the fortress. I don't know if the rumors have spread, but I have been

engaged in the crafting of a flying ship. Where your divinations have failed, my more 'traditional' eye has been watching this fortress from high overhead. Strange how rarely Ragesians tend to look up.

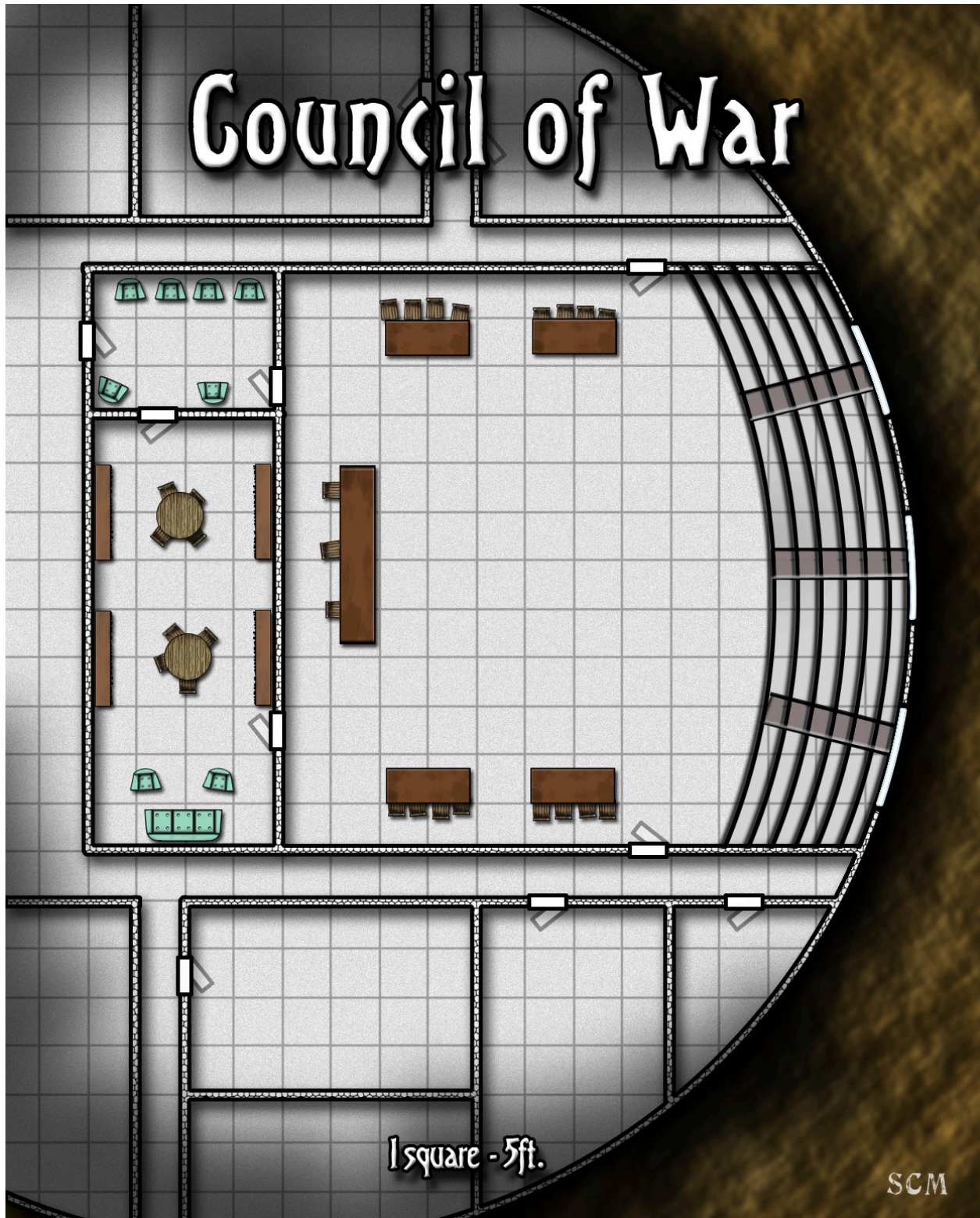
"The Ragesians have already threatened the monastery my brother and I have strived to make a place of enlightenment, so we wish to offer our aid, if you'll have us. A score of our students have volunteered for your fight, and I personally offer to remain overhead during the battle. Alas, my airship has no weapons that would be of use in this mission, but I am confident that my timely reconnaissance, which can help you prepare for the Ragesian forces, will be a valuable aid.

"I offer this with no terms, merely that you bear me good will in this war's aftermath."

This should set off another round of discussion. Pilus is actively connected to the mask, and so he can contribute to the conversation. If the heroes view him as a threat, he responds to any unfriendliness without taking offense, acknowledging that he understands their hesitancy, but that cooperation now is the best way to avoid distrust later.

If pressed about his airship, he at first avoids the question, saying his alliance with Khagan Onamdamin requires a certain amount of discretion, but if the heroes insist, he will admit that his ship, *The Tempest*, is quite large, and it carries a crew of Ostalin soldiers, but that Onamdamin is not willing to commit them to this battle, since his pride requires he direct any war engagement that his armies are involved in. Additionally, Pilus knows that the valley is warded with a *forbiddance* spell, the power of which would slay any men he sent down. And if the heroes mention it, Pilus admits that indeed, his ship is a living creature, which simply renders it too vulnerable to the *forbiddance*.

If the heroes accept Pilus's offer (and the rest of the council is at least grudgingly in favor of it), he asks them to keep the mask with them, and to pull it out whenever they wish to speak with him, though he politely requests they not bother him with frivolous concerns.



Give the heroes a chance to discuss their plans for a while, perhaps butting heads with other members of the Resistance who don't want to commit troops to a mission that might end with everyone stranded hundreds of miles inside enemy lines if the heroes take the Torch with them. At a dramatic juncture, or when things start to lull, a sudden ice storm strikes.

A thunderous noise fills the air. Screams fill the streets and the sound of breaking glass reigns above them, as a hail of ice strikes the entire city at once, for a period of seconds that seems to last a lifetime. Simultaneously, everyone in the room aside from the heroes and whoever is sitting with them (and anyone with more than 150 hit points) is stunned. A strange, mournful song fills the air for a moment, then fades, its tune reminiscent of the Song of Forms.

Frost forms its latticework over the windows and floor with unnatural suddenness, and then the windows and doors burst open. Then the two blizzard elementals attack.

The Attack: Kreven has been using the Koren Obelisk to watch the heroes and wait for an opportunity to attack and claim the Torch. Having lost sight of the meeting when Kiernan activated his *rod of security*, Kreven drew upon the power of the Obelisk to send an *ice storm* upon Seaquen, strike the conference chamber and the entire rest of the tower with an advanced *power word stun*, and summon a group of powerful blizzard elementals.

The heroes' seats were protected by a variant of *magic circle against evil* cast by Kiernan, who had the foresight that someone might try to charm them. Kiernan, Simeon, and Xavious are also protected, and can aid in the coming fight. The floating mask of Pilus watches the fight, commenting on the weaknesses of the elementals in an attempt to help the fight from afar.

Blizzard elemental (2, CR 13). 204 hp.

There are many others in the council chamber, all of them endangered by the elementals. The elementals have been ordered to attack the heroes, but they don't mind targeting their attacks to take

WITHOUT PILUS

If the heroes refuse Pilus's help, the aeromancer will nevertheless keep an eye on the assault, since he knows that his plan will be jeopardized if the Obelisk is not destroyed. Really the heroes' acceptance has no effect on his plans, except that he will not be actively speaking with them. Pilus's actions are detailed in Act Two.

out a few bystanders as well. If the heroes respond quickly, they can avoid disastrous losses among their allies.

Terrain: Step seating lies along the eastern edge of the room, with windows 20-ft. high windows rising up behind the seats. The rooms to the west are a waiting room and a private meeting chamber, which could serve as fall-back locations, since the elementals cannot easily enter them. Outside the chamber, the two hallways lead to classrooms and foyers, where no help is to be had. All of the people who could help are stunned for at least 4 rounds.

Aftermath: When the elementals are defeated, the heroes can check on survivors. Outside the windows they can see a swath of the city, nearly a quarter mile across, is covered in ice, and many buildings are damaged from hail. Most who were out in the streets have been killed.

General Xavious walks to the window and looks out on the devastation.

"We will not suffer this wound quietly," he growls, vehement. "The Scourge has just lived up to its name, and proven that we cannot afford to let this Obelisk reach its full power.

"We can be ready within days. Should the Ragesians drive us off, we'll bring in another thousand troops the next day, and another thousand, until the dogs of Leska face every man, woman and child of our alliance. We shall break this hanging sword."

After this pronouncement, Xavious heads out to survey the streets for wounded, but asks the

heroes to meet him back at the Lyceum academy that evening. Within a few days the armies of the Resistance will be in position for a major strike, and Xavious wants the heroes to be clear on what their role in all this is.

It's Okay, Really

Things are not as bad as the heroes may believe at this point. This little stunt pushed the limits of the Koren Obelisk, and took Kreven days to prepare. He does not understand the workings of this device as Leska does; he is merely the builder, not the architect, and does not fully comprehend its arcane design. Of course, if the heroes dally, Kreven can continue to attack every few days.

Kreven can still use the Obelisk with limited prep time, but he needs a focus. To this end, he has summoned an ice devil named Velkiss to be the target of his magic. When the heroes assault the fortress, it will be through Velkiss that they first face the power of the high inquisitor.

A FRIENDLY GAME

If any of the heroes have taken an interest in the game Conquest, Xavious asks to play one great game with them before the mission. This game will represent the entire war as Xavious currently understands it. He will represent Ragesia, and the heroes will represent the Resistance.

Xavious has a +19 bonus to his Knowledge (history) check, and has enough ranks in other skills to gain a +8 synergy bonus for later rounds. The sheer size of Ragesia's armies grants him an additional bonus of +12 to his check, but he also gains a bonus or penalty depending on what victories the heroes have achieved. For each of the following missions the heroes have accomplished, the Ragesian side begins with one Loss.

- Saved Dassen from the Ragesian invasion in adventure four, *The Mad King's Banquet*.
- Gained the friendship of Khagan Onamdamin of Ostalin in adventure five, *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds*.
- Arranged an alliance with the monastery master Pilus.

CONQUEST

Any number of players can participate in a game of Conquest. The rules of the actual game are complicated and detailed, but you can represent it in game with the following simplified version.

Each round, players make opposed Knowledge (history) checks, representing their familiarity with historical military tactics. The player with the smallest force has no special bonus, but if your force is twice as large you gain a +2 bonus. If four times as large, the bonus is +4, with an extra +2 for each doubling thereafter.

If the game goes beyond two rounds, for each round thereafter you have the ability to bolster your forces with your economy, politics, and propaganda. This grants you a +2 synergy bonus for each of the following skills you have 5 or more ranks in: Bluff, Diplomacy, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), and Sense Motive. Likewise, a particularly clever gambit can grant a +2 bonus, at the game master's option.

If your check is highest, you may have one opponent suffer a "Loss," or you can remove one of your own Losses. For every 5 points you win by, you can inflict one additional Loss, either to the same foe or to another one, or you can remove one of your own Losses. For each Loss a player has, he takes a -2 penalty on his Knowledge (history) checks. Once a player's total modifier is 20 points or more below the next lowest player, that player loses. The last player remaining is the victor, though players can choose to end the game in a draw.

A player can choose to use the Aid Another action, representing an alliance, though, as in reality, an alliance provides no guarantee that your "ally" will not simply use his position to harm you, inflicting a Loss on you. A player can also choose to attack recklessly, gaining a +4 bonus on his check, but automatically taking a Loss at the end of the round.

- Forged an alliance with General Magdus and the survivors of the First Ragesian Army in adventure six, *Tears of the Burning Sky*.
- Retrieved the Torch in adventure seven, *The Trial of Echoed Souls*.
- Repaired the Torch with the power of the Temple.
- Arranged an alliance with the Shahalesti elves. Counts as two victories.
- Sack key Ragesian cities such as Muldera, Palesi, Vemerre, and Yroma.
- Foment rebellion in the local populaces of the old nations of Chathus, Kequalak, or Latia.
- Sack Ragos, the capital of Ragesia. Requires two victories.
- Achieve any of the missions from the first list the heroes have not yet accomplished.

You can simply run the game as a battle of numbers, but each victory or loss represents a tangible part of the Resistance's strategy, and so you can tie the results of each round of the game with one or more of the following missions.

- Destroy the Koren Obelisk.
- Drive the Second Ragesian Army out of Gate Pass.
- Drive the Third Army from Dassen's border.
- Drive the Fourth Army out of Shahalesti lands.
- Destroy one of the three surviving Ragesian armies. Requires two victories.

Each Loss Ragesia inflicts represents undoing one of the heroes' accomplishments, and then later sacking the capitals of Dassen, Ostalin, and Shahalesti, turning those nations' armies to their own side, and then finally obliterating Seaquen.

Of course, there are factors influencing the war that are not represented in this simulation, but this game can serve as a good way to keep clear in the players' minds the scope of the war.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes defeat General Xavious in this game, reward them for a CR 16 encounter. Even if they lose, reward them for a CR 14 encounter for playing.

ACT TWO: THE NEEDLE'S EYE

In this act, the heroes disable the watchpost at the Frost Needle's Eye and cross the icy wasteland to the Scourge fortress.

This location bears its name because of two separate landforms. First is the Needle, a mile-long arrow-straight pass that lead through the mountains to the Scourge valley. Second is the Eye, a large subterranean ice sheet that old shamans used for scrying, located at the end of the mountain pass.

THE GREAT MISSION

With great wariness and little fanfare, the forces of the Resistance gather for this mission. Hopefully one of the heroes will shout an inspiring speech to the soldiers, while mages and priests lend their power to protect the soldiers. Simeon and Kiernan can provide any spells the heroes have asked for, within reason, though they make sure to cast *fly* on each hero, and someone will have provided *heroes' feast*.

The heroes can requisition magic items of up to 20,000 gp each; Simeon recommends substantial amounts of magical healing, since once they go in, they might not have a chance to withdraw. The heroes will have to accomplish their mission in one day, so scrolls will be very useful to spellcasters, and everyone should stock up even on basic supplies like spare arrows. The Ragesians are of course renowned for their antimagic capabilities, so Simeon suggests not overloading on too many "buffing" spells before the first strike.

The mission is set to begin at midnight. When the heroes are ready, someone, likely Wayfarer Guildmistress Larkins, casts *teleportation circle*, targeting a small sheltered valley a half mile from the entrance of the Frost Needle's Eye mountain pass. The hero with the Torch must pass through first, after which anyone else traveling through the portal will be protected from the flames of the Burning Sky.

The heroes arrive in a desolate, frigid tundra, with no one in sight. Just over a low hill to the north is the supply road that leads to the Frost Needle's Eye. Once the heroes give the all clear signal, soldiers begin streaming through, four per round, forming ranks and giving space for the continual flow of troops. Scouts

GLOSSING OVER THE MINUTIAE

Most likely the heroes will be leading a coalition force from many different regions, so the heroes would need to teleport to their different allies and use the Torch with the aid of a wayfarer to create an initial *teleportation circle* just to get everyone to the same place, which then can be the final staging ground. However, if you prefer the first activation of the Torch to be more dramatic, you can simply gloss over this, or stretch credulity a bit and have the heroes' allies already have marched into position. Do whatever you feel your players would most appreciate.

quickly get their bearings and determine they have arrived on location, a half-mile from the mountain pass entrance to the Scourge valley.

Depending on who their allies are, the heroes will have anywhere from three thousand to ten thousand troops, most of them between 4th and 8th level. Most are veteran or elite foot soldiers, with a few Dasseni warmages and a handful of Sindairese druids. The mages who have come along are stocked with dozens of scrolls for different contingencies, and various called outsiders bolster the ranks. In a war with armies numbering in the hundreds of thousands, it is ultimately a small force, but these are the best soldiers the Resistance can offer, and since a teleportation circle lasts less than three hours anyway, getting any more here is impractical.

Mission Stages

Unless the heroes have come up with an alternate plan, Xavious leads the Resistance forces with the following goals.

Stage One: The heroes fly over the mountain wall to attack the Eye while more conventional forces assault the Needle to keep the forces there from pincering the heroes. This, they hope, will draw out the Ragesian garrison at the main fortress in the valley's center.

Up to three heroes can be linked with Xavious and Simeon via a *telepathic bond* spell, though because the Obelisk blocks incoming divination (but not outgoing), Simeon will not be able to hear the heroes' thoughts. Xavious stays at the edge of the divination shield, and so by moving back and forth can relay messages. The spell will last two hours and twenty minutes.

Stage Two: Once the heroes defeat the defenders at the Eye, they will be able to evade the oncoming Ragesian forces and cross the valley to the fortress when it is relatively undefended. Pilus and his airship will provide guidance to make sure the heroes keep safely out of sight from the Ragesians. Xavious hopes to capture some parts of the defenses in the Needle, so the Resistance forces can hole up and keep the Ragesians occupied for a long while.

During this leg of the mission, the heroes will be able to communicate with Pilus via the black mask that was brought to the council meeting. If the heroes refused his help, Pilus keeps an eye open anyway, and can help out in a pinch, sending an elder air elemental to their aid.

Stage Three: The heroes enter the fortress, find the Koren Obelisk, and destroy it, as well as anyone who looks like they would know how to repair it. If possible, Xavious hopes the heroes will be able to use the Obelisk at least once to destroy the Ragesians here, but he imagines the eldritch machine won't be easy to use.

Resistance forces will hold the pass, and when the heroes are done they're to fly to the rear of the Resistance forces, and create a new *teleportation circle* back home. The allied forces will then withdraw. It's not important to kill all the Ragesians, but if Xavious loses touch with the heroes for more than ten minutes, he'll order a full assault in an attempt to force his way into the valley.

Also, the prison should be located directly below the fortress, so if they have the time, the heroes could do worse than to rescue a few prisoners, though it will likely be logistically infeasible to get out all of them. If the heroes

can think of an effective way, they should be rewarded for their ingenuity.

Xavious wants the heroes to keep the Torch. He thinks his soldiers will fight better if they know they're not going home without a victory. The old dwarf commander is certain that a failure in this mission will spell doom for the Resistance, so retreat is not an option.

The Scourge Valley

The Scourge valley is four miles across, with the Obelisk located in a fortress in its center. The Koren Obelisk wards the entire valley against incoming divinations, but inside the valley divination magic works normally.

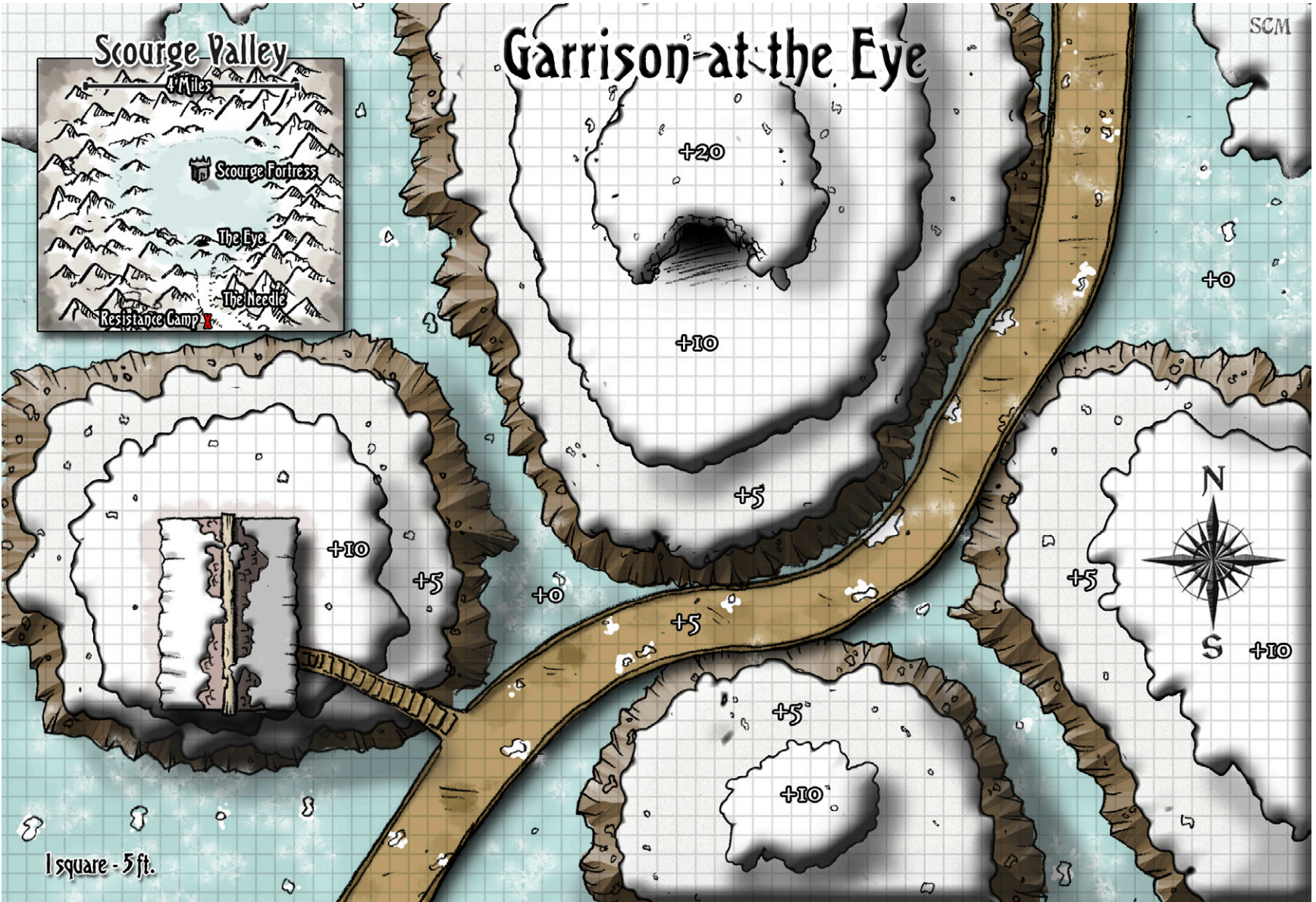
Unless otherwise noted, all parts of the valley are blanketed in a *forbiddance* effect, set to harm non-Lawful Evil creatures (6d6 damage to LG, LN, NE, or CE creatures; 12d6 to NG, CG, N, and CN creatures; Will DC 20 half; caster level 11th), and blocking all dimensional travel. This ward extends a hundred feet into the air. Individual 60-ft. cubes can be dispelled, but they are only suppressed for ten minutes before coming back into effect.

The Needle is sixty feet wide, defended by a force of three hundred soldiers and inquisitors (all Lawful Evil), generally divided into groups of eight in dozens of different bunkers and pillboxes. Wards allow the inquisitors to activate *walls of fire* at various intervals along the pass, and various *symbol* spells face toward incoming forces. Four cunningly crafted greater stone golems hide near the mouth of the pass, appearing at first to be nothing but massive boulders poking out of the ice. They are the first line of defense against an overland assault. Behind them numerous other lines of defense. The Resistance forces have quite a fight waiting for them.

A road crosses the two mile distance from the Needle to the fortress, wide enough for a dozen men to march abreast.

FROST NEEDLE'S EYE

The heroes will be detected when they cross over the mountains into the Scourge valley, so all enemies will be ready for a fight. If you wish to run the full



battle for control of the Needle, we suggest you use the *Grim Tales* mass combat system, published by Bad Axe Games. This scene, however, focuses on the heroes' actions in taking the Eye.

Surface Defenses (EL 16)

The Eye has ground forces patrolling its exterior, and several *unhallow* spells (caster level 13th) cover an 80-ft. radius centered on the entrance to the subterranean tunnel. These *unhallows* are tied to *invisibility purge*. The entrance to the tunnel is sealed with a *sonic wall of fire* (caster level 18th), and 30 ft. past the roaring wall is a permanent *symbol of stunning* (caster level 13th). Trying to rush past the garrison will have very bad consequences for the heroes.

A small stone barracks west of the tunnel entrance normally lets troops warm themselves and sleep in cramped quarters, but all of the warriors are on guard now. The main road to the Scourge Fortress runs past the snowy hills here, crossing over an ancient frozen lake.

The defense of the exterior is led by Garivus, a warlike inquisitor who commands from the top of a fiendish war mammoth. He controls the mammoth, while archers mounted in a howdah on its back provide ranged fire support. He has used a scroll of *fly* on the mammoth, and has cast many enhancements on himself by the time the heroes arrive.

Meanwhile, dozens of warriors form a defensive ring 80-ft. in diameter, while closer to the mouth of the tunnel a group of elite archers watch the skies, with three inquisitors spread out for support. The Ragesians anticipate an aerial attack, so two wyvern knights patrol the air in lazy circles. They and their mounts have received *see invisibility*.

Mammoth Unit

Fiendish War Mammoth (CR 12). 230 hp. *Fly* (fly 60 good).

Master Ragesian Archers (3, CR 11). 85 hp.

Garivus, Master Ragesian Inquisitor (CR 13). 88 hp.

Defensive Ring

Standard Ragesian Soldiers (40, CR 4). 35 hp.

Aerial Defense

Elite Ragesian Archers (4, CR 8). 65 hp.

Standard Ragesian Inquisitors (3, CR 7). 49 hp.

Wyvern Patrol

Wyvern Knights (2, CR 6). 50 hp. *See invisibility*.

