

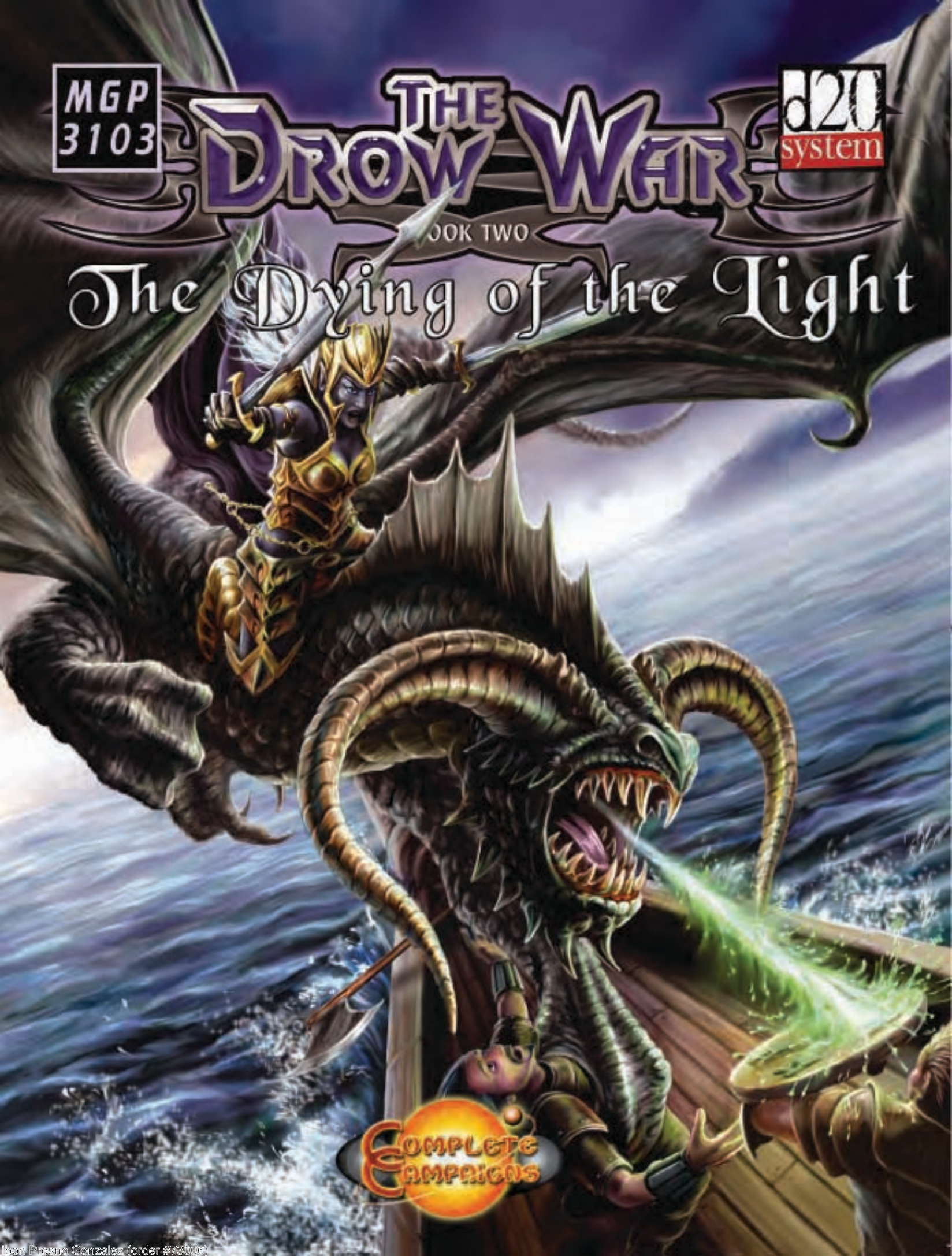
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# THE DROW WAR

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BOOK TWO

## The Dying of the Light



COMPLETE  
CAMPAIGNS





# THE DROW WAR

## BOOK TWO

### The Dying of the Light

<b>Author</b> Adrian Bott	<b>Introduction</b>	2
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# Introduction

Welcome to *The Drow War, Book Two: The Dying of the Light!*

This is a linked series of three 256-page books. Each one contains a single epic story broken into ten parts, thus making thirty discrete adventures in total, all tied in to one overarching saga.

The adventures are structured to take the characters concerned from 1<sup>st</sup> level to 30<sup>th</sup> level. Each book covers a span of ten levels, meaning that every adventure will (if completed successfully) advance the characters by approximately one level of experience. Naturally, this outcome is not guaranteed, nor is the progress going to be one long grind!

The story of the Drow War continues where it left off, in the aftermath of the war for Caldraza. A mysterious messenger brings the news that the threat of the drow is by no means wiped out. A strike from below will come any day now. Powerful friends wait to aid the Player Characters in the city of Crom Calamar, the unconquered capital of Jehannum, Nation of Warriors.

The attack comes in a way nobody could have foreseen – from below. Immense battle-spires, the Darkspears, smash up through the city streets and shed a pall of unending night across the rooftops and battlements. In the course of a day, a whole nation falls to the drow and the crowned heads of Ashfar are thrown into turmoil. The Player Characters are thrown centre stage, as the fate of the entire world is placed upon their shoulders. At Xoth Sarandi, the island called the Crossroads of the World, the diplomats convene and it is there that the Player Characters must make their stand.

First, though, there is an ocean to cross, with strange secrets brooding in the deep. The menace of the maelstrom is not the mere ocean hazard that it appears, and the pirate tribe called the Sea Harriers prove to be more than just a band of opportunistic brigands. Legends tell of sunken cities far to the south, but not all sunken cities stay sunken, not when there are deals to be made with ancient creatures from times before mankind arose.

Xoth Sarandi provides the opportunity to play politics and avoid the daggers of assassins in back alleys. New friends provide welcome help; the guidance of a Conclave of powerful elven mages, tired of their government's endless neutrality, gives the Player Characters valuable leads to follow. To break the drow's dark spell, the Players must find out how it was woven, which leads to quests into the most icy and remote corners of the world. From there, gateways to worlds darker and more sinister still offer new challenging dimensions.

The long road to final confrontation with the drow takes the Player Characters to deep, accursed deserts, cities where the memories of the dead walk, mines deep underground where traitors plot and scheme, the workshops of the grey dwarves where mechanical monstrosities wait to be unleashed and ultimately to distant peaks where only dragons dwell.

Ultimately, the Player Characters will be the force to unite the free nations against the drow, if they have the wit and the will to do so. In this series of adventures, they are doing more than avoiding traps and killing monsters. They must mobilise armies, hold counsel with kings and give the orders that, as every oracle knows, always lead to death. Whether the Players or the Dark prevail remains to be seen; there are no set endings and no certain answers. Failure is always a possibility, as without the threat of failure, there is no reward in victory.

*The Drow War, Book Two: The Dying of the Light* continues the adventure begun in *The Drow War, Book One: The Gathering Storm*. The campaign concludes in *The Drow War, Book Three: The Darkest Hour*.



# De Profundis

This chapter catapults the Player Characters into the action right away, with the formerly impregnable city of Crom Calamar invaded from the one direction nobody expected... directly below.

## How the Adventure Sections Work

For the Games Master's convenience, the various different sections of the adventure are divided into types. These are Summary, Location, Plot Event, Event, Non-Player Character, Information and Aftermath.

**Summary:** This is a brief summary of the adventure chapter.

**Location:** Entries of this type describe locations that the Player Characters may visit, whether or not there is anything happening there at the time. These can be resources, such as a tavern, or features of tactical importance, such as a marsh or defensive wall. Note that a group's headquarters and its personnel are listed separately, as the group is not bound to one place. For example, a rogues' guild meetinghouse is a Location, while the guild itself is a Non-Player Character group.

**Plot Event:** These entries describe occurrences that drive the main story forward. They happen irrespective of the Player Characters' actions. They are rare, because the Player Characters themselves advance the story for the most part. A plot event usually happens when the Player Characters reach an area for the first time or when they achieve some decisive objective. The Player Characters cannot avoid plot events, though they can always choose to delay reacting to them or ignore them altogether.

**Event:** These events can be included at the Games Master's discretion, as and when appropriate. They are not destined to happen but may occur as a result of the Player Characters' actions. For example, an event may involve the imprisonment of the Player Characters after they decide to break into a building and are caught. Events frequently involve combat and are recommended for livening up a session when the Player Characters want something to fight or when they are running behind on experience.

**Non-Player Character:** Both individuals and groups are covered by this type of entry. Non-Player Characters

have lives of their own, which they get on with whether the Player Characters are there to see them or not. If a character or monster is of more importance than just one encounter, it will be described here; otherwise, it is given an 'Event' entry.

**Information:** This entry type gives information that the Games Master needs to know and the Player Characters can find out. It is most commonly used for rumours and legends which can be found out by the use of the Gather Information skill or Bardic Knowledge checks.

**Aftermath:** This kind of entry details the various ways the plot can unfold after a key decision has been made or a critical encounter passed. Aftermath entries include information on experience point bonuses, character rewards, victory points and the fates of the Non-Player Characters involved.

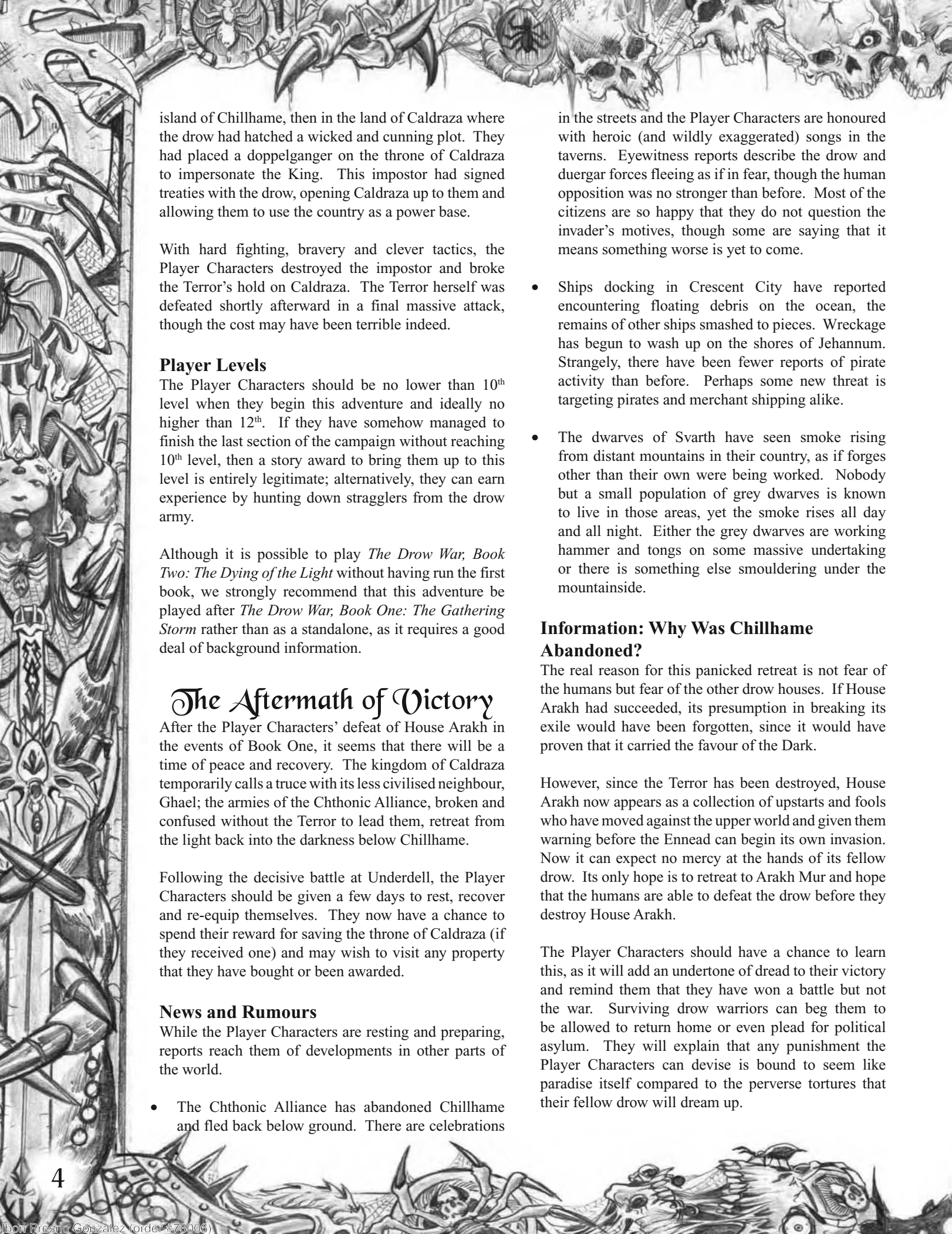
## What Has Gone Before

In Book One of *The Drow War*, the Player Characters learned of a force of subterranean warriors who were bent on the conquest of the upper world. They discovered that these warriors served – or aspired to serve – an overwhelming force called the Dark, a cosmic energy balanced and opposed by the force of the Stars, as personified in the figure of the goddess Nuith. The Player Characters themselves later discovered that they were living incarnations of the Stars, heroes sent forth in a time of need, just as had happened before in times long past.

For reasons unknown, the Dark had chosen to favour an exiled, disgraced house of the drow, House Arakh, incarnating itself in an avatar known as the Terror. House Arakh was not a part of the enormous Drow Empire, having been removed from it after the last war a thousand years ago. The other drow warlords looked on with interest, wondering why the Dark was operating through these disgraced ones. Perhaps they were being given a second chance? The Ennead, the ruling council of the drow, chose to observe rather than to intervene. Let this Terror prove herself; and if she prevailed, House Arakh would be welcomed back into the drow empire.

The first battles of the Drow War were fought on the defensive and in retreat, first from the beleaguered





island of Chillhame, then in the land of Caldraza where the drow had hatched a wicked and cunning plot. They had placed a doppelganger on the throne of Caldraza to impersonate the King. This impostor had signed treaties with the drow, opening Caldraza up to them and allowing them to use the country as a power base.

With hard fighting, bravery and clever tactics, the Player Characters destroyed the impostor and broke the Terror's hold on Caldraza. The Terror herself was defeated shortly afterward in a final massive attack, though the cost may have been terrible indeed.

### Player Levels

The Player Characters should be no lower than 10<sup>th</sup> level when they begin this adventure and ideally no higher than 12<sup>th</sup>. If they have somehow managed to finish the last section of the campaign without reaching 10<sup>th</sup> level, then a story award to bring them up to this level is entirely legitimate; alternatively, they can earn experience by hunting down stragglers from the drow army.

Although it is possible to play *The Drow War, Book Two: The Dying of the Light* without having run the first book, we strongly recommend that this adventure be played after *The Drow War, Book One: The Gathering Storm* rather than as a standalone, as it requires a good deal of background information.

## The Aftermath of Victory

After the Player Characters' defeat of House Arakh in the events of Book One, it seems that there will be a time of peace and recovery. The kingdom of Caldraza temporarily calls a truce with its less civilised neighbour, Ghael; the armies of the Chthonic Alliance, broken and confused without the Terror to lead them, retreat from the light back into the darkness below Chillhame.

Following the decisive battle at Underdell, the Player Characters should be given a few days to rest, recover and re-equip themselves. They now have a chance to spend their reward for saving the throne of Caldraza (if they received one) and may wish to visit any property that they have bought or been awarded.

### News and Rumours

While the Player Characters are resting and preparing, reports reach them of developments in other parts of the world.

- The Chthonic Alliance has abandoned Chillhame and fled back below ground. There are celebrations

in the streets and the Player Characters are honoured with heroic (and wildly exaggerated) songs in the taverns. Eyewitness reports describe the drow and duergar forces fleeing as if in fear, though the human opposition was no stronger than before. Most of the citizens are so happy that they do not question the invader's motives, though some are saying that it means something worse is yet to come.

- Ships docking in Crescent City have reported encountering floating debris on the ocean, the remains of other ships smashed to pieces. Wreckage has begun to wash up on the shores of Jehannum. Strangely, there have been fewer reports of pirate activity than before. Perhaps some new threat is targeting pirates and merchant shipping alike.
- The dwarves of Svarth have seen smoke rising from distant mountains in their country, as if forges other than their own were being worked. Nobody but a small population of grey dwarves is known to live in those areas, yet the smoke rises all day and all night. Either the grey dwarves are working hammer and tongs on some massive undertaking or there is something else smouldering under the mountainside.

### Information: Why Was Chillhame Abandoned?

The real reason for this panicked retreat is not fear of the humans but fear of the other drow houses. If House Arakh had succeeded, its presumption in breaking its exile would have been forgotten, since it would have proven that it carried the favour of the Dark.

However, since the Terror has been destroyed, House Arakh now appears as a collection of upstarts and fools who have moved against the upper world and given them warning before the Ennead can begin its own invasion. Now it can expect no mercy at the hands of its fellow drow. Its only hope is to retreat to Arakh Mur and hope that the humans are able to defeat the drow before they destroy House Arakh.

The Player Characters should have a chance to learn this, as it will add an undertone of dread to their victory and remind them that they have won a battle but not the war. Surviving drow warriors can beg them to be allowed to return home or even plead for political asylum. They will explain that any punishment the Player Characters can devise is bound to seem like paradise itself compared to the perverse tortures that their fellow drow will dream up.

If any player wants to bring in a drow character, then he can do so now. This is (for once) a plausible reason for a drow to change sides and ally with the Starborn.

## The Messenger

The adventure proper begins when a strange messenger arrives in Caldraz and makes straight for the Player Characters, wherever they may be.

### Plot Event: The Clockwork Knight

The messenger resembles a fully armoured knight riding upon a sturdy warhorse. He never speaks a word and only communicates by nodding, shaking his head or writing words down on paper. Those who are close to him hear ticks, pings and clicks as he moves, suggesting that there is nobody inside the armour, only a collection of ingenious clockwork parts. Wherever the Player Characters are, he will find them.

The messenger makes his way to where the Player Characters are, without concern for what they may be doing at the time. He has a message to deliver; if they are asleep, drunk after the celebration or even in the bath, he does not care.

Once he has the attention of the Player Characters, the messenger will gather them together and make a sign that he needs paper and ink. Once he has them, he will begin to write:

*To the Starborn,*

*We apologise for this unusual method of communication; circumstance forced it. Our messenger has his faults, but he can be trusted to deliver a message exactly as it was given to him. You have enemies who would have seized upon a mortal messenger instantly and devoured him, so instead we send the Clockwork Knight, the finest construct of the gnomes of Vella. He is both resilient and hard to detect; most importantly, he has no mind and so this message cannot be extracted from him by sorcery or torture.*

*The danger posed by the minions of the Dark is far from over. We now face no mere house of bitter exiles, but the true conclave of the drow, the Ennead. Even now they are preparing to strike at the kingdom of Jehannum, the most strongly fortified country in all of eastern Ashfar. We understand that it seems bizarre that so militaristic and entrenched a nation could be at risk, but that is nonetheless the situation. Furthermore, their eyes are turned upon Crom Calamar itself, the seat of the Iron Dukes.*

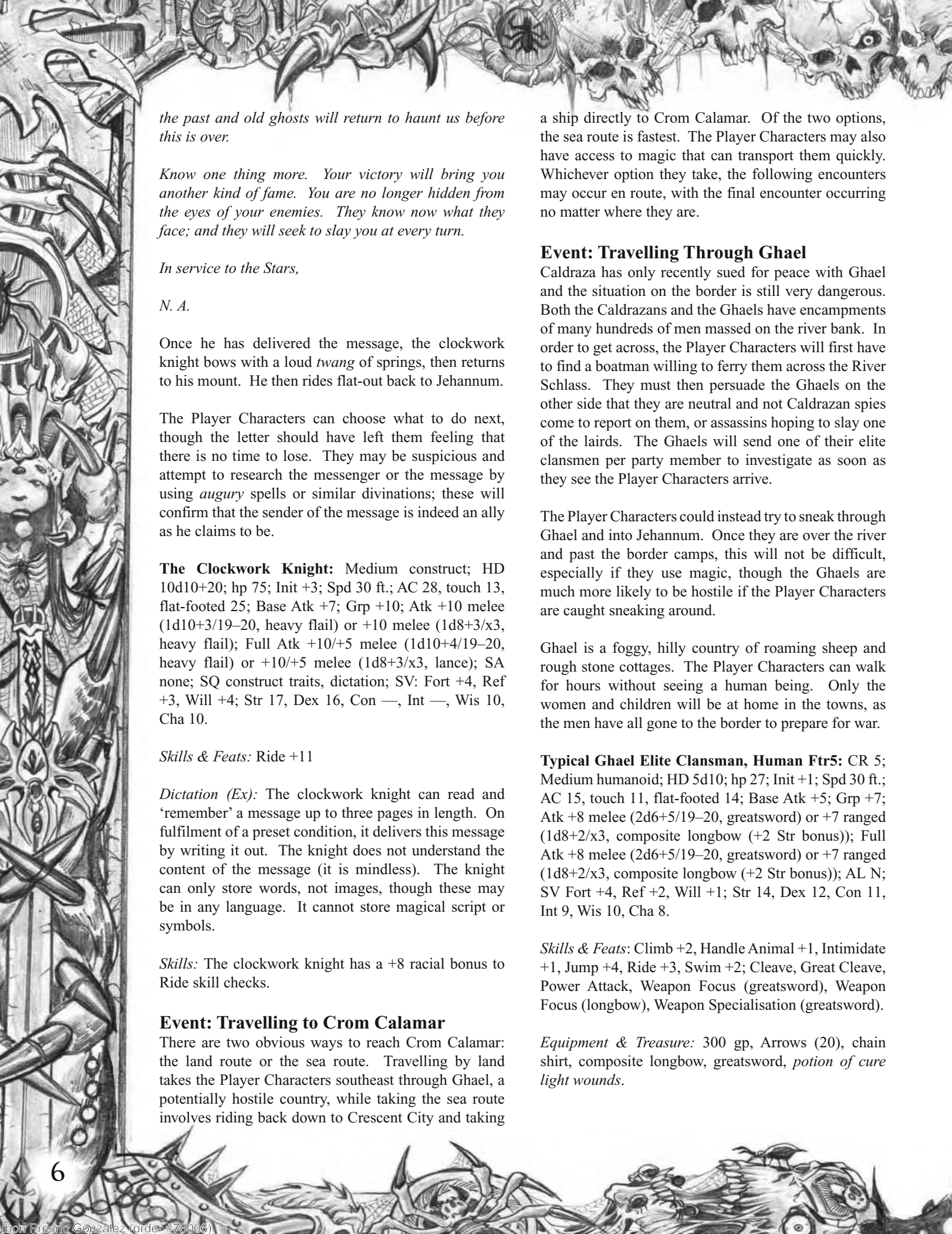


*You may ask how they plan to take such a mighty city, and indeed we ourselves are unsure of their methods. This, though, we know: the drow will come from beneath the city, not from outside it as they did at Saragost. There are many tunnels beneath Crom Calamar, some of which have been shunned for years, especially in the tomb districts where the Halls of Groaning lie. It is imperative that these tunnels be guarded.*

*In defeating Mezelline the so-called Terror, the brat of House Arakh, you became heroes to the people. You can no longer be dismissed as mere adventurers seeking glory. We can only hope that the Iron Dukes of Burgenstoch Castle hold you in the same respect as the Caldrazans do. You must travel to Crom Calamar and warn them. The drow may strike at any moment, so travel with all speed. Once the Iron Dukes are given warning, we may begin to prepare our counterattack. The days of flight and alarms will soon be over and we will take the fight to them.*

*When you have spoken to the Iron Dukes, come to the Inn of the Green Embers in the west of Crom Calamar. Either the Clockwork Knight or I myself will meet you there. It is my hope that upon that meeting, I will be able to tell you more of my allies and myself. There is much yet to tell; the earth barely covers the bones of*





*the past and old ghosts will return to haunt us before this is over.*

*Know one thing more. Your victory will bring you another kind of fame. You are no longer hidden from the eyes of your enemies. They know now what they face; and they will seek to slay you at every turn.*

*In service to the Stars,*

*N. A.*

Once he has delivered the message, the clockwork knight bows with a loud *twang* of springs, then returns to his mount. He then rides flat-out back to Jehannum.

The Player Characters can choose what to do next, though the letter should have left them feeling that there is no time to lose. They may be suspicious and attempt to research the messenger or the message by using *augury* spells or similar divinations; these will confirm that the sender of the message is indeed an ally as he claims to be.

**The Clockwork Knight:** Medium construct; HD 10d10+20; hp 75; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 28, touch 13, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d10+3/19–20, heavy flail) or +10 melee (1d8+3/x3, heavy flail); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d10+4/19–20, heavy flail) or +10/+5 melee (1d8+3/x3, lance); SA none; SQ construct traits, dictation; SV: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills & Feats:* Ride +11

*Dictation (Ex):* The clockwork knight can read and ‘remember’ a message up to three pages in length. On fulfilment of a preset condition, it delivers this message by writing it out. The knight does not understand the content of the message (it is mindless). The knight can only store words, not images, though these may be in any language. It cannot store magical script or symbols.

*Skills:* The clockwork knight has a +8 racial bonus to Ride skill checks.

### **Event: Travelling to Crom Calamar**

There are two obvious ways to reach Crom Calamar: the land route or the sea route. Travelling by land takes the Player Characters southeast through Ghael, a potentially hostile country, while taking the sea route involves riding back down to Crescent City and taking

a ship directly to Crom Calamar. Of the two options, the sea route is fastest. The Player Characters may also have access to magic that can transport them quickly. Whichever option they take, the following encounters may occur en route, with the final encounter occurring no matter where they are.

### **Event: Travelling Through Ghael**

Caldraza has only recently sued for peace with Ghael and the situation on the border is still very dangerous. Both the Caldrazans and the Ghaels have encampments of many hundreds of men massed on the river bank. In order to get across, the Player Characters will first have to find a boatman willing to ferry them across the River Schlass. They must then persuade the Ghaels on the other side that they are neutral and not Caldrazan spies come to report on them, or assassins hoping to slay one of the lairds. The Ghaels will send one of their elite clansmen per party member to investigate as soon as they see the Player Characters arrive.


The Player Characters could instead try to sneak through Ghael and into Jehannum. Once they are over the river and past the border camps, this will not be difficult, especially if they use magic, though the Ghaels are much more likely to be hostile if the Player Characters are caught sneaking around.

Ghael is a foggy, hilly country of roaming sheep and rough stone cottages. The Player Characters can walk for hours without seeing a human being. Only the women and children will be at home in the towns, as the men have all gone to the border to prepare for war.

**Typical Ghael Elite Clansman, Human Ftr5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d10; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (2d6+5/19–20, greatsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+2/x3, composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); Full Atk +8 melee (2d6+5/19–20, greatsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+2/x3, composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +2, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +1, Jump +4, Ride +3, Swim +2; Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialisation (greatsword).

*Equipment & Treasure:* 300 gp, Arrows (20), chain shirt, composite longbow, greatsword, *potion of cure light wounds*.



The border of Ghael and Jehannum is obviously guarded, with the gigantic fortress of Ellenbek towering above the hills. Player Characters heading towards Jehannum will meet an intercepting force of knights coming the other way, who will politely but firmly demand to know their business. There is one less knight than there are members in the party.

If the Player Characters act in a suspicious manner, the knights will insist on searching them; if they are stupid enough to start a fight, the knights will attempt to hack them to pieces on the spot, calling for reinforcements from the fortress if needed. For the knights' statistics, see the Special Reserve Elite City Guard statistic block below.

Duke Gormick, the Wolf of the West, is in charge of the fortress. If the Player Characters conduct themselves well, he will invite them in to refresh themselves and, if they are persuasive, offer to escort them to Crom Calamar to meet with the other dukes. Gormick takes the threat of the drow very seriously and is taken aback when the other dukes do not.

### Event: Sailing to Crom Calamar

The Player Characters can easily book passage on a ship travelling from Crescent City to Crom Calamar, as dozens leave every day. If they still have the *Elensil*, the ship they were given in Book One, then they can travel in her; this is the fastest possible option.

**The Wreck of the *Unvanquishable*:** During the journey, the Player Characters are called up on deck to look at a strange sight (alternatively, one of them can be the first to see it). Drifting past their vessel is a mass of flotsam that is clearly the remains of a ship. The debris has not spread out very far, so the wreck is very recent. With a successful Spot check (DC 20), one of the Player Characters notices the name of the ship on a bobbing plank: the *Unvanquishable*.

A successful Knowledge (local) check (DC 25) or a Bardic Knowledge check (DC 25) identifies the *Unvanquishable* as one of the Jehannum warships that patrolled the waters around the sea-portal to keep it safe from pirates. Some mighty force has shattered it like a gull's egg. A successful Survival check (DC 15) picks up on an ominous feature of this disaster: there seem to be no bodies, let alone any survivors.

It is impossible to tell what sort of force destroyed the ship, but several possibilities can be ruled out. A Search check (DC 20) reveals the following clues. There is no sign of any fire damage, so it was not an explosion;



and there are many small pieces of drifting debris rather than a single hulk, so the ship was smashed or torn apart rather than holed and sunk.

As they near Crom Calamar, they see a titanic stone arch out to sea. This is the sea-portal, the magical gateway that provides a shortcut between this country and Xoth Sarandi. Iridescent lights like the gleams of a soap bubble glimmer faintly between the pillars. There is also an odd stench in the air as they come near, like that of a massive dead fish fetched up from the sea bottom. This is the reek of Omorogg the Kraken, which recently surfaced to destroy the *Unvanquishable*.

The harbour at Crom Calamar is, like everything else in Jehannum, fortified beyond belief. Two forts stand at either side of the river mouth, their batteries of siege catapults and ballistae ready to unleash a barrage on any incoming vessel that does not fly a friendly flag. In the river's centre is a squat tower, the Rook, which is also heavily set about with war machinery.

### Plot Event: The Eye Is Turned Upon You

The drow wizard Rannirak is currently preparing to invade Crom Calamar and is aware of the danger that the Starborn pose. Beginning on the first day of the adventure, he attempts to spy on one of the Player Characters using *greater scrying* and repeats this attempt every day until he is successful. The DC for the Will saving throw against this is 23, though the Player Characters gain a +5 bonus to their saving throws as Rannirak has never met them in person and has only heard of them through reports.





It is likely that at some point one of the Player Characters will fail the saving throw and Rannirak will discover their location. As soon as he knows this (and can see them) he will use his knowledge of their likeness to send forth his ally, the demon-spider Gugloth, to destroy them. Gugloth is a retriever and is thus well able to track them down.

This event will happen during the night. Rannirak will *teleport* himself and Gugloth to a nearby location and then *teleport* back, as he is far too busy with battle plans to confront the Starborn personally. Any Player within 150 feet of this senses the sudden presence of a member of the Host for a few seconds. Gugloth will either head straight for the Player Characters (if they are unprepared for a fight) or lurk in the darkness and wait for the best moment.

**Gugloth:** CR 11; Huge construct (extraplanar); HD 10d10+80; hp 135; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +25; Atk +15 melee (2d6+10, claw) and +8 ranged touch (eye ray); Full Atk +15 melee (2d6+10, 4 claws) and +10 melee (1d8+5, bite) and +8 ranged touch (eye ray); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA eye rays, *find target*, improved grab; SQ construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 31, Dex 17, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

**Eye Rays (Su):** Gugloth's eyes can produce four different magical rays with a range of 100 feet. Each round, it can fire one ray as a free action. A particular ray is usable only once every four rounds. Gugloth can fire an eye ray in the same round that it makes physical attacks. The saving throw DC for all rays is 18. The four eye effects are:

**Fire:** Deals 12d6 points of fire damage to the target (Reflex saving throw for half damage).

**Cold:** Deals 12d6 points of cold damage to the target (Reflex saving throw for half damage).

**Electricity:** Deals 12d6 points of electricity damage to the target (Reflex saving throw for half damage).

**Petrifaction:** The target must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw or turn to stone permanently.

**Find Target (Sp):** When ordered to find an item or a creature, Gugloth does so unerringly, as though guided by *discern location*. This ability is the equivalent of an 8<sup>th</sup> level spell.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Gugloth must hit with its bite attack. 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 grips the opponent fast in its mouth.

The Player Characters may well wonder how the demon-spider was able to find them. Evidently the drow, or some ally of theirs, is aware of their destination – or perhaps the writer of the letter has led them into a trap?

## Crom Calamar

This river port city has been a hive of human civilisation for as long as records can recall. It is far from beautiful and resembles a warlord's dream of military security. The only small elements of humanity and comfort come from the civilian population, painting murals on the walls, hanging bright flags out of their windows and growing flowers in window boxes. The Iron Dukes tolerate this in the lower city, so long as no military installation is ever daubed with paint.

A grim wall of stone blocks topped with iron spikes surrounds the main sprawl of the city. Above this, the upper city can clearly be seen. This is an area to the

### Crom Calamar

**Size:** Metropolis

**Population:** 35,000


**Racial Mix:** 79% human, 9% dwarf, 8% half-orc, 3% elf, 1% half-elf

**GP Limit:** 40,000

**Power Centre 1:** The Iron Dukes

**Power Centre 2:** Bomber Haggon and the Svarth Armaments Consortium

**Executive Authority:** Grand Warden Pellham (Ftr 20) and the city guardsmen



northwest, a built-up hill in a bend in the river that was the original settlement. This has its own name: Crom Crythni. It is restricted to the nobility and the generals, who rarely descend to the lower city. The architecture here is far more pleasing to the eye; many of the buildings are antique structures dating from the days of elven colonisation, preserved behind high walls for centuries.

At the northern end of Crom Crythni, keeping the whole region in its shadow, stands Burgenstoch Castle, a grotesque fortress of iron-barbed towers and thick layers of metal plating over ancient stonework. A flight of steps called the Shadrill Stair, flanked by watchtowers, connects the upper and lower cities.

### Non-Player Character Group: The Citizens

Crom Calamar, and indeed the entire country of Jehannum, operates a martial code of enfranchisement. If one is registered as a warrior, then one is entitled to vote on any issue that the Iron Dukes present to the people for resolution, including on the question of who should succeed any duke who resigns or dies. The rationale is that only those who fight in their country's defence deserve to have a say in how that country is governed.

In order to be registered, one must either be enrolled (or have served time) in the army of Jehannum or be a member of a volunteer militia for one's town or city. In cities, the militia are organised by district. All one has to do to join one is demonstrate competence with a weapon and sign up, pledging to take part in the defence of one's community should it be threatened.

The residents of Crom Calamar have a knee-jerk contempt for anyone who does not seem like a warrior or fighter. Clerics are all right if they do their part in the fighting. Wizards and sorcerers are an unfortunate necessity, useful for making the best armour and weapons but not the kind of people one would socialise with out of choice. The populace views them as aberrations. As they are dependent upon their magic to compensate for their physical weakness, they never have a chance to toughen themselves up.

Barbarians are good drinking companions, rangers tend to be scruffy but are tolerable and monks are admirable combatants but a little too caught up in all of that mystical stuff. Rogues are rarely worth associating with, paladins are excellent fellows (they set such good examples) and druids – well, the druids are just incomprehensible. *Wooden armour? What is*

wrong with a good solid piece of shaped metal on one's body?

Almost all of Crom Calamar's citizens are armed all the time, even if it is only with a dagger or hand-axe. Their weapons are the signs of their citizenship. Being seen in public without a weapon is like being seen naked: it draws stares and whispered comments or even insults.

The following modifiers apply in Crom Calamar:

- Any Player who is obviously a wizard, sorcerer or druid suffers a  $-2$  circumstance penalty to checks made to influence others' opinions, such as Diplomacy checks. He will also have to pay 150% of the listed price for any item.
- Any Player who does not carry an openly displayed weapon suffers an additional  $-2$  penalty to the above checks.
- Failing to accept a challenge is considered cowardly. Any Player who refuses an invitation to a fight will have a default reaction of Hostile from that point onwards until he regains his honour by fighting an opponent.

**Typical Crom Calamar Citizen (Militia Member), Human War2:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+5; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword); AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

*Skills & Feats:* Intimidate +3, Profession (any) +1, Ride +4; Power Attack, Toughness.


*Equipment & Treasure:* Short sword, studded leather armour.

### Information: Rumours in Crom Calamar

Player Characters can glean basic information about the city without needing to make a check, as it is common knowledge.

**Basic Information:** Crom Calamar is the capital of Jehannum. Every citizen goes armed, because only people who can fight are counted as citizens. The Iron Dukes are in charge. These are nine of the city's finest, elected by the citizens, who meet up at Burgenstoch to decide policy. By long-established tradition, every Iron Duke wears an iron mask when appearing in public or before strangers, to protect his identity and to emphasise





that his office is not the same thing as his personality. There are many fine craftsmen in Crom Calamar but the finest of all is Bomber Haggon, a dwarf. The dwarves of Svarth have been the friends and allies of the Jehannese for as long as anyone can remember.

Jehannum is the most powerful and stable nation in all of Eastern Ashfar. If it were not for Jehannum holding everything together, the other nations would be at each other's throats.

**Rumours:** The information below can be gleaned with a Gather Information check. The check result determines the quality of information. A high check result also gives all the information that would have been gained from lower results.

**10–14:** The iron masks that the dukes wear have magical powers. The drow used to hold land right here in Jehannum but were driven off. The upper city, Crom Crythni, is much older than the lower part. The tomb district has many underground chambers, which are called the Halls of Groaning and are forbidden to all. One is allowed to enter the graveyards but may not descend below, as it insults the ancestors. If anyone asks one to fight, it is bad manners to refuse. A touring show recently came through town: the Amazing Brexel

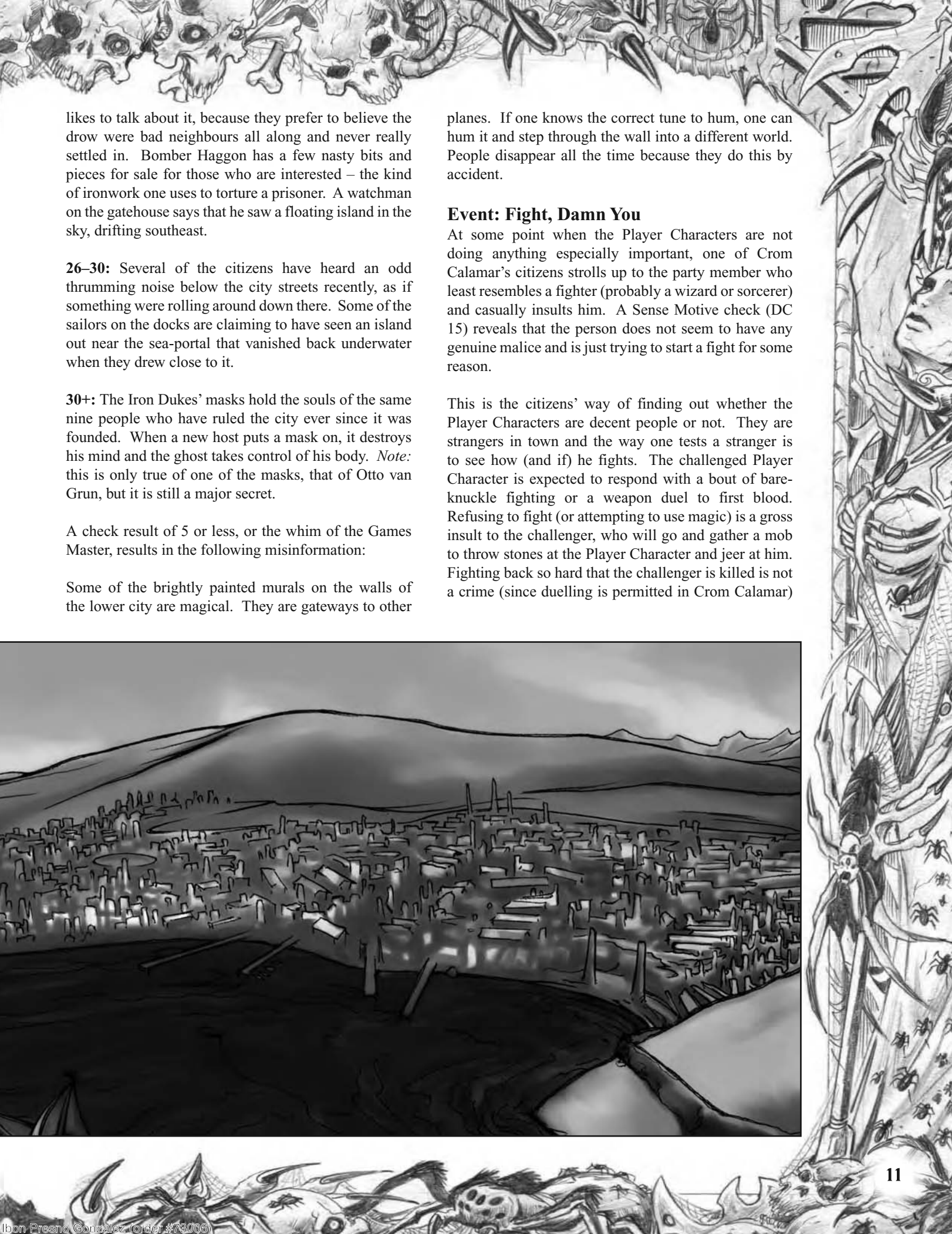
and his Shadow Puppets. It was fantastic entertainment and it is a shame the Player Characters missed it.

**15–20:** The drow who used to live here were not only driven away, they were massacred by the hundreds. They were the descendents of non-combatants left fatherless by the last war. Humans used to collect drow scalps and claim bounties for them. Bomber Haggon is more than just a merchant; he effectively runs the lower city, since he owns so much of it. Fortunately, he counts himself an ally of the Iron Dukes.

There is a mighty sepulchre deep within the Halls of Groaning that holds the bodies of a hundred Jehannese knights, who discovered a prophecy that the settlement of Crom Calamar would be burned down within their lifetimes unless the blood of its bravest warriors became part of its walls forever. They fell on their own swords and mixed their blood with the mortar that now binds the stones of Burgenstoch together. Legends say that when the city has need of them, a truly brave warrior will be given the power to wake them from the sleep of death and call them to defend the city once again.

**21–25:** The real reason the humans turned on the drow was because the elves of Xoth Sarandi offered them huge piles of treasure to go back on their word. Nobody





likes to talk about it, because they prefer to believe the drow were bad neighbours all along and never really settled in. Bomber Haggon has a few nasty bits and pieces for sale for those who are interested – the kind of ironwork one uses to torture a prisoner. A watchman on the gatehouse says that he saw a floating island in the sky, drifting southeast.

**26–30:** Several of the citizens have heard an odd thrumming noise below the city streets recently, as if something were rolling around down there. Some of the sailors on the docks are claiming to have seen an island out near the sea-portal that vanished back underwater when they drew close to it.

**30+:** The Iron Dukes' masks hold the souls of the same nine people who have ruled the city ever since it was founded. When a new host puts a mask on, it destroys his mind and the ghost takes control of his body. *Note:* this is only true of one of the masks, that of Otto van Grun, but it is still a major secret.

A check result of 5 or less, or the whim of the Games Master, results in the following misinformation:

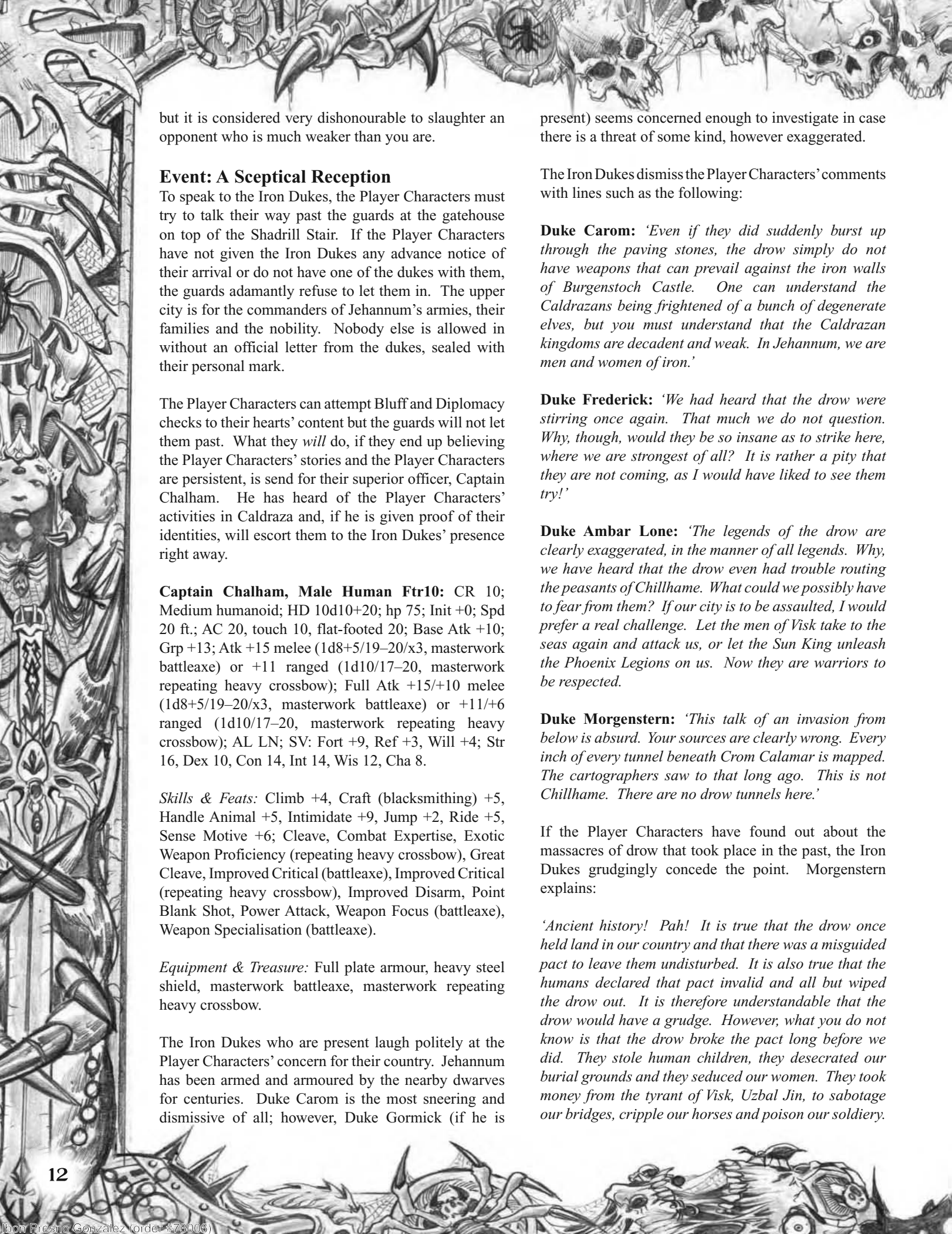
Some of the brightly painted murals on the walls of the lower city are magical. They are gateways to other

planes. If one knows the correct tune to hum, one can hum it and step through the wall into a different world. People disappear all the time because they do this by accident.

**Event: Fight, Damn You**

At some point when the Player Characters are not doing anything especially important, one of Crom Calamar's citizens strolls up to the party member who least resembles a fighter (probably a wizard or sorcerer) and casually insults him. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals that the person does not seem to have any genuine malice and is just trying to start a fight for some reason.

This is the citizens' way of finding out whether the Player Characters are decent people or not. They are strangers in town and the way one tests a stranger is to see how (and if) he fights. The challenged Player Character is expected to respond with a bout of bare-knuckle fighting or a weapon duel to first blood. Refusing to fight (or attempting to use magic) is a gross insult to the challenger, who will go and gather a mob to throw stones at the Player Character and jeer at him. Fighting back so hard that the challenger is killed is not a crime (since duelling is permitted in Crom Calamar)



but it is considered very dishonourable to slaughter an opponent who is much weaker than you are.

### Event: A Sceptical Reception

To speak to the Iron Dukes, the Player Characters must try to talk their way past the guards at the gatehouse on top of the Shadrill Stair. If the Player Characters have not given the Iron Dukes any advance notice of their arrival or do not have one of the dukes with them, the guards adamantly refuse to let them in. The upper city is for the commanders of Jehannum's armies, their families and the nobility. Nobody else is allowed in without an official letter from the dukes, sealed with their personal mark.

The Player Characters can attempt Bluff and Diplomacy checks to their hearts' content but the guards will not let them past. What they will do, if they end up believing the Player Characters' stories and the Player Characters are persistent, is send for their superior officer, Captain Chalham. He has heard of the Player Characters' activities in Caldraza and, if he is given proof of their identities, will escort them to the Iron Dukes' presence right away.

**Captain Chalham, Male Human Ftr10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d10+20; hp 75; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d8+5/19–20/x3, masterwork battleaxe) or +11 ranged (1d10/17–20, masterwork repeating heavy crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+5/19–20/x3, masterwork battleaxe) or +11/+6 ranged (1d10/17–20, masterwork repeating heavy crossbow); AL LN; SV: Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Skills & Feats:** Climb +4, Craft (blacksmithing) +5, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +9, Jump +2, Ride +5, Sense Motive +6; Cleave, Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (repeating heavy crossbow), Great Cleave, Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Critical (repeating heavy crossbow), Improved Disarm, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialisation (battleaxe).

**Equipment & Treasure:** Full plate armour, heavy steel shield, masterwork battleaxe, masterwork repeating heavy crossbow.

The Iron Dukes who are present laugh politely at the Player Characters' concern for their country. Jehannum has been armed and armoured by the nearby dwarves for centuries. Duke Carom is the most sneering and dismissive of all; however, Duke Gormick (if he is

present) seems concerned enough to investigate in case there is a threat of some kind, however exaggerated.

The Iron Dukes dismiss the Player Characters' comments with lines such as the following:

**Duke Carom:** *'Even if they did suddenly burst up through the paving stones, the drow simply do not have weapons that can prevail against the iron walls of Burgenstoch Castle. One can understand the Caldrazans being frightened of a bunch of degenerate elves, but you must understand that the Caldrazan kingdoms are decadent and weak. In Jehannum, we are men and women of iron.'*

**Duke Frederick:** *'We had heard that the drow were stirring once again. That much we do not question. Why, though, would they be so insane as to strike here, where we are strongest of all? It is rather a pity that they are not coming, as I would have liked to see them try!'*

**Duke Ambar Lone:** *'The legends of the drow are clearly exaggerated, in the manner of all legends. Why, we have heard that the drow even had trouble routing the peasants of Chillhame. What could we possibly have to fear from them? If our city is to be assaulted, I would prefer a real challenge. Let the men of Visk take to the seas again and attack us, or let the Sun King unleash the Phoenix Legions on us. Now they are warriors to be respected.'*

**Duke Morgenstern:** *'This talk of an invasion from below is absurd. Your sources are clearly wrong. Every inch of every tunnel beneath Crom Calamar is mapped. The cartographers saw to that long ago. This is not Chillhame. There are no drow tunnels here.'*

If the Player Characters have found out about the massacres of drow that took place in the past, the Iron Dukes grudgingly concede the point. Morgenstern explains:

*'Ancient history! Pah! It is true that the drow once held land in our country and that there was a misguided pact to leave them undisturbed. It is also true that the humans declared that pact invalid and all but wiped the drow out. It is therefore understandable that the drow would have a grudge. However, what you do not know is that the drow broke the pact long before we did. They stole human children, they desecrated our burial grounds and they seduced our women. They took money from the tyrant of Visk, Uzbald Jin, to sabotage our bridges, cripple our horses and poison our soldiery.'*



*Our patience was simply at an end. They will think twice before taking advantage of us in the future.'*

Once they have said their piece, the Player Characters will be allowed to leave. If they have made a bad impression, then the hearty laughter of the Iron Dukes echoes after them. If they have made a convincing case (in the Games Master's estimation), the dukes are still sceptical but are willing to indulge the Player Characters, just because they respect them for their victories in the past.

The most that the Iron Dukes will agree to is a survey expedition, sent into the tunnels under the city, *just in case* there are drow warriors nosing around down there. Duke Gormick will argue strongly for this if he is present. The Player Characters can accompany the exploration team if they wish; see 'Event: Down the Drains' below.

### **Location: Burgenstoch Castle**

Burgenstoch resembles a gloomy fortress from a gothic horror story. The hallways are huge, draughty and hung with faded tapestries. Antique weapons hang from the walls and suits of armour stand in practically every corner. All the stairways are steep and all the floors are bare stone. During the day, light seeps in through the arrow slits. At night, candle flames glimmer from wax-encrusted sconces.

The castle is about one thing only: security. All the doors are made from iron and the stone inner walls are covered with iron plates (treat these as an outer layer of iron walls). There are no windows, only arrow slits.

No foe has ever entered Burgenstoch, much less taken it. The only fighting that is likely to take place in Burgenstoch during this adventure or later ones is against flying foes, such as Scallandriax the dragon (see page 26). Burgenstoch is well-equipped to deal with aerial assault:

**Battlements:** Burgenstoch's upper battlements are narrow, allowing only enough room for an archer to run around and fire at aerial opponents. This is to prevent hordes of flying creatures from gathering on the battlements and forcing their way in. The battlements are fitted with clusters of sharp iron spikes at regular intervals to keep flying foes at bay. Any flying creature moving into a battlement square suffers an attack from 1d3 spikes (+10 melee, 2d6 piercing damage each).

**Turrets:** Burgenstoch's ballistae, which are mounted on tower tops, have metal domes enclosing them. These



provide cover equivalent to an arrow slit for the crew operating the ballista. The cumbersome armouring means that the whole turret containing the ballista has to be rotated if it is to be aimed, which adds one round to its rate of fire and necessitates two more people on the crew.

### **Location: The Inn of Green Embers**

This small inn is situated outside the city walls to the south on the coast road, among the small clusters of dwellings and warehouses that make up the cheaper dockland. The clientele are mostly travellers who arrive too late to be let into the city (Crom Calamar closes its gates to all comers between dusk and dawn) and are glad to have a bed for the night. The inn has few regulars, as it mostly serves the through traffic.

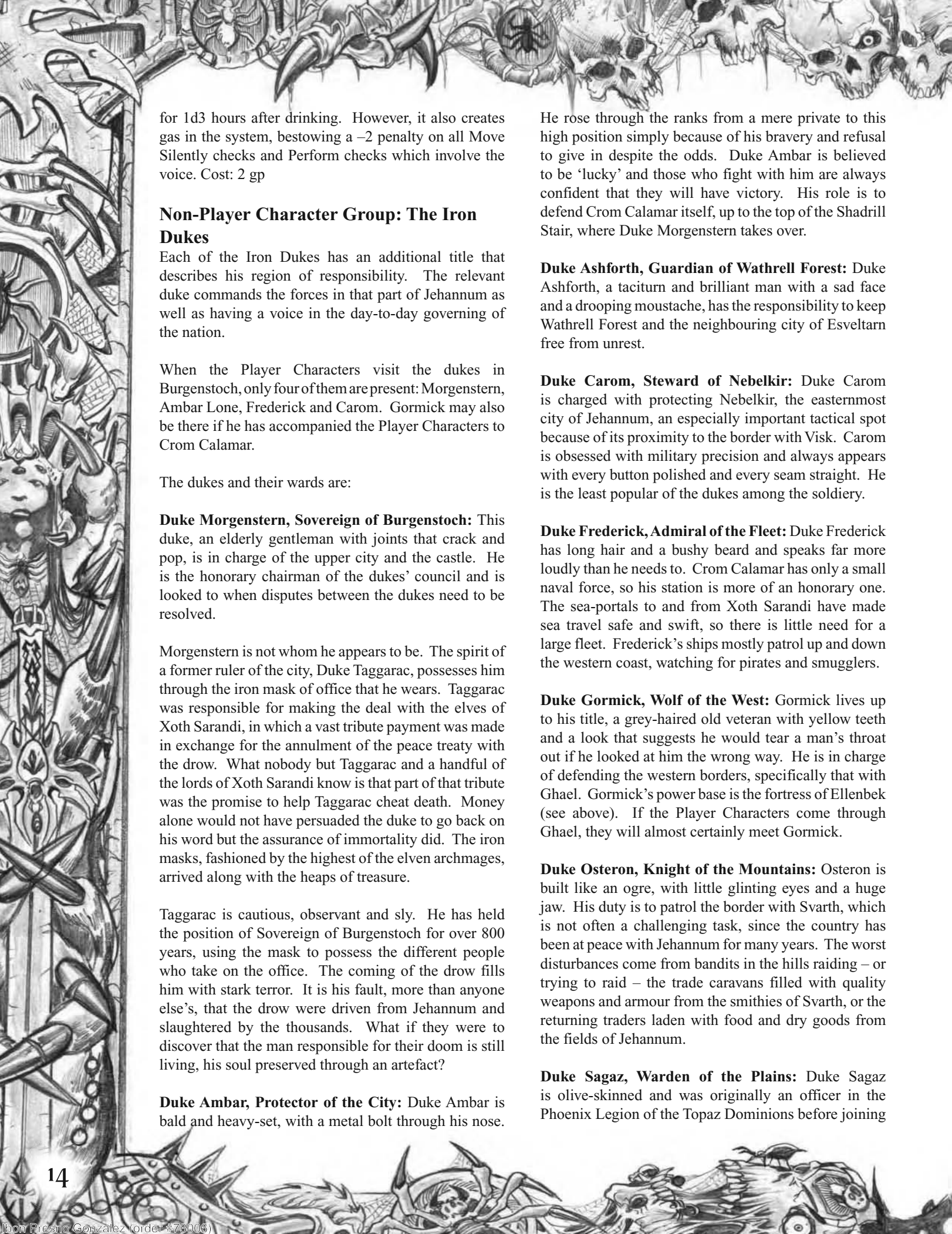
The inn's name comes from the proprietor's penchant for alchemy. Jedediah Cripkin, a vastly overweight dwarf, has concocted numerous homebrews that have mild unexpected effects:

**Smooth Billy:** This beer has an aphrodisiac effect and is prized by the sailors in the dockside taverns, since it has an opposite effect upon their performance to that which beer usually does. On the downside, it renders the drinker suggestible (-2 alchemical penalty to Will saving throws and Sense Motive checks). Cost: 5 sp

**Calico Blue:** This light fizzy ale is pale blue and is popular among the sentries, because it is better for keeping them awake and alert than anything else. Drinking Calico Blue allows a Player Character to go without sleep for up to 24 hours, though he must catch up on all lost sleep immediately afterwards or be fatigued. Cost: 1 gp

**Cripkin's Old Thunderous:** This thick stout has a warming effect like hot stew and protects the drinker from the cold as effectively as a set of winter garments,





for 1d3 hours after drinking. However, it also creates gas in the system, bestowing a -2 penalty on all Move Silently checks and Perform checks which involve the voice. Cost: 2 gp

### **Non-Player Character Group: The Iron Dukes**

Each of the Iron Dukes has an additional title that describes his region of responsibility. The relevant duke commands the forces in that part of Jehannum as well as having a voice in the day-to-day governing of the nation.

When the Player Characters visit the dukes in Burgenstoch, only four of them are present: Morgenstern, Ambar Lone, Frederick and Carom. Gormick may also be there if he has accompanied the Player Characters to Crom Calamar.

The dukes and their wards are:

**Duke Morgenstern, Sovereign of Burgenstoch:** This duke, an elderly gentleman with joints that crack and pop, is in charge of the upper city and the castle. He is the honorary chairman of the dukes' council and is looked to when disputes between the dukes need to be resolved.