Wyverns (2, CR 6). 59 hp, MM. *See invisibility*.

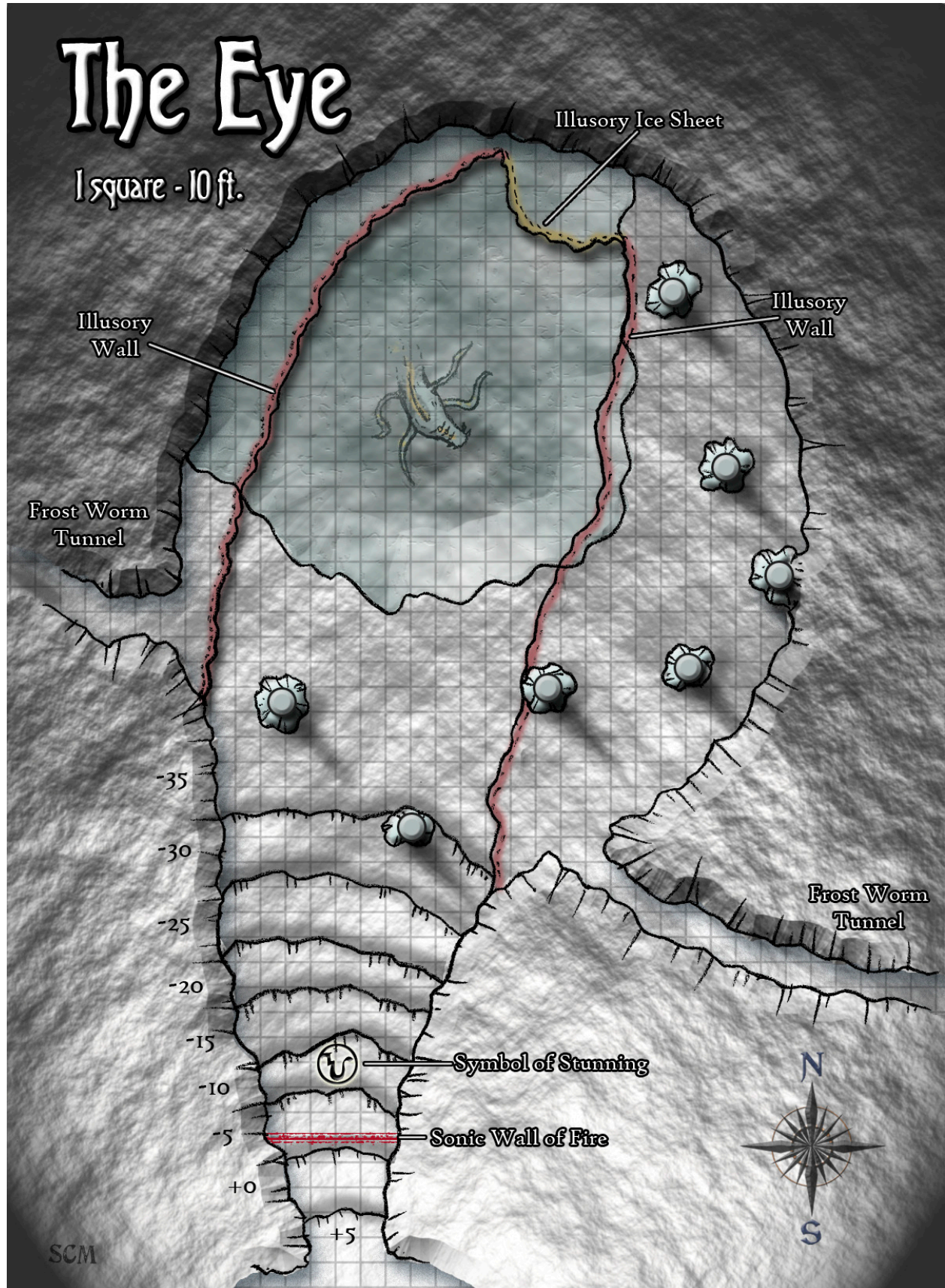
Tactics: The defensive ring and wyvern knights are basically fodder, but any that survive the heroes' initial attack will swarm whatever enemies they can reach. Garivus prefers to keep his mammoth on the ground so it can trample, but if he is unable to dispel the heroes' *fly* spells, he'll take to the air himself. The other inquisitors generally stay on the defensive, but will try to dispel particularly frustrating magic, while their archer allies concentrate fire on isolated heroes. The wyverns would love to grab a flying foe and hurl him down into the tunnel to the Eye, to be hit by the *sonic wall of fire*.

Terrain: The land is snowy or rocky. Snowy grounds counts as difficult terrain. The Ragesians poured water into the mouth of the tunnel to the Eye, which turned to ice, making the slope slippery (Balance DC 15). Those who slip while descending slide 30 ft. per round straight through the *sonic wall of fire* and will be blasted by the *symbol of stunning*. A narrow walking path with handholds cut into the ice goes along each side of the tunnel, which counts as difficult terrain unless one succeeds a Climb or Balance check (DC 15).

Development and Aftermath: The defenders within the Eye do not emerge, nor do those in the Needle come to help. Within moments of the heroes' attack, however, Kreven will be notified of their presence, and the bulk of the forces at the fortress will begin to march within ten minutes. Thirty minutes later they will reach the Eye, so the heroes have at most forty minutes to regroup, head into the Eye, and get out before they are overwhelmed by thousands of Ragesians.

Blinding the Eye (EL 19)

The Eye is a huge sheet of ice, beneath which lives an ancient aboleth that has been trapped here since before the last ice age. The aboleth considers



the Eye his domain, but proudly serves the tyranny of Leska. He defends his lair with two dominated *frost worms*, and the Ragesians have left two Nessian warhounds as bodyguards, equipped with collars that allow them to communicate telepathically as if they were true devils. (These collars do not work for non-infernal creatures.)

When the heroes cross the mountains, Kreven sends his wife Koren to shore up the defense of the Eye. Though the area is warded with *forbiddance*, her wayfarer training lets her bypass the ward after one or two tries. With her she brings her personal bodyguard Magnus Fightmaster, two twisted humanoid creatures called nullifiers, and the ice devil Velkiss, who is Kreven's personal servant in this battle.

Frost Worm (2, CR 12). 147 hp, MM.

Lurker in the Eye, aboleth savant (CR 13). 276 hp.

Nessian warhounds (2, CR 9). 114 hp, MM.

Nullifiers (2, CR 10). 133 hp.

Koren (CR 16). 91 hp.

Magnus Fightmaster, claw of Leska (CR 14). 105 hp.

Velkiss, Ice Devil (CR 16). 147 hp, MM. See below for details.

Terrain: The cave is fairly nondescript except for the massive ice sheet in its center (Balance DC 12). This ice sheet is not frozen water, but rather the frozen slime of the aboleth savant, put down layer after layer over the centuries. Due to this unique attachment to the ice, the savant can swim through the ice as easily as he could normal water, and can attack out of the ice freely. The ice sheet is only two feet thick, beneath which is normal, albeit frigid, water. If the savant has attacked with its tentacles in the past round, the tentacles can be attacked by creatures above the surface, similar to sundering the heads of a hydra. A sunder attempt that does 19 points of damage severs a tentacle (as well as doing normal damage to the aboleth).

The ice sheet provides total cover from most attacks, but strangely does not block line of effect for the purpose of targeting spells (spells with physical effects, such as fireball, must first bypass the ice as would a normal physical attack). The ice has

NULLIFIERS

The Ragesians went to great effort to ensure that their prisoners would live long enough to power the Scourge, even to the point of *hallowing* the entire prison complex so that none who died in the oppressive despair would rise as undead. But despair had a few tricks up its sleeve.

A rare few of the mages interred in the dungeon responded to the pain of Agony's power by turning necromantic magic upon themselves, shutting off their own emotions and nerves. As the Halls of Pain augmented this magic, their bodies twisted and mutated, until they succeeded in blotting out the pain of their sentience. These twisted creatures, which the Ragesians call nullifiers, have been removed from the Halls (they blocked up the flow of the agony) and released into the wild around the fortress, though Koren kept a few as pets. These two are currently dominated by Koren.

hardness 0, and 3 hit points per inch for any given 5-ft. square; it takes double damage from fire. A square that has taken 72 points of damage is considered too damaged to provide total cover, but the debris of the ice still provides normal cover.

Any creature passing over the ice sheet sees images of events around the valley – particularly the battle going on right now for control of the Needle – shining up from the depths, which is enough to cause vertigo in most people (Will DC 15 each round or the creature is sickened for 1 round).

Preparation: Before the heroes arrive, the aboleth savant uses *mirage arcana* to make the room look more nondescript, and a *programmed image* to lure the heroes to a perilous spot. The first illusion hides the sides of the room where Koren and the rest of the Ragesian forces wait, as well the two frost worm tunnels near the entrance, plus the ice sheet itself, replacing everything beyond the red dashed line with relatively mundane snow and ice walls and floor, and hiding the main ice sheet under illusory snow.

The second illusion creates the appearance of a small ice sheet in the area of the map marked with black dashed lines, and causes it to glow. Finally, the savant uses *veil* to conceal the frost worms as giant flaming serpents.

When the heroes enter the chamber, Velkiss, who is hidden behind the illusory wall of the *mirage arcana*, has Kreven cast his *project image* spell.

The figure of a frail old man appears in the glow above the ice sheet at the far end of this cave, and you briefly hear echoes of a fey song. A rich winter cloak drapes across the man's shoulders, but beneath it his body is so withered that the bear skull he wears as a mask could easily be his true face. He holds up a hand to forestall immediate attack.

"You've done very well," he says, his voice refined and dismissive, "but your Resistance is foolish if it believes it can triumph over the might of the Ragesian Empire. I could easily collapse this cavern upon you, yet I would rather not destroy such a valuable scrying Eye. I shall not offer you an alliance, nor attempt to turn you to our side. I simply ask you abandon your hope that you might succeed.

"This world is vast place. Go where you wish, and when Empress Leska has crushed those who have stood against her, I will tell her of your wisdom. She respects the intelligent – those who do not let emotion sway their decisions. If you flee now, she will know you are no threat, and you may keep your lives.

"Stay, and I will have no choice but to ensure your perpetual agony."

If the heroes do not look ready to leave, Kreven chuckles and says, "Excellent. I much prefer to torment you, anyway. Velkiss, destroy them."

At this point, Velkiss and the frost worms emerge from their hiding spots, seeming to erupt from the ice wall. One frost worm trills for one round as the other attacks. Velkiss attacks as well, but there is a roleplaying component nested nested inside this combat encounter, and so this somewhat

complicated set-up receives its own section below.

Tactics: The aboleth savant's first action is to drop the *mirage arcana* for a dramatic reveal of the ice sheet, after which it uses *enslave* round after round until it succeeds. Once it has a minion, it begins attacking through the ice.

Koren has cast *silence* on an ice pillar to protect herself and the rest of the Ragesians against the trill, but she'll send the nullifiers charging in behind Velkiss. If none of the heroes are stunned by the trill, Koren orders the rest of the group to attack, seeing no reason to hold back their full power.

The savant directs the frost worms to use their breath weapons early, before the Ragesians are close enough to be hit in the crossfire. The nullifiers, warhounds, and Magnus attack the heroes fairly directly. Koren, however, stays mobile, usually hiding behind ice pillars and casting spells in the middle of her movement. She casts *haste* on her allies, then tries to disable or disrupt the heroes with emotion-affecting magic.

Kreven's projected image will lay a *mind fog* amid the heroes, then use *mass suggestion* (perhaps to get the heroes to cluster near one of the frost worms when it is near death so the explosion will catch them all) and sonic empowered *chain lightning*. Each round he also casts *severing slash* as a swift action, and intermittently speaks to someone located in the Obelisk chamber, giving them directions like, "Channel negative energy into the second chime," or "Recurse the flow of daons, and quickly!"

When either Koren or Magnus are heavily injured, Koren will move to her bodyguard, grab him, and then teleport back to the Scourge Fortress (which requires her to roll 1d20+20 against DC 22 to overcome the *forbiddance*). Before she teleports, she looks to the *projected image* of Kreven and shouts, "My love, get the healers."

Aftermath: All of the foes here fight to the death except Koren, who if she cannot escape will beg for her life, offering to betray her husband, all while discreetly trying to teleport away. If she is charmed or otherwise forced to talk, she knows everything about the Koren Obelisk except for the exact identity of the creatures who power it.

The heroes might wish to use the Eye, but if they damaged the ice to get to the savant, the visions through the scrying sheet are distorted. At best the heroes can simply see things in the valley, and can see that the army is marching. They can also make out its components – roughly two thousand soldiers, scattered inquisitors and other specialists, and a handful of monsters – information in which General Xavious is very much interested.

Velkiss (EL 16)

This encounter likely occurs simultaneously with the Blinding the Eye encounter above, but Velkiss has a bit more freedom to range about, and his encounter is complicated, so we detail it separately here.

When Velkiss sees the heroes, he charges, but simultaneously begins communicating telepathically with the heroes.

Velkiss, Ice Devil (CR 16): 147 hp.

Special: Because Velkiss serves as Kreven's focus for the Koren Obelisk, the ice devil is currently affected by *magic circle against good*, *shield*, *spell turning*, *stoneskin*, and *true seeing*. He has also used *fly* and *unholy aura* on himself. Kreven can cast spells with range Touch or Personal on Velkiss, but to cast any spells with longer ranges, Kreven must first cast *project image*. This allows him to participate in the combat, and gives the heroes an opportunity to see the main villain of the adventure at some point other than just the climax. However, if Velkiss loses line of sight to the projected Kreven, the spell ends. Likewise, if Velkiss dies or is returned to his home plane, Kreven no longer has a focus to target through.

Kreven's presence raises Velkiss's CR by 3, since he effectively has an untouchable 18th-level sorcerer hiding in his body. Kreven's vulnerability to simply having his image dispelled, however, mitigates the effective challenge.

Negotiations: It is not particularly wise, in general, to make a deal with the devil. In this case, however, the party might benefit to try it. Velkiss's contract originally required he permit his body to be used as a focus for the Obelisk's power for a period of

VELKISS'S PRICES

GP	Information
3,000	Entrance. A series of seven hand gestures is required to bypass the <i>forbiddance</i> spell that surrounds the Scourge Fortress. Velkiss will imprint this knowledge in the heroes' minds if they pay up.
4,000	Map. Velkiss knows the layout of the majority of the Scourge Fortress (areas 1 through 16), but not the prison itself. If the heroes pay, he'll give them a clear mental map, but does not mention specific defenders or what each room's purpose is.
6,000	Surrender. If the heroes pay this much, Velkiss agrees to not resist any attempts to magically dismiss or banish him.
6,000	How it Works. For this much, Velkiss explains that the Obelisk has three components. First, it draws its power from the pain of the prisoners, which is regularly renewed by an effect Kreven simply referred to as "Agony." Whenever the Obelisk is used, the pained spirits of the imprisoned sing like an unholy choir. Second, the Obelisk is linked to eight clusters of runes – one for each school of magic – in the same chamber as it, which store and amplify the power of spells, gaining great power and scope at the expense of precision. This is why Kreven cannot simply destroy the Resistance army, because doing so would wipe out most of his own too. If these rune clusters are destroyed, spells of the associated school can no longer benefit from the Obelisk's power. Third, he who controls the Obelisk can target spells to anywhere he can see, and the Obelisk lets you see almost anywhere. Kreven's attack on Seaquen overextended the Obelisk's power, however, so now he can only cast magic on whatever creature he happens to be directly scrying on, or on areas near the fortress. His <i>project image</i> spell lets him cast spells at other targets too, but not with the massive power the Obelisk normally wields.
8,000	Strengths and Tactics. Velkiss knows by now the majority of the spells on Kreven's spell list, as well as who he keeps around him as body guards.
8,000	Reaching the Obelisk. Velkiss can tell the heroes about the final lines of defense for the Obelisk. These include an antimagic room that is a kill zone for archers hiding behind arrow slits, a chamber that can be flooded, and walls of force that are created by the Obelisk.

eighteen days, but when the heroes attacked, Kreven offered to revise the deal. Now Velkiss is allowed to return home when he believes everyone in the heroes' party to be dead, but until that time he must fight them to the best of his ability, and let Kreven use the Obelisk's power against them. Additionally, Velkiss still has standing orders not to knowingly injure any member of the Ragesian army.

As a devil, lawful by nature, Velkiss will follow those orders to the letter. However as a devil, evil by nature, he hates Kreven, and so he attempt to subvert the spirit of the bargain. Velkiss will telepathically contact the heroes at the start of combat, telling them the letter of his contract, and opening up a virtual marketplace of sabotage options.

Because of the contract, he continues to fight while he deals, and refuses to lighten his offense for the heroes' sake. However, if the heroes should happen to discreetly drop gems, coins, or magical items during the battle, he will part with information.

The extraplanar insectile mind of the ice devil allows for extremely efficient telepathic communication. Effectively, each round a given creature can talk with him for about 30 seconds of real time as a free action. Longer conversations can occur in the span of a single round if a character spends his full turn. Velkiss can imprint any information the heroes pay for into their minds as a free action. All of this communication occurs without Kreven or other onlookers noticing.

If the heroes do not agree to bargain with him, Velkiss is more than willing to flee, since he views that tactic as part of how to "fight to the best of his ability." He cannot teleport because of the *forbiddance*, but may try to escape with Koren if she is present.

THE FROZEN WASTELAND

The air is dry and far enough beyond freezing that the snow is more like dust than anything. On this side of the mountains, the land is flat as far as the eye can see: several hundred feet, due to the blowing snow.

Assuming the heroes are cautious, they can cross the wasteland without running into the Ragesians, though you may wish to have a few close calls with ranging patrols seeking them and Pilus's guidance

helping them avoid detection. However, someone is looking for them.

The Grim Stalwart (EL 13)

Recently the Ragesians decided to take a few nullifiers out to deal with a perpetual thorn in their side named Ander Folthwaite, a gnome with a stubbornness that nothing could crush.

This encounter begins as the party travels, and can happen multiple ways depending on their mode of transportation, but most likely Ander simply walks up toward them.

A slender gnome wearing ordinary peasant garb appears at the top of the hill in front of you. He looks completely unconcerned with the intense cold, nor worried that an army might be just beyond the next rise. He appears to be slightly transparent.

"Here now," he says, squinting at you with suspicion, "you aren't with Ragesia, are you?"

Ander Folthwaite is a ghost (CG male gnome ghost sorcerer 4), but he doesn't know it, and his stubbornness is such that he looks almost the same as he did in life. However, he is trapped in the memory of his death over a year ago, when the prison was just becoming a wizards-only area. He is talkative, brusque, and carefree. If given a chance, he leaps into talking about himself. If interrupted with any questions, he'll reply, "I'm getting to it." He does not respond too well to new stimuli.

"See, I've always been a bit stubborn. My mam told me to care for strangers and so I always have, and I've never cared much for what they do outside my home, if you see. Well, when I got caught harboring a mage, the Ragesians brought me in for questioning and they tortured me, which got me right pissed off. I just gave a tired man at my door a place to stay for the night!

"So they told me to tell them what I knew, and I was so mad I told them I knew all about that man's mission but wouldn't ever give it up. That," he admits, a little shamefaced, "were

probably a bit childish. But I didn't!" He looks proud of himself. "They brought in some amateur, with mind magic and such, and I blotted him out with a set of bar tunes day after day, until he had to admit he couldn't do it! Suck on *that* lemon, Ragesia!

"Then, they bring this real pro, don't use magic or nothing. Just sticks me with needles and cuts my thigh open with scissors and has his pet ghouls gnaw on my fingernails. By this point, it was a matter of pride. I told them I'd let myself die before I'd squeal."

He looks over his shoulder at the distant fortress. "So they brought me here. I think they said they were going to use me for parts in some kind of machine, but I didn't let them get me that far. I clawed, I bit, whatever it took, and finally, I won! I forced them to stab me out here. I wasn't about to sit around in their stinking dungeon and rot, not me. Ha!"

"And then I thought, well, what's one more? So after I beat their mind wizards and their soldiers I took on Death. I think I'm doing pretty well, so far, except for those creepy monsters they send after me from time to time. They make it hard to breathe and smile they do. But I persevere. It's sad, seeing folk driven to lose their minds like that. I wish that bitch who makes them would get her 'uppance.

"You want to know the worst thing? I keep hearing this song coming from in the earth, under their fort. Whenever I hear that song, I forget I'm fighting, because all the screaming down there stops.... There it is!"

The heroes can hear nothing, but Ander's form grows eerily solid, and blood rushes from countless cuts across his body, dripping to the snow at his feet. He curls over and cries out, until in two rounds he "dies" from blood loss and vanishes. If the heroes wait around, a few hours later he'll return, fully reformed, with no memory of seeing the heroes.

Roaming Nullifiers: Shortly after Ander seemingly perishes, through lightly falling snow the heroes spy some dark shapes moving their way

from a hundred feet off. These trio of free-range nullifiers wear torn leashes around their necks. They could sense Ander's ebullient spirit from far away, but when they sense the heroes, they hesitate for a moment, then flee toward the road, having been ordered to report any intruders.

Nullifiers (3, CR 10). 133 hp.

Tactics: The nullifiers all run at first, taking three slightly different directions through bland, rolling terrain. If the heroes pursue, one turns around to try to slow them down while the others escape. They all fight if they can no longer run, or if the heroes can outrun them, though the visibility makes it hard to pursue them.

Aftermath: If the nullifiers get away, the heroes will have to hurry, or else find a way to get past a small legion of forces that falls back to defend the fortress.

If the heroes have defeated Koren, or return here after defeating her, Anders thanks them before vanishing. Each hero gains a special favor: one time, the hero can benefit from *good hope* (caster level 7th), which also dispels any deleterious emotion-based effects active on the hero. The hero can activate this favor as an immediate action at any time.

The Scourge Entrance

The heroes can spot the Scourge Fortress from over a mile away across the flat tundra. The main valley road ends near the fortress, and the surrounding countryside is covered with dozens of squat stone barracks, enough to house and supply an army of thousands. The air smells active and hungry, filled with the dust and snow kicked up by the armies as they marched out to the Needle. And in the center of the rings of barracks is a daunting shining beacon.

Kreven has activated the Scourge Fortress's greatest defense, a huge *prismatic sphere* with a 100-ft. radius, which is likely an impassable challenge for the heroes. Worse, though most of the army has departed, a few hundred soldiers remain as a rear guard, ringed around the sphere to ensure the heroes would not have a chance to idly dispel the layers of the mighty abjuration.

Before the heroes get too close to the fortress, Pilus contacts them (either through his mask or via *whispering wind*), saying, "Hold back a moment. When you're ready I will destroy the barrier. You will need to hurry in; it might not stay down long."

When the heroes reply that they're ready (Pilus is more than capable of hearing them from his airship), Pilus takes action. If the heroes refuse to act, Pilus forces the issue.

Though the shining sphere dominates the terrain, as the air begins to rumble with a deep, pervasive thunder, you notice something bright in the clouds overhead. Looking up, it takes you a moment to adjust your eyes to the scale of what you are seeing. The clouds are being *pushed* down as something truly colossal descends through them. Lightning crackles around it, but its form is hidden, impossible to see at once so massive it is. The only thing your vision can easily focus on is a bright sliver of light on its underside, a thousand feet or more above the forces defending the Scourge Fortress.

The sliver widens from a slit to a thick crescent, to the shape of a gibbous moon, to a full circle, which must be a hundred feet across or more, shining with an inner line. The light has a dark center, like the pupil of a god's eye.

The air seems to come alive – breathing, momentous, full of energy – and you realize that a wild wind is blowing across you, first a breeze, but quickly rising to the power of a titan's roar, swirling upward toward the eye in the tempest. Torrents of snow fill the sky, and just before your vision is blotted out, a green-white brilliance swells in the eye. Then there is a flash, blindingly bright, and the sky turns solid white.

The ground trembles beneath your feet, and it is only a breath later that the shockwave hits you.

Everyone within sight of the blast must make a Fortitude save (DC 30) or be blown back. Creatures on the ground are knocked prone and rolled 1d4×10 feet, taking 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per 10 feet. Flying creatures are blown back 2d6×10 feet and take 2d6 points of nonlethal damage due to battering and buffeting.

The sky is suddenly very dark, and by the time the heroes' eyes adjust, the massive being in the sky has vanished and the clouds are rolling in to fill the gap left by its departure. When they look down at the entrance to the Scourge Fortress, most of the barracks buildings have been shattered, with those closest to the center simply annihilated. However, in the center beyond the field of destruction is the small stone tower that marks the entrance to the fortress, practically untouched by the devastating blast. A large pair of adamantine double doors are all that lie between the heroes and their objective.

The *prismatic sphere* is gone. So is the garrison.

WHY DOESN'T PILUS DO THIS HIMSELF?

The man has a doomsday airship. What does he need the Resistance for?

First of all, *The Tempest*, though powerful, is not invincible. It can only use its primary eye attack every hour or so, and since this cannot destroy the Koren Obelisk in a single blow, the ship would be vulnerable to counter-attack: the Obelisk would likely drop the airship out of the sky, and once on the ground it would be hacked apart by an army of thousands.

Second, Pilus isn't really on the Resistance's side. He wants them to waste a few thousand of their men on this mission. It will make it all the easier for him to triumph later. This move by Pilus will be detailed in adventure eleven, *Under the Eye of the Tempest*.

ACT THREE: THE HALLS OF PAIN

At last, the party reaches the interior of the Scourge Fortress, which reaches downward, iceberg-like, into the frozen earth, turning into a gulag and terminating in the oubliette that imprisons the entity that powers the Koren Obelisk.

In this act they must fight to Kreven's research facility and discern that the Obelisk is invulnerable unless they can cut off its power source, which means they must descend into the prison itself. There they meet Guthwulf, a former inquisitor who was imprisoned for repeated failure to kill the heroes. From him they learn of the "whisper-hole" that leads to the oubliette. The heroes must break through to the oubliette, and defeat or release Agony and Etinifi, which leaves the Obelisk vulnerable to a final attack.

THE SCOURGE FORTRESS

The fortress has been slightly damaged, not by the blast directly, but by the tremors that passed through the stone from those areas outside the *prismatic sphere*. After the attack, the staff of the facility retreated to the defensible lower levels and released nullifiers and various undead into the upper level, hoping that these would delay the attackers until the army could return.

Area Descriptions

The walls are all stone, the floors thinly carpeted. Aside from areas 1 and 2, the fortress is underground, under at least 20 ft. of stone. Unless otherwise noted, assume the following traits for the interior of the fortress.

- **No Lighting.** The inquisitors mostly all have darkvision or carry lanterns, and so leave the fortress unlit.
- **Unhallow.** Areas 3 through 12 are affected by *unhallow*.
- **Forbiddance.** Areas 3 through 16 are affected by *forbiddance*, which wards against non-Lawful Evil creatures. A creature who makes seven special hand gestures before entering the *forbiddance* field takes no damage. If the Obelisk's power source is removed, the *forbiddance* effect ends.
- **Debris.** Certain areas are covered in debris from cracked ceilings. This counts as light rubble. A few dead guards lie crushed beneath this rubble.
- **Magic in the Air.** Divination spells are fairly useless beyond the clean room (Area 13). In Areas 14 to 16, the power of Agony is so overwhelming even spells that do not normally detect magic or evil reveal overwhelming auras of both. A caster level check (DC 20) is required to have any divination spells function properly in this area. Additionally, the heroes occasionally catch glimpses of momentary reflection in the air, as if tiny shards of glass were winking in and out of existence every few seconds.
- **Walls.** The walls are all stone with a thin sheet of lead inside them. Exterior walls of the facility are framed with steel trusses to prevent *passwall* and resist earthquakes.

1. Entrance (EL 15)

A squat stone tower guards the entrance to the facility. A 60-ft. long ramp descends 30-ft. to a pair of adamantite doors (hardness 20, 40 hit points; Break DC 35). White stone pillars line the ground above on the sides the ramp. The doors have no lock, and normally are opened magically. This requires channeling positive or negative energy into the doorway, sufficient to affect a 13-HD creature (or counter a spell with caster level 13).

Though the main garrison was obliterated by the aerial strike, a few defenders within the shield survived. An archery squad fires down from the tower, commanded by Rovus, an elite inquisitor. On the ground, a cloud giant waits with plenty of rocks to throw at the heroes as they approach. The battlements of the tower provide cover to the archers against targets below.

Elite Ragesian Archers (8, CR 8). 65 hp.

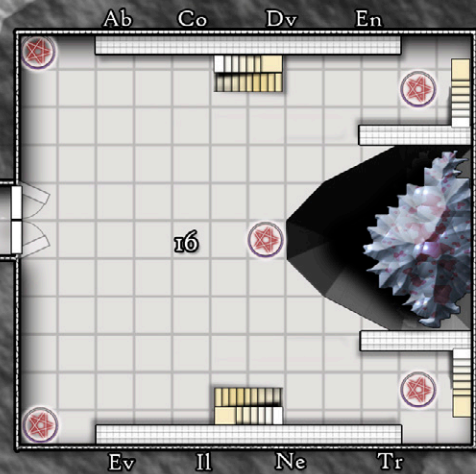
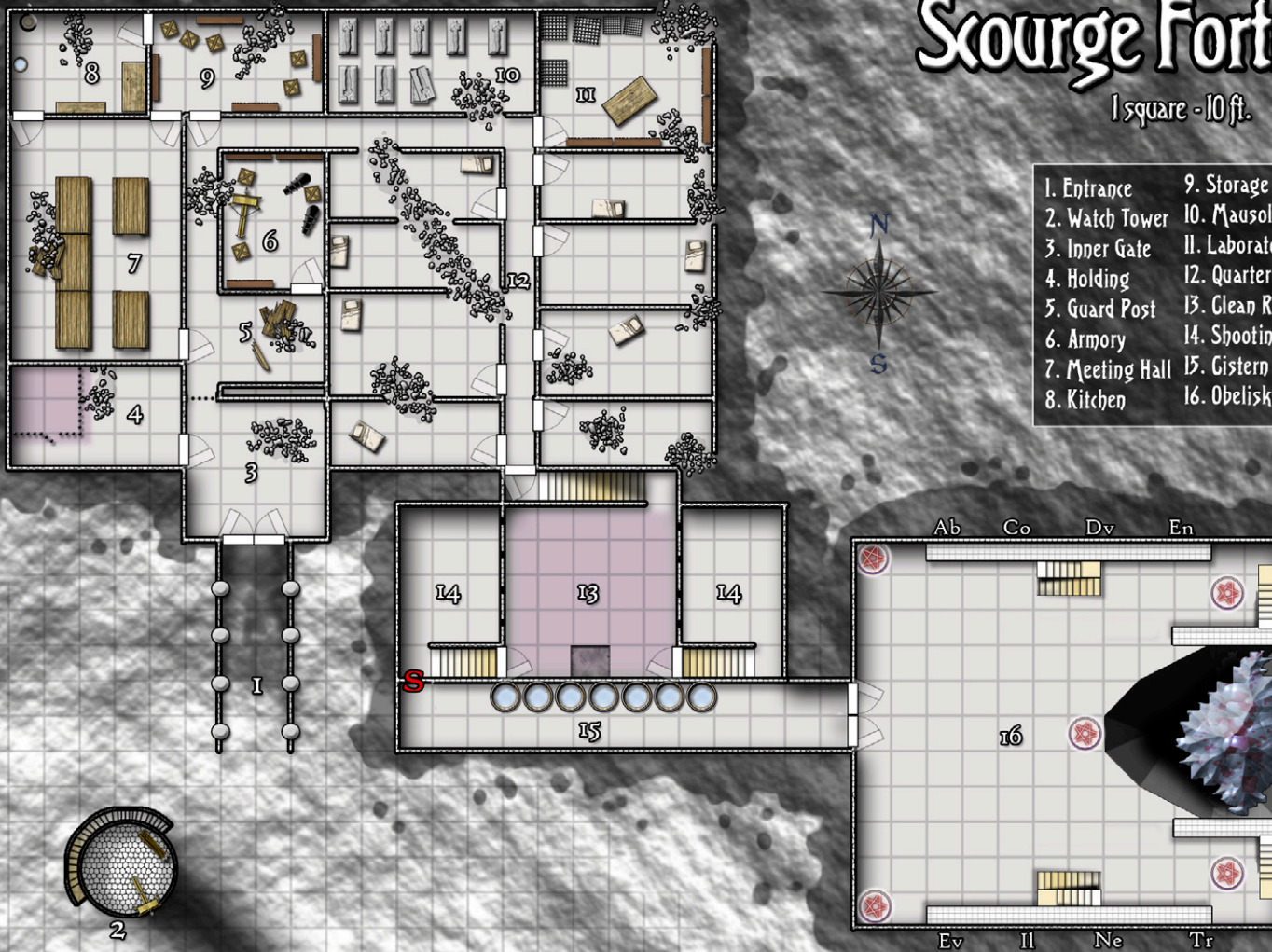
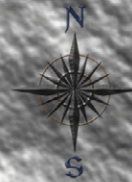
Rovus, Elite Ragesian Inquisitor (CR 11). 75 hp.

Cloud Giant (CR 11). 178 hp, MM.

Scourge Fortress

1 square = 10 ft.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. Entrance | 9. Storage |
| 2. Watch Tower | 10. Mausoleum |
| 3. Inner Gate | 11. Laboratory |
| 4. Holding | 12. Quarters |
| 5. Guard Post | 13. Clean Room |
| 6. Armory | 14. Shooting Galleries |
| 7. Meeting Hall | 15. Gistern Hall |
| 8. Kitchen | 16. Obelisk Chamber |



SCM

2. Watch Tower

This stone tower is 30 ft. tall, accessed by a wide, stable stone staircase that spirals around the outside the tower. At the tower's center is a ballista on rotating tracks, intended to hold off aerial attacks. Anyone can fire it, but it takes two full-round actions to reload, and Medium creatures take a –4 penalty to attack with it.

There are forty normal ballista bolts, plus ten special ones. These huge +1 *heavy crossbow bolts* are loaded with a special arrowhead filled with superior alchemist fire. A successful hit deals normal bolt damage (3d8+1), plus 10d6 points of fire damage. Adjacent creatures take 10 points of fire damage from splashing chemicals. This fire damage repeats for two further rounds, unless the creature struck successfully neutralizes the fire.

3. Inner Gate

This room is used to receive and inspect prisoners. A wide iron portcullis, slightly burnt as if by acid (Strength check DC 24 to lift or break), blocks the path to the rest of the facility. It hangs half-open when the heroes enter, with 3-ft. of clearance. Of course, monsters wait just beyond it to grab the first person to walk through. See Area 5.

The most interesting thing the heroes find here are scorch marks in the floor, as if some acid had seared away the carpet. Jiggly drops of black ooze remain on the floor, and burst into smaller bits if poked.

Development: As the heroes enter this room, a faint chill runs over them, and they sense someone watching them. A voice speaks to them from all around; this is a modified *sending*, empowered by the Obelisk, which Kreven uses to taunt the heroes and gauge their status.

"I'm certain you savages will enjoy looting our facility," Kreven says, "but you are as good as trapped, while I and my staff are safely protected by the Obelisk. You are quite doomed. Within minutes that leviathan in the heavens will be destroyed, and without your biomancer friend's aid, I doubt you'll be able to resist long once the army returns.

"I will admit your assault was a bit of a surprise, but not one we are unable to counteract. I suspect

you have less than an hour to live, so I suggest you run and hide."

He and the heroes *can* talk to each other, but Kreven will not let the conversation go on for long. He is wholly convinced that the heroes will be unable to harm him, with good reason, so after trading a few verbal barbs with them, he ends the communication and gets back to work defending the fortress.

4. Holding

The prison cell in this room is enchanted with a permanent *antimagic field*. Four humans, wearing just thin gray robes of prisoners, lie dead, torn to pieces by monsters in the past few minutes. If the heroes get here early enough, the nullifier in Area 7 is here instead.

5. Guard Post (EL 13)

The square marked "X" on the map is the lever that activates the portcullis. Eight slaving zombies lurk around the corner, waiting to grab anyone who comes through.

Horde Zombies (8, CR 7). 39 hp.

6. Armory

The stone door to this room is locked (Open Lock DC 35).

HORDE ZOMBIES

These undead (see page 57 for stats) are specifically designed for use in high-level adventures. They have fewer hit points than most CR 7 creatures, but a higher attack bonus, because they are meant to be weak enough to be easily disposed of, but strong enough to still be a threat for the round or two they survive. As fun as it is to hack through them, normal zombies are too weak for this purpose; conversely, most foes tough enough to threaten high-level characters are too resilient for that satisfying "hewing through the horde" sensation.

Countless weapons, armor, and gear fill this room. We provide a sample listing of what the heroes might find, but we suggest you personalize the contents of this room to help them resupply. Because they'll have practically no opportunity to rest and regain spells, the items in this chamber should give magic-users endurance they might otherwise lack. Additionally, some of the equipment should be sufficiently unusual as to give the heroes some new toys to play with. Of course, if the heroes are doing fine on supplies, feel free to cut down on what they find here. Within the room, the heroes can find:

- Dozens of simple and martial weapons and several suits of various types of armor, all masterwork.
- Copious amounts of ordinary ammunition.
- Ten flasks of superior alchemist's fire (see Appendix Three).
- A *horn of blasting*.
- Two *beads of force*.
- Twelve *javelins of lightning*.
- Two *rods of absorption* (each already holds fifty spell levels).
- A *staff of healing* (twenty-five charges).
- A *staff of life* (ten charges).
- A *wand of cure critical wounds* (twenty charges) and ten *wands of cure light wounds* (fifty charges).
- A scroll case labeled "In case of accident," which contains four scrolls of *regenerate*.

Additionally, there is a surprisingly large amount of gear for Small (or child-sized) humanoids, though the Ragesians use almost no Small forces.

7. Meeting Hall (EL 10)

This room of long tables has many maps along its walls, as well as a chalkboard upon which a quick defensive plan for the valley was sketched out in the early minutes of the Resistance's assault. The room was abandoned when the facility was struck by Pilus's airship. A nullifier sits quietly at one of the tables, examining left-behind food for traces of the emotions felt by those who had been eating it. He screeches when he notices the heroes, which also attracts undead from areas 8 and 9.

Nullifier (CR 10). 133 hp.

8. Kitchen (EL 12)

A group of zombies lurks here.

Horde zombies (6, CR 7). 39 hp.

9. Stores (EL 12)

Another group of zombies lurks here.

Horde zombies (6, CR 7). 39 hp.

10. Mausoleum

This is where the inquisitors stored their undead. The soldier sent to let them out lies dead, torn to pieces amid the rubble leading into the room. A few unanimated corpses lie stacked like cordwood around the room. This room's *unhallow* is attached to a *gentle repose* spell.

11. Laboratory (EL 15)

Kreven's wife Koren has all but mastered teleportation magic, but her latest interest lies in controlling the emotions of creatures in order to enslave them. She hopes to allow Leska to not simply annihilate her enemies, but take control of their minds. After the attack by Pilus's airship, Koren quickly set up a surprise for the heroes while the rest of the staff were fleeing into the lower level.

Since Kreven and Koren never had a child, the woman has a sick fascination with the young, and she has made a point of keeping as prisoners all of the children captured in the Scourge. With the aid of the Obelisk she has *dominated* them all, and now she has armed and armored them. They have orders to attack the heroes when they arrive, and the horrified emotions this could provoke will hopefully make the heroes easy pickings for her pet nullifiers.

Koren herself is not here.

Nullifiers (4, CR 10). 133 hp.

Dominated children (20, CR 1/2). 4 hp. Use the stats for halfling warriors, MM.

Tactics: The children have been ordered by Koren to grapple and attack the intruders, and to try to force them into the cages on the north side of the

room. The nullifiers just push their way through the crowd and attack the heroes, though they too try to throw the heroes into the cages.

These cages each have been enchanted in an effort to forcibly create more nullifiers. Any creature pushed into the cage must make a Will save (DC 17) each round or suffer a cumulative penalty of 1d4 points of Charisma. When the creature's Charisma is reduced to 0, it will rise an hour later as a nullifier unless the cage is destroyed (hardness 10, 30 hp). Destroying the cage negates all Charisma penalties it has created. Each cage locks automatically once the door is closed (Open Lock DC 25).

Terrain: Being relatively small and weak, the children's squares can be moved through as if they were difficult terrain, even by the heroes. A hero who occupies the same square as a child counts as being squeezed.

Treasure: In the drawers beneath the lab tables are dozens of spellbooks, taken from prisoners. If the heroes want any spells, they can justifiably be found here. There are also detailed notes into the nature of the nullifiers.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes manage to keep most of the children alive and free them of their compulsion, then get them to safety at the end of this adventure, reward them for a CR 16 encounter.

12. Quarters (EL 12)

These bedrooms are abandoned, and all the furniture lies in melted heaps. The doors all hang open, for the inquisitors fled in a hurry. Now an elder black ooze slithers through the damaged rooms. Originally used as a garbage disposal system for the facility, it escaped after the aerial strike shattered its holding cell. It avoids the undead, and so stays in this area. However, once the heroes enter the area, it becomes active and oozes toward them. As attacks split the ooze into multiple smaller oozes, the different pieces chase after different creatures.

The stone door at the end of the hallway is locked (Open Lock DC 35).

Elder black ooze (CR 12). 290 hp, MM.

Beyond the door, stairs lead down twenty feet to the clean room.

13. Clean Room (EL 16)

There is an intense corruptive influence to the power of Agony, as the heroes may have guessed from dealing with the nullifiers. To protect the army they keep above-ground, the Ragesians have a room that completely negates the flow of magical energy. This prevents the assistants from carrying any magical diseases above-ground, and limits the amount of psychic disturbance that might otherwise drive the workers here insane. When guards who do not rely on magic are posted there, it also makes for an exceptional guardpost.

This entire room is enveloped in a permanent *antimagic field* (filling the area marked in pink). A wall separates the room from the stairway, so the stairs are shielded from the *antimagic field*. The ceiling is 30 ft. high, and arrow slits look into the room, but are located 20-ft. above the floor level. Four archers wait behind each wall.

The main defenders of the room, however, are a group of Ragesian infiltrators equipped for combat in antimagic areas. Led by a former clerk named Clark, these infiltrators wait behind doors, on the two staircases that lead up from the clean room to the shooting galleries. They are ready to surge in once the heroes are in the *antimagic field*.

Rush Team

Clark the Clerk, Antimagic Assassin (CR 16). 89 hp.

Elite Infiltrators (5, CR 8). 53 hp.

Shooting Team

Standard Archers (8, CR 4). 35 hp.

Terrain: The area shaded pink on the map is the extent of the *antimagic field*.

On the south end of the room is the primary access to the Scourge Prison below, a covered pit. A winch with various chains and attachment clips hangs on the wall beside the pit, and with a round of work a chain can be dropped down the 100-ft. deep pit (also in an *antimagic field*). The pit's edges are fairly smooth, almost impossible to climb out from

(Climb DC 25, since a creature can use the corners to its advantage).

The pit is fairly easy to see, so the heroes shouldn't be able to accidentally fall in, but they could be pushed. A creature forced into one of the pit's squares must make a Reflex save (DC 25) to avoid falling. If there's an open square adjacent to him, he moves to that square. Otherwise he ends up dangling over the pit.

The bottom 20 ft. of the pit are not in an antimagic field, and a permanent *feather fall* effect functions there, so a creature falling in will land gently. He'll just be stuck thereafter.

Tactics: No one attacks, not even the archers, until the bulk of the heroes are in the room, or until the heroes start attacking. The defenders hope to lure more of their foes into the antimagic area.

When combat begins, the rush team rushes in, trying to surround heroes. Clark tumbles through the battle, or has his minions grapple the heroes so that he can take advantage of his devastating multiple sneak attacks. Each of his sneak attacks is also a crippling strike, dealing 2 points of Strength damage as he rips out tendons and muscles from his foes. His daggers are poisoned as well, and whenever he drops a foe he'll quickdraw and throw daggers with the rest of his attacks.

The defenders here do not retreat, since they know Kreven will not open up the Obelisk chamber until the heroes are defeated.

Development: Clark is fundamentally a coward and more interested in escape than duty. He rather hates working here, and his infiltrators long thought of the Obelisk as a cursed thing. A few weeks ago one of Clark's men tried to break the Obelisk with the *horn of blasting* from the armory, and though it did crack the huge ice pillar, moments later an invisible wall came up to block further attacks, and eventually the Obelisk seemed to heal on its own.

The soldier in question was tossed into the pit without the aid of a winch.

Clark is willing to betray Kreven, but only if he does not have to leave the clean room. He can share information, even help the heroes descend into the

prison, but he's afraid of being scryed on, and so won't leave the clean room if he can avoid it.

14. Shooting Galleries

These two rooms are twenty feet above the level of the clean room, with four arrow slits facing into it. A creature behind the arrow slits has improved cover (+8 AC, +4 to Reflex saves, effects which allow a Reflex save for half damage deal no damage on a successful save and half damage on a failed save).

In each room, a rack in the corner holds ten *potions of cure moderate wounds*. The archers don't keep the potions on themselves because they're superstitious the antimagic will ruin their precious healing.

15. Cistern Hallway

A secret door (Search DC 20) leads from the shooting gallery to this hallway, but opening it triggers an *alarm* (Search DC 21, Disable Device DC 21). Along the north wall are seven huge steel cisterns that rise up into the ceiling. These hold enough water to partially flood the prison below. While it's not enough to drown anyone (and the water would quickly drain to the lower levels and then flow out into the underdark), the water is kept just barely above freezing, and can be released in the case of a prisoner revolt. Or, in this case, a hostile incursion.

Trap: When the heroes reach this hallway they feel the same chill as the last time Kreven spoke to them, and the air begins to hum with the sound of overlapping abjurations as multiple *walls of force* spring into existence, sealing off the end of the hallway, so that the only open path leads back to the clean room and the pit. Kreven's voice again comes from all around.

"Persistent fools," he says. "You will not reach the Obelisk. After our forces have slain you, I will raise you as walking dead and let you lead the assault on your pathetic rebellion."

Then a loud churning sounds in the cisterns, and their faces slide open. A powerful spray of water pours out from them, threatening to sweep the heroes into the pit to the prison.

- **Round One.** The water floods to waist height, and creatures in the hallway must make a Swim check (DC 10) to maneuver. The current pushes creatures 20 ft. in the direction of the pit in Area 13, but creatures could potentially move against the flow of the water to try to reach the entrance to Area 17.
- **Round Two.** The water is now at chest height. A Swim check (DC 15) is required to maneuver, and the current pushes creatures 30 ft. in the direction of the pit.
- **Round Three.** The water now fills the room. A Swim check (DC 20) is required to maneuver, and the current pushes at a speed of 40 ft.
- **Round Four.** The water is already draining, now at chest height. Effects are as per round two.
- **Round Five.** The water is back down to waist height, and effects are as per round one.
- **Round Six.** Only a small amount of water flows now. Any heroes who have not been swept away can act freely from here on.

16. Obelisk Chamber (EL 21)

Though the heroes might reach this chamber now, it is intended to be the climax of the adventure, so it is detailed in the Battle at the Obelisk section after the Halls of Pain.

THE HALLS OF PAIN

Finally the heroes reach the title of the act, only to find it entirely without combat encounters!

At the bottom of the pit, 100 feet down, the heroes find the smoothly-hewn tunnels of the Scourge Prison. The following conditions obtain throughout:

- **Meager Lighting.** The prison came with no light sources, but a few prisoners managed to cast intermittent *continual flame* spells.
- **Dimensional Lock.** A *dimensional lock* spell (caster level 17th) affects the entire prison. There is no *forbiddance* spell here, however.
- **Hallow.** The entire complex is hallowed, so as to prevent despairing prisoners from dying and rising as undead who would then quickly depopulate the prison. The *hallow*

TOO CLEVER FOR THEIR OWN GOOD

It's actually in the heroes' best interest to go into the prison, because without defeating Agony, they'll be unable to get past the defenses that ward the Obelisk chamber. However, heroes are tricky, and might not fall for Kreven's trap (such as if they have a *rod of cancellation* to destroy the *wall of force*, or a *wall of force* of their own to stop the water, or use *hold portal* to keep the pit closed).

In that case, when they do get to the Obelisk chamber, they can face the device's defenders, but even if they triumph, any damage they deal to the Obelisk will quickly heal. They have to go to the prison if they want to destroy it for good.

The intended flow of the end of this adventure is that the heroes delve into the prison, defeat the trillith, then emerge and destroy the Obelisk. However, if your players seem intent on doing otherwise, the action instead becomes destroy the Obelisk, delve into the prison, and put the trillith out of its misery. We feel Kreven makes for a better final encounter, but don't stymie the players' efforts just for the sake of drama.

spell is attached to an *endure elements*, so the prisoners can survive despite the below-freezing temperatures.

- **Layout.** The prison's general shape is a giant ring, with the pit for new arrivals along the northwest arc. The tunnel of the main ring is 20-ft. wide by 10-ft. high. Along the edge of the ring, every forty feet a 10-ft. wide hallway extends outward 80 ft., with 5-ft. deep alcoves cut into the walls for prisoners to sleep. However, there are no beds or furnishings. Three long access tunnels cross the interior of the ring. One hallway leads inward from the ring, toward the whisper hole and the oubliette, detailed below.
- **Agony.** Whenever Etinifi's song fails, the trillith Agony's spirit roams the prison. Each round, every creature in the prison must make

a Will save (DC 23) or be stunned as the most horrible pain imaginable afflicts it. Those who resist are still wracked with pain, taking a –4 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks. This generally lasts for ten minutes before subsiding. Persistent exposure to this agony drives people insane.

We do not provide a complete map for the entire facility because it is sprawling and fairly repetitive, and because the heroes will likely not be spending much time exploring, since their allies are counting on them to take out the Scourge's power source, and the thousand imprisoned mages will not let their potential saviors dally.

Defenses: The hallways are patrolled by eight stone golems carved to resemble skeletal bears, but these serve only as clean-up. Practically immune to any attacks the prisoners could muster, the golems only attack prisoners if they see them trying to dig their way out or otherwise compromise the prison's integrity. If a prisoner dies, or turns into a nullifier, they carry it to the base of the pit and wait for the forces overhead. Likewise, they also perform the wretched duty of refuse collector. Every day the defenders open the pit and cautiously send down a harness to bring up anything that needs to be removed.

The walls, floor, and ceiling are a thick stone façade over a truss of steel and cold iron beams, plus a thin sheet of lead, designed to stop burrowing and magical phase attempts.

Prisoners and Their Care: Most prisoners are energy drained before being tossed into the pit, so the majority are 1st-level clerics, druids, sorcerers, and wizards. Few are above 4th level. Even for those, the regular bouts of incredible agony are enough to keep anyone from having a clear enough head to prepare or regain spells.