Morgenstern is not whom he appears to be. The spirit of a former ruler of the city, Duke Taggarac, possesses him through the iron mask of office that he wears. Taggarac was responsible for making the deal with the elves of Xoth Sarandi, in which a vast tribute payment was made in exchange for the annulment of the peace treaty with the drow. What nobody but Taggarac and a handful of the lords of Xoth Sarandi know is that part of that tribute was the promise to help Taggarac cheat death. Money alone would not have persuaded the duke to go back on his word but the assurance of immortality did. The iron masks, fashioned by the highest of the elven archmages, arrived along with the heaps of treasure.

Taggarac is cautious, observant and sly. He has held the position of Sovereign of Burgenstoch for over 800 years, using the mask to possess the different people who take on the office. The coming of the drow fills him with stark terror. It is his fault, more than anyone else's, that the drow were driven from Jehannum and slaughtered by the thousands. What if they were to discover that the man responsible for their doom is still living, his soul preserved through an artefact?

**Duke Ambar, Protector of the City:** Duke Ambar is bald and heavy-set, with a metal bolt through his nose.

He rose through the ranks from a mere private to this high position simply because of his bravery and refusal to give in despite the odds. Duke Ambar is believed to be 'lucky' and those who fight with him are always confident that they will have victory. His role is to defend Crom Calamar itself, up to the top of the Shadrill Stair, where Duke Morgenstern takes over.

**Duke Ashforth, Guardian of Wathrell Forest:** Duke Ashforth, a taciturn and brilliant man with a sad face and a drooping moustache, has the responsibility to keep Wathrell Forest and the neighbouring city of Esveltarn free from unrest.

**Duke Carom, Steward of Nebelkir:** Duke Carom is charged with protecting Nebelkir, the easternmost city of Jehannum, an especially important tactical spot because of its proximity to the border with Visk. Carom is obsessed with military precision and always appears with every button polished and every seam straight. He is the least popular of the dukes among the soldiery.

**Duke Frederick, Admiral of the Fleet:** Duke Frederick has long hair and a bushy beard and speaks far more loudly than he needs to. Crom Calamar has only a small naval force, so his station is more of an honorary one. The sea-ports to and from Xoth Sarandi have made sea travel safe and swift, so there is little need for a large fleet. Frederick's ships mostly patrol up and down the western coast, watching for pirates and smugglers.

**Duke Gormick, Wolf of the West:** Gormick lives up to his title, a grey-haired old veteran with yellow teeth and a look that suggests he would tear a man's throat out if he looked at him the wrong way. He is in charge of defending the western borders, specifically that with Ghael. Gormick's power base is the fortress of Ellenbek (see above). If the Player Characters come through Ghael, they will almost certainly meet Gormick.

**Duke Osteron, Knight of the Mountains:** Osteron is built like an ogre, with little glinting eyes and a huge jaw. His duty is to patrol the border with Svarth, which is not often a challenging task, since the country has been at peace with Jehannum for many years. The worst disturbances come from bandits in the hills raiding – or trying to raid – the trade caravans filled with quality weapons and armour from the smithies of Svarth, or the returning traders laden with food and dry goods from the fields of Jehannum.

**Duke Sagaz, Warden of the Plains:** Duke Sagaz is olive-skinned and was originally an officer in the Phoenix Legion of the Topaz Dominions before joining



the army of Jehannum. He leads a troop of horsemen in an unceasing patrol around the towns of Jehannum's central plains, keeping order there.

**Duke Sprangel, Falcon of the East:** Sprangel is the youngest of the dukes, a rather dashing young man with the 'look of eagles' and an accent of obvious nobility. His men mutter that he has too few scars for a soldier and is more suited to ladies' boudoirs than the battlefield, but Sprangel's bravery is not in doubt, as he has led several lightning raids against nomad raiders from the desert of Sharn before now. Sprangel's ward is the arid desert border to the east of Jehannum; he watches for incursions from the famous white stone fortress of Thrun Rock.

**Typical Iron Duke, Male Human Ftr16:** CR 16; HD 16d10+32; hp 120; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 28, touch 10, flat-footed 28; Base Atk +16; Grp +20; Atk +26 melee (1d10+13/17–20, +5 *bastard sword*) or +21 ranged (1d10+3/19–20, +3 *repeating heavy crossbow*); Full Atk +26/+21/+16/+11 melee (1d10+13/17–20, +5 *bastard sword*) or +21/+16/+11 ranged (1d10+3/19–20, +3 *repeating heavy crossbow*); AL LN (except Morgenstern, who is LE); SV: Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Skills & Feats:** Craft (any) +21, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +18, Ride +20, Swim +11; Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*bastard sword*), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*repeating heavy crossbow*), Far Shot, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (*bastard sword*), Improved Critical (*repeating heavy crossbow*), Improved Disarm, Iron Will, Leadership, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*bastard sword*), Weapon Specialisation (*bastard sword*).

**Equipment & Treasure:** +5 *bastard sword*, +4 *plate armour of fortification*, +4 *heavy steel shield*, ornamental iron mask.

### Non-Player Character Group: The City Guard

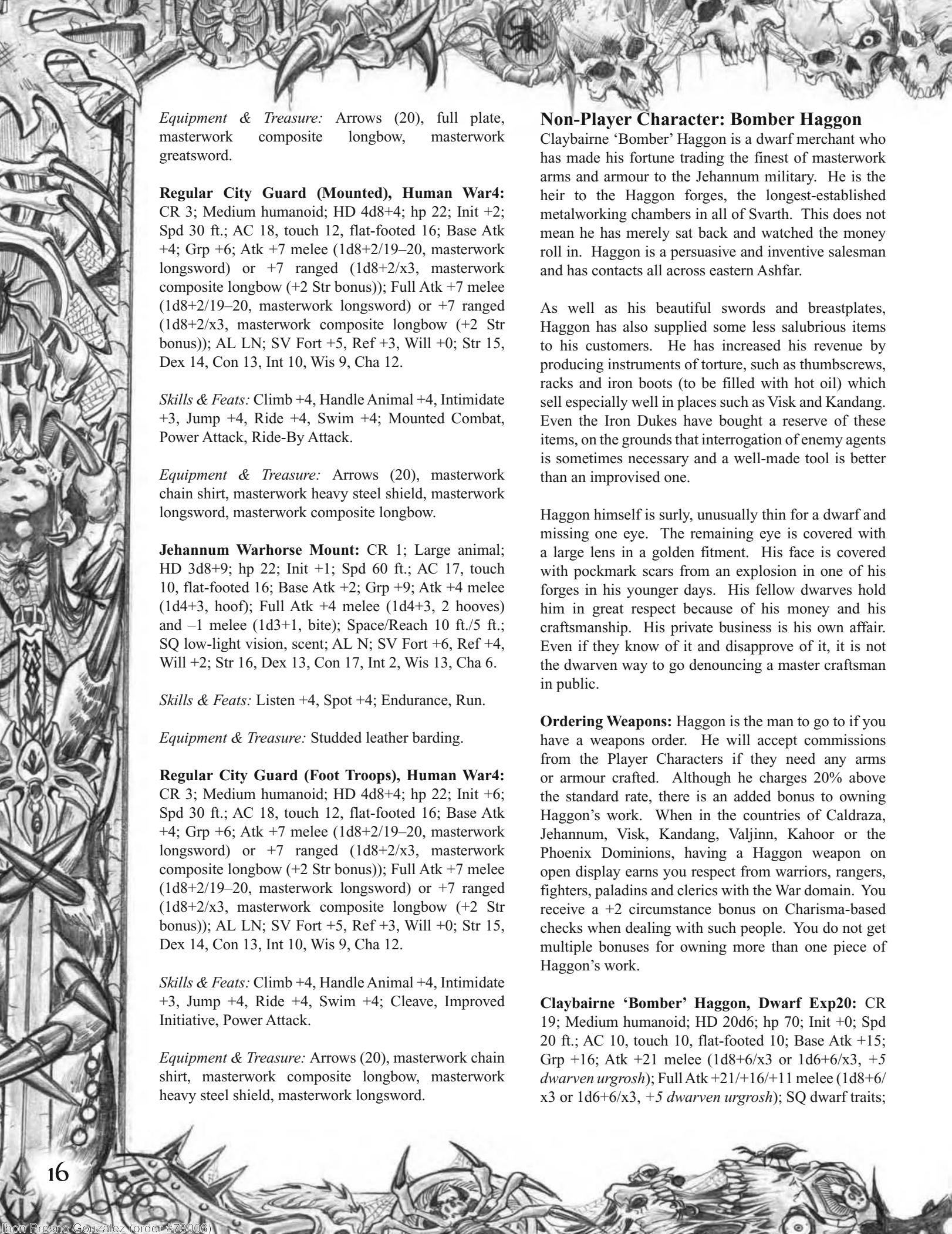
Crom Calamar's guards are the pride of the city. They are divided into two brigades, the Regulars and the Special Reserve. The Regulars patrol the lower city on foot and on horseback, watching for any infraction of Crom Calamar's rigid laws. The Special Reserve is kept for the upper city and for any places of special significance in the lower city, such as the Grand Temple of Aranu and the Hall of Assembly.

**Special Reserve Elite City Guard, Human Ftr10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d10+10; hp 65; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +16 melee (2d6+6/17–20, masterwork greatsword) or +13 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus)); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (2d6+6/17–20, masterwork greatsword) or +13/+8 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus)); AL LN; SV: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 10.

**Skills & Feats:** Craft (weaponsmithing or armouring) +7, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +10, Jump +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +5, Ride +12; Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (*greatsword*), Improved Critical (*greatsword*), Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*greatsword*), Weapon Specialisation (*greatsword*).







*Equipment & Treasure:* Arrows (20), full plate, masterwork composite longbow, masterwork greatsword.

**Regular City Guard (Mounted), Human War4:** CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+2/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+2/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +4, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +3, Jump +4, Ride +4, Swim +4; Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Arrows (20), masterwork chain shirt, masterwork heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork composite longbow.

**Jehannum Warhorse Mount:** CR 1; Large animal; HD 3d8+9; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 60 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +9; Atk +4 melee (1d4+3, hoof); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+3, 2 hooves) and –1 melee (1d3+1, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6.

*Skills & Feats:* Listen +4, Spot +4; Endurance, Run.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Studded leather barding.

**Regular City Guard (Foot Troops), Human War4:** CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+2/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+2/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +4, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +3, Jump +4, Ride +4, Swim +4; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Arrows (20), masterwork chain shirt, masterwork composite longbow, masterwork heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.

### **Non-Player Character: Bomber Haggon**

Claybairne ‘Bomber’ Haggon is a dwarf merchant who has made his fortune trading the finest of masterwork arms and armour to the Jehannum military. He is the heir to the Haggon forges, the longest-established metalworking chambers in all of Svarth. This does not mean he has merely sat back and watched the money roll in. Haggon is a persuasive and inventive salesman and has contacts all across eastern Ashfar.

As well as his beautiful swords and breastplates, Haggon has also supplied some less salubrious items to his customers. He has increased his revenue by producing instruments of torture, such as thumbscrews, racks and iron boots (to be filled with hot oil) which sell especially well in places such as Visk and Kandang. Even the Iron Dukes have bought a reserve of these items, on the grounds that interrogation of enemy agents is sometimes necessary and a well-made tool is better than an improvised one.

Haggon himself is surly, unusually thin for a dwarf and missing one eye. The remaining eye is covered with a large lens in a golden fitment. His face is covered with pockmark scars from an explosion in one of his forges in his younger days. His fellow dwarves hold him in great respect because of his money and his craftsmanship. His private business is his own affair. Even if they know of it and disapprove of it, it is not the dwarven way to go denouncing a master craftsman in public.

**Ordering Weapons:** Haggon is the man to go to if you have a weapons order. He will accept commissions from the Player Characters if they need any arms or armour crafted. Although he charges 20% above the standard rate, there is an added bonus to owning Haggon’s work. When in the countries of Caldraza, Jehannum, Visk, Kandang, Valjinn, Kahoor or the Phoenix Dominions, having a Haggon weapon on open display earns you respect from warriors, rangers, fighters, paladins and clerics with the War domain. You receive a +2 circumstance bonus on Charisma-based checks when dealing with such people. You do not get multiple bonuses for owning more than one piece of Haggon’s work.

**Claybairne ‘Bomber’ Haggon, Dwarf Exp20:** CR 19; Medium humanoid; HD 20d6; hp 70; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +15; Grp +16; Atk +21 melee (1d8+6/x3 or 1d6+6/x3, +5 *dwarven urgrosh*); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (1d8+6/x3 or 1d6+6/x3, +5 *dwarven urgrosh*); SQ dwarf traits;



AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +14; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 11.

*Skills & Feats:* Appraise +29, Bluff +22, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +24, Craft (armouring) +30 (+32 with metal), Craft (gemcutting) +27 (+29 with stone or metal), Craft (weaponsmithing) +30 (+32 with stone or metal), Forgery +27, Knowledge (history) +27, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +27, Sense Motive +26; Diligent, Great Fortitude, Negotiator, Skill Focus (Craft (armouring)), Skill Focus (Craft (weaponsmithing)), Toughness.

*Equipment & Treasure:* +5 dwarven *urgrosh*, loose gems (worth 8,000 gp), *ring of invisibility*.

### **Event: Down the Drains**

This event takes place if the Player Characters convince the Iron Dukes that the reported threat is worth investigating. In order to set the Player Characters' minds at rest, the Iron Dukes authorise an expedition into the drains under the central city. Four of the regular city guards (see above) are ordered to accompany them.

The exploration patrol is a long circuit and takes the Player Characters past points A, B, C, D and E on the

map. For the most part, there is nothing down here but a nasty smell and the occasional rat. The Games Master should have the Player Characters make Spot and Listen checks at intervals to keep them on their toes. There are, however, a few points of note.

#### **A: Faint Sounds**

At this point, the Games Master should have the Player Characters make Listen checks (DC 25). Those who succeed can hear a very faint rumbling sound from deep underfoot. This is the Darkspear, preparing to launch. The noise does not grow any louder or quieter. The guards with the Player Characters, if they can even hear it, shrug and say that it is just the echo of cartwheels going by overhead.

#### **B: The Forbidden Arch**

At this point, the sewer network connects with the Halls of Groaning, the underground section of the tomb districts. The guards steadfastly refuse to go in and warn the Player Characters that they are not to do so, either. The Halls of Groaning are forbidden to the citizens of Crom Calamar. Some of the honoured ancestors do not rest as peacefully as the citizens would like and those who enter the Halls of Groaning do not return.

#### **C: Hungry Ghosts**


This sewer section runs parallel to part of the Halls of Groaning. The air is noticeably colder here and the guards point out patches of frost on the walls, sure signs that there are spectral terrors lurking in the vaults to the east. A successful Listen check (DC 20) detects a rising and falling moan. This sounds like it could just be an underground wind but is in fact the sound of spectres, for which the Halls of Groaning are named.

While the Player Characters and their guard escorts are moving through this section, a group of three spectres rises slowly through the floor, heading for the surface. They are hissing to one another about 'many deaths', the fact that 'our time comes again' and their expectations that 'blood like spring rivers will run'.

From their supernatural insight they know what is coming and are moving towards the surface so they can take their places in the darkness that is to come. With the dome of darkness in place, they will be free to hunt mortals continually, since the sunlight will not reach them. If the Player Characters do not stop them now, they will be a menace when the dark dome closes over Crom Calamar.

Two of the spectres wear lopsided, tarnished coronets, as if they were long-dead nobles. They each have





dagger wounds in their chests. The third wields a bishop's crook, though it does not use it as a weapon; this one has a broken neck. A Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (DC 20) reveals that it is very odd for spectres to want to head above ground, since they are powerless in sunlight.

**Spectre (3):** CR 7; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 7d12; hp 45; Init +7; Spd 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3/—; Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain, incorporeal touch); SA create spawn, energy drain; SQ +2 turn resistance, darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, sunlight powerlessness, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills & Feats:* Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +14, Search +12, Spot +14, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a spectre's incorporeal touch attack gain two negative levels. A Fortitude save (DC 15) removes a negative level thus gained. For each such negative level bestowed, the spectre gains 5 temporary hit points.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid slain by a spectre becomes a spectre in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the spectre that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

*Unnatural Aura (Su):* Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

*Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex):* Spectres are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action in a round.

#### **D: New Tunnels**

Here something large has bored a new tunnel through the sewer wall. This makes the guards with the Player Characters exchange glances and mutter about how they might have a point after all. The tunnel is ten feet across and appears to have been made by some sort of

corrosive substance. The far end is caved in; the other end opens in section E.


Aza Yog, the delver who made the tunnel, has been enslaved by the aboleth Spa-Tront and is lurking in the position indicated. If the Player Characters come too close to the pool, the aboleth will force the delver to attack them.

If the Player Characters manage to survive this encounter without killing Aza Yog and are able to break the aboleth's domination power, the delver will be gruffly thankful. If the Player Characters think to ask him for information, he will report that he has not burrowed under this area very often, as all the good minerals are gone. The little dark ones have taken them; they are making a big metal thing. The Player Characters may encounter Aza Yog again in the final adventures in this book, where he can be a useful ally.

**Aza Yog, Enslaved Delver:** CR 9; Huge aberration; HD 15d8+78; hp 145; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +11; Grp







+27; Atk +17 melee (1d6+8 plus 2d6 acid, slam); Full Atk +17 melee (1d6+8 plus 2d6 acid, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA corrosive slime; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid, stone shape, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12.

**Skills & Feats:** Knowledge (dungeoneering) +14, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +20, Move Silently +17, Spot +20, Survival +14 (+16 underground); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness.

**Corrosive Slime (Ex):** Aza Yog produces a mucus-like slime that contains a highly corrosive substance. The slime is particularly effective against stone. Its mere touch deals 2d6 points of acid damage to organic creatures or objects. Against metallic creatures or objects, Aza Yog's slime deals 4d8 points of damage. Against stony creatures (including earth elementals) or objects, it deals 8d10 points of damage. Aza Yog's slam attack leaves a patch of slime that deals 2d6 points of damage on contact and another 2d6 points of damage in each of the next two rounds. A large quantity (at least a quart) of water or weak acid, such as vinegar, washes off the slime. An opponent's armour and clothing dissolve and become useless immediately unless the wearer succeeds on a Reflex save (DC 22). Weapons that strike Aza Yog also dissolve immediately unless the wielder succeeds on a Reflex save (DC 22). A creature attacking Aza Yog with natural weapons takes damage from its slime each time an attack hits unless the creature succeeds on a Reflex save (DC 22).

**Stone Shape (Ex):** Aza Yog can alter its slime to temporarily soften stone instead of dissolving it. Once every ten minutes, Aza Yog can soften and shape up to 25 cubic feet of stone, as a *stone shape* spell (caster level 15<sup>th</sup>).

### **E: Something Lurking in the Cistern**

This region contains a pool of clear water bordered by a stone ridge, possibly some kind of underground reservoir. A character who succeeds at a Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (DC 20) notices that there is something very wrong. This area is supposed to contain a deep pool of noisome slurry, the run-off from the sewers, as a form of overflow control in the event of flood. Bizarrely, the water seems to be clear and free from filth.

The pool is the lair of Spa-Tront, an aboleth who hatched in the depths of the Halls of Groaning and swam up from there to be closer to the surface, where it could

begin to enslave the occupants of the city. It has been lucky enough to enslave a passing delver (see above) and is using him to create tunnels that will enable it to move around more easily.

If it is discovered and Aza Yog is defeated or freed, Spa-Tront tries to dominate the guards and turn them against the Player Characters. If Spa-Tront is losing the battle and has no further cards left to play, it pleads for its life and offers to tell the Player Characters the secrets it has learned.

Spa-Tront keeps two potions of eagle's splendour close at hand in order to make its enslavement attempts harder to resist. The rest of its treasure is hidden away under the sludge of the pool's bottom and includes a platinum egg studded with diamonds that is possibly a piece of regalia (worth 3,500 gp), as well as four small rubies in a case (worth 450 gp each) and a pearl of power (4<sup>th</sup> level spell).


Spa-Tront has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. If Spa-Tront has a chance to quaff a potion of eagle's splendour before it is attacked, the DCs of saving throws against its Enslave and Psionics abilities are increased by +2.

**Spa-Tront, Aboleth:** CR 7; Huge aberration (aquatic); 8d8+40; hp 76; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +22; Atk +12 melee (1d6+8 plus slime, tentacle); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+8 plus slime, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA enslave, psionics, slime; SQ aquatic subtype, darkvision 60 ft., mucus cloud; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 26, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 17.

**Skills & Feats:** Concentration +16, Knowledge (any one) +13, Listen +16, Spot +16, Swim +8; Alertness, Combat Casting, Iron Will.

**Enslave (Su):** Three times per day (the power has already been used once today), Spa-Tront can attempt to enslave any one living creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC 17) or be affected as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 16<sup>th</sup>). An enslaved creature obeys Spa-Tront's telepathic commands until freed by *remove curse* and can attempt a new Will saving throw every 24 hours to





break free. The control is also broken if Spa-Tront dies or travels more than one mile from its slave.

*Psionics (Su):* At will: *hypnotic pattern* (DC 15), *illusory wall* (DC 17), *mirage arcana* (DC 18), *persistent image* (DC 18), *programmed image* (DC 19), *project image* (DC 20), *veil* (DC 19). The effective caster level is 16<sup>th</sup>.

*Slime (Ex):* A blow from Spa-Tront's tentacle can cause a terrible affliction. A creature hit by a tentacle must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) or begin to transform over the next 1d4+1 minutes, its skin gradually becoming a clear, slimy membrane. An afflicted creature must remain moistened with cool, fresh water or take 1d12 points of damage every ten minutes. The slime reduces the creature's natural armour bonus by one (but never to less than zero). A *remove disease* spell cast before the transformation is complete will restore an afflicted creature to normal. Afterwards, however, only a *heal* or *mass heal* spell can reverse the affliction.

*Mucus Cloud (Ex):* When Spa-Tront is underwater, it surrounds itself with a viscous cloud of mucus roughly one foot thick. Any creature coming into contact with and inhaling this substance must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) or lose the ability to breathe air for the next three hours. An affected creature suffocates in 2d6 minutes if removed from the water. Renewed contact with the mucus cloud and failing another Fortitude saving throw continues the effect for another three hours.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Pearl of power, platinum egg studded with diamonds, potions of eagle's splendour (2), small rubies (4) in a case.

### **Plot Event: The Rise of the Darkspear**

While the Player Characters are in Crom Calamar, the capital city of Jehannum, the unthinkable happens. The Games Master should read the following text aloud:

*The usual sounds of the morning suddenly give way to a distant rumble. Vibrations quiver through the ground beneath your feet. People who were going about their business stop to listen. It sounds as if something huge is rolling through the city's sewers.*

The Games Master should allow the Player Characters a moment to react to this, then continue:

*The rumbling sound is growing louder and louder. Now the ground is actually shaking visibly. The cobbles in*

*the streets are cracking out of the cement. A single window in a nearby shop shatters.*

*The rumble becomes a roar, then the sound of an avalanche, deafening you. The citizens are yelling in alarm; the guards do not seem to know what to do. The yells become screams as an immense shape, a spire of black steel the size of a cathedral tower, breaks through the city streets. The spire rises and rises as buildings around its widening base crumble and collapse. At last it stops, higher than any of the buildings in the city, dwarfing even Burgenstoch Castle. It must be hundreds of feet across at the base. With a sound like a great bell chiming doom, metal doorways open in its sides. For a moment, the only sound is of loose stones falling.*

*From the top of the spire, living darkness seethes in a cloud, spraying out from a mass of jet-black crystal as large as a giant's head. The darkness floods into the streets, like ink filling a bowl, turning a scene of day into one of midnight. The citizens scream and cower, fearing the end of the world.*

*A dome of darkness steadily rises over the city's roofs. Those few citizens who have managed to keep their wits about them hurriedly spark torches and lanterns alight, only to find that they shed a sickly green glow instead of their usual comforting rays.*

*While the citizens and soldiery alike struggle to cope with the sudden darkness, crowds gather at the foot of the spire, terrified but wondering what will come next.*

*From the openings at the base of the spire emerge rank upon rank of drow warriors, dressed in fine dark mail and purple cloaks, led by war-priestesses and cowed wizards. They take up defensive positions around the spire, training crossbows upon the citizenry, but not firing. From within the spire, the words ring out:*

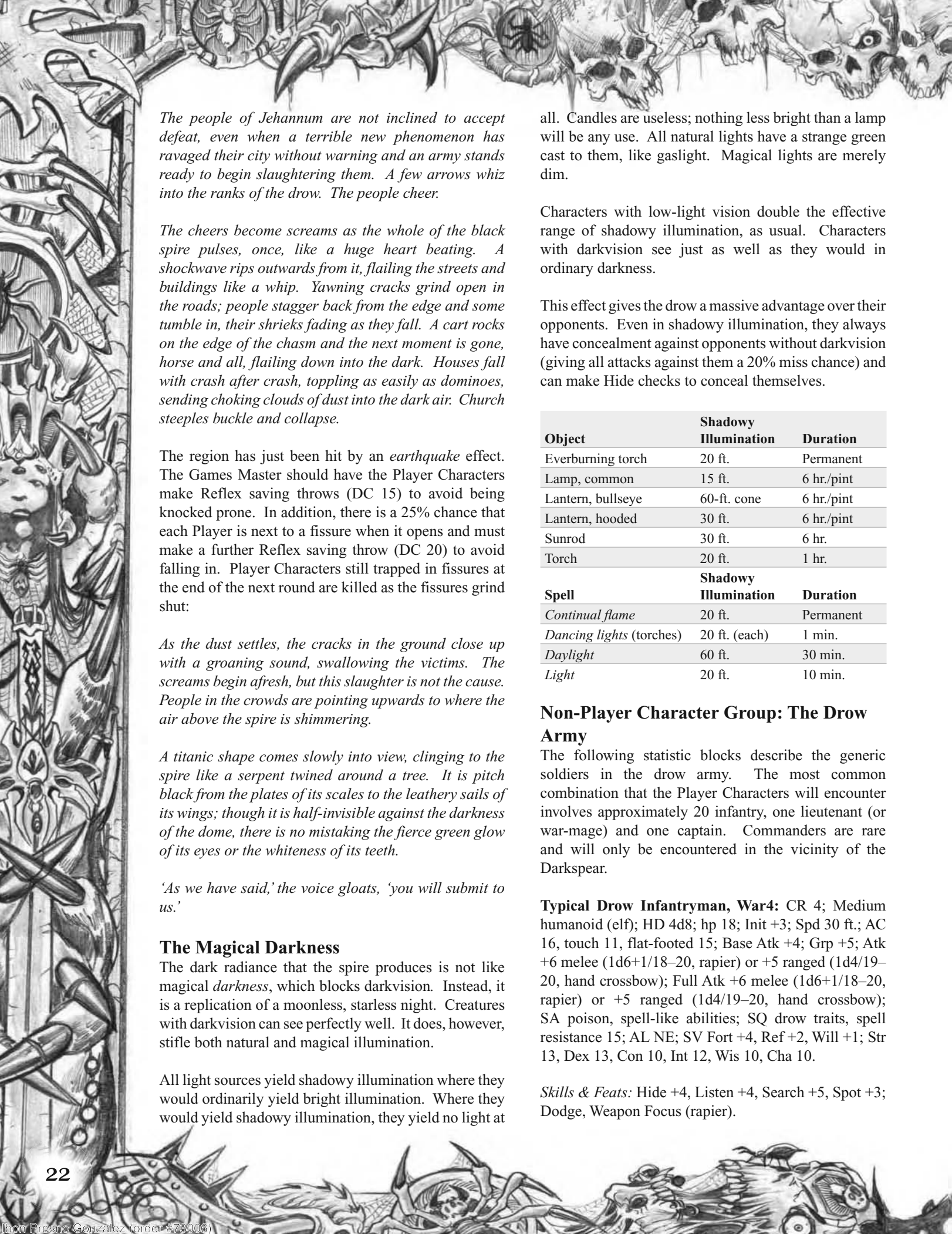
*'We, the armies of the Ennead, have taken back what was ours. The land that you stole from us is once again under our control, after too many bitter years. We have doomed the five proudest cities of Jehannum – Crom Calamar, Vorgsbund, Nebelkir, Dun Brondel and Esveltarn – to eternal night. You will submit to us, or you will be destroyed.'*

*Immediately, voices begin to shout defiance.*

The Games Master should allow the Player Characters a chance to react to this, then proceed:







*The people of Jehannum are not inclined to accept defeat, even when a terrible new phenomenon has ravaged their city without warning and an army stands ready to begin slaughtering them. A few arrows whiz into the ranks of the drow. The people cheer.*

*The cheers become screams as the whole of the black spire pulses, once, like a huge heart beating. A shockwave rips outwards from it, flailing the streets and buildings like a whip. Yawning cracks grind open in the roads; people stagger back from the edge and some tumble in, their shrieks fading as they fall. A cart rocks on the edge of the chasm and the next moment is gone, horse and all, flailing down into the dark. Houses fall with crash after crash, toppling as easily as dominoes, sending choking clouds of dust into the dark air. Church steeples buckle and collapse.*

The region has just been hit by an *earthquake* effect. The Games Master should have the Player Characters make Reflex saving throws (DC 15) to avoid being knocked prone. In addition, there is a 25% chance that each Player is next to a fissure when it opens and must make a further Reflex saving throw (DC 20) to avoid falling in. Player Characters still trapped in fissures at the end of the next round are killed as the fissures grind shut:

*As the dust settles, the cracks in the ground close up with a groaning sound, swallowing the victims. The screams begin afresh, but this slaughter is not the cause. People in the crowds are pointing upwards to where the air above the spire is shimmering.*

*A titanic shape comes slowly into view, clinging to the spire like a serpent twined around a tree. It is pitch black from the plates of its scales to the leathery sails of its wings; though it is half-invisible against the darkness of the dome, there is no mistaking the fierce green glow of its eyes or the whiteness of its teeth.*

*'As we have said,' the voice gloats, 'you will submit to us.'*

### The Magical Darkness

The dark radiance that the spire produces is not like magical *darkness*, which blocks darkvision. Instead, it is a replication of a moonless, starless night. Creatures with darkvision can see perfectly well. It does, however, stifle both natural and magical illumination.

All light sources yield shadowy illumination where they would ordinarily yield bright illumination. Where they would yield shadowy illumination, they yield no light at

all. Candles are useless; nothing less bright than a lamp will be any use. All natural lights have a strange green cast to them, like gaslight. Magical lights are merely dim.

Characters with low-light vision double the effective range of shadowy illumination, as usual. Characters with darkvision see just as well as they would in ordinary darkness.

This effect gives the drow a massive advantage over their opponents. Even in shadowy illumination, they always have concealment against opponents without darkvision (giving all attacks against them a 20% miss chance) and can make Hide checks to conceal themselves.

Object	Shadowy Illumination	Duration
Everburning torch	20 ft.	Permanent
Lamp, common	15 ft.	6 hr./pint
Lantern, bullseye	60-ft. cone	6 hr./pint
Lantern, hooded	30 ft.	6 hr./pint
Sunrod	30 ft.	6 hr.
Torch	20 ft.	1 hr.


Spell	Shadowy Illumination	Duration
<i>Continual flame</i>	20 ft.	Permanent
<i>Dancing lights</i> (torches)	20 ft. (each)	1 min.
<i>Daylight</i>	60 ft.	30 min.
<i>Light</i>	20 ft.	10 min.

### Non-Player Character Group: The Drow Army

The following statistic blocks describe the generic soldiers in the drow army. The most common combination that the Player Characters will encounter involves approximately 20 infantry, one lieutenant (or war-mage) and one captain. Commanders are rare and will only be encountered in the vicinity of the Darkspear.

**Typical Drow Infantryman, War4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 4d8; hp 18; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +5 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +5 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 15; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills & Feats:* Hide +4, Listen +4, Search +5, Spot +3; Dodge, Weapon Focus (rapier).



*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), chain shirt, hand crossbow, light shield, rapier.

**Typical Drow Lieutenant, Ftr10:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 10d10; hp 55; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (2d4+6/15–20 plus poison, masterwork falchion) or +14 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (2d4+6/15–20 plus poison, masterwork falchion) or +14 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, spell resistance 21; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +4, Climb +7, Handle Animal +15, Intimidate +20, Jump +9, Listen +2, Ride +6, Search +3, Spot +2; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (falchion), Mobility, Persuasive, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialisation (falchion).

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), masterwork falchion, masterwork hand crossbow, studded leather armour.

**Typical Drow Captain, Clr10:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +9 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow) or +11 ranged (entanglement, masterwork net); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +9 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow) or +11 ranged (entanglement, masterwork net); SA poison, rebuke undead, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 21; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 10.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +13, Diplomacy +4, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (religion) +5, Profession (field commander) +7, Spellcraft +5; Combat Casting, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (net).

*Spells prepared (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1, save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds, resistance, virtue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *cause fear, command, doom, entropic shield, magic weapon\**, *shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *augury, cure moderate wounds, enthal, hold person, spiritual weapon\**, *summon monster II*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *animate dead, dispel magic, magic vestment\**, *prayer*,

*wind wall*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *divine power\**, *giant vermin, inflict critical wounds, poison*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *flame strike\**, *slay living, symbol of pain*.

\*Domain spell.

*Domains:* Protection (touched target gains +10 as a bonus to next saving throw, 1/day), War (proficiency and Weapon Focus with deity's favoured weapon).

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), hand crossbow, heavy shield, masterwork full plate armour, masterwork net, masterwork rapier.

**Typical Drow War-Mage, Wiz10:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 10d4+10; hp 35; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow), Full Atk +5 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow); SA poison, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 21; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +4, Concentration +14, Decipher Script +17, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Spellcraft +17; Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (Evocation), Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Focus (Evocation).

*Spells prepared (4/5/5/4/4/2, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *message, ray of frost, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *mage armour, magic missile (2), shield, shocking grasp*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *cat's grace, fox's cunning, resist energy, scorching ray, see invisibility*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt, protection from energy*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *dimensional anchor, fire shield, resilient sphere, wall of fire*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *cloudkill, cone of cold*.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), hand crossbow, masterwork rapier.

**Tiny Viper Snake Familiar:** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD ¼ d8; hp 17; Init +3; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp –6; Atk +10 melee (1 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (1 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 2 ½ ft./0 ft.; SA poison, deliver touch spells; SQ empathic link, improved evasion, share spells, speak with master; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills & Feats:* Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +5; Weapon Finesse.

*Poison:* Saving throw DC 10, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con.

### Non-Player Character: Commander Yazroch

Ozarriah Yazroch is in charge of the initial attack, leading the hordes of drow soldiers through the streets and targeting the guardhouses and groups of guardsmen. Ozarriah's job is to smash the initial, well-equipped city defences quickly, after which the later waves of warriors will take care of the citizenry. The Player Characters thus have a high chance of encountering him early in the invasion.

He is a tall, gaunt drow with no nose, only a silver plate held in place by wire stitches. Beneath the plate is a disgusting mass of scar tissue. Ozzarriah enjoys hunting on other planes, bringing back souvenirs of the strange


beasts he has killed. His mount, Greshkel, has been with him since he fought and tamed her in a trip to Noctulos. Her kick staved in his face (burning his nose away and nearly blinding him) but he kept on fighting, which won him her respect.

**Commander Ozarriah Yazroch, Male Drow Ftr12:** CR 13; HD 12d10; hp 66; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +12; Grp +16; Atk +19 melee (1d10+8/17-20 plus poison, +2 *bastard sword*) or +15 ranged (1d4/19-20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); Full Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (1d10+8/17-20 plus poison, +2 *bastard sword*) or +15 ranged (1d4/19-20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, spell resistance 23; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +8, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Jump +1, Listen +3, Ride +5, Search +4, Spot







+3, Survival +6, Swim +8; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Critical (bastard sword), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Track, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialisation (bastard sword).

*Equipment & Treasure:* +2 bastard sword, +2 chainmail, +2 light steel shield, crossbow bolts (10), masterwork hand crossbow.

**Greshkel, Female Nightmare:** CR 5; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar); HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +6; Spd 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (good); AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +6; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d4 fire, hoof); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d4 fire, 2 hooves) and +4 melee (1d8+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA flaming hooves, smoke; SQ astral projection, darkvision 60 ft., etherealness; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 12.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +12, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +12, Move Silently +11, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Spot +12, Survival +10 (+12 on other planes and following tracks); Alertness, Improved Initiative, Run.

*Flaming Hooves (Su):* A blow from Greshkel's hooves sets combustible materials alight.

*Smoke (Su):* During the excitement of battle, Greshkel snorts and neighs with rage. This snorting fills a 15-foot cone with a hot, sulphurous smoke that chokes and blinds opponents. Anyone in the cone must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 16) or take a -2 penalty on all attack and damage rolls until 1d6 minutes after leaving the cone. The cone lasts for one round and Greshkel uses it once as a free action during her turn each round. The smoke she gives off means that Greshkel has concealment against creatures five feet away and total concealment against creatures ten feet or farther away. The smoke does not obscure Greshkel's vision at all.

*Astral Projection and Etherealness (Su):* These abilities function just like the spells of the same names (caster level 20<sup>th</sup>); Greshkel can use either at will. While Ozzariah rides her into battle, she uses her etherealness ability to bring him straight through enemy ranks and around to the rear, where he attacks from behind while his warriors attack from the front.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Chainmail barding.

## Event: Fighting in the Streets

For game purposes, the drow have an unlimited supply of warriors. More and more of them emerge from the Darkspear as the transport disc in its lower section ferries them up from the underworld. They have the advantages of surprise and superior vision in the dark conditions, so they will overrun the lower city rapidly. The most the Player Characters can do is to cut down a few score warriors and cover their own retreat. The rest of this book depends on Crom Calamar being overrun, so it happens irrespective of the Player Characters' actions. However heroic they are, they cannot stand against the largest army of drow ever assembled in the upper world.

The Player Characters will probably want to fight anyway, joining the citizens of Crom Calamar in an attempt to defend the city. In the situations described below, a drow brigade consists of 20 infantry, one war-mage and one captain. Most of the Player Characters' encounters will be with brigades of this size – a far more powerful force than they can expect to defeat on their own. Unless they have the city guards and armed citizens backing them up, they will not last long.

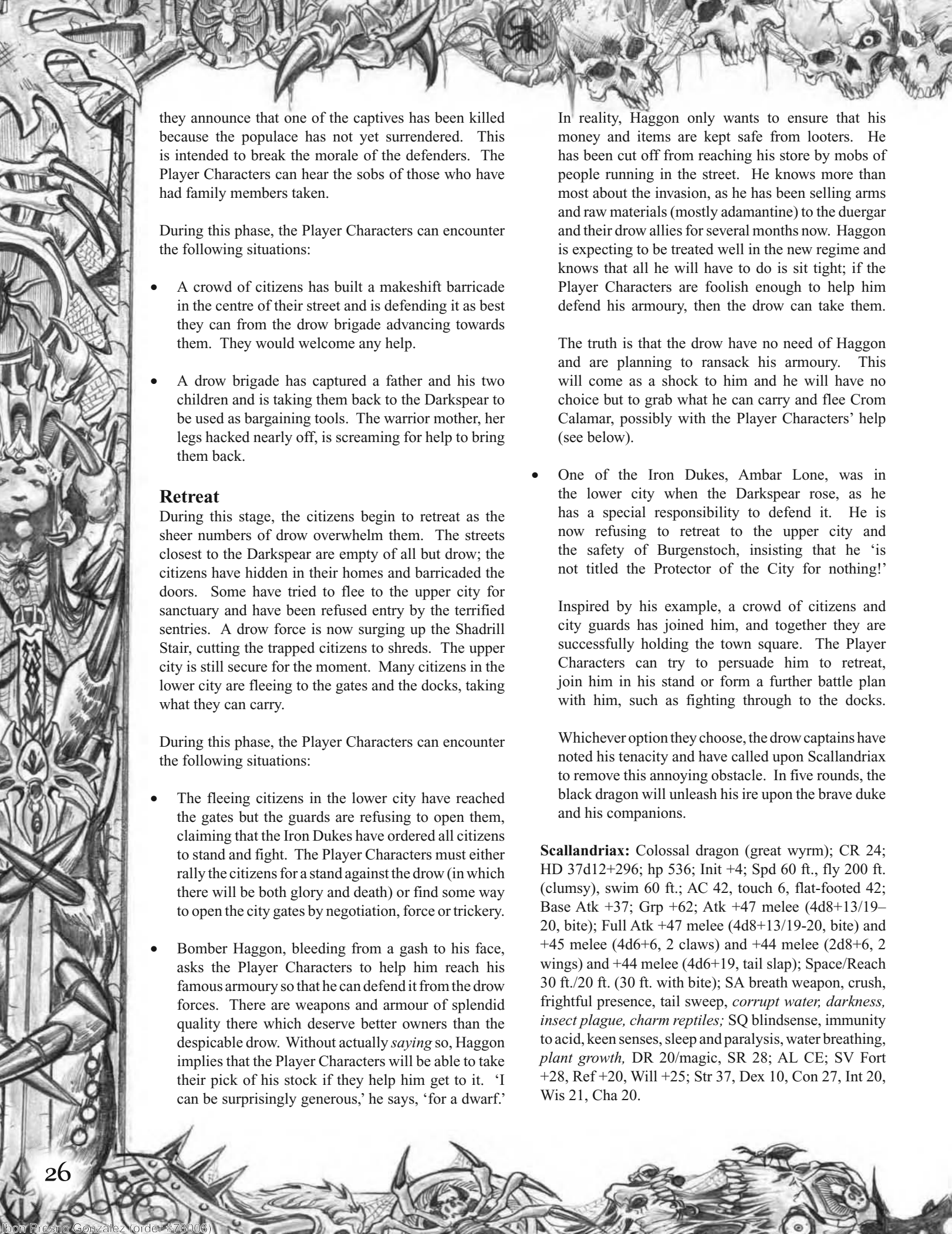
The Darkspear's *earthquake* pulse has destroyed or partially ruined approximately one-fifth of the smaller buildings in Crom Calamar, so the streets are filled with rubble and detritus. The fighting that ensues occurs over and around mounds of loose brick and fallen masonry. If the Games Master uses floor plans, some 10–20% of the open streets should be covered with rubble piles between five and 20 feet across. Partially ruined buildings may also cave in on the Player Characters' heads, trapping them (see the rules governing cave-ins in the *DMG*).

The battle is divided into three phases: initial onslaught, retreat and mopping up.

### Initial Onslaught

The first stage involves platoons of drow in military formation moving through the streets, slaying all those who stand against them. Where they find non-combatants, such as children or some of the women, they take hostages instead. The drow use blown glass spheres filled with soporific poison to subdue their captives, then ferry them back to the Darkspear.

As the first stages of the battle unfold and the hostages begin to arrive in the Darkspear, the drow captains announce the names of those who have been taken, using magical amplification (*shout* spells) so that these names echo across the darkened city. From time to time



they announce that one of the captives has been killed because the populace has not yet surrendered. This is intended to break the morale of the defenders. The Player Characters can hear the sobs of those who have had family members taken.

During this phase, the Player Characters can encounter the following situations:

- A crowd of citizens has built a makeshift barricade in the centre of their street and is defending it as best they can from the drow brigade advancing towards them. They would welcome any help.
- A drow brigade has captured a father and his two children and is taking them back to the Darkspear to be used as bargaining tools. The warrior mother, her legs hacked nearly off, is screaming for help to bring them back.

### Retreat

During this stage, the citizens begin to retreat as the sheer numbers of drow overwhelm them. The streets closest to the Darkspear are empty of all but drow; the citizens have hidden in their homes and barricaded the doors. Some have tried to flee to the upper city for sanctuary and have been refused entry by the terrified sentries. A drow force is now surging up the Shadrill Stair, cutting the trapped citizens to shreds. The upper city is still secure for the moment. Many citizens in the lower city are fleeing to the gates and the docks, taking what they can carry.

During this phase, the Player Characters can encounter the following situations:

- The fleeing citizens in the lower city have reached the gates but the guards are refusing to open them, claiming that the Iron Dukes have ordered all citizens to stand and fight. The Player Characters must either rally the citizens for a stand against the drow (in which there will be both glory and death) or find some way to open the city gates by negotiation, force or trickery.
- Bomber Haggon, bleeding from a gash to his face, asks the Player Characters to help him reach his famous armoury so that he can defend it from the drow forces. There are weapons and armour of splendid quality there which deserve better owners than the despicable drow. Without actually *saying* so, Haggon implies that the Player Characters will be able to take their pick of his stock if they help him get to it. 'I can be surprisingly generous,' he says, 'for a dwarf.'

In reality, Haggon only wants to ensure that his money and items are kept safe from looters. He has been cut off from reaching his store by mobs of people running in the street. He knows more than most about the invasion, as he has been selling arms and raw materials (mostly adamantine) to the duergar and their drow allies for several months now. Haggon is expecting to be treated well in the new regime and knows that all he will have to do is sit tight; if the Player Characters are foolish enough to help him defend his armoury, then the drow can take them.


The truth is that the drow have no need of Haggon and are planning to ransack his armoury. This will come as a shock to him and he will have no choice but to grab what he can carry and flee Crom Calamar, possibly with the Player Characters' help (see below).

- One of the Iron Dukes, Ambar Lone, was in the lower city when the Darkspear rose, as he has a special responsibility to defend it. He is now refusing to retreat to the upper city and the safety of Burgenstoch, insisting that he 'is not titled the Protector of the City for nothing!'

Inspired by his example, a crowd of citizens and city guards has joined him, and together they are successfully holding the town square. The Player Characters can try to persuade him to retreat, join him in his stand or form a further battle plan with him, such as fighting through to the docks.

Whichever option they choose, the drow captains have noted his tenacity and have called upon Scallandriax to remove this annoying obstacle. In five rounds, the black dragon will unleash his ire upon the brave duke and his companions.

**Scallandriax:** Colossal dragon (great wyrm); CR 24; HD 37d12+296; hp 536; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy), swim 60 ft.; AC 42, touch 6, flat-footed 42; Base Atk +37; Grp +62; Atk +47 melee (4d8+13/19-20, bite); Full Atk +47 melee (4d8+13/19-20, bite) and +45 melee (4d6+6, 2 claws) and +44 melee (2d8+6, 2 wings) and +44 melee (4d6+19, tail slap); Space/Reach 30 ft./20 ft. (30 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon, crush, frightful presence, tail sweep, *corrupt water*, *darkness*, *insect plague*, *charm reptiles*; SQ blindsense, immunity to acid, keen senses, sleep and paralysis, water breathing, *plant growth*, DR 20/magic, SR 28; AL CE; SV Fort +28, Ref +20, Will +25; Str 37, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 20, Wis 21, Cha 20.



**Skills & Feats:** Concentration +48, Diplomacy +49, Escape Artist +40, Hide +24, Intimidate +45, Knowledge (history) +45, Listen +47, Move Silently +40, Sense Motive +45, Search +45, Spot +47, Swim +21; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw), Wing Over

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Scallandriax's breath weapon is a line of acid 140 ft. in length, 5 ft. wide and 5 ft. high. It deals 24d4 acid damage, with a Reflex saving throw for half damage (DC 36).

**Crush (Ex):** See above. Saving throw DC is 36; the damage is 4d8+24. The crush only affects creatures of Large size or smaller.

**Frightful Presence (Su):** See above. The saving throw DC is 33 and the ability affects creatures with fewer than 40 Hit Dice within 360 feet.

**Tail Sweep (Ex):** As above. Half-circle radius is 40 feet, the sweep affects creatures of Medium size or smaller and it automatically deals 2d8+24 damage. Affected creatures can attempt Reflex saving throws to take half damage (DC 36).

**Water Breathing (Ex):** Scallandriax can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

**Corrupt Water (Sp):** Once per day Scallandriax can stagnate ten cubic feet of water, making it become still, foul, and unable to support animal life. The ability spoils liquids containing water. Magic items (such as potions) and items in a creature's possession must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC 33) or become fouled. This ability is the equivalent of a 1<sup>st</sup> level spell, with a range of 360 feet.

**Charm Reptiles (Sp):** Scallandriax can use this ability three times per day. It works as a *mass charm* spell that affects only reptilian animals. It can communicate with any charmed reptiles as though casting a *speak with animals* spell. This ability is the equivalent of a 1<sup>st</sup> level spell.

**Other Spell-Like Abilities:** 3/day: *darkness* (radius 120 feet), *insect plague*; 1/day: *plant growth*.

**Spells:** Scallandriax casts spells as a 15<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer.

**Spells Known (6/8/7/7/7/6/4; save DC 15 + spell level):** 0<sup>th</sup> – *read magic, resistance, guidance, flare, touch of fatigue, detect magic, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *entropic shield, shield of faith, true strike, ray of enfeeblement, expeditious retreat*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *blur, ghoul touch, invisibility, cure moderate wounds, silence*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel magic, protection from energy, stinking cloud, displacement*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *stoneskin, black tentacles, dimension door, cure critical wounds*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *cloudkill, dominate person, baleful polymorph, telekinesis*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *chain lightning, mislead, disintegrate*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *forcecage, reverse gravity*.

## Mopping Up

The battle is all but over and the bodies of the dead lie in heaps in the streets. Drow, human and dwarf blood mingles in the gutters. Brigades of drow soldiers search through the ruins for survivors. The healthy are taken captive, while the wounded are dispatched with a quick crossbow bolt in the eye.

The upper city still holds firm but the drow do not seem to care. There is not much the Iron Dukes can do up there and they have only a fraction of the forces they would need to retake the city. Instead of trying to invade the upper city, the drow station a large force on the Shadrill Stair, keeping the Iron Dukes prisoners in their own fortified sanctuary.

By now the Player Characters should have left for the Inn of Green Embers to meet their contact. If the Player Characters are still in the city at this stage, they had better have a very good reason for staying. The longer they remain, the more likely it is that Rannirak will *scry* their location and send something more deadly than Gugloth after them.

During this phase, the Player Characters can encounter the following situations:

- His identity concealed by a swift disguise and his pockets bulging with gems, Bomber Haggon tries to flee the city. He claims that he did not want to leave his business while the battle was still undecided. Now that the drow are victorious, he is taking what he can carry and running. The Player Characters recognise him (or he recognises them) and he tries to bargain for help to get out of Crom Calamar.
- With the gates in drow hands, the Player Characters will be hard pressed to find a way out of the city. They can clearly see Scallandriax breathing acid on people who try to *fly* over the walls; the half-dissolved bodies that fall out of the sky should put





them off trying that route. Some desperate groups are forming human pyramids and trying to climb up the walls. In the darkness and confusion, the drow are picking them off easily, some making a game of it.

A Survival check (DC 15) reveals that the Player Characters' best bet is to head for the river and swim for their lives. The drow have taken the two harbour forts but the siege machinery there is for use against ships, not small moving targets. The Player Characters can also use the docks for cover against drow archers, hiding under the wooden platforms. If they have water-breathing capacity then so much the better, as they can gain total concealment by walking along the bottom of the river.


### **Plot Event: Meeting the Contact**

Whether they leave the city shortly after the Darkspear arrives or stay to fight until they can fight no more, the Player Characters must eventually meet up with their mysterious informant at the Inn of the Green Embers if they are to advance the adventure. The inn lies on the outskirts of Crom Calamar, just beyond the dome of magical darkness that now envelops the city.

Finding the contact is not difficult, as the inn is all but abandoned. Only the barkeep and a single figure in a hooded cloak are in attendance. The hooded figure beckons the Player Characters over and withdraws his hood, revealing the pointed ears and almond eyes of a pure-blood elf. He introduces himself:

*'You can only be the Starborn. I am Nimian Archimandrus, one of the mages of Xoth Sarandi. I am sorry that your efforts to warn the Iron Dukes were in vain. In truth, there was little they could have done to defend against this assault. We learned of the Darkspear too late. Perhaps, had they listened, more lives could have been saved... but it is futile to dwell on that now.'*

*'As you are no doubt aware, the enemies you faced in Chillhame and Caldraza were not the same drow that have captured unfortunate Crom Calamar. House Arakh, your former adversaries, were a disgraced and exiled house, raised temporarily to prominence when the force that opposes you – the force we call the Dark – incarnated itself in one of their priestesses. While House Arakh held the favour of the Dark, the other drow houses held back from action, not fully understanding the will of their master and not wishing to pre-empt it. Now that House Arakh is shattered and fallen once more, the nine houses of the Ennead have returned to their original plan. They have taken not only Crom Calamar but four other cities of Jehannum, all in one*



stroke. This nation is now lost. Once the drow have enslaved the populace and exterminated the rebels, they will turn their eyes upon other nations.

'Peace in this part of the world depended upon Jehannum's strong dominion. It will not be difficult for the drow to set nations against one another, sapping their strength, flattering their pride and steadily encroaching upon them, establishing embassies and power bases. That is how they work, through insidious manipulation and the degradation of will.

'Hear me now. The elf-lords of Xoth Sarandi know more than any mortal alive about the drow, their sources of power and how to combat them. We have remained aloof from the battles of men for centuries, but now that our old enemies have returned, we can no longer remain wholly disinterested. I ask you to accompany me to Xoth Sarandi, where the High Council will speak with you about what is to be done. Although it may seem impossible now, the drow can be beaten. From Xoth Sarandi, one can access all the lands of the world. If you act now, then you may be able to garner the help we need and rally the nations against the Dark before it is too late.'

The Player Characters may have some questions for Archimandrus. He urges them to leave with him immediately – he has a ship in the harbour, the *Sephardine Gull* – but will answer questions as best he can. Possible questions are covered below:

Why did Archimandrus not warn the Iron Dukes directly? Why did he send the Starborn to do it?

'Our people cannot be seen to involve themselves directly in non-elven affairs. The last time we did this was... regrettable.' He will say no more on this point.

How did they know the Darkspear was about to rise?

'Our auguries are potent, but oracles rarely tell the whole truth. All we knew was that the attack would come from directly below the city. We did not expect this... abomination.'

How have the drow managed to cloak the entire city in darkness?

'That is a mystery. Evidently, the crystals within the spire are central to it. We shall seek for answers in the libraries of Xoth Sarandi.'

Does he know who the dragon is, or how the drow gained his allegiance?

'That wyrm can only be Scallandriax, the kin-devourer of the Dolorous Peak. Yes, we know of him. He sleeps for centuries at a stretch, then goes forth ravaging. He has slaughtered many good and noble creatures; but for him, the kingdom of Kandang would still be a wisely governed and peaceful place. I do not know what the drow may have been able to offer him, for so far as we knew, he desires nothing more than to taste the heart's blood of other dragons. We must learn, yes, we must learn.'

Who sent the retriever to attack us?

'You were attacked? By a demonic spider? Then it is worse than I feared. The eye of the enemy is turned upon you, and now that you have been seen, he will be able to track you. I have spells that are potent enough to turn his scrying sight aside.'

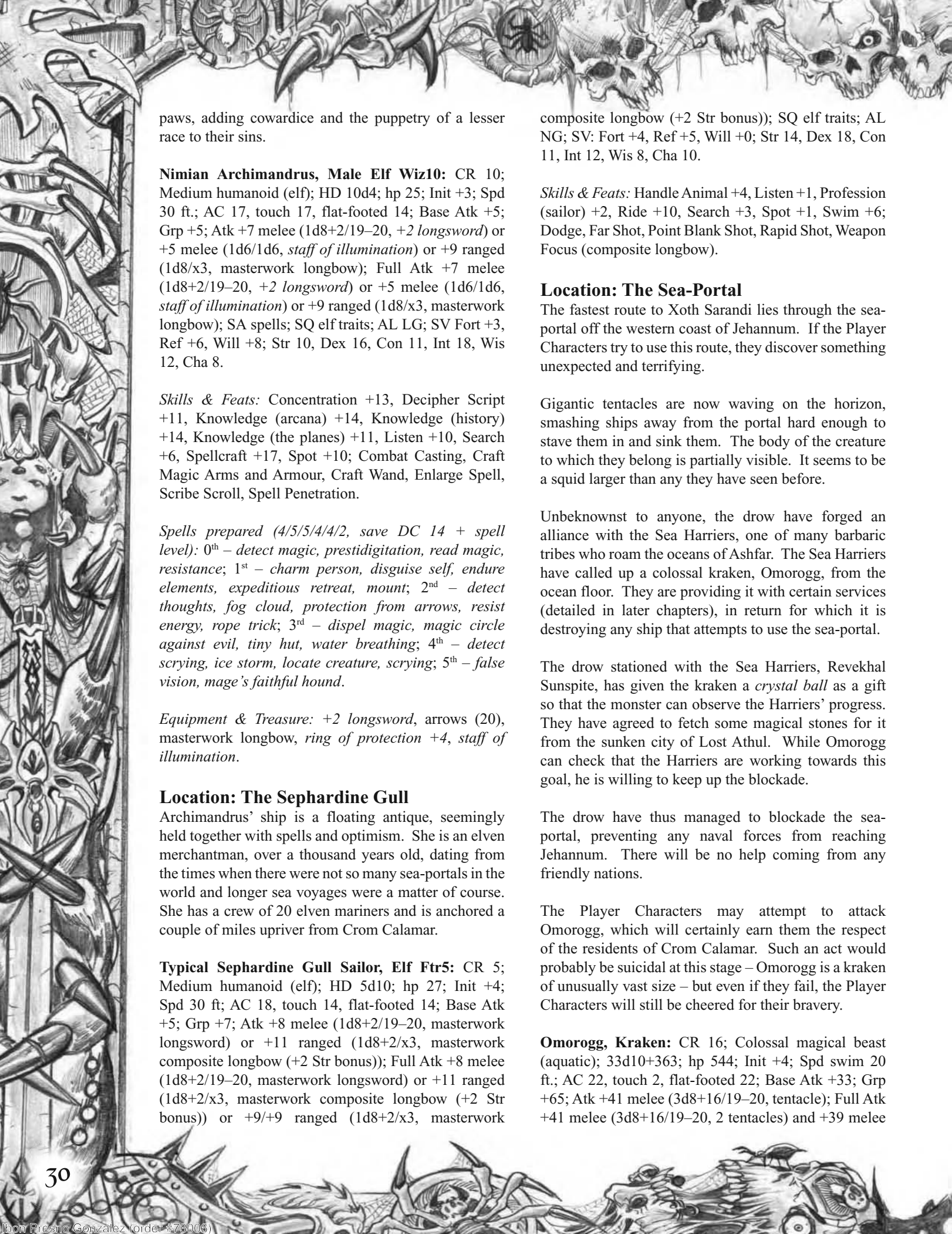
Archimandrus now uses *detect scrying* regularly to see if he and the Player Characters are being watched. He also casts *false vision* as soon as the Player Characters are aboard ship, to fool enemy *scrying* into thinking that the cabins are empty.

### **Non-Player Character: Nimian Archimandrus**

Nimian has jet-black hair, hollow cheeks and an aura of detached awkwardness, as if he has spent his whole life in a library and is now talking to real people for the first time. He has an annoying habit of pausing for thought in the middle of sentences. He wears white linen robes and carries a staff of pale wood with silver chasing, marking him very obviously as a wizard.

He holds the Starborn in respectful awe and considers himself more their servant than their ally. If they are in danger, he will risk his own life to save them without a thought. This does not mean that he will sit quietly crafting magic items for them all day – he has to remain by their side until they reach Xoth Sarandi – but he knows that they are more important than he is. The Drow War can afford to lose an elven mage, but not one of the Starborn.

Nimian bitterly regrets the elves' attempt to destroy the drow altogether after the last war by bribing the humans to do their dirty work. Although the drow are evil, the elves' treatment of them was hardly any better; they caused the slaughter of non-combatants, not just warriors. Furthermore, they used the humans as cats



paws, adding cowardice and the puppetry of a lesser race to their sins.