Each of the radial hallways has a stick that extends from the wall at the end. This stick casts *create food and water* once per ten minutes, enough to keep the population fed. The golems also possess the ability to cast *remove disease* three times per day.

Among the roughly one thousand inmates, numerous gangs and pacts have developed. Each typically has its own section of the prison, with

guards posted, or primitive signs erected to ward off intruders.

- *Despairing.* These mages seek to use necromantic magic to turn themselves into nullifiers. They are not particularly unified, and have to discuss their plans in secret because the rest of the inmates know that a new nullifier will likely kill many of them before the golems carry it away. Anyone who is revealed to be planning to become one is killed as a precaution.
- *Sons of the Resistance.* Perhaps the least mad group, these forty or so individuals have one radial hall to themselves. Consisting of mostly bards and clerics, they do their best to keep each other's hopes up, and occasionally seek ways to break out. They are led by **Theren Willen** (LG male half-elf paladin 4), who does his best to prevent fighting among the different groups in the prison.
- *The Wee Halls.* The three narrow access tunnels are home to most of the halflings and gnomes here. These tunnels were originally hidden, but one **Avantina Drumfingers** (CG female gnome wizard) found them, and realized they were too small for the golems to enter. These prisoners try to hide from the golems, and with just their most primitive tools have managed to dig a 20-ft. tunnel through solid stone, though they still have a long way to go.
- *The Mad Party.* Some of the inmates are simply schizophrenic, and have deluded themselves into a mass hallucination where they are all in a grand party. Hundreds of prisoners have become this wretched, and are slightly dangerous, since they often believe newcomers to the party are dangerous, and will try to bite and claw them.
- *Redjacks.* This gang of the most physically imposing prisoners try to make their lives as comfortable as possible despite their conditions, resorting to classic bullying, beatings, and theft. Led by **Ugar Thrank** (CE male orc ranger 4), this gang of fifty or so regularly terrorizes others in the prison.
- *Alchemists.* These mages, who have a few small hallways as their enclave, believe that by sacrificing part of their life force they can regain

enough magic to escape. Toward this end they have mutilated themselves and often trade small magical favors to the Redjacks in exchange for new victims to maim for power.

- *The Choir.* A few dozen prisoners believe that if they can decipher the muted, distorted song they hear through the stone, they could keep the pain at bay forever. A few have made slight strides, but none have the power to hold Agony in its flesh-bound form.
- *Slaves.* As is too often the case, in this terrible place many women have been taken as slaves.
- *The Demented.* And then there are those who are simply gone, barely able to feed themselves, roaming and screaming endlessly, scratching at their skin until it goes raw.
- *Guthwulf, Minister of Pain.* Right outside the deepest oubliette of the prison lairs **Guthwulf** (LE male human cleric 11/thaumaturgist 5), a former inquisitor who was destined for the prison after his summoned devils repeatedly failed to defeat the heroes. He was set upon by his former allies in his sleep, but managed to fight them off. Realizing he would be unable to get out of the valley with an army chasing him, he willingly jumped into the pit, along with his ghoulish henchman Augustus. He is the only mage here capable of protecting himself from Agony's power, and so can be a valuable ally.

Mad Greetings

When the heroes reach the bottom of the pit, they see a long tunnel heading to either side, lit by intermittent puffs of arcane flame. A stone golem walks past them, its bear skull turning briefly to consider them before it moves on. Then, a moment later, a thickly-bearded man follows the golem, capering and quite clearly addled in his head. He stops when he sees the heroes.

Hyperactive and convinced that the golems can't see directly behind them, this is **Crazy Harry** (CN male human druid 1). When he spots the heroes he runs to them and looks up the pit, screaming for freedom and trying to scramble up the walls. He whimpers that he wants to get out before the

pain returns. Only moments later a wave of agony strikes, as detailed above. Screams sound from throughout the prison, and the air is filled with a strange undertow, as if pieces of their souls were being tugged away from them.

They'll most likely be debilitated, but if the heroes explore they find the prisoners throughout the facility paralyzed with pain, or perhaps feebly crawling, trying to escape. When the wave finally ends ten minutes later, it takes a while for the screams to fade, but then there is a moment of silence in which the heroes hear, muted by thick rocks, the song of the fey. (If the heroes have not encountered it before, it is detailed in Appendix Three.)

Crazy Harry can be a guide for the heroes, explaining in a chattering, terrified, sing-song way how things work in the prison, though he often uses strange turns of phrase since his mind is unhinged. Feel free to rant madly at the players, to depict Harry as an iconic prisoner here. He does not know about the Obelisk, or why he's here, just that Ragesia took him because he was a mage and did not pledge loyalty to their new bitch of an empress.

Take Us to Your Leader

Unless the heroes ask for something in particular, Harry is not particularly helpful at first. He takes the heroes to the Mad Party, wanting to welcome them with a celebration. Along the way the heroes will likely run into an enforcer of the Redjacks, busy stealing meager trinkets from those prisoners who have not recovered quickly enough from the Agony. Everyone who sees the heroes briefly snaps out of whatever they're doing to ponder these heavily-armed newcomers. Some begin to follow them – in hopes of rescue, or simply to mug them if they look vulnerable, depending on who it is. Eventually, however, the heroes should talk to Theren of the Sons of the Resistance

Theren is a strong, dark-skinned holy warrior whose faith is unshakeable even in these dark circumstances. He and his small band are working on crafting macabre crossbows from the remains of a few of their fellow prisoners who were killed by the mob, and eventually they hope to fight their way

to the surface. Theren himself has been busy trying to negotiate an alliance with Guthwulf, though he's not sure he can trust the man.

The former inquisitor arrived a couple weeks ago, and then made a beeline for the whisper hole, managing to bypass the defenses. Many saw him, as well as what appeared to be his handservant, but no one knows why he's here or has had a chance to talk to him. Rumor is that the former inquisitor has been somehow offering advice to the despairing on how to turn themselves into nullifiers, or that he's come to kill the singing one in the center of the prison.

While the heroes could spend a lot of time here, Theren encourages them to go to Guthwulf quickly, before the perpetual pain begins to weaken them. He says that he has prayed for deliverance, and he thinks the heroes are his answer.

Guthwulf (EL 16)

Considering his situation, Guthwulf lives fairly comfortably. He is evil to the core, but in a bemused, friendly way, with a dark, mocking sense of humor that endears him to many. He seldom wishes ill to anyone he gets to know personally, and he doesn't like to harm people while others watch, but he greatly enjoys the suffering of strangers (and of prisoners).

Guthwulf does loves torturing people, and his skill in that regard was legendary in the Imperial palace, allowing him to rise to great power in the inquisitor hierarchy with relatively little notoriety in the outside world.

Augustus, or "Gus" to Guthwulf, was an infiltrator in life, skilled at grabbing enemies unaware and stabbing them to death. He died on a mission Guthwulf was leading, and the inquisitor took cruel pity on him, returning him to unlife as a devil-infused ghoul. Gus has a dark sense of humor regarding this – he knows he's going to some hell after he dies again, so he plans to enjoy himself as much as he can until then. He also knows Guthwulf can destroy him practically with a thought, so he's very loyal, and despite himself, he likes the guy.

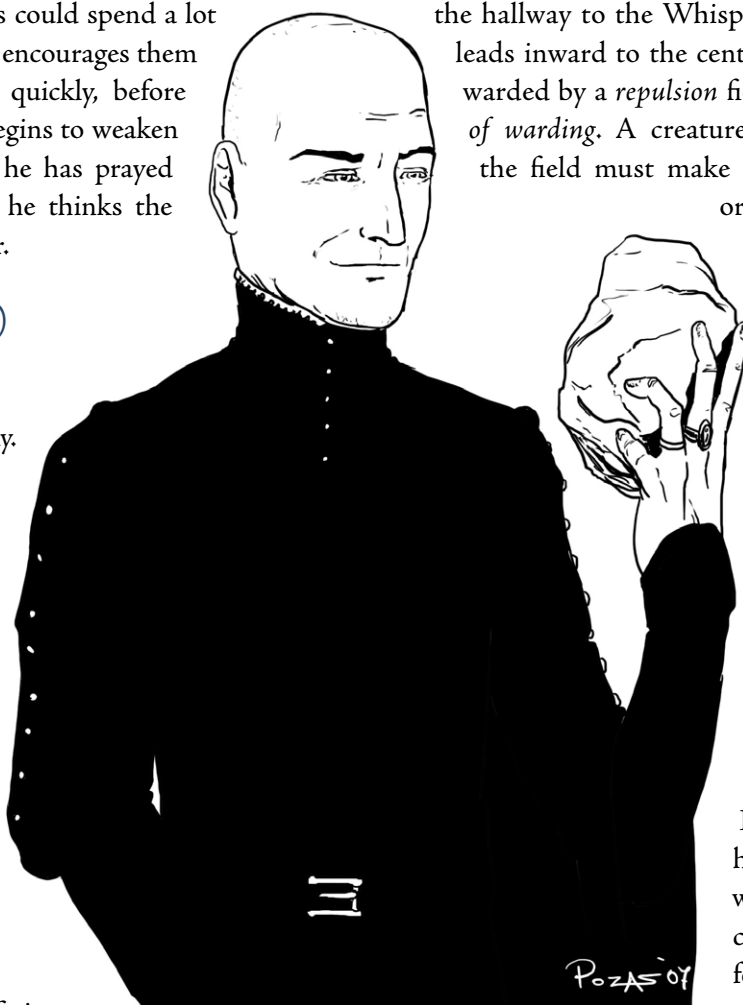
Getting to Guthwulf requires going down the hallway to the Whisper Hole. This hallway leads inward to the center of the ring, but it's warded by a *repulsion* field and a *greater glyph of warding*. A creature attempting to enter the field must make a Will save (DC 21)

or be forced back, and any creature crossing the glyph is caught in an explosion for 10d8 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 20 half). The glyph recharges every hour.

Beyond the glyph is a small rift in an antimagic field, which is the bottom of the pit that leads up to the Koren Obelisk, a hundred feet above. Ice coats every surface here, including the 5-ft. wide stone bridge that crosses the gap. Seventy feet beneath the bridge, an adamantine spiked grate stops the fall of

anyone who falls into the pit. Beneath the pit is an underground river. So far a few have tried to escape into the river. They died.

Beyond the bridge is the room where Guthwulf now lives, the walls of which are carved with tales



of Leska's glory and other vanities, which Guthwulf has defaced. With *stone shape* he has created crude furniture, tools, and weapons for himself and Gus.

The south wall is a floor-to-ceiling carving of a bearded man's face, with its lips puckered in the shape of an "O." The "O" is a hole about finger width, and unlike similar holes elsewhere, this one will not chop off or electrocute anything an adventurer puts into it. Whenever the song is active, wind blows through the hole and a *wall of force* blocks access to the face. When the song falters, the mouth closes and the *wall of force* falls, but Agony's power is unleashed. Normally this prevents anyone from breaking through.

The wall of the face is one foot of magically reinforced stone (hardness 15, hp 480).

Encounter: Guthwulf is ready to kill anyone who comes after him, but he is very much looking for a chance to escape, and so he does not pick a fight. He defends his territory with a casual humor entirely out of place in a prison full of anguished prisoners, but as former high interrogator (or, as he preferred, "minister of pain"), he enjoys everyone else's suffering. Also, he's protected from the agony, courtesy of *mind blank*.

He of course recognizes the heroes as his old targets, and greets them as old friends. He is forthright about his past, but laughs at the heroes as if they're joking if they imply they don't trust him.

"I'm not with the Ragesians anymore," he says. "You put in a good seventeen years torturing, intimidating, and raising minions from the dead, and you get rewarded with premature burial because the budget is short? I honestly would have sent a lot more devils after you if Kreven had approved the payment for them, but that is, shall we say, water under the bridge. Now I would much rather betray him as payback for his foolishly short-sighted attempt to betray me.

"I imagine you would all like to get out, wouldn't you? How about we *don't* kill each other, and in exchange I'll tell you how to get out of here. It is unfortunately not a job one man and his trusty ghoulish sidekick could accomplish on their own, but from what I know of you, you should manage not to screw it up too much."

Guthwulf wants to get out, and he wants the heroes' help to kill Kreven, but he doesn't care about the other prisoners. His primary plan of escape is good enough to get the heroes out, but not everyone. However, if the heroes press and succeed a Diplomacy check (DC 30), he'll admit that he does have a trick that could help them get out. If they fail the check, Guthwulf says he doesn't know how to get the prisoners out short of defeating all the guards.

Guthwulf (CR 16). 82 hp.

Augustus (CR 12). 76 hp.

Tactics: If a fight does happen, Guthwulf starts with *antilife shell*, then *blade barrier*. He cannot use summoning magic because of the dimensional lock on the prison. He'll cast *earthquake* if he's about to die. In combat, Gus will stand between Guthwulf and those who threaten him, or if he can, sneak attack after blinding a foe by throwing salt in their eyes. During the fight, however, Guthwulf continues to explain to the heroes that they'd be better off if they worked with him.

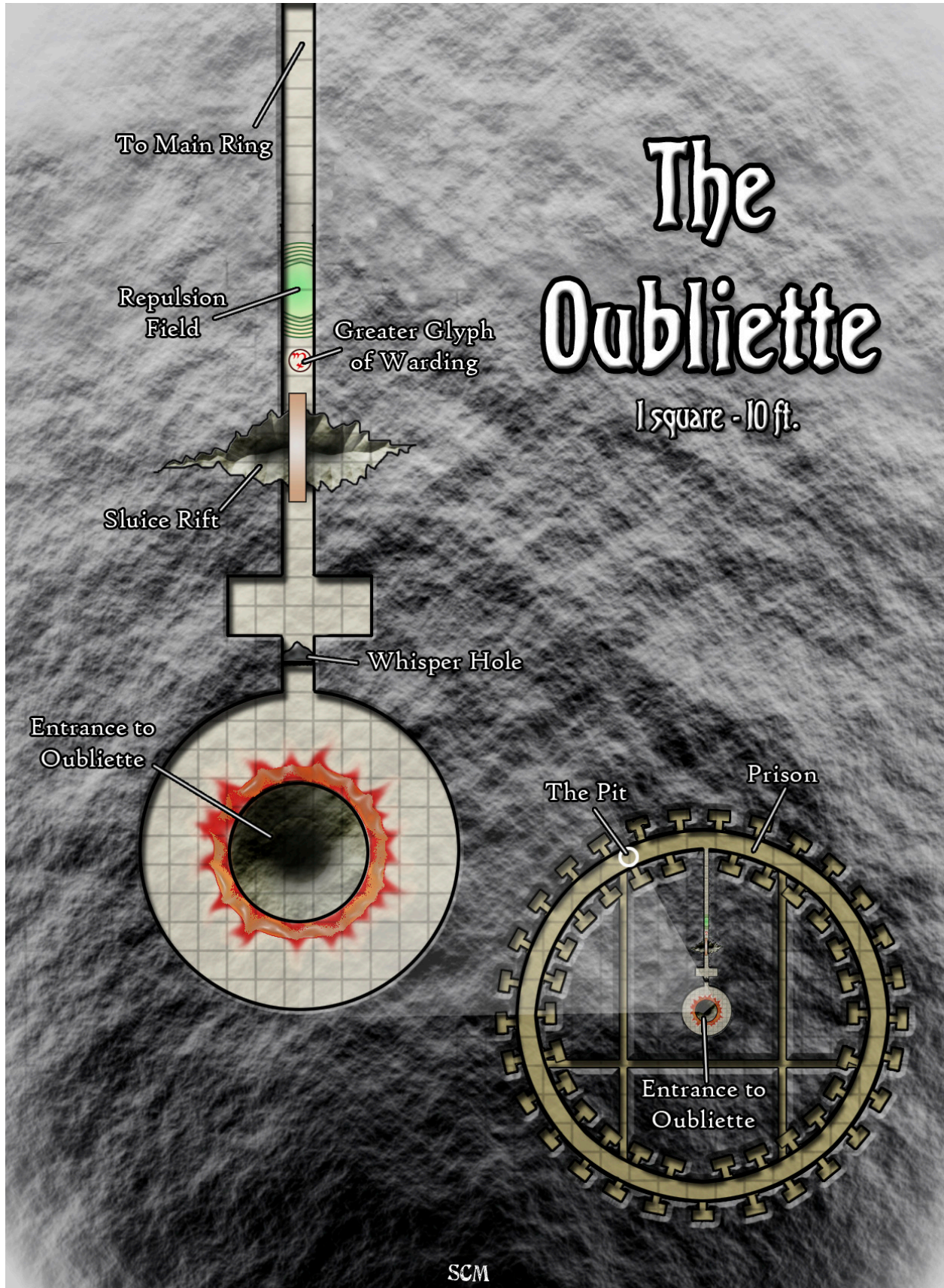
Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes get Guthwulf's aid in freeing the prisoners, reward them for a CR 16 encounter.

The Great Escape

Let the heroes propose escape plans first, using their own resources. However, if they don't have any outs, Guthwulf happens to have a pretty good plan of his own.

First of all, Guthwulf will explain that escaping is pointless if the Obelisk is active. He's been here a long time, so he knows the power source is some creature trapped in the Oubliette beyond the whisper hole, but he doesn't know what it is. However, he has heard it referred to as if "Agony" were its actual name. He believes that killing it will end the waves of agony, leaving the Obelisk with only whatever power it currently has stored.

To get into the Oubliette, the heroes will have to wait until the song ends and the *wall of force* drops. If the heroes have no way through, Guthwulf can open the path easily with *stone shape*. Thereafter, however,



he expects the heroes to pull their weight. If the heroes don't mind receiving evil spells, he can offer *magic circle against good* to give them a slight bonus against Agony's power.

After Agony is slain (Guthwulf assumes they will have to kill it, whatever it is), the next stage of the plan may actually be harder. When the Obelisk no longer has a steady power source, it will be unable to maintain the *forbiddance* spell over the valley. However, the prison is still in a *dimensional lock*. Guthwulf can rebuke that to suppress

it in a given area for 1d4+1 rounds, during which time he has a few ideas how to get out.

One of the heroes can just teleport them all to the surface, or perhaps summon an avoral to *dimension door* them to somewhere outside the *antimagic field*. If one of the heroes has good timing, Guthwulf can begin casting *greater planar ally* to summon a fiendish burrowing creature; the hero will have to make sure the *dimensional lock* is dispelled the round Guthwulf completes his spell, and they'll have to offer some of their gear to pay the creature. Finally, Gus is a surprisingly adept climber for an undead creature, and if necessary, he can just climb up the shaft out and drop the harness down to pull the group up one by one.

As for getting the prisoners out *en masse*, Guthwulf could cast *earthquake* at the base of the pit. The resulting landslide would certainly dislodge parts of the pit wall, leaving some patches that are outside the antimagic field, or that are at least more climbable. He doesn't suggest this, because he'd rather not risk collapsing the whole prison on himself.

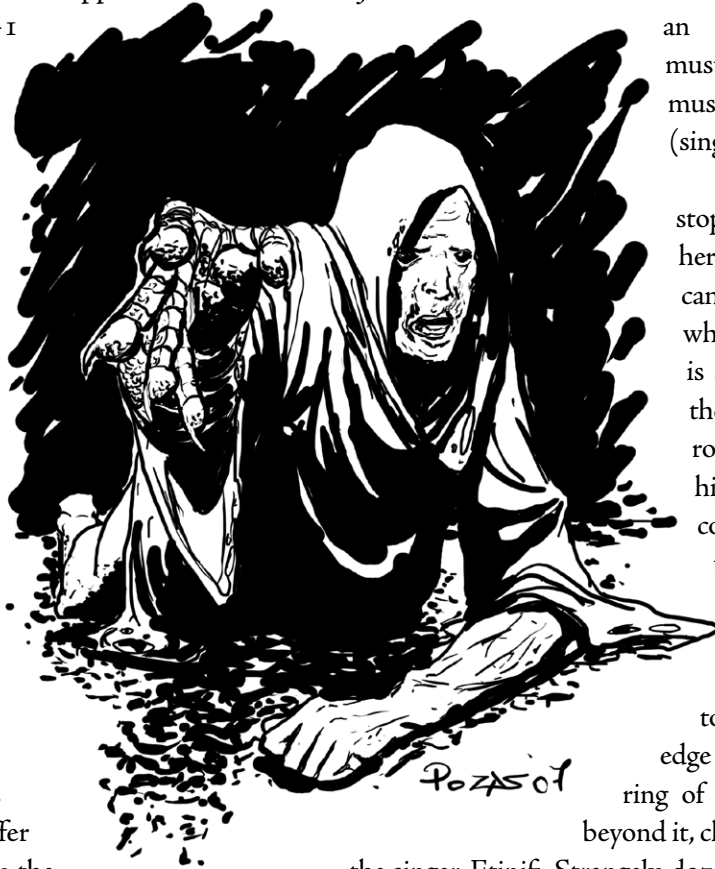
The Song of Agony (EL 17)

Through the whisper hole the heroes can clearly hear the Song of Forms, the lyrics of which often change, but which keeps a constant mournful rhythm and rhyme scheme. The heroes can wait for Etinifi to grow tired and stop singing in several hours, or they can try to provoke him to stop. The most effective way to do this is to sing the fey song back to him. A character who learned the song back in the second adventure, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*, can do this automatically. Otherwise,

an untrained singer must speak Sylvan, and must succeed a Perform (singing) check (DC 20).

Whenever Etinifi stops singing, the heroes (or Guthwulf) can get through the whisper hole. Beyond is a short hallway, and then a huge circular room with a 20-ft. high ceiling, the walls covered in gold plating that hides a deadly trap. In the center of the room is a large pit that leads to the oubliette, its edge surrounded by a ring of burning runes, and beyond it, chained to the floor, is the singer, Etinifi. Strangely, dozens of tiny scorpions crawl along the floor, oblivious to the magical pain.

A limited antimagic effect in the room suppresses all magical light effects and dims glowing swords and the like to the faintness of candlelight, but does not affect light from actual fire. The circle of runes prevents any creature or object from entering or escaping the oubliette; even light does not pass through, but sound and psychic emanations can, allowing communication. This magic circle can be dispelled (caster level 11th), or it can be disrupted by simply smashing the stone or snuffing the flames.



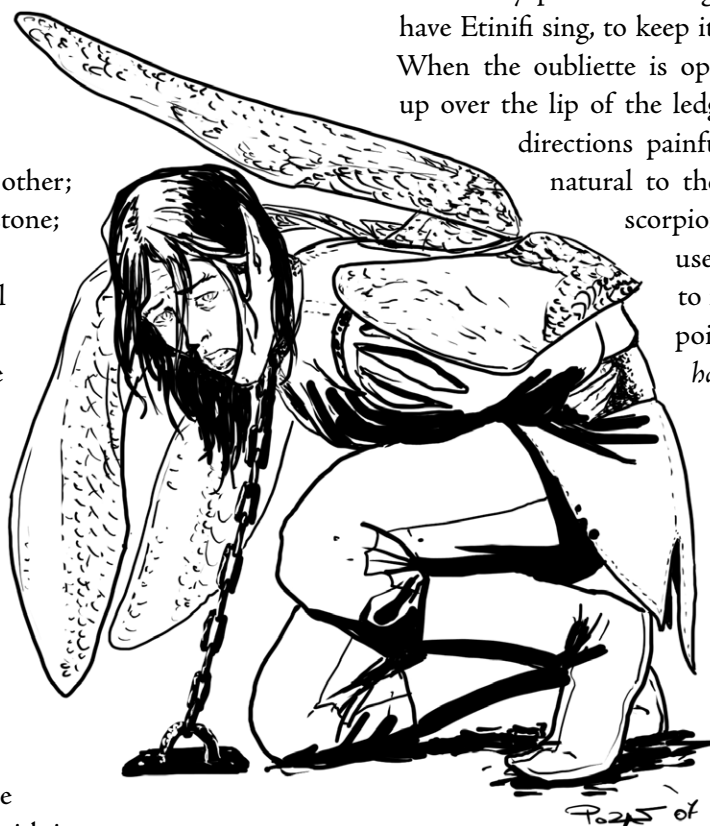
Agony (CR 17). 230 hp (currently 225).

Etinifi (CR 8). 77 hp.

The Prisoners: Etinifi is chained to the floor, in a position where he can almost manage to kneel. When he sees the heroes he briefly overcomes the pain to point at the pit and cry out, “Oh nightmares, free me! Destroy this agony.” Oddly, each character hears him speaking in their native tongue.

From the darkness of the oubliette comes the sound of thousands of carapaced limbs scraping against each other; of claws scraping on stone; of mute, shuddering pain. If the heroes call down to it, Agony identifies itself as “one of Mother’s first.” It has been trapped for so long that it assumes any corporeal creature is its foe and is automatically Hostile. Agony just wants to be released, and wants to leave to help its Mother, so the heroes can negotiate with it, and if the heroes manage to win the trillith’s favor, they can escape without a fight.

Grant the heroes a bonus to their Diplomacy check (from +5 to +10) if they correctly identify Agony as a trillith, and mention peaceful dealings with other trillith in the past. If they heal Agony to full hit points, its attitude improves two steps. If it becomes Friendly it will share what it knows about the trillith incursion into Gate Pass (see below). If it becomes Helpful, if asked it will help the heroes briefly in their fight against the Ragesians, long enough to get out of the fortress.



Encounter: The heroes will have to decide how best to deal with this situation. While Agony’s power is in effect, Etinifi will be unable to give them much useful information, and they themselves will likely be debilitated. However, Etinifi cannot answer questions while singing, lest he release Agony again. It should be clear that to reach the power source of the Koren Obelisk, the heroes will have to open the pit and release or kill whatever is trapped in there.

If they plan to kill Agony, their best bet is to have Etinifi sing, to keep it trapped in a solid form. When the oubliette is opened, the trillith crawls up over the lip of the ledge, his limbs twisting in directions painful to human joints, but natural to the segmented limbs of a scorpion. If it is incorporeal, it uses its spell-like abilities to fight; if corporeal, it uses poison claws and quickened harm spells. If Agony needs to create a body for himself, he pulls in the scorpions in the room and uses them for his embody ability. If anyone is singing the Song of Forms (including Etinifi), Agony focuses its attacks on silencing the song.

Note that Etinifi is technically immortal; though he can be “killed,” he’ll come back soon thereafter.

Aftermath: If the heroes gain Agony’s trust, the creature is willing to restrain its power and leave, flowing down through the river to the darkest reaches of the deep underground. It may also briefly help the heroes fight the Ragesians. Etinifi begs to be freed as well, and once he realizes the heroes are opposed to the Ragesians, he desperately claims that he knows how to defeat Leska. The man is clearly somewhat mad, but after such torture it is fairly understandable.

Freeing these prisoners will provide the heroes with a piece of valuable information. Agony knew this because he is connected on a subconscious level to his fellow trillith, and there were brief times over the years that the two prisoners were able to simply talk to each other, so Etinifi knows it as well. However, the fey has an ulterior motive. In addition to bartering the information so he will be freed, Etinifi actually seeks to ally with the trillith. He offers the heroes this information.

"Innenotdar, my love, my homeland, lies south of the city of the Gate, a city founded by man, but who lets dreams craft its fate. O agonized one, not I, this inmate but the other, shared his tale of betrayal by his brother, against the Mother of Dreams. It seems her children long to pass the gate, to day above from great below, but a brother is their foe. Vigilance stands watch, keeps weak his kin, but in days too few to wait will come his fall, when the free men dance their Festival of Dreams. At the midnight hour a nightmare masquerade will arise at Leska's right hand, and all this land will be scoured.

"My own traitorous love left me here, to live and die and live in fear. We two share our blood and breath, and each can bring the other's death. Lest man and dream become but one, and all this world's life be done, you and I must share this task, to kill the whore who wore a mask."

Of course, spontaneously crafting the dialogue of a man whose entire life is wrapped in poetry and song can be difficult, but Etinifi can speak normally if you need him to. He can explain his history, and how he was betrayed by Leska, and says that to kill her they must destroy the Aquiline Heart, which will also release him from his immortal torment. He offers to guide them to the location of the heart, but warns that it is much more urgent to deal with the trillith, who will be arriving during Gate Pass's Festival of Dreams. This is the focus of adventure nine, *The Festival of Dreams*.

Final Stage

When the heroes have defeated or gained the aid of Agony, they'll want to hurry back to the fortress above, because it will take less than an hour for Kreven to realize what has happened, at which point they might simply destroy the entire prison out of spite. While the heroes get ready for battle, any prisoners cogent enough to realize what's going on cry out to be saved, to be taken with them, and if the heroes cannot offer some solace, they'll be facing a riot.

Of course, fleeing into the freezing outdoors might not be the best idea, but unbeknownst to the heroes, anyone left in the prison when the Obelisk is destroyed is effectively doomed.

BATTLE AT THE OBELISK

From outside the door to the Obelisk chamber, the heroes can faintly hear faint music audible even through adamantine and lead-lined walls. The portal that leads to this room is 10-ft. wide, 2-inch thick adamantine (hardness 40, 80 hp), which can normally only be opened by channeling positive or negative energy sufficient to affect a 13-HD undead (or counter a spell with caster level 13). Kreven is easily able to use the Obelisk to see on the other side of the door, so he and his forces will not be surprised unless the heroes are really tricky.

The adamantine doors open, and the muted music you heard before rises to stunning volume, a choir of hundreds of tormented voices, conducted in an eerie, ominous song in infernal tongues.

Pillars of fire illuminate this huge room, the walls of which are covered with runes that glow red beneath a sheen of ice, but both the runes and the flame seem faded, flickering like a candle at the end of its wick. Dozens of defenders look down at you from high steel scaffolding scattered around the room.

Across the chamber, Kreven stands on a platform beside a bed of jagged shards of frozen blood, from which rises a pillar of ice – the Koren Obelisk. Tangible fields of pain shimmer around it, and as Kreven raises one clenched fist, the song swells, and the battle is joined.

Kreven (CR 18). 47 hp.
 Koren (CR 16). 91 hp.
 Claws of Leska (2, CR 14). 105 hp.
 Veteran Ragesian Inquisitors (4, CR 9). 62 hp.
 Elite Ragesian Soldiers (8, CR 8). 65 hp.
 Standard Ragesian Archers (16, CR 4). 35 hp.
 Stone Golems (2, CR 11). 107 hp, MM.

Terrain: The east end of the room has a massive pit that descends to the prison. A mass of jagged, bloody ice shards extrudes from the far wall, descending all the way to the rift outside the whisper hole below. The top of this ice – a bed of frozen spikes – is level with the rest of the chamber. Then, in the center of the spikes is the slender, gleaming pillar of the Obelisk itself, 5-ft. wide and rising 30 ft. to the ceiling. At the very base of the pillar, icy sculptures of four elemental spirits rear menacingly, but they are just for decoration.

For each 5-ft. square of the ice shards a creature moves through, it takes an amount of damage equal to 25 minus its AC, not counting Dexterity and dodge bonuses (so a creature in +2 *full plate*, which grants AC 20, would take 5 damage).

The Obelisk – The Obelisk has hardness 10 and 200 hit points, and takes double damage from fire. Also, whenever Kreven uses the Obelisk, he damages it. However, it “heals” 30 points of damage per round, even if it is completely destroyed, unless its power source has been removed.

Rune Clusters – Scaffolding surrounds this room, with 15-ft. high platforms beside the Obelisk itself, and 40-ft. high scaffolding on the north and south walls. This scaffolding provides access to eight great clusters of runes that line those walls. The Obelisk is the primary focus of power, but these runes channel that energy, and without them the Obelisk cannot turn potential power to actual spell effects.

The north wall has four large sections of runes – abjuration, conjuration, divination, and enchantment – and the south another four – evocation, illusion, necromancy, and transmutation. Each cluster is a 10-ft. square, with AC 3. Anyone who can read Infernal can

USING THE KOREN OBELISK

While the full extent of the Obelisk's power falls in the realm of game master fiat, for the purposes of this battle, Kreven can use the Obelisk in several ways. Whenever he uses the Obelisk, he likes to gesture grandiosely, as if he is directing an orchestra.

He can modify any spell he casts (when within 30 ft. of the Obelisk), but doing so deals damage to the Obelisk if its power source has been removed. He can apply multiples of these effects to the same spell, to a maximum of 20 hit points worth of bonuses.

- Double the spell's duration or range. 4 hp. (Tripling 8 hp, quadrupling 12 hp, etc.).
- Originate the spell from another creature he can see (e.g., cast “personal” spells on other creatures), or use touch-range spells with a range of 70 ft. 8 hp.
- Double the spell's area. 12 hp.
- Cast the spell as a swift action. 16 hp.
- Cast the spell twice at the same time, with different targets or areas. 20 hp.

If the Obelisk takes damage while he is using its power, Kreven must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level + amount of hp worth of bonuses being wielded) or else the spell fails. If a spell is countered or disrupted, all duplicates of that spell are as well.

If a rune cluster is nullified or destroyed, Kreven can no longer use the Obelisk to empower spells of that type, and any spells of that school which he has already affected with the power of the Obelisk end as if they were dispelled.

make a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 17) to discern this division of runes, which provides a clue to how to defeat the Obelisk's power.

A spell of 7th level or higher cast at one of these clusters of runes suppresses the power of that rune for one minute if it has the appropriate magical school. While the rune cluster is suppressed, Kreven cannot use the power of the

Obelisk to cast or maintain spells of that school. Alternately, if the wall is sufficiently damaged (hardness 8, hp 20), the rune cluster is ruined.

Fire Pillars – In the corners of the room and beside the pit are five pillars of fire, 10-ft. across. A creature entering one of these pillars takes 5d6 points of fire damage and 5d6 points of unholy divine damage, as if from a *flamestrike*. They provide enough light to fully illuminate the room. If the evocation rune cluster is suppressed or destroyed, these pillars fade out.

Tactics: Assuming he is not caught by surprise, before combat Kreven casts *spell turning* on himself, then lays a *mind fog* at the entrance to the room. Kreven is fragile, but can easily turn his enemies against each other. He typically starts with *mass suggestion*: “Take no hostile action against me until you’ve defeated all my guards.” (This elicits a sarcastic, “Thank you, my love,” from Koren if she is present.)

Kreven then uses the power of the Obelisk to seal off himself and the Obelisk with *wall of force* (doubled thanks to the Obelisk). This blocks his spells’ normal line of effect for targeting, so thereafter he’ll use the Obelisk’s power to have his magic originate from some of his allies, usually Koren. He usually doesn’t waste his time counterspelling unless he’s the target of the spell. His *ring of friend shield* means half the damage against him goes to one of the claws of Leska.

If the heroes manage to destroy the rune cluster of evocation, however, the *walls of force* are destroyed, forcing Kreven to change his tactics. In order of preference, he’ll generally use *dominate monster*, then a *sonic empowered chain lightning*, and then *empowered vampiric touch* (usually doubling each of them with the Obelisk’s power, or extending the *vampiric touch*’s range). Each round he also attacks with *severing slash* if he’s not quickening something else, since he can cast it as a swift action.

Koren, has already used *inspire courage* on the defenders unless they are caught by surprise. She teleports around the room, carrying allies into opportune tactical positions (she can bring along extra creatures when she uses *wayfarer’s step* by expending multiple uses), seldom casting offensive spells, figuring there will be too much counterspelling

USING THE KOREN OBELISK, CONT’D

Heroes and the Obelisk

If the Obelisk’s power source is still functioning, the Obelisk’s defenses prevent anyone other than Kreven from wielding it. Once Agony is gone, however, a hero who stands within 30 ft. of the Obelisk can concentrate and try to bend its eldritch energy to his will.

As the heroes are not familiar with it, controlling the Obelisk requires a Use Magic Device check or caster level check (DC 25) in order to access the above powers. To use the Obelisk’s full power requires a DC 35 check: the controller can cast any spell anywhere within the valley with an area of up to twenty times the spell’s normal area. Other characters can aid the primary controller.

Each failed attempt deals 40 damage to the Obelisk. Using the Obelisk’s full power, without the proper guidance from assisting inquisitors and precise knowledge of how the device works, destroys the Obelisk, but should let the heroes get off one good shot first.

going on for her enchantments to last long. She saves those as a back-up near the end of the fight, since her survivability is fairly high.

The inquisitors stay in the scaffolding, intent on using countermagic to thwart the heroes, such that for any given spell the heroes cast, there will usually be at least two or three inquisitors trying to rebuke or *overmaster* it. They cast offensive spells when they can, but are mostly here to protect Kreven and the Obelisk.

The claws of Leska and elite Ragesian soldiers rush into melee, while the two stone golems stay back to defend the approach to the obelisk. The archers stay on the scaffolding and provide relatively useless cover fire, and are mostly here to let the heroes enjoy their area-effect attacks.

Unorthodox Allies: If the heroes have Guthwulf or Agony on their side, they can greatly turn the tide of this battle. Agony just leaps and clammers up the walls, tearing through inquisitors. Guthwulf starts by saying, “I said I’d kill you, bastard,” which triggers

a contingent summoning: a bearded devil appears to fight with Guthwulf.

Aftermath: The Ragesians fight to the death.

When the Obelisk is destroyed, if its power source has been removed, the accrued pain and suffering of the prison is released. Black, shrieking waves of pain surge outward from the Obelisk, shaking the entire facility. The ice shards shatter and tumble into the rift, and from the core of the Obelisk bursts a tangible cryoclastic flow of negative energy, which begins to fill the room, tons more pouring out than could possibly have been contained in the ice. Some flows down into the prison, but this deadly cryoclasm mostly fills the Obelisk chamber, then flows through the rest of the fortress, eventually welling up out of it and covering any trace of it on the surface.

Anyone who comes in contact with the black sludge takes 20d6 points of cold damage and must make a Will save (DC 25) or be nauseated with pain for one minute, able to take only a single move action per round.

The flow fills the fortress, expanding outward at a rate of roughly 20 ft. per round in a mass 5-ft. deep. Of course the flow does not fill up the chamber all at once, so any Ragesians not yet dead might still fight the heroes while trying to stay on the scaffolding. If Kreven can, he'll create *walls of force* to try to trap the heroes, trusting to his high ground, and to his wife's ability to teleport him out.

The heroes will have to race from the fortress; now that the Obelisk is destroyed, all the magical defenses of the fortress and valley are gone, including the *antimagic field* in the clean room and pit.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes manage to rescue the Sons of the Resistance from the prison, reward them for a CR 16 encounter.

CONCLUSION

As the heroes escape from the frozen fortress, the situation on the ground could be in many different states, from embattled to a rout. Either way, the heroes should be able to use teleportation or flight to link up with their allies, and then use another *teleportation circle* to return to Dassen.

If the heroes were victorious, the destruction of the Obelisk will tip the scales in favor of the Resistance, and any prisoners the heroes rescued become celebrities and symbols of the strength of spirit of those fighting against Ragesia (after they receive *heal* spells to cure their insanity).

On the other hand, if the heroes failed to destroy the Obelisk, the Resistance is doomed. Within days it becomes fully operational, and no force can stand against Leska as with impunity she annihilates all who oppose her. While it might still be possible for the heroes to survive and tackle future missions by staying hidden, the world will eventually bow to the might of Leska and her Obelisk.

In victory, however, the heroes bolster the clout of the Resistance, and soon many who were simply hiding in hopes of waiting out the war join up to fight against Ragesia. The Resistance will need them, too, because their next mission, liberating Gate Pass, puts them up against tens of thousands of warriors.

Worse, Etinifi's warning of the coming trillith incursion means that the heroes will have to figure out how to stop these dreamborn monsters, for their incorporeal forms are all but invincible to normal attacks. It seems Leska has a few more plays to make before she is defeated, and the next stage of battle is where the campaign saga began: Gate Pass.

APPENDIX ONE: ENEMIES AND ALLIES

Items marked with an asterisk are detailed in Appendix Two: New Feats or Appendix Three: New Magic.

ALLIED FORCES

Simeon Gohanach

CR 14

Dressed in a leather vest and rough shirt, you would almost forget this middle-aged man was a mage if not for the subtle runes stitched into his clothes. He looks more like a rancher or farmhand, and his face is that of a man who enjoys life too much to be saddled with his current burden of authority.

Middle-aged male human diviner 7/lorekeeper 7

LG Medium humanoid

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

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarf, Elf, Infernal, Orc

AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (–2 Dex, +3 armor, +1 deflection, +1 natural)

hp 37 (16 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +14

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +5/+0 masterwork dagger (1d4–1, 19–20/x2)

Base Atk +6; Grp +5

Spells Known (CL 14th)

7th – *greater arcane sight, greater scrying, vision*

6th – *disintegrate, greater dispel magic, quickened scorching ray, true seeing*

5th – *break enchantment, contact other plane, quickened true strike, telepathic bond*

4th – *detect scrying, dimensional anchor, greater invisibility, scrying, shout, stonework*

3rd – *arcane sight, fireball x2, protection from energy x2, still silent charm person*

2nd – *detect thoughts x4, invisibility, scorching ray*

1st – *magic missile x4, protection from evil, true strike*

0 – *detect magic x5*

Prohibited School Necromancy

Abilities Str 9, Dex 7, Con 11, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 16
SQ dodge trick, greater lore, instant mastery (Bluff, Sense Motive), lore, secrets of inner strength, spellduelist

Feats Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Decipher Script), Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Knowledge (nobility and royalty)), Spellduelist, Still Spell

Skills Bluff +8, Decipher Script +24, Diplomacy +21, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +24, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +23, Use Magic Device +13

Possessions *amulet of natural armor +1, bracers of armor +3, vest of resistance +5, ring of protection +1, various spell components*

Tactics: Simeon is honestly not much of a tactician. If endangered, he turns invisible, then casts *true strike* and tries to *disintegrate* the largest threat.

Kiernan Stekart

CR 13

A dusky-skinned dwarf with a flowing black beard and precisely-trimmed hair, he carries a stone scepter traced with strange veins of black mineral. His clothes are thick, crisp, and a deep, almost black red.

Male dwarf abjurer 13

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

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

Languages Common, Dwarf, Infernal, Orc

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 99 (13 HD)

Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +12

Resist +2 on saves vs. magic

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +8/+3 metamagic rod mace (1d8+1)

Base Atk +6; Grp +7

Combat Gear metamagic silent rod

Special Actions improved counterspell, reactive counterspell

Spells Known (CL 13th)

7th – *limited wish*, *spell turning*

6th – *eyebite*, *greater dispel magic* ×2

5th – *baleful polymorph*, *break enchantment*, *dismissal*, *magic jar*

4th – *black tentacles*, *dimensional anchor*, *resilient sphere* ×2, *stoneskin*, *wall of ice*

3rd – *dispel magic* ×2, *magic circle against evil*, *protection from energy*, *stinking cloud*, *vampiric touch*

2nd – *alter self*, *detect thoughts*, *resist energy*, *rope trick*, *see invisibility*, *shatter*

1st – *hold portal*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* ×3, *shield*

0 – *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *resistance*

Prohibited Schools Enchantment, Illusion

Abilities Str 12, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 6

SQ dwarf traits, spellduelist

Feats Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms & Armor, Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Reactive Counterspell, Scribe Scroll, Spellduelist

Skills Craft (stonecutting) +20, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (engineering) +14, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +22

Possessions *amulet of health* +4, *cloak of resistance* +3, metamagic silent rod (casts heightened *sanctuary* [7th level] 1/day)

Tactics: Kiernan focuses on the role of bodyguard, ready to reactively counterspell a spell that might be debilitating. When he's not counterspelling, he'll start with *eyebite* so he can continue to make attacks as a free action, then uses *black tentacles* against clusters of enemies, and *wall of ice* to hold off warriors.

Xavious Foebane

CR 14

This gray-bearded dwarf has the scars of over a century of military experience.

Venerable male dwarf commander 14

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +4; Senses darkvision; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, Dwarf, Goblin, Terran

AC 12, touch 6, flat-footed 12 (–4 Dex, +6 armor)

hp 66 (16 HD); DR 1/–

Fort +9, Ref +0, Will +12

Resist +2 on saves vs. magic

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +8/+3 +1 *dwarven waraxe* (1d10–1, 20/x3)

Base Atk +9; Grp +7

Combat Gear wand of magic missile (9th level, 50 charges)

Special Actions leadership performance (5/day), battlecry, improved disarm, combat expertise

Abilities Str 6, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 18

SQ battle cry, chain of command, dwarf traits, implicit command, initiative bonus +4

Feats Combat Expertise, Fearless Leader, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership Performance, Legendary Leader, Maneuver Leader, Skill Focus (Perform (oratory)), Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Spellwise Leader

Skills Bluff +21, Diplomacy +27, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +19, Perform (oratory) +24, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +10, Use Magic Device +15

Possessions +1 *dwarven waraxe*, +1 adamantine chainmail, cloak of charisma +2

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

- Give a one-minute speech to grant himself and allies who hear it +3 to attack and weapon damage rolls and saves against fear effects, lasting for as long as Xavious remains within 50 ft., plus the next 5 rounds of combat, to a maximum of one 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 Xavious 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 or

mind-affecting effect makes a new save against that effect, using your Perform check in place of their Will save. Xavious can only do this if he himself did not fail his save against the same effect.

- As a standard action, inspire allies to greatness. All allies within 50 ft. gain 17 temporary hit points and a +2 dodge bonus to AC, lasting for as long as Xavious is within 50 ft., and for 5 rounds thereafter. A given creature can only be inspired this way once per day.
- As a standard action, inspire spellcasting allies. As long as you maintain concentration, whenever an ally within 50 ft. casts a spell that another ally has targeted in the past round, the target takes a –2 penalty to its saving throw.

Direct Orders (Ex): As a swift action each round Xavious can choose to grant all allies within 50 ft. a +4 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 (Ex): Once per hour as a free action, Xavious can shout an iconic battle cry (such as "Even beyond death, they shall fear you!" or "What are you so scared of? I was killing these things before you were even born!") to gain an additional leadership performance, which must be used during that combat.

Initiative Bonus (Su): Allies within 50 ft. of Xavious gain a +4 bonus to initiative checks.

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

Tactics: At his age, Xavious prefers to delegate responsibilities, but if he has to fight, he directs his allies to minimize the number of enemies who can attack, while maximizing the number of his allies who are fighting back, such as by bottlenecking enemies after one manages to get close. He cannot lend much aid in physical combat, but he's smart enough not to fight alone.

STANDARD RAGESIAN FORCES

Ragesian forces can be primarily divided into cavalry, infiltrators, inquisitors, soldiers, and wyvern knights.

Cavalry

This adventure includes no conventional cavalry knights, but does involve elite archers who ride in howdahs atop fiendish war mammoths, and daring skyknights mounted on wyverns.

Standard Ragesian Archer

CR 4

Male half-orc fighter 4
 LE Medium humanoid (orc)
 Init +8; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision
 Languages Common, orc

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dexterity, +5 armor, +1 shield)
 hp 35 (4 HD)
 Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +0

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
 Melee +7 cold iron battleaxe (1d8+2, ×3)
 Melee +7 mwk silver shortsword (1d6+1, 19–20/×2)
 Ranged +9 mwk composite longbow (1d8+4, ×3)
 Ranged +7/+7 mwk composite longbow (1d8+4, ×3)
 Base Atk +4; Grp +6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10
 Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)
 Skills Intimidate +4, Ride +5
 Possessions masterwork breastplate, masterwork buckler, masterwork composite longbow [Str +2] with 40 arrows, masterwork cold iron battleaxe, masterwork silver shortsword

Elite Ragesian Archer

CR 8

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

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dexterity, +6 armor, +2 shield)
 hp 65 (8 HD)
 Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
 Melee +10 cold iron battleaxe (1d8+2, ×3)
 Melee +10 silver shortsword (1d6+1, 19–20/×2)
 Ranged +15/+10 +1 composite longbow (1d8+5, ×3)
 Ranged +13/+13/+8 +1 composite longbow (1d8+5, ×3)
 Base Atk +8; Grp +10

Atk Options Volley Shot
 Combat Gear two *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10
 Feats Elite Training (longbow)*, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Volley Shot*, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)
 Skills Intimidate +4, Ride +9
 Possessions +1 breastplate, +1 buckler, +1 composite longbow [Str +2] with 40 arrows, 10 +1 bane arrows (various types, typically human or elf), cold iron battleaxe, silver shortsword

Master Ragesian Archer

CR 11

Male half-orc ranger 1/fighter 10
 LE Medium humanoid (orc)
 Init +9; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision 60 ft.
 Languages Common, Orc

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dexterity, +6 armor, +2 shield)
 hp 85 (11 HD)
 Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +2

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
 Melee +14/+9 cold iron battleaxe (1d8+3, ×3)
 Melee +14/+9 silver shortsword (1d6+2, 19–20/×2)
 Ranged +20/+15 +2 composite longbow (1d8+7, 19–20/×3)
 Ranged +18/+18/+13 +2 composite longbow (1d8+7, 19–20/×3)
 Base Atk +11; Grp +16
 Atk Options Volley Shot
 Combat Gear 10 *potions of cure light wounds*, 12 +1 *human-bane arrows*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8
 SQ favored enemy (humans +2)
 Feats Elite Training (longbow)*, Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Initiative, Improved Precise Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Track, Volley Shot*, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)
 Skills Climb +3, Handle Animal +3, Jump -3, Ride +19, Survival +3
 Possessions +1 *breastplate*, +1 *buckler*, +2 *composite longbow* [Str +3] with 40 arrows, *gloves of dexterity* +2, cold iron battleaxe, silver shortsword

Fiendish War Mammoth

CR 12

NE Huge magical beast
 Init +0 Senses Listen +23, Spot +10; low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., scent special quality
 Languages Understands Common

AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21 (-2 size, +7 natural, +6 armor)
 hp 230 (22 HD); DR 10/magic
 Resist fire 10, cold 10; SR 25
 Fort +19, Ref +13, Will +8

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares); 30 ft. when encumbered
 Melee slam +25 melee (2d6+11) and two stamps +20 melee (2d6+5)
 Melee gore +26 melee (2d8+16)
 Base Atk +16; Grp+35
 Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.
 Atk Options smite good (1/day, +20 damage vs. good), rhino-hide armor charge; Great Cleave, Power Attack

Abilities Str 32, Dex 10, Con 22, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 7
 Feats Alertness, Cleave, Endurance, Great Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Listen), Weapon Focus (gore)
 Skills no ranks other than Spot and Listen
 Possessions Huge *rhino hide chainmail barding* +1

Trample (Ex): Reflex DC 26, 2d8+16.
 Rhino-hide armor charge (Ex/Su): The mammoth deals +2d6 damage on a successful charge.