**Nimian Archimandrus, Male Elf Wiz10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 10d4; hp 25; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, +2 *longsword*) or +5 melee (1d6/1d6, *staff of illumination*) or +9 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, +2 *longsword*) or +5 melee (1d6/1d6, *staff of illumination*) or +9 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); SA spells; SQ elf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +13, Decipher Script +11, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Listen +10, Search +6, Spellcraft +17, Spot +10; Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Wand, Enlarge Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration.

*Spells prepared (4/5/5/4/4/2, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person, disguise self, endure elements, expeditious retreat, mount*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *detect thoughts, fog cloud, protection from arrows, resist energy, rope trick*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel magic, magic circle against evil, tiny hut, water breathing*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *detect scrying, ice storm, locate creature, scrying*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *false vision, mage's faithful hound*.

*Equipment & Treasure:* +2 *longsword*, arrows (20), masterwork longbow, *ring of protection* +4, *staff of illumination*.

### Location: The Sephardine Gull

Archimandrus' ship is a floating antique, seemingly held together with spells and optimism. She is an elven merchantman, over a thousand years old, dating from the times when there were not so many sea-portals in the world and longer sea voyages were a matter of course. She has a crew of 20 elven mariners and is anchored a couple of miles upriver from Crom Calamar.

**Typical Sephardine Gull Sailor, Elf Ftr5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 5d10; hp 27; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +11 ranged (1d8+2/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +11 ranged (1d8+2/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)) or +9/+9 ranged (1d8+2/x3, masterwork

composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); SQ elf traits; AL NG; SV: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills & Feats:* Handle Animal +4, Listen +1, Profession (sailor) +2, Ride +10, Search +3, Spot +1, Swim +6; Dodge, Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow).

### Location: The Sea-Portal

The fastest route to Xoth Sarandi lies through the sea-portal off the western coast of Jehannum. If the Player Characters try to use this route, they discover something unexpected and terrifying.

Gigantic tentacles are now waving on the horizon, smashing ships away from the portal hard enough to stave them in and sink them. The body of the creature to which they belong is partially visible. It seems to be a squid larger than any they have seen before.

Unbeknownst to anyone, the drow have forged an alliance with the Sea Harriers, one of many barbaric tribes who roam the oceans of Ashfar. The Sea Harriers have called up a colossal kraken, Omorogg, from the ocean floor. They are providing it with certain services (detailed in later chapters), in return for which it is destroying any ship that attempts to use the sea-portal.


The drow stationed with the Sea Harriers, Revekhal Sunspite, has given the kraken a *crystal ball* as a gift so that the monster can observe the Harriers' progress. They have agreed to fetch some magical stones for it from the sunken city of Lost Athul. While Omorogg can check that the Harriers are working towards this goal, he is willing to keep up the blockade.

The drow have thus managed to blockade the sea-portal, preventing any naval forces from reaching Jehannum. There will be no help coming from any friendly nations.

The Player Characters may attempt to attack Omorogg, which will certainly earn them the respect of the residents of Crom Calamar. Such an act would probably be suicidal at this stage – Omorogg is a kraken of unusually vast size – but even if they fail, the Player Characters will still be cheered for their bravery.

**Omorogg, Kraken:** CR 16; Colossal magical beast (aquatic); 33d10+363; hp 544; Init +4; Spd swim 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 2, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +33; Grp +65; Atk +41 melee (3d8+16/19–20, tentacle); Full Atk +41 melee (3d8+16/19–20, 2 tentacles) and +39 melee





(1d8+8, 6 arms) and +39 melee (6d6+8, bite); Space/Reach 30 ft./20 ft. (80 ft. with tentacle, 40 ft. with arm); SA constrict, improved grab; SQ darkvision 60 ft., ink cloud, jet, low-light vision, spell-like abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +29, Ref +18, Will +18; Str 42, Dex 10, Con 33, Int 21, Wis 20, Cha 23.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +31, Diplomacy +26, Hide 4, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (geography) +25, Knowledge (nature) +18, Listen +37, Search +17, Sense Motive +25, Spot +37, Survival +17 (+19 following tracks), Swim +36, Use Magic Device +36; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armour, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Omorogg especially enjoys using the benefits of its Great Cleave feat to slay multiple citizens and flip their corpses into the sea.

An opponent can make sunder attempts against Omorogg's tentacles or arms as if they were weapons. Omorogg's tentacles have 33 hit points and its arms have 16 hit points. If Omorogg is currently grappling a target with one tentacle or arm, it usually uses another limb to make its attack of opportunity against the sunder attempt. Severing Omorogg's tentacle or arm deals damage to Omorogg equal to half the limb's full normal hit points. Omorogg withdraws from combat if it loses both tentacles or three of its arms. Omorogg regrows severed limbs in 1d10+10 days.

Omorogg has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

*Constrict (Ex):* Omorogg deals automatic arm or tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, Omorogg must hit with an arm or tentacle attack. 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 can constrict.

### Sea Travel in Ashfar

Given that most of Ashfar's shipping rarely needs to make a voyage of more than 15 miles in actual distance (five out from the home harbour to the sea-portal that leads to Xoth Sarandi, then five more to reach the sea-portal to the destination, then five more to the destination port), ships are built for short hops and heavy cargoes. Few vessels are built to survive the rigours of the open sea; only colony vessels, exploration ships and warships are built for such conditions.

*Ink Cloud (Ex):* Omorogg can emit a cloud of jet-black ink in an 80-foot spread once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment, which Omorogg will use to escape a fight that is going badly. Creatures within the cloud are considered to be in darkness.

*Jet (Ex):* Omorogg can jet backward once per round as a full-round action, at a speed of 280 feet. It must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* 1/day – *control weather, control winds, dominate animal* (DC 19), *resist energy*. Caster level 9<sup>th</sup>. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Equipment & Treasure:* *Crystal ball.*

### Aftermath

Since the sea-portal is blocked, there is nothing for it but to head to Xoth Sarandi the long way, over the great Incarnadine Sea. The Player Characters can either sail there directly, risking assault from the sea creatures that dwell in the open oceans, or they can try to reach and use another sea-portal, such as the one by the harbour of Khummu in the Topaz Dominions. Either way, their voyage will be a perilous one.

Escaping Crom Calamar is worth a story award equivalent to defeating a CR 10 challenge.

# Across Unknown Oceans

This chapter covers the Player Characters' sea voyage from Jehannum to Xoth Sarandi. The route they take is up to them and will affect the random encounters that happen en route, but the set plot events will happen no matter what route they take.

If the pace of the campaign is such that too many sea adventures would become gruelling, then the Charybdis Device adventure can be omitted completely or saved for a later sea journey. The sahuagin encounters can easily be adjusted to increase the EL.

**Deciding on a Route:** Nimian Archimandrus will recommend that they sail directly to Xoth Sarandi instead of trying to reach another sea-portal, although the Player Characters may have other ideas. His rationale is that the drow have arranged for one portal to be blockaded, so they may well have sabotaged others. The two sea-portals the Player Characters are most likely to try for, if they take that route, are the portal to the south of the Topaz Dominions or the abandoned portal by Lost Athul. Plot events will, in any case, draw them to the latter.

The adventures and hooks below should allow the Games Master to give the players an entertaining time while still leaving them with freedom of choice as to where their characters go.

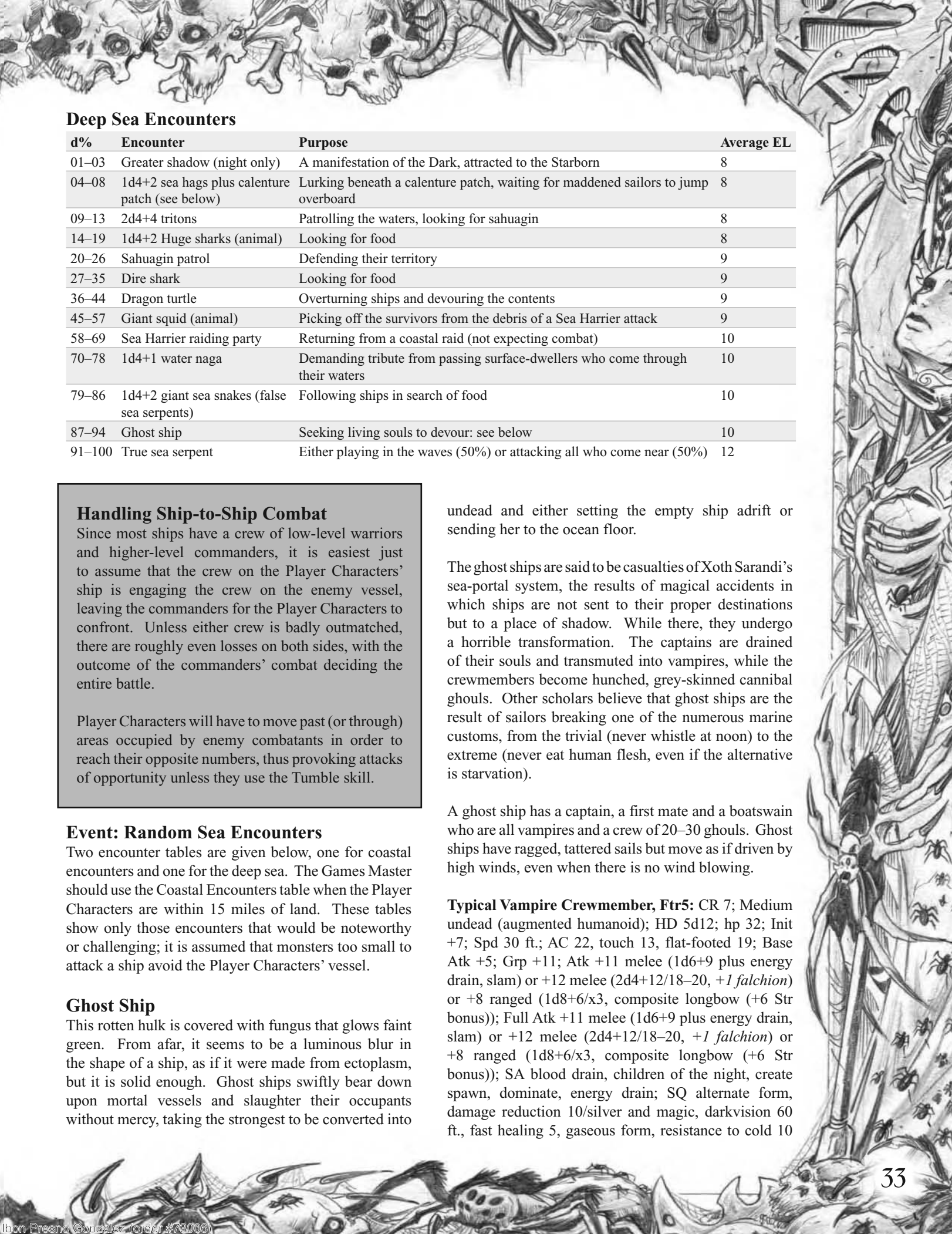
**Other Shipping:** The kraken's presence at the Crom Calamar portal and the invasion of the city has, of course, created panic among the traders at the docks. Everyone wants to get out at once. Scores of ships are sailing south along the coast, trying to reach the Topaz Dominions. These ships are staying within sight of one another, for greater safety against pirates. They are not equipped for long voyages or speed, so they are easy prey.

If the Player Characters opt to travel with a convoy of ships, the Sea Harriers adventure below can have a different opening. The Sea Harriers mount a raid on the trader convoy, in which the Player Characters' vessel is one of many attacked. See the section 'Alarum and Plunder' below.

## Coastal Encounters

d%	Encounter	Purpose	Average EL
01-03	Greater shadow (night only)	A manifestation of the Dark, attracted to the Starborn	8
04-08	1d6+1 sea cats	Hunting for food for their young	8
09-13	Juvenile bronze dragon	<i>Polymorphed</i> into dolphin form, observing Player Characters, wondering what their business is in its hunting ground	9
14-19	1d6+1 harpies*	Trying to captivate sailors on passing ships and lure them onto the rocks (or to jump overboard)	9
20-26	Locathah tribe	Defending their territory and driving ships away; they want no part in the upper world's wars	9
27-35	5d4 merrow (aquatic ogres)	Trying to smash in the hulls of ships with rocks from below, then raid the wreck	10
36-44	Human trading vessel	Separated from convoy, blown off course	—
45-57	Human fishermen	Trying to bring home a catch and feed their village	—
58-69	Sea Harrier raiding party	Looking for easy pickings	10
70-78	1d4+2 giant sea snakes (false sea serpents)	Following ships in search of food	10
79-86	Merfolk bard (9 <sup>th</sup> level)	Creating <i>major image</i> illusions of sea monsters to scare the sailors on passing ships	10
87-94	Harpy archer (7 <sup>th</sup> level)	Luring passing ships onto the rocks of her island home with her <i>captivating song</i>	11
95-100	Kraken	Preying on fishing smacks	12

\* 50% chance of calenture patch (see below)



## Deep Sea Encounters

d%	Encounter	Purpose	Average EL
01–03	Greater shadow (night only)	A manifestation of the Dark, attracted to the Starborn	8
04–08	1d4+2 sea hags plus calenture patch (see below)	Lurking beneath a calenture patch, waiting for maddened sailors to jump overboard	8
09–13	2d4+4 tritons	Patrolling the waters, looking for sahuagin	8
14–19	1d4+2 Huge sharks (animal)	Looking for food	8
20–26	Sahuagin patrol	Defending their territory	9
27–35	Dire shark	Looking for food	9
36–44	Dragon turtle	Overturning ships and devouring the contents	9
45–57	Giant squid (animal)	Picking off the survivors from the debris of a Sea Harrier attack	9
58–69	Sea Harrier raiding party	Returning from a coastal raid (not expecting combat)	10
70–78	1d4+1 water naga	Demanding tribute from passing surface-dwellers who come through their waters	10
79–86	1d4+2 giant sea snakes (false sea serpents)	Following ships in search of food	10
87–94	Ghost ship	Seeking living souls to devour: see below	10
91–100	True sea serpent	Either playing in the waves (50%) or attacking all who come near (50%)	12

### Handling Ship-to-Ship Combat

Since most ships have a crew of low-level warriors and higher-level commanders, it is easiest just to assume that the crew on the Player Characters' ship is engaging the crew on the enemy vessel, leaving the commanders for the Player Characters to confront. Unless either crew is badly outmatched, there are roughly even losses on both sides, with the outcome of the commanders' combat deciding the entire battle.

Player Characters will have to move past (or through) areas occupied by enemy combatants in order to reach their opposite numbers, thus provoking attacks of opportunity unless they use the Tumble skill.

### Event: Random Sea Encounters

Two encounter tables are given below, one for coastal encounters and one for the deep sea. The Games Master should use the Coastal Encounters table when the Player Characters are within 15 miles of land. These tables show only those encounters that would be noteworthy or challenging; it is assumed that monsters too small to attack a ship avoid the Player Characters' vessel.

### Ghost Ship

This rotten hulk is covered with fungus that glows faint green. From afar, it seems to be a luminous blur in the shape of a ship, as if it were made from ectoplasm, but it is solid enough. Ghost ships swiftly bear down upon mortal vessels and slaughter their occupants without mercy, taking the strongest to be converted into

undead and either setting the empty ship adrift or sending her to the ocean floor.

The ghost ships are said to be casualties of Xoth Sarandi's sea-portal system, the results of magical accidents in which ships are not sent to their proper destinations but to a place of shadow. While there, they undergo a horrible transformation. The captains are drained of their souls and transmuted into vampires, while the crewmembers become hunched, grey-skinned cannibal ghouls. Other scholars believe that ghost ships are the result of sailors breaking one of the numerous marine customs, from the trivial (never whistle at noon) to the extreme (never eat human flesh, even if the alternative is starvation).

A ghost ship has a captain, a first mate and a boatswain who are all vampires and a crew of 20–30 ghouls. Ghost ships have ragged, tattered sails but move as if driven by high winds, even when there is no wind blowing.

**Typical Vampire Crewmember, Ftr5:** CR 7; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +5; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d6+9 plus energy drain, slam) or +12 melee (2d4+12/18–20, +1 *falchion*) or +8 ranged (1d8+6/x3, composite longbow (+6 Str bonus)); Full Atk +11 melee (1d6+9 plus energy drain, slam) or +12 melee (2d4+12/18–20, +1 *falchion*) or +8 ranged (1d8+6/x3, composite longbow (+6 Str bonus)); SA blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate, energy drain; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistance to cold 10





and electricity 10, spider climb, undead traits, vampire weaknesses; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 17, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

**Skills & Feats:** Climb +5, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +1, Jump +5, Listen +5, Ride +3, Spot +5, Swim +4; Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Cleave, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialisation (falchion).

The DC for the Will saving throw against a vampire crewmember's domination ability is 13, as is the DC to remove a negative level caused by its energy drain.

**Equipment & Treasure:** +1 falchion, arrows (20), composite longbow, studded leather armour.

**Ghost Ship Treasure:** The undead crews of ghost ships have no use for treasure but they still amass it in their holds, out of habit and because they enjoy the misery it causes when they take it away from its owners. Ghost ship cargo holds typically have the standard treasure for a CR 10 creature, with double coins.

### Calenture Patch

This is a bright green algae that grows on the surface of the sea, in stretches up to a mile across. It is found only in equatorial climes, not in colder regions. A ship passing through the stuff seems to be passing through the grass of a summer meadow rather than the open sea. Experienced mariners avoid these growths if they can, with good reason. They are the ocean-going equivalent of desert mirages that lure travellers to their deaths.

Being surrounded by a calenture patch, especially when becalmed, is exactly like being surrounded by grassy

land. The power of this illusion is so compelling that any non-aquatic air-breathing creature who can see the patch while the ship is surrounded by it must make a Will saving throw (DC 15) or be compelled to jump overboard, as if by a *suggestion* spell. This is a mind-affecting supernatural effect of the algae. If the ship is stationary, the DC of the saving throw is increased to 17 as the illusion is more compelling. If the victim actually lands in the water, the illusion is dispelled.

The victims are totally convinced that the sea is in fact solid ground and will support their weight. This effect lasts while the victim can see the algae and for 1d6+6 minutes afterwards. Characters who successfully save against the algae's effect are immune to it for the next 24 hours.

The condition of believing the algae to be solid ground is called 'the calenture' and gives its name to the algae. Sea monsters are aware of its effects and take advantage of it to hide, as they gain total concealment beneath the green blanket and can easily snatch floundering sailors. Sea hags are especially fond of the stuff; there is even a legend that they are responsible for creating it.

A calenture patch has a CR of 3. Fire has no effect upon it but cold damage destroys it instantly. However, there is usually so much of it that destroying isolated patches is fruitless.

### Giant Sea Snake (False Sea Serpent)

#### Huge Animal (Aquatic)

**Hit Dice:** 10d8+20 (65 hp)

**Initiative:** +6

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

**Armour Class:** 16 (–2 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+18

**Attack:** Bite +10 melee (1d6+4 plus poison)

**Full Attack:** Bite +10 melee (1d6+4 plus poison)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Poison

**Special Qualities:** Amphibious, low-light vision, scent

**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

**Skills:** Balance +5, Climb +6, Hide +3, Listen 4, Spot 4, Swim +6

**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armour, Run, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Environment:** Temperate aquatic

**Organisation:** Solitary


**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 11–20 HD (Huge)

**Level Adjustment:** —



These reptiles are often mistaken for the genuine (and much rarer) sea serpent, as the shape of their bodies is similar. The false serpent is merely an animal and has neither the intelligence nor the special abilities of the true serpent. Giant sea snakes are highly venomous, much more so than their land-based relatives.

*Amphibious (Ex):* A giant sea snake can breathe in air and underwater.

*Poison (Ex):* A giant sea snake has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Constitution. The Fortitude saving throw DC is 21 and includes a +4 racial bonus. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Skills:* A true sea serpent has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

### Sea Harrier Raiding Party

This is a shipload of 20 Sea Harriers led by a captain with two lieutenants. The statistics for captains, sailors and lieutenants can be found below in the Sea Harriers adventure section.

A Sea Harrier encounter can segue into the Sea Harrier adventure (see below). Instead of Nimian Archimandrus receiving a message from Azbeth, he can find out about her from one of the Sea Harriers. The Player Characters can interrogate a surviving crewmember (using Intimidate checks and such spells as detect thoughts) to find out where the Sea Harrier mothership is and whereabouts on it Azbeth is being held.

### True Sea Serpent (Water)

**Gargantuan Magical Beast (Aquatic, water)**

**Hit Dice:** 16d10+112 (200 hp)

**Initiative:** -2

**Speed:** Swim 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Armour Class:** 19 (-4 size, -2 Dex, +15 natural), touch 4, flat-footed 19

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +16/+40

**Attack:** Bite +25 melee (2d8+12)

**Full Attack:** Bite +25 melee (2d8+12) and tail slap +20 melee (2d8+6)

**Space/Reach:** 20 ft./15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Breathe steam, improved grab, swallow whole, water spray

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision

**Saves:** Fort +17, Ref +8, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 35, Dex 6, Con 25, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 8

**Skills:** Listen +18, Swim +20

**Feats:** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (fin)

**Environment:** Temperate aquatic

**Organisation:** Solitary or pair

**Challenge Rating:** 12

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 16-32 HD (Gargantuan); 33-48 HD (Colossal)

**Level Adjustment:** —

True sea serpents are rare but can sometimes be seen in tropical seas, undulating their scaly coils through the waves and creating a distinctive 'humped' appearance. They have heads similar to those of horses, with odd little protuberances like the horns of a giraffe. Their forward fins are much larger than their rear fins.

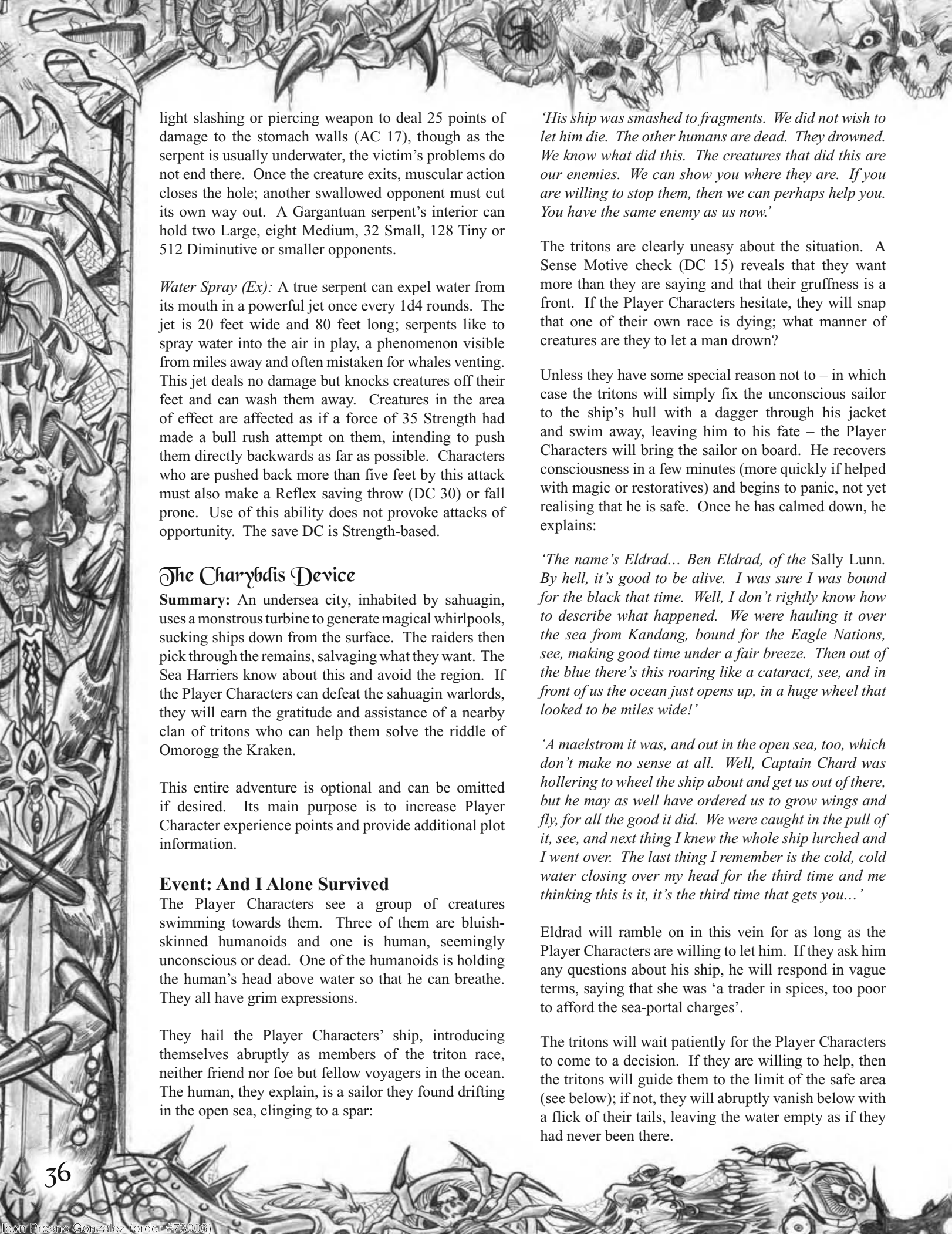
A serpent's behaviour depends entirely on its mood; it can be playful, rolling over and over like a dolphin, or murderously vicious, slamming its head into a ship's hull and staving it in. Solitary serpents are far more likely to be hostile, which has led to the belief that their 'play' is a mating dance of some kind. True serpents despise the kraken and attack them on sight.

A true sea serpent has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

*Breathe Steam (Ex):* A true serpent can breathe steam from its nostrils in a line 20 feet wide and 80 feet long once every 1d4 rounds. This deals 12d6 fire damage, with a Reflex saving throw for half damage (DC 25). This is effective underwater and on the surface. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a true serpent must hit with its bite attack. 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 can attempt to swallow the foe the following round.

*Swallow Whole (Ex):* A true serpent can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of a smaller size than itself by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d8+12 points of crushing damage plus eight points of acid damage per round from the serpent's stomach. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a



light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the stomach walls (AC 17), though as the serpent is usually underwater, the victim's problems do not end there. Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A Gargantuan serpent's interior can hold two Large, eight Medium, 32 Small, 128 Tiny or 512 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

*Water Spray (Ex):* A true serpent can expel water from its mouth in a powerful jet once every 1d4 rounds. The jet is 20 feet wide and 80 feet long; serpents like to spray water into the air in play, a phenomenon visible from miles away and often mistaken for whales venting. This jet deals no damage but knocks creatures off their feet and can wash them away. Creatures in the area of effect are affected as if a force of 35 Strength had made a bull rush attempt on them, intending to push them directly backwards as far as possible. Characters who are pushed back more than five feet by this attack must also make a Reflex saving throw (DC 30) or fall prone. Use of this ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The save DC is Strength-based.

## The Charybdis Device

**Summary:** An undersea city, inhabited by sahuagin, uses a monstrous turbine to generate magical whirlpools, sucking ships down from the surface. The raiders then pick through the remains, salvaging what they want. The Sea Harriers know about this and avoid the region. If the Player Characters can defeat the sahuagin warlords, they will earn the gratitude and assistance of a nearby clan of tritons who can help them solve the riddle of Omorogg the Kraken.

This entire adventure is optional and can be omitted if desired. Its main purpose is to increase Player Character experience points and provide additional plot information.

### Event: And I Alone Survived

The Player Characters see a group of creatures swimming towards them. Three of them are bluish-skinned humanoids and one is human, seemingly unconscious or dead. One of the humanoids is holding the human's head above water so that he can breathe. They all have grim expressions.

They hail the Player Characters' ship, introducing themselves abruptly as members of the triton race, neither friend nor foe but fellow voyagers in the ocean. The human, they explain, is a sailor they found drifting in the open sea, clinging to a spar:

*'His ship was smashed to fragments. We did not wish to let him die. The other humans are dead. They drowned. We know what did this. The creatures that did this are our enemies. We can show you where they are. If you are willing to stop them, then we can perhaps help you. You have the same enemy as us now.'*

The tritons are clearly uneasy about the situation. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals that they want more than they are saying and that their gruffness is a front. If the Player Characters hesitate, they will snap that one of their own race is dying; what manner of creatures are they to let a man drown?

Unless they have some special reason not to – in which case the tritons will simply fix the unconscious sailor to the ship's hull with a dagger through his jacket and swim away, leaving him to his fate – the Player Characters will bring the sailor on board. He recovers consciousness in a few minutes (more quickly if helped with magic or restoratives) and begins to panic, not yet realising that he is safe. Once he has calmed down, he explains:

*'The name's Eldrad... Ben Eldrad, of the Sally Lunn. By hell, it's good to be alive. I was sure I was bound for the black that time. Well, I don't rightly know how to describe what happened. We were hauling it over the sea from Kandang, bound for the Eagle Nations, see, making good time under a fair breeze. Then out of the blue there's this roaring like a cataract, see, and in front of us the ocean just opens up, in a huge wheel that looked to be miles wide!'*

*'A maelstrom it was, and out in the open sea, too, which don't make no sense at all. Well, Captain Chard was hollering to wheel the ship about and get us out of there, but he may as well have ordered us to grow wings and fly, for all the good it did. We were caught in the pull of it, see, and next thing I knew the whole ship lurched and I went over. The last thing I remember is the cold, cold water closing over my head for the third time and me thinking this is it, it's the third time that gets you...'*

Eldrad will ramble on in this vein for as long as the Player Characters are willing to let him. If they ask him any questions about his ship, he will respond in vague terms, saying that she was 'a trader in spices, too poor to afford the sea-portal charges'.

The tritons will wait patiently for the Player Characters to come to a decision. If they are willing to help, then the tritons will guide them to the limit of the safe area (see below); if not, they will abruptly vanish below with a flick of their tails, leaving the water empty as if they had never been there.





### Non-Player Character: Ben Eldrad

Eldrad is a nasty piece of work. He is pretending to be affable and ignorant around the Player Characters but in reality he is intelligent and callous. The *Sally Lunn* was carrying a cargo of slaves, dirt-poor peasants from the jungles of Kandang, to be auctioned off in the markets of the Shard. This is the real reason the ship was taking the long route. The elves of Xoth Sarandi often inspect ships to check their cargoes, and nervous captains with something to hide often opt to take the long way around rather than risk imprisonment in an elven jail.

Eldrad will tag along with the Player Characters as best he can, hoping to make something for himself out of the situation. He is not stupid and does not try anything rash, but he will definitely help himself to treasure if he gets a chance.

**Ben Eldrad, Male Human Rog6/Ftr4:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6 plus 4d10; hp 43; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +13 melee (1d8+3/17–20; masterwork longsword) or +11 ranged (1d10, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+3/17–20; masterwork longsword) or +11 ranged (1d10, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +3, Climb +7, Disable Device +10, Disguise +5, Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +5, Hide +7, Intimidate +11, Jump +7, Knowledge (local) +10, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +7, Profession (sailor) +4, Search +8, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +4, Swim +7, Use Rope +4; Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Feint, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Equipment & Treasure:* Masterwork heavy crossbow, masterwork longsword.

**The Tritons:** Medium outsider (native, water); CR 2; HD 3d8+3; hp 16 hp; Init +0; Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, trident) or +3 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, trident) or +3 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL NG; SV: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 11.

*Skills & Feats:* Craft (weed weaving) +7, Diplomacy +2, Hide +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Ride +6, Search +7, Sense Motive +7, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+9 following tracks), Swim +9; Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* 1/day: *Summon nature's ally IV*. Caster level is 7<sup>th</sup>; the creature called is almost always a water elemental.

*Skills:* A triton has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

### Location: The Vortex

Guided by the tritons, the Player Characters come to a region of open sea that looks like any other but for some drifting flecks of foam. The tritons explain that this is the aftermath of the vortex. They do not know how the creatures below are creating it, only that they have used it to wreck many vessels. They warn the Player Characters against approaching much closer, as the creatures can activate the vortex in an instant; they have seen them do it. It may be time to trim the sails and drop anchor.

What happens next depends on the Player Characters. They can either deliberately alert the creatures below in the hope that they will activate the vortex, which will reveal exactly where it is coming from, or they can try for a more stealthy approach, keeping the ship out of range and searching the ocean floor for clues.

The Player Characters need some means of functioning underwater if they investigate the source of the maelstrom. Nimian Archimandrus can prepare and cast *water breathing* for each party member. Given adequate notice, he can create backup *potions of water breathing* so that the Player Characters can have as much time to explore as possible. Ben Eldrad refuses to go if he is asked to accompany the Player Characters, claiming that he never wants to be under the sea again in his life if he can help it.

If they opt for stealth, the Player Characters have to stay close to the ocean floor, using the weeds and sponges for cover. They are in danger of being found by the wide patrol (see below), which moves in the pattern indicated. Once they are within 60 feet of the crack from which the vortex emanates, they can detect it with a Spot or Search check (DC 30).



### Effects of the Vortex

If they are careful, the Player Characters should be able to keep clear of the vortex. The ship is safe so long as it stays out of range and the Player Characters are unlikely to enter the vortex intentionally. However, the crafty sahuagin may find ways to drive them into it.

The vortex's area of effect is a cone, rising from the point of origin and broadening by five feet for every five feet it rises. All water in the cone and around it to a distance of 60 feet is considered stormy for the purpose of Swim checks.

Creatures in the cone must make Swim checks each round (DC 20) or be dragged 5d4 feet downwards along the inside of the cone. Creatures who fail their Swim checks also go underwater if they are not already. In addition, if there is debris in the cone (such as from a wrecked ship), creatures have a one in six chance each round to be struck by a piece of flotsam (melee attack +8, 4d6 bludgeoning damage) whether they made their Swim check or not.

A non-aquatic creature can attempt to swim out of the cone by making a Swim check (DC 20) on its turn as normal.

As well as buffeting and drowning creatures caught in its swirl, the vortex draws creatures and objects in. On an initiative count of one, all creatures within 60 feet of the cone automatically move towards it at a rate of 1d4x5 feet per round unless they succeed at a Swim check (DC 20). Creatures who fail their Swim checks can still attempt to swim back away from the cone on their turns. A creature within 30 feet of the cone moves towards it at a rate of 2d4x5 feet per round unless it succeeds at a Swim check (DC 20).

Creatures who can breathe water are at far less risk from the vortex, as they are unlikely to drown. The vortex can still trap and exhaust them, however.

If the Player Characters approach directly instead, the sahuagin notice the approaching ship and give the signal to activate the vortex, thinking that the ship will be over the target area by the time the vortex is active. While the Player Characters look on, the vortex opens in front of them, tugging at the ship's prow.

Since the Player Characters have been forewarned, they will be able to steer away from the vortex without being dragged into it. The sahuagin are not stupid, however, and know that any ship that escapes can warn others. They send a raiding party made up of four wreckers to board the ship, take the crew by surprise and slaughter them.

Beneath the water's surface, the Player Characters can clearly see the funnel-like shape of the maelstrom snaking away into a rocky region of seabed. The silver tail of the vortex vanishes into a crack in the rocks, a mere 20 feet across. The area all around is scattered with the debris of destroyed ships.

### 1. The Ships' Graveyard

*Through the clear water, you see the ocean floor ahead of you, an alien landscape of rocky outcrops and sandy depressions, thick with plants and growths in lurid colours. The ground level drops slightly to the north, where sinister dark shapes lie among the weedy rocks. You recognise a snapped mast, a broken railing and what looks like a piece of a ballista. As you watch, the nearby weeds move aside and a blotched parody of a human face looks at you, a sea-crab clinging to its cheek.*

This is nothing but the grotesque features of a sunken ship's figurehead, though it may give the Player Characters a scare.

The remains of at least eight ships – possibly as many as ten – lie on the ocean floor here, overgrown with weeds. The Player Characters can investigate them, though if they come within 30 feet of the sentry point (see below), they are likely to be spotted.

Cursory examination reveals no trace of any victims, not even so much as a bone. The ships seem to have been stripped bare. A Search check (DC 20) reveals the marks of claws on some of the cabin doors, suggesting that a clawed humanoid purposefully ransacked the sunken ships after they were brought down.

If the Player Characters are looking for it (but only if they specify this), then a further Search check (DC 25) finds part of the wreck of the *Sally Lunn*, identifiable by the lack of weeds growing on it. Searching within this wreck turns up several sets of manacles of basic quality, which seem to have been smashed open with a rock or other blunt object. This occurred when the sahuagin needed to remove the drowned bodies of the slaves to feed to their master. They abandoned the broken manacles, as they were useless to them.



A sahuagin patrol circles this area, checking the perimeter for intruders. Its route is marked on the map.

## 2. Sentry Point

*The ground at this point rises in a rocky nodule, thickly overgrown with seaweed that ranges from brown to black in colour.*

The long, waving weeds here offer good concealment from observation. From here the sentries from the sahuagin nest can observe the region all around them, most importantly the sea directly overhead. There is always a group of three wreckers here, hiding among the weeds. Their shark animal companions stay close but do not bother to hide.

In the centre of the weed growth is a ship's bell on the remains of its stand, taken from a wreck. When the sentries see something worth pulling in, they sound the alarm by hammering the bell with a bone, sending a strange clangour through the underwater world. The sentries have different signals for 'activate the vortex' and 'to arms'. Unless the Player Characters have been

stealthy in their approach, the sahuagin observers will sound 'to arms', which warns the den that an attack is incoming. The sentries will either engage with the Player Characters themselves (if they think they are not much of a threat) or wait until 2–4 lacerators come up from Area 4 to join them.

## 3. The Eye of the Maelstrom

*The rocks here have a cleft in them that drops steeply underfoot. There are no plants growing nearby; they seem to have been torn out by the roots. The surfaces of the rocks have a scoured appearance, as if sand had abraded them.*

This crack in the rocks is where the vortex emanates from. It is 30 feet deep, ten feet wide at the top and only two feet across at the bottom. Medium-sized characters cannot climb through without squeezing (see the Escape Artist skill rules).

If the vortex is active while the Player Characters are down here, then they can see its tail snaking into the cleft. If they approach closer than 60 feet, they risk being dragged in (see above).







#### 4. Hidden Entrance

The main entrance to the sahuagin lair is here, a 5-foot wide tunnel covered with a stiff mat woven from weeds. Living plants have been attached to this and sand thrown over it, so that unless it is examined closely it seems to be nothing more than another patch of vegetation. A character can notice the hidden entrance with a Search check (DC 25).

Immediately beneath the opening is a wide cave where the sahuagin guards wait for word from above. There are three sahuagin lacerators present here at all times. If they hear anyone approaching, they train their crossbows on the opening in case it is not one of their own.

At the point marked 4a is a ballista (see the *DMG*) taken from a deck mount on a wrecked ship. If outnumbered, the sahuagin will retreat back here to where they can fire the ballista at invaders.

#### 5. The Feasting Rooms

*The water in this cavern is filled with particles of matter, swirling like snow. Among these drift larger pieces of material, which are recognisable – a scrap of torn cloth, a matted tangle of hair, a toenail. The floor of the cave is a charnel house of gnawed bones, empty skulls and fragments of fish. You make out the remains of tritons, merfolk and a great many humans.*

The swirling matter is the result of the remains decaying and provides concealment to all creatures within the cavern.

This is where the sahuagin gather to feast. Their meals are taken together under the eyes of Scathla and Render Seaclaw, so there will either be no sahuagin here at all or all of them except for the sentries. If the entire tribe is gathered here, there will be ten wreckers and their shark companions, eight lacerators, Scathla and Render – an encounter that will almost certainly result in the players' deaths. If the Games Master wants a tense encounter rather than a vicious fight, he can have the Player Characters present when a feasting is called, so that they have time to hide among the loathsome remains on the cave floor, or somewhere along the walls; the cloudy water makes it much easier to hide.

Sahuagin feastings among the cult involve the spoils from the latest wreck being brought in, which in this case are the drowned crew of the *Sally Lunn*, their ankles bound together with seaweed. There are 20 other corpses who seem to be from a different part of the world and have manacles binding them. A Knowledge (geography) check (DC 15) identifies them as the peasant people of *Kandang*.

Scathla pronounces a blessing in Aquan, and then draws the twenty dead slaves out of the chamber while the rest of the tribe goes into a feeding frenzy. Characters who can understand Aquan can tell that the dead ones are an offering for The One Who Must Be Fed – whoever *that* may be. While the sahuagin are preoccupied with devouring their grisly dinner, they suffer a –4 circumstance penalty on all Spot and Listen checks. Once the feasting is finished, the bones are dropped to the cave floor and the sea devils return to their stations.

The Player Characters can search the noisome remains if they wish but they find nothing of value no matter how long they search. All valuables are removed and offered to the One.

#### 6. The Sacrifice Pit

*This domed cavern is cleaner than any other you have encountered so far. There are no plants growing at all; the rock is bare and seems almost polished. On the floor in the chamber's centre is a huge irregular disc, ten feet across, which seems to have been hacked from wooden planks and then had pieces of metal plate nailed across it, like a jerry-built shield for a titan. Four stout iron chains run from the disc through brackets in the cavern floor, with pegs thrust through the chains to keep them in place.*

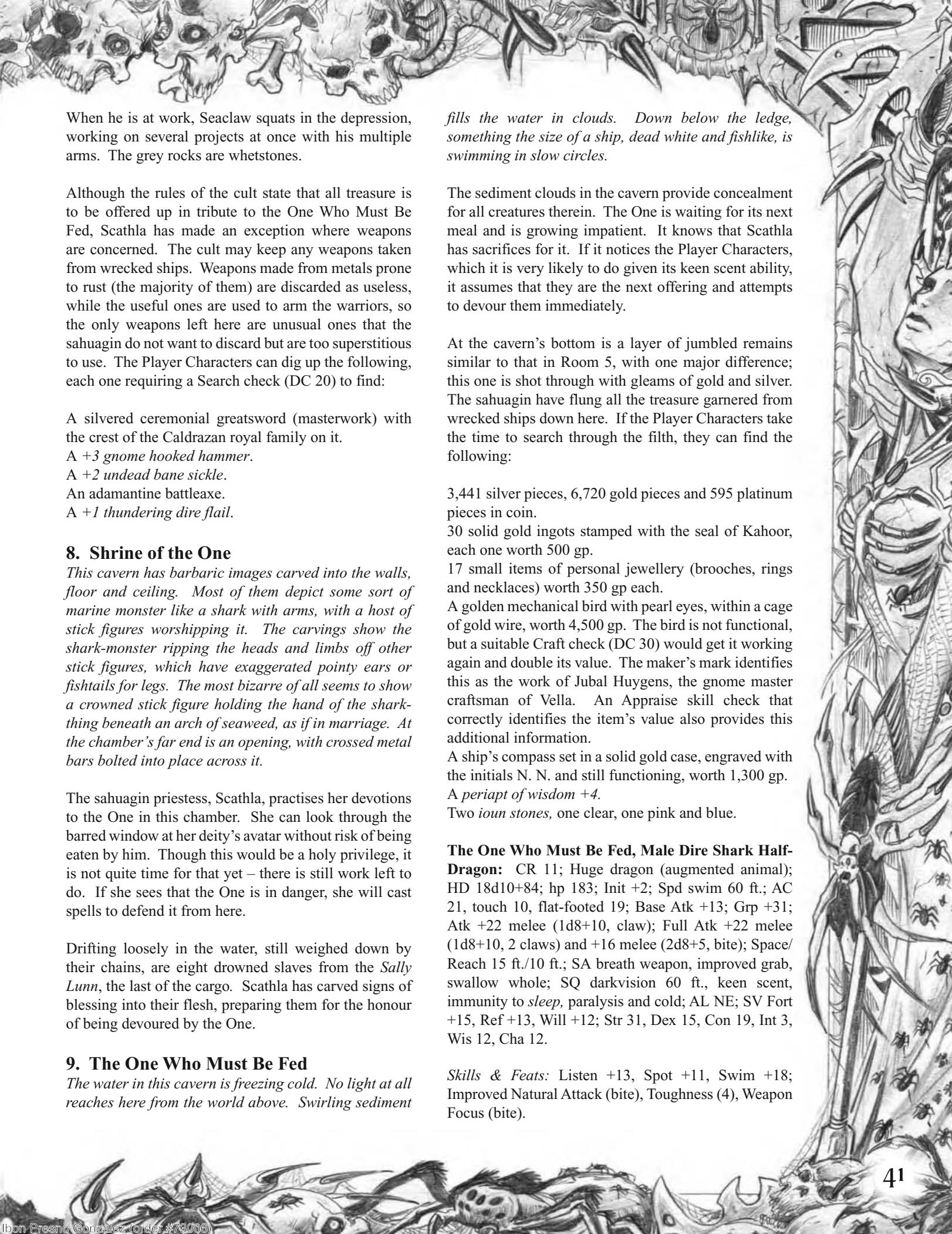
Any Player Character examining the arrangement concludes that it would be easy to tug the restraining pins out and thus lift the disc up. This configuration is clearly supposed to keep something in the chamber beneath safely contained.

Two sahuagin lacerators are on guard here. If they are attacked, they call out for help, bringing Scathla down from Room 8 and Render Seaclaw from Room 7.

#### 7. Chamber of Armaments

The opening of this cave has been closed off with a large rock. Moving it requires a Strength check (DC 20). The cave beyond is where Render Seaclaw keeps the tribe's weapons, mending broken ones and making new ones from salvaged bits. This is crucial to the tribe's survival, as it is impossible to forge new weapons underwater. He keeps the cave shut for privacy while he is working, not because he fears theft. No sahuagin in this lair would be that stupid.

*This cave is littered with weapons in various stages of repair. Someone has been cobbling together the pieces of broken weapons into makeshift tridents. In the room's centre is a depression, with several grey rocks in it.*



When he is at work, Seaclaw squats in the depression, working on several projects at once with his multiple arms. The grey rocks are whetstones.

Although the rules of the cult state that all treasure is to be offered up in tribute to the One Who Must Be Fed, Scathla has made an exception where weapons are concerned. The cult may keep any weapons taken from wrecked ships. Weapons made from metals prone to rust (the majority of them) are discarded as useless, while the useful ones are used to arm the warriors, so the only weapons left here are unusual ones that the sahuagin do not want to discard but are too superstitious to use. The Player Characters can dig up the following, each one requiring a Search check (DC 20) to find:

- A silvered ceremonial greatsword (masterwork) with the crest of the Caldrazan royal family on it.
- A +3 *gnome hooked hammer*.
- A +2 *undead bane sickle*.
- An adamantite battleaxe.
- A +1 *thundering dire flail*.

## 8. Shrine of the One

This cavern has barbaric images carved into the walls, floor and ceiling. Most of them depict some sort of marine monster like a shark with arms, with a host of stick figures worshipping it. The carvings show the shark-monster ripping the heads and limbs off other stick figures, which have exaggerated pointy ears or fishtails for legs. The most bizarre of all seems to show a crowned stick figure holding the hand of the shark-thing beneath an arch of seaweed, as if in marriage. At the chamber's far end is an opening, with crossed metal bars bolted into place across it.

The sahuagin priestess, Scathla, practises her devotions to the One in this chamber. She can look through the barred window at her deity's avatar without risk of being eaten by him. Though this would be a holy privilege, it is not quite time for that yet – there is still work left to do. If she sees that the One is in danger, she will cast spells to defend it from here.

Drifting loosely in the water, still weighed down by their chains, are eight drowned slaves from the *Sally Lunn*, the last of the cargo. Scathla has carved signs of blessing into their flesh, preparing them for the honour of being devoured by the One.

## 9. The One Who Must Be Fed

The water in this cavern is freezing cold. No light at all reaches here from the world above. Swirling sediment

fills the water in clouds. Down below the ledge, something the size of a ship, dead white and fishlike, is swimming in slow circles.

The sediment clouds in the cavern provide concealment for all creatures therein. The One is waiting for its next meal and is growing impatient. It knows that Scathla has sacrificed for it. If it notices the Player Characters, which it is very likely to do given its keen scent ability, it assumes that they are the next offering and attempts to devour them immediately.

At the cavern's bottom is a layer of jumbled remains similar to that in Room 5, with one major difference; this one is shot through with gleams of gold and silver. The sahuagin have flung all the treasure garnered from wrecked ships down here. If the Player Characters take the time to search through the filth, they can find the following:

3,441 silver pieces, 6,720 gold pieces and 595 platinum pieces in coin.

30 solid gold ingots stamped with the seal of Kahoor, each one worth 500 gp.

17 small items of personal jewellery (brooches, rings and necklaces) worth 350 gp each.

A golden mechanical bird with pearl eyes, within a cage of gold wire, worth 4,500 gp. The bird is not functional, but a suitable Craft check (DC 30) would get it working again and double its value. The maker's mark identifies this as the work of Jubal Huygens, the gnome master craftsman of Vella. An Appraise skill check that correctly identifies the item's value also provides this additional information.


A ship's compass set in a solid gold case, engraved with the initials N. N. and still functioning, worth 1,300 gp.

A *peript of wisdom* +4.

Two *ioun stones*, one clear, one pink and blue.

**The One Who Must Be Fed, Male Dire Shark Half-Dragon:** CR 11; Huge dragon (augmented animal); HD 18d10+84; hp 183; Init +2; Spd swim 60 ft.; AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +13; Grp +31; Atk +22 melee (1d8+10, claw); Full Atk +22 melee (1d8+10, 2 claws) and +16 melee (2d8+5, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon, improved grab, swallow whole; SQ darkvision 60 ft., keen scent, immunity to *sleep*, paralysis and cold; AL NE; SV Fort +15, Ref +13, Will +12; Str 31, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills & Feats:* Listen +13, Spot +11, Swim +18; Improved Natural Attack (bite), Toughness (4), Weapon Focus (bite).



The One has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. He can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. He can use the run action while swimming, provided he swims in a straight line.

*Breath Weapon (Ex):* The One can breathe a 30-foot cone of cold once every 1d4 rounds. This deals 6d8 points of damage, with a Reflex saving throw for half damage (DC 23).

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, the One must hit with his bite attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can try to swallow the foe in the following round.

*Swallow Whole (Ex):* The One can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to one size smaller by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent is dealt 2d6+6 points of bludgeoning damage plus 1d8+4 points of acid damage per round from the One's digestive juices. A swallowed creature can cut its way out using a light slashing or piercing weapon by dealing 25 points of damage to the One's digestive tract (AC 17). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. The One's gullet can hold two Large, eight Medium or Small, 32 Tiny, 128 Diminutive, or 512 Fine or smaller opponents.

*Keen Scent (Ex):* The One can notice creatures by scent in a 180-foot radius and can detect blood in the water at a range of up to one mile.



### Origin of the One

400 years ago, the white dragon Yselvir plummeted screaming from the sky, bleeding from a dozen wounds. She had been driven from her lair in the Waste. A territorial rival, Serremin, had cast her out and nearly killed her. She knew she could not return, so she concealed herself while she planned revenge. She took on the form of one of the vast sharks that swam in the arctic waters, hiding among them and living their blind moronic life of eating, swimming and mating.

The eventual result of this was the birth of a white, deformed thing with rudimentary claws, half dragon and half dire shark. He ate, grew larger and ate again; stronger than those around him and possessed of abilities that he used without understanding them, he soon became dominant over the others in his region. Fearing what he might do when he grew to full maturity but unwilling to kill him, Serremin drove him away.

More intelligent than the other sharks (though not by much), the One understood that being fed by others was preferable to feeding himself, so when intelligent beings began to offer him food in the hope he would take that instead of them, he accepted the offerings and left them alone. The legend of a gigantic white shark that had to be appeased with the bodies of mariners grew in the telling and became a figure of sailors' myth.

Old now, the One has taken to lurking in an undersea cavern instead of roaming the seas; this may mean that he is becoming more dragon-like in his behaviour. Like a dragon, he sometimes spends years asleep. When the sahuagin found him, they were amazed; the creature understood much more than the sharks with which they were used to communicating. Evidently he was some form of holy shark, destined to lead the sahuagin to bloody victory.

The One is stark white in colour, with little prehensile arms growing in front of his fins. The sahuagin believe this to be a sign that he is some kind of mystic link between his species and theirs. He has lain inert on the seabed for so long that barnacles and weeds are growing in patches on his body.





## 10. The Vortex Generator

The item that produces the maelstrom is secured here, fastened to the cavern floor by thick chains. It seems to be nothing more impressive than a metal cylinder ten feet long and three feet thick, with rotating fins arranged around its outer casing like a propeller. Inside there is a strange assembly of brass pipes, tiny glowing gems and leather sacs that inflate and deflate. This is clearly some amalgam of magic and mechanical engineering. A Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 15) identifies it beyond a doubt as gnomish in origin. Any Player Character examining the case finds a maker's mark, which an Appraise check (DC 20) identifies as that of Jubal Huygens, the current master artisan of Vella (see the golden bird description above).

This item was never intended to be a maelstrom generator. Huygens built it as a prototype propulsion system for ships, which would generate a magical turbine effect and power them through the waves at unimaginable speeds. The sahuagin captured it when they raided the ship that was carrying it to the Eagle Nations.

### Non-Player Character Group: The Sahuagin

The clan of sahuagin who live in this burrow are not a conventional group and there are no young here. They are, even by sahuagin standards, a group of fanatical cultists. They are devoted to their living idol, the One Who Must Be Fed, an ancient half-dragon dire shark who was discovered slumbering in a deep cave and believed to be an avatar of the shark deity.

The priestess of the One was convinced that he would lead them to a source of unending wealth and power, which – to the joy of the cult – he did. The sahuagin do not fully understand what the vortex generator is, nor do they care. It makes whirlpools that wreck the human ships and this is good. One day they will take it from its cave and deploy it against the aquatic elves, and with the One leading them, they will tear their enemies to bloody shreds. Nobody knows when that day will come.

### Sahuagin Wreckers

These troops are used as sentries and fast-response warriors. Their specialty is boarding surface vessels and slaughtering the occupants.

**Sahuagin Wrecker, Rgr5:** CR 7; Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic); HD 7d8+7; hp 38; Init +6; Spd 30 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d4+2, talon) or +9 melee (1d8+3, trident) or +9 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+2, trident) and +7 melee (1d4+1, bite); or +7/+2 melee (1d8+2, trident) and +7 melee (1d6+1/x3, handaxe) and +7 melee (1d4+1, bite); or +9 melee (1d4+2, 2 talons) and +7 melee (1d4+1, bite); or +9 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA blood frenzy, favoured enemies, rake 1d4+1; SQ blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., freshwater sensitivity, light blindness, speak with sharks, water dependent, wild empathy; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 9.

*Skills & Feats:* Handle Animal +4\*, Hide +6\*, Listen +12\*, Move Silently +8, Profession (hunter) +1\*, Ride +11, Search +8, Spot +12\*, Survival +1\*, Use Rope +8; Alertness, Endurance<sup>B</sup>, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Multiattack<sup>B</sup>, Track<sup>B</sup>.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), heavy crossbow, trident.

*Favoured Enemies:* Wreckers gain a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot and Survival checks and a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls when using skills against or attacking humans. Against aquatic elves, the same checks and rolls receive a +4 bonus.

\*A wrecker can handle his shark companion as a free action or push it as a move action. He gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks made regarding his shark companion.

**Animal Companion, Shark:** CR 1; Medium magical beast (aquatic); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +2; Swim 60 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); SQ blindsense, keen scent, link, share spells; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills & Feats:* Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +9; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

*Tricks:* Attack, defend, guard and seek.

## Sahuagin Lacerators

The lacerators are the heavy fighters who defend the group's most precious possessions, the vortex generator and the One Who Must Be Fed.

**Sahuagin Lacerator, Ftr6:** CR 8; Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic); HD 2d8+2 plus 6d10+6; hp 50; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d4+3, talon) or +12 melee (1d8+5, trident) or +9 ranged (1d10/19–20; heavy crossbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+5, trident) and +9 melee (1d6+1, bite); or +11 melee (1d4+3, 2 talons) and +9 melee (1d6+1, bite); or +9 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA blood frenzy, rake 1d4+1; SQ blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., freshwater sensitivity, light blindness, speak with sharks, water dependent; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 9.

**Skills & Feats:** Climb +9, Handle Animal +10, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Listen +6, Profession (hunter) +1, Ride +9, Spot +6, Survival +1; Combat Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Armour, Multiattack<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (trident), Weapon Specialisation (trident).

**Equipment & Treasure:** Crossbow bolts (10), heavy crossbow, shark hide armour, trident.

## Render Seaclaw

Render is the four-armed elite warrior in charge of this den. He looks to Scathla for advice but has the final say in what the tribe does. He enjoys bringing the ships down, along with other victims like the occasional whale, but is worried that enemies will soon simply avoid the region. If that happens there will be no more fighting, no flesh to tear, no heavenly taste of blood in the waters.

**Render Seaclaw, Male Sahuagin Ftr8:** CR 10; Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic); HD 2d8+2 plus 8d10+8; hp 63; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +13 melee (1d4+3, talon) or +15 melee (1d8+6 plus 1d6 cold, +1 trident of icy burst) or +12 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+6 plus 1d6, +1 trident of icy burst) and +5 melee (1d8+3, 3 masterwork tridents) and +11 melee (1d6+1, bite); or +13 melee (1d4+3, 4 talons) and +11 melee (1d6+1, bite); or +12 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA blood frenzy, rake 1d4+1; SQ blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., freshwater sensitivity, light blindness, speak with sharks, water dependent; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 9.




**Skills & Feats:** Climb +9, Craft (weaponsmithing) +6, Handle Animal +10\*, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Listen +6, Profession (hunter) +1, Ride +9, Spot +6, Survival +1; Cleave, Combat Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Armour, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Multiattack<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (trident), Weapon Specialisation (trident).

**Equipment & Treasure:** +3 shark hide armour, +1 trident of icy burst, crossbow bolts (10), heavy crossbow, masterwork tridents (3).

## Scathla

Scathla is the deranged priestess of the One Who Must Be Fed. When she first learned (from a tortured human sailor) that there were legends circulating of a huge, freakish white shark with claws that roamed the middle oceans, she was certain that this was some kind of sahuagin messiah. Originally she saw the half-dragon dire shark as a messenger or possibly a child of her deity, but as she has spent more and more time with it, she has become convinced that it *is* a god, not just the offspring of a god. The other sahuagin here share her beliefs, though they are starting to wonder how much longer they will all need to remain here, bringing down ships and offering their cargoes as 'tribute' to the One.

**Scathla, Female Sahuagin Clr10:** CR 10; Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic); HD 12d8+12; hp 66; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 16, touch 11,



flat-footed 15; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d4+2, talon) or +15 melee (1d8+6 plus 2d6 against good, +3 *unholy trident*) or +10 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+6 plus 2d6 against good, +3 *unholy trident*) and +9 melee (1d4+1, bite); or +11 melee (1d4+2, 2 talons) and +9 melee (1d4+1, bite); or +10 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA blood frenzy, rake 1d4+1, rebuke undead, spells; SQ blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., freshwater sensitivity, light blindness, speak with sharks, water dependent; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +13; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 9.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +11, Handle Animal +4, Hide +6, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +6, Profession (hunter) +1, Ride +3, Spot +6, Spellcraft +6, Survival +1; Great Fortitude, Martial Weapon Proficiency (trident)<sup>B</sup>, Multiattack<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (trident)<sup>B</sup>.

*Spells prepared* (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1, save DC 13 + spell level): 0<sup>th</sup> – detect poison, enlarge person\*, guidance, read magic, resistance (2); 1<sup>st</sup> – bane, cause fear, doom, protection from good, shield of faith; 2<sup>nd</sup> – augury, bear's endurance, bull's strength\* (2), silence, summon monster II; 3<sup>rd</sup> – bestow curse, inflict serious wounds, invisibility purge, magic vestment\*; 4<sup>th</sup> – divine power\*, inflict critical wounds, spell immunity, summon monster IV; 5<sup>th</sup> – greater command, righteous might\*, spell resistance.