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 mwk shortsword (1d6+1, 19–20/x2)

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

Base Atk +6; Grp +7

Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potions 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 combat gear plus 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 Wyvern Mount

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 +8/+8 wings (1d8+2)

Melee +8/+8 talons (2d6+4) if making flyby attack

Base Atk +7; Grp +15

Combat Gear *hurling bracers**

Combat Options improved grab; Flyby Attack

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

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

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

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 damage.

Infiltrators

These warriors are trained to catch enemies off guard, and typically do not serve in mass combat. Most do not carry magic weapons, so that their presence cannot be easily discovered with a mere *detect magic*.

Standard Infiltrator

CR 5

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/d6+1, 19–20/x2)
 Ranged +7 masterwork shortbow (1d6, x3)
 Base Atk +4; Grp +11

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

Elite Infiltrator

CR 8

Male half-orc rogue 4/fighter 4
 LN Medium humanoid (orc)
 Init +2; Senses Listen +6, Spot +6, darkvision
 Languages Common, orc

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; deflect arrows
 hp 53 (8 HD); DR 1/–
 Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2; evasion

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
 Melee +12 adamantine shortsword (1d6+5, 19–20/x2),
 or +10 unarmed strike (1d3+3); or +10/+10 two
 adamantine shortswords (1d6+5/d6+3, 19–20/x2)
 Ranged +7 masterwork shortbow (1d6+3, x3)
 Base Atk +7; Grp +14

Abilities Str 17, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8
 Feats Deflect Arrows, Improved Grapple, Improved
 Unarmed Strike, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus
 (shortsword), Weapon Specialization (shortsword)
 Skills Climb +11, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Listen +6,
 Move Silently +8, Open Locks +8, Spot +6, Tumble +10
 Possessions adamantine chain shirt, two adamantine
 shortswords, masterwork shortbow [Str +3] with 20
 arrows

Inquisitors

Generally, less than one in a hundred Ragesian militants is an inquisitor, but the Scourge is more heavily guarded.

Standard Ragesian Inquisitor

CR 7

Male human cleric 7
 LE Medium humanoid
 Init +3; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common, Orc
 AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (–1 Dex)
 hp 49 (7 HD)
 Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +8
 Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
 Melee +6 hand claw (1d4+1)
 Base Atk +5; Grp +6
 Special Actions spontaneous casting (inflict spells), reactive counterspell, rebuke magic (4/day, 1d20+7), turn water creatures or command fire creatures (4/day, 1d20+1)
 Combat Gear *brooch of shielding* (101 charges), *scroll of break enchantment*, *scroll of mage armor*, *scroll of hold person* ×4, *scroll of invisibility*, *scroll of magic circle against chaos*, *wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges), *wand of hold portal* (10 charges)
 Spells Prepared (CL 7th, DC 13 + spell level)
 4th – *sending*, *wall of fire*^D
 3rd – *blindness/deafness*, *create food and water*, *dispel magic*^D, *invisibility purge*
 2nd – *hold person*, *produce flame*^D, *resist energy*, *silence*, *sound burst*
 1st – *bane*, *bless*, *burning hands*^D, *cause fear*, *command*, *endure elements*
 0 – *create water*, *detect magic* ×4, *guidance*
D Domain spell Domains Fire, Magic
 Abilities Str 12, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 13
 Feats Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Concentration)
 Skills Concentration +13, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Speak Language (orc), Spellcraft +12
Possessions Hand claw, inquisitor's mask
Reactive Counterspell (Ex): The inquisitor can counterspell even when he has not readied an action, as long as he is aware of a spell being cast. If he does so, he gives up his standard action on his next turn, having effectively already used it.
Rebuke Magic (Su): Four times a day, the inquisitor can attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel magic*. He rolls 1d20+7 against DC 11 + caster level of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic can dispel no more than one magical effect. See *Campaign Guide* for more details.

Veteran Ragesian Inquisitor

CR 9

Male half-orc cleric 9
 LE Medium humanoid (orc)
 Init +3; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3, darkvision
Languages Common, Orc
 AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11 (+2 shield, –1 Dex)
 hp 62 (9 HD)
 Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +9
 Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
 Melee +8 masterwork hand claw (1d4+1)
 Base Atk +6; Grp +7
 Special Actions spontaneous casting (inflict spells), reactive counterspell, rebuke magic (4/day, 1d20+9), turn water creatures or command fire creatures (4/day, 1d20+1)
 Combat Gear *brooch of shielding* (101 charges), *scroll of break enchantment*, *scroll of mage armor* ×2, *scroll of hold person* ×2, *scroll of invisibility* ×2, *scroll of invisibility purge*, *scroll of magic circle against chaos*, *scroll of speak with dead*, *wand of cure moderate wounds* (30 charges), *wand of hold portal* (10 charges)
 Spells Prepared (CL 9th, DC 13 + spell level)
 5th – *overmaster*^{*}, *spell resistance*^D
 4th – *sending*, *summon monster IV*, *wall of fire*^D
 3rd – *animate dead*, *blindness/deafness*, *create food and water*, *dispel magic*^D, *speak with dead*
 2nd – *hold person* ×2, *produce flame*^D, *resist energy*, *silence*, *sound burst*
 1st – *bane*, *bless*, *burning hands*^D, *cause fear*, *command*, *endure elements*
 0 – *create water*, *detect magic* ×4, *guidance*
D Domain spell Domains Fire, Magic
 Abilities Str 12, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12
 Feats Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Concentration)
 Skills Concentration +13, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Spellcraft +13
Possessions Masterwork hand claw, +1 *buckler*, inquisitor's mask, 400 gp in black gems
Reactive Counterspell (Ex): As above.
Rebuke Magic (Su): Four times a day, the inquisitor can attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel magic*. He rolls 1d20+9 against DC 11 + caster level of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic can dispel no more than one magical effect. See *Campaign Guide* for more details.

Elite Ragesian Inquisitor

CR 11

Male human cleric 11

LE Medium humanoid (human)

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

Languages Common, orc

AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20 (+9 armor, +2 shield, -1 Dex)

hp 75 (11 HD)

Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +10

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +9 +1 *hand claw* (1d4+1), or melee touch +8 (varies)

Base Atk +8; Grp +8

Special Actions reactive counterspell, rebuke magic (5/day, 1d20+11), turn water creatures or bolster/command fire creatures (5/day, 1d20+2, 2d6+13 HD)

Combat Gear *brooch of shielding* (101 charges), *scroll of break enchantment*, *scroll of mage armor* ×2, *scroll of hold person* ×2, *scroll of invisibility* ×2, *scroll of invisibility purge*, *scroll of magic circle against chaos*, *scroll of speak with dead*, *wand of cure moderate wounds* (30 charges), *wand of hold portal* (10 charges), *wand of lightning bolt* (10 charges)

Spells Prepared (CL 11th, DC 13 + spell level)

6th – *antimagic field*^D, *harm*

5th – *flame strike*, *overmaster*^{*}, *spell resistance*^D

4th – *dismissal*, *divination*, *summon monster IV*, *wall of fire*^D

3rd – *bestow curse*, *blindness/deafness*, *dispel magic*^D, *glyph of warding*, *prayer*, *speak with dead*

2nd – *hold person* ×2, *produce flame*^D, *resist energy*, *silence*, *sound burst*

1st – *bane*, *bless*, *burning hands*^D, *cause fear*, *command*, *endure elements*, *sanctuary*

0 – *create water*, *detect magic* ×4, *guidance*

D Domain spell Domains Fire, Magic

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

SQ rebuke magic (see below), spontaneous casting (inflict spells)

Feats Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Concentration)

Skills Concentration +19, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +15, Spellcraft +17

Possessions +1 *glamered full plate*, +1 *hand claw*, +1 *buckler*, inquisitor's mask, 400 gp in black gems

Reactive Counterspell (Ex): As above.

Rebuke Magic (Su): Five times a day, the inquisitor can attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel magic*. He rolls 1d20+11 against DC 11 + caster level of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic can dispel no more than one magical effect. See *Campaign Guide* for more details.

Master Ragesian Inquisitor

CR 13

Thick black bearskins cover rune-etched white plate armor, combining with this inquisitor's bearskull mask to create a pale image of death in the winter's night.

Male human cleric 13

LE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +0; Senses Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages Common, infernal, orc

AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 26 (+11 armor, +4 shield, +1 insight)

hp 88 (13 HD)

Immune temperatures between -50 and 140° F, impediments to movement

Resist acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, sonic 30

Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +16

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +14/+9 +3 *flaming hand claw* (1d4+4 plus 1d6 fire)

Base Atk +9; Grp +10 (automatically succeeds grapple checks made to resist or escape grapple or to escape pin)

Atk Options Power Attack

Special Actions spontaneous casting (inflict spells), reactive counterspell, rebuke magic (7/day, 1d20+13), turn water creatures or command fire creatures (3/day, 1d20)

Combat Gear four acorn grenades (*fire seeds*), *brooch of shielding* (101 charges), *scroll of break enchantment*, *scroll of mage armor* ×2, *scroll of hold person* ×2, *scroll of invisibility* ×2, *scroll of invisibility purge*, *scroll of magic circle against chaos*, *scroll of speak with dead*, *wand of cure moderate wounds* (30 charges), *wand of hold portal* (10 charges)

Spells Prepared (CL 13th; ranged touch +9); ~~strikerthrough~~ spells are already cast.

7th – *fire storm*^D (DC 22), *mass cure serious wounds*

6th – *fire seeds*^D (DC 21), *greater dispel magic*, *heal*

5th – *overmaster*^{*}, *righteous might*, *true seeing*, *spell resistance*^D

4th – *cure critical wounds*, *death ward*, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon*, *wall of fire*^D

3rd – *dispel magic*^D ×3, *invisibility purge*, ~~*magic vestment*~~ ×2

2nd – *produce flame*^D, ~~*resist energy*~~ ×5, *status*

1st – *bless*, *burning hands*^D (DC 16), *cure light wounds* ×3, ~~*endure elements*~~, *shield of faith*

0 – *create water*, *detect magic* ×4, *guidance*

D Domain spell Domains Fire, Magic

Abilities Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 10

Feats Extra Turning, Improved Counterspell, Power Attack, Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Concentration), Weapon Focus (hand claw)

Skills Concentration +21, Ride +12, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +17; automatically succeeds Escape Artist checks made to escape grapple or pin

Possessions masterwork full plate, masterwork light shield, *inquisitor's mask of +3 resistance and +2 Wisdom*, +1 *flaming hand claw*, *ring of counterspell* (currently holding *greater dispel magic*), *gloves of dexterity +2 and ride +4*, *dusty rose ioun stone* (+1 insight to AC)

Immediate Buff Suite *divine power*, *righteous might*. These last 13 rounds; they are not included in the stat block, but are spells the inquisitor casts if he feels pressed.

With Divine Power hp 101; melee +21/+16/+11 (1d4+7 plus 1d6 fire); grapple +16

With Righteous Might AC 25 (touch 9, flat-footed 25); hp 101; Fort +14; melee +15/+10/+5 (1d6+6 plus 1d6 fire); grapple +16; DR 6/good; Large size

With Divine Power and Righteous Might AC 25 (touch 9, flat-footed 25); hp 114; Fort +14; melee +22/+17/+12 (1d6+9 plus 1d6 fire); grapple +18; DR 6/good; Large size

Short Buff Suite *bless*, *death ward*, *invisibility purge* (65 ft. radius), *shield of faith* (+4 deflection), *spell resistance* (SR 25), *true seeing*. All these last 13 minutes or more; they are not included in the stat block, but are the first spells the inquisitor casts if he has time to prepare before an anticipated conflict.

Long Buff Suite *endure elements*, *fire seeds*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon*, *magic vestment* (armor & shield), *resist energy* (all five, energy resistance 30), *status*. All these last one hour or more, and are included in the stat block.

Reactive Counterspell (Ex): As above.

Rebuke Magic (Su): Seven times a day, the inquisitor can attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel magic*. He rolls 1d20+13 against DC 11 + caster level of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic can dispel no more than one magical effect. See *Campaign Guide* for more details.

Soldiers

These are typical foot soldiers and guards.

Standard Ragesian Soldier

CR 4

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
 Atk Options Power Attack
 Combat Gear three *potions of cure light wounds*, *potion of cure serious wounds*

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

Elite Ragesian Soldier

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/+11 +1 battleaxe (1d8+9, ×3) or +14/+9
 silver shortsword (1d6+5, 19–20/×2)
 Ranged +10/+5 masterwork composite shortbow (1d6+4, ×3)
 Base Atk +8; Grp +12
 Atk Options Power Attack
 Combat Gear three *potions of cure light wounds*, three *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of fly*

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 bane arrows (specify bane type, typically human or elf), silver shortsword

ACT ONE ENCOUNTERS

Blizzard Elemental

CR 13

NE Huge elemental (air, cold)

Init +15; Senses Listen +27, Spot +27, darkvision 60

Languages Auran

AC 31, touch 19, flat-footed 20 (+11 Dex, -2 size, +8 natural, +4 *shield*)

hp 204 (24 HD); DR 10/–

Fort +12, Ref +25, Will +10

Resist *spell turning* (1d6+4 spell levels turned)

Immune cold, critical hits, *magic missiles*, paralysis, poison, stunning; cannot be flanked

Vulnerable fire

Speed fly 100 ft. (perfect)

Melee +27 two slams (2d8+6)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Base Atk +18; Grp +32

Atk Options freezing gale; Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Spring Attack

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 24th)

At will – *icebind**

3/day – quickened *icebind**

1/day – *polar ray* (ranged touch +27)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 33, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11

SQ air mastery, eldritch ice, elemental traits

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative^B, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*icebind*), Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Listen +27, Spot +27

Eldritch Ice (Su): Any spell with the acid, electricity, fire, or sonic descriptor cast within 60 ft. of the elemental, or whose area of effect comes within 60 ft. of the elemental, has its energy type changed to cold unless its caster succeeds a caster level check (DC 23).

Additionally, surfaces within 60 ft. of a blizzard elemental become coated with ice, which counts as difficult terrain and increases the DC of Balance and Tumble checks by +5. This ice thaws normally.

An effect capable of turning or rebuking a cold creature of 12 HD suppresses this ability for two rounds.

Freezing Gale (Su): As an immediate action, blizzard elementals can release a 70 mph blast of freezing wind, 5-ft. wide and 60-ft. long. This can be used to deflect incoming missile attacks, negating conventional missile weapons and incurring a –4 penalty to the attack roll for siege weapons, or to blow away a Small creature, knock down a Medium creature, or check a Large or Huge creature that fails a Fortitude save (DC 28). Any creature in the path of the gale takes 5d6 points of cold damage (Reflex half DC 28).

Buff Suite (Su): The Koren Obelisk allows Kreven to cast *shield* and *spell turning* on the two elementals (caster level 18th). The effects are included in the stat block.

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

ACT TWO ENCOUNTERS

Lurker in the Eye

CR 13

In the depths of the eye lurks something dark and massive, its tentacles trapped just below the surface, its three eyes the color of a blood moon.

LE Gargantuan Aberration (Aquatic)

Init +1; Senses Listen +32, Spot +32, darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Aboleth, Aquan, Common, Undercommon

AC 17, touch 7, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +11 natural, -4 size)

hp 276 (24 HD)

Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +19

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), swim 60 ft.

Melee four tentacles +21 (1d12+12 plus slime)

Base Atk +12; Grp +36

Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft.

Special Actions cleave, enslave, power attack, psionics

Abilities Str 34, Dex 12, Con 24, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 17

SQ slime

Feats Ability Focus (enslave), Alertness, Cleave, Combat

Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Natural Attack, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

Skills Concentration +34, Knowledge (history) +27,

Listen +32, Spot +32

Enslave (Su): Three times a day, the lurker in the eye can use *dominate monster* (Will DC 25 negates) with a range of 30 ft. Remove curse breaks this effect.

Psionics (Sp): At will – *hypnotic pattern, illusory wall, mirage arcana, persistent image, programmed image, project image, veil*.

Slime (Ex): A blow from an aboleth's tentacle can cause a terrible affliction. A creature hit by a tentacle must succeed on a DC 29 Fortitude save or begin to transform over the next 1d4+1 minutes, the skin gradually becoming a clear, slimy membrane. An afflicted creature must remain moistened with cool, fresh water or take 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes. The slime reduces the creature's natural armor bonus by 1 (but never to less than 0). *Remove disease* stops the transformation, but only *heal* can reverse it.

Mucous Cloud (Ex): The climate here prevents the aboleth savant from using its mucous cloud.

Claw of Leska

CR 14

This hulking orc warrior seethes with unholy energy, and his eyes are wide with fanatic glory. The gauntlets of his crimson spiked armor end in wicked claws.

LE Medium humanoid (orc)

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

Languages Common, Orc

Aura detects as overwhelming evil; unholy aura

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 23 (+9 armor, +4 deflection)

hp 105 (14 HD); SR 25 (against good spells and spells from good casters)

Fort +17, Ref +10, Will +10

Immune possession and mental influence

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +2 *spell-storing greathammer* +24/+19/+14 (3d6+14, 19–20/x2)

Melee +2 *flaming greataxe* +24/+19/+14 (1d12+14 plus 1d6 fire, 19–20/x3)

Melee two claws +22 (1d6+4, 19–20/x2)

Ranged darkfire burst +14 ranged touch (7d6 fire and unholy)

Base Atk +14; Grp +22

Special Actions awesome blow, darkfire blast, scour magic, smite good (3/day, +2 attack, +14 damage), spell-storing weapon, spiked armor

Abilities Str 26, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 14

SQ dark blessing, scour magic, unholy aura

Feats Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greathammer or greataxe), Power Attack, Skill Focus (Spellcraft)

Skills Spellcraft +9

Possessions +1 *spiked full plate, cloak of charisma +2, belt of strength +4, hurling bracers*. Additionally, most Claws wield a +2 *spell-storing greathammer*, but Magnus Fightmaster wields a +2 *flaming greataxe* instead.

Awesome Blow (Ex): A Claw of Leska can only use this ability if he has activated his *hurling bracers*, which allows him to count as Large for one round. As a standard action he may make a melee attack, taking a –4 penalty to his attack roll. If he hits, the struck creature must make a Reflex save (DC = damage dealt) or be knocked 10 ft. in the direction of the Claw's choice.

Darkfire Smite (Su): As a standard action, a Claw of Leska can fire a ray of unholy flame, to a maximum range of 30 ft. Any creature struck takes 7d6 points of damage. Half of this damage is fire, and half is unholy energy. For one round after using this ability, the Claw of Leska loses the benefit of its unholy aura (detailed below).

Scour Magic (Su): Five times a day as an immediate action, a Claw of Leska can attempt to counter a spell. He rolls 1d20+13 against a DC of 11 + the spell's caster level. If he succeeds in countering the spell, he gains 5 temporary hit points per level of the spell countered. These temporary hitpoints vanish after a minute.

Smite Good (Su): Three times a day a Claw of Leska can make any melee attack be a smite, gaining a +2 bonus to attack and dealing +14 damage if the target is good.

Spell-Storing Weapon (Sp): The Claw of Leska's weapon stores a *dispel magic* (caster level 10), which it can release on any successful melee attack. This dispel can only affect the target struck. Magnus Fightmaster does not have this ability.

Unholy Aura (Sp): The Claw of Leska has a +4 deflection bonus to AC, a +4 resistance bonus to saves, SR 25 against good spells and spells from good casters, and is immune to possession and mental influence. If a good creature strikes the Claw, that creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or take 1d6 points of Strength damage.

Nullifier

CR 10

These creatures look like they were once members of civilized humanoid races, but have since had their bodies mutated and twisted beyond recognition. Strips of flesh have been stretched and pulled over their eyes, ears, and noses, and their bodies have been twisted and reattached in strange and disturbing ways. The skin itself is a mottling of black, gray, and white spots. Their mouths show no emotion, but as takes a deep breath of the icy air, you note that it has no tongue.

NE Medium Aberration

Init +4; Senses Listen +0, Spot -10, emotion sense 120 ft.

Languages Common, Draconic, Orc

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+4 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 133 (14 HD); SR 30

Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +9

Immune mind-affecting effects

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee unarmed strike +14/+9 (1d6+4)

Base Atk +7; Grp +15

Special Actions emotion drain, improved grapple, thief of desire

Abilities Str 18, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 10

SQ emotion sense, human mind

Feats Ability Focus (thief of desire), Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Concentration +22, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +19, Spellcraft +19

Emotion Drain (Su): Nullifiers' preferred tactic is to grapple the most emotional foe they can sense. A nullifier automatically inflicts a penalty of 1d4 to the Charisma of its foe with a successful grapple check, in addition to dealing unarmed strike damage. A Will save (DC 17) negates this penalty. This penalty is cumulative, and a creature reduced to 0 Charisma falls unconscious and turns into a nullifier within an hour if it is not healed (or eaten by other nullifiers). This is a mind-affecting effect.

When a nullifier dies, the Charisma penalty it inflicted ends as the creature's senses return to it.

Emotion Sense (Su): Nullifiers have poor vision, but can psionically sense emotions of creatures within 120 ft. Mindless creatures and those under the effect of *mind blank* or *calm emotions* are effectively invisible to nullifiers. A creature that is psionically focused effectively has 20% concealment against a nullifier. Even non-psionic creatures can attempt to calm their emotions enough to hide from a nullifier; as a full-round action a creature can make a Concentration check (DC 20) to clear its mind of emotions for one minute.

Creatures currently influenced by emotion-affecting magic cannot hide from nullifiers, even if they have calmed their emotions or are psionically focused. In fact, creatures experiencing strong emotions, such as through emotion-influencing magic, barbarian rage, or more traditional fits of passion, are easier for nullifiers to attack. Against such a creature, a nullifier gains a +4 bonus to its attack rolls and grapple checks.

Emotion sense extends through materials, but is limited the same way as detection spells: it is stopped by 3 feet of wood or dirt, 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, or a thin sheet of lead.

Human Mind (Ex): Nullifiers were once humanoids, and so count as both humanoids and aberrations for all purposes.

Thief of Desire (Su): As a standard action, a nullifier can turn its empty gaze upon any creature within 150 ft. A creature that fails a Will save (DC 20) is stunned for one round as the nullifier steals all desire from its heart and replaces them with bottomless feelings of despair. This immediately ends any emotion-influencing effect currently affecting the creature, and for one minute thereafter, the creature is affected as if by *crushing despair*, taking a -2 penalty to attack rolls, saves, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls (and making the creature easy prey for the nullifier). This is a mind-affecting effect.

Koren

CR 16

Ribbons and necklaces of finger bones flutter and clatter as this lithe blonde woman leaps and tumbles through combat, carrying an elaborately adorned quarterstaff that marks her as a Wayfarer. She dresses in short black robes trimmed with sapphires.

Female human bard 8/wayfarer cirqueliste 8

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses Listen –1, Spot –1

Languages Common, Orc

AC 31, touch 19, flat-footed 20 (+6 Dex, +7 armor, +3 shield, +2 deflection, +2 natural, +1 insight)

hp 91 (16 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +18, Will +7

Resist cold 30, fire 30

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +1 quarterstaff +17/+12 (1d6+1)

Base Atk +10; Grp +10

Special Actions bardic music 8/day (inspire courage +2, countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, suggestion)

Spells Known (CL 16th, +4 for spell penetration)

4th (2) – *break enchantment*, *dominate person* (DC 20), *hold monster* (DC 20)

3rd (4) – *charm monster* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *fear* (DC 17), *see invisibility*

2nd (4) – *crushing despair*, *heroism*, *silence* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 18)

1st (4) – *disguise self*, *feather fall*, *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *wayfarer's step*

0 (3) – *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)

19/day – *Wayfarer's step*. This lets Koren teleport 50 ft. as a swift action, though her path cannot pass through a solid barrier. Koren can also expend one of these uses to use *feather fall*, *fly*, *haste*, or *resist energy*. She can also expend one to bring along an extra creature when she teleports.

3/day – *dimension door*

2/day – *teleport*

1/day – *greater teleport*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 22, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 18

SQ abduct, bardic knowledge +9, celeritous strafe, planar spell, prescient dodge, sense teleportation, spell-like abilities, spellrunner, traveler, unanchored

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Greater Spell Penetration, Improved

Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Penetration, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +29, Bluff +23, Concentration +21, Jump +20, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Perform (sing) +23, Spellcraft +23, Tumble +31

Possessions +1 quarterstaff, handy haversack, tiara of charisma +4, +3 mithral shirt, ring of protection +2, amulet of natural armor +2, boots of striding and springing of dexterity +4, ioun stone of insight +1, +2 mithral buckler, wand of cure light wounds (20 charges)

Abduct (Su): Koren's teleportation spells and spell-like abilities can affect unwilling creatures as if they were willing, unless they succeed a Will save (DC 14 + spell level).

Celeritous Strafe (Ex): Koren can take her standard action for the turn at any point during her movement.

Planar Spell (Su): Koren's spells can affect an incorporeal or ethereal creature just as they would a corporeal creature if she chooses.

Prescient Dodge (Ex): Once per day Koren can take a move action as an immediate action. If she does this in response to an attack and moves to a space the attacker cannot target, the attack misses her. If she moves but is still within reach or range, the attacker automatically readjusts his aim, and the attack is resolved normally. Using this ability must be declared after an attack is announced but before the attack roll is made.

Spellrunner (Su): Whenever Koren casts a spell with an instantaneous duration, she may expend a daily use of *wayfarer's step* to teleport to any unoccupied space within that spell's area or adjacent to one of its targets, as long as that space is within 800 ft. of her.