\*Domain spell.

*Domains:* Strength (Gain a bonus to Strength equal to cleric level, 1/day), War (proficiency and Weapon Focus with deity's favoured weapon).



*Equipment & Treasure:* +3 *unholy trident*, crossbow bolts (10), heavy crossbow, platinum tiara of office set with pearls (worth 3,500 gp).

### Sahuagin Special Abilities

All of the sahuagin in the lair have the following special abilities.

*Blindsense (Ex):* A sahuagin can locate creatures underwater within a 30-foot radius. This ability works only when the sahuagin is underwater.

*Blood Frenzy:* Once per day, a sahuagin who takes damage in combat can fly into a frenzy in the following round, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +2 Constitution and +2 Strength and takes a –2 penalty to Armour Class. A sahuagin cannot end its frenzy voluntarily.

*Rake (Ex):* Attack bonus +2 melee, damage 1d4+1. A sahuagin also gains two rake attacks when it attacks while swimming.

*Freshwater Sensitivity (Ex):* A sahuagin fully immersed in fresh water must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) or become fatigued. Even on a success, it must repeat the saving throw attempt every ten minutes it remains immersed.

*Light Blindness (Ex):* Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a *daylight* spell) blinds sahuagin for one round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled while operating in bright light.

*Speak with Sharks (Ex):* Sahuagin can communicate telepathically with sharks up to 150 feet away. The communication is limited to fairly simple concepts such as 'food', 'danger' and 'enemy'. Sahuagin can use the Handle Animal skill to befriend and train sharks.

*Water Dependent (Ex):* Sahuagin can survive out of the water for one hour per two points of Constitution, after which they begin to drown.

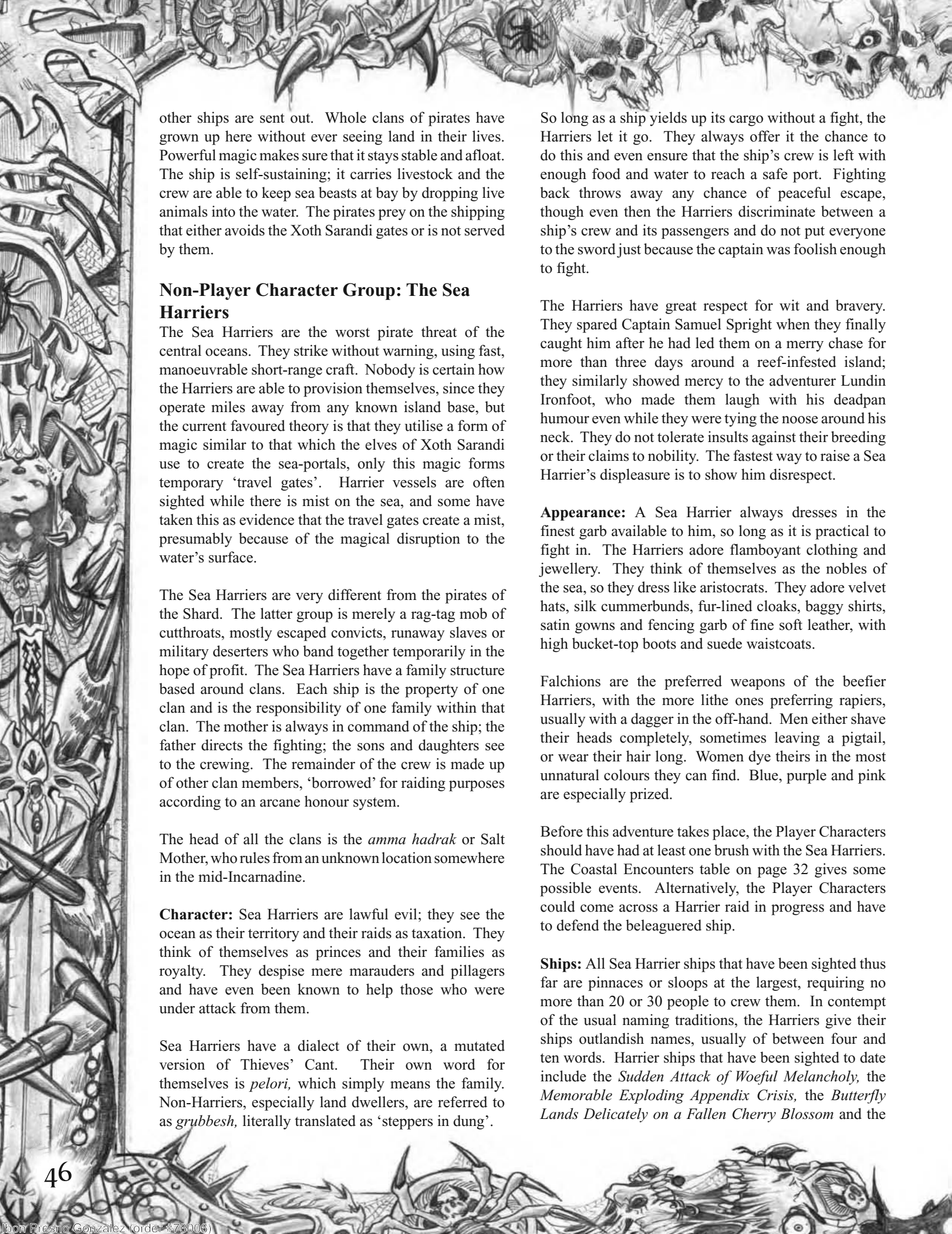
A sahuagin has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

### The Sea Harriers

**Summary:** This is an entire 'dungeon' set on an enormous ship, the *Celebration of Glorious and Lasting Independence*. The ship is a pirate nation, from which







other ships are sent out. Whole clans of pirates have grown up here without ever seeing land in their lives. Powerful magic makes sure that it stays stable and afloat. The ship is self-sustaining; it carries livestock and the crew are able to keep sea beasts at bay by dropping live animals into the water. The pirates prey on the shipping that either avoids the Xoth Sarandi gates or is not served by them.

### Non-Player Character Group: The Sea Harriers

The Sea Harriers are the worst pirate threat of the central oceans. They strike without warning, using fast, manoeuvrable short-range craft. Nobody is certain how the Harriers are able to provision themselves, since they operate miles away from any known island base, but the current favoured theory is that they utilise a form of magic similar to that which the elves of Xoth Sarandi use to create the sea-portals, only this magic forms temporary 'travel gates'. Harrier vessels are often sighted while there is mist on the sea, and some have taken this as evidence that the travel gates create a mist, presumably because of the magical disruption to the water's surface.

The Sea Harriers are very different from the pirates of the Shard. The latter group is merely a rag-tag mob of cutthroats, mostly escaped convicts, runaway slaves or military deserters who band together temporarily in the hope of profit. The Sea Harriers have a family structure based around clans. Each ship is the property of one clan and is the responsibility of one family within that clan. The mother is always in command of the ship; the father directs the fighting; the sons and daughters see to the crewing. The remainder of the crew is made up of other clan members, 'borrowed' for raiding purposes according to an arcane honour system.

The head of all the clans is the *amma hadrak* or Salt Mother, who rules from an unknown location somewhere in the mid-Incarnadine.

**Character:** Sea Harriers are lawful evil; they see the ocean as their territory and their raids as taxation. They think of themselves as princes and their families as royalty. They despise mere marauders and pillagers and have even been known to help those who were under attack from them.

Sea Harriers have a dialect of their own, a mutated version of Thieves' Cant. Their own word for themselves is *pelori*, which simply means the family. Non-Harriers, especially land dwellers, are referred to as *grubbesh*, literally translated as 'steppers in dung'.

So long as a ship yields up its cargo without a fight, the Harriers let it go. They always offer it the chance to do this and even ensure that the ship's crew is left with enough food and water to reach a safe port. Fighting back throws away any chance of peaceful escape, though even then the Harriers discriminate between a ship's crew and its passengers and do not put everyone to the sword just because the captain was foolish enough to fight.


The Harriers have great respect for wit and bravery. They spared Captain Samuel Spright when they finally caught him after he had led them on a merry chase for more than three days around a reef-infested island; they similarly showed mercy to the adventurer Lundin Ironfoot, who made them laugh with his deadpan humour even while they were tying the noose around his neck. They do not tolerate insults against their breeding or their claims to nobility. The fastest way to raise a Sea Harrier's displeasure is to show him disrespect.

**Appearance:** A Sea Harrier always dresses in the finest garb available to him, so long as it is practical to fight in. The Harriers adore flamboyant clothing and jewellery. They think of themselves as the nobles of the sea, so they dress like aristocrats. They adore velvet hats, silk cummerbunds, fur-lined cloaks, baggy shirts, satin gowns and fencing garb of fine soft leather, with high bucket-top boots and suede waistcoats.

Falchions are the preferred weapons of the beefier Harriers, with the more lithe ones preferring rapiers, usually with a dagger in the off-hand. Men either shave their heads completely, sometimes leaving a pigtail, or wear their hair long. Women dye theirs in the most unnatural colours they can find. Blue, purple and pink are especially prized.

Before this adventure takes place, the Player Characters should have had at least one brush with the Sea Harriers. The Coastal Encounters table on page 32 gives some possible events. Alternatively, the Player Characters could come across a Harrier raid in progress and have to defend the beleaguered ship.

**Ships:** All Sea Harrier ships that have been sighted thus far are pinnaces or sloops at the largest, requiring no more than 20 or 30 people to crew them. In contempt of the usual naming traditions, the Harriers give their ships outlandish names, usually of between four and ten words. Harrier ships that have been sighted to date include the *Sudden Attack of Woeful Melancholy*, the *Memorable Exploding Appendix Crisis*, the *Butterfly Lands Delicately on a Fallen Cherry Blossom* and the



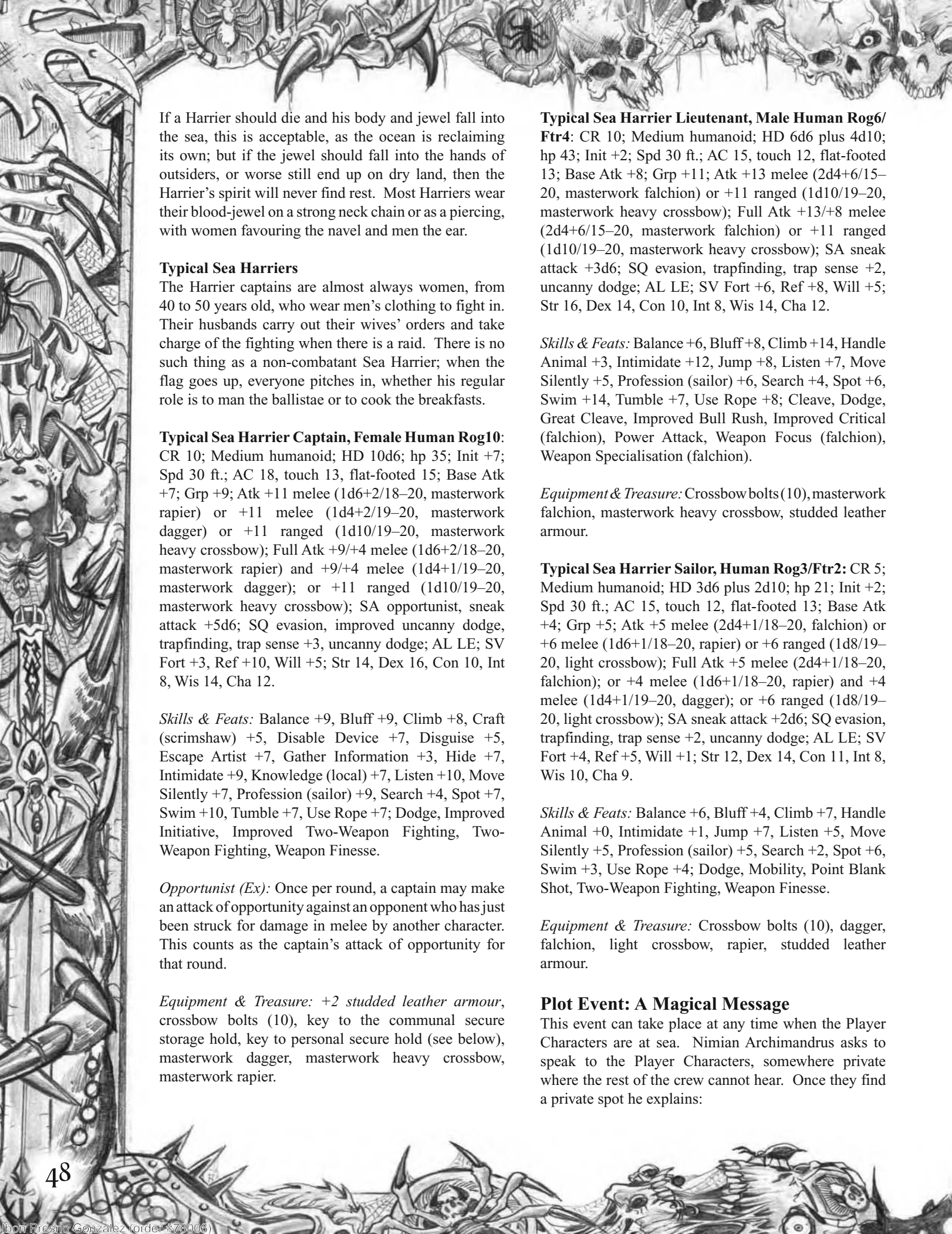
notorious *By the Time You Read This We Will Be Cutting Your Throat*. Between themselves, the Harriers usually shorten the ship's name, in the same way that friends and family use a shortened version of a person's name when talking to or about them.

**The Witchcompass:** Every Sea Harrier ship has a Witchcompass, a sphere of glass that contains a sliver of wood from the *Celebration*, floating on mercury. The Witchcompass points unerringly to the *Celebration*, no matter how far away it is, so long as it is on the same

plane. This allows the Harriers to keep their mothership on the move.

**The Blood-Jewel:** All Sea Harriers own a blood-jewel, a gem that they are given when they are first immersed in the ocean and given a name. This gem, usually a ruby, is typically worth between 500 and 2,000 gold pieces. Sea Harriers believe that it houses the soul. When a Harrier dies, his blood-jewel is passed back to the *amma hadrak*, who performs a ritual to free the spirit and let it move on.





If a Harrier should die and his body and jewel fall into the sea, this is acceptable, as the ocean is reclaiming its own; but if the jewel should fall into the hands of outsiders, or worse still end up on dry land, then the Harrier's spirit will never find rest. Most Harriers wear their blood-jewel on a strong neck chain or as a piercing, with women favouring the navel and men the ear.

### Typical Sea Harriers

The Harrier captains are almost always women, from 40 to 50 years old, who wear men's clothing to fight in. Their husbands carry out their wives' orders and take charge of the fighting when there is a raid. There is no such thing as a non-combatant Sea Harrier; when the flag goes up, everyone pitches in, whether his regular role is to man the ballistae or to cook the breakfasts.

### Typical Sea Harrier Captain, Female Human Rog10:

CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d6; hp 35; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d6+2/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +11 melee (1d4+2/19–20, masterwork dagger) or +11 ranged (1d10/19–20, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+2/18–20, masterwork rapier) and +9/+4 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger); or +11 ranged (1d10/19–20, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA opportunist, sneak attack +5d6; SQ evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trap sense +3, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills & Feats:* Balance +9, Bluff +9, Climb +8, Craft (scrimshaw) +5, Disable Device +7, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +7, Gather Information +3, Hide +7, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +7, Profession (sailor) +9, Search +4, Spot +7, Swim +10, Tumble +7, Use Rope +7; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse.

*Opportunist (Ex):* Once per round, a captain may make an attack of opportunity against an opponent who has just been struck for damage in melee by another character. This counts as the captain's attack of opportunity for that round.

*Equipment & Treasure:* +2 studded leather armour, crossbow bolts (10), key to the communal secure storage hold, key to personal secure hold (see below), masterwork dagger, masterwork heavy crossbow, masterwork rapier.

### Typical Sea Harrier Lieutenant, Male Human Rog6/

**Ftr4:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6 plus 4d10; hp 43; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +13 melee (2d4+6/15–20, masterwork falchion) or +11 ranged (1d10/19–20, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d4+6/15–20, masterwork falchion) or +11 ranged (1d10/19–20, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills & Feats:* Balance +6, Bluff +8, Climb +14, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +12, Jump +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Profession (sailor) +6, Search +4, Spot +6, Swim +14, Tumble +7, Use Rope +8; Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (falchion), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialisation (falchion).

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), masterwork falchion, masterwork heavy crossbow, studded leather armour.

### Typical Sea Harrier Sailor, Human Rog3/Ftr2: CR 5;

Medium humanoid; HD 3d6 plus 2d10; hp 21; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (2d4+1/18–20, falchion) or +6 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +6 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+1/18–20, falchion); or +4 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) and +4 melee (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); or +6 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.


*Skills & Feats:* Balance +6, Bluff +4, Climb +7, Handle Animal +0, Intimidate +1, Jump +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Profession (sailor) +5, Search +2, Spot +6, Swim +3, Use Rope +4; Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), dagger, falchion, light crossbow, rapier, studded leather armour.

### Plot Event: A Magical Message

This event can take place at any time when the Player Characters are at sea. Nimian Archimandrus asks to speak to the Player Characters, somewhere private where the rest of the crew cannot hear. Once they find a private spot he explains:





*'My friends, these enemies of ours have been busy on many fronts. I have received a magical distress signal from a fellow mage of Xoth Sarandi, the Lady Azbeth, who has spent the last six months investigating the motley pirate brotherhood that call themselves the Sea Harriers. She was convinced that they had made an alliance with the drow, and based her views on reports of ships seen in the mist, captained and crewed entirely by dark elves. Now, it seems, she has come a little too close to the truth. Her sending said that the Sea Harrier vessel A Dream of Pomegranates was closing on her and she had no chance of outrunning them.*

*'By now, Azbeth has undoubtedly been taken prisoner. The Sea Harriers have her. I cannot tell whether or not she still lives. From what she was able to tell me in the little time she had, the Sea Harriers have indeed struck some sort of a deal with the drow. There is strong evidence to suggest that they are behind the kraken's presence at the harbour. It is imperative that we go to her aid, both for her sake and for our own. If it is true that the Sea Harriers called up the kraken, then we may be able to undo their work and send it back to whatever ocean trench it crawled from.*

*'Azbeth was able to tell me her location before she was taken. According to the maps, she was in the open sea hundreds of miles from land, which can only mean that she is still on one of the Sea Harriers' ships. I suggest that we seek that ship and attempt to intercept it before it reaches land.'*

If the Player Characters check the location that Archimandrus cites, they see that it is indeed in a region of open sea, only two or three days' sailing away from their current location. The maps show nothing at all nearby, not even the tiniest of islands.

### **Event: Hunting the Hunters**

Searching for the Sea Harriers that took Azbeth is a wearisome task. The Player Characters can do little but scour her last known location looking for clues, while Archimandrus repeatedly casts enlarged *locate creature* spells and tries to *scry* on Azbeth. His *scrying* reveals her to be alive, chained up in a tiny wooden-walled cell that is obviously part of a ship.

The Games Master can extend this search as long as is appropriate for the story, throwing in red herrings and random encounters as needed. We suggest any of the following:

A band of 'helpful' merfolk who lie about having seen the Sea Harriers and spin a tall story about where they went.

A pair of whales fleeing past the Player Characters' ship, closely followed by the cry of a sea serpent echoing across the waters (actually the Beast Bellower from the deck of the *Celebration*, for which see below).

A group of tritons or aquatic elves who encountered Azbeth and spoke to her before she was captured.

A gang of pirates from the Shard, who hate the Sea Harriers and know nothing of any prisoner.

The Player Characters should, however, find a lead before they become bored. While they are searching, the Games Master should have one of them notice a fog bank off the port bow. At sea it is important to avoid fog if possible, as ships can easily collide with unseen hazards, so it would be wise to inform the crew. In fact, the Sea Harriers have been banking on just such caution in order to remain undetected, since nobody would purposefully steer into a fog bank. A Knowledge (nature) or Profession (sailor) check (DC 20) reveals that the weather conditions are not right for fog. There is something unnatural about this cloud.

If the Player Characters need even more encouragement to steer into it, Archimandrus exclaims that he has found Azbeth. His enlarged *locate creature* spells show that she is less than 1,600 feet away, in a direction that would take the ship right into the fog bank.

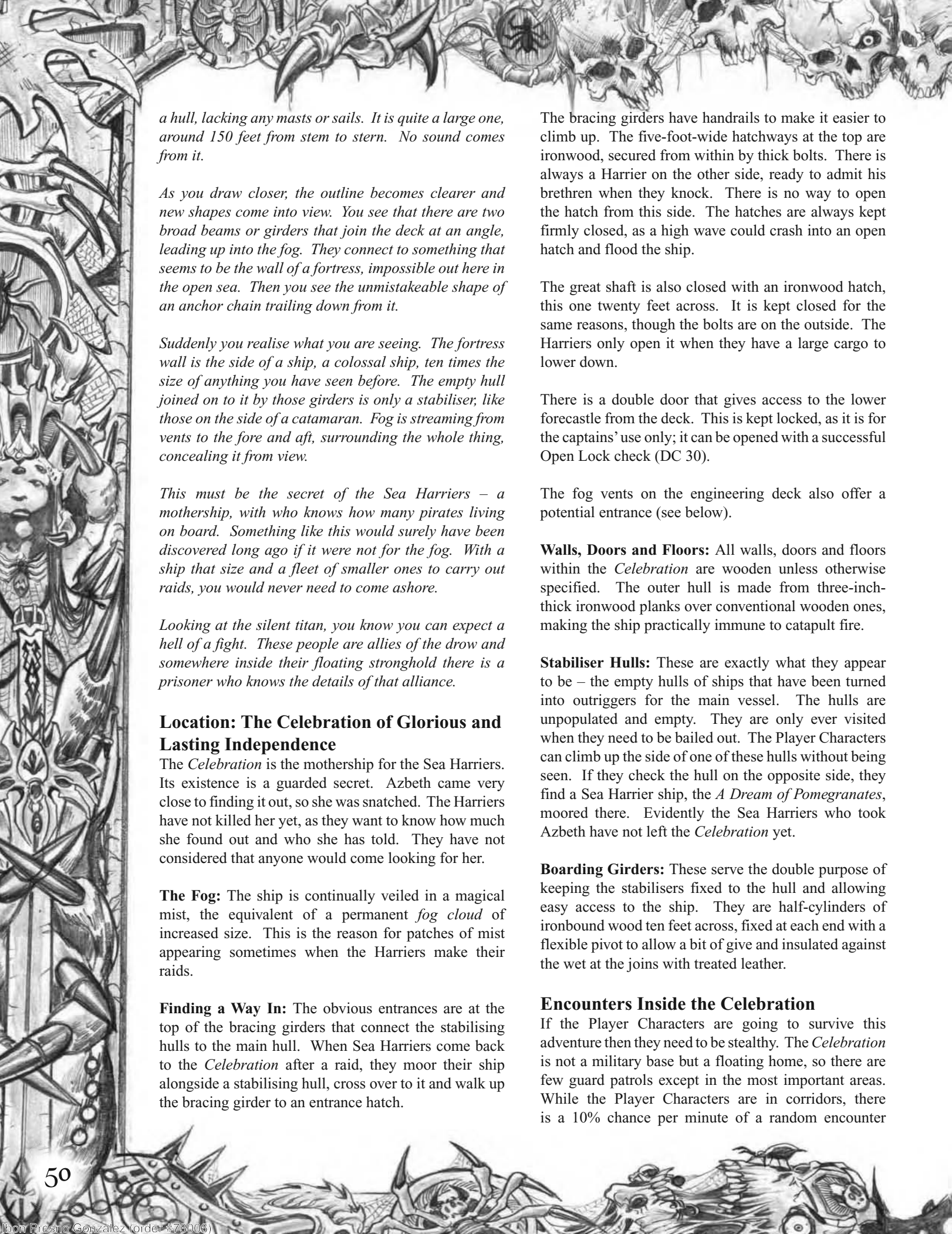
The fog can work to the Player Characters' advantage here. It conceals the mothership, but it also hides anything approaching it. The smaller the craft, the more efficient is the concealment. The Player Characters can choose how best to approach whatever lies inside the fog. Taking one of the ship's rowing boats is better for stealth, while going in with the whole ship provides more warriors in the event of a fight. Archimandrus argues for stealth, since they have no idea what is in there.

### **Event: Sighting the Celebration**

When the Player Characters first encounter the *Celebration*, the Games Master should read or paraphrase the following:

*There seems to be no end to the chill fog that surrounds you. The only sound is the rhythmic sculling of oars in the water. Then, looming out of the fog, you see the vague shape of a ship, though it seems to be nothing but*





*a hull, lacking any masts or sails. It is quite a large one, around 150 feet from stem to stern. No sound comes from it.*

*As you draw closer, the outline becomes clearer and new shapes come into view. You see that there are two broad beams or girders that join the deck at an angle, leading up into the fog. They connect to something that seems to be the wall of a fortress, impossible out here in the open sea. Then you see the unmistakable shape of an anchor chain trailing down from it.*

*Suddenly you realise what you are seeing. The fortress wall is the side of a ship, a colossal ship, ten times the size of anything you have seen before. The empty hull joined on to it by those girders is only a stabiliser, like those on the side of a catamaran. Fog is streaming from vents to the fore and aft, surrounding the whole thing, concealing it from view.*

*This must be the secret of the Sea Harriers – a mothership, with who knows how many pirates living on board. Something like this would surely have been discovered long ago if it were not for the fog. With a ship that size and a fleet of smaller ones to carry out raids, you would never need to come ashore.*

*Looking at the silent titan, you know you can expect a hell of a fight. These people are allies of the drow and somewhere inside their floating stronghold there is a prisoner who knows the details of that alliance.*

### **Location: The Celebration of Glorious and Lasting Independence**

The *Celebration* is the mothership for the Sea Harriers. Its existence is a guarded secret. Azbeth came very close to finding it out, so she was snatched. The Harriers have not killed her yet, as they want to know how much she found out and who she has told. They have not considered that anyone would come looking for her.

**The Fog:** The ship is continually veiled in a magical mist, the equivalent of a permanent *fog cloud* of increased size. This is the reason for patches of mist appearing sometimes when the Harriers make their raids.

**Finding a Way In:** The obvious entrances are at the top of the bracing girders that connect the stabilising hulls to the main hull. When Sea Harriers come back to the *Celebration* after a raid, they moor their ship alongside a stabilising hull, cross over to it and walk up the bracing girder to an entrance hatch.

The bracing girders have handrails to make it easier to climb up. The five-foot-wide hatchways at the top are ironwood, secured from within by thick bolts. There is always a Harrier on the other side, ready to admit his brethren when they knock. There is no way to open the hatch from this side. The hatches are always kept firmly closed, as a high wave could crash into an open hatch and flood the ship.

The great shaft is also closed with an ironwood hatch, this one twenty feet across. It is kept closed for the same reasons, though the bolts are on the outside. The Harriers only open it when they have a large cargo to lower down.

There is a double door that gives access to the lower forecabin from the deck. This is kept locked, as it is for the captains' use only; it can be opened with a successful Open Lock check (DC 30).

The fog vents on the engineering deck also offer a potential entrance (see below).

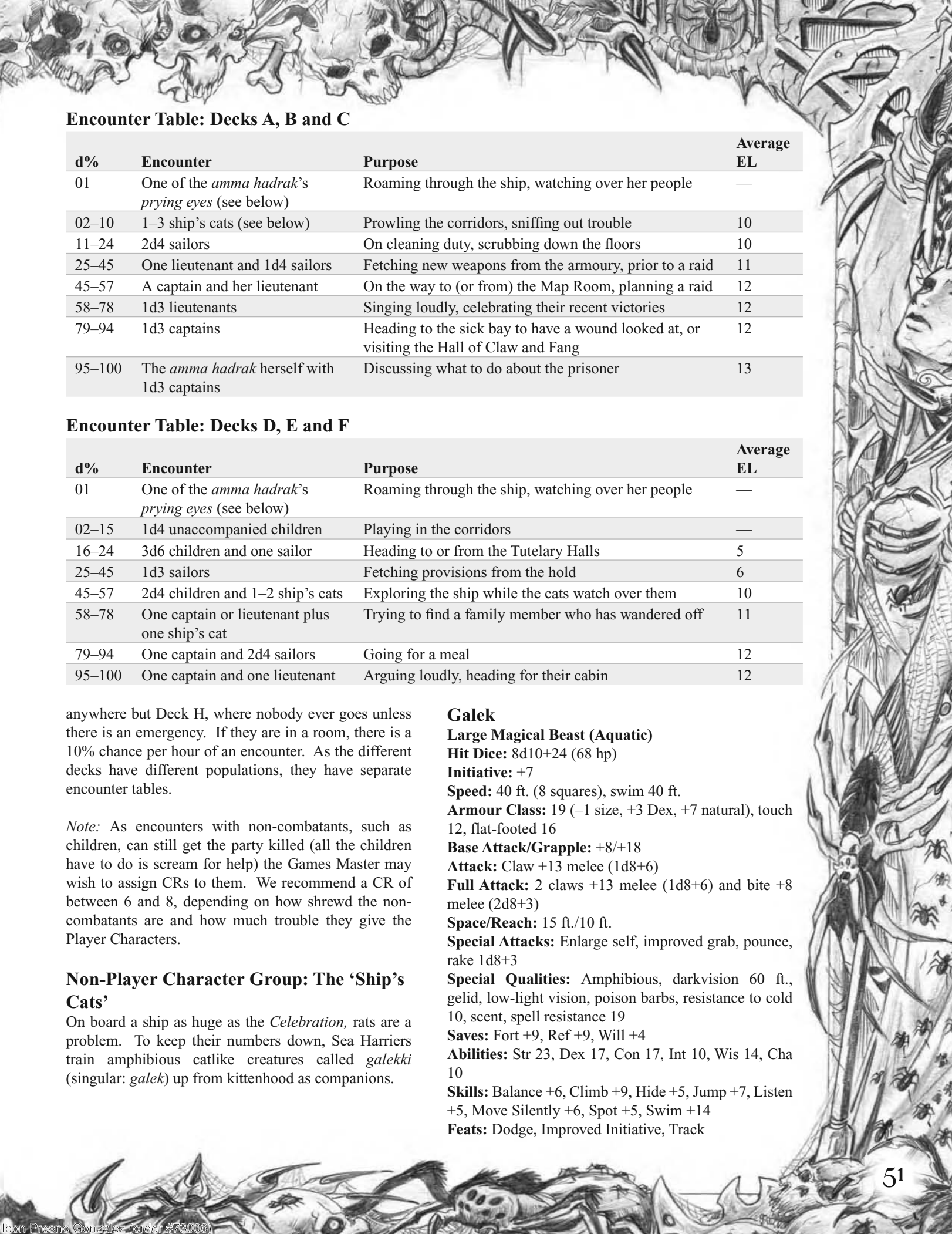
**Walls, Doors and Floors:** All walls, doors and floors within the *Celebration* are wooden unless otherwise specified. The outer hull is made from three-inch-thick ironwood planks over conventional wooden ones, making the ship practically immune to catapult fire.

**Stabiliser Hulls:** These are exactly what they appear to be – the empty hulls of ships that have been turned into outriggers for the main vessel. The hulls are unpopulated and empty. They are only ever visited when they need to be bailed out. The Player Characters can climb up the side of one of these hulls without being seen. If they check the hull on the opposite side, they find a Sea Harrier ship, the *A Dream of Pomegranates*, moored there. Evidently the Sea Harriers who took Azbeth have not left the *Celebration* yet.

**Boarding Girders:** These serve the double purpose of keeping the stabilisers fixed to the hull and allowing easy access to the ship. They are half-cylinders of ironbound wood ten feet across, fixed at each end with a flexible pivot to allow a bit of give and insulated against the wet at the joins with treated leather.

### **Encounters Inside the Celebration**

If the Player Characters are going to survive this adventure then they need to be stealthy. The *Celebration* is not a military base but a floating home, so there are few guard patrols except in the most important areas. While the Player Characters are in corridors, there is a 10% chance per minute of a random encounter



### Encounter Table: Decks A, B and C

d%	Encounter	Purpose	Average EL
01	One of the <i>amma hadrak</i> 's <i>prying eyes</i> (see below)	Roaming through the ship, watching over her people	—
02–10	1–3 ship's cats (see below)	Prowling the corridors, sniffing out trouble	10
11–24	2d4 sailors	On cleaning duty, scrubbing down the floors	10
25–45	One lieutenant and 1d4 sailors	Fetching new weapons from the armoury, prior to a raid	11
45–57	A captain and her lieutenant	On the way to (or from) the Map Room, planning a raid	12
58–78	1d3 lieutenants	Singing loudly, celebrating their recent victories	12
79–94	1d3 captains	Heading to the sick bay to have a wound looked at, or visiting the Hall of Claw and Fang	12
95–100	The <i>amma hadrak</i> herself with 1d3 captains	Discussing what to do about the prisoner	13

### Encounter Table: Decks D, E and F

d%	Encounter	Purpose	Average EL
01	One of the <i>amma hadrak</i> 's <i>prying eyes</i> (see below)	Roaming through the ship, watching over her people	—
02–15	1d4 unaccompanied children	Playing in the corridors	—
16–24	3d6 children and one sailor	Heading to or from the Tutelary Halls	5
25–45	1d3 sailors	Fetching provisions from the hold	6
45–57	2d4 children and 1–2 ship's cats	Exploring the ship while the cats watch over them	10
58–78	One captain or lieutenant plus one ship's cat	Trying to find a family member who has wandered off	11
79–94	One captain and 2d4 sailors	Going for a meal	12
95–100	One captain and one lieutenant	Arguing loudly, heading for their cabin	12

anywhere but Deck H, where nobody ever goes unless there is an emergency. If they are in a room, there is a 10% chance per hour of an encounter. As the different decks have different populations, they have separate encounter tables.

*Note:* As encounters with non-combatants, such as children, can still get the party killed (all the children have to do is scream for help) the Games Master may wish to assign CRs to them. We recommend a CR of between 6 and 8, depending on how shrewd the non-combatants are and how much trouble they give the Player Characters.

### Non-Player Character Group: The 'Ship's Cats'

On board a ship as huge as the *Celebration*, rats are a problem. To keep their numbers down, Sea Harriers train amphibious catlike creatures called *galekki* (singular: *galek*) up from kittenhood as companions.

### Galek

#### Large Magical Beast (Aquatic)

**Hit Dice:** 8d10+24 (68 hp)

**Initiative:** +7

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), swim 40 ft.

**Armor Class:** 19 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +7 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +8/+18

**Attack:** Claw +13 melee (1d8+6)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +13 melee (1d8+6) and bite +8 melee (2d8+3)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Enlarge self, improved grab, pounce, rake 1d8+3

**Special Qualities:** Amphibious, darkvision 60 ft., gelid, low-light vision, poison barbs, resistance to cold 10, scent, spell resistance 19

**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 23, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10

**Skills:** Balance +6, Climb +9, Hide +5, Jump +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +5, Swim +14

**Feats:** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Track





**Environment:** Temperate aquatic  
**Organisation:** Solitary, pair, or pride (6–10)  
**Challenge Rating:** 8  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil  
**Advancement:** 9–10 HD (Large); 11–24 HD (Huge)  
**Level Adjustment:** —

A galek resembles a tailless greenish cat the size of a lioness, with thick jelly-like strands covering its body instead of fur like the fronds of an anemone. Its eyes are hourglass-pupilled, more like those of octopi or frogs than those of cats. There is webbing between its claws.

Though they usually subsist on fish, galekki love to eat warm-blooded creatures. They eat rats enthusiastically, but will not refuse larger prey such as seals and dolphins.

*Amphibious (Ex):* A galek can breathe in air and underwater.

*Enlarge Self (Su):* When galekki are annoyed, they hiss and their fronds stand on end, making them look larger than they are. When they are enraged, they spontaneously enlarge in size as if by the *animal growth* spell. An enlarged galek increases in size to Huge. It gains a +8 size bonus to Strength, a +4 size bonus to Constitution (and thus gains an additional two hit points per Hit Die) and takes a –2 size penalty to Dexterity. Its natural armour bonus increases by two. It takes a further –3 size penalty to attack rolls and Armour Class. The base damage for its claw attacks increases to 2d6 and the base damage for its bite attack increases to 3d8. Finally, it gains damage reduction 10/magic and a +4 resistance bonus to all saving throws. Galekki can remain enlarged for a maximum of five rounds plus one round per HD. They can end the enlargement at will.

*Gelid (Ex):* Galekki are naturally slimy to the touch and are composed mostly of jelly-like substances. They can squeeze through gaps as if they were one size category smaller than they are.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a galek must hit with its bite attack. 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 can rake.

*Poison Barbs (Ex):* A galek's fronds are covered with tiny stinging barbs like those of a jellyfish. Any creature that is in a grapple with the galek or strikes the galek with a natural weapon is exposed to the poisonous barbs and must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 17) to avoid them. Creatures who do not avoid the barbs must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 21) against their poison; primary damage paralysis, secondary damage 1d6 Strength. The saving throw is Constitution-based and includes a +4 racial bonus.

*Pounce (Ex):* If a galek charges, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

*Rake (Ex):* Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d8+3.

*Skills:* A galek has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## Fire Hoses

A wooden structure the size of the *Celebration* is a fire hazard, so whoever constructed it has included insurance against conflagrations. At the points on the map marked FH are fire hoses. These are lengths of hosepipe connected up to the pumps in the engine room (see below) via internal plumbing. Each hose can extend up to 30 feet from its anchor point.

The water flow has to be turned on via a valve in the anchor point. When a hose is running at full blast it produces a 20-foot-long, one-foot-wide stream that delivers 30 gallons of sea water per round. The water stream causes considerable back pressure, requiring the holder to make a Strength check (DC 12) each round to avoid being knocked down. The force of the stream deals 1d4 points of damage but can only affect one target per round. Creatures struck by the stream must also make Strength checks (DC 12) or fall prone.



## A Note on Room Description

To give the Games Master more control over the occupants of the rooms, the features and furniture are mentioned first. The creatures inside a given room (and what they are doing) are determined by the approach the Player Characters take to investigating the *Celebration*. For example, if they choose to raid the ship at night, some of the rooms will be empty. If they make themselves *invisible*, then the creatures they encounter will not notice them as soon as they enter.

Creatures have only been included in a room description when they are always present (such as the galekki in their lair). The Games Master should always remember to describe any occupants a room has, rather than just reading or paraphrasing the room description.

## Overheard Conversations

A vessel the size of the *Celebration* can occasionally be tedious to explore, especially with so many identical rooms and so many of the combatants having similar abilities. In order to make the adventure more than just a selection of rooms to have fights in, the Games Master can include occasional snatches of overheard conversation. Player Characters can hear these when listening at doors, hiding or moving through the ship's corridors. The following are recommended:

*'He knows what he's doing and he's promised good payment. We know he's good for the loot. Don't his inky kin live down where the diamonds come from? Anyways, the amma hadrak supports the plan, so that should be good enough for you too, neh?'*

*'I care not for such payments. I don't care how many of those black diamonds we stand to gain from this. The island was drowned for good reason. We're not meant to be plundering the dead. What if a saidakh should come?'*

*'You ever seen a saidakh?'*

*'No. And nobody who's ever been drowned by one saw one, either...'*

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*'How much do you think she saw?'*

*'Truly? I don't think she saw a thing. Barrington's men were on her too quick.'*

*'She was casting a spell, though. What if she sent for help?'*

*'What if she did? There's not a soul on the seas can scratch us, and you know it...'*

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*'You're a scabby-arsed lorun gach, you bloody dongobel.'*

*'You calling me out, you pezwen? I'll have your gachbekken skull for a drinking cup.'*

*'You? You don't have the blood in you to drown a flea. I say you sicken for the land. I say your mother was a grubbesh and you are a grubbesh too.'*

*'That's it. That's the limit. I'll see you in the Hall of Claw and Fang, where I'll wet my father's good steel in the jelly of your eyes, you hull-scraping...'*

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*'Raishel aid me. Bethecca aid me. Oh, sweet sea-mothers, I am in trouble. I can't believe I lost it. They'll think it was stolen. Oh, gods of my forefathers, what the hell am I to do...'*

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*'But mother, I did see it!'*

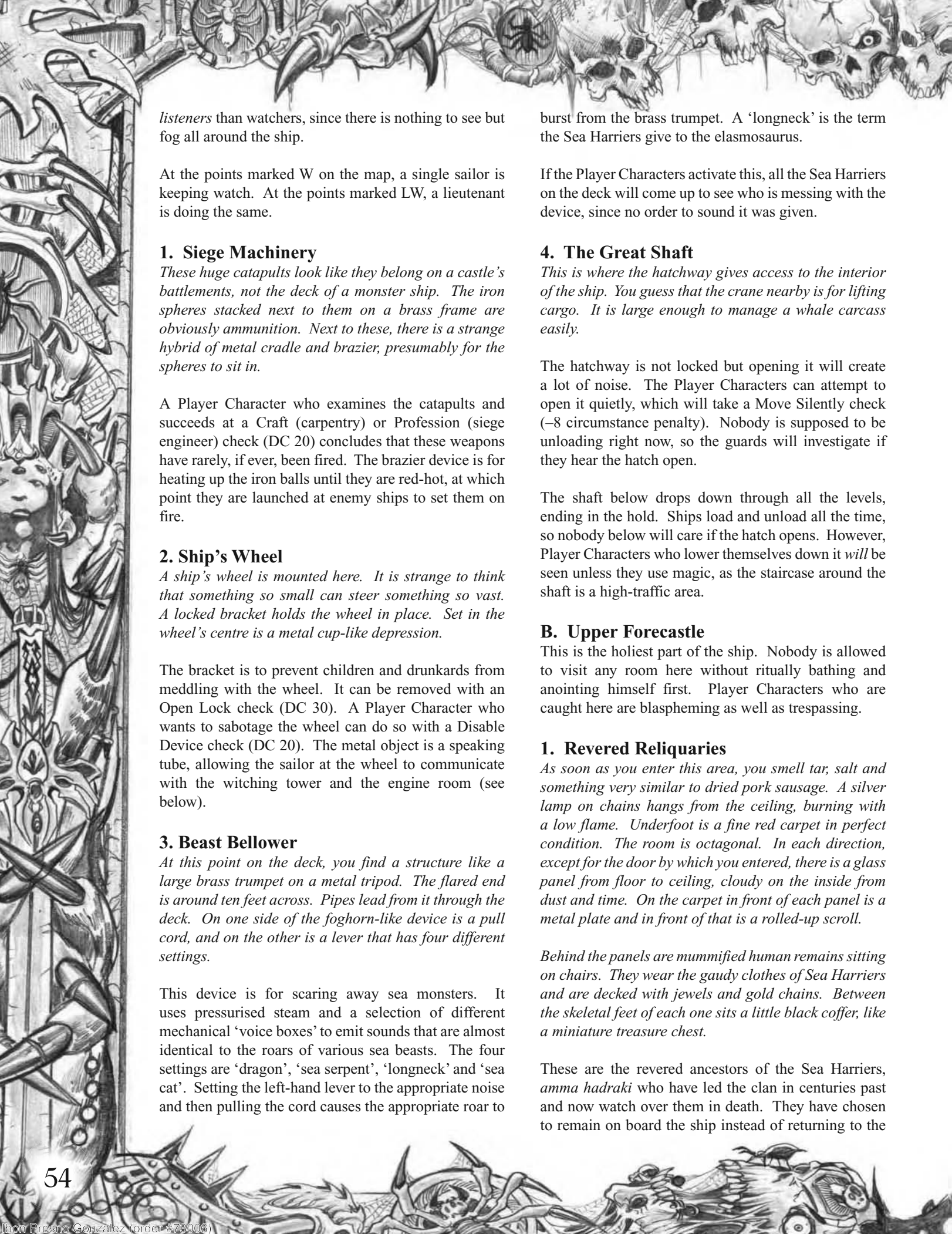
*'Hush now. There are no ghosties in the bilges. And you are never, never to go down there again without a grown-up, do you hear me? It's a wonder the vermin didn't eat you alive. I swear, I'll flay you if I hear of such a thing again.'*

*'But there was a skellington with bones and a skull and everything...'*

## A. Deck Level

*The fog curls around the railings on the edge of the deck. Despite the grey haze, you can make out some details. Towards the stern, the deck rises in a forecandle-like structure, with a pepperpot-shaped tower poking from it. At the other end, there is a square hatchway 20 feet across that you guess leads down to the hold. Beside the hatch is a crane and windlass, draped with chains. Right in the centre of the deck is something like a metal flower or perhaps a trumpet, mounted on a stand.*

Currently, only a few people are on deck. The Sea Harriers do not expect any visitors and there are no sea monsters nearby, so there is no need for more than a token watch. Those who do stand at the rails are more



*listeners* than *watchers*, since there is nothing to see but fog all around the ship.

At the points marked W on the map, a single sailor is keeping watch. At the points marked LW, a lieutenant is doing the same.

### 1. Siege Machinery

*These huge catapults look like they belong on a castle's battlements, not the deck of a monster ship. The iron spheres stacked next to them on a brass frame are obviously ammunition. Next to these, there is a strange hybrid of metal cradle and brazier, presumably for the spheres to sit in.*

A Player Character who examines the catapults and succeeds at a Craft (carpentry) or Profession (siege engineer) check (DC 20) concludes that these weapons have rarely, if ever, been fired. The brazier device is for heating up the iron balls until they are red-hot, at which point they are launched at enemy ships to set them on fire.

### 2. Ship's Wheel

*A ship's wheel is mounted here. It is strange to think that something so small can steer something so vast. A locked bracket holds the wheel in place. Set in the wheel's centre is a metal cup-like depression.*

The bracket is to prevent children and drunkards from meddling with the wheel. It can be removed with an Open Lock check (DC 30). A Player Character who wants to sabotage the wheel can do so with a Disable Device check (DC 20). The metal object is a speaking tube, allowing the sailor at the wheel to communicate with the witching tower and the engine room (see below).

### 3. Beast Bellow

*At this point on the deck, you find a structure like a large brass trumpet on a metal tripod. The flared end is around ten feet across. Pipes lead from it through the deck. On one side of the foghorn-like device is a pull cord, and on the other is a lever that has four different settings.*

This device is for scaring away sea monsters. It uses pressurised steam and a selection of different mechanical 'voice boxes' to emit sounds that are almost identical to the roars of various sea beasts. The four settings are 'dragon', 'sea serpent', 'longneck' and 'sea cat'. Setting the left-hand lever to the appropriate noise and then pulling the cord causes the appropriate roar to

burst from the brass trumpet. A 'longneck' is the term the Sea Harriers give to the elasmosaurus.

If the Player Characters activate this, all the Sea Harriers on the deck will come up to see who is messing with the device, since no order to sound it was given.

### 4. The Great Shaft

*This is where the hatchway gives access to the interior of the ship. You guess that the crane nearby is for lifting cargo. It is large enough to manage a whale carcass easily.*

The hatchway is not locked but opening it will create a lot of noise. The Player Characters can attempt to open it quietly, which will take a Move Silently check (-8 circumstance penalty). Nobody is supposed to be unloading right now, so the guards will investigate if they hear the hatch open.

The shaft below drops down through all the levels, ending in the hold. Ships load and unload all the time, so nobody below will care if the hatch opens. However, Player Characters who lower themselves down it *will* be seen unless they use magic, as the staircase around the shaft is a high-traffic area.

### B. Upper Forecastle

This is the holiest part of the ship. Nobody is allowed to visit any room here without ritually bathing and anointing himself first. Player Characters who are caught here are blaspheming as well as trespassing.

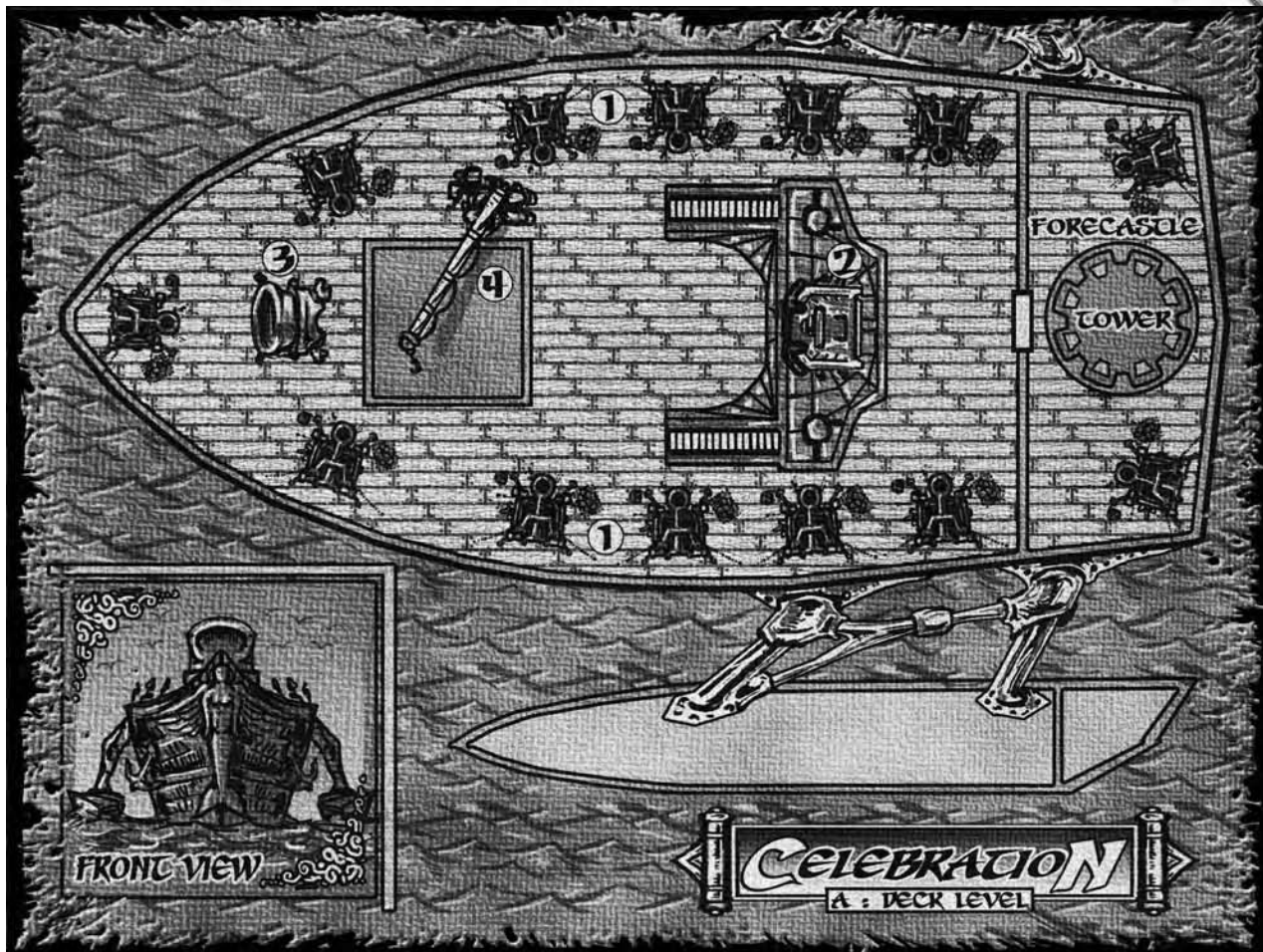
### 1. Revered Reliquaries

*As soon as you enter this area, you smell tar, salt and something very similar to dried pork sausage. A silver lamp on chains hangs from the ceiling, burning with a low flame. Underfoot is a fine red carpet in perfect condition. The room is octagonal. In each direction, except for the door by which you entered, there is a glass panel from floor to ceiling, cloudy on the inside from dust and time. On the carpet in front of each panel is a metal plate and in front of that is a rolled-up scroll.*

*Behind the panels are mummified human remains sitting on chairs. They wear the gaudy clothes of Sea Harriers and are decked with jewels and gold chains. Between the skeletal feet of each one sits a little black coffer, like a miniature treasure chest.*

These are the revered ancestors of the Sea Harriers, *amma hadraki* who have led the clan in centuries past and now watch over them in death. They have chosen to remain on board the ship instead of returning to the





sea, so that they can remain close to their descendants. Each ancestor is still given a share of the treasure every year at a festival of remembrance.

**The Metal Plates:** These bear the name of the ancestor behind the glass. Clockwise from the door, these are: Lady Raishel the First, Queen Bethecca the Wrack, Sagbely Sal the Whale of Nine Oceans, Mistress Flick, Frederica the Romany, Queen Twilight and Rattling Janine Coalblister.

**The Scrolls:** The scrolls are lists of requests made by Sea Harriers, in much the same way as saints are petitioned. They range from ‘good grandmother, cure my gout’ to ‘send us fair weather for the raid tomorrow’ to ‘make him fall in love with me and I will give you all the gold I take this hunting season’.


**The Compartments:** If the Player Characters remove the glass (which can be done quietly with a Disable Device check (DC 25)) they can loot the bodies. The Player Characters probably expect the dry skeletons to lurch up and attack them, but nothing of the kind happens; the worst thing to happen is a skull toppling

from bony shoulders and landing on the floor with a thump, still wearing its velvet hat. Each coffer contains exactly 3,141 gold pieces; each ancestor gets an equal share of the coin. The ancestors’ remains have been laid to rest with the following additional treasure:

**Lady Raishel the First:** A golden anchor pendant on a gold chain (worth 900 gp), 18 assorted bangles in gold and silver (worth 75 gp each), a stylised silver-gilt pectoral in the shape of a hawk and set with jasper (worth 450 gp) and a masterwork hand crossbow with silver fittings and scenes of ships engraved on the stock (worth 550 gp).

**Queen Bethecca the Wrack:** A diamond-encrusted hat ornament in the shape of a crab (worth 2,100 gp), matched pearl earrings (fixed on with silver wire because the skull has no ears) (worth 700 gp each), three golden rings (worth 50 gp each) and a gold ankle chain with jewelled lucky charms hanging from it (worth 350 gp).

**Sagbely Sal the Whale of Nine Oceans:** A masterwork dagger with a claw at the pommel holding an emerald (worth 750 gp), a chunky silver necklace with a giant



shark's tooth set in silver (worth 300 gp), fine leather boots with diamonds set into the heel in a skull-and-crossbones pattern (worth 1,400 gp) and a golden chain link belt long enough to wrap around an average person three times (worth 1,300 gp).

**Mistress Flick:** A miniature ship in a bottle (worth 15 gp), a pocket compass in a golden case with mermaids embossed on the back hanging on a gold chain (worth 1,000 gp), 16 hair-beads made from carved semiprecious stones (worth 10 gp each), a platinum snuffbox with a mother-of-pearl inlay showing a ship in full sail being attacked by a kraken (worth 2,500 gp) and two ebony chopsticks with jade dragon fittings (worth 200 gp each).

**Frederica the Romany:** A hip flask made from solid silver embossed with a dancing skeleton design with sapphire eyes (worth 1,200 gp), an armband made from white gold in the shape of an octopus with tentacles entwined (worth 2,000 gp), a masterwork violin made from exotic woods inlaid with pearl in an ebony case (worth 900 gp) and a headdress made from platinum coins on a wire (worth 600 gp).

**Queen Twilight:** A silver inkwell filled with dried blood (worth 150 gp), a tangle of 20 delicate silver and gold chains (Dexterity check (DC 25) needed to disentangle, with failure halving its value) (worth 50 gp each), a silver ship's bell with a pearl-inlaid hardwood handle (worth 500 gp), a large golden amulet in the shape of a ship's wheel hung from a sharkskin thong (worth 1,400 gp) and a bulky, slightly dented golden belt buckle (worth 400 gp).

**Rattling Janine Coalblister:** A monkey skull covered with a mosaic of ruby, sapphire and emerald pieces (worth 900 gp), a binder for a ship's log in black leather with pearl ornamentation and gold studs (worth 250 gp), a swordstick made from ebony with a silver serpent twined along its length, the head forming the knob, the sword is a masterwork silvered rapier (worth 850 gp) and there is an artificial hand replacing the skeleton's own left hand, made from silver and articulated with wires, with jewelled rings moulded into the fingers (worth 4,500 gp).

If the Player Characters disturb the remains or steal any of the treasure, the spirits of the ancestors become angry. They send forth a *saidakh*, a female sea-horror, to take revenge and reclaim the treasure. The *saidakh* does not attack immediately. Instead, she pursues the Player Characters responsible and strikes when they are alone.

**Saidakh, Medium Undead (water):** CR 11; Diminutive magical beast; HD 14d12; hp 91; Init +1; Spd 30 ft, fly 20 ft. (poor); AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +7; Grp +15; Atk Slam +11 melee (1d4+4 plus energy drain); Full Atk 2 slams +11 melee (1d4+4 plus energy drain); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Chilling gaze, create spawn, energy drain, kiss of drowning; SQ Aqueous form, change shape, damage reduction 15/good and magic, energy immunity, *find victim*, *mist veil*, quench, spell-like abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 13, Con —, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 20.

**Skills & Feats:** Bluff +13, Disguise +14, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (nature) +8, Intimidate +22, Spellcraft +18, Swim +21; Improved Grapple, Improved Natural Attack (slam).

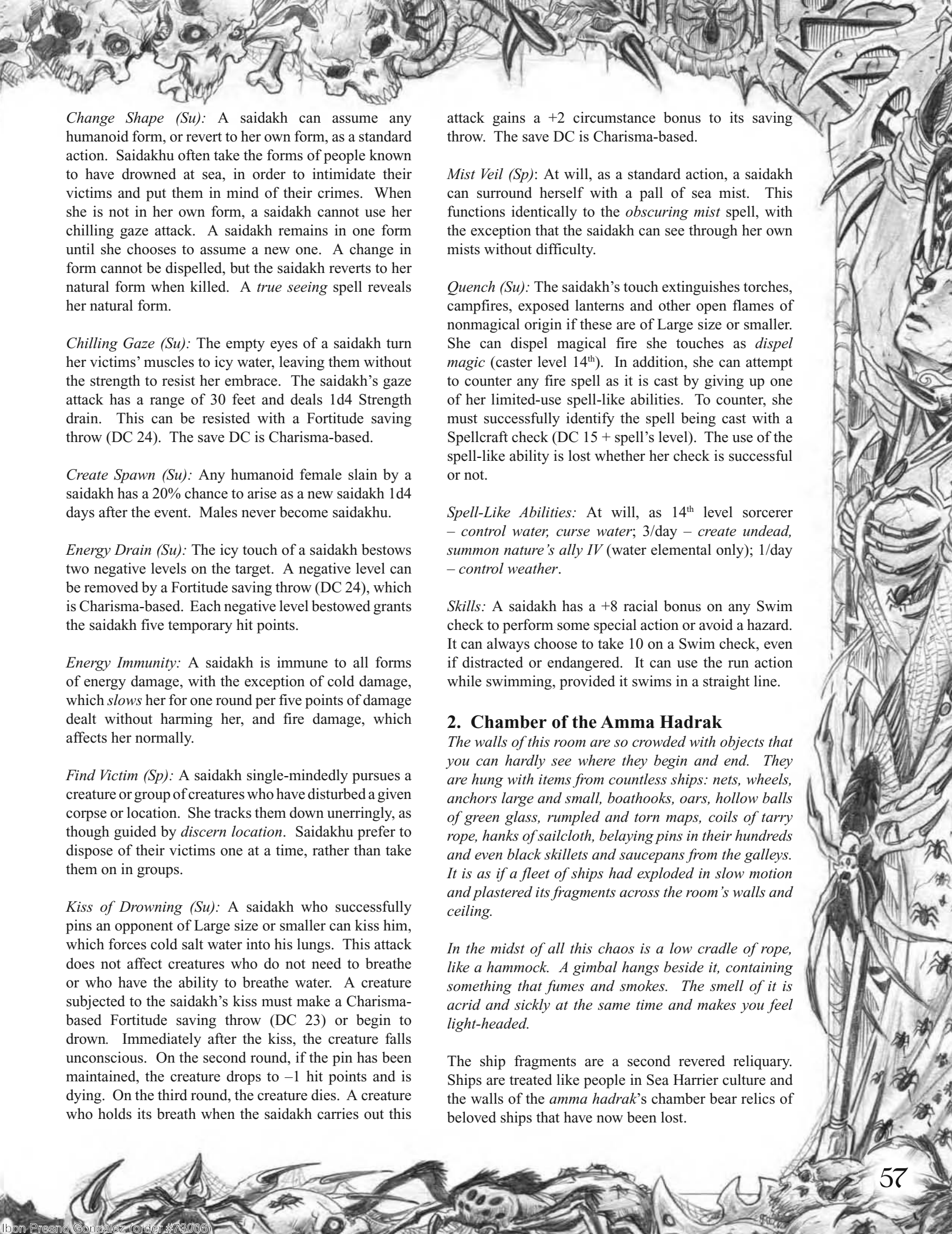
The *saidakhu* are marine undead who watch over the bones of the dead who die at sea. They work by the principle that what the sea takes, it owns and what it owns, it shall keep. They have no ill will towards anyone save those who disturb the dead at sea. Those who plunder shipwrecks, disturb sunken remains or loot the bodies of the drowned are those most hated by the *saidakhu*. Though they are evil, the *saidakhu* are bound by a code. A *saidakh* will never attack a creature who has had no part in such crimes unless she is attacked first.

A *saidakh* resembles the animated corpse of a drowned woman, with blank white eyes and a gaping mouth from which water continually trickles. In the lore of the sea, *saidakhu* are sometimes called *whiteladies* or *weeping women*.

*Saidakhu* do not have treasure that belongs to them. They are sent forth when treasure that should remain under the sea or with the sea's dead is stolen.

In combat, the *saidakh* attempts to weaken her target with her chilling gaze, then goes in for the kill with a grapple, a pin and a kiss of drowning.

**Aqueous Form (Su):** A *saidakh* can enter or leave aqueous form at will as a free action, collapsing suddenly into a spreading pool of water. While aqueous, she gains damage reduction 25/good and magic. An aqueous *saidakh* cannot attack, nor can she use spells or spell-like abilities. She cannot run, but can move over ground at a speed of 20 feet and swim at a speed of 30 feet. When immersed in water, she becomes *invisible* as per the spell and can use the water to hide. *Saidakhu* typically use this form to seep through keyholes and under doors to reach those who try to flee from them.



*Change Shape (Su):* A saidakh can assume any humanoid form, or revert to her own form, as a standard action. Saidakhu often take the forms of people known to have drowned at sea, in order to intimidate their victims and put them in mind of their crimes. When she is not in her own form, a saidakh cannot use her chilling gaze attack. A saidakh remains in one form until she chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but the saidakh reverts to her natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell reveals her natural form.

*Chilling Gaze (Su):* The empty eyes of a saidakh turn her victims' muscles to icy water, leaving them without the strength to resist her embrace. The saidakh's gaze attack has a range of 30 feet and deals 1d4 Strength drain. This can be resisted with a Fortitude saving throw (DC 24). The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid female slain by a saidakh has a 20% chance to arise as a new saidakh 1d4 days after the event. Males never become saidakhu.

*Energy Drain (Su):* The icy touch of a saidakh bestows two negative levels on the target. A negative level can be removed by a Fortitude saving throw (DC 24), which is Charisma-based. Each negative level bestowed grants the saidakh five temporary hit points.

*Energy Immunity:* A saidakh is immune to all forms of energy damage, with the exception of cold damage, which *slows* her for one round per five points of damage dealt without harming her, and fire damage, which affects her normally.

*Find Victim (Sp):* A saidakh single-mindedly pursues a creature or group of creatures who have disturbed a given corpse or location. She tracks them down unerringly, as though guided by *discern location*. Saidakhu prefer to dispose of their victims one at a time, rather than take them on in groups.

*Kiss of Drowning (Su):* A saidakh who successfully pins an opponent of Large size or smaller can kiss him, which forces cold salt water into his lungs. This attack does not affect creatures who do not need to breathe or who have the ability to breathe water. A creature subjected to the saidakh's kiss must make a Charisma-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 23) or begin to drown. Immediately after the kiss, the creature falls unconscious. On the second round, if the pin has been maintained, the creature drops to -1 hit points and is dying. On the third round, the creature dies. A creature who holds its breath when the saidakh carries out this

attack gains a +2 circumstance bonus to its saving throw. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Mist Veil (Sp):* At will, as a standard action, a saidakh can surround herself with a pall of sea mist. This functions identically to the *obscuring mist* spell, with the exception that the saidakh can see through her own mists without difficulty.

*Quench (Su):* The saidakh's touch extinguishes torches, campfires, exposed lanterns and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. She can dispel magical fire she touches as *dispel magic* (caster level 14<sup>th</sup>). In addition, she can attempt to counter any fire spell as it is cast by giving up one of her limited-use spell-like abilities. To counter, she must successfully identify the spell being cast with a Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell's level). The use of the spell-like ability is lost whether her check is successful or not.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* At will, as 14<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer – *control water*, *curse water*; 3/day – *create undead*, *summon nature's ally IV* (water elemental only); 1/day – *control weather*.

*Skills:* A saidakh has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## 2. Chamber of the Amma Hadrak

*The walls of this room are so crowded with objects that you can hardly see where they begin and end. They are hung with items from countless ships: nets, wheels, anchors large and small, boathooks, oars, hollow balls of green glass, rumpled and torn maps, coils of tarry rope, hanks of sailcloth, belaying pins in their hundreds and even black skillets and saucapans from the galleys. It is as if a fleet of ships had exploded in slow motion and plastered its fragments across the room's walls and ceiling.*

*In the midst of all this chaos is a low cradle of rope, like a hammock. A gimbal hangs beside it, containing something that fumes and smokes. The smell of it is acrid and sickly at the same time and makes you feel light-headed.*

The ship fragments are a second revered reliquary. Ships are treated like people in Sea Harrier culture and the walls of the *amma hadrak's* chamber bear relics of beloved ships that have now been lost.



### Tizla Leaves

These leaves are mildly narcotic and are used in many shamanic cultures. Kobold sorcerers and goblin adepts are known devotees of the herb. When burned and inhaled, tizla leaves enhance clairvoyant magic, though they make the user groggy at the same time. Any spell of the Divination school that has a duration of longer than one round, such as *scrying*, has its duration increased by 100% when cast by a caster under the influence of tizla. This effect stacks with other methods of increasing spell duration. However, the user is also *slowed* for as long as the influence lasts.

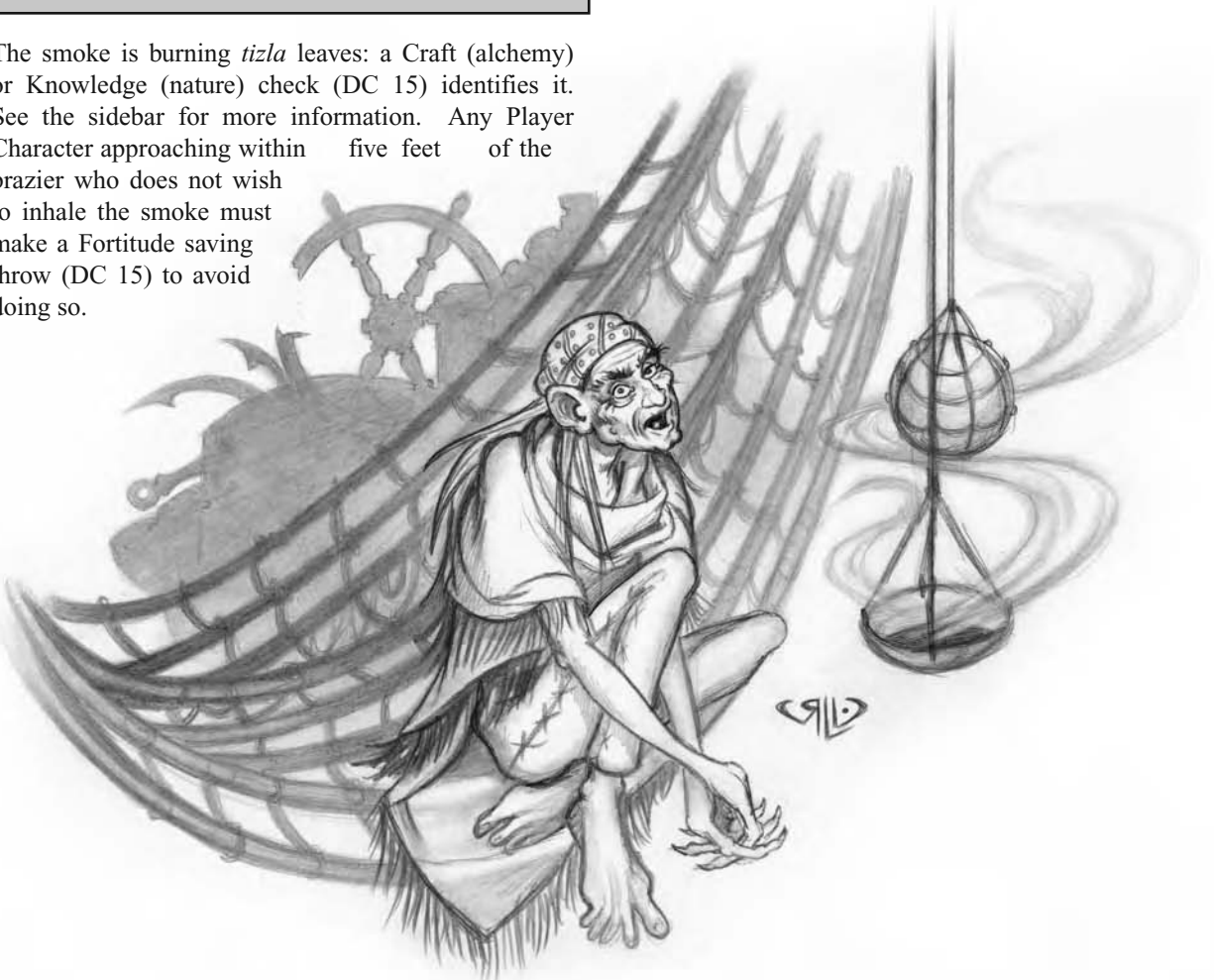
A person inhaling tizla smoke partakes of the effects for as long as he continues to inhale it and for 1d6 rounds afterwards. In order to make sure that they continue to inhale the smoke for as long as possible, tizla users sit in lodges and burn fistfuls of it on coals, or do what the *amma hadrak* does and stack up an incense burner.


The smoke is burning *tizla* leaves: a Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (nature) check (DC 15) identifies it. See the sidebar for more information. Any Player Character approaching within five feet of the brazier who does not wish to inhale the smoke must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) to avoid doing so.

If she has not been encountered already, the *amma hadrak* is sitting in her hammock, rocking back and forth and inhaling the smoke. She rarely leaves her chambers, preferring to remain here and send out her *prying eyes* to keep watch over her people. She intends to totter forth and visit the prisoner at some point today, to find out how much the interfering elf scum found out.

If the Player Characters confront her in her lair, she opts for parley rather than combat. She does not even rise from her hammock. While she engages them in halting conversation, her *prying eyes* scoot to Revekhal Sunspite (or, if he is not to be found, to the nearest captain) and jiggle frantically, to signal that she is in danger. She tries to stall the Player Characters until help arrives. If they attack her directly, she attempts to escape with *dimension door* and fetch backup.

The *amma hadrak* looks like a smelly hag but she is the toughest adversary on the whole ship. Like all Sea Harriers, she respects courage and humour. If the Player





Characters put up a good fight and do not whimper like weaklings, she lets them live and keeps them prisoner instead of slaughtering them. It is not every *grubbesh* who dares to creep into the private rooms of a sea-mother.

**The Amma Hadrak, Female Human Sor10/Rog6:** CR 16; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6 plus 10d4; hp 46; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grp +8; Atk +13 melee (1d6+1/18–20, +2 *rapier of puncturing*) or +12 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+1/18–20, +2 *rapier of puncturing*) or +12 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA sneak attack +3d6, spells; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +10; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 19.

*Skills & Feats:* Balance +5, Bluff +21, Climb +2, Concentration +11, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +11, Jump +2, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +12, Move Silently +8, Profession (sailor) +7, Search +7, Spellcraft +13, Spot +10, Swim +8, Tumble +8, Use Rope +6; Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Greater Spell Focus (conjuration), Improved Familiar, Spell Focus (conjuration), Weapon Finesse.

*Spells known (9/5/4/3/2/1, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, message, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *animate rope, grease, mage armour, obscuring mist, shield, summon monster I, true strike*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *acid arrow, glitterdust, summon monster II, summon swarm, web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel magic, sleet storm, stinking cloud, summon monster III*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *black tentacles, solid fog, summon monster IV*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *prying eyes*.

*Equipment & Treasure:* +2 *rapier of puncturing*, crossbow bolts (10), masterwork light crossbow, *ring of protection* +4.

The *amma hadrak* is a shrunken pot-bellied woman in a black shawl, wearing a headscarf from under which dangle hanks of white hair. She reeks of the sea. Her familiar, Rasquetto, wears a gaudy outfit, with ruff and jester's hat. The children of the Sea Harriers are terrified of him.

**Rasquetto, Male Imp:** CR –; Tiny outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 3d8; hp 23; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 25, touch 15, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +9; Grp +1; Atk +14 melee (1d4 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +14 melee (1d4 plus poison, sting);

Space/Reach 2½ ft./0 ft.; SA deliver touch spells, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 5/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., empathic link, fast healing 2, immunity to poison, improved evasion, resistance to fire 5, share spells; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

*Skills & Feats:* Balance +6, Bluff +19, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +8, Hide +17, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Search +6, Spellcraft +12, Spot +10, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks), Tumble +9; Dodge, Weapon Finesse.

### 3. Witching Tower

*A steep spiral staircase leads up inside this tower. At the top is a domed room, with walls of curved glass. From here, you can see out over the whole ship and the sea beyond. There is no sign of any mist – perhaps it has lifted since you entered the ship. To one side is a wooden pedestal with a metal speaking tube bracketed onto it and a clip on one side that holds a spyglass.*

This tower is where a lookout, usually the *amma hadrak* herself (either in person or through a *prying eye* or her familiar) keeps watch and scans the sea for approaching ships. The glass walls are magically treated to allow sight through the obscuring mists emitted by the ship. This is the only place on the *Celebration* where the mists can be seen through. The speaking tube connects to the ship's wheel, so the lookout can give instructions to the helmsman.

If he has not already been encountered, then Rasquetto, the *amma hadrak*'s imp familiar, is in this room using the spyglass to look out over the waves.

### 4. Cabin of the Honoured Navigator

*This luxurious cabin contains a multitude of books, neatly stacked on shelves. A desk occupies the south wall, with a map unfolded on it and compasses and pencils nearby. A route has been drawn on a sheet of translucent paper overlaying the map. Lying open on top of this is a book bound in white leather, with twisting magical inscriptions across the pages. A quill pen and an assortment of coloured inks have been carefully laid out next to this. At the northern end of the room is a curtain and a capacious armchair.*

The book on the desk is Azbeth's spellbook (see below). Revekhal Sunspite has been copying the spells he does not yet have. The curtain screens off a luxurious bed.



This room is where Revekhal Sunspite, the navigator of the *Celebration* and husband of the *amma hadrak*, lives and works. He is a drow of House Tzammu and a trusted servant of the Ennead who has been away from the underworld for more than 30 years, making preparations for the coming war. His services to the Sea Harriers have raised him from a mere *grubbesh* to an honorary member of the clan by marriage. He is also the father of Dark Mariah, who the Player Characters may have met in *Book One*.

Sunspite's is the mind behind the plan to blockade Crom Calamar. He is a schemer who prefers patience and careful planning to rash action. If attacked, he will try to escape rather than fight back.

*Note:* The adventure in Lost Athul works much more smoothly if Sunspite survives. If the Player Characters kill him, then someone else will have to activate the Stone of Melvek and raise Lost Athul.

**Revekhal Sunspite, Male Drow Wiz13:** CR 14; Medium (elf); HD 13d4; hp 32; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +9 melee (1d4+1/19–20 (plus 2d6+2 against humans) plus poison, +2 *dagger of human bane*) or +12 ranged (1d4+3/19–20 plus poison, +3 *hand crossbow*); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4+1/19–20 (plus 2d6+2 against humans) plus poison, +2 *dagger of human bane*) or +12 ranged (1d4+3/19–20, +3 *hand crossbow*); SA poison, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ drow traits, *screy on familiar*, spell resistance 24; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 16.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +8, Concentration +16, Decipher Script +8, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +20, Listen +11, Profession (navigator) +20, Search +6, Spellcraft +20, Spot +5; Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Profession (navigator)), Spell Mastery (*disguise self*), Spell Mastery (*dimension door*), Spell Mastery (*dispel magic*), Weapon Finesse.

*Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/5/3/2/1, save DC 14 + spell level): 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *comprehend languages*, *disguise self*, *endure elements*, *mage armour*, *shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *blur*, *detect thoughts*, *false life*, *locate object*, *scorching ray*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *nondetection*, *slow*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *resilient sphere*, *scrying*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *contact other plane*, *feblemind*, *waves of fatigue*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *invisibility* (quickened), *repulsion*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *forcecage*. Sunspite can prepare other spells if necessary; his spellbook is reproduced below.

*Equipment & Treasure:* +2 *dagger of human bane*, +3 *hand crossbow*, crossbow bolts (10), *major cloak of displacement*, *scarab of death* in a wooden carrying box, scroll with a *sepia snake sigil* on it, *staff of power* (8 charges), tiny silver key.

The *scarab of death*'s wooden box is Sunspite's insurance against pickpockets. The scroll with the *sepia snake sigil* is to give to anyone who demands maps or papers. The silver key opens Sunspite's spellbook, for which see below. The *staff of power* and *major cloak of displacement* are the property of Azbeth, who is currently shut up in the brig.


Sunspite's familiar is Pipeete, a bat:

**Pipeete, Female Bat:** CR –; Diminutive magical beast; HD ¼ d8; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +6; Grp –11; Atk —; Full Atk —; Space/Reach 1 ft./0 ft.; SQ blindsense 20 ft., deliver touch spells, empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells, speak with bats, speak with master, spell resistance 18; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skills & Feats:* Hide +14, Listen +8\*, Move Silently +6, Spot +8\*; Alertness.

\*Pipeete has a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if her blindsense is negated.





**Sunspite's Journal:** If the Player Characters search the bookshelves, a Search check (DC 20) locates a journal among the books. This is written in a cipher of Sunspite's own devising and requires either magic or a Decipher Script check (DC 30) to understand. The relevant entries are reproduced below:

### Entry One

*Objective: Devise and execute a solution to the problem of the blasted sea-portal. My people command an immense army but are lacking in naval power and are likely to remain so until the day that oak trees grow in the Sunless World.*

*Even if we take Crom Calamar at a stroke, which Rannirak assures us can be done (and I believe him), it will not remain ours for long. The tactician Maskuz Vellin, writing in the time of the old Equinox, reminds us that principalities are either easily taken and hard kept, or taken with great effort and then kept more easily. Crom Calamar shall be a victory of the former kind.*

*Without some upper-world power base, there is no way we can assemble a fleet and prevent reinforcements arriving through the sea-portal. The likelihood of us acquiring one is slim to nil. Where would we build ships? Come to that, where would we board them? There are no harbours in the Sunless World.*

*Conclusion: Make an alliance with a force that is capable of executing the kind of blockade we need for long enough for us to slash the heart out of Crom Calamar. No land-based kingdoms but Visk and Kandang have shown any willingness to consider an alliance. Visk cares only for itself and Kandang is too thick with webs of corruption and intrigue. It must be the neutrals, then, the pirates of the Shard or the Sea Harriers.*

### Entry Two

*The Pirates of the Shard have proved useless, though I seem to have fathered a brat on one of them, which added some spice to the trip. They are simply too fond of chaos. One can sustain their interest only with gold or the promise of gold and even that is no guarantee that they will keep to a bargain. They have no 'fleet' to speak of; it is only a shabby gathering of brigand vessels, working on the principle of each man for himself, united by nothing more than terror of capture and punishment.*

*The Sea Harriers have proved far more worthy of my time. The problem is that they do not think me worthy of theirs. They call me 'grubbersh' and think me, a*

*noble of the Crevasse of Concatenate Lanterns, to be a mere hedge-wizard. My anger is so great that I must discharge it in private with small acts of torture, which at least grant me sleep.*

*My only recourse is to make myself indispensable to them. Let me, then, climb this arduous ladder. For Tzammu and the Ennead! For Arkady!*

### Entry Three

*One is now an honoured navigator. One is satisfied.*

*Even so, my privileges are limited. The amma hadrak sees all, controls all. Without her word, the Harriers will not lift a finger to aid us. As yet, she has baulked at any suggestion that they might take sides in a war. It is not their way, she says. She quipped a saying at me: the fisherman does not choose sides in a battle of fish.*

*Some days the insularity and hauteur of these people infuriates me. On others it seems that they are more like us than any other race of the upper world. I have dealt with the rage in the usual manner. Part of me wonders, in an alarmingly disconnected and abstract fashion, what would become of me if the remains were found. Perhaps this life of eternal seas and open skies is driving me mad. I have been compelled to huddle in the cupboard to remind myself what it is like to be enclosed by stone.*

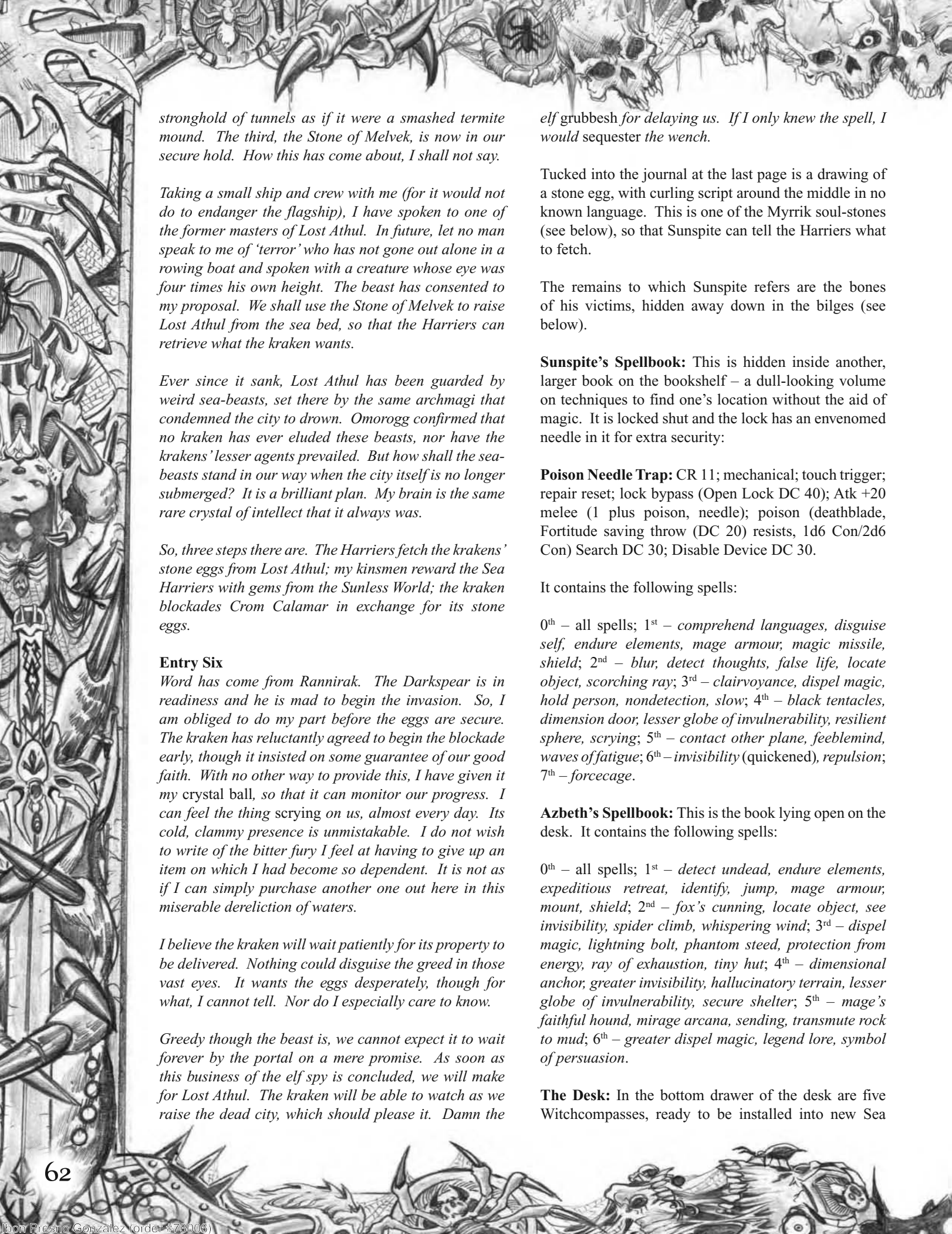
### Entry Four

*Disaster. The amma hadrak has forbidden any further discussion of the blockade plan. She feels that the Celebration would be in too much danger of discovery. Their way is to strike fast and vanish fast, not to sit like... what was the phrase?... a whale with his mouth open, waiting for prey to swim in. Damn her greasy hide. Damn all of them. Damn this cat's water I am obliged to drink to quieten my head. This demands something more. Yes, I know what will settle my seething brains.*

### Entry Five

*I am filled with joy, as if the sun had all of a sudden vanished behind a mighty thundercloud.*

*The tales speak of three artefacts, resembling standing stones in their outward appearance, that have the power to lift entire masses of land into the air. The Stone of Caradeth was one such; Bruin the Abjurer transported it to the island of Chillhame, according to legend, though what became of it then is not known. Another was the Stone of Zaul, which the formidable but mad Shura Krai of Kandang employed to hoist off the mountain peak beneath which his enemies were hiding, exposing their*



*stronghold of tunnels as if it were a smashed termite mound. The third, the Stone of Melvek, is now in our secure hold. How this has come about, I shall not say.*

*Taking a small ship and crew with me (for it would not do to endanger the flagship), I have spoken to one of the former masters of Lost Athul. In future, let no man speak to me of 'terror' who has not gone out alone in a rowing boat and spoken with a creature whose eye was four times his own height. The beast has consented to my proposal. We shall use the Stone of Melvek to raise Lost Athul from the sea bed, so that the Harriers can retrieve what the kraken wants.*

*Ever since it sank, Lost Athul has been guarded by weird sea-beasts, set there by the same archmagi that condemned the city to drown. Omorogg confirmed that no kraken has ever eluded these beasts, nor have the krakens' lesser agents prevailed. But how shall the sea-beasts stand in our way when the city itself is no longer submerged? It is a brilliant plan. My brain is the same rare crystal of intellect that it always was.*

*So, three steps there are. The Harriers fetch the krakens' stone eggs from Lost Athul; my kinsmen reward the Sea Harriers with gems from the Sunless World; the kraken blockades Crom Calamar in exchange for its stone eggs.*

#### **Entry Six**

*Word has come from Rannirak. The Darkspear is in readiness and he is mad to begin the invasion. So, I am obliged to do my part before the eggs are secure. The kraken has reluctantly agreed to begin the blockade early, though it insisted on some guarantee of our good faith. With no other way to provide this, I have given it my crystal ball, so that it can monitor our progress. I can feel the thing scrying on us, almost every day. Its cold, clammy presence is unmistakable. I do not wish to write of the bitter fury I feel at having to give up an item on which I had become so dependent. It is not as if I can simply purchase another one out here in this miserable dereliction of waters.*

*I believe the kraken will wait patiently for its property to be delivered. Nothing could disguise the greed in those vast eyes. It wants the eggs desperately, though for what, I cannot tell. Nor do I especially care to know.*

*Greedy though the beast is, we cannot expect it to wait forever by the portal on a mere promise. As soon as this business of the elf spy is concluded, we will make for Lost Athul. The kraken will be able to watch as we raise the dead city, which should please it. Damn the*

*elf grubbers for delaying us. If I only knew the spell, I would sequester the wench.*

Tucked into the journal at the last page is a drawing of a stone egg, with curling script around the middle in no known language. This is one of the Myrrik soul-stones (see below), so that Sunspite can tell the Harriers what to fetch.

The remains to which Sunspite refers are the bones of his victims, hidden away down in the bilges (see below).

**Sunspite's Spellbook:** This is hidden inside another, larger book on the bookshelf – a dull-looking volume on techniques to find one's location without the aid of magic. It is locked shut and the lock has an envenomed needle in it for extra security:

**Poison Needle Trap:** CR 11; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 40); Atk +20 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (deathblade, Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) resists, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con) Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.


It contains the following spells:

0<sup>th</sup> – all spells; 1<sup>st</sup> – *comprehend languages, disguise self, endure elements, mage armour, magic missile, shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *blur, detect thoughts, false life, locate object, scorching ray*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *clairvoyance, dispel magic, hold person, nondetection, slow*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *black tentacles, dimension door, lesser globe of invulnerability, resilient sphere, scrying*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *contact other plane, feeblemind, waves of fatigue*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *invisibility (quickened), repulsion*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *forcecage*.

**Azbeth's Spellbook:** This is the book lying open on the desk. It contains the following spells:

0<sup>th</sup> – all spells; 1<sup>st</sup> – *detect undead, endure elements, expeditious retreat, identify, jump, mage armour, mount, shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *fox's cunning, locate object, see invisibility, spider climb, whispering wind*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel magic, lightning bolt, phantom steed, protection from energy, ray of exhaustion, tiny hut*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *dimensional anchor, greater invisibility, hallucinatory terrain, lesser globe of invulnerability, secure shelter*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *mage's faithful hound, mirage arcana, sending, transmute rock to mud*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *greater dispel magic, legend lore, symbol of persuasion*.

**The Desk:** In the bottom drawer of the desk are five Witchcompasses, ready to be installed into new Sea



Harrier ships as they are captured. The needles in each of them are pointing towards the ship's heart. If the Player Characters take one of these with them, they will be able to find the Celebration at any time in the future.

## 5. Map Room

In the centre of this large room is a stand with a metal device mounted on it that looks like a huge bullseye lantern. It is obviously lit, as bright light is gleaming from the cracks. The northern wall is hung with a single white sheet. The stand has a set of sliding drawers built into it. On its left side is a globe, marked in sections and mounted on a pedestal.

To prevent tampering, the drawer handles are trapped with contact poison:

**Contact Poison Trap:** CR 9; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; poison (black lotus extract, Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) resists, 3d6 Con/3d6 Con); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 26.

The drawers contain around 500 glass panels, painted in intricate detail, designed to be slotted into the lantern. Each panel is labelled with a grid reference, noting which section of the globe it depicts. The panels are, essentially, colour slides. The contraption projects a ten-foot-by-ten-foot image of the globe section onto the north wall. A character who succeeds at a Knowledge (geography) check (DC 20) can tell that the level of detail and accuracy is astounding, though the political boundaries shown are some 20 years out of date. The Sea Harriers stole the apparatus from an elven transport, with Sunspite's guidance. It is part of the secret of their prosperity.

## C. Lower Forecastle

This region is more luxuriously furnished than the rest of the ship, as it is reserved for the highest-ranking members of the Harrier clans.

### 1. Captains' Quarters

These large cabins are the elite accommodations on the *Celebration* and are reserved for captains and their husbands. Each one contains at least a bed, a dresser, a wardrobe and a desk, with some containing cloak stands, large mirrors, sea-chests, bookcases and similar paraphernalia. Player Characters who want to root through the furniture looking for loot have a 60% chance to find 1d3 pieces of typical Harrier jewellery, each piece worth 1d6x100 gold pieces.

During daylight hours, these cabins are largely unoccupied (10% chance of a captain or a lieutenant being present); during the night, the majority of them are occupied by sleeping or relaxing Sea Harrier couples (90% chance for a room to contain one captain and one lieutenant).

### 2. Grand Dining Hall

This room glitters with reflected light from dozens of mirrors on the walls. Most of the room is taken up by an irregularly shaped table that seems to be made from a single piece of tortoiseshell polished to a tawny shine. A humanoid creature with goggle eyes and fins is rubbing away at the surface with a piece of cloth. Chains on its arms rattle as it moves.

This is the central gathering room for the Harrier captains. They only meet here at times of formal celebration, when the *amma hadrak* leads the feasting. The table is made from the shell of a dragon turtle and could be sold for 2,500 gold pieces, if some way could be found to remove it from the ship.

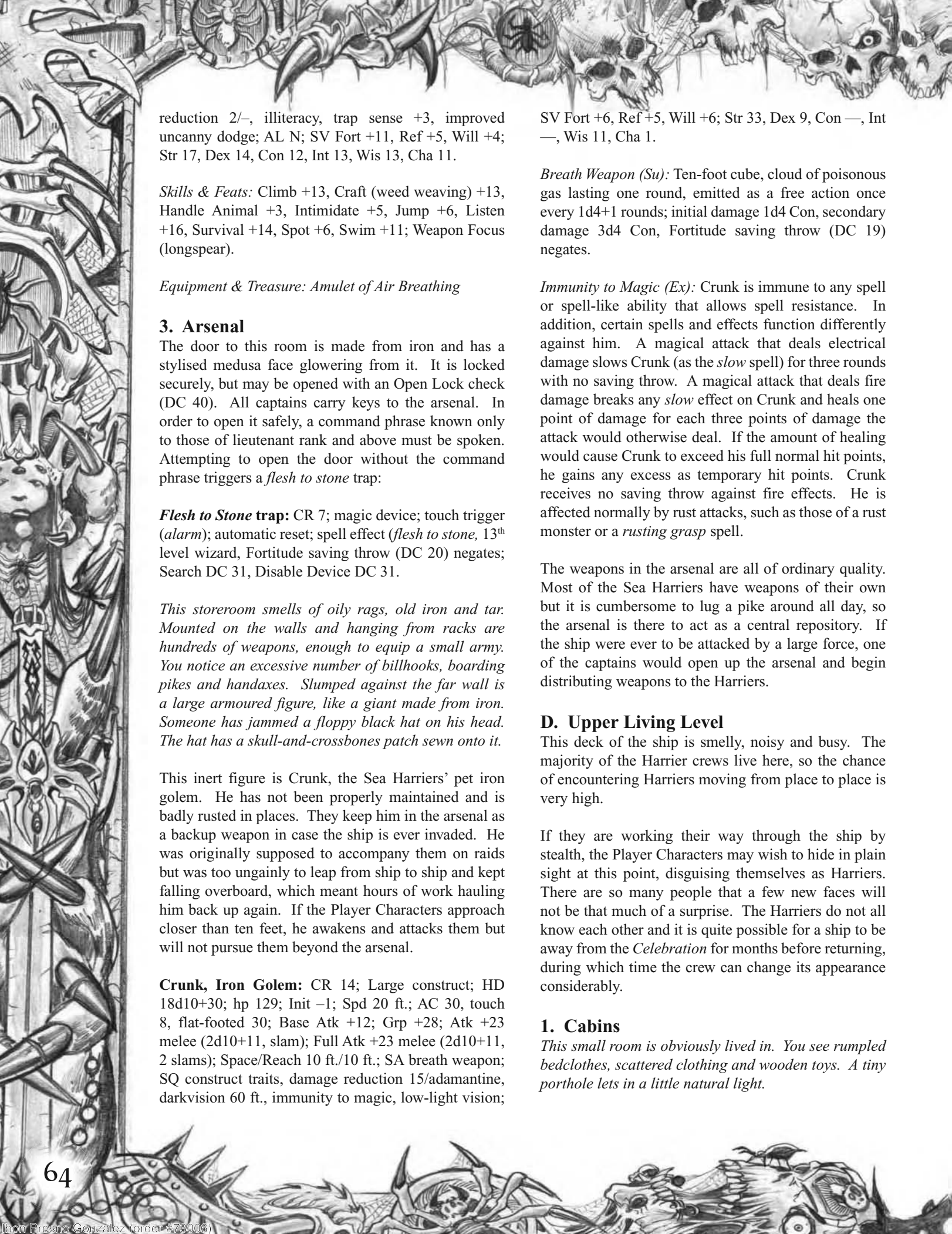
The creature labouring away at the table is Ubrilglup, an enslaved locathah chieftain. He made the mistake of leading a group of his people in an attack on the Sea Harriers while they were raiding a merchant vessel. The Harriers were furious at this insult; they let the merchant ship escape, rounded on the locathah and took Ubrilglup prisoner. He is now forced to do menial work for the Harriers as compensation for the insult (Sunspite has crafted an *Amulet of Air Breathing* so he can survive on the ship indefinitely). The Harriers have promised that if he works for them for five years he will be returned to his people, but if he ever rebels, the Harriers will return to the locathah settlement and destroy it completely. Ubrilglup's pride is not as strong as his wish to preserve his people, so he has submitted to this humiliation.

His legs are bound with manacles, allowing him to walk, but not to move any faster than walking speed. If the Player Characters set him free, he helps them if he thinks they have any chance of success against the Sea Harriers. His spirit is not quite broken and he grabs a long spear that is mounted on the wall, a glimmer of barbarian rage burning in his eye.

**Ubrilglup, Male Locathah Bbn10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (aquatic); HD 2d8+2 plus 10d12+12; hp 86; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., swim 70 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +11; Grp +14; Atk +15 melee (1d8+4/x3, long spear) Full Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (1d8+4/x3, long spear); SA rage 3/day; SQ damage







reduction 2/–, illiteracy, trap sense +3, improved uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 11.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +13, Craft (weed weaving) +13, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +5, Jump +6, Listen +16, Survival +14, Spot +6, Swim +11; Weapon Focus (longspear).

*Equipment & Treasure:* Amulet of Air Breathing

### 3. Arsenal

The door to this room is made from iron and has a stylised medusa face glowering from it. It is locked securely, but may be opened with an Open Lock check (DC 40). All captains carry keys to the arsenal. In order to open it safely, a command phrase known only to those of lieutenant rank and above must be spoken. Attempting to open the door without the command phrase triggers a *flesh to stone* trap:

**Flesh to Stone trap:** CR 7; magic device; touch trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*flesh to stone*, 13<sup>th</sup> level wizard, Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) negates; Search DC 31, Disable Device DC 31.

*This storeroom smells of oily rags, old iron and tar. Mounted on the walls and hanging from racks are hundreds of weapons, enough to equip a small army. You notice an excessive number of billhooks, boarding pikes and handaxes. Slumped against the far wall is a large armoured figure, like a giant made from iron. Someone has jammed a floppy black hat on his head. The hat has a skull-and-crossbones patch sewn onto it.*

This inert figure is Crunk, the Sea Harriers' pet iron golem. He has not been properly maintained and is badly rusted in places. They keep him in the arsenal as a backup weapon in case the ship is ever invaded. He was originally supposed to accompany them on raids but was too ungainly to leap from ship to ship and kept falling overboard, which meant hours of work hauling him back up again. If the Player Characters approach closer than ten feet, he awakens and attacks them but will not pursue them beyond the arsenal.

**Crunk, Iron Golem:** CR 14; Large construct; HD 18d10+30; hp 129; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 30, touch 8, flat-footed 30; Base Atk +12; Grp +28; Atk +23 melee (2d10+11, slam); Full Atk +23 melee (2d10+11, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon; SQ construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision;

SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 33, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Ten-foot cube, cloud of poisonous gas lasting one round, emitted as a free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; initial damage 1d4 Con, secondary damage 3d4 Con, Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) negates.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex):** Crunk is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against him. A magical attack that deals electrical damage slows Crunk (as the *slow* spell) for three rounds with no saving throw. A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any *slow* effect on Crunk and heals one point of damage for each three points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause Crunk to exceed his full normal hit points, he gains any excess as temporary hit points. Crunk receives no saving throw against fire effects. He is affected normally by rust attacks, such as those of a rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

The weapons in the arsenal are all of ordinary quality. Most of the Sea Harriers have weapons of their own but it is cumbersome to lug a pike around all day, so the arsenal is there to act as a central repository. If the ship were ever to be attacked by a large force, one of the captains would open up the arsenal and begin distributing weapons to the Harriers.

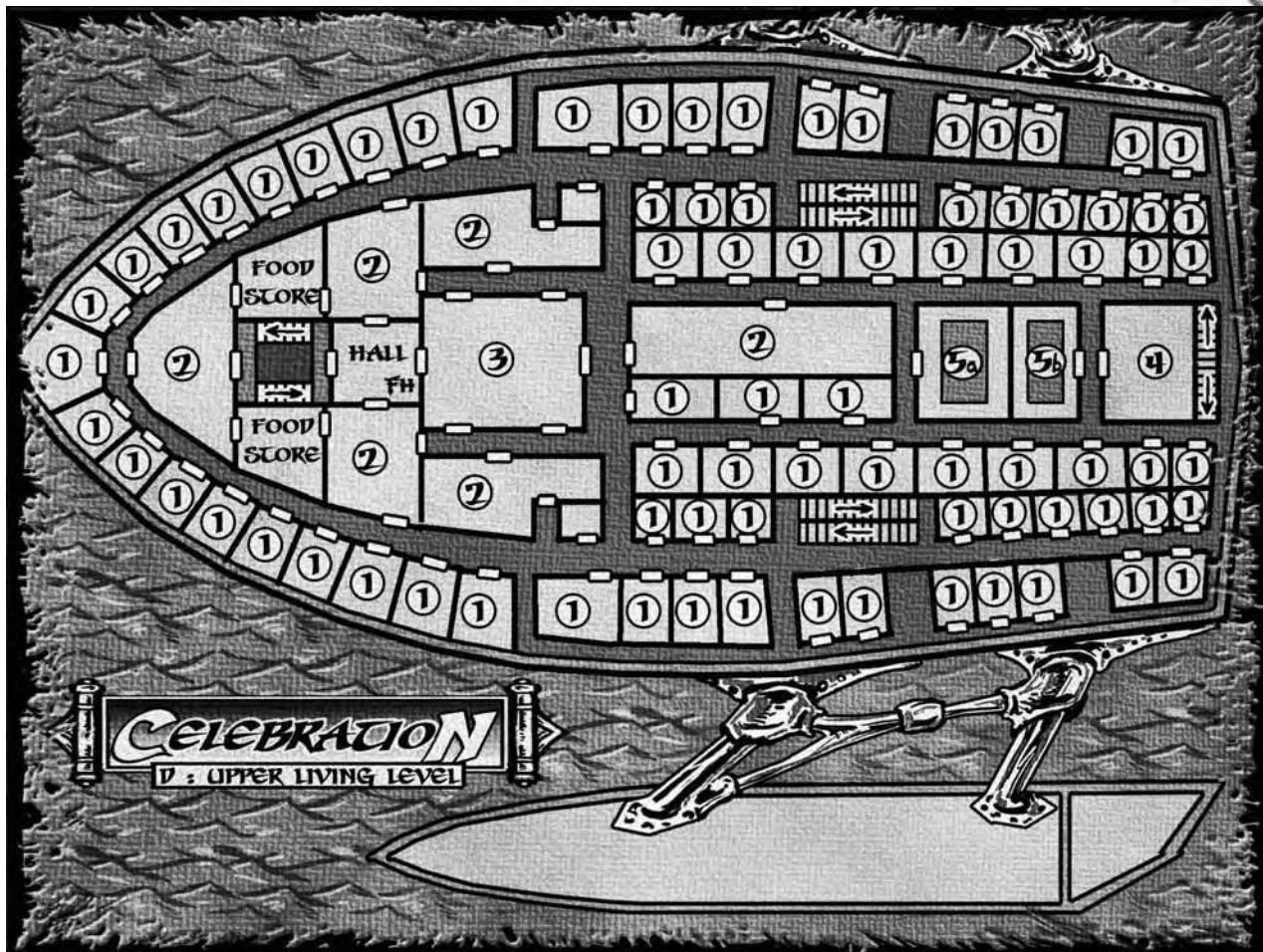
### D. Upper Living Level

This deck of the ship is smelly, noisy and busy. The majority of the Harrier crews live here, so the chance of encountering Harriers moving from place to place is very high.

If they are working their way through the ship by stealth, the Player Characters may wish to hide in plain sight at this point, disguising themselves as Harriers. There are so many people that a few new faces will not be that much of a surprise. The Harriers do not all know each other and it is quite possible for a ship to be away from the *Celebration* for months before returning, during which time the crew can change its appearance considerably.

### 1. Cabins

*This small room is obviously lived in. You see rumpled bedclothes, scattered clothing and wooden toys. A tiny porthole lets in a little natural light.*



The standard cabins for crew families are rudimentary, with simple beds and chests for possessions. Harrier custom is to divide a room up with hanging sheets to give a sense of privacy. Even the poorest of the Harrier families attempt to brighten a room up with coloured silks and gaudy ornaments. They cannot stand a room to be drab.

All of the cabins on the living levels are essentially identical. A Player Character entering one at random has an 80% chance to find it occupied by 1–2 sailors and 0–3 children.

## 2. Mess Halls

*This large chamber has square wooden tables at regular intervals. There is a smell of fresh cooking in the air. The walls are decorated with huge silk hangings with abstract geometric patterns on them.*

The Harriers gather here for communal meals three times a day. At eight in the morning, midday and six in the evening, the room is packed with Harrier families (and the rest of the ship is all but empty). Half an hour before the meals are dished up, four sailors are

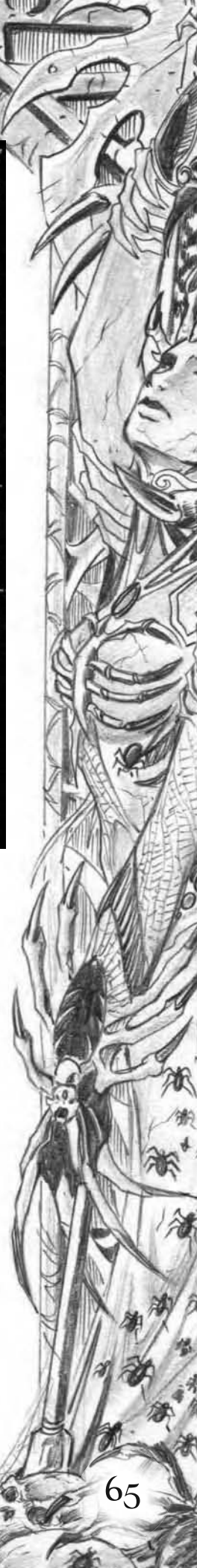
in the room laying out places and making everything ready. The silk hangings on the wall are ideal for hiding behind.

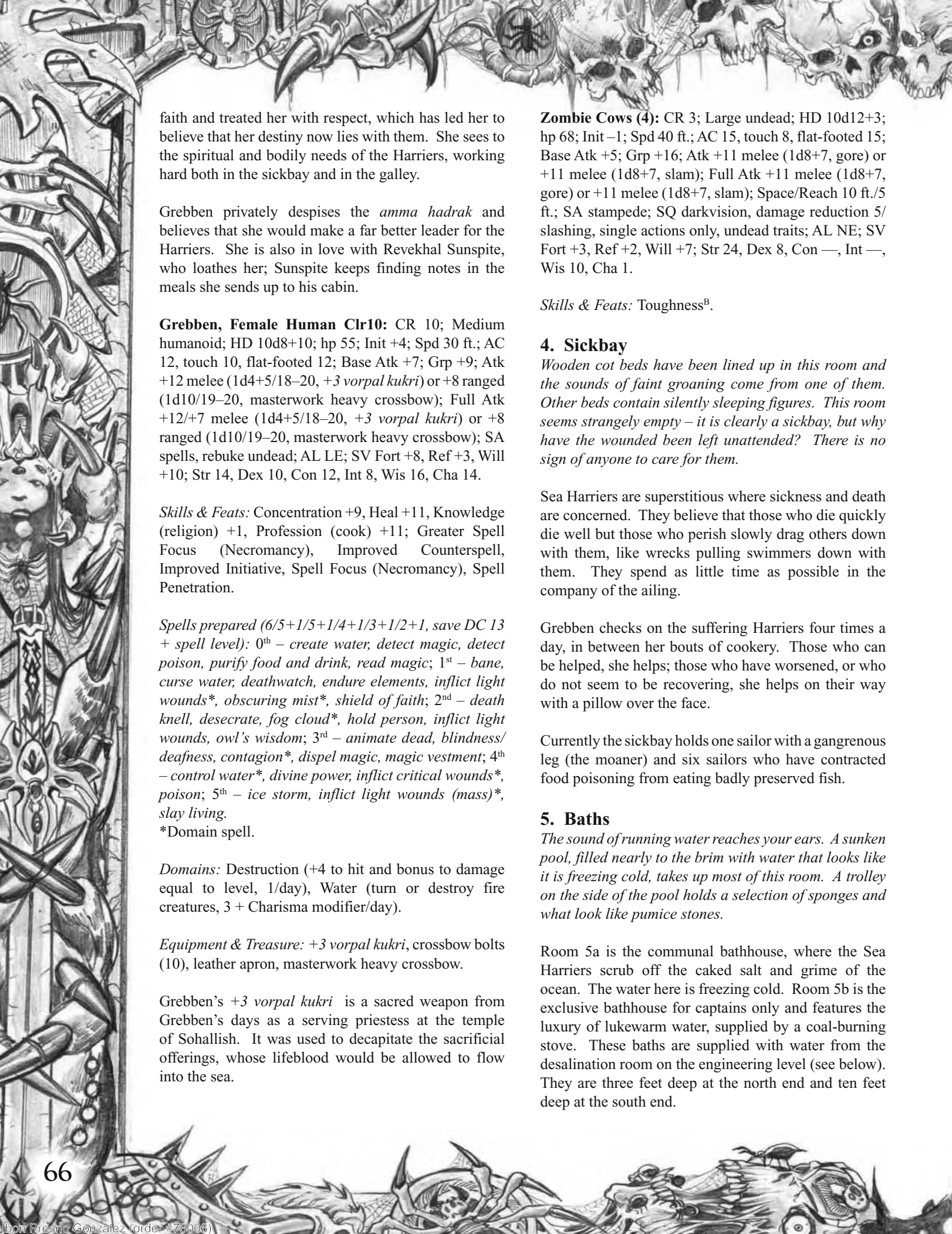
## 3. Galley

*The air swirls with steam as you enter this room. The sound of bubbling stew comes from close by. The Sea Harriers must like their food spicy, as there is a powerful smell of curry and ginger. The large, freshly slaughtered carcasses of four cows lie at the end of the room on a bloody tarpaulin.*

One cook (Grebben) and eight sailor assistants are in this room at all times, preparing food for the others. If they are attacked, Grebben casts *animate dead* on the cow corpses and tries to use them to block off the Player Characters' exits.

Grebben is a bald, tan-skinned, red-faced person with a gold ring in each ear. She is a woman, but her large girth and lack of hair make it very hard to tell her gender. She was originally a priestess of an obscure sea-goddess, Sohallish, serving with a temple in Kahoor. When the sea raiders attacked her ship, they recognised her





faith and treated her with respect, which has led her to believe that her destiny now lies with them. She sees to the spiritual and bodily needs of the Harriers, working hard both in the sickbay and in the galley.

Grebber privately despises the *amma hadrak* and believes that she would make a far better leader for the Harriers. She is also in love with Revekhal Sunspite, who loathes her; Sunspite keeps finding notes in the meals she sends up to his cabin.

**Grebber, Female Human Clr10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d8+10; hp 55; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +12 melee (1d4+5/18–20, +3 *vorpal kukri*) or +8 ranged (1d10/19–20, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d4+5/18–20, +3 *vorpal kukri*) or +8 ranged (1d10/19–20, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA spells, rebuke undead; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 14.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +9, Heal +11, Knowledge (religion) +1, Profession (cook) +11; Greater Spell Focus (Necromancy), Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (Necromancy), Spell Penetration.

*Spells prepared* (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1, save DC 13 + spell level): 0<sup>th</sup> – create water, detect magic, detect poison, purify food and drink, read magic; 1<sup>st</sup> – bane, curse water, deathwatch, endure elements, inflict light wounds\*, obscuring mist\*, shield of faith; 2<sup>nd</sup> – death knell, desecrate, fog cloud\*, hold person, inflict light wounds, owl's wisdom; 3<sup>rd</sup> – animate dead, blindness/deafness, contagion\*, dispel magic, magic vestment; 4<sup>th</sup> – control water\*, divine power, inflict critical wounds\*, poison; 5<sup>th</sup> – ice storm, inflict light wounds (mass)\*, slay living.

\*Domain spell.

*Domains:* Destruction (+4 to hit and bonus to damage equal to level, 1/day), Water (turn or destroy fire creatures, 3 + Charisma modifier/day).

*Equipment & Treasure:* +3 *vorpal kukri*, crossbow bolts (10), leather apron, masterwork heavy crossbow.

Grebber's +3 *vorpal kukri* is a sacred weapon from Grebber's days as a serving priestess at the temple of Sohallahish. It was used to decapitate the sacrificial offerings, whose lifeblood would be allowed to flow into the sea.

**Zombie Cows (4):** CR 3; Large undead; HD 10d12+3; hp 68; Init –1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 8, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +16; Atk +11 melee (1d8+7, gore) or +11 melee (1d8+7, slam); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+7, gore) or +11 melee (1d8+7, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA stamped; SQ darkvision, damage reduction 5/slashing, single actions only, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 24, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills & Feats:* Toughness<sup>B</sup>.

#### 4. Sickbay

*Wooden cot beds have been lined up in this room and the sounds of faint groaning come from one of them. Other beds contain silently sleeping figures. This room seems strangely empty – it is clearly a sickbay, but why have the wounded been left unattended? There is no sign of anyone to care for them.*

Sea Harriers are superstitious where sickness and death are concerned. They believe that those who die quickly die well but those who perish slowly drag others down with them, like wrecks pulling swimmers down with them. They spend as little time as possible in the company of the ailing.

Grebber checks on the suffering Harriers four times a day, in between her bouts of cookery. Those who can be helped, she helps; those who have worsened, or who do not seem to be recovering, she helps on their way with a pillow over the face.


Currently the sickbay holds one sailor with a gangrenous leg (the moaner) and six sailors who have contracted food poisoning from eating badly preserved fish.

#### 5. Baths

*The sound of running water reaches your ears. A sunken pool, filled nearly to the brim with water that looks like it is freezing cold, takes up most of this room. A trolley on the side of the pool holds a selection of sponges and what look like pumice stones.*

Room 5a is the communal bathhouse, where the Sea Harriers scrub off the caked salt and grime of the ocean. The water here is freezing cold. Room 5b is the exclusive bathhouse for captains only and features the luxury of lukewarm water, supplied by a coal-burning stove. These baths are supplied with water from the desalination room on the engineering level (see below). They are three feet deep at the north end and ten feet deep at the south end.





The Sea Harriers like to keep clean, as it ties in to their concept of themselves as a noble people, so there are usually 2–12 sailors in the communal bathhouse and 0–3 captains in the exclusive bathhouse at all times. Of course, they have no clothes or equipment, so in combat they have to grapple foes or dash for weapons. When bathing, the Harriers leave their possessions in neat piles against the wall. A sword is more important than modesty; they will grab weapons and fight naked if they have to.

If the Player Characters try to fight the Harriers while in the water, the Harriers try to drown them. A combatant who achieves a pin against an opponent while fighting in at least three feet of water can hold the opponent underwater, which begins to drown him if he does not hold his breath. Breaking the pin allows the grappled character to breathe.

## E. Lower Living Level

This level holds another set of cabins and several rooms that are used communally to raise the Sea Harrier children in the life of piracy.

### 1. Cabins

These are identical to those on Deck D (see above).

### 2. Children's Nests

*These rooms have a sour smell of old milk and straw. The walls have childish chalk drawings on them. There are bunks up the walls, with long ladders connecting them. Ropes have been strung between the bunks, connecting the levels in a hempen spider's web. Scattered across the floor are bolsters packed with hay, crayons, toy ships, sheets of scribbled-on paper and wooden swords.*

During the day the room is filled with Harrier children yelling, running around and brachiating from bunk to bunk along the ropes. A single lieutenant attempts to keep control of them all. When Harrier families go off on raids, the children are all moved to this room, where they can be supervised together. The high ladders and dangerous ropes are there to get the children used to heights from an early age.

### 3. Assembly Room

*One end of this room has a raised floor, with a lectern and a sheet of canvas hanging behind. On the canvas is a painting of the world, with the ocean currents marked in.*

A Player Character observing the map closely and making a Search check (DC 25) notices something

curious. On five places on the map, all of them tiny islands in the ocean, a dot has been marked with a symbol of a bell next to it. These are the Sea Harrier bolt-holes, where they can go to hide from foes, take emergency loot from a store or replenish their food stocks.

The bolt-holes are an important secret of the Sea Harriers, as they allow ships to evade pursuit if the *Celebration* is nowhere in range. Some Sea Harrier bolt-holes have been discovered in the past, which has led to the conclusion that a carefully hidden bolt-hole system is the secret of their efficiency. The Harrier children are trained to memorise the location of these safe havens.

### 4. Hall of Claw and Fang

*This room seems to be some sort of gymnasium, judging by the towels and racks of rapiers on the wall. Unlike most training rooms you have seen, it has been fitted with wooden posts from floor to ceiling, spaced at five-foot intervals. A raised section in the centre has three ropes hanging from a beam above and a scuffed circular platform below. The posts and the room's walls are covered with nicks and gouges, as if from hundreds of fencing bouts.*

This room fulfils two functions. Primarily it is the training hall where the Harriers learn to fight, with special emphasis on fighting onboard ship. The wooden posts are to simulate the difficulty of fighting in cramped conditions, the ropes are for swinging on and climbing and the platform can be made to sway from side to side, requiring the combatants to make Balance checks (DC 15) each round or lose their footing.

Its second function is as a courtroom. Disputes between the Harriers are settled 'toe to toe, buccaneer fashion' in a duel. These are usually to first blood but can be duels to the death if the matter is serious enough.

At the Games Master's discretion (and depending on how battered and weary the Player Characters are by this point), there may be a duel in progress. Two sailors, Scutter Prewitt and Randall Gash, are fighting with daggers on the tilting platform while two more sailors (their seconds) look on stony-faced. Their dispute is over a girl who has gone missing, Tanda Clay. Prewitt is accusing Gash of having abducted her and Gash is protesting his innocence. The truth is that Sunspite has done away with the girl in one of his murderous rages and concealed her body in the bilges, though the duellists have no chance of knowing that.





## 5. Galekki Lairs

*These dank, lightless rooms stink of ammonia and raw meat. A cracked femur, possibly from a horse, lies nearby. The wooden walls and floor have been covered with green tiles, presumably to keep the damp off the ship's timbers. Soaking wet sea-sponges are piled on the floor and heaped in mounds in the corners. Green-skinned, gelid creatures, like some revolting hybrid of toad and panther, are sprawled across them.*

These rooms are where the galekki rest. The sponges are kept soaking wet with seawater, so the creatures will not dry out. The Harriers allow them their privacy, feeding them live animals twice a day but otherwise leaving them to themselves. There are 1d4+1 galekki in each lair. Most of the time (80%) they will be sleeping. Wakeful galekki prowl the ship, only returning to the sponges when they are tired.