Traveler (Su): Koren can ignore effects that would restrict her movement. This acts as the *freedom of movement* spell, and can be used 16 rounds per day. This effect occurs automatically as soon as it applies, lasts until it runs out or is no longer needed, and can operate multiple times per day (up to the daily limit of rounds).

Unanchored (Su): Koren can attempt to use dimensional travel even when an effect – like *dimensional anchor* – prohibits such movement. She rolls 1d20+20 against DC 11 + spell's caster level. If she succeeds, her teleportation spell or spell-like ability functions normally. If she fails, the spell or ability is wasted.

ACT THREE ENCOUNTERS

Horde Zombies

NE Medium Undead

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

Languages None

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+5 natural)

hp 39 (6 HD); DR 5/slashing

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +12

Resist cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

Immune undead immunities

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +16 slam (1d6+17)

Base Atk +3; Grp +20

Atk Options gnaw, mob tactics

Abilities Str 28, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1

SQ dweomer eater, magic enhancements, undead traits

Feats Improved Grapple^B

Dweomer Eater (Su): A horde zombie can chew through unattended magic items as easily as if they were roast pork. This is why the heroes don't find much to loot.

Gnaw (Ex): If a horde zombie succeeds in pinning a creature, it bites, dealing 1d6+17 damage.

Magic Enhancements (Sp): A horde zombie is magically imbued with *bull's strength* and *greater magic fang* (caster level 16th). If these effects are dispelled, its Strength falls to 24, reducing its attack bonus to +10 (1d6+10 damage), and its grapple check to +14.

Mob Tactics (Ex): For each other horde zombie that threatens a given creature, the horde zombie gets +2 to its attack rolls. For each other horde zombie grappling the same creature, the horde zombie gets +2 to its grapple checks.

CR 7

Clark the Clerk, Antimagic Assassin CR 16

Male half-orc rogue 11/fighter 4/assassin 1

NE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +5; Senses Listen +14, Spot +14, darkvision 60

Languages Common, Orc

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +4 armor, +1 shield)

hp 89 (16 HD); DR 1/—

Fort +9, Ref +15, Will +3; evasion

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +19/+19/+14/+14/+9/+9 daggers (1d4, 19–20/x2)

Ranged +19/+19/+14/+14/+9/+9 daggers (1d4, 19–20/x2)

Ranged +21/+16/+11 thrown item (damage varies)

Base Atk +12; Grp +12

Atk Options crippling strike, sneak attack +7d6

Special Actions death attack (DC 11)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10

SQ evasion, improved uncanny dodge, poison sense, trap sense +3

Feats Elite Training (dagger)*, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Quickdraw, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger), Weapon Specialization (dagger)

Skills Bluff +15, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +19, Hide +20, Jump +10, Listen +14, Move Silently +15, Sense Motive +19, Spot +14, Tumble +26

Possessions adamantine chain shirt, twenty masterwork daggers, two adamantine daggers, two cold iron daggers, two silver daggers, ten masterwork daggers with blue whinnis poison applied (Fort DC 14, initial 1 Con, secondary unconsciousness), two masterwork daggers carved from wyvern stingers with wyvern poison (Fort DC 17, initial and secondary 2d6 Con), ten vials of superior alchemist.fire (2d6 per round).

Guthwulf, Minister of Pain CR 16

This mage is the first you've seen in the entire prison who does not appear crazed, half-starved, and violent. Bald, cleanly dressed in black robes, with a staff made of stone and a skull hanging from his belt, the man considers you with a stern gaze for a long moment, but then his expression cracks into a smile. Simultaneously he, and a gray-skinned half-orc hunched behind him, burst into laughter.

Male human cleric 11/thaumaturgist 5

NE Medium humanoid

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

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 82 (16 HD)

Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +15

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +7 stone quarterstaff (1d6–3)

Base Atk +10; Grp +9

Special Actions reactive counterspell, rebuke magic (5/day, 1d20+11)

Spells Prepared (CL 16th, DC 14 + spell level)

8th – *earthquake*, *greater spell immunity*, *mind blank*^o

7th – *disintegrate*^o, *repulsion* ×2, *summon monster VII*

6th – *antilife shell*, *blade barrier*, *harm*^o, *heal*

5th – *flame strike* ×2, *overmaster*^{*} ×2, *spell resistance*^o

4th – *cure critical wounds* ×2, *freedom of movement*, *imbue with spell ability* (already cast), *spell immunity*^o, *tongues*

3rd – *contagion*^o, *create food and water*, *magic circle against good*, *meld into stone*, *stone shape* ×3

2nd – *resist energy* ×2, *shatter*^o, *silence*, *sound burst* ×2, *spiritual weapon*

1st – *cause fear*, *comprehend languages*, *deathwatch*, *endure elements*, *protection from good*, *sanctuary*^o, *shield of faith* ×2

0 – who cares?

D Domain spell Domains Destruction, Protection

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 14

SQ rebuke magic (see below), spontaneous casting (inflict spells), extended summoning

Feats Augment Summoning^b, Eschew Materials, Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Minister of Pain, Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Spell Focus (conjunction)

Skills Concentration +20, Diplomacy +21, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (the planes) +21, Spellcraft +21

Possessions stone quarterstaff, makeshift divine focus (etched human skull)

Contingent Conjunction (Su): When Guthwulf says, "I said I'd kill you, bastard," a contingency casts *summon monster V* to summon a bearded devil.

Extended Summoning (Ex): Guthwulf's summoning spells are automatically extended.

Reactive Counterspell (Ex): Guthwulf can counterspell even when he has not readied an action, as long as he is aware of a spell being cast. If he does so, he gives up his standard action on his next turn, having effectively already used it.

Rebuke Magic (Su): Five times a day, Guthwulf can attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel magic*. He rolls 1d20+11 against DC 11 + caster level of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic can dispel no more than one magical effect. See *Campaign Guide* for more details.

Augustus, Guthwulf's Cohort CR 12

Male fiend-touched ghoulish half-orc rogue 7/fighter 4

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, extraplanar, orc)

Init +3; Senses Listen +6, Spot +6, darkvision

Languages Common, Orc

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dexterity)

hp 72 (11 HD); DR 5/magic

Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +3; evasion

Resist cold 10, fire 10; SR 16

Immune undead immunities

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +11/+6 stone shortsword (1d6+3, 19–20/x2), or +12/+7 unarmed strike (1d3+3); or +9/+9/+4/+4 two stone shortswords (1d6+3/d6+1, 19–20/x2)

Ranged +12 rock (1d4+3), +12 salt (ranged touch, see below)

Base Atk +9; Grp +16

Combat Options sneak attack +4d6, salt in the eyes, smite good (1/day, +11 damage)

Spells Imbued (CL 16th)

2nd – *shield other*

1st – *deathwatch*, *shield of faith*

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

SQ undead traits

Feats Ability Focus (salt in the eyes), Improved Grapple, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Unarmed Strike, Quickdraw, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (swordsword), Weapon Specialization (swordsword)

Skills Climb +17, Escape Artist +12, Hide +16, Listen +14, Move Silently +16, Open Locks +9, Spot +13, Tumble +17

Possessions two stone shortswords, rocks, pouch full of salt

Salt in the Eyes (Ex): As a free action, Gus can pull out a handful of salt and toss it into an enemy's eyes, as a ranged touch attack with a range of 5 ft. The creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 21) or be blinded for ten minutes, or until it can wash out its eyes. Even if it succeeds the save, it takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls. A given creature is only vulnerable to this trick once per day.

Agony

CR 17

A twisted man crawls on broken limbs, clad only in loose rags that do not hide the black sores that cover his body. As he moves through the shadows, his flesh seems to glint like a dark carapace, and where his fingernails scratch on stone, he leaves a trail of black venom. Hidden in the hunch of his body are a cluster of arms, which wrap around his torso like a freezing man struggling for warmth, but each of these arms ends not in hands, but in five writhing, segmented scorpion tails. With a moan the figure looks to you, his hollow eyes wide with desperate agony.

CG Medium Aberration (trillith, incorporeal)

Init +6; Senses Darkvision 60, true seeing, Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages Telepathy 100 ft.

AC 30, touch 16, flat-footed 24 (+6 Dex, +14 natural)
hp 230 (20 HD – currently at 225 hit points); DR 15/
health

Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +10

Miss Chance 50% incorporeal; SR 22

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), Climb 40 ft., Fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee two claws +18 (2d6+7 plus poison, 19–20/x2)

Base Atk +10; Grp +23

Combat Options rake (four attacks +18, 1d6+3 plus
poison), unleash agony

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)

At will – *hold monster* (DC 18), *mass inflict critical
wounds* (DC 21)

3/day – *power word stun*, quickened *harm* (DC 19).

Abilities Str 25, Dex 23, Con 25, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 16

SQ agonized spirit, spell-like abilities, damage reduction,
embody, endow, grant boon, healing vulnerability,
poison, project image, rejuvenation

Feats Ability Focus (agonized spirit), Ability Focus
(poison), Improved Critical (claw), Improved Grapple,
Improved Natural Attack (claw), Quicken Spell-Like
Ability (harm), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Climb +15, Concentration +30

Agonized Spirit (Su): Whenever Agony takes damage, the creature responsible for dealing that damage takes an equal amount of damage. A Will save (DC 25) negates this. A separate save must be made each round (not for each individual attack).

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): Agony can only use *hold monster* against creatures that are at less than half their maximum hit points. The trillith is immune to his own magic, and so cannot kill himself.

True Seeing (Su): Agony has *true seeing* active constantly.

Unleash Agony (Su): As a full-round action while incorporeal, Agony can release an intense blast of psychic pain. Each round, every other creature within a mile must make a Will save (DC 23) or be stunned as the most horrible pain imaginable afflicts them. Those who resist are still wracked with pain, taking a –4 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks. It is only during this time that Agony is relieved of its pain, but it can only maintain this power for about ten minutes before it grows weak, rendering it unable to use the power for a minute. During that time, Etinifi is usually able to start singing the Song of Forms, which binds Agony and holds the pain at bay for a while.

This is a mind-affecting effect. The defenses of the Scourge prison prevent this power from affecting those outside the prison, though even they feel a slight discomfort while Agony uses his power.

Damage Reduction (Ex): Agony's damage reduction can be bypassed by creatures who are at full health, with no damage or debilitating physical conditions.

Embody (Su): Agony is naturally incorporeal and so normally could not do much to harm his foes other than to use spell-like abilities. However, as a full round action, Agony can create a corporeal form for himself by entering an object (or group of objects) of roughly Medium size that resembles either an injured person or a scorpion. Agony has his normal shape, but his composition will be that of the matter used to create his body.

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

When the heroes face Agony, however, he will be affected by Etinifi's song of forms, and he spontaneously embodies, not requiring any object to enter. If he is already embodied he cannot leave his body.

Endow (Su): As a full round action while incorporeal, Agony can grant its power to any living creature within 30 ft. When he does so, he vanishes, effectively absorbed by the creature. At will, or when the creature dies, Agony reappears within 30 ft. of the creature, unharmed by the ordeal. The endowed creature gains Agony'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): Agony can lend his power to several creatures at once without actually entering their bodies. To do so he must touch each creature. Agony gains a negative level, and the creature gains a +15 enhancement bonus to Concentration checks made to maintain concentration after taking damage or being otherwise disturbed. This boon is the equivalent of a magic item with market value 10,000 gp.

If Agony is slain while affected by the Song of Forms, the nearest ten intelligent creatures within 150 ft. gain his boon, which is permanent unless dispelled. Agony can grant this boon to up to nineteen creatures.

Healing Vulnerability (Ex): If an effect heals Agony's damage, the trillith must make a Will save (DC 10 + damage healed) or be overwhelmed with relief, effectively being stunned for one round. Agony cannot attack while its hit points are full. However, every minute that its hit points are at full, it takes 5 points of damage as its inherent nature causes it pain again.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Agony must hit with a claw attack. He can then rake with multiple small hands that stretch out from his chest, each finger tipped with a scorpion-tail stinger: four attacks at +18 (1d6+3 plus poison).

Poison (Su): Injury. Will DC 29 (initial) and Fortitude DC 29 (secondary). Initial damage – wracking pain for ten minutes; Secondary Damage – 1 Con. A creature afflicted with wracking pain takes a –4 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks, and any character attempting to use magic to heal the creature must succeed a caster level check (DC 27), or else the creature receives no healing. This is a magical effect that can be dispelled (caster level 20).

Project Image (Su): At will when he is incorporeal, Agony can assume the appearance of a wretched, rag-clad man whose joints are twisted painfully, as if they had been repeatedly broken. Agony's true form is only visible to creatures using *true seeing*.

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

Agony can only be truly slain two ways. If his body dies while he is trapped by the Song of Forms or similar magic, he dies, and his corpse remains even after the magic ends. Alternately, if Agony 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 Agony's boon.

Etinifi, the Longwalker

CR 8

Chained to the floor is a withered, gray-skinned man, fey wings curled around his back and limbs limp. He lies listless, his eyes closed, only his mouth moving as he sings a mourning song so pained you feel a compulsion to kill the pitiful creature just so it will end.

Male seela spontaneous cleric 5 (UA)/seela paragon 3

CE Medium fey

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

Languages Auran, Common, Elven, Sylvan

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10

hp 77 (8 HD)

Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +9

Immune disease, energy drain, and poison

Regeneration 30

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

Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d3+1d6)

Base Atk +5; Grp +5

Special Actions smite (1/day, +5 damage), song of forms 4/day

Spells Known (CL 5th)

3rd (3) – *contagion, nondetection*

2nd (4) – *eagle's splendor, invisibility, shatter, silence*

1st (6) – *bane, command, comprehend languages, deathwatch, disguise self, inflict light wounds*

0 (5) – *detect magic, detect poison, guidance, light, mending, read magic*

D Domain spell Domains Destruction, Trickery

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 6, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 20

SQ blessing of the aquiline heart, fallow touch, feysinger

Feats Extra Performances, Improved Unarmed Strike, Skill Focus (Perform (singing))

Skills Bluff +16, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Perform +21, Spellcraft +7, Survival +11

Blessing of the Aquiline Heart (Ex): Etinifi is immortal.

He does not suffer ability score penalties from aging, nor can he die of old age, but he does gain the normal ability score bonuses. He has regeneration 30, and heals ability damage at a rate of 1 point per ability score per round. He is immune to disease, energy drain, and poison.

Almost no form of attack deals lethal damage to Etinifi. He regenerates even if he fails a saving throw against a *disintegrate* spell or a death effect. If he fails his save against a spell or effect that would kill him instantly (such as those mentioned above), the spell or effect instead deals nonlethal damage equal to his full normal hit points +10 (or 78 hp). Etinifi is immune to effects that produce incurable or bleeding wounds, such as mummy rot, a sword with the wounding special ability, or a clay golem's cursed wound ability.

If Etinifi loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 1d6 minutes (the detached piece dies and decays normally). He can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to his stump.

Only the bite or breath weapon of a true dragon deals lethal damage to Etinifi. He cannot regenerate Constitution damage from having his blood drunk. If he is completely exsanguinated (reduced to 0 Constitution by the blood drain of a vampire, for example), he loses this ability and is slain. If he has nonlethal damage equal to his hit points +10, he is unconscious and helpless. While he is helpless, a character may perform a *coup de grace* to impale him in the heart. As long as his heart is so pierced, Etinifi cannot regenerate.

Fallow Touch (Su): Etinifi deals 1d6 point of damage with his touch, or 2d6 per round of prolonged exposure. He heals an equal amount, to a maximum of 15 points per day.

Feysinger (Ex): Etinifi can take 10 on Perform checks, even if threatened or stressed.

Kreven

CR 18

A rich winter cloak drapes across this frail old man, so withered that the bear skull he wears as a mask could easily be his true face.

Venerable male human sorcerer 18

LE Medium humanoid

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

Languages Common, Infernal, Orc

AC 8, touch 8, flat-footed 8 (-2 Dex)

hp 47 (18 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +18

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +7 masterwork handclaw (1d4-3)

Base Atk +9; Grp +6

Special Actions reactive counterspell

Spells Known (CL 18th, DC 18 + spell level)

9th (3) – *dominate monster***

8th (6) – *greater planar binding*, *power word stun*, *severing slash**

7th (7) – *project image*, *spell turning*, *spelleater**

6th (7) – *chain lightning*, *mass suggestion***, *true seeing*

5th (7) – *dominate person***, *mind fog***, *overmaster**, *wall of force*

4th (8) – *charm monster***, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*

3rd (8) – *magic circle against good*, *protection from energy*, *suggestion***, *vampiric touch*

2nd (8) – *cancel*, *hideous laughter***, *invisibility*, *shatter*

1st (8) – *burning hands*, *charm person***, *shield*, *sleep***, *unseen servant*

0 (6) – *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

* New spell; see Appendix Three

** Enchantment spell; +2 DC

(Kreven has definitely already cast one 8th-, one 4th-, two 3rd-, and one 1st-level spell today, plus any he used against the heroes in previous encounters – which, if the heroes fought Velkiss today, include at least another one 7th-, one 6th-, one 4th-, one 3rd-, and one 1st-level spell. These are not yet removed from his stat block.)

Abilities Str 4, Dex 6, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 26

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Energy Substitution (sonic), Extra Spell Knowledge (severing slash), Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Counterspell, Reactive Counterspell, Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Concentration +21, Craft (stonework) +23, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Perform (orchestra) +19, Spellcraft +25

Possessions *mask of inner death*, *ring of friend shield*, *crystal ball* with telepathy

Buff Suite: *mind blank*, *magic circle against good*, *protection from energy*, *shield*, *stoneskin*. Kreven casts these spells before combat if he has time; they are not included in the stat block.

New Item – **Mask of Inner Death:** This bearskull inquisitor mask grants its wearer a +6 enhancement bonus to Charisma, and the ability to expend an 8th level spell slot to cast *mind blank* once per day. Market value 60,000 gp.

APPENDIX TWO: NEW 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 8 or Fighter level 4 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.

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.

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.

Volley Shot [Fighter]

You can turn your arrow shots into an area attack.

Prerequisite: Rapid Shot, base attack +6.

Benefit: As a full-round action you can choose a single creature within range of your bow and fire three arrows. That creature must make a Reflex save (DC 10 + your attack bonus with your bow -2 per range increment beyond the first) or take damage as if you had struck that creature with an arrow. You cannot add precision-based bonuses such as sneak attack to this damage.

APPENDIX THREE: NEW MAGIC

Several of the characters in this adventure have new spells and magic items.

NEW ITEMS

Ragesian Dragonbomb

This alchemical 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.

Superior Alchemist's Fire

Imported from the elemental planes, these fist-sized amberglass spheres explode when shattered, dealing 10d6 points of fire damage to a target struck, plus 10 points of fire damage to adjacent targets. This fire damage repeats for two rounds or until the fire is neutralized, as with normal alchemist's fire. They have a range increment of 10 ft.

Cost 4000 gp. Weight 2 lb.

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).

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

Mask of Inner Death

This bear-skull inquisitor mask grants its wearer a +6 enhancement bonus to Charisma, a +5 resistance bonus to Will saves, and the ability to expend an 8th level spell slot to cast *mind blank* once per day.

Market value 60,000.

NEW SPELLS

Icebind

Conjuration [Cold]

Level: Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Effect: Icy bonds in a 20-ft. radius spread

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Reflex partial; see text

Spell Resistance: No

Creatures caught in the area are trapped by bonds of ice, becoming entangled, and the affected area counts as difficult, slippery terrain. While entangled, they take 1d6 points of cold damage per round. Additionally, each creature in the area when the spell is cast must make a Reflex save or be stuck in place. It is not helpless, but cannot move from its location. If this spell is cast on a creature that is not adjacent to a surface, the creature is still entangled with ice, but cannot be held in place.

A creature stuck in place can make a Strength or Escape Artist check (DC 20) as a move action. Success frees the creature from being stuck, but leaves the creature entangled. If the creature beats

DC 25, it frees itself from the bonds entirely. The bonds can also be broken by dealing 20 points of damage; the bonds have hardness 5, but fire ignores hardness and does double damage.

Material Component: A drop of water and a blue thread.

Overmaster

Abjuration

Level: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Target: One spellcaster

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions like *dispel magic*, except that it can only counter spells as they are being cast. Make a dispel check, 1d20 + caster level (maximum of +20) against DC 11 + caster level of the spell you're trying to counter. If you succeed, the spell is countered, and you can choose to cast the spell yourself as a free action. The spell functions as if cast by its original caster, except that it originates from you, and that you control it and make all choices regarding its effects and targeting.

Since this spell takes a standard action to cast, you must either ready an action to cast it in response to a spell, or must be able to counter spells reactively.

For example, Katrina (sorcerer 9) casts a *fireball*, but the inquisitor Kreven (sorcerer 18) uses *overmaster* to counter it. He may then immediately cast *fireball*, though its caster level will only be 9.

Severing Slash

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 8

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 swift action

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

Effect: One blade of force

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

A crescent-shaped blade of force flies from you to your target, causing a grievous cutting wound. Make a ranged attack, with an attack bonus of your caster level plus your Intelligence or Charisma modifier. As a force effect, it can strike ethereal and incorporeal creatures. A creature or object struck takes 4d12 points of force damage. Living creatures then take 1d6 points of damage each round thereafter from blood loss. This blood loss can be stopped by a Heal check (DC 15) or any amount of magical healing.

When you cast this spell, you can choose a specific limb, body part, or other exposed piece of your target to try to sever. If you do, you take a -4 penalty to your attack roll, but the target must make a Fortitude save or have that piece cut off.

A lost limb causes no additional damage, except for the bleeding mentioned above, but incurs appropriate penalties to the creature's actions. A lost arm halves the creature's lifting ability (but doesn't affect how much it can carry on its person), as well as obviously making it impossible to use that arm for anything (except maybe a club). A lost leg reduces a creature's speed to 5 ft., and incurs a -10 penalty to Balance and Tumble checks, as well as a -4 penalty to melee attack rolls and Reflex saves. Other effects may occur, subject to the game master's adjudication (for example, a quadruped losing a leg might only be reduced to half speed, and wyvern that loses its tail loses its stinger attack).

If you attempt to sever something that would kill or destroy the target, the target gets a +20 bonus to its save (but automatically fails if the damage dealt to it kills it anyway).

Spelleater

Abjuration/Necromancy

Level: Clr 7, Drd 7, Sor/Wiz 7

This spell functions as *greater dispel magic*, except that whenever it successfully counters a spell or dispels a spell in effect, you heal 1 point of damage for each spell level of the countered or dispelled spell. You do not heal from dispelling magic items.

Wayfarer's Step

Conjuration (Teleportation)

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 full-round action

Range: 10 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels

Target: Personal

Duration: Instantaneous

You can teleport 10 ft., plus 5 ft. per two levels. You do not need line of sight to your destination, but you cannot teleport to any location if there is a physical barrier between you and it, so you could not teleport through a window, through prison bars, or past a door, but you could teleport across a chasm, through fog, around a corner, or up a cliff. If your intended destination is occupied, you do not teleport.

NEW BARDIC MUSIC ABILITY

Song of Forms

The seela of Innenotdar originally used this song in prayers to the spirit of their forest, believing that they could give the forest a body so they could see its physically-embodied majesty. The Longwalker Etinifi carried this song with him, and the heroes could learn it from him.

Learning the Song of Forms: To properly learn the song of forms, you must possess the bardic music ability, the leadership performance feat, or a similar ability, must be able to speak Sylvan, and must have learned the song from the fey of the fire forest. It does not require any special feat or ability.

Using the Song of Forms: Singing the song of the fey counts as a bardic music usage. Beginning the song is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity, and maintaining the song requires

concentration.

The magic of the song draws on your life to create bodies for those that have none, so singing the song deals 2 points of Constitution damage to you, plus another 2 points every ten minutes you continue to sing. The song of forms only has a magical effect when sung by a living creature. Fey who are bonded to a location, such as the seela of the fire forest, do not take Constitution damage from singing the song of forms as long as they are in that location.

Effect: You make a Perform (singing) check, and each incorporeal creature within 200 ft. must make a Fortitude save (DC equal to the result of your Perform check) or lose its incorporeality for as long as you remain singing and it remains in range. Note that the song of forms does not affect ghosts that have not manifested, since they are on the ethereal plane and not the material (and even on the ethereal plane they are not incorporeal). A creature with turn resistance adds its turn resistance bonus to its Fortitude save against this effect. The song of forms is a supernatural, sonic ability.

Creatures that are only temporarily incorporeal simply return to their normal corporeal form. Creatures that are normally incorporeal but that are currently occupying a physical body, such as a ghost using its malevolence ability or a trillith using its embody ability, are unable to willingly leave their current bodies. Creatures without any normal corporeal form – such as allips, shadows, and wraiths, as well as ghosts that are not in a body, assume a semi-corporeal form. Trillith that are not currently occupying a body are affected as detailed in the Campaign Saga Overview (or in that creature's stat block in this adventure).

A creature forced into a semi-corporeal body is affected as follows:

Hit Dice, Base Attack, Special Attacks, Special Qualities, Saves, Skills, Feats: These do not change, except that the creature loses incorporeality and any attendant special abilities. The new form is not incorporeal, and thus the creature can be affected by weapons as any other physical creature, though it retains any special resistances or immunities it had that weren't tied to its incorporeality.