One of the more favoured galekki, Chelkhan, lives in the lair marked 'C'. He is the alpha male of the 'ship's cats' and has a place of honour with the Sea Harriers. In recognition of this he wears an adamantine collar set with spikes and two rusted-looking metal vambraces on his forelegs. The collar is a *collar of natural armour* +4, while the vambraces are *bracers of greater magic fang* (caster level 12<sup>th</sup>, +3 enhancement bonus to attack and damage with claw attack).

Chelkhan is an arrogant beast and loves to play with intelligent prey. Rather than alerting the Sea Harriers, he tries to deal with intruders on his own, chasing them down into the lower decks where he can play 'cat and mouse' with them.

**Chelkhan, Male Galek:** CR 8; Large magical beast (aquatic, amphibious); 8d8+24; hp 68; Init +7; Spd 40 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +8; Grp +20; Atk +16 melee (1d8+9, claw); Full Atk +16 melee (1d8+9, 2 claws) and +11 melee (2d8+5, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA enlarge self, improved grab, pounce, rake 1d8+5; SQ darkvision 60 ft., gelid, low-light vision, poison barbs, resistance to cold 10, scent, spell resistance 19; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 26, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills & Feats:* Balance +6, Climb +11, Hide +5, Jump +11, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +5, Swim +12; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Track.

*Equipment & Treasure:* *Bracers of greater magic fang* (2), *collar of natural armour* +4.

## 6. Gaming Room

*From the smell of tobacco, the rugs on the floor, the round tables, the stools and the chairs, you can tell that this area must be the Harriers' lounge. Bottles and half-empty glasses stand on the tables. In the room's centre, the tables have been moved away to make room for an enclosure made from planks. You can hear a fierce squealing and scrabbling coming from within.*

The Harriers pass the time between raids by drinking, fighting and betting on animal fights. The enclosure is a five-foot-deep fighting pit, 15 feet square, with a floor of sand. With nothing else to pit against one another, the Harriers have taken to capturing dire rats from the bilges and making them fight.

Currently, a one-eyed dire rat called Grimswold is taking on a young challenger, Mogsbane. A group of ten sailors is crowded around the fight, cheering on the rats. These sailors are all drunk, so their abilities have been adjusted.

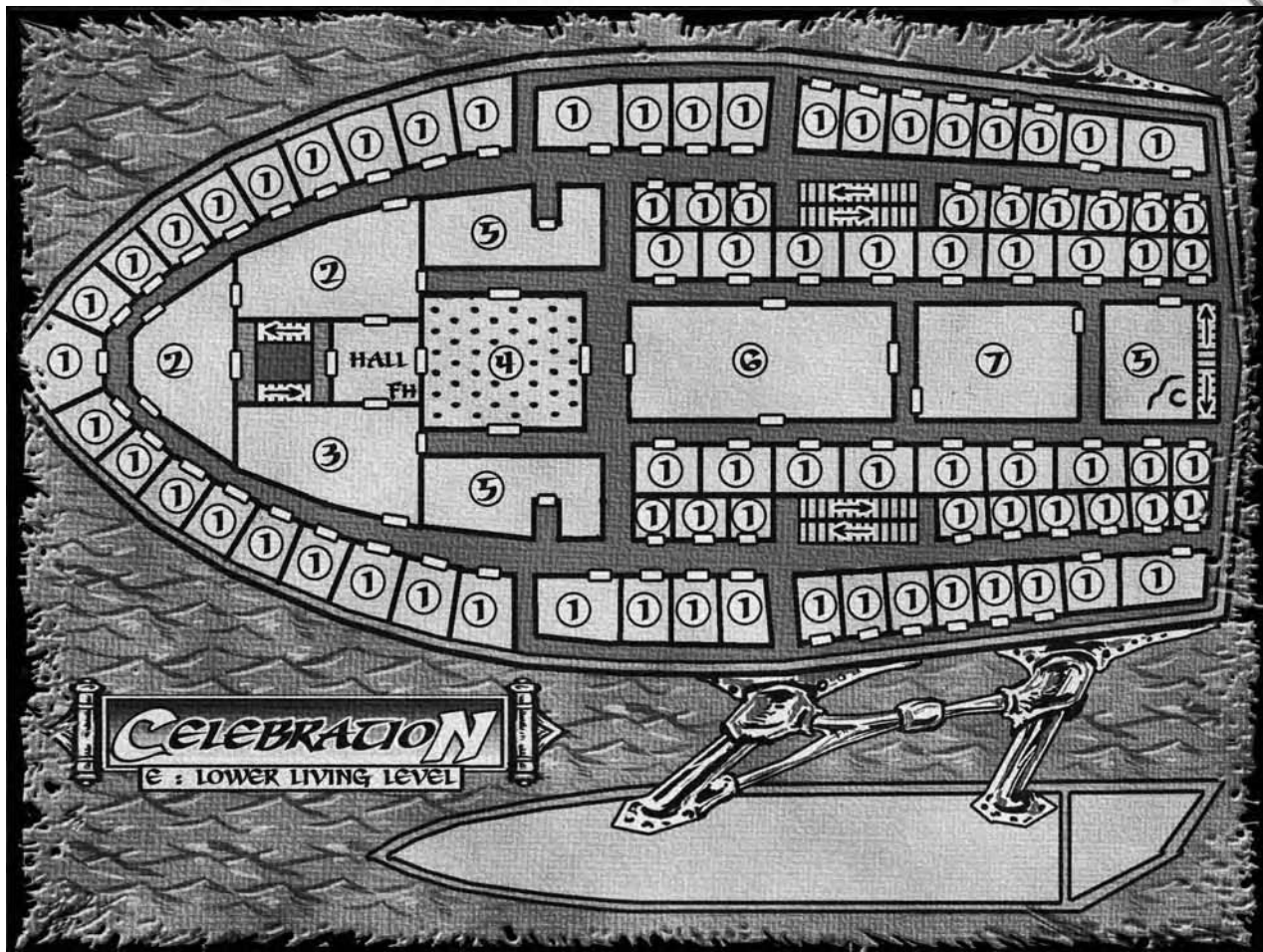
If the sailors catch anyone sneaking around, such as the Player Characters, they will try to have some 'fun'. This involves stripping them of possessions, rubbing them with stinking cheese and throwing them into the enclosure, then tipping 20 hungry dire rats in after them.

**Drunken Sailors, Human Rog3/Ftr2 (10):** CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 3d6 plus 2d10; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (2d4+1/18–20, falchion) or +5 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (2d4-1/18–20, falchion) or +3 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) and +3 melee (1d4/19–20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 9.

*Skills & Feats:* Balance +3, Bluff +6, Climb +6, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +1, Jump +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +2, Profession (sailor) +6, Search +3, Spot +5, Swim +2, Use Rope +2; Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), dagger, falchion, light crossbow, studded leather armour.

**Dire Rats (2):** CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +4 melee (1d4



plus disease, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA disease; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

**Skills & Feats:** Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>.

**Disease (Ex):** The rats' bite transmits filth fever, unless prevented by a Fortitude saving throw (DC 11); the incubation period is 1d3 days and the damage is 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

**Skills:** Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

## 7. Laundry Room

*The smell of soapy water and the humid feeling of hot steamy air hit you. You hear the hiss and rattle of machinery. Through the mist you see that this chamber is filled with steaming tubs of soaking clothing. At one*

*end of the room, wooden bins overflow with garments and sheets. At the other end, the two wooden cylinders of a huge mangle rotate, pressing water out of wet clothes.*

This area is plumbed directly into the desalination room below. Three sailors, stripped to the waist, can be found working in this room, along with one basking ship's cat who enjoys the steam. The heavy mists from the hot water give concealment (20% miss chance).

**Mangle:** The mechanised mangle is dangerous to those who come too close. Loose clothing can get caught in the works and drag creatures in. Any creature who occupies a space adjacent to the mangle at the end of its turn must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) or be dragged in, taking 6d6 points of crushing damage. Characters caught in the machinery cannot move until they free themselves. Trapped characters may make Strength checks or Escape Artist checks (DC 25) to free themselves. On every round thereafter on which they remain trapped, they take a further 10d6 points of crushing damage, with a Reflex saving throw (DC 25) for half damage.



It is possible to shut the mangle down by opening the steam valve and cutting off pressure. The steam valve is located among the pipes and requires a Spot or Search check to locate (DC 20). Shutting the mangle down is a full-round action. A character can also attempt to smash the mangle, which has an effective Armour Class of 16 and becomes inactive after 150 hit points are dealt to it.

## F. Cargo and Livestock Level

This part of the ship is either teeming with activity or dead quiet, depending on whether there is a ship returning from a raid. Most of the time, the only noise here comes from the animal pens and the only traffic is to and from the galley, as the kitchen crew fetch up animals for slaughtering or sacks of food.

The Games Master can choose whether the Player Characters happen to arrive during unloading time or not. It is probably best if this level is not busy when the Player Characters arrive. After the hubbub of the previous two levels, they can use this level as a place to rest up and lie low for a while.

### 1. Main Cargo Hold

*This area is vast. You have been in smaller cathedrals before. It is filled with crates, like a warehouse, packed into steep shelves on either side, with ladders lashed into place offering access. Lengths of taut knotted rope hold down the crates. Down the centre of the hold are bolts of sailcloth, lengths of wood thick enough to serve as spare masts, reels of hempen rope and barrels of tar and oil. The only sound is the scratching of rats.*

This area is used to store the ship's vital supplies, along with the materials needed to refit and repair any Harrier ship that suffers damage. The western end of the hold is for sacks of grain, barrels of salted meat, pickled fish and kegs of ale. These materials are not especially exciting but they are necessary.

### 2. Secure Cargo Holds

*On either side of this corridor are reinforced doors at regular intervals. Each one has a keyhole and a robust handle as you would find on a safe. Evidently the Harriers want to keep access to whatever is behind these doors strictly limited.*

Each family headed by a captain has the right to use one of these cargo bays to store the spoils of their raiding. The Harriers do not keep all their property in common.

The family who took the prizes can keep half the overall value, as decided by the *amma hadrak* and her advisors. The other half is put into the communal hold and is used to buy essential supplies such as timber and food.

All the doors to the cargo holds are trapped. Any of these traps will activate if a person touches the door and does not look like the captain whose cargo hold this is. The trap uses *clairvoyance* as its trigger, has a Spot check modifier of +15 and can see only the five-foot-square space directly in front of the door. Triggering the trap activates a *mass hold person* effect and sounds an alarm that sounds like a shrieking human voice, magically amplified, which draws all the Sea Harriers in the area to the spot.

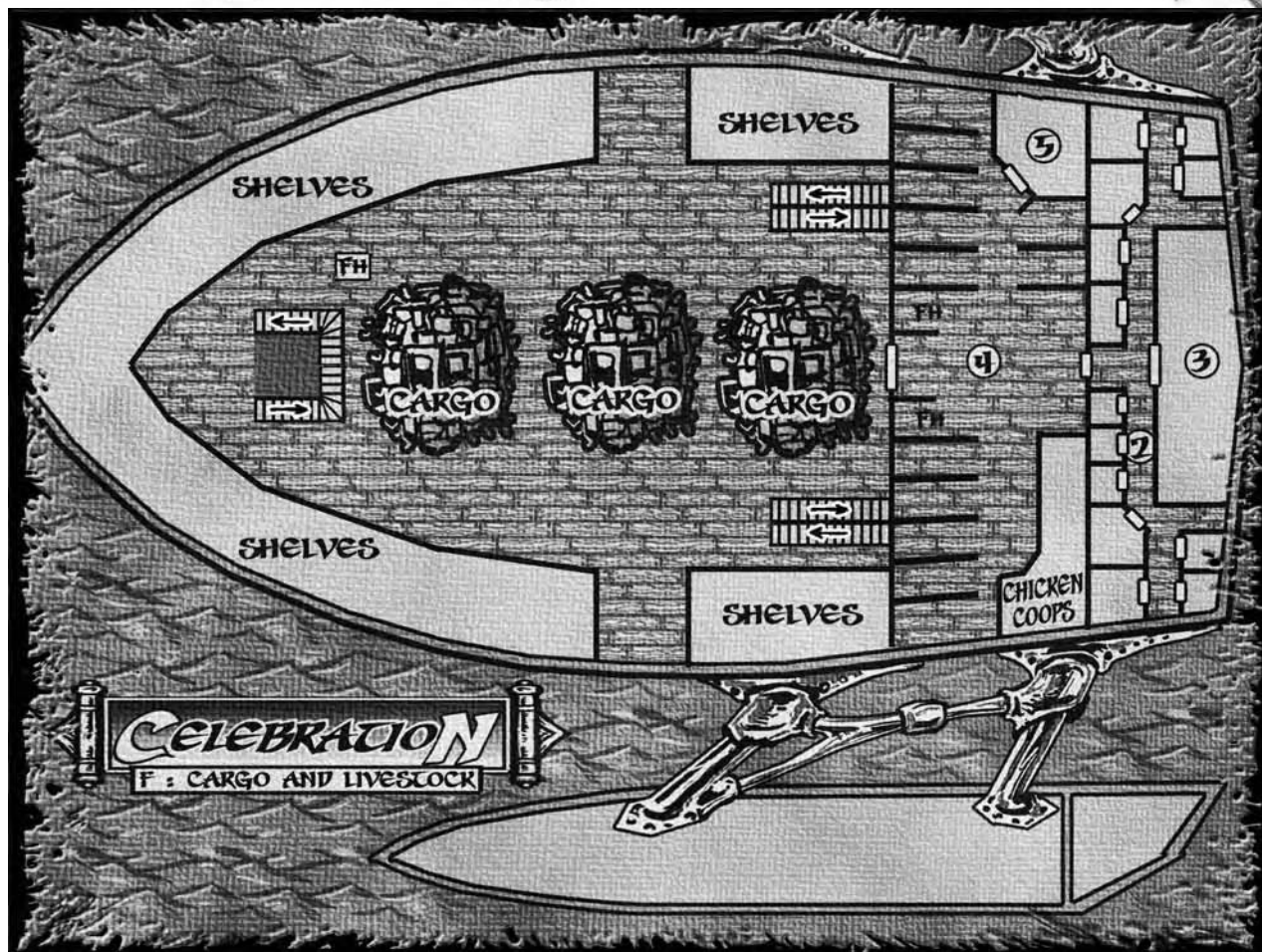
**Door Alarm Trap:** CR 8; magic device; visual trigger (*clairvoyance*); automatic reset; spell effect (*shout*, 14<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer, deafness, Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) negates, 5d6 sonic damage, Reflex saving throw (DC 19) halves), spell effect (*mass hold person*, 14<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer, Will saving throw (DC 21) negates); Search DC 32, Disable Device DC 32.

The contents of the holds are varied and depend on how well each family has been faring with its raids. At any one time, the majority of them are empty. Harriers like to spend their money while they have it. The Games Master can randomly determine the contents of a given hold by using the table below:

d10 Roll	Hold Contents
1–5	Empty but for crates, straw and packing cases
6–7	Meagre haul (two rolls on Table A)
8–9	Moderate haul (three rolls on Table A, one roll on Table B)
10	Fresh haul (three rolls on Table A, three on Table B, two on Table C)

**Table A: Ordinary Goods**

d%	Goods	Quantity/Value
01–15	Chalk	1d12 tonnes (250 gp per tonne)
16–30	Coal	2d8 tonnes (250 gp per tonne)
31–40	Nuts	1d6 tonnes (750 gp per tonne)
41–50	Salt	1d4 tonnes (700 gp per tonne)
51–60	Seafood	1d4 tonnes (800 gp per tonne)
61–80	Timber	4d4 tonnes (400 gp per tonne)
81–00	Wool	1d6 tonnes (700 gp per tonne)



**Table B: Quality Goods**

d%	Goods	Quantity/Value
01–15	Ale	2d6 tonnes (1,000 gp per tonne)
16–30	Cloth	2d4 tonnes (2,500 gp per tonne)
31–40	Coffee	1d4 tonnes (1,500 gp per tonne)
41–55	Hardwood	1d6 tonnes (2,000 gp per tonne)
56–60	Iron	2d4 tonnes (2,500 gp per tonne)
61–75	Leather	2d8 tonnes (1,250 gp per tonne)
76–85	Marble	1d3 tonnes (4,000 gp per tonne)
86–00	Tobacco	1d4 tonnes (3,700 gp per tonne)

**Table C: Exotic Goods**

d%	Goods	Quantity/Value
01–15	Amber	1d10x10 lb. (80 gp per pound)
16–30	Cosmetics	3d6x10 lb. (150 gp per pound)
31–40	Dyes	2d4x100 lb. (125 gp per pound)
41–55	Artwork	3d6x10 lb. (700 gp per pound)
56–60	Silver bars	2d4x100 lb. (10 gp per pound)
61–75	Spices	1d4 tonnes (10,000 gp per tonne)
76–85	Gold bars	2d4x100 lb. (100 gp per pound)
86–00	Jewellery	2d6 lb. (1,500 gp per pound)

### 3. Communal Secure Hold

This is the collective repository for the Harriers' treasure, from which a portion is regularly taken to give to the honoured ancestors (see page 54). Each captain has a key to it and is trusted to take only what their family requires.

The door to the hold has an identical trap to those on the smaller holds, except that it uses a timer rather than a visual trigger. Any person in the space adjacent to the door who does not lock or unlock it with an appropriate key within three rounds triggers the trap. While the door is open, the trap is deactivated. Captains know that they have to unlock the hold briskly when they need to use it.

*This spacious area has a collection of chests close to the door. Further back inside is something like a large barrel or hogshead, with odd holes in the side and lanterns on the front. Beyond that, a massive stone shape looms out of the darkness. Its head is an almost featureless mass of granite and its fists look like they could stave in a ship's hull with one blow.*

## Ballast

To add additional security, the Harriers have invested in the monstrosity they call Ballast. Ballast is a greater stone golem who spends most of his time guarding the communal hold but is often used as a lifter and hauler in the main cargo hold, as he can carry vast loads in one hand. Ballast is not allowed to pursue foes off the cargo hold level, as the floor is weaker in the upper levels and would give way under his weight. Ballast was not given his name in jest; he *does* act as a stabilising weight. When he moves too far from the ship's central axis, the ship tilts to one side, which brings concerned Sea Harriers running downstairs to see what is going on.

**Ballast, Greater Stone Golem:** CR 16; Huge construct; HD 42d10+40; hp 271; Init -2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 27, touch 6, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +31; Grp +52; Atk +42 melee (4d8+13, slam); Full Atk +42 melee (4d8+13, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA slow; SQ construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +14; Str 37, Dex 7, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Slow (Su):* Ballast can use a *slow* effect, as the spell, as a free action once every two rounds. The effect has a range of ten feet and a duration of seven rounds, requiring a Will saving throw (DC 31) to negate.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* Ballast is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against him, as noted below:

A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows Ballast (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of his lost hit points.



## The Stone of Melvek

This granite megalith looks as if it has been dragged off from the stone circle at the Tump (see *Drow War, Book One*). It has patches of a strange purple moss growing on it that are unsettlingly warm to the touch.

The stone radiates an overwhelming aura of Transmutation magic. It is an artefact, one of only three of its kind in the world.

While it is afloat on a ship or otherwise out of contact with the earth, the stone is inert. When the stone is placed in contact with the earth, its full power becomes accessible. There are two levels of command: basic and advanced.

A person who knows the basic command phrases can tell the stone to *raise*, *lower* or *stay*. Each command phrase requires a whole minute of speech. When the *raise* phrase is uttered, the land for one mile around the stone in each direction detaches itself and *levitates* into the air. This creates a floating island and a crater beneath. The stone can thus be used to shift immense masses of earth or propel cloud castles into the sky. The *lower* command slowly brings the landmass back down again, while the *stay* command fixes it in position where it is.


The advanced command phrases are extremely difficult to master and require a Spellcraft check (DC 30) to learn. These allow a character to command the stone to move the landmass in a given direction, so that the floating island can move from place to place.

Currently, the only people who know the stone's activation phrases are Revekhal Sunspite and the *amma hadrak*. They know only the basic command phrases. They intend to use the stone to raise Lost Athul from beneath the sea, so that they can retrieve several magic items to repay the Kraken, Omorogg.

Another of these stones lifted the village of Astercote into the sky (see *The Drow War, Book One*), but the magician who did so only knew the *raise* command, and so the village has been drifting ever since.

A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change Ballast's structure but negates his damage reduction and immunity to magic for one full round.





*Equipment & Treasure:* Currently stored inside the communal hold are 2,000 lb. of silver ingots (worth 10 gp each), 800 lb. of gold ingots (worth 100 gp each), three coffers containing 3 lb. of assorted jewellery each (worth 4,500 gp per coffer) and one *apparatus of the crab*, which the Harriers occasionally take out of the hold and use for underwater scouting. Among all this loot stands the Stone of Melvek (see sidebar).

#### 4. Animal Pens

*There is a thick stench of dung in this part of the ship. You can hear squeals, snorts and lowing. The Sea Harriers must have a taste for fresh meat, because it seems they have set aside this part of the deck for livestock. Pigs are penned in wooden enclosures down the left side of the area, while the right side has a series of sheds that must be cow byres. Wooden coops with chickens in them have been stacked up against the eastern wall.*

In total, there are 90 pigs, 30 cows and 200 chickens currently on the ship. The animals are no threat to the Player Characters so long as they remain in their enclosures. If the cows are set free and frightened sufficiently, they stampede, causing total havoc on this deck.

The fire hoses in this region are for keeping the stalls washed clean. Slurry flows down specially built gutters into the waste tanks and from there is pumped out of the back of the ship.

#### 5. Feed Store

*This room almost seems like the inside of a barn, not that of a ship. Bales are stacked high against the wall and musty sacks have been stood close by.*

This region is simply a storage bay for hay bales, sacks of oats and grain for the chickens. The only hazards are the dire rats that raid the grain bins regularly. A single ship's cat is sleeping at the top of the pile of hay bales, digesting its latest meal of rats.

#### G. Engine Level

A low thrum of machinery fills this whole deck, bestowing a -4 circumstance penalty on all Listen checks. Characters in the region can feel the walls and floor vibrate.

#### 1. Steam Engines

*This must be the powerhouse of the whole ship. The heat and humidity are stifling. Before you is a copper-plated barrel the size of a barn, connected up to a titanic piston and flywheel. A thin plume of steam hisses from a valve at the top; beneath, incarnadine fires are glowing*

*through a grate above a metal trough. Subsidiary cogs and gears lead off from the flywheel to other parts of the ship and a single vast axle, turning rapidly, runs directly towards the stern. The engine is clearly using some form of steam propulsion, though there is no sign of any fuel for the fires.*

*A gantry leads to a platform overlooking the engine. There is a bank of dials and levers beside the platform.*

Standing at the controls is the chief engineer, Dunstan, a white-haired sea raider with a huge carbuncular nose. A speaking tube allows communication with the helm and the witching tower. It is his job to increase or decrease the engine power according to what the helmsman instructs. Currently the ship is idling, so Dunstan is smoking his pipe and having a rest.

**Dunstan, Male Human Rog6/Ftr4:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6 plus 4d10; hp 43; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +15 melee (1d8+8/19-20/x3, +3 *thundering warhammer*) or +11 ranged (1d10/19-20, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+8/19-20/x3, +3 *thundering warhammer*) or +11 ranged (1d10/19-20, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

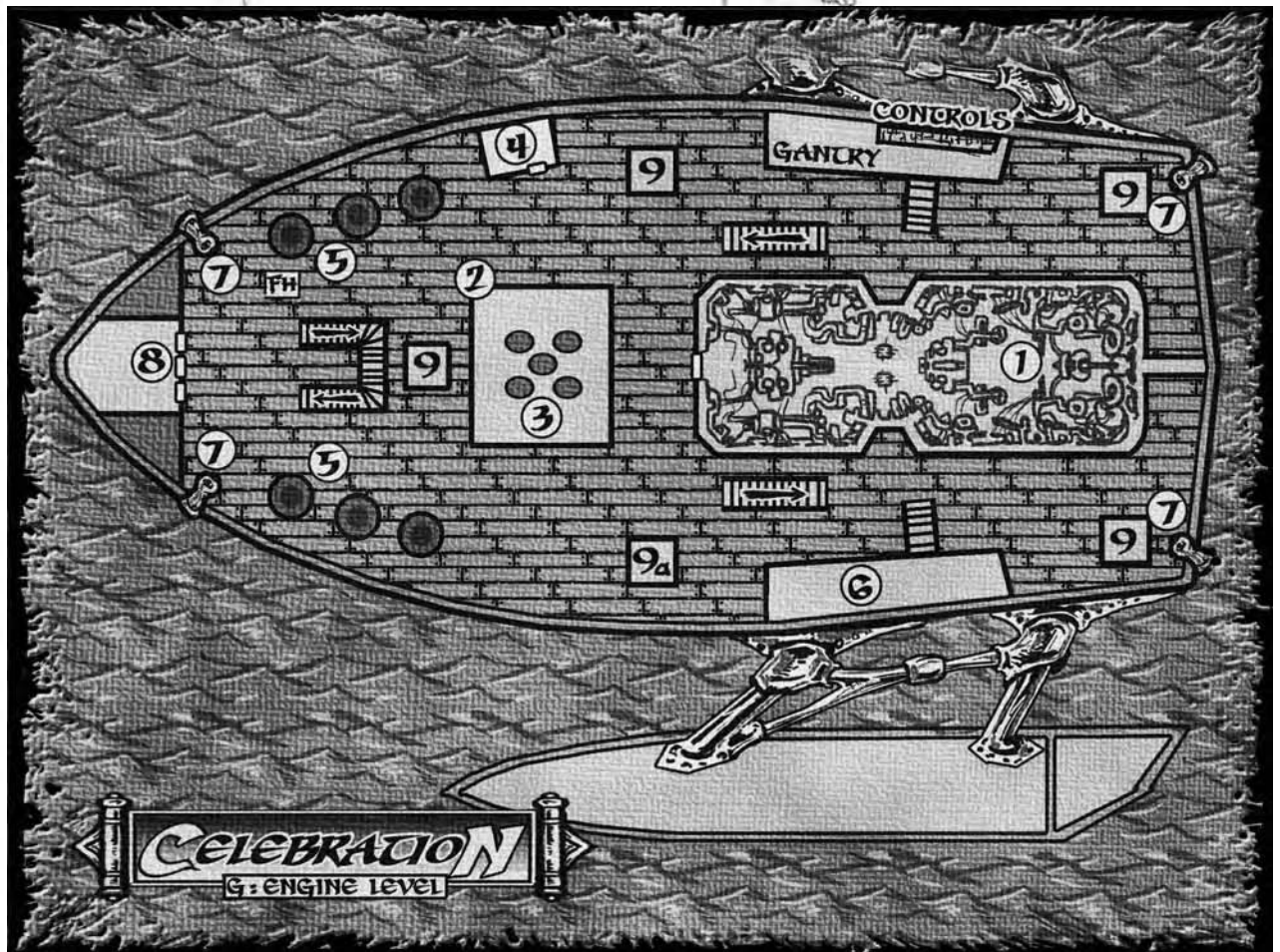
*Skills & Feats:* Balance +6, Bluff +10, Climb +10, Craft (alchemy) +11, Disable Device +11, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +9, Jump +7, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +9, Listen +10, Move Silently +5, Profession (engineer) +17, Search +7, Spot +5, Swim +14, Tumble +7, Use Rope +10; Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (warhammer), Power Attack, Skill Focus (Profession (engineer)), Weapon Focus (warhammer), Weapon Specialisation (warhammer).

*Equipment & Treasure:* +3 *thundering warhammer*, +2 *light steel shield*, crossbow bolts (10), key, masterwork heavy crossbow, *minor ring of fire resistance* (20 points), rod of black glass.

Dunstan's +3 *thundering warhammer* deals +2d8 sonic damage when a critical hit is scored. The key he carries is for the security grille over the shut-down lever, and the glass rod is used to open the desalinator defence grille.

**The Controls:** The control bank allows an operator to increase the ship's speed (forwards or reverse), turn the water circulation on or off, drop or weigh the anchor





and activate or deactivate the fog cloud that surrounds the ship. A single large lever behind a locked grille shuts down the entire engine in an emergency or for maintenance; the grille can be opened without its key via an Open Lock (DC 40) check. Currently the ship is immobile, though the engine is still running.

The ship's cloaking screen of fog depends on a constant supply of steam from the engine room; the obscuring fog is in fact magically thickened steam. If the Player Characters shut the steam engines down, the fog clears in 1d4 minutes. It is much easier to stop the engine than to start it. It takes ten minutes of work and a Profession (engineer) check (DC 15) to start the engine again after it has been shut down.

In addition, shutting down the boiler disables Gugglehatch's breath weapon (see the Brig, below).


**Sabotage:** If a Player Character studies the boiler and makes a successful Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Profession (engineer) check (DC 20), he can see a way to cripple it. The valve at the top of the boiler vents excess steam and keeps the pressure inside

at a safe level. If the valve is blocked and the engine kept running, then pressure will build up and up until the boiler explodes at its weakest point.

If a Player Character wants to try this, he must first reach the valve. The boiler's metal casing is scalding hot, dealing 1d6 points of fire damage per round to any creature who touches it. The character must then make a successful Disable Device check (DC 25) to plug the valve. If this is done and the boiler is left unattended, it detonates in 1d6+4 minutes, dealing 20d6 fire damage in a 60-foot-radius spread; a Reflex saving throw (DC 23) halves this damage. If Dunstan sees that the boiler pressure is going through the roof, he unlocks the shutdown lever and stops the engine before any damage is done.

**The Grate:** Set into the space below the steam cylinder is an adamantine cage, through which the occupants can direct heat.

The source of power for the steam engines is a group of three imprisoned efreeti, Massum, Jahammad and Zah. These are brothers who were part of a conspiracy to



unseat the Architect of Flame on the Elemental Plane of Fire. Their fate was harsh; eternal servitude to the masters of the ship, whoever they may be. The efreeti absolutely despise the Harriers but have no choice in their servitude. They spend their time eternally reprimanding each other.

The physical correlate of the efreeti's curse is the adamantine cage, which is a magic item emanating a continual *antimagic shell* effect within its boundaries. The efreeti cannot use any spell-like or supernatural abilities but continue to emit searing heat, as this is an extraordinary ability. It thus keeps them bound physically and magically, while allowing them to carry out the steam generation that is part of their duty of service. Player Characters who attempt to set the efreeti free must somehow negate the magic of the cage (caster level 30<sup>th</sup>) and break the adamantine grating.

If the efreeti encounter the Player Characters without the Harriers being present, they put on a pitiful show, claiming to be slaves of the cruel pirates, taken away from their home and forced to work as part of this terrible engine. They beg the Player Characters to release them in the name of the Gods, of mercy, of the spirit of freedom, of the brotherhood of all living things and in the name of any other platitude they can think up.

If petitions to the Player Characters' better natures do not work, the efreeti attempt bribery instead, promising that each one of them will grant a single wish to the person who releases them. Under no circumstances will they grant any more than three wishes in total. Naturally they have no intention of granting even a single wish, but if the Player Characters force them to swear that they will, then they keep to their word if they are released.

Each of the three efreeti have identical statistics, as follows:

**Massum, Jahammid and Zah, Male Efreeti:** CR 8; Large outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Init +7; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect); AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +10; Grp +20; Atk +15 melee (1d8+6 plus 1d6 fire, slam); Full Atk +15 melee (1d8+6 plus 1d6 fire, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA *change size*, heat, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, *plane shift*, telepathy 100 ft., vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 23, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 15.

**Skills & Feats:** Bluff +15, Concentration +15, Craft (alchemy) +14, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Intimidate +17, Listen +15, Move Silently +16, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +14, Spot +15; Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*scorching ray*).

**Change Size (Sp):** Twice per day, an efreeti can magically change a creature's size. This works just like an *enlarge person* or *reduce person* spell (the efreeti chooses when using the ability), except that the ability can work on the efreeti. A Fortitude saving throw (DC 13) negates the effect. This is the equivalent of a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell.

**Heat (Ex):** An efreeti's red-hot body deals 1d6 points of extra fire damage whenever it hits in melee, or in each round it maintains a hold when grappling.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will – *detect magic*, *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 14), *scorching ray* (1 ray only); 3/day – *invisibility*, *wall of fire* (DC 16); 1/day – grant up to three *wishes* (to non-genies only), *gaseous form*, *permanent image* (DC 18), *polymorph* (self only). Caster level is 12<sup>th</sup>.

## 2. Coil Defence Barrier

*A portcullis-like steel grating closes off the region beyond. It gives off a quiet, ominous hum. There are four black, glittering jewels set into it in a square pattern.*

As the desalinators coils are so crucial to the crew's continued survival, the Harriers have taken pains to defend them. Before the coils can be accessed, the jewels must be touched with the black glass rod in Dunstan's possession, in the correct order (clockwise, beginning at the bottom left). If the grating is touched in any other way or the sequence is wrong, an identical *chain lightning* trap is triggered from each jewel. There are thus four traps in total, each one requiring a separate skill check to find and disable. Once the trap is deactivated, the grating can be lifted manually.

**Chain Lightning Trap (4):** CR 7; magic device; touch trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*chain lightning*, 11<sup>th</sup> level wizard, 11d6 electrical to target touching trigger area plus 5d6 electrical to each of up to eleven secondary targets, Reflex saving throw (DC 19) half damage); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.





### 3. Desalinator Coils

*The air in this area smells strangely acrid, like the aftermath of a lightning strike. There is a gurgling all around you as water flows through a complicated array of pipes, spiralling round several tall metal cones in the room's centre.*

This machinery uses alchemical filtration to remove the salt from seawater, making it usable on board ship for drinking and washing. Sabotaging these devices would cripple the *Celebration* in a far more drastic way than would shutting down the engine, as it would leave the crew without any drinkable water. Sabotaging the coils requires a Disable Device check (DC 25) or a total of 60 points of damage dealt to them. The coils have a hardness of 8.

### 4. Alchemy Workshop

*A workbench has been set up here, with dozens of carefully labelled jars stacked on shelves beside it. The jars have labels like 'sulphur granules', 'tincture of elastium' and 'ground draconic enamel extract'. On the bench is a metal bowl filled with brown crystals, like Demerara sugar.*

Anyone with any skill ranks in Craft (alchemy) recognises this immediately as an alchemical laboratory. Dunstan has been working on an alchemical means to dry out food, so that it can be kept longer. The brown crystals are his first steps toward success.

### 5. Reducing Cauldrons

*In this part of the ship, fifteen-foot-high wooden vats have been installed. A noisome bubbling sound comes from them. You smell a strong reek of fish.*

The cauldrons are used to reduce whale parts into usable oil. The vats have a hardness of 5 and can sustain 30 points of damage before breaking open. If any of the vats is ruptured, steaming whale oil gushes out and floods the area, making the floor slippery in an 80-foot-radius spread.

### 6. Pump Controls

*A bank of levers has been built into the wall here, with the word PUMPS scrawled above them. Beside the levers is a diagram showing to which parts of the ship they correspond.*

There are six levers in total. Pulling one of them starts the bilge pumps going in that part of the ship. This lowers the water level from five feet to two feet in that area.

### 7. Fog Vents

*At this point on the deck a thrumming metal pipe, five feet across, leads out through the hull. This must be the source of the fog that shrouds the ship. There is a hatch in the side of the pipe.*

The hatch is there so that blockages in the vents can be found and removed. Characters can attempt to enter the ship through the fog vents. The continuous blast of hot steam gives total concealment and deals 3d6 points of fire damage per round to any character exposed to it, with a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) for half damage. Immediately inside the vent is an iron grille, bolted in place, to prevent creatures from clambering into the works. Beyond the grille is the access hatch, which is locked from within. Beyond the hatch, the pipe narrows to two feet.


### 8. Brig

*This part of the ship is unlike any other that you have seen. To the west is the head of an enormous catfish, whiskered and goggling, made of some greenish metal. It is as if a fish-shaped construct had rammed the ship here and forced its way through the hull. As you watch, the metal eyes swivel slightly and puffs of steam come from the nostrils. It is either alive or made to look that way!*

The quality of workmanship is astonishing; each scale of the fish head seems to have been manufactured separately. A character who examines the fish's mouth and succeeds at a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 20) or Search check (DC 25) notices that the fish's mouth is hinged and can be opened. A further Search check (DC 25) locates a steam pipe concealed among the detail of the fish's scales, which is apparently the power source for the opening mechanism. This runs down into the floor and eventually connects with the boiler. A character can sabotage Gugglehatch's breath weapon by tampering with this pipe. A Disable Device check (DC 25) or a total of 40 points of damage dealt to the pipe (Hardness 10) will render the breath weapon unusable.

In fact, the brig is a sentient prison and has the name of Gugglehatch. Instead of locks and keys, whoever created the *Celebration* decided to make the prison and the guard the same thing. Locks can be picked, traps can be disarmed and guards can be killed, but a mechanical fish head is harder to bypass.

Gugglehatch can only do three things: open and close its mouth (including making attacks), use its breath weapon and communicate. It speaks in a slow monotone,



sounding more stupid than it is, and is immediately suspicious of strangers unless it is addressed by name. It takes orders only from the *amma hadrak*, Revekhal Sunspite or those to whom it has seen them delegate authority. If it believes that there is trouble afoot, it bellows out an alarm and calls the Sea Harriers to assist. It uses its breath weapon if anyone tries to attack it.

**Gugglehatch:** CR 10; Huge construct, HD 18d10+40; HP 139; Init -1; Spd —; AC 29, touch 7, flat-footed 29; Base Atk +13; Grp +32; Atk +22 melee (2d10+11, bite); Full Atk +22 melee (2d10+16, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon, swallow whole; SQ construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 33, Dex 9, Con —, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Skills & Feats:* Listen +18, Sense Motive +18, Spot +18.

*Breath Weapon (Su):* Gugglehatch can breathe a 30-foot cone of superheated steam every 1d4 rounds. This deals 16d6 fire damage, with a Reflex saving throw (DC 19) allowed for half damage.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, Gugglehatch must hit a Medium-sized or smaller opponent with its bite attack. 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 can try to swallow the foe the following round

*Swallow Whole (Ex):* Gugglehatch can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of Medium or smaller size by making a successful grapple check. Once past the jaws, opponents find themselves inside the brig proper (see below).

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* Gugglehatch is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance.

**Inside the Brig:** The brig proper consists of a metal-lined room, stark and cold and without any furniture at all save a bucket for slops. Currently the cell has only one occupant: Azbeth, the elven mage whom Archimandrus has led the party here to rescue.

Characters who attempt to break through the walls or cast spells annoy Gugglehatch, who can activate a magical trap that brings the walls together like a waste compactor, in the hope that the prisoners will stop fooling around. As soon as it believes that they are behaving themselves again, it moves the walls back to

their original positions. Gugglehatch is not supposed to kill troublesome prisoners, but it has squashed more than a few in the past when they became unruly.

**Crushing Walls Trap:** CR 12; mechanical; manual trigger (Gugglehatch activates at will); automatic reset; walls move together (16d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. by 10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (two rounds); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 30.

### Non-Player Character: Azbeth

Azbeth Cellerinne is a skinny, suntanned elf with an overbite and the air of a runaway child. When she is found in the brig, she has her hands and feet bound and a gag in her mouth to prevent her from casting spells. The Sea Harriers only remove the gag twice a day, to feed her. They are very wary of her spellcasting powers. Nimian Archimandrus feels like a failed parent where Azbeth is concerned; she is no relation, but he feels obliged to protect her, while she stubbornly insists that she can cope on her own. She is glad of the rescue, thanking the Player Characters sincerely while berating Archimandrus for ‘taking so damn long’.

Azbeth, if she is freed, urges the Player Characters to find Revekhal Sunspite. The drow navigator is the one behind the drow-Sea Harrier alliance. If anyone knows the secret of the Sea Harriers’ control over the kraken, it is he. Besides, he took Azbeth’s *staff of power* and *major cloak of displacement* and she wants them back before she leaves. If the Player Characters already have them, she will politely ask for them back.

She will be glad to help the Player Characters, though she reminds them that the Harriers come to check on her twice a day. If she is not in her cell where she is supposed to be, they will mobilise the entire ship to find her.

*Note:* When the players find Azbeth she has *no* spells prepared. Those listed below are what she typically prepares when she has access to her spellbook.

**Azbeth Celerrine, Female Elf Wiz12:** CR 12; HD 12d4+12; HP 42; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike); SA spells; SQ elf traits, low-light vision; AL CG; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +7, Decipher Script +6, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (geography)





+15, Knowledge (nature) +13, Listen +2, Profession (explorer) +10, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +2, Survival +6; Enlarge Spell, Improved Counterspell, Maximise Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Mastery (*mage armour, message, sending*), Spell Mastery (*mage armour*).

*Spells prepared (4/5/5/5/3/3/2, save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *acid splash, ghost sound, message, resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *detect undead, endure elements, expeditious retreat, mage armour, shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *fox's cunning, locate object, see invisibility, spider climb, whispering wind*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel magic, lightning bolt, protection from energy, ray of exhaustion*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *dimensional anchor, greater invisibility, hallucinatory terrain, lesser globe of invulnerability*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *mage's faithful hound, transmute rock to mud*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *greater dispel magic, sending* (already cast).

*Equipment & Treasure:* The tattered remains of a travelling outfit. Everything else was confiscated.

Azbeth is a footloose traveller, more of a bard or druid at heart than a wizard. She loves to be out on her own among the elements, sailing her one-woman skiff on the open sea. She never really fit into the formal, stratified society of Xoth Sarandi and so serves the Council in ways that let her stay as far from the city as possible. She is their preferred scout, explorer and surveyor, sending back regular dispatches from distant parts of the world.

## 9. Trapdoors

At this point, you find a sturdy-looking metal trapdoor in the floor. You can hear the soft gurgle of water from beneath.

These trapdoors lead down to the bilges. They are kept locked (although they can be opened with an Open Lock check (DC 30)) to prevent children from wandering down there, though they seem to be able to get into the bilges with bewildering frequency. This is because the trapdoor marked 9a has a broken lock and can be opened with a swift tug and a Strength check (DC 10), though this is not obvious from above; noticing it requires a Search check (DC 20).

## H. Bilge Level

The bilges are at the very bottom of the ship. Water steadily collects here from tiny leaks in the hull or from battle damage, and has to be pumped out. This entire region is always flooded with foul water. When the pumps have not been run for a while, the water is waist deep (four feet). Running the pumps for an hour lowers the water level to two feet in depth.

The Harriers never come down here unless there is a specific task to be done, such as patching up a leak in the hull or finding something that has fallen into the waste disposal system.

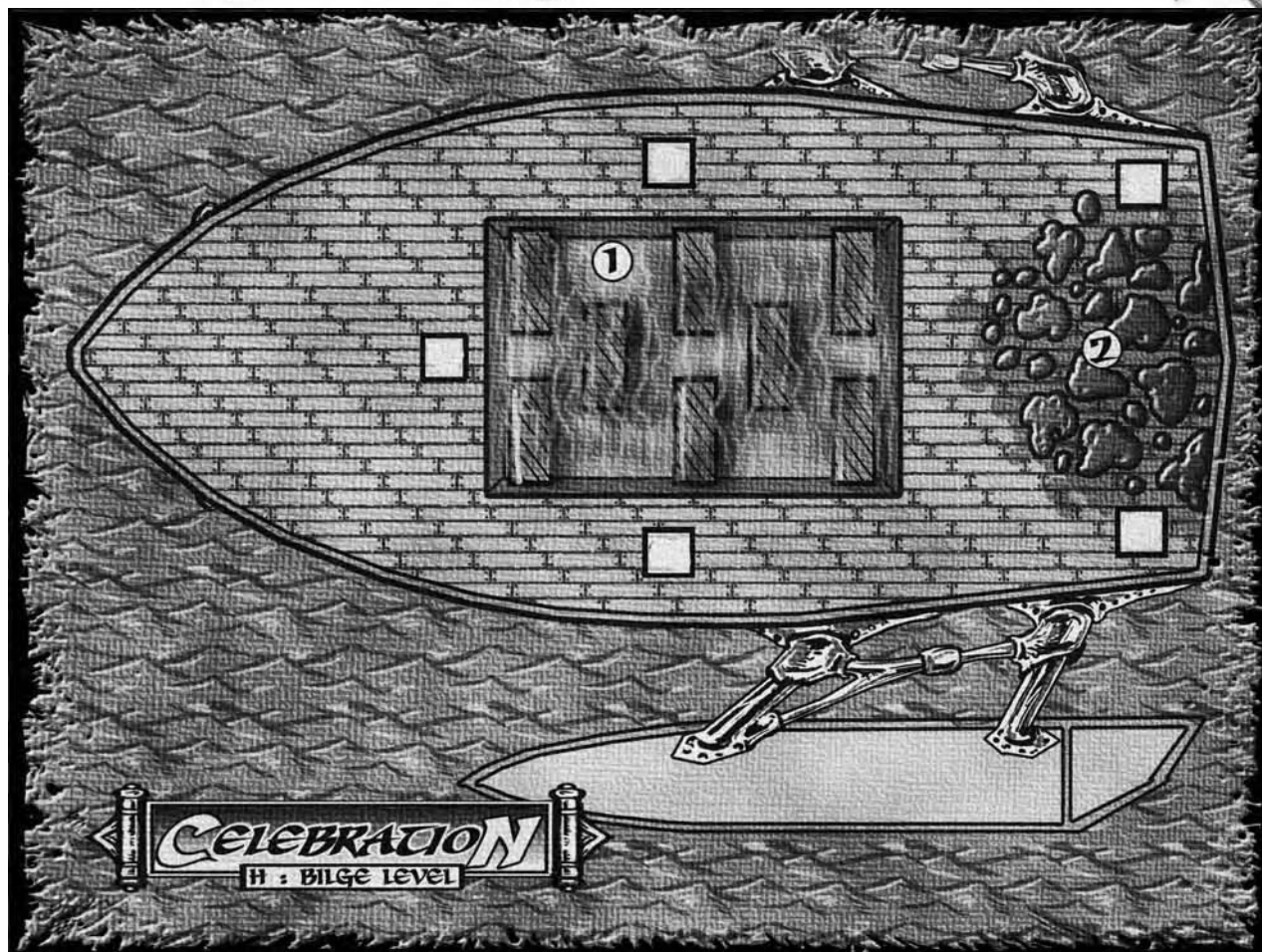
## 1. Waste Disposal

*A blocky cistern stands before you, with multiple pipes feeding into it. The stench is overpowering. You hear a grinding, sloshing noise, as if the filth inside were being stirred repetitively.*

The various waste pipes in the ship all feed into this tank, where machinery powered from above slices the contents into slurry that is then pumped out of the back of the ship. The tank is made from iron but is lined with ceramic tiles to prevent corrosion. A hinged iron security grating closes off the top of the tank, with padlocks holding it shut; it can be opened with an Open Lock check (DC 20).

A character looking down into the filth may make a Spot check (DC 20) to notice a small human skull bob to the surface and then vanish. Revekhal Sunspite has been using this slurry tank to dispose of his victims. Unbeknownst to him, the tank has another inhabitant, who has been digesting their bodies and leaving only their bones – a gigantic black pudding, hidden under the sewage. The ooze is not in the least bothered by the slicing blades; those that have sliced into it have been quickly dissolved. It is too big to be pumped out of the tank with the rest of the sludge.





**Hazards:** The sludge is 20 feet deep. A character who falls into the tank must make Swim checks as if he were in water. In addition, the rotating blades in the shaded areas make automatic melee attacks each round against each creature within their areas of effect. The blades have a melee attack bonus of +20 and deal 4d8 slashing damage. Any character injured by the blades while he is immersed in the muck is exposed to filth fever (Fortitude DC 18, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con).

**Elder Black Pudding:** CR 9; Gargantuan ooze; HD 20d10+180; hp 290; Init -5; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 1, touch 1, flat-footed 1; Base Atk +15; Grp +35; Atk +19 melee (3d6+12 plus 3d6 acid, slam); Full Atk +19 melee (3d6+12 plus 3d6 acid, slam); Space/Reach 20 ft./20 ft.; SA acid, constrict 2d8+12 plus 2d6 acid, improved grab; SQ blindsight 60 ft., split, ooze traits; AL N; SV Fort +15, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 26, Dex 1, Con 28, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

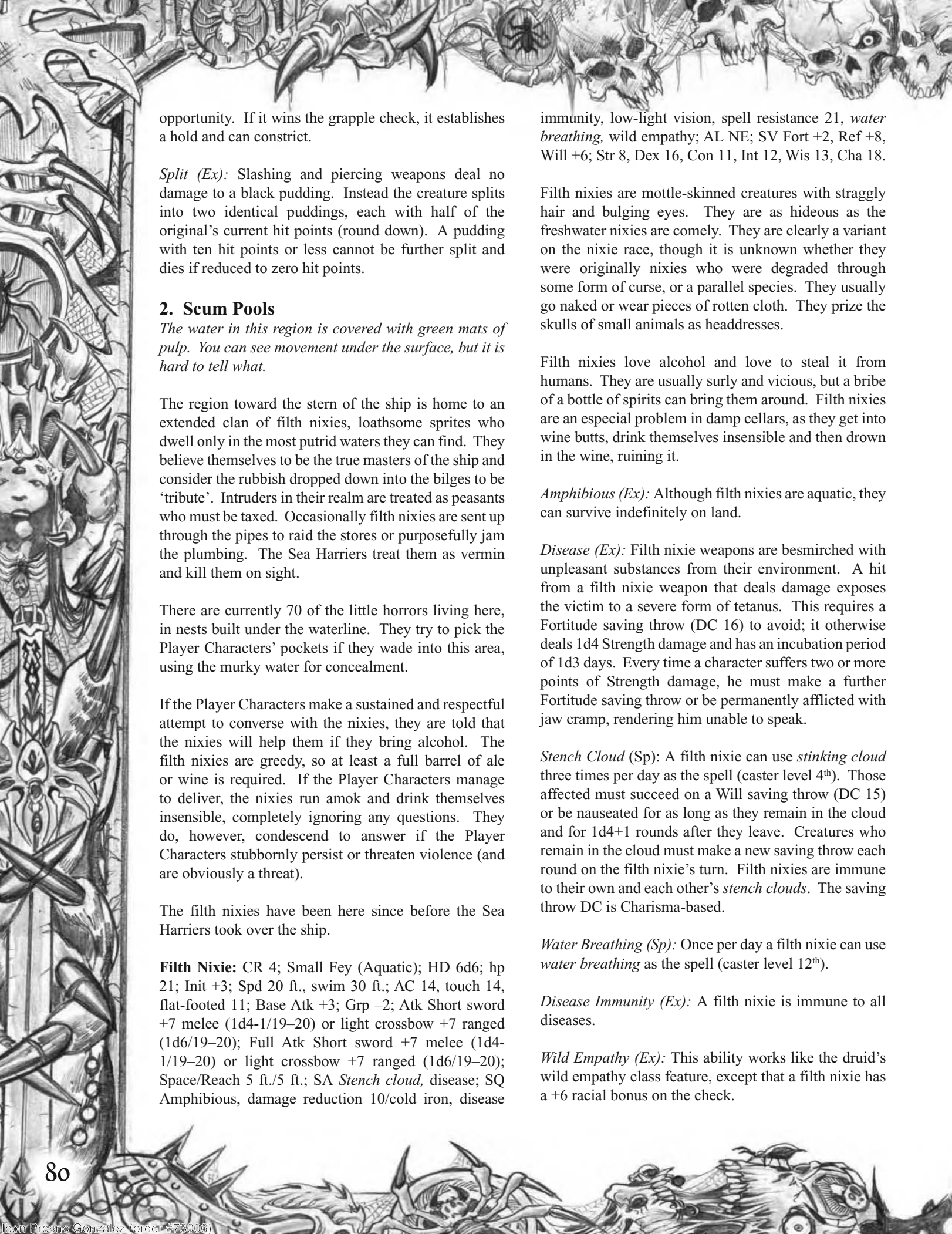
*Skills & Feats:* Climb +16\*.

\*A black pudding has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

*Acid (Ex):* Any melee strike or constrict attack deals acid damage. The opponent's armour and clothing dissolve and become useless immediately unless they succeed on Reflex saving throws (DC 29). A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a black pudding also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds on a Reflex saving throw (DC 29). The pudding's acidic touch deals 21 points of damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the ooze must remain in contact with the object for one full round to deal this damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Constrict (Ex):* A black pudding deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armour take a -4 penalty on Reflex saving throws against the acid.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a black pudding must hit with its slam attack. 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 can constrict.

*Split (Ex):* Slashing and piercing weapons deal no damage to a black pudding. Instead the creature splits into two identical puddings, each with half of the original's current hit points (round down). A pudding with ten hit points or less cannot be further split and dies if reduced to zero hit points.

## 2. Scum Pools

*The water in this region is covered with green mats of pulp. You can see movement under the surface, but it is hard to tell what.*

The region toward the stern of the ship is home to an extended clan of filth nixies, loathsome sprites who dwell only in the most putrid waters they can find. They believe themselves to be the true masters of the ship and consider the rubbish dropped down into the bilges to be 'tribute'. Intruders in their realm are treated as peasants who must be taxed. Occasionally filth nixies are sent up through the pipes to raid the stores or purposefully jam the plumbing. The Sea Harriers treat them as vermin and kill them on sight.

There are currently 70 of the little horrors living here, in nests built under the waterline. They try to pick the Player Characters' pockets if they wade into this area, using the murky water for concealment.

If the Player Characters make a sustained and respectful attempt to converse with the nixies, they are told that the nixies will help them if they bring alcohol. The filth nixies are greedy, so at least a full barrel of ale or wine is required. If the Player Characters manage to deliver, the nixies run amok and drink themselves insensible, completely ignoring any questions. They do, however, condescend to answer if the Player Characters stubbornly persist or threaten violence (and are obviously a threat).

The filth nixies have been here since before the Sea Harriers took over the ship.

**Filth Nixie:** CR 4; Small Fey (Aquatic); HD 6d6; hp 21; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp -2; Atk Short sword +7 melee (1d4-1/19-20) or light crossbow +7 ranged (1d6/19-20); Full Atk Short sword +7 melee (1d4-1/19-20) or light crossbow +7 ranged (1d6/19-20); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA *Stench cloud*, disease; SQ Amphibious, damage reduction 10/cold iron, disease

immunity, low-light vision, spell resistance 21, *water breathing*, wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 18.

Filth nixies are mottle-skinned creatures with straggly hair and bulging eyes. They are as hideous as the freshwater nixies are comely. They are clearly a variant on the nixie race, though it is unknown whether they were originally nixies who were degraded through some form of curse, or a parallel species. They usually go naked or wear pieces of rotten cloth. They prize the skulls of small animals as headdresses.

Filth nixies love alcohol and love to steal it from humans. They are usually surly and vicious, but a bribe of a bottle of spirits can bring them around. Filth nixies are an especial problem in damp cellars, as they get into wine butts, drink themselves insensible and then drown in the wine, ruining it.

*Amphibious (Ex):* Although filth nixies are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely on land.

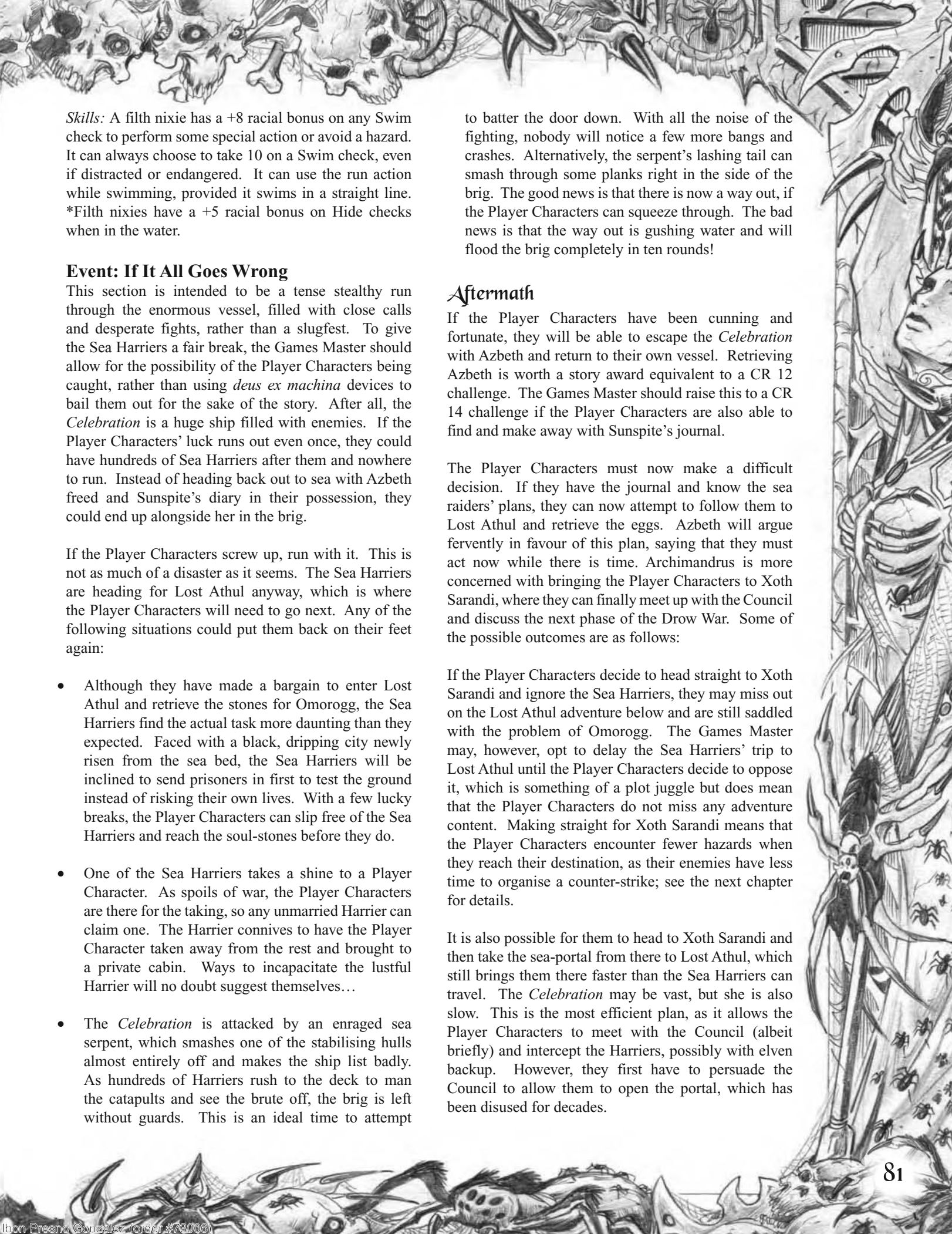
*Disease (Ex):* Filth nixie weapons are besmirched with unpleasant substances from their environment. A hit from a filth nixie weapon that deals damage exposes the victim to a severe form of tetanus. This requires a Fortitude saving throw (DC 16) to avoid; if otherwise deals 1d4 Strength damage and has an incubation period of 1d3 days. Every time a character suffers two or more points of Strength damage, he must make a further Fortitude saving throw or be permanently afflicted with jaw cramp, rendering him unable to speak.

*Stench Cloud (Sp):* A filth nixie can use *stinking cloud* three times per day as the spell (caster level 4<sup>th</sup>). Those affected must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC 15) or be nauseated for as long as they remain in the cloud and for 1d4+1 rounds after they leave. Creatures who remain in the cloud must make a new saving throw each round on the filth nixie's turn. Filth nixies are immune to their own and each other's *stench clouds*. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

*Water Breathing (Sp):* Once per day a filth nixie can use *water breathing* as the spell (caster level 12<sup>th</sup>).

*Disease Immunity (Ex):* A filth nixie is immune to all diseases.

*Wild Empathy (Ex):* This ability works like the druid's wild empathy class feature, except that a filth nixie has a +6 racial bonus on the check.



*Skills:* A filth nixie has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. \*Filth nixies have a +5 racial bonus on Hide checks when in the water.

### Event: If It All Goes Wrong

This section is intended to be a tense stealthy run through the enormous vessel, filled with close calls and desperate fights, rather than a slugfest. To give the Sea Harriers a fair break, the Games Master should allow for the possibility of the Player Characters being caught, rather than using *deus ex machina* devices to bail them out for the sake of the story. After all, the *Celebration* is a huge ship filled with enemies. If the Player Characters' luck runs out even once, they could have hundreds of Sea Harriers after them and nowhere to run. Instead of heading back out to sea with Azbeth freed and Sunspite's diary in their possession, they could end up alongside her in the brig.

If the Player Characters screw up, run with it. This is not as much of a disaster as it seems. The Sea Harriers are heading for Lost Athul anyway, which is where the Player Characters will need to go next. Any of the following situations could put them back on their feet again:

- Although they have made a bargain to enter Lost Athul and retrieve the stones for Omorogg, the Sea Harriers find the actual task more daunting than they expected. Faced with a black, dripping city newly risen from the sea bed, the Sea Harriers will be inclined to send prisoners in first to test the ground instead of risking their own lives. With a few lucky breaks, the Player Characters can slip free of the Sea Harriers and reach the soul-stones before they do.
- One of the Sea Harriers takes a shine to a Player Character. As spoils of war, the Player Characters are there for the taking, so any unmarried Harrier can claim one. The Harrier connives to have the Player Character taken away from the rest and brought to a private cabin. Ways to incapacitate the lustful Harrier will no doubt suggest themselves...
- The *Celebration* is attacked by an enraged sea serpent, which smashes one of the stabilising hulls almost entirely off and makes the ship list badly. As hundreds of Harriers rush to the deck to man the catapults and see the brute off, the brig is left without guards. This is an ideal time to attempt

to batter the door down. With all the noise of the fighting, nobody will notice a few more bangs and crashes. Alternatively, the serpent's lashing tail can smash through some planks right in the side of the brig. The good news is that there is now a way out, if the Player Characters can squeeze through. The bad news is that the way out is gushing water and will flood the brig completely in ten rounds!

### Aftermath

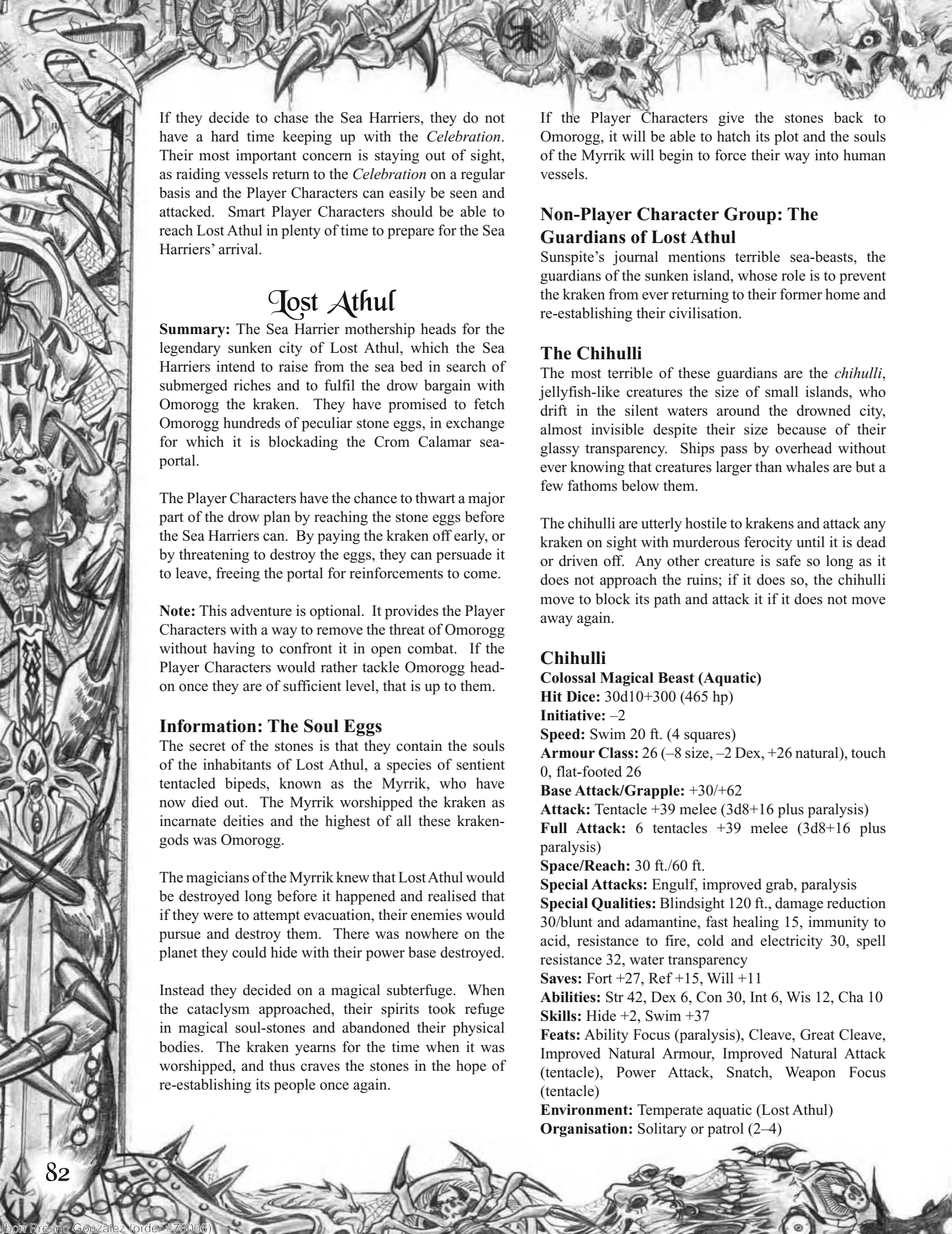
If the Player Characters have been cunning and fortunate, they will be able to escape the *Celebration* with Azbeth and return to their own vessel. Retrieving Azbeth is worth a story award equivalent to a CR 12 challenge. The Games Master should raise this to a CR 14 challenge if the Player Characters are also able to find and make away with Sunspite's journal.

The Player Characters must now make a difficult decision. If they have the journal and know the sea raiders' plans, they can now attempt to follow them to Lost Athul and retrieve the eggs. Azbeth will argue fervently in favour of this plan, saying that they must act now while there is time. Archimandrus is more concerned with bringing the Player Characters to Xoth Sarandi, where they can finally meet up with the Council and discuss the next phase of the Drow War. Some of the possible outcomes are as follows:

If the Player Characters decide to head straight to Xoth Sarandi and ignore the Sea Harriers, they may miss out on the Lost Athul adventure below and are still saddled with the problem of Omorogg. The Games Master may, however, opt to delay the Sea Harriers' trip to Lost Athul until the Player Characters decide to oppose it, which is something of a plot juggle but does mean that the Player Characters do not miss any adventure content. Making straight for Xoth Sarandi means that the Player Characters encounter fewer hazards when they reach their destination, as their enemies have less time to organise a counter-strike; see the next chapter for details.

It is also possible for them to head to Xoth Sarandi and then take the sea-portal from there to Lost Athul, which still brings them there faster than the Sea Harriers can travel. The *Celebration* may be vast, but she is also slow. This is the most efficient plan, as it allows the Player Characters to meet with the Council (albeit briefly) and intercept the Harriers, possibly with elven backup. However, they first have to persuade the Council to allow them to open the portal, which has been disused for decades.





If they decide to chase the Sea Harriers, they do not have a hard time keeping up with the *Celebration*. Their most important concern is staying out of sight, as raiding vessels return to the *Celebration* on a regular basis and the Player Characters can easily be seen and attacked. Smart Player Characters should be able to reach Lost Athul in plenty of time to prepare for the Sea Harriers' arrival.

## Lost Athul

**Summary:** The Sea Harrier mothership heads for the legendary sunken city of Lost Athul, which the Sea Harriers intend to raise from the sea bed in search of submerged riches and to fulfil the drow bargain with Omorogg the kraken. They have promised to fetch Omorogg hundreds of peculiar stone eggs, in exchange for which it is blockading the Crom Calamar sea-portal.

The Player Characters have the chance to thwart a major part of the drow plan by reaching the stone eggs before the Sea Harriers can. By paying the kraken off early, or by threatening to destroy the eggs, they can persuade it to leave, freeing the portal for reinforcements to come.

**Note:** This adventure is optional. It provides the Player Characters with a way to remove the threat of Omorogg without having to confront it in open combat. If the Player Characters would rather tackle Omorogg head-on once they are of sufficient level, that is up to them.

### Information: The Soul Eggs

The secret of the stones is that they contain the souls of the inhabitants of Lost Athul, a species of sentient tentacled bipeds, known as the Myrrik, who have now died out. The Myrrik worshipped the kraken as incarnate deities and the highest of all these kraken-gods was Omorogg.

The magicians of the Myrrik knew that Lost Athul would be destroyed long before it happened and realised that if they were to attempt evacuation, their enemies would pursue and destroy them. There was nowhere on the planet they could hide with their power base destroyed.

Instead they decided on a magical subterfuge. When the cataclysm approached, their spirits took refuge in magical soul-stones and abandoned their physical bodies. The kraken yearns for the time when it was worshipped, and thus craves the stones in the hope of re-establishing its people once again.

If the Player Characters give the stones back to Omorogg, it will be able to hatch its plot and the souls of the Myrrik will begin to force their way into human vessels.

### Non-Player Character Group: The Guardians of Lost Athul

Sunspite's journal mentions terrible sea-beasts, the guardians of the sunken island, whose role is to prevent the kraken from ever returning to their former home and re-establishing their civilisation.

#### The Chihulli

The most terrible of these guardians are the *chihulli*, jellyfish-like creatures the size of small islands, who drift in the silent waters around the drowned city, almost invisible despite their size because of their glassy transparency. Ships pass by overhead without ever knowing that creatures larger than whales are but a few fathoms below them.

The chihulli are utterly hostile to krakens and attack any kraken on sight with murderous ferocity until it is dead or driven off. Any other creature is safe so long as it does not approach the ruins; if it does so, the chihulli move to block its path and attack it if it does not move away again.

#### Chihulli

**Colossal Magical Beast (Aquatic)**

**Hit Dice:** 30d10+300 (465 hp)

**Initiative:** -2

**Speed:** Swim 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Armour Class:** 26 (-8 size, -2 Dex, +26 natural), touch 0, flat-footed 26

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +30/+62

**Attack:** Tentacle +39 melee (3d8+16 plus paralysis)

**Full Attack:** 6 tentacles +39 melee (3d8+16 plus paralysis)

**Space/Reach:** 30 ft./60 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Engulf, improved grab, paralysis

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight 120 ft., damage reduction 30/blunt and adamantine, fast healing 15, immunity to acid, resistance to fire, cold and electricity 30, spell resistance 32, water transparency

**Saves:** Fort +27, Ref +15, Will +11

**Abilities:** Str 42, Dex 6, Con 30, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Hide +2, Swim +37

**Feats:** Ability Focus (paralysis), Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Natural Armour, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle), Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

**Environment:** Temperate aquatic (Lost Athul)

**Organisation:** Solitary or patrol (2-4)



**Challenge Rating:** 18

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always lawful neutral

**Advancement:** 31–60 HD (Colossal)

**Level Adjustment:** —

The origin of the chihulli is not in doubt. They were purposefully bred to defend Lost Athul against the return of its former masters. A group of archmagi working in the laboratories of Xoth Sarandi crossbred jellyfish with fragile sentient water-intelligences from other planes, tinkered with experimental alchemical steeping tablets, shrugged and dropped them into the breeding vats, infused the pulsing result with reliable growth vibrations and so produced these monstrous creatures.

Chihulli are barely visible in their watery environment. Onlookers can only discern the vague, glossy shape of something immense and roughly spherical from whose body hang trailing tentacles.

An opponent can make sunder attempts against a chihulli's tentacles as if they were weapons. A chihulli's tentacles have 30 hit points. If the creature is currently grappling a target with one tentacle, it usually uses another limb to make its attack of opportunity against the sunder attempt. Severing a chihulli's tentacle deals damage to the creature equal to half the limb's full normal hit points. A chihulli regrows severed limbs in 1d10+10 hours.

**Blindsight (Ex):** The chihulli, despite their tough hides, are extremely sensitive to vibrations in water. They notice creatures that are within range in the same body of water as they are without having to make Spot or Listen checks. They cannot use this ability to discern creatures that are not also in water.

**Engulf (Ex):** The chihulli use their tentacles to transfer paralysed prey to their gullets. A chihulli can try to engulf a grabbed opponent of a smaller size than itself by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d8+16 points of crushing damage plus ten points of acid damage per round from the chihulli's gullet. The gullet does not cause paralysis; the chihulli's paralysing barbs are in its tentacles. An engulfed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gullet (AC 17). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A Colossal chihulli's gullet can hold two Huge, eight Large, 32 Medium, 128 Small, or 512 Tiny or smaller opponents.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the chihulli must hit with a tentacle attack. 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 can attempt to engulf the target on its next turn.

**Paralysis (Ex):** A chihulli's tentacles contain stinging barbs that have a paralysing effect on the victim (though this is not a poison effect). A creature struck for damage by a chihulli's tentacle attack must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 37) or be stricken with paralysis for 2d8+1 rounds. Krakens are especially vulnerable to this attack and suffer a –8 racial penalty to their saving throws against it.

**Water Transparency (Ex):** The chihulli are nearly invisible when immersed in water. While a chihulli is immersed it gains concealment, and attacks against it have a 20% miss chance. The chihulli must be completely submerged for this ability to take effect. If a chihulli has engulfed a visible victim who has not yet been completely absorbed, the effect of the water transparency is negated, as it can be located easily.

**Skills:** A chihulli has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## The Termador

The archmagi who created the chihulli and set them to guard Lost Athul knew that the krakens would try to send agents into the city who could bypass them. The chihulli were adequate to defend against the krakens, but they could easily miss smaller creatures. The archmagi thus created a group of smaller guardians, the *termador*, as a second line of defence. These will attack anything that comes close to the ruins.

### Termador

#### Large Construct

**Hit Dice:** 15d10+30 (112 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 40 ft.

**Armour Class:** 32 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +22 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 31

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +11/+27

**Attack:** Pincer +22 melee (1d6+12)

**Full Attack:** 2 pincers +22 melee (1d6+12)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./20 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Crush, improved grab, spell-like abilities, *stunning pulse*, thicken water

**Special Qualities:** Amphibious, construct traits, damage reduction 15/chaotic, darkvision 60 ft., defensive armouring, fast healing 10, low-light vision, spell resistance 25, telepathy 100 ft., true seeing

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 35, Dex 13, Con —, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 18

**Skills:** Climb +18, Diplomacy +7, Hide +6, Listen +11, Move Silently +7, Search +7, Spot +11, Sense Motive +9, Swim +20, Use Rope +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Great Fortitude

**Environment:** Any aquatic and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 14

**Treasure:** —

**Alignment:** Always lawful neutral

**Advancement:** 16–28 HD (Large); 29–45 HD (Huge)

**Level Adjustment:** —

From the back, these creatures resemble mechanical lobsters made from beaten bronze, standing nine feet tall. When viewed from the front, a mask-like human face and glowing blue eyes can be seen beneath the armoured shell, as if a person were wearing a suit of lobster-like armour. The creature has a set of human arms beneath its lobster claws, which it uses for tasks that require fine manipulation. The lobster claws have a far greater reach than is immediately apparent. The bronze arms telescope out, allowing the creature to snatch up trespassers.

Powerful magicians appoint the termador to guard underwater locations. When possible, they disable

rather than kill intruders. Termador use their *feblemind* spell-like abilities to turn intruders into docile morons, then eradicate their memories of ever having been to the location with their *modify memory* ability. Those who have encountered the termador – often shipwrecked sailors or treasure seekers – find themselves adrift at sea with no memory of what they have just been through or how they got to where they are now.

*Amphibious:* Though it is designed for underwater duty, a termador functions as well on land as it does beneath the sea.

*Crush (Ex):* A termador deals 1d6+18 damage with a successful Grapple check.

*Defensive Armouring (Ex):* A termador's jointed armour plates allow it to roll itself up into a ball, protecting itself from harm and allowing it to heal. It does this if it takes too much damage in combat and has no easy way to retreat. A termador can ball up or return to normal as a move action. While balled up, it gains a +8 natural armour bonus to its Armour Class and a +2 resistance bonus to Fortitude saving throws, and its fast healing ability increases from 10 to 15. However, it can take no actions at all other than to uncoil itself.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, the termador must hit with a pincer attack. 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 can crush the target.


*Spell-like Abilities:* At will, as 14<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer – *feblemind* (DC 19), *modify memory* (DC 18); 3/day – *wall of iron*, 1/day – *telekinetic sphere*. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

*Stunning Pulse (Sp):* A termador disables its opponents by generating a thumping pulse of sound that hammers the water in front of it in a cone 60 feet wide at the base. It does this as a standard action. All creatures in the area of effect suffer 6d6 points of sonic damage, with a Reflex saving throw (DC 21) for half damage. Affected creatures must also make Fortitude saving throws (DC 21) or be *dazed* for one round. Once a termador has used its *stunning pulse*, it cannot use it again for 1d4 rounds. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

*Telepathy (Su):* Termador can communicate with one another over distances of up to 100 feet. They cannot use this ability to communicate with creatures other than termador.







*Thicken Water (Su):* The termador continually emanates a 30-foot-radius spherical field of magical energy that has a peculiar effect upon water. All creatures other than termador find the water in the area of effect to be thick as honey. It costs one additional square of movement to enter any square within the affected region. This ability is always on and requires no concentration, though it cannot be sustained if the termador balls itself up (see defensive armouring above).

*True Seeing (Su):* A termador sees with *true seeing* constantly, as per the spell.

## Spectres of the Myrrik

When the city sank, not all of the Myrrik were saved. Out of tens of thousands of inhabitants, only five hundred – the elite of the elite – qualified for soul preservation. The others were drowned, insane with terror and fired with hatred both for the elven archmagi who had condemned them and for their own leaders for allowing them to die.

The green ghosts of Myrrik citizens still walk the streets of Lost Athul as if the city had never sunk. The termador and the chihulli ignore them and are ignored in return. In the darkness beneath the waves, the sun never troubles a spectre. Now that the city is suddenly hauled back to the surface, the spectres' quiet dream is torn apart. If Lost Athul is raised during the day, the spectres flee into the dark shelter of the buildings as the city rises. At night their glowing forms move through the streets just as they always have done.

For narrative purposes it is best if the city rises during the day, with the spectres emerging at night. However, the Games Master should allow events to play out as the Player Characters' choices dictate.

**Myrrik Spectres:** CR 9; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 14d12; hp 91; Init +7; Spd 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +7; Grp —; Atk +11 melee (1d8 plus energy drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8 plus energy drain, 2 incorporeal touches); SA create spawn, energy drain; SQ +2 turn resistance, darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, sunlight powerlessness, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +11; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18.

*Skills & Feats:* Hide +20, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (religion) +19, Listen +21, Search +14, Spot +21, Survival +7 (+9 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch).

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a spectre's incorporeal touch attack gain two negative levels. A Fortitude saving throw (DC 21) removes a negative level. For each such negative level bestowed, the spectre gains five temporary hit points. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid slain by a spectre becomes a spectre in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the spectre that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

*Unnatural Aura (Su):* Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

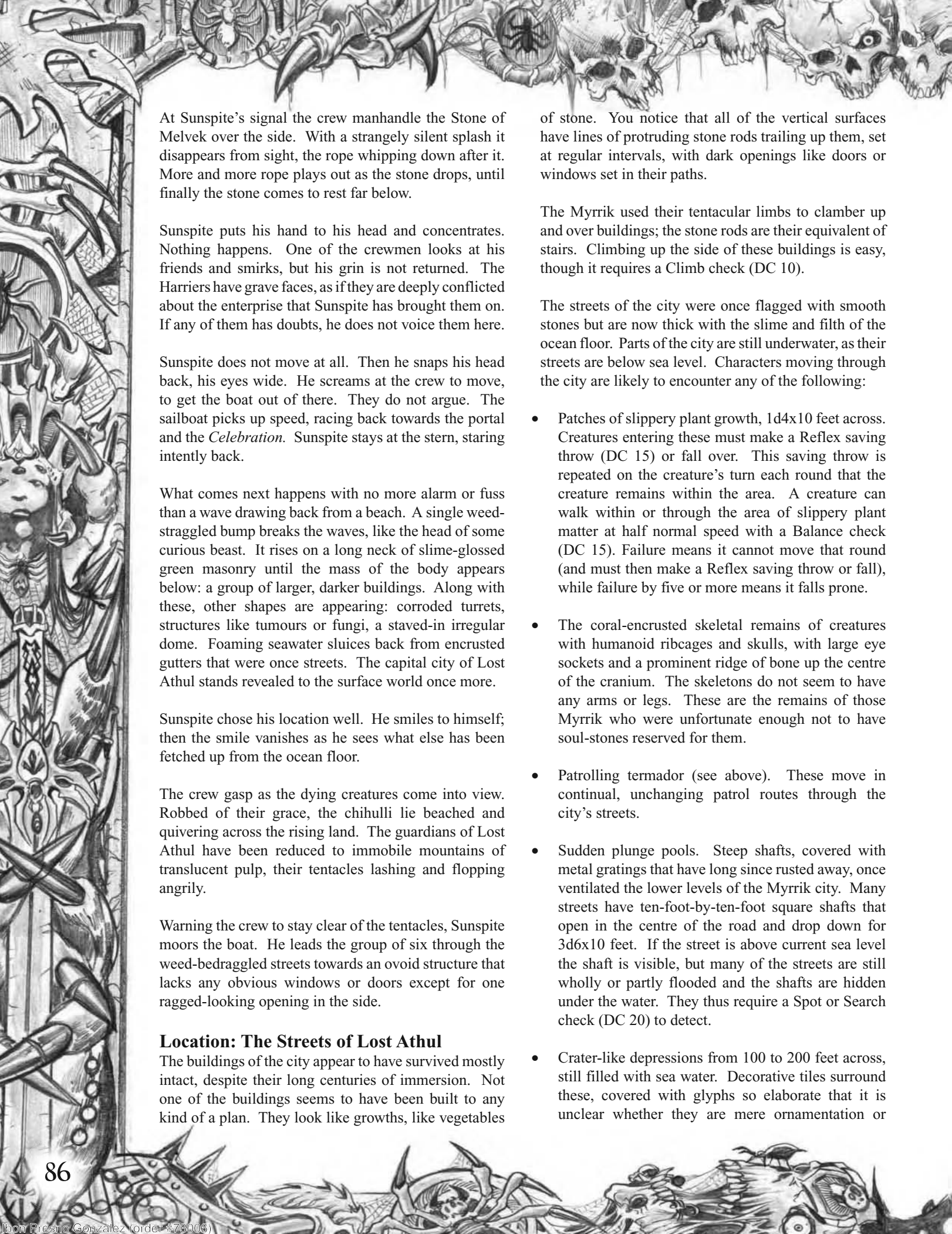
*Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex):* Spectres are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action in a round.

The Myrrik spectres are the Player Characters' only clue as to what the original city inhabitants looked like, and these are misty and incorporeal. They have huge unblinking eyes, broad nostrils, large head crests that continue down their backs, oddly human-like torsos and leathery tentacles where their arms and legs would be. They move by grabbing objects and hauling themselves along, slithering over horizontal and vertical surfaces with equal ease. Oddly, the Myrrik have no gills, and so should not have been able to survive in water. They were not a true aquatic race, though they were expert swimmers.

## Event: The Rise of Lost Athul

The following event may or may not be witnessed by the Player Characters. Even if they are not physically present, they may attempt to *scry* it to find out what is going on.

As they near the region where Lost Athul sank, Sunspite (if he is present) warns the Sea Harriers to stay well back. He explains curtly that if the island rises directly beneath the *Celebration*, the ship will be trapped. Leaving the *Celebration* stationed by the sea-portal, just in case any meddlers try to use it to disrupt the operation, Sunspite takes a small sailboat and a crew of six into the centre of the target region. The Stone of Melvek lies amidships in a rope cradle, ready to be lowered into the sea. Sunspite is not certain that he has the location right and will have the stone hauled back if anything goes wrong.



At Sunspite's signal the crew manhandle the Stone of Melvek over the side. With a strangely silent splash it disappears from sight, the rope whipping down after it. More and more rope plays out as the stone drops, until finally the stone comes to rest far below.

Sunspite puts his hand to his head and concentrates. Nothing happens. One of the crewmen looks at his friends and smirks, but his grin is not returned. The Harriers have grave faces, as if they are deeply conflicted about the enterprise that Sunspite has brought them on. If any of them has doubts, he does not voice them here.

Sunspite does not move at all. Then he snaps his head back, his eyes wide. He screams at the crew to move, to get the boat out of there. They do not argue. The sailboat picks up speed, racing back towards the portal and the *Celebration*. Sunspite stays at the stern, staring intently back.

What comes next happens with no more alarm or fuss than a wave drawing back from a beach. A single weed-straggled bump breaks the waves, like the head of some curious beast. It rises on a long neck of slime-glossed green masonry until the mass of the body appears below: a group of larger, darker buildings. Along with these, other shapes are appearing: corroded turrets, structures like tumours or fungi, a staved-in irregular dome. Foaming seawater sluices back from encrusted gutters that were once streets. The capital city of Lost Athul stands revealed to the surface world once more.

Sunspite chose his location well. He smiles to himself; then the smile vanishes as he sees what else has been fetched up from the ocean floor.

The crew gasp as the dying creatures come into view. Robbed of their grace, the chihulli lie beached and quivering across the rising land. The guardians of Lost Athul have been reduced to immobile mountains of translucent pulp, their tentacles lashing and flopping angrily.

Warning the crew to stay clear of the tentacles, Sunspite moors the boat. He leads the group of six through the weed-bedraggled streets towards an ovoid structure that lacks any obvious windows or doors except for one ragged-looking opening in the side.

### **Location: The Streets of Lost Athul**


The buildings of the city appear to have survived mostly intact, despite their long centuries of immersion. Not one of the buildings seems to have been built to any kind of a plan. They look like growths, like vegetables

of stone. You notice that all of the vertical surfaces have lines of protruding stone rods trailing up them, set at regular intervals, with dark openings like doors or windows set in their paths.

The Myrrik used their tentacular limbs to clamber up and over buildings; the stone rods are their equivalent of stairs. Climbing up the side of these buildings is easy, though it requires a Climb check (DC 10).

The streets of the city were once flagged with smooth stones but are now thick with the slime and filth of the ocean floor. Parts of the city are still underwater, as their streets are below sea level. Characters moving through the city are likely to encounter any of the following:

- Patches of slippery plant growth, 1d4x10 feet across. Creatures entering these must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) or fall over. This saving throw is repeated on the creature's turn each round that the creature remains within the area. A creature can walk within or through the area of slippery plant matter at half normal speed with a Balance check (DC 15). Failure means it cannot move that round (and must then make a Reflex saving throw or fall), while failure by five or more means it falls prone.
- The coral-encrusted skeletal remains of creatures with humanoid ribcages and skulls, with large eye sockets and a prominent ridge of bone up the centre of the cranium. The skeletons do not seem to have any arms or legs. These are the remains of those Myrrik who were unfortunate enough not to have soul-stones reserved for them.
- Patrolling termador (see above). These move in continual, unchanging patrol routes through the city's streets.
- Sudden plunge pools. Steep shafts, covered with metal gratings that have long since rusted away, once ventilated the lower levels of the Myrrik city. Many streets have ten-foot-by-ten-foot square shafts that open in the centre of the road and drop down for 3d6x10 feet. If the street is above current sea level the shaft is visible, but many of the streets are still wholly or partly flooded and the shafts are hidden under the water. They thus require a Spot or Search check (DC 20) to detect.
- Crater-like depressions from 100 to 200 feet across, still filled with sea water. Decorative tiles surround these, covered with glyphs so elaborate that it is unclear whether they are mere ornamentation or



some kind of script. A Decipher Script skill check (DC 30) gleans that these are hymns of praise to the kraken-gods. The craters were temple-pools, where Lost Athul's living gods could receive sacrifices and adoration from their hysterical followers.

Each crater has a walkway leading into the centre. This is the point where the high priest would stand in order to petition the kraken. The pools are currently empty, though at the Games Master's discretion, one of the chihulli might have been caught in one and spared the fate of its unfortunate fellows.

### Location: The Tower of Scollub

*This tower is as bulbous and twisted as a root ripped from the earth. At its top it widens out like the bell of a crocus. Incongruously, a hempen rope dangles down from it.*

This ugly structure is the first part of Lost Athul to break the surface. The Stone of Melvek is caught on top of it, leaning against the tower railing, with the rope trailing down beside it. A character can easily climb this rope to reach the tower top. Player Characters who hatch plans to send Lost Athul back to the ocean floor may try to reach the Stone of Melvek to destroy it or shut it down somehow. Currently the stone is keeping Lost Athul floating 1,000 feet above the seabed.

Sending Lost Athul back down below is a worthy goal, but if the Player Characters do so before they have fetched the soul-stones, they leave themselves with no way to rid Crom Calamar of Omorogg. Both Archimandrus and Azbeth urge the Player Characters to find the stones, both to prevent the Sea Harriers from getting them first and to give themselves a bargaining tool with the kraken.

Archimandrus adds the following additional note of caution: if Omorogg finds out that the Player Characters have interfered and denied him the stones he craves, then he will have a personal reason to oppose them. He might do a lot worse than simply blockading the portal. An angry kraken of his size and power could devastate a coastal town on his own if he chose – and he is bound to have allies, fellow kraken who also remember the days of being gods in Lost Athul.

### Location: The Sanctuary of Souls

The Sanctuary of Souls is the vaguely egg-shaped building that Sunspite is making for. In this vault, the Myrrik wizards transferred the souls of the most important members of the race into enchanted stone receptacles. They expected that one day their kraken

masters would return and free them. To that end they prepared stores of magical treasures, which they could claim and wield when their souls had entered new bodies.

As an additional failsafe, they prepared cunning magical traps that would render comatose any treasure-seeker who came poking around in the ruins, preparing him for the entry of the soul of a Myrrik wizard into his body. This fate is almost certain to befall Sunspite's crew and may well afflict one of the Player Characters, too, if they are not cautious...

### 1. Entrance

*The opening in the side of the structure is 30 feet up and has no platform, ramp or stairs. Instead, there is a line of stone protrusions, around a foot long, which lead up to it like rungs on a ladder. You can see from here that the gateway has evidently been barricaded from the inside. Clumps of some material like coral with bone fragments in it, or possibly compacted flesh, fill up the opening.*

If Sunspite has beaten the Player Characters here, the Games Master should add the following:

*A hole has been smashed in this barricade. Judging from the scattered debris, this happened recently.*

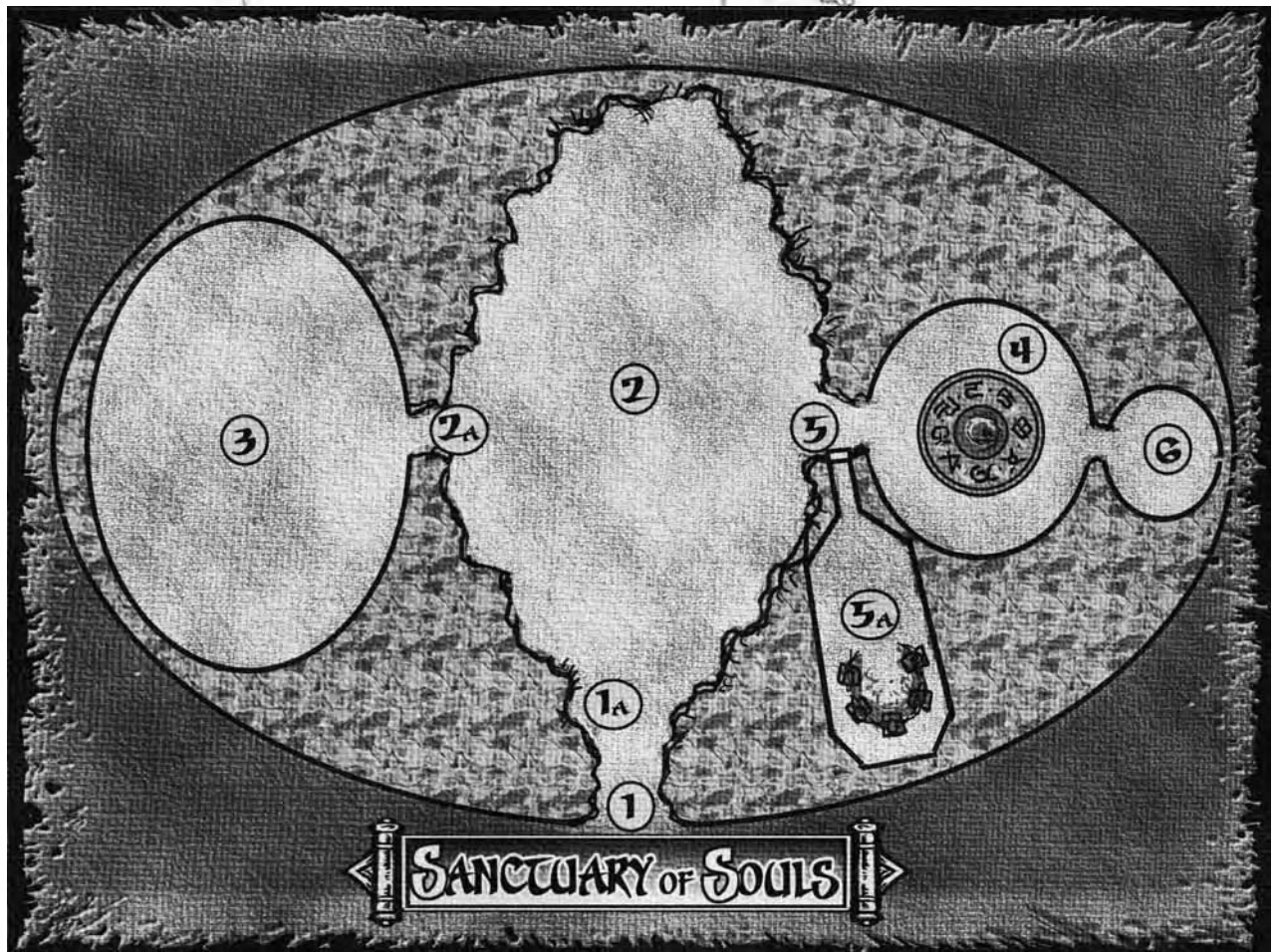
The corridors inside the Sanctuary all seem to be made from the same unpleasant coral-like substance. It is a suspiciously deep blood-red in colour and occasionally has pieces of white material in it that almost (but not quite) resemble bones and teeth. If that is what they are, then they have been severely deformed.

**1a:** At this point the Myrrik placed a powerful magical trap that would freeze any intruder in place. Myrrik and kraken are exempt from this effect. Simultaneously, the trap sends a signal to the Animus Operative in Area 3 to tell it that there are living beings in Lost Athul once again. When the trap is triggered, the Animus Operative hastens to the area (taking double moves each round) and examines the *held* creatures. If the souls it is carrying recognise any of them as worthy of occupancy, then it incapacitates them with its *feeblemind* ray. The foremost soul then attempts to possess the creature while the Animus Operative destroys its unneeded companions.

**Mass hold monster trap:** CR 10; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*mass hold monster*; 17<sup>th</sup> level wizard, Will saving throw (DC 23) negates); multiple targets (one or more)







creatures, no two of which can be more than 30 feet apart); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

## 2. Ossuary

This chamber reeks of death – not just the foul fish-like stench of something that has lain rotting in the water for years but the stifling, sickly smell of embalming fluid or putrid flower petals. Before you there stretches a hallway with stone pews on either side, as if for some great assembly or church service. If so, it is a service for the dead, because the pews are full of limbless skeletons, hundreds of them, huddled against one another. They are clearly not the remains of humans, as their eye sockets gape wide enough for a man’s fist and their crania have a bony ridge like a shark’s fin.

From the sheer number of Myrrik skeletons in this room, one might think that there had been an act of mass ritual slaughter in the city’s final hours. In fact, the Myrrik in this chamber were more at peace than those left outside in the city streets. They waited patiently in their appointed places until the Animus Operative came for them. When their souls were transferred into the

stone eggs, their empty bodies simply collapsed and eventually starved to death.

**2a:** There is another magical trap here, this time a *mind fog* trap to soften up exploring creatures’ minds before they enter the Animus Operative’s chamber.


**Mind fog trap:** CR 6; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*mind fog*, 9<sup>th</sup> level wizard, Will saving throw (DC 17) negates); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

## 3. The Animus Operative

*This chamber must at one time have been a workshop. The soapstone workbenches covered with unrecognisable tools, twists of silvery wire and pieces of curved glass give you no indication of what was built here or why.*

If the Animus Operative has not already been encountered and destroyed, the Games Master should add the following:

*Patches of coloured light move up, across and down the walls. They are shining from the device that*



*hovers at the end of the room: a rotating framework of illuminated glass spheres around a central axis, like a magical planetarium. It emits a faint keening noise like the whining of a dog in pain.*

When the Myrrik began to plan for the devastation that they knew was coming, they met an unexpected problem. The souls needed to be transferred into safe receptacles that could survive the coming disaster, but who could they trust to carry this out? Furthermore, jealousy and rivalry was common – the first Myrrik to place his soul into an egg might be destroyed by a rival, once his original body was empty and powerless.

Any Myrrik wizard who volunteered to perform the necessary rituals for everyone else would save his brethren but would be destroyed in the cataclysm, since there would be nobody to preserve *his* soul. Not one of the evil, selfish creatures was willing to be the one left to die.

The solution was to build a unique construct imbued with the power to work the necessary magic. This being would harvest and store the souls, allowing all of the Myrrik wizards to survive. More: it would awaken if potential vessels came near, so that it could drain their souls and transfer Myrrik souls into the husks.

This construct, called the Animus Operative, has now awakened, sensing the presence of new life (either Sunspite's men or the Player Characters). They will be ideal vessels for the Myrrik to use.

The Operative uses the tools in the workshop to repair and maintain itself. This is how it has remained functional through the centuries since Lost Athul sank.

## **Animus Operative**

### **Large Construct**

**Hit Dice:** 14d10+30 (107 hp)

**Initiative:** +7

**Speed:** Fly 60 ft. (12 squares) (perfect)

**Armour Class:** 26 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +9 natural, +5 deflection), touch 17, flat-footed 23

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +10/+14

**Attack:** Tentacle +12 melee (1d6 plus 3d6 electrical)

**Full Attack:** 4 tentacles +12 melee (1d6 plus 3d6 electrical)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rays, shocking tendrils

**Special Qualities:** All-around vision, construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, deflection aura, energy immunity, spell resistance 25

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 17, Con —, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 20  
**Skills:** Bluff +19, Hide +14, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Listen +15, Search +17, Spot +15

**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (ray)

**Environment:** Any land and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 14

**Treasure:** —

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 15–28 HD (Large)

**Level Adjustment:** —

The Animus Operative resembles a collection of glass spheres hovering in the air, connected by filigree gold and silver threads. It is in constant motion, with an outer set of spheres rotating in one direction and an inner set rotating the other way. The inner spheres can be opened to store the stone eggs. Currently there are five of these inside the creature. At the core of the creature is a vertical metal cylinder, the axis of the Animus Operative.


It exudes limbs of twined metal from its axis when it needs to manipulate objects or attack foes. The assembly looks as fragile as a crystal goblet but is almost impervious to damage. It counts as a crystalline creature for the purposes of relevant spells and effects, such as *shatter* spells.

The Operative is able to recognise a Myrrik soul in a non-Myrrik body and refrains from attacking these. It carries out any instructions that are given to it by any of the five souls currently stored inside its body (once they have new bodies), though they must speak to it in the Myrrik language, as it does not understand any other.

*Deflection Aura (Su):* The nucleus of the Animus Operative emanates a field that confers a +5 deflection bonus to the creature's Armour Class.

*Energy Immunity (Su):* The Animus Operative is immune to all forms of energy damage, with the exception of sonic damage.

*Rays (Su):* So that it can carry out its duties of defending the Sanctuary and preparing new bodies for the Myrrik souls, the Animus Operative can emit a variety of magical rays, which resemble spells cast by a 14<sup>th</sup> level caster. These rays emerge from the various glassy outer spheres. The effects resemble spells but follow the rules for rays. It produces these rays as a free action. Resisting them requires a Charisma-based saving throw (DC 22). The Operative's ray attacks are +11 ranged touch attacks.



The rays are grouped in sets of two. Each set is confined to a 90-degree arc: forward, rear, left and right. The first ray that the Animus Operative fires at a target defines its orientation for that round. The rays are as follows:

#### Forward Arc

*Confusion:* The target must succeed on a Will saving throw or be affected as though by the spell. The Animus Operative uses this ray to get groups of adversaries used to their members behaving unpredictably, so that when one of them is possessed by a stored soul, their erratic behaviour can be blamed on lingering confusion.

*Disintegration:* The target must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw or be affected as though by this spell. The Operative uses the ray on opponents it believes would be useless, or at least non-optimal, as possession candidates.

#### Rear Arc

*Dispel Magic:* The Animus Operative uses this ray to remove a target's magical defences, in particular protection from evil, which would prevent the souls it carries from being able to possess a target.

*Enervation:* A creature struck by this ray is affected by enervation as per the spell. Every negative level bestowed on the target creature grants five temporary hit points to the Animus Operative. It uses this ray to repair itself and to weaken potential victims before soul transfer.

#### Left Arc

*Exhaustion:* The target of this ray must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw or become exhausted. Creatures that succeed on their saving throws are merely fatigued. The Operative employs this ray to prevent victims from running away.

*Hold Person:* A creature hit by this ray must make a Will saving throw or be affected as if by the spell. The Operative uses this ray to paralyse targets prior to a possession attempt.

#### Right Arc

*Repulsion:* A creature struck by the repulsion ray must make a Will saving throw or be affected as if it had entered the field of a repulsion spell. The Operative uses this ray to keep dangerous opponents at range so that it can bring its more deadly rays to bear against them.

*Feeblemind:* A creature struck by the feeblemind ray must make a Will saving throw or have its mind enfeebled as if by the spell. The Operative reserves the use of this ray for spellcasters whom it wants to strip of their abilities or possession targets whose Will saving throw modifiers it wants to obliterate. A feeble-minded

character whose soul is transferred into a storage stone remains feeble-minded while he is in there.

**Shocking Tendrils (Su):** The creature's tentacles deal 3d6 points of electrical damage with a successful hit. In addition, the target must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) or be stunned for one round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Soul Transfusion:* The Animus Operative is designed to hold five soul storage eggs, which function in the same way that a *magic jar* does (see below). When the Animus Operative comes within range of a potential target (the range for these souls is 130 feet), the first Myrrik wizard soul within the eggs can attempt to possess a victim, forcing its soul into the receptacles (see the *magic jar* spell for more details). Souls stored inside the Animus Operative act on the Operative's initiative count.

The souls inside these eggs have an additional advantage. They can see and hear what the Animus Operative itself sees and hears, so they can choose which targets they would prefer to occupy. They cannot, however, use its Spot and Listen skills actively, nor do they use their own ability score modifiers. They simply have the information relayed to them.

One of the souls is 'first in line' and this one can communicate with the Operative and give it instructions, such as 'destroy the big one with the axe, but paralyse the one with the spellbook'. Once that soul has left its egg, another one is freed to communicate with the Operative. Only the soul that is first in line can attempt to possess a target. The souls in the other eggs must wait until it has left before the next of them can make an attempt. If the soul that is first in line fails to possess any of the available targets, it cannot step out of sequence and let another soul try.

**Typical Myrrik Wizard Souls, Myrrik Wiz13:** CR 13; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 13d4; hp 32; Init +0; Spd 0 ft; AC n/a; Base Atk +6; Grp —; Atk —; Full Atk —; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +9; Str —, Dex —, Con —, Int 20, Wis 12, Cha 17.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +11, Concentration +16, Decipher Script +13, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (history) +13, Search +10, Spellcraft +15, Swim +8; Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Enlarge Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Necromancy), Spell Mastery (*magic jar*).





## The Soul-Stones

As the world of Ashfar has no magical means for anyone to return from the dead (with the exceptions of the Host and the Starborn), people are constantly seeking for ways to extend life and cheat death. The wizards of the Myrrik created the soul-stones as their answer to the problem. It was a desperate, last minute solution but may yet prove to have saved one of the most evil civilisations ever known.

A soul-stone is around the size of an ostrich egg, green in colour, faintly translucent and uncomfortably warm to the touch. A band of runes runs round the middle. These magical glyphs identify the Myrrik whose soul is housed in the stone. The eggs must be prepared for one individual. Only the person named on the egg may use it as a storage receptacle for his soul.

The stones have the power to preserve souls. When a spellcaster uses *magic jar* to move his soul into the stone, the time limit on the spell is suspended. The soul can remain within the stone indefinitely. Even if the body dies, the soul is not compelled to leave the egg.

A soul within a soul-stone can sense and attack life forms that come within range, exactly as described in the *magic jar* spell. In addition, if the soul-stone is installed into an Animus Operative (see above), the soul can see and hear what the Operative sees and hears, allowing it to choose the target it wishes to possess with much more precision.

*Spells prepared (4/5/5/5/5/4/2/1, save DC 15 + spell level): 0<sup>th</sup> – detect magic, light, message, read magic; 1<sup>st</sup> – cause fear, comprehend languages, disguise self, obscuring mist, shield; 2<sup>nd</sup> – alter self, false life, fox's cunning, ghoulish touch, invisibility; 3<sup>rd</sup> – blink, nondetection, suggestion, tongues, water breathing; 4<sup>th</sup> – animate dead, dimension door, fear, greater invisibility, scrying; 5<sup>th</sup> – contact other plane, dominate person, magic jar (cast), symbol of pain; 6<sup>th</sup> – circle of death, true seeing; 7<sup>th</sup> – finger of death.*

Attempting to possess a body is a full-round action. It is blocked by *protection from evil* or a similar ward. The Myrrik wizard possesses the body and forces the creature's soul into the stone egg from whence it came unless the subject succeeds on a Will saving throw (DC 21). Failure to take over the host leaves the Myrrik life force in the stone egg. The target automatically

succeeds on further saving throws if the same Myrrik wizard attempts to possess its body again.

If the Myrrik is successful, its life force occupies the host body and the host's life force is imprisoned in the stone egg. The Myrrik wizard retains its Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, level, class, base attack bonus, base save bonuses, alignment and mental abilities. It also brings with it any spells that it had prepared. The body retains its Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, hit points, natural abilities and automatic abilities. A body with extra limbs does not allow the Myrrik to make more attacks (or more advantageous two-weapon attacks) than normal. It cannot choose to activate the body's extraordinary or supernatural abilities. The creature's spells and spell-like abilities do not stay with the body.

**The Workbenches:** Nothing on the benches is of value. A Search check (DC 30) detects a tiny piece of crooked silver wire bent into a strangely regular pattern. This is the key to the lock bypass that disables the crushing wall trap at Location 5.

## Increasing the Challenge

If the Player Characters are already higher than 14<sup>th</sup> level by this stage, the Games Master should introduce a second Animus Operative but should not have it attack at the same time as the first. The second Operative waits inside the sealed inner sanctuary.

## 4. The Inner Sanctuary

*This circular room has a single pillar in the centre. Its sides are honeycombed with hexagonal hollows. In each one, a green stone egg rests on some kind of spongy substance. A circle, marked with mystical signs and words in an arcane script, surrounds the pillar on the floor beneath.*

A Spellcraft skill check (DC 18) identifies the circle as some permanent variant of a *magic circle of protection against evil*, with the protection turned inward in order to confine what is placed inside. The Myrrik were distrustful of their brethren and wanted to make sure that when the five chief souls were free and came to free the others, they would not be attacked and possessed. They built the confinement circle in order to keep the 495 other souls securely within their eggs until there were enough bodies for all.

The circle is effectively a magic item, whose creator was 13<sup>th</sup> caster level. Any character foolish enough to step over the circle without a suitable ward (such as *protection from evil*) is immediately exposed to 4d6 possession attempts from the congeries of souls.



### Possessed By a Myrrik

It is quite likely that one or more of the Player Characters will end up temporarily possessed by a Myrrik wizard. Depending on how the player feels, the Games Master should either run the character as a Non-Player Character while the possession lasts, or pass a note to the affected player to tell him what has happened.

Taking the character over as a Non-Player Character immediately alerts the players that something is wrong. It is easier to play this way, but it makes for a much more enjoyable game session (and plenty of paranoia among the Player Characters) if the player roleplays it out. Some players will not be comfortable doing this, so be ready with a fallback plan.

The following guidelines are provided to help the Games Master or player decide how the possessed character behaves:

The Myrrik wizard is highly intelligent and is not about to give up his one and only chance to re-establish his people. Immediately upon being possessed, he will pretend to fall unconscious or to be *confused*, depending on what the Player Character was doing immediately prior to the possession. He will then pretend to be *feble-minded*, using his time to study the other Player Characters and find out what sort of people they are. As soon as he has a chance, he will cast *comprehend languages* so that he can understand what the Player Characters are saying.

The Myrrik's first goal is to have as many characters possessed by fellow Myrrik as possible. He will be as subtle as he can in achieving this. If the Player Characters manage to destroy the Animus Operative, he will remove the stones from it and carry them around so that they can try to possess the other characters. If he needs to get rid of any of them, he will 'discover' the secret door at Location 5 and stand well back while those who attempt to open it are crushed. He can also cross the magic circle in Room 4 with impunity, since he is already possessed. This may encourage other characters to do the same.

The Myrrik will do his best to take no action that might be seen as suspicious or odd. If he can get away with doing nothing, then that is what he will do, blaming his inactivity on the effects of the Animus Operative's attacks. It has been a long, tedious imprisonment, but he can still wait a little longer before revealing who he is.

Any player who states that his character is observing the possessed person's actions closely may make a Sense Motive skill check (DC 20) to get a hunch that all is not quite right with him.

Similarly, if an egg is removed from the protective circle, its occupant will attempt to possess the nearest suitable creature.

In total, there are 495 stone eggs. Omorogg the Kraken has specified that it wants all of the eggs in the sanctuary, including the ones inside the Animus Operative.

The five lords of the Myrrik whose souls are stored inside the Animus Operative wanted to be sure they could reclaim their possessions once they had new bodies. To this end they created effigies of themselves on which they placed their magic items. These effigies would stand as defiant memorials (even if nobody ever saw them) and proclaim the undying pride of the Myrrik.

### 5. Secret Door

As the chamber beyond contains items of value that other Myrrik might try to steal, the door is better hidden and more secure than most. It is blended into the coral-like wall, making it very hard to detect; a Search check (DC 30) is required. It is also trapped. Attempting to open the door without first unlocking the hidden bypass causes this section of the wall to slam outwards, crushing the target against the far wall, instead of moving inwards.

**Crushing Wall Trap:** CR 16; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; hidden lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30, Search DC 25); multiple targets (all characters in 10-ft.-square section); attack +24 melee (18d6, crush); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.



## 5a. The Chamber of Regalia

Beyond the concealed door is a small chamber with flat, smooth walls, polished to a shine, unlike the rest of this strange edifice. Five statues stand in a semicircle facing the entrance. They resemble roughly humanoid creatures with large eyes and tentacles for limbs. The tentacles of each creature are entwined with the creature next to it.

The statues have been dressed in strange armour and decked out with weapons and other items. Whether these are offerings of some kind or part of some peculiar ritual, you cannot tell.

Although they were wizards, the Myrrik overlords had armour for ceremonial occasions. The characteristic Myrrik armour resembles a breastplate. It will not fit anything other than Myrrik anatomy. Each statue has a +4 breastplate that cannot be worn by any creature alive on the planet at present.

The other items are more useful. Characters who collect the gear from the statues can come away with the following:

Two *amulets of natural armour*, one +2, the other +4.  
Four *ioun stones* (dusty rose, scarlet and blue, dark blue, vibrant purple).  
A *circlet of persuasion*.  
A *cloak of resistance* +3.  
Two *metamagic rods* (silent and empower).  
A *wand of dispel magic* and one *wand of slow*, both with 50 charges.

## 6. The Altar of Consultation

In the centre of this domed chamber is a pedestal, on which is a glass dish. The dish is delicately and beautifully made, with scalloped edges and intricate patterns suggestive of marine plants. It looks out of place against such ugly surroundings.

The dish radiates a moderate aura of Necromantic magic. If the dish is filled with pure water and a soul-stone is placed in it, the occupant of the stone can communicate verbally. This item was used to ensure that the occupants of the soul-stones had survived the transference process.

### Aftermath

There are several ways this scenario can end. Sunspite may be alive or dead, the Player Characters may or may not have the stone eggs and Lost Athul may still be on the surface or it may have been returned to the sea. There is no incorrect way to play it.

Leaving the island with the stone eggs qualifies the Player Characters for a story award equivalent to a CR 14 encounter. If they also submerged Lost Athul once again, the Games Master should grant them an additional story award equal to defeating a CR 10 encounter.

**Storing the Stones:** The Games Master should bear in mind that the soul-stones are dangerous cargo to have on board a ship. If the Player Characters do not take precautions to protect the crew or ward the place where they are kept, their occupants will be free to make possession attempts against anyone within range. This could easily result in a whole ship full of reincarnated Myrrik. The best solution is to keep them on a separate plane by means of an item such as a *bag of holding* or a spell such as *secret chest*.

### Event: Bargaining with Omorogg

Once they have the soul-stones, the Player Characters can buy Omorogg off. The kraken is only attacking shipping because it wants its people back and trusts that Sunspite can get this done. It blusters and threatens but beneath all the bombast it is willing to do what is necessary to persuade the Player Characters to hand the stones over.

How this encounter proceeds is entirely down to how the Player Characters want to handle it. Some of the possible outcomes are detailed below:

- A straightforward approach – ‘we will give you the stones if you leave the portal’ – will work. Omorogg insists that the Player Characters must make the first move by giving over the stones. If they do so, the kraken takes its prize and submerges, leaving the passage to Crom Calamar clear once more. The problem with this solution is that the Player Characters have now allowed it to begin rebuilding one of the most evil civilisations ever seen on Ashfar. Reinforcements can now be sent to combat the drow but the price of this tactical advantage is high.
- The Player Characters may try to lure the kraken into a trap, with the promise of the soul-stones as bait. This can be a thrilling way to play out the encounter. Omorogg is a CR 16 creature, higher than the Player Characters can safely face in the first half of the adventure, so attempts to trap and kill it will probably require the help of numerous allies. The problem then arises of where to find them. If the Player Characters are on good terms with the current ruler of Caldrazza following the events of *Book One*, then they can recruit a small force to help (up to 500 1<sup>st</sup> level warriors). Otherwise they will have to wait





until they have been to Xoth Sarandi, where they can ask any friendly nation for military assistance. See the next chapter for details.

- Omorogg is suspicious of anything other than a straightforward deal. If it believes that the Player Characters are trying to trick it, it may decide to attack them and claim the stones from the wreck of their ship. Its arrogance and desire to be worshipped are more likely to win out though, so it will cooperate with them so long as doing so does not put it in an obviously vulnerable position.
- Refusing to give Omorogg the stones straight away, for *any* reason, angers it. If the Player Characters have not taken steps to ensure that Omorogg *cannot* simply help itself to the stones, it tries to take them.
- The Player Characters may opt to skip diplomacy altogether and just go for an all-out fight. Equally, the kraken may lose patience and decide that it would be simpler just to take the stones by force. In this case, Omorogg dives underwater and uses its reach to attack the underside of the Player Characters' ship (if they have one). It tries to keep the fight in the water as much as it can, since that terrain is most advantageous to it. This means retreating into the depths and forcing the Player Characters to come after it.
- If the Games Master thinks that the Player Characters can handle it, he can have Omorogg attack them once it has the stones, purely out of malice and pride. It has deeply resented being made into a sentry for a bunch of pathetic air-breathers; humans and drow alike.

### If Omorogg Is Not Frightening Enough

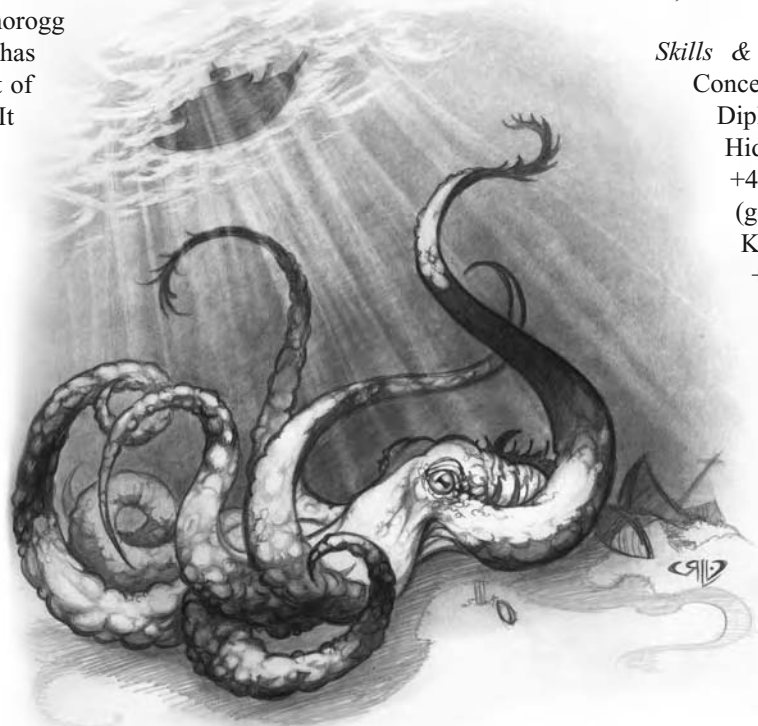
Omorogg is meant to be a major adversary who cannot be dealt with by the usual approach of swords and spells. The Player Characters should not have a single obvious way to handle the


situation and if Omorogg does not appear as enough of a threat they will simply shrug and attempt to slay him themselves instead of bothering with the Lost Athul adventure. Moreover, they may gain so much experience and power by going off and having other adventures that by the time they come to confront Omorogg they actually have a good chance of prevailing against him.

If the Games Master needs to make Omorogg a more daunting opponent, the half-fiend version described below can be used instead of that on page 30. The idea is not to force the Player Characters to take the route of diplomacy instead of combat; it is to make Omorogg enough of a challenge that combat is not the *obvious* solution.