Size and Type: Its size and type do not actually change, though its body does. The form the creature assumes resembles its incorporeal form, with appropriate modifications that would allow for actual locomotion. A wraith would gain feeble legs, while an unbodied (an incorporeal psionic brain able to creature illusory bodies) would probably gain the body of its current illusion, or if it had no illusion it would gain tentacles attached to its brain with which it could shamle about.

Speed: The creature loses any ability to fly unless its form has wings (such as a ghost manticores). If it had no other form of locomotion, it gains a land speed of 30 ft.

Armor Class: The creature loses the deflection bonus from its Charisma, and instead gains a natural armor bonus appropriate to its size, as detailed in the Song of Forms table, at right.

Attacks, Damage, and Abilities: The creature gains a Strength score appropriate to its size if it did not already have one.

If the creature had normal attack forms, it retains them, though they are no longer incorporeal. If it dealt special damage with its incorporeal touch attacks, that damage is applied as bonus damage to any melee attacks it makes, though the attacks must beat the creature's normal AC, not just touch AC. The creature may gain attack forms appropriate to its new form. As a default, you can assume the creature gains a slam attack if it has no other clear attack form, with damage appropriate to its size.

For example, a ghost with the corrupting touch ability who carried a sword would be able to attack with that sword, dealing sword damage, plus 1d6 from the corrupting touch ability. An allip (a medium incorporeal undead) would gain a slam attack that did 1d6 damage, plus 1d4 points of Wisdom drain.

Other effects may be appropriate, at the game master's prerogative.

Song of Forms – Strength and Slam Damage

Size	Natural Armor	Strength	Damage
Fine	+0	1	1
Diminutive	+0	2	1d2
Tiny	+0	4	1d3
Small	+1	8	1d4
Medium	+2	10	1d6
Large	+3	18	1d8
Huge	+4	26	2d6
Gargantuan	+7	34	2d8
Colossal	+11	42	4d6

Special Note: Most undead are destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points, and this occurs normally even if the creature is currently in a semi-corporeal form. Non-undead incorporeal creatures die at –10 hit points as normal. When the host body of a ghost using malevolence is killed, the ghost survives, but is forced into a semi-corporeal form by the song. Even if the ghost is destroyed while semi-corporeal, however, it can still rejuvenate as normal.

Normally when a trillith is slain, its essence disperses, but can reform several days later. However, if a trillith is slain while affected by the song of forms, it is dead permanently.

APPENDIX FOUR: THE GRAND FINALE?

If you are running this adventure as the climax to the campaign, make the following changes so that the players can have proper closure. Stats for Leska and Shaaladel are included here. Please note that some of these changes require a little revision of map layout.

THE ASSAULT

If this is the final adventure, you may as well let the heroes use the Torch at its full power, though warn them that when they repaired it in the last adventure, they left it fragile, so using it too much could destroy it. This way the heroes can call down a massive pillar of fire from the heavens, and teleport everyone within a mile to the very outskirts of the valley. They can come with a much larger force, though the Ragesians should have a comparably large number of defenders.

Additionally, Pilus offers his airship for an end run. After the heroes attack the Eye and draw out a large bulk of the army at the fortress, the *Tempest* will strike the fortress to take down its shield, and then disembark a few hundred Ostalin hippogriff riders to clear up the surviving defenders at the fortress, clearing the way for the heroes to get in.

SUPREME INQUISITOR LESKA

The new empress is either already at the fortress when the Resistance attack, or arrives after the initial strike (she can get in by teleporting to the area above the *forbiddance* and flying down). When the heroes breach the fortress, upon reaching the clean room, an ambush does not occur. Instead, the clean room has a balcony overlooking it, and as soon as the heroes enter, Kreven uses the power of the Obelisk to create *walls of force* behind them in the stairwell and just outside the borders of the *antimagic field*, effectively trapping them, with the only way out being the pit to the prison.

Leska then appears at the balcony, protected behind a *wall of force* and flanked by two of her Claws. She speaks with the heroes, assuring them that none can challenge her, that they have accomplished

nothing except to kill a few thousand soldiers which she can raise and send back into battle. She thanks them, however, saying that for the first time in a long while, they have given her something she can enjoy, for she will enjoy knowing they will die in agony.

She then opens a “scrying screen” on her side of the *wall of force*, so the heroes can see the events occurring overhead. She gives a command to Kreven, telling him to activate the *disjunction*, and then the entire fortress shakes as the Obelisk unleashes its incredible power upon Pilus’s airship. Magical lights illuminating the airship flicker and die, and the storm surrounding the leviathan suddenly dissipates. Then slowly the ship lists sideways and falls to the earth. It lands far from the fortress, but the impact still shakes the entire room.

Then, pleased with her show of power, Leska has Kreven activate the flood from the cisterns (which in this version, comes from behind them above the stairwell), and the heroes are swept into the prison.

If the heroes manage to overcome this villainous trap, they can get to fighting Leska right away (after all, few places are worse for her than an antimagic room). Otherwise, after the heroes escape from the prison, they can face her in the Obelisk chamber.

LORD SHAALADEL OF THE SHAHALESTI

There is a good chance the Shahalesti lend some support in the assault on the Scourge, though how trustworthy they are depends heavily on how well the heroes got along with the princess Shalosh. Shaaladel himself leads his forces. With his leadership and the magical aid of his army, the Resistance will manage to break through the defenses at the Needle, and then march upon the reinforcements from the fortress.

Xavious will keep the heroes informed of what’s going on, and by the time the heroes are able to get out of the prison, the Resistance army will be almost to the fortress, being in the grip of battle now with an army of undead created from the warriors slain by Pilus’s airship.

When the heroes negate the power source of the Obelisk and then reach Leska, in the opening rounds of combat Shaaladel, his daughter, and several allies teleport into the Obelisk chamber to aid the final fight. And, when Leska looks like she will be defeated, Shaaladel will turn on the heroes in an attempt to take the Torch from them.

LOOSE ENDS

This is an abbreviated climax, so the heroes will never get a chance to deal with Pilus themselves, nor will they find out the secret of the Mother of Dreams,

and will miss out on the satisfaction of liberating Gate Pass from the conquering Ragesians. However, when the Obelisk is destroyed, even if the heroes can't manage to figure out how to kill Leska, she can still be caught in the cryoclastic flow, immortally trapped until some adventures accidentally let her out in a few thousand years.

Meanwhile, the heroes will have led the Resistance to victory, and their leadership should place them in a position to direct the fates of many nations: to be free and independent, to unite under a noble ruler, or to be burnt in fires of a new conquering warlord.

Lord Shaaladel

CR 20

Ruler of the Shining Land of Shahalesti, Lord Shaaladel stands tall and stern, his blonde hair short-cropped to highlight his sharp ears and high cheeks, the marks of his elvish heritage. His dress lives up to his shining title, with stark blues and bright silver adorning his mithral breastplate, crisp cloak, and hauberk. He wears at his hip a seemingly mundane longsword, and on his left arm a unique bladed shield that covers his forearm, then bends over his hand like the claw of an eagle. Pride gleams in his grey eyes.

Middle-aged male elf commander 8/fighter 12

Neutral Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +7; Senses Low-light vision, celestial sight, Listen +4, Spot +31

Languages Common, Celestial, Elf, Orc

Aura *shadow purge* 60-ft. radius

AC 46* (+5 Dex, +10 armor, +5 natural, +5 deflection, +6 shield, +5 defending weapon), touch 20, flat-footed 36. *Includes +5 from defending bladed shield.

hp 162 (20 HD, 8d8+12d10+60)

Immune sleep, movement-impairment (*freedom of movement*)

Resist +2 vs. enchantment

Fort +18, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares) or fly 60 ft. (12 squares, good maneuverability)

Melee +29/+24/+19/+14 +5 *human-bane orc-bane keen longsword of life stealing** (1d8+15 plus 2d6 vs. humans or orcs plus negative level on crit; 17–20/x2) and +22/+17 +5 *mithral defending frost ghost touch bladed shield** (1d4+4 plus 1d6 cold; x2)

Melee +31/+26/+21/+16 +5 *human-bane orc-bane keen longsword of life stealing** (1d8+15 plus 2d6 vs. humans or orcs plus negative level on crit; 17–20/x2)

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +22

Atk Options Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Special Actions Leadership performances (4/day), battle cry ("Burn them with our holy light!"), direct orders +8

Combat Gear *glove of storing*, 6 *potions of cure serious wounds*, 2 *potions of heroism*, *potion of neutralize poison*, *potion of remove blindness/deafness*, *potion bracer*.

Abilities Str 18, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 26
SQ initiative bonus +2, widen command (40 ft.)

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Elite Training

(longsword), Fearless Leader, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword), Improved Shield Bash, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Leadership Performance, Legendary Leader, Maneuver Leader, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword), Whirlwind Attack.

Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +30, Intimidate +19, Jump +12, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +9, Perform (oratory) +31, Ride +10, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (celestial), Spot +31, Swim +7, Tumble +11.

Possessions combat gear plus +5 *human-bane orc-bane keen longsword of life stealing**, +5 *mithral defending frost ghost touch bladed shield**, *amulet of natural armor* +5, *belt of physical perfection*, *boots of the winterlands*, *Crown of Shining Glory*, *eyes of the eagle*, +5 *mithral breastplate*, *ring of freedom of movement*, *ring of protection* +5, *wings of flying*.

Celestial Sight (Su): Shaaladel is of a royal elvish bloodline with a distant celestial heritage. He has a unique form of vision in which all living things shine with an inner light, and all inanimate objects and non-living creatures appear as gleaming crystal. In this vision, he can see regardless of light conditions, since the inner light of any living creature effectively illuminates a 60-ft. radius. This does not allow him to see invisible creatures, but he can detect the presence of creatures behind cover or concealment by noticing their glow.

Celestial sight functions just as well in well-lit areas as it does in dark areas. However, magical darkness blocks his line of sight for this ability, and a shadowdancer using its hide in plain sight ability does not appear to emit light.

Shaaladel cannot be blinded or dazzled by bright light.

Leadership Performances (Ex): Four times per day, Shaaladel can inspire or direct his allies in one the following ways. Unless otherwise noted, these performances require a standard action, and do not affect Shaaladel himself. They only affect allies who can understand Shaaladel's language.

- Give a one-minute speech to grant allies who hear it +4 to attack and weapon damage rolls and saves against fear effects, lasting as long as Shaaladel remains within 40 ft., and then for 5 rounds thereafter.
- Inspire greatness, granting allies within 40 ft. 17 temporary hit points and a +2 dodge bonus to AC, lasting for as long as he is within 40 ft. and for 5 rounds thereafter.
- Grant every ally within 40 ft. an immediate move action or a single attack with whatever weapon he has available.
- Make a Perform (oratory) check. Every ally within 40 ft. that is afflicted with a hostile mind-affecting effect breaks free if Shaaladel's Perform check beats that effect's save DC.

Battle Cry (Ex): Once per hour, if Shaaladel shouts a battle cry while in combat (typically "Burn them with our holy light!") he gains a bonus leadership performance that must be used during that combat.

Direct Orders (Ex): Each round as a swift or immediate action, Shaaladel may choose one of the following types of rolls. He grants every ally within 40 ft. a +8 bonus to rolls of that type for one turn: Attack rolls to confirm critical hits. Attack rolls while charging. Caster level checks. Disarm attempts, both to make and resist. Fortitude saves. Grapple checks. Reflex saves. Sunder attempts, both to make and resist. Trip attempts, both to make and resist. Will saves.

Initiative Bonus (Ex): All of Shaaladel's allies within 40 ft. gain a +2 bonus to initiative checks.

Strategies and Tactics Shaaladel is strongest with many allies at his side, but he is arrogant and likes to handle major foes personally, directing his allies with encouragement that their deeds will bring glory to the elvish people, even if he is sending them to their deaths like the pawns they are.

Shaaladel enjoys flying over a line of enemies, landing behind their defenses, and cutting them down from within their ranks. Against land-bound foes he will spring attack while flying, getting out of reach. If he finds himself overwhelmed, he has many items at his disposal for getting out of trouble. He simply tucks his gray longsword into his *glove of storing*, retrieves what he needs, uses it, then rearms himself.

If he expects a fight, Shaaladel will start off by drinking a potion of heroism, then has one of his assistants cast *daylight* on his sword for dramatic effect. Because of his reliance on magic items, Shaaladel is loath to go into battle against inquisitors, and usually sends his subordinates in first to dispatch them.

Unique Items As the ruler of a sovereign nation, Shaaladel has access to several magic items of impressive power.

The Gray Blade is a +5 *human-bane orc-bane keen longsword of life stealing*. Unlike the rest of his people, Shaaladel wields a sword that does not shed light. It is the result of a failed attempt to create a new Torch, and while the sword can drink life energy, it lacks the teleportation powers of the Torch. Whenever the *gray blade* deals a critical hit, it bestows a negative level and the wielder gains 1d6 temporary hit points, lasting 24 hours. One day after being struck, subjects must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or the level loss is permanent. CL 20; *Market Price* 145,715 gp.

Talon is a custom-made +5 *mithral light shield* that fits on Shaaladel's forearm and hand like a large, flared gauntlet. A trio of long blades extend over Shaaladel's hand like an eagle's talon, functioning as +5 *mithral defending frost ghost-touch light shield spikes*, except that they deal slashing damage. CL 20; *Market Price* 156,819 gp (26,009 for the shield plus 130,810 for the shield spikes).

Belt of physical perfection is a blue velvet sash with silver stitching, that grants a +6 enhancement bonus to the wearer's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. CL 12; *Market Price* 108,000 gp

Crown of Shining Glory is the sign of the ruler of Shahalesti. It grants its wearer a +6 enhancement bonus to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Additionally, it creates *shadow purge*, a 60-ft. emanation that eliminates all darkness and shadows, and wreathes Shaaladel and his allies in sparkling light. This effect can be deactivated at will, but Shaaladel keeps it up to defend against a particular shadowdancer. Finally, as a mark of Shaaladel's vanity, the crown conceals itself with *invisibility* so that the Lord of the Shining Land's aquiline features are not obscured. CL 14; *Market Price* 132,300 gp

Supreme Inquisitor Leska Merideus CR 21

The world seems to fade around Leska, sounds muted, colors faded, time drawing out so that nothing appears real except for her dark majesty. Despite her imperial grandeur, she is adorned with dozens of primitive shamanistic charms and amulets. Her face lies hidden behind a skeletal mask, long dark gloves conceal her hands, and regal crimson robes float around her body as if even gravity yields to her power. Only the flesh of her neck, jaw, and mouth is exposed, and her blood-red lips hint at a face filled with cold, scornful detachment.

Female human cleric 3/wizard 5/mystic theurge 10/
archmage 3

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0 (+18, *moment of prescience*); Senses Listen +4,
Spot +4; *true seeing*

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elf, Infernal, Orc

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 148 (21 HD)

Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +21

Immune disease, divination, energy drain, mind-affecting
effects, impaired movement, and poison

Buff Suite *mind blank, moment of prescience, true seeing*

Regeneration 30

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee melee touch +6 (varies)

Ranged ranged touch +7 (varies)

Base Atk +7; Grp +6

Combat Gear

Special Actions multispell, rebuke magic (6/day,
1d20+13 vs. 11+caster level)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th, save DC 14 + spell level)

7th – *spell turning*[◊], *spelleater**

6th – *antilife shell, fire seeds*^{◊**}, *heal*

5th – *flame strike****, *greater command, spell
resistance*[◊], *true seeing*

4th – *cure critical wounds, dimensional anchor,
dismissal, sending* ×3, *wall of fire*^{◊**}

3rd – *dispel magic*[◊], *invisibility purge, remove
blindness/deafness, remove curse, remove disease,
stone shape, wind wall*

2nd – *align weapon, identify*[◊], *lesser restoration, resist
energy* ×2, *silence* ×2, *sound burst*^{**}

1st – *burning hands*^{◊**}, *command* ×5, *deathwatch,
endure elements*

D Domain spell Domains Fire, Magic

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 18th, save DC 19 + spell
level) (Strikethrough spells are already cast.)

9th – *crushing hand*[◊] (+45 grapple), *summon monster
IX, time stop*[◊]

8th – *horrid wilting***, *mind-blank, moment-of
prescience*

7th – *delayed blast fireball***, *greater arcane sight,
mage's sword*[◊] (+30, 4d6+3, 19–20/×2)

6th – *greater dispel magic* ×4

5th – quickened *magic missile* ×2, *telekinesis*[◊] ×2**,
teleport ×2

4th – *charm monster, dimension door* ×2, *fire shield*[◊],
wall of fire ×2**

3rd – *fireball*^{◊**} ×3, *fly, haste, slow*

2nd – *arcane lock, detect thoughts* ×4, *protection from
arrows*

1st – *magic missile* ×3, *shield, wayfarer's step** ×3

* Presented in Appendix Three.

** Evocation or Necromancy spell. Save DC +2.

◊ Quickened, courtesy of metamagic rod.

Leska has used one 6th, two 7th, and one 8th level
spell slot for her archmage powers.

Epic Spells (2/day) – *Desertion of the Blade, Mythos
Scourge* (see page 75)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 28, Wis 18, Cha 16

SQ *Blessing of the Aquiline Heart, mastery of
counterspelling, mastery of elements, mastery of
shaping, contingent heal*

Feats Epic Spellcasting, Greater Spell Focus (evocation),
Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved
Counterspell, Multispell, Quicken Spell, Reactive
Counterspell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Spellcraft),
Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (necromancy)

Skills Concentration +25, Decipher Script +13,
Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (history) +33,
Knowledge (religion) +33, Knowledge (the planes) +33,
Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +45

Possessions *mask of Leska, cloak of fire, amulet of three
beasts, greater quicken metamagic rod, standard
quicken metamagic rod, lesser quicken metamagic rod*

Blessing of the Aquiline Heart (Ex): Leska is immortal.
She does not suffer ability score penalties from aging,
nor can she die of old age, but she does gain the

normal ability score bonuses. She has regeneration 30, and heals ability damage at a rate of 1 point per ability score per round. She is immune to disease, energy drain, and poison.

Almost no form of attack deals lethal damage to Leska. She regenerates even if she fails a saving throw against a *disintegrate* spell or a death effect. If she fails her save against a spell or effect that would kill her instantly (such as those mentioned above), the spell or effect instead deals nonlethal damage equal to her full normal hit points +10 (or 158 hp). Leska is immune to effects that produce incurable or bleeding wounds, such as mummy rot, a sword with the wounding special ability, or a clay golem's cursed wound ability.

If Leska loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 1d6 minutes (the detached piece dies and decays normally). She can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to her stump.

Only the bite or breath weapon of a true dragon deals lethal damage to Leska. She cannot regenerate Constitution damage from having her blood drunk. If Leska is completely exsanguinated (reduced to 0 Constitution by the blood drain of a vampire, for example), she loses this ability and is slain. If Leska has nonlethal damage equal to her hit points +10, she is unconscious and helpless. While she is helpless, a character may perform a *coup de grace* to impale her in the heart. As long as her heart is so pierced, Leska cannot regenerate.

Mastery of Counterspelling (Ex): When Leska counterspells a spell, it is turned back upon the caster as if it were fully affected by a *spell turning* spell. If the spell cannot be affected by *spell turning*, then it is merely counterspelled.

Mastery of Elements (Ex): Leska can alter an arcane spell when cast so that it utilizes a different element from the one it normally uses. This ability can only alter a spell with the acid, cold, fire, electricity, or sonic descriptor. The spell's casting time is unaffected. She decides whether to alter the spell's energy type and chooses the new energy type when she begins casting.

Mastery of Shaping (Ex): Leska can alter area and effect spells that use one of the following shapes: burst, cone, cylinder, emanation, or spread. The alteration consists of creating spaces within the spell's area or effect that are not subject to the spell. The minimum dimension for these spaces is a 5-foot cube. Furthermore, any shapeable spells have a minimum dimension of 5 feet instead of 10 feet.

Multispell (Ex): Leska can cast two quickened spells per round.

Reactive Counterspell (Ex): Leska can counterspell even when she has not readied an action, as long as she is aware of a spell being cast. If she does so, she gives up her standard action on her next turn, having effectively already used it.

Contingent Heal (Su): Leska has used *contingency* so that if she falls unconscious, a *heal* spell will be cast upon her (caster level 13th). After this effect triggers, the contingency is expended.

Mask of Leska: This skull-like mask, carved from one single bone and etched with gold, deadens the effects of magic upon the wearer, and focuses its wearer's mind. The wearer gains a +6 enhancement bonus to Intelligence and a +5 resistance bonus to saving throws. Market value 143,000 gp.

Cloak of Fire: Dark red like seared blood, this cloak grants its wearer constant *freedom of movement*. 40,000 gp.

Amulet of Three Beasts: Representing the planes of earth, life, and time, this amulet grants the wearer a +6 enhancement bonus to Constitution, and a +10 competence bonus to Spellcraft checks. Market value 46,000 gp.

Tactics: Leska has used three *metamagic rods of quicken* to prepare an array of magic, taking advantage of her Multispell feat to cast up to three spells per round. She has cast *mind blank* and *moment of prescience* already, and at the start of combat uses her prescient +18 insight bonus to her initiative check, which gives her a good chance of going first. She then casts a quickened *time stop*.

During the *time stop* she casts mostly defensive spells (*spell turning*, *quickened fire shield*, *quicked mage's sword* in round one; *quickened crushing hand* and *summon monster IX* for 1d3 hellcats in round two; then less critical ones, such as *greater arcane sight*, *shield*, and *fly*), and when the spell ends she unleashes her magical fury upon the heroes.

Leska has designed two epic spells, which she supplements with quickened *fireballs*, *magic missiles*, and *telekinesis* spells, taking advantage of her mastery of energy and shaping abilities to have the fireballs deal whatever damage the heroes are most vulnerable to, without hitting any of her allies.

She casts her first epic spell, *Desertion of the Blade*, in the first round of combat (since when her *time stop* ends, it's still her turn), turning the heroes' magic items against them. If Leska believes she may actually be defeated (such as when most of her allies are

defeated or after she has expended her contingent *heal* spell), she casts *Mythos Scourge*, and then fights to the death. After investing so much into her conquest, she is too proud to surrender or flee.

Note that these tactics assume that, for non-spontaneous spellcasters, metamagic rods must be used at the time of a spell's preparation, rather than when spells are cast. If you instead allow preparation-based magic-users to apply metamagic feats from rods on the fly, Leska keeps her three metamagic rods at her hip, and begins combat by drawing the greater rod, holding it until she has expended its power. Then she drops the rod, draws the next most powerful, and continues fighting. This is a good opportunity to show Leska's disdain for the heroes, and her willingness to cast aside things once they have served their purpose. She is so confident she will defeat them that she doesn't hesitate to drop a supremely expensive magic item on the ground. All the while, she quietly assures them that she will destroy them and all who stood with them.

Bear in mind, this encounter's probably too hard for 15th level PCs whose resources are expended from earlier in the adventure. But it's a climax, and they'll have allies helping, so don't be afraid to destroy them.

Epic Spell – Desertion of the Blade

Transmutation

Spellcraft DC: n/a

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Targets: 1 creature/level, all of which must be within 60 ft. of each other

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

You turn the possessions of your enemies against them, awakening a spark of malevolent sentience in even the most mundane magic items. Each round, each affected creature must make a Will save. Those who fail are beset by their own gear, taking 1d6 points of damage per magic item worn (maximum 12d6). This only includes items that take up body slots, not potions, scrolls, ioun stones, and the like.

Worn magical armor tugs at the wearer, making a bull rush attempt with a bonus equal to its armor bonus (so +5 *full plate* gets a +13 bonus). Magic weapons attack their holder with an attack bonus of your caster level + your prime ability score modifier + 3 (+30 in Leska's case). Held items which cast spells, such as wands and staves, cast their spells so as best to harm their wielder. Other effects may occur, at your discretion.

Affected creatures must make a new save each round, even if they previously succeeded.

Intelligent magic items and artifacts (such as the Living Blade of Innenotdar and the Torch of the Burning Sky) are unaffected.

Epic Spell – Mythos Scourge

Conjuration (Teleportation)

Spellcraft DC: n/a

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: See below

Targets: All creatures within 200 ft.

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You rip open the veils of reality, transporting nearby creatures into a demiplane where myth rules, then call forth an elder spirit of that myth to your enemies. All creatures within range are transported with you, and when the spell ends they all snap back to their previous reality.

When Leska uses this spell, the fortress vanishes from sight as the entire battle is transported to a cracked, dead field of white stones that stretches to the horizon in every direction. The heavens burn with fire, casting everything in a red haze, and stretching for a hundred feet behind Leska is the withered, dessicated corpse of a massive eagle, its rib cage exposed where its heart should be. High overhead, thunder roars as a serpent circles the battle, and with a gesture from Leska, the eagle cries as life suffuses it, and the dragon dives from the heavens.

Effectively, this summons a fiendish roc and a young adult red dragon, who attack the heroes. However, the Koren Obelisk is still present on the battlefield, and if it is destroyed or Leska is rendered unconscious, the spell ends.

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War of the Burning Sky

O, Wintry Song of Agony

by Jeremy Anderson and Ryan Nock

As war rages on multiple fronts, the heroes call together their allies for a strike against a secret, frozen fortress that defends the Scourge.

Deep in the icy heart of northern Ragesia, the Scourge is Supreme Inquisitor Leska's greatest weapon: a device powered by the suffering of thousands of prisoners which, if completed, could annihilate a city from across the world.

The heroes must assault this fortress deep in enemy territory, but can they destroy the doomsday weapon before they fall victim to a wintry song of agony?

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