**Omorogg, Kraken (half-fiend):** CR 19; Colossal outsider (aquatic, native); HD 33d10+396; hp 577; Init +6; Spd swim 20 ft.; AC 25, touch 4, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +33; Grp +67; Atk +43 melee (3d8+18/19–20, tentacle); Full Atk +43 melee (3d8+18/19–20, 2 tentacles) and +41 melee (1d8+9, 6 arms) and +41 melee (6d6+9, bite); Space/Reach 30 ft./20 ft. (80 ft. with tentacle, 40 ft. with arm); SA constrict 3d8+16 or 1d8+8, improved grab, smite good; SQ damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to poison, ink cloud, jet, low-light vision, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10 and fire 10, spell-like abilities, spell resistance 35; AL NE; SV Fort +30, Ref +20, Will +18; Str 46, Dex 14, Con 35, Int 25, Wis 20, Cha 25.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +25, Concentration +47, Diplomacy +43, Hide +22, Intimidate +43, Knowledge (geography) +43, Knowledge (history) +43, Knowledge (nature) +25, Listen +41, Search +43, Sense Motive +41, Spot +41, Survival +41 (+43 following tracks), Swim +54, Use Magic Device +43;





Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armour, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack.

An opponent can make sunder attempts against Omorogg's tentacles or arms as if they were weapons. Omorogg's tentacles have 33 hit points and its arms have 16 hit points. If Omorogg is currently grappling a target with one tentacle or arm, it usually uses another limb to make its attack of opportunity against the sunder attempt. Severing Omorogg's tentacle or arm deals damage to it equal to half the limb's full normal hit points. Omorogg withdraws from combat if it loses both tentacles or three of its arms. Omorogg regrows severed limbs in 1d10+10 days.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, Omorogg must hit with an arm or tentacle attack. 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 can constrict.

*Constrict (Ex):* Omorogg deals automatic arm or tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

*Jet (Ex):* Omorogg can jet backward once per round as a full-round action, at a speed of 280 feet. It must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting.

*Ink Cloud (Ex):* Omorogg can emit a cloud of jet-black ink in an 80-foot spread once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment, which Omorogg uses to escape a fight that is going badly. Creatures within the cloud are considered to be in darkness.

*Smite Good (Su):* Once per day, Omorogg can make a normal melee attack to deal +20 damage against a good foe.

*Spell-like abilities:* 1/day – *control weather, control winds, dominate animal* (DC 19), *resist energy*. Caster level is 9<sup>th</sup>. Omorogg also has the following spell-like abilities from being a half-fiend: 3/day – *darkness, poison, unhallow, unholy aura*; 1/day – *blasphemy, contagion, desecrate, destruction, horrid wilting, summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow, unholy blight*. The caster level for these abilities is 33<sup>rd</sup> and the saving throw DC against them is 32.

*Skills:* Omorogg has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even

if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

*Equipment & Treasure:* See below.

This version of Omorogg is the spawn of a female kraken and a colossal marine demon from the Flaming Sea, the topmost level of the Infernum. Its hybrid nature is obvious; it is a brilliant scarlet in colour, with grotesque bat wings sprouting from its body. As Omorogg does not have a land speed, these wings are useless for flight.

### **Location: Omorogg's Lair**

It stands to reason that a monster as old and powerful as Omorogg must have a lair somewhere. Treasure-hungry Player Characters will no doubt conclude that while Omorogg is defending the sea-portal, its lair is undefended and can be raided. Krakens are known to amass large amounts of treasure, so a beast of Omorogg's stature must have heaps of gold hidden away somewhere.

If the Player Characters want to try their luck at raiding the kraken's home, they must first find out where it is. They can do this by means of a *legend lore* spell, or a Knowledge (history) or Bardic Knowledge check (DC 35). Even this only gives them an approximate location – 70 miles north-northeast of Lost Athul.

The kraken's lair is thousands of fathoms below the surface, where the water is pitch black and unbearably cold. A successful Search check (DC 35) is needed to locate the entrance to the lair. This is a boulder so vast that only something of Omorogg's size can move it. The kraken uses the boulder as a door, since it is the only creature for miles around strong enough to roll it away again. A Strength check (DC 32) is needed to move the boulder away from the door.

Omorogg does not really expect anyone to be snooping around in his lair and so has not fortified it beyond this. It does, however, *scry* on its home with Sunspite's *crystal ball* every night. If it discovers that the Player Characters are raiding his home, it becomes furious and goes out of its way to find and kill them.

The murky cave beyond the boulder contains 14,000 gold pieces, 250 platinum pieces, three star sapphire gems worth 3,000 gold pieces each, a golden idol of Omorogg as a deity (worth 4,000 gold pieces) and a single *pearl of the sirines*.



# Crossroads of the World

In this chapter, the Player Characters arrive at Xoth Sarandi, which has been an elven colony for over 2,000 years. Around the island, the elves have created huge magical gateways through which ships can reach distant lands. Thanks to their ingenious sorcery, a vessel and its cargo can move halfway around the world in the course of a single day.

At Xoth Sarandi, the Player Characters can meet with the High Council and with Archimandrus' conclave of wizards. They may learn the full truth of the Starborn for the first time: how the elven magicians, allied with Nuith, first channelled the souls of the stars into mortal bodies so there would be champions on Ashfar to oppose the Dark. They can also hear the origin legends of the drow, find out about their deities and their organisational structure and discover the reason for their assault on Jehannum.

Xoth Sarandi is also the location of the Halls of Concord, a critically important institution in the campaign. The Halls of Concord are where the ambassadors of the various nations of the world meet in order to discuss treaties, allegiances and wars. The Player Characters can use this building to talk to the direct representatives of heads of state, involving themselves deeply in the politics of Ashfar and the progress of the Drow War.

*Note:* This chapter's events are weighted towards roleplay and intrigue. There is some combat to be found but discussion and negotiation are much more important. This means that the Player Characters may not gain much experience from fighting. To compensate for this, story awards are given for the achievement of diplomatic objectives, whether combat was involved or not.

## Xoth Sarandi

There is no other place like this in the world. What other island is presided over by the most graceful and grave of races and yet boasts the most raucous taverns and overcrowded flophouses this side of Crescent City? Xoth Sarandi is like a mediaeval microcosm of the world, with the undisturbed paradise of the elves' dwellings at the centre falling away to the bustle and din of the market traders in the outer city, the internecine politics of the Halls of Concord, the brothels and inns

that never need to close and ultimately the darkness under the wharves where the dregs sleep.

Xoth Sarandi is crammed with disparate groups of people, forced to rub shoulders with one another. Gnome artisans play chess on pavement café tables with retired generals. Merchants prosper one day and are ruined the next, while their mistresses keep sailors company as they gamble away their pay in a haze of alcohol. Nobles hundreds of years old, who have seen empires rise and fall, pass by children in the streets who were born less than a mile away and will die without ever seeing another place than this.

### Xoth Sarandi

**Size:** Metropolis

**Population:** 55,000

**Racial Mix:** 45% elf, 35% human, 10% half-elf, 5% gnome, 5% other races

**GP Limit:** 150,000

**Power Centre 1:** The High Council of Xoth Sarandi (LN)

**Power Centre 2:** The House of Trade (N)

**Executive Authority:** Chief Constable Haveranti Brythna (Rgr 5/Arc 15)


### Information: Rumours in Xoth Sarandi

Player Characters can glean basic information about the city without needing to make a check, as it is common knowledge.

**Basic Information:** Xoth Sarandi is really two cities, an inner region for the elves and an outer region where all the other races mingle. It was not originally intended to be a city where people settled down and is more of a way station that has grown into a city over time. It is the richest city in the world but has some of the poorest people in its dockside regions: stranded travellers who were robbed and cannot afford to leave; stowaways who were discovered halfway through a sea journey and abandoned here; wharf brats of tavern prostitutes fathered by sailors; even bankrupt merchants who have been driven out of business by ruthless competitors.

- Xoth Sarandi's geographic centrality and its unique role as a global crossroads have made it a focal point for politics as well as trade. The Halls of Concord, which were originally assembly halls for non-elven





traders to discuss business, are now a place where delegates from the civilised nations can meet and decide where they stand with one another. The Halls of Concord are a microcosm in which feuding nations are represented by arguing ambassadors, while friendly nations settle major trade treaties over flagons of dwarven beer.

- Xoth Sarandi's wealth has come from the sea-portals, which cannot be used without the *portal keys*, special magical items that can only be obtained from the House of Trade.

**Rumours:** The information below can be gleaned with a Gather Information check. The check result determines the quality of information. A high check result also gives all the information that would have been gained from lower results.

- **10–14:** If you are anything other than an elf, then the best person to talk to if you need unofficial help is Maskin Tythe. He can be found at the Brazen Trumpet Inn on Barter Street. Maskin can find you pretty much anything you might need, for the right price. If he does not have it, he knows a man who does. No humans are allowed to set foot on the Bridge of Pure Blood. If you try it, they will shoot you.
- **15–20:** There is a new representative for Jehannum in the Halls of Concord. The old representative, Karil Sturvin, has been recalled back to Jehannum. Several people watched him leave; he was shouting insults at the elves and humans alike as he stormed down to the docks and on to a waiting ship. The new representative is a strange, sardonic bald man called Brexel who claims to speak for the 'lawful occupants of Jehannum', presumably these drow that have come and taken the place over seemingly overnight.
- **21–25:** There is great confusion in the Halls of Concord concerning the invasion of Jehannum. The delegates have reported back to their sovereigns, who are now deciding whether or not to recognise the drow as the rightful occupants of the country. A meeting has been scheduled for noon tomorrow, at which the nations will announce their positions on the drow occupation. When Brexel arrived in the city he was in the company of four silent companions dressed like theatrical performers or acrobats.

The High Council is in a state of denial about the massacres of drow non-combatants in Jehannum

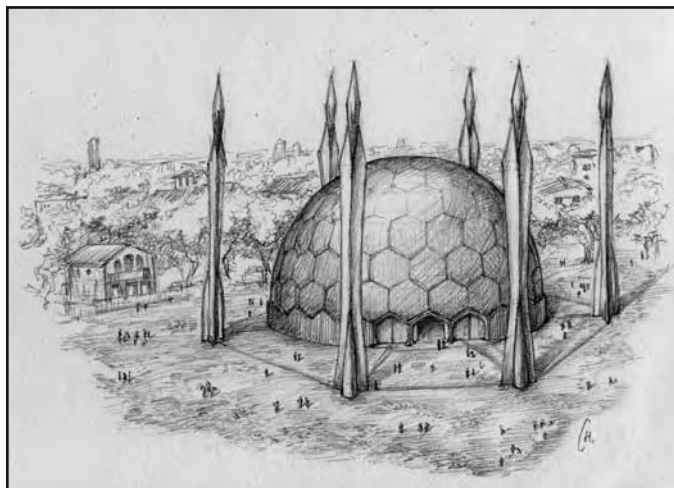
after the last Drow War. Although its members paid the humans of Jehannum to break their treaty with the drow, the official line is that no such action ever took place and that the council remained neutral throughout.

Brexel has been seen speaking with the ambassador for Kandang, a strange fellow who wears a white dragon mask and has vapour surrounding his body.

- **26–30:** A crate large enough to conceal an ogre was loaded onto one of the ships in the ambassadorial dock last night. The dockhand who saw it happen believes it was the personal galleon of the Kandang ambassador. The people who loaded the crate were definitely not regular dockworkers. They were dressed more like circus performers.
- **30+:** Karil Sturvin never left Xoth Sarandi. Brexel and his companions, the Shadow Troupe, murdered the former Jehannum ambassador. They dumped his body somewhere in the city where it would never be found. Brexel and Fangthane Barbiculus have made a private deal involving future drow support for an invasion of Valjinn.

A check result of five or less, or the whim of the Games Master, results in the following misinformation:

- The High Council of Xoth Sarandi are sponsors of a slave trade. They use the ambassadorial docks to exchange cargoes of captured human slaves for magic items. Nobody ever finds out, because the ambassadorial dock is private and closely guarded. The slaves end up back in Shallenoi, being forced to serve, just as they used to back when the elves had the whole world in their grasp.





## Non-Player Character Group: The Elven Guards

As Xoth Sarandi is an elven city and other races are not trusted with positions of authority, the guards are all members of the elf race. The majority of them are archers (see below) but the inner city has its own special guards who will also be dispatched to the outer city to deal with particularly serious threats. These are a band of elite archers who have also applied arcane study to their craft, training hard in the combat academy of General Vayne.

These troops are called the *territh rhi*, literally ‘shining host’, a name given to them because of the brilliance of their mithral armour. As they also wear unusual swept-back mithral helmets that cover the hair entirely and taper to a point, the humans have given them a less flattering name – the ‘coneheads’. Somewhere along the line this name was applied to the elven city watch as a whole. The phrase ‘don’t make me call for the coneheads’ is commonly heard in the taverns of the outer city, though very few people follow through on the threat.

**Typical Regular Guardsman, Elf Ftr6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10; hp 33; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +10 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+1/19–20; masterwork longsword) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite longbow) or +8/+8/+3 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite longbow); SQ elf traits; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +2, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +1, Jump +2, Ride +4, Swim +2; Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialisation (longbow).

*Possessions:* Arrows (20), elven chain, masterwork composite longbow, masterwork longsword.

**Typical Shining Host Guard (‘Conehead’), Elf Ftr6/Wiz1/Arc6:** CR 13; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+6 plus 1d4+1 plus 6d8+6; hp 75; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +12; Grp +14; Atk +15 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork short sword) or +22 ranged (1d8+7/19–20/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus) and +3 *enhanced arrow*); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork short sword) or +22/+17/+12 ranged (1d8+7/19–20/

x3, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus) and +3 *enhanced arrow*) or +20/+20/+15/+10 ranged (1d8+7/19–20/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus) and +3 *enhanced arrow*); SA *imbue arrow*, *phase arrow*, *seeker arrow*, spells; SQ elf traits; AL LN; SV Fort +11, Ref +12, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +6, Concentration +4, Handle Animal +4, Hide +13, Intimidate +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Ride +10, Spot +7, Swim +6, Use Rope +12; Dodge, Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Scribe Scroll, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialisation (longbow).

*Possessions:* +3 *enhanced arrows* (20), masterwork composite longbow, masterwork short sword, mithral shirt.

## Location: The Outer and Inner Cities


The districts in Xoth Sarandi are organised concentrically. The outermost district is entirely dockland, which yields to the low-class residential district, then the higher-class district, then the civic sector. The further towards the centre one moves, the larger and more widely spaced the buildings become and the cleaner the streets are. This is a bizarre reversal of the way cities usually work, in that the centre is usually the most congested region.

The main roads are like the spokes of a wheel, radiating out from the centre. These thoroughfares are 20 feet across and bear the brunt of the city’s traffic.

**The Outer City:** Xoth Sarandi’s outer city is much like any human metropolis: overbuilt, noisy, smelly and crowded. Apart from the main thoroughfares, the streets are narrow (five feet across is the norm) and full of traffic. The buildings are often built up to three storeys high so as to accommodate more people and are made from stone only at the bottom storey.

**The Molten Moat:** A circular moat 200 feet wide and 20 feet deep divides the outer city from the inner. This is filled to the brim with water on which a permanent and impressive illusion has been placed, giving it the appearance of liquid gold. Tradition has it that the elves have filled the moat with the melted-down riches they have extracted from other races over the millennia, though this is only a folk tale.

There is a ten-foot-wide border around the moat, beyond which pedestrians are not allowed to approach. This is



to keep them from throwing anything into it. Passers-by sometimes throw coins into the moat for luck, though this is a minor offence by the laws of the city, so they wait until the sentries look the other way first.

At the bottom of the moat is something more sinister than a coin. The body of Karil Sturvin, weighted down with cobblestones, lies concealed by the metallic liquid. The Shadow Troupe concealed themselves with magic and dumped the body here, knowing that nobody would look for it in such a well-guarded place.

**The Bridges:** There are two bridges spanning this divide, the Bridge of Fellowship and the Bridge of Pure Blood. While any person who has been invited to visit the inner city may use the Bridge of Fellowship, the Bridge of Pure Blood is for elves *only*. The six Shining Host sentinels at the bridge will not hesitate to shoot any non-elf who dares to take even one step on it, no matter who that person is.

**The Inner City:** Beyond the molten moat is a serene vista of marble buildings, green lawns set with sculptures and mirror-like pools of water. The elves have built their power centre entirely from polished white stone. Even the residences look like small temples. Even when the inner city is at its busiest, there is a meditative hush in the streets. Nobody seems to feel any need to yell or hurry. Humans are apt to find the place maddening. Its stillness is almost smug, proclaiming that the elves have all the time in the world.

The council chamber, a geodesic marble dome surrounded by obelisks, lies at the very heart of Xoth Sarandi.

### Location: The Sea-Portals

There are seven sea-portals in the ocean surrounding Xoth Sarandi. Physically, the portals look like gigantic stone gates made from two upright megaliths and one horizontal. The air in between the three megaliths shimmers like a mirage. The space in the centre of each gate is 80 feet wide and 120 feet tall, allowing almost all shipping to pass through easily. A permanent *repulsion* effect on the base of each vertical stone prevents ships from colliding with them. Ships that stray off course drift gently away from the stone pillar.

**Portal Keys:** A ship requires a special magic item called a *portal key* in order to make use of any given portal. A *portal key* is a twisted metal bar, shaped like a lightning rod, which is usually fixed to the ship's prow. Sailing through the portal automatically *teleports* the ship to the gate at the other end and burns one charge

from the *portal key*. Each key only works on one ship at a time. For key purposes, a ship is defined as any marine vessel larger than a dinghy. A *portal key* can also be used to open the portal for one or more creatures (such as aquatic creatures that do not need ships), in which case up to ten creatures can use the key so long as no two of them are more than 30 feet apart.

The secrets of making the *portal keys* are kept within one elven family, the Heshimel, who have worked in service to the lords of Xoth Sarandi for more than a thousand years. *Portal keys* can be bought at their official outlet, the House of Trade overlooking the main port. As there is no way to use the portals other than by means of a key, the elves can charge whatever they like, though in practice they keep to the prices listed below.

Elven law restricts the sale of *portal keys* only to persons known to be of 'trustworthy standing'. In practice, this means that one can buy a key so long as one is not known to have been a pirate, raider, smuggler or similar undesirable. This law is supposed to keep the law-abiding sea community safe. Naturally there is a thriving black market in *portal keys*. If one cannot get a key from the official supplier, one may be able to find someone in a dockside tavern who is willing to part with one; but be warned – scams are common and many a would-be smuggler has ended up with a bent poker with *magic aura* cast on it instead of the *portal key* he thought he was getting.

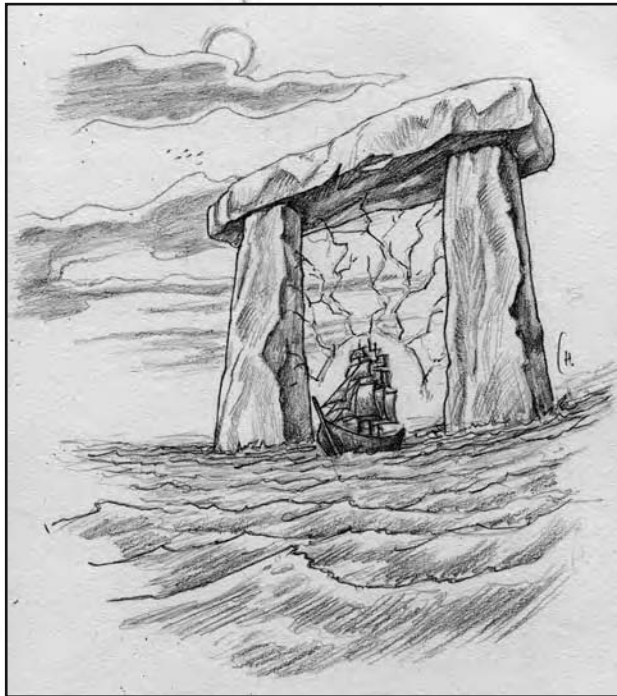
**Recharging Keys:** Instead of buying a new key every time, the old one can be recharged. This is what the merchants do but ordinary travellers usually prefer to buy a two-charge key (one charge for the trip to Xoth Sarandi, the second for the trip on to their final destination), which is the cheapest option and is called a *lesser portal key*.

**The Gate to Shallenoi:** Ordinary *portal keys* do not work on the Shallenoi Gate. The elves want to keep their antique kingdom as free from the interference of other races as possible. To use this gate, one must acquire a *key of the first portal*, which can be used with any gate.

**The Orbs of Free Travel:** The elves created sixteen spheres of purple glass in which miniature illusory waves could be seen rolling across an open sea. Six of these were presented as diplomatic gifts to the rulers of the foremost kingdoms of Ashfar; the others remain in elven hands. An *Orb of Free Travel* functions like a *key of the first portal*, except that it does not have charges.







The bearer of such an orb can use any of the portals at will.

### Prices for *Portal Keys*

Item	Price (official)	Price (black market)
<i>Lesser portal key</i> (two charges only, non-rechargeable)	400 gp	950 gp
<i>Portal key</i> (can be recharged)*	1,500 gp	4,500 gp
Charge for <i>portal key</i>	200 gp	600 gp
Key of the first portal*	Not available	35,000 gp
Orb of Free Travel	Not available	500,000 gp (must be stolen to order)

\*When they are first bought, these items have four free charges.

### Event: Arrival at Xoth Sarandi

The description below assumes the Player Characters arrive by sea-portal. The Games Master should omit the first paragraph if they come some other way.

*Your vessel sails through the pillars of the gate. The vast stone lintel passes high overhead and for a second the whole ship seems to shimmer; you feel a lurch as if*

*you had missed a step, then with a crash and a spray of water you are through.*

*Ahead you can see an island so overbuilt that it seems more like a floating city surrounded by sea. According to the tales, this is a place of wonder, the strongest seat of magic in the world. From here it looks like a collection of slums spilling into the water, with a suggestion of cleaner buildings somewhere further inland. This is no sylvan paradise; this is a termite mound. One thing is certain, however. From the stone sea-gates far off in the distance to the haze of energy simmering over the city, Xoth Sarandi is clearly soaked in magic.*

### Information: Magic Use in Xoth Sarandi


This island was not chosen at random. The elves who founded Xoth Sarandi chose it for its strong background energy. The sea-portal system would probably not have lasted so well without it. All spells and spell-like abilities cast within five miles of Xoth Sarandi have an effective caster level of +1. Creatures with these abilities can sense the subtle boost to their powers when they come within the area of effect.

### Event: Vipers in the Shadows

Soon after the Player Characters arrive, the Shadow Troupe (see below) attacks them on Brexel's orders. The Troupe will wait until night has fallen before mounting its attack and will try to observe the Player Characters from a hiding place, so that its members can use their death attacks. If they have a chance to pick off a solitary Player Character, they will take it.

If the Player Characters delay coming to Xoth Sarandi in order to head to Lost Athul (or for any other reason), then the Shadow Troupe's information network is set up when they arrive. The Shadow Troupe attacks them on their first night in the city, wherever they are staying, while they rest. Assume that the Troupe's contacts notice the Player Characters arrive, no matter where they go first. If the Player Characters take exceptional care to protect themselves, such as by *teleporting* to some safe haven off the island or retreating off-plane, then the Troupe is of course unable to reach them; but the *slightest* lack of attention to overnight security should warrant an attack.

If, however, the Player Characters choose to head straight to Xoth Sarandi instead of chasing after the Sea Harriers, then the Shadow Troupe has less time to prepare. Without their information network in place, the Troupe is not able to locate and attack the Player Characters as efficiently as it had wished. With no idea where they are staying, the Troupe is forced to attack them in the street, opportunistically.



**A note on tactics:** The Shadow Troupe is a fast-in, fast-out group. Its members excel at attacking from the shadows with surprise, but they are not good at sustained combat. They prefer to target one person and overwhelm him rather than move from target to target. As the assassins say, ‘one dead is better than two wounded’.

The Troupe is best kept as a recurring threat, not an all-or-nothing assault force. If its initial onslaught fails to bring a Player Character down, it flees back into the shadows to regroup and strike again another night. This may frustrate and infuriate the Player Characters but they will get plenty of chances to take revenge.

The Troupe members use their summoned shadows to flank targets, enabling them to use sneak attacks against opponents. They down *potions of fox's cunning* immediately before assassination attempts, in order to raise the saving throw DCs of their death attacks.

### Non-Player Character Group: The Shadow Troupe

This gang of enigmatic assassins is under the command of Brexel (see above, and see page 110 for Brexel's statistics). While he conducts his business in the Halls of Concord, the Troupe members room at the Flambeau Tavern on the waterfront, taking care of any jobs that Brexel needs doing. Their last task was to dispose of Karil Sturvin, the former ambassador. They assassinated him, weighed down his body and hid it in the molten moat, then used magical illusions to give one of their own number his appearance. The disguised assassin then made a point of insulting everyone he could on his way to the docks, pretending to be drunk and belligerent, so that lots of people would see him leave and remember it.

The Shadow Troupe members make a living as entertainers, putting on shadow puppet shows and displays of circus skills. So far they have kept a low profile in Xoth Sarandi, not wishing to attract too much attention to themselves.

**Skimble, Male Human Brd5/Shd4/Asn1:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6 plus 4d8 plus 1d6; hp 39; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +10 melee (1d6+2/18–20 plus poison, +2 rapier) or +9 ranged (1d10, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+2/18–20 plus poison, +2 rapier) or +9 ranged (1d10, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA bardic music, countersong, death attack, *fascinate*, poison use, *shadow illusion*, sneak attack +1d6, spells, summon shadow; SQ bardic

knowledge, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, hide in plain sight, inspire competence, inspire courage +1, shadow jump 20 ft., uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +12, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 15.

**Skills & Feats:** Balance +4, Bluff +10, Climb +4, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +4, Hide +12, Jump +8, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +10, Perform (dance) +11, Perform (guitar) +16, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Tumble +15; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perform (guitar)), Weapon Finesse.

Assassin spells prepared (2, save DC 11 + spell level):  
1<sup>st</sup> – *shield*, *true strike*.

Bard spells known (3/4/2, save DC 12 + spell level):  
0<sup>th</sup> – *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *lullaby*, *message*, *prestidigitation*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *grease*, *hideous laughter*, *undetected alignment*, *ventriloquism*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *eagle's splendour*, *silence*, *sound burst*.

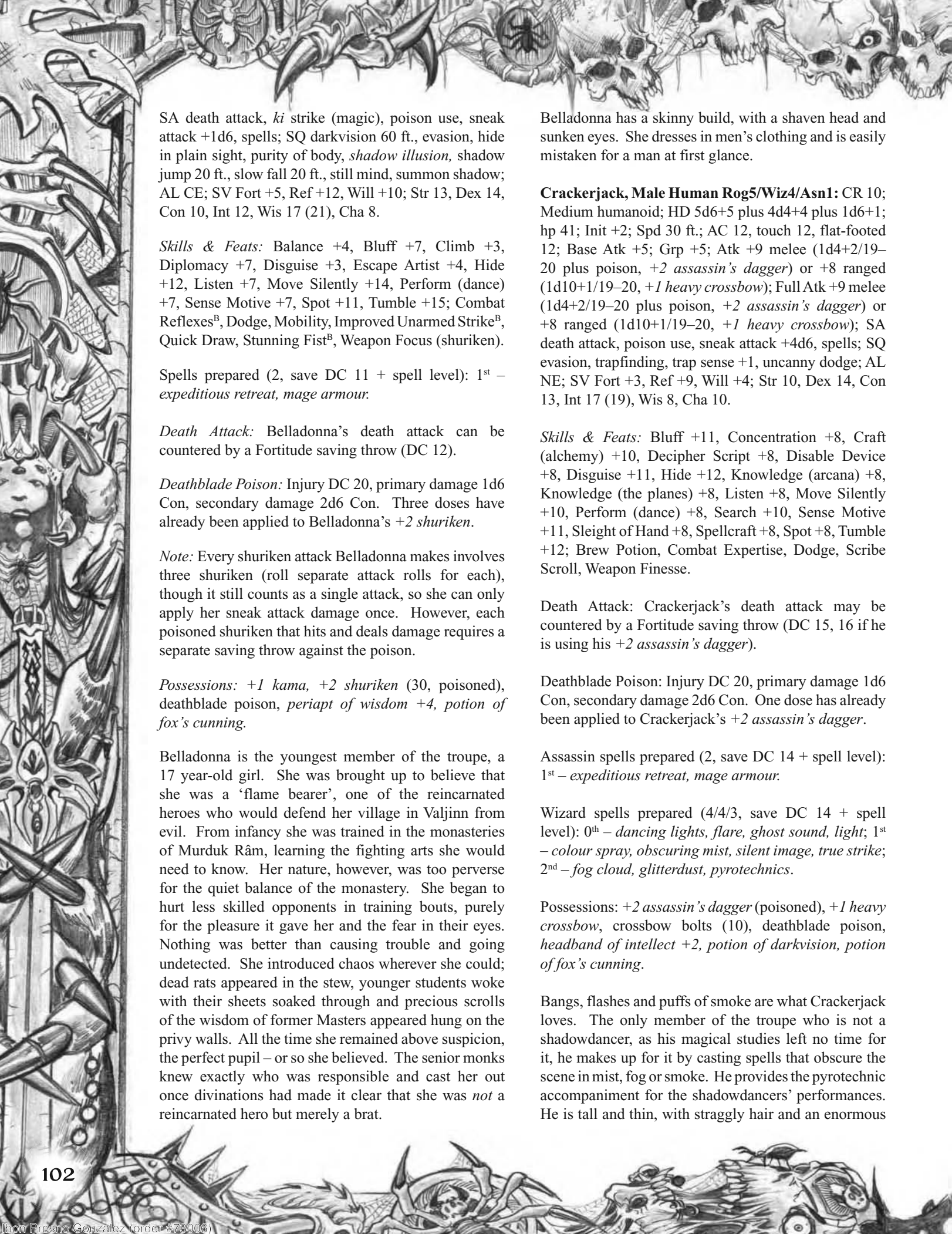
**Death Attack:** Skimble's death attack can be countered by a Fortitude saving throw (DC 12).

**Deathblade Poison:** Injury DC 20, primary damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 2d6 Con. One dose has already been applied to Skimble's +2 rapier.

**Possessions:** +2 rapier (poisoned), +2 studded leather armour, crossbow bolts (10), deathblade poison, masterwork guitar, masterwork heavy crossbow, *potion of fox's cunning*.

Skimble is the puffy-shirt-wearing musician of the troupe, who strums tunes for them to dance to and narrates the puppet shows. He is addicted to female attention and frequently has to be dragged back (usually by Belladonna) from chasing after barmaids, female guards and anyone else who comes within range. He has tousled chestnut hair, gleaming grey eyes and stubble that he thinks makes him look dashing.

**Belladonna, Female Human Mnk5/Shd4/Asn1:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8 plus 1d6 plus 4d8; hp 44; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+1, unarmed strike) or +8 melee (1d6+2, +1 kama) or +11 ranged (1d2+3, +2 shuriken); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d8+1, unarmed strike) or +6/+6/+1 melee (1d8+1, unarmed strike) or +8/+3 melee (1d6+1, +1 kama) or +7/+7/+2 melee (1d6+1, +1 kama) or +11/+6 ranged (3d2+3, +2 shuriken) or +10/+10/+5 ranged (1d2+3, +2 shuriken);



SA death attack, *ki* strike (magic), poison use, sneak attack +1d6, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, hide in plain sight, purity of body, *shadow illusion*, shadow jump 20 ft., slow fall 20 ft., still mind, summon shadow; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +10; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 17 (21), Cha 8.

*Skills & Feats:* Balance +4, Bluff +7, Climb +3, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +4, Hide +12, Listen +7, Move Silently +14, Perform (dance) +7, Sense Motive +7, Spot +11, Tumble +15; Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Dodge, Mobility, Improved Unarmed Strike<sup>B</sup>, Quick Draw, Stunning Fist<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (shuriken).

Spells prepared (2, save DC 11 + spell level): 1<sup>st</sup> – *expeditious retreat*, *mage armour*.

*Death Attack:* Belladonna's death attack can be countered by a Fortitude saving throw (DC 12).

*Deathblade Poison:* Injury DC 20, primary damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 2d6 Con. Three doses have already been applied to Belladonna's +2 *shuriken*.

*Note:* Every shuriken attack Belladonna makes involves three shuriken (roll separate attack rolls for each), though it still counts as a single attack, so she can only apply her sneak attack damage once. However, each poisoned shuriken that hits and deals damage requires a separate saving throw against the poison.

*Possessions:* +1 *kama*, +2 *shuriken* (30, poisoned), deathblade poison, *periapt of wisdom* +4, *potion of fox's cunning*.

Belladonna is the youngest member of the troupe, a 17 year-old girl. She was brought up to believe that she was a 'flame bearer', one of the reincarnated heroes who would defend her village in Valjinn from evil. From infancy she was trained in the monasteries of Murduk Râm, learning the fighting arts she would need to know. Her nature, however, was too perverse for the quiet balance of the monastery. She began to hurt less skilled opponents in training bouts, purely for the pleasure it gave her and the fear in their eyes. Nothing was better than causing trouble and going undetected. She introduced chaos wherever she could; dead rats appeared in the stew, younger students woke with their sheets soaked through and precious scrolls of the wisdom of former Masters appeared hung on the privy walls. All the time she remained above suspicion, the perfect pupil – or so she believed. The senior monks knew exactly who was responsible and cast her out once divinations had made it clear that she was *not* a reincarnated hero but merely a brat.

Belladonna has a skinny build, with a shaven head and sunken eyes. She dresses in men's clothing and is easily mistaken for a man at first glance.

**Crackerjack, Male Human Rog5/Wiz4/Asn1:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6+5 plus 4d4+4 plus 1d6+1; hp 41; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +9 melee (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, +2 *assassin's dagger*) or +8 ranged (1d10+1/19–20, +1 *heavy crossbow*); Full Atk +9 melee (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, +2 *assassin's dagger*) or +8 ranged (1d10+1/19–20, +1 *heavy crossbow*); SA death attack, poison use, sneak attack +4d6, spells; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 17 (19), Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +11, Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +10, Decipher Script +8, Disable Device +8, Disguise +11, Hide +12, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Perform (dance) +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +8, Spellcraft +8, Spot +8, Tumble +12; Brew Potion, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Finesse.

*Death Attack:* Crackerjack's death attack may be countered by a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15, 16 if he is using his +2 *assassin's dagger*).

*Deathblade Poison:* Injury DC 20, primary damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 2d6 Con. One dose has already been applied to Crackerjack's +2 *assassin's dagger*.

Assassin spells prepared (2, save DC 14 + spell level): 1<sup>st</sup> – *expeditious retreat*, *mage armour*.

Wizard spells prepared (4/4/3, save DC 14 + spell level): 0<sup>th</sup> – *dancing lights*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *light*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *colour spray*, *obscuring mist*, *silent image*, *true strike*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *fog cloud*, *glitterdust*, *pyrotechnics*.

*Possessions:* +2 *assassin's dagger* (poisoned), +1 *heavy crossbow*, crossbow bolts (10), deathblade poison, *headband of intellect* +2, *potion of darkvision*, *potion of fox's cunning*.

Bangs, flashes and puffs of smoke are what Crackerjack loves. The only member of the troupe who is not a shadowdancer, as his magical studies left no time for it, he makes up for it by casting spells that obscure the scene in mist, fog or smoke. He provides the pyrotechnic accompaniment for the shadowdancers' performances. He is tall and thin, with straggly hair and an enormous



wart on his forehead. He wears gaudy waistcoats and smokes a pipe constantly.

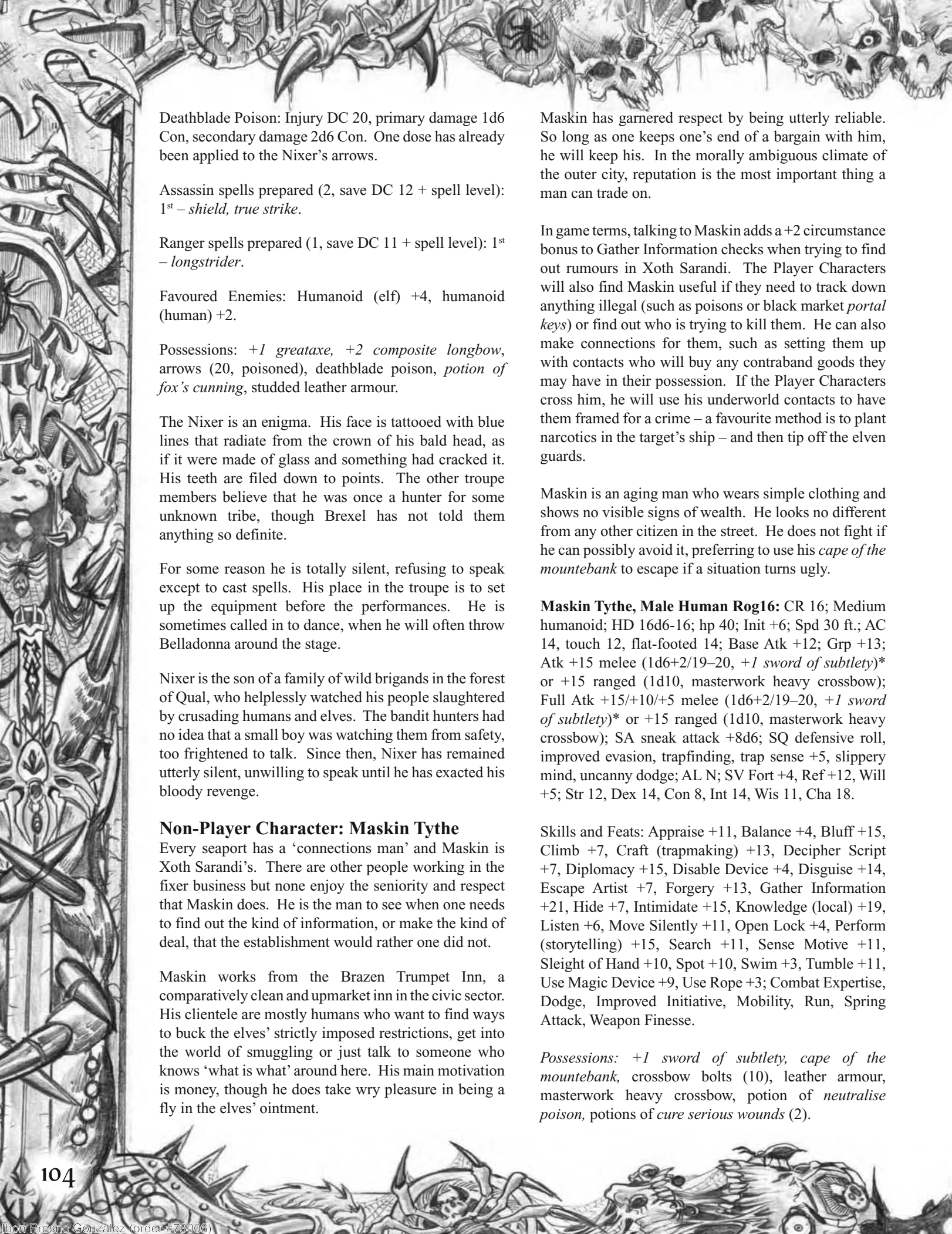
**The Nixer, Male Human Rgr5/Shd4/Asn1:** CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8 plus 1d6 plus 4d8; hp 44; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d12+5/x3, +1 greataxe) or +13 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +2 composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d12+5/x3, +1 greataxe) or +13/+8 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +2 composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)) or +11/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +2 composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); SA death attack, favoured enemies, poison use, *shadow illusion*, sneak attack +1d6, spells, wild empathy; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, hide in plain

sight, shadow jump 20 ft., summon shadow, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +8, Climb +7, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +6, Hide +14, Jump +10, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +14, Perform (dance) +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +10, Survival +10, Tumble +6; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance<sup>B</sup>, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot<sup>B</sup>, Silentspell, Track<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (longbow).

*Death Attack:* The Nixer's death attack may be countered by a Fortitude saving throw (DC 13).





Deathblade Poison: Injury DC 20, primary damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 2d6 Con. One dose has already been applied to the Nixer's arrows.

Assassin spells prepared (2, save DC 12 + spell level): 1<sup>st</sup> – *shield, true strike*.

Ranger spells prepared (1, save DC 11 + spell level): 1<sup>st</sup> – *longstrider*.

Favoured Enemies: Humanoid (elf) +4, humanoid (human) +2.

Possessions: +1 *greataxe*, +2 *composite longbow*, arrows (20, poisoned), deathblade poison, *potion of fox's cunning*, studded leather armour.

The Nixer is an enigma. His face is tattooed with blue lines that radiate from the crown of his bald head, as if it were made of glass and something had cracked it. His teeth are filed down to points. The other troupe members believe that he was once a hunter for some unknown tribe, though Brexel has not told them anything so definite.

For some reason he is totally silent, refusing to speak except to cast spells. His place in the troupe is to set up the equipment before the performances. He is sometimes called in to dance, when he will often throw *Belladonna* around the stage.

Nixer is the son of a family of wild brigands in the forest of Qual, who helplessly watched his people slaughtered by crusading humans and elves. The bandit hunters had no idea that a small boy was watching them from safety, too frightened to talk. Since then, Nixer has remained utterly silent, unwilling to speak until he has exacted his bloody revenge.

### Non-Player Character: Maskin Tythe

Every seaport has a 'connections man' and Maskin is Xoth Sarandi's. There are other people working in the fixer business but none enjoy the seniority and respect that Maskin does. He is the man to see when one needs to find out the kind of information, or make the kind of deal, that the establishment would rather one did not.

Maskin works from the Brazen Trumpet Inn, a comparatively clean and upmarket inn in the civic sector. His clientele are mostly humans who want to find ways to buck the elves' strictly imposed restrictions, get into the world of smuggling or just talk to someone who knows 'what is what' around here. His main motivation is money, though he does take wry pleasure in being a fly in the elves' ointment.

Maskin has garnered respect by being utterly reliable. So long as one keeps one's end of a bargain with him, he will keep his. In the morally ambiguous climate of the outer city, reputation is the most important thing a man can trade on.


In game terms, talking to Maskin adds a +2 circumstance bonus to Gather Information checks when trying to find out rumours in Xoth Sarandi. The Player Characters will also find Maskin useful if they need to track down anything illegal (such as poisons or black market *portal keys*) or find out who is trying to kill them. He can also make connections for them, such as setting them up with contacts who will buy any contraband goods they may have in their possession. If the Player Characters cross him, he will use his underworld contacts to have them framed for a crime – a favourite method is to plant narcotics in the target's ship – and then tip off the elven guards.

Maskin is an aging man who wears simple clothing and shows no visible signs of wealth. He looks no different from any other citizen in the street. He does not fight if he can possibly avoid it, preferring to use his *cape of the mountebank* to escape if a situation turns ugly.

**Maskin Tythe, Male Human Rog16:** CR 16; Medium humanoid; HD 16d6-16; hp 40; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +12; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d6+2/19-20, +1 *sword of subtlety*)\* or +15 ranged (1d10, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, +1 *sword of subtlety*)\* or +15 ranged (1d10, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA sneak attack +8d6; SQ defensive roll, improved evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +5, slippery mind, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +11, Balance +4, Bluff +15, Climb +7, Craft (trapmaking) +13, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +4, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +7, Forgery +13, Gather Information +21, Hide +7, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +19, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +4, Perform (storytelling) +15, Search +11, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +10, Swim +3, Tumble +11, Use Magic Device +9, Use Rope +3; Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Run, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse.

*Possessions:* +1 *sword of subtlety*, *cape of the mountebank*, crossbow bolts (10), leather armour, masterwork heavy crossbow, *potion of neutralise poison*, *potions of cure serious wounds* (2).



\*When Maskin makes a sneak attack, the *sword of subtlety* confers a +4 bonus to attack and damage rolls instead of a +1 bonus.

### Location: Arosi's Dancers

On a green hill at the very heart of the inner city stand nine stones in a circle, each one white as sea foam, in graceful curved forms that suggest dancing figures. This is the node of Xoth Sarandi, the most sacred of all the elven stone circles outside of Shallenoi.

### Location: The Ambassadorial Docks

This is a portion of the harbour set aside for the exclusive use of representatives from the Halls of Concord and members of the High Council. A stone wall 20 feet high divides it from the rest of the city and members of the Shining Host keep a constant watch for trouble.

Currently, all the ambassadors' ships are docked here. The Player Characters may want to investigate them; the only interesting ship is the *Medusa*, which is Honoured Fangthane Barbiculus' private vessel.

Characters who sneak aboard find that the ship seems to be unguarded, though a Listen skill check (DC 20) detects heavy slithering noises in the hold. The little present that Brexel gave Barbiculus (12 caskets of drow poison, each casket containing 50 doses) is sitting in the hold, along with a pair of guardians to keep it safe. These are abyssal greater basilisks, gifts from dark powers who assist Kandang's ruling monarchy. As each ambassador's vessel counts as an embassy and thus as sovereign territory, Barbiculus is allowed to have dangerous creatures on board, so long as they do not leave the ship...

**Abyssal Greater Basilisks (2):** CR 12; Large outsider (augmented magical beast, extraplanar); HD 18d10+90; hp 189; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +18; Grp +29; Atk +25 melee (2d8+10, bite); Full Atk +25 melee (2d8+10, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA petrifying gaze, smite good; SQ damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, resistance to cold 10 and fire 10, spell resistance 23; AL CE; SV Fort +18, Ref +12, Will +8; Str 24, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 15.

*Skills & Feats:* Hide +0\*, Listen +10, Spot +10; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (bite).

### Location: The Halls of Concord

The Halls are a set of conference rooms inside a building of green marble. On the domed roof, a statue of Kyros Threadcutter, the elven god of reason and precision, stands with his hand raised in peaceful greeting. The Halls have an ornamental garden at the rear, intended for meditation and quiet conversation.

**Background:** In Xoth Sarandi, there has always been a clear divide between the elves who run the place and everyone else who pays to use it. This has led to friction, as the non-elven traders bickered and fought amongst themselves over who had the right to monopolise which commodity, whose ships should be given priority in the queue to use the portals, which nations should refuse to trade with which and whether or not a general boycott to force the elves to lower their rates was a good idea.

The non-elven population of Xoth Sarandi originally founded the Halls of Concord as an assembly place where they could discuss business matters. The elves, with their elitist approach to diplomacy, were quite happy to set aside a building for the other nations to use. They assigned them a disused magical academy in the Avenue of Silver Sounds and, in brief, let them get on with it. Their empire was in retreat and they no longer owned most of the world. They were tired of governing and did not want to bother trying to manage fractious humans any more. It was better to throw them all into one box and let them argue amongst themselves.

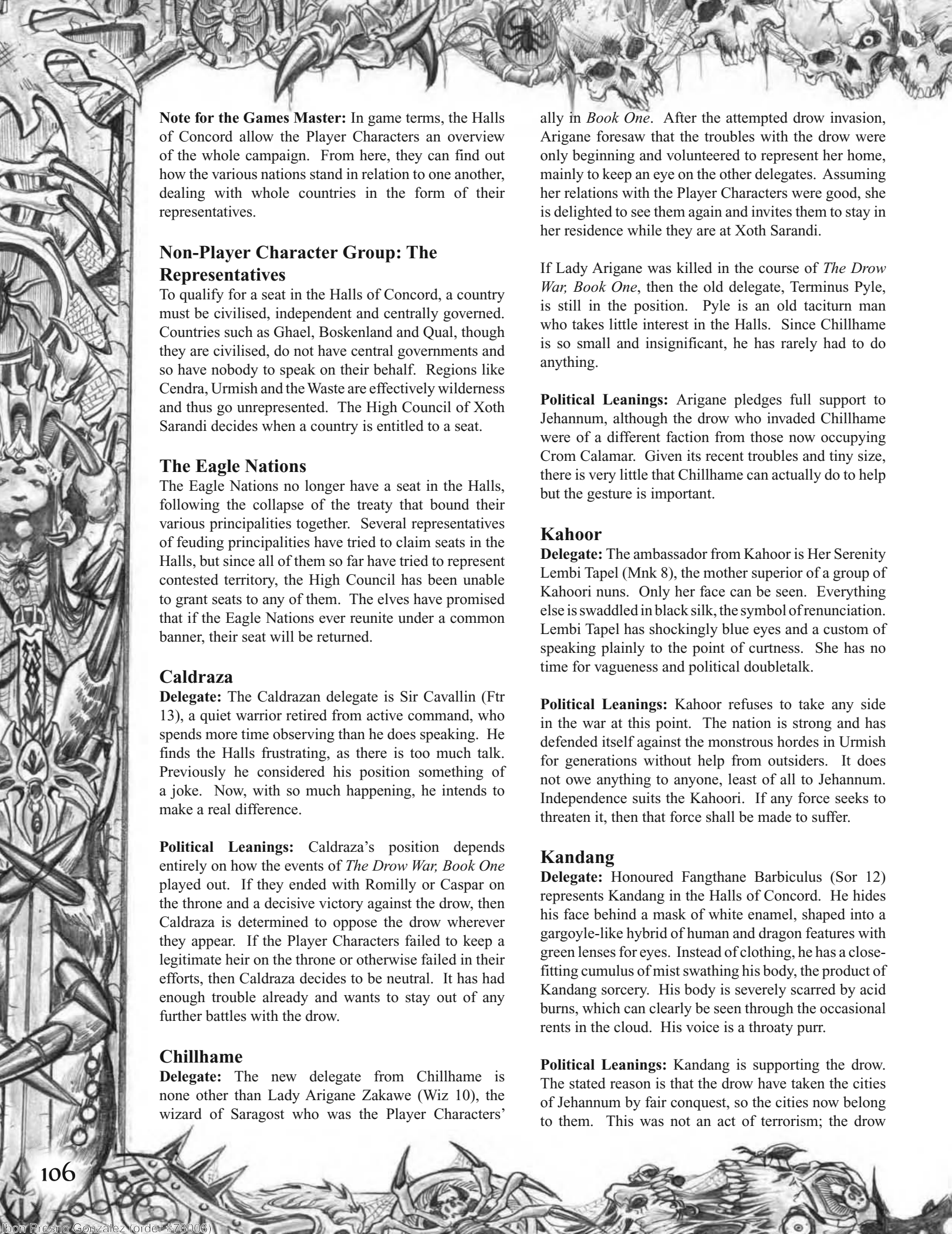
The rule was simple. The elves insisted on peaceful discussion, even if one country was at war with another. The Halls of Concord would never know the sound of battle. So far, that rule has been adhered to.

Several centuries after their original founding, the Halls have far outshone their original purpose. Under the elves' aegis, representatives from all the civilised countries of Ashfar meet here to talk through their business in peace. To some countries, the Halls are a joke, a mere talking shop where everything is discussed and nothing is ever resolved. To others, the Halls are the key to a future in which world powers can work together, trading knowledge and produce alike.

The Halls have been stagnant over the last 50 years or so. The representatives have had little to do here. However, reports of the invasion of Chillhame stirred the place up and now, with the far more successful invasion of Jehannum underway, the Halls are frantic with activity.







**Note for the Games Master:** In game terms, the Halls of Concord allow the Player Characters an overview of the whole campaign. From here, they can find out how the various nations stand in relation to one another, dealing with whole countries in the form of their representatives.

### **Non-Player Character Group: The Representatives**

To qualify for a seat in the Halls of Concord, a country must be civilised, independent and centrally governed. Countries such as Ghael, Boskenland and Qual, though they are civilised, do not have central governments and so have nobody to speak on their behalf. Regions like Cendra, Urmish and the Waste are effectively wilderness and thus go unrepresented. The High Council of Xoth Sarandi decides when a country is entitled to a seat.

### **The Eagle Nations**

The Eagle Nations no longer have a seat in the Halls, following the collapse of the treaty that bound their various principalities together. Several representatives of feuding principalities have tried to claim seats in the Halls, but since all of them so far have tried to represent contested territory, the High Council has been unable to grant seats to any of them. The elves have promised that if the Eagle Nations ever reunite under a common banner, their seat will be returned.

### **Caldraza**

**Delegate:** The Caldrazan delegate is Sir Cavallin (Ftr 13), a quiet warrior retired from active command, who spends more time observing than he does speaking. He finds the Halls frustrating, as there is too much talk. Previously he considered his position something of a joke. Now, with so much happening, he intends to make a real difference.

**Political Leanings:** Caldraza's position depends entirely on how the events of *The Drow War, Book One* played out. If they ended with Romilly or Caspar on the throne and a decisive victory against the drow, then Caldraza is determined to oppose the drow wherever they appear. If the Player Characters failed to keep a legitimate heir on the throne or otherwise failed in their efforts, then Caldraza decides to be neutral. It has had enough trouble already and wants to stay out of any further battles with the drow.

### **Chillhame**

**Delegate:** The new delegate from Chillhame is none other than Lady Arigane Zakawe (Wiz 10), the wizard of Saragost who was the Player Characters'

ally in *Book One*. After the attempted drow invasion, Arigane foresaw that the troubles with the drow were only beginning and volunteered to represent her home, mainly to keep an eye on the other delegates. Assuming her relations with the Player Characters were good, she is delighted to see them again and invites them to stay in her residence while they are at Xoth Sarandi.

If Lady Arigane was killed in the course of *The Drow War, Book One*, then the old delegate, Terminus Pyle, is still in the position. Pyle is an old taciturn man who takes little interest in the Halls. Since Chillhame is so small and insignificant, he has rarely had to do anything.

**Political Leanings:** Arigane pledges full support to Jehannum, although the drow who invaded Chillhame were of a different faction from those now occupying Crom Calamar. Given its recent troubles and tiny size, there is very little that Chillhame can actually do to help but the gesture is important.

### **Kahoor**


**Delegate:** The ambassador from Kahoor is Her Serenity Lembi Tapel (Mnk 8), the mother superior of a group of Kahoori nuns. Only her face can be seen. Everything else is swaddled in black silk, the symbol of renunciation. Lembi Tapel has shockingly blue eyes and a custom of speaking plainly to the point of curtness. She has no time for vagueness and political doubletalk.

**Political Leanings:** Kahoor refuses to take any side in the war at this point. The nation is strong and has defended itself against the monstrous hordes in Urmish for generations without help from outsiders. It does not owe anything to anyone, least of all to Jehannum. Independence suits the Kahoori. If any force seeks to threaten it, then that force shall be made to suffer.

### **Kandang**

**Delegate:** Honoured Fangthane Barbiculus (Sor 12) represents Kandang in the Halls of Concord. He hides his face behind a mask of white enamel, shaped into a gargoyle-like hybrid of human and dragon features with green lenses for eyes. Instead of clothing, he has a close-fitting cumulus of mist swathing his body, the product of Kandang sorcery. His body is severely scarred by acid burns, which can clearly be seen through the occasional rents in the cloud. His voice is a throaty purr.

**Political Leanings:** Kandang is supporting the drow. The stated reason is that the drow have taken the cities of Jehannum by fair conquest, so the cities now belong to them. This was not an act of terrorism; the drow



people say that they have been *at war* with Jehannum since their settlements were destroyed, so Kandang regards their occupation as part of the progress of that war, not an unprovoked assault. The length of time between the massacre of the drow non-combatants and the invasion of Crom Calamar is irrelevant. No treaties were ever signed, so the war is still in effect.

The private reason is less high-minded. Brexel has met with Fangthane Barbiculus in private and proposed a deal. The drow are willing to help Kandang invade Valjinn and Qual at some future date in exchange for support against Jehannum now. If successful, this would re-establish almost all of the old territory of the Dragon-Kings of Kandang. Brexel has also provided a 'sweetener' – a dozen caskets of drow poison for the nobles of Kandang to use against their enemies, with the promise of more to come. Impressed by this gesture and pleased to have a possible edge against Valjinn at last, the monarchs of Kandang have agreed to a private alliance.

### Murduk Râm

**Delegate:** Master Zu (Ftr 2/Mnk 10) is a half-orc who looks rather like a mahogany wardrobe crammed into a yellow tunic. He is fearsome to look at (favouring his orcish side in features) but speaks in clear, gentle tones. Originally from Visk, he made the journey to Murduk Râm after a vision he had during a hangover warned him to turn from savage ways and seek enlightenment.

**Political Leanings:** King Kallimon is deeply saddened by the loss of life in Jehannum. He does not believe that any good can come from this war. The enemy is not the drow or the humans, but discord and senseless destruction. To stand against this, he offers two proposals.

Firstly, Murduk Râm will give sanctuary and political asylum to anyone who comes to seek it, no matter which side they fight on. Secondly, the monks intend to establish field hospitals and soup kitchens so that the refugees will have at least a little humanitarian aid. There are already refugees from the cities of Jehannum massing on the fringes of the Desert of Sharn, trapped between murderous drow on one side and merciless heat on the other. Has nobody thought of them?

### Shumil

**Delegate:** Muftah Freyne (Rog 3/Wiz 2) is a grave man with olive skin, a thick moustache and heavy white garments. He interprets everything in terms of profit and loss. Widely considered the archetypal

boring politician, he is nonetheless a great benefit to his country, because he always takes the trouble to prepare the most comprehensive treaties and trade agreements. He is completely out of his depth now that war has broken out and yearns to get back to haggling over the price of barley.

**Political Leanings:** Shumil uses the excuse of being 'nowhere near the events in Jehannum' to bow out of the side-taking. Muftah Freyne reminds everybody that the Halls of Concord were originally supposed to be for *trade* discussions, not for taking sides in a global game of war. Shumil declares itself neutral and expects others to respect that neutrality.

### Svarth

**Delegate:** Tammás Brandobast (Ftr 15/Ddf 5) is still a dwarf, just about. He has a steel plate covering half of his head, one eye, one arm and no legs. Metal replacements clank in place of his missing limbs. Constant fighting as a mercenary against monstrous humanoids in the Eagle Nations made him into a steel-nerved warrior, but when vengeful trolls captured and butchered him, his days in the field were over. The craftsmen of Vella were able to build prosthetic limbs for him; they are far inferior to his original arm and legs, but they allow him to move about.

Tammás is hard as adamantine, utterly stubborn and totally inflexible. When he speaks (which is infrequent), people listen. The High Council respect him, and even Warwolf Visk is secretly scared of him.

**Political Leanings:** The dwarves of Svarth do not abandon their friends in a time of need. They will not rest until every drow in Jehannum is driven back under the ground; and even then they had better keep running, because the dwarves will pursue them into the deepest crevasses of the earth. To force the humans to fight in darkness was a cowardly trick. Dwarves who took their first breath in darkness, grew up in darkness and fought throughout their lives in darkness will not be daunted by it.


### The Topaz Dominions

**Delegate:** The delegate for this country is Ata Huara (Exp 11), an immensely fat gentleman with an aquiline nose. He wears robes of brilliant rainbow-coloured silk and an amber necklace of authority worth some 4,500 gold pieces. He likes to embroider his speeches with rhetoric, even when he is saying something simple; in this he is the very opposite of Lembi Tapel, the delegate for Kahoor.









**Political Leanings:** The Sun King of the Topaz Dominions is driven by religious fervour. He sees the drow as nothing less than demons, incarnations of the darkness that his 'lord and father, the sun' wishes to destroy. Their vile and unnatural act, denying the light of the sun to the people of Jehannum, is an unforgivable blasphemy in his eyes. He wants the drow wiped out altogether but his views are so totalitarian that he may be a problematic ally.

### Valjinn

**Delegate:** Ambassador Wantano (Exp 5) is young and earnest, dressed in a formal silk tunic and breeches. The son of one of Valjinn's ruling council members, he is convinced that conflict is never the best way to solve a problem and always wants to talk his way through differences. He admires Grole of Aspen Water very much. Some of the older members of Valjinn's council doubt that the boy has what it takes; he is too trusting, too soft.

**Political Leanings:** Valjinn feels that rushing to take sides would be hasty. There is no need for the whole world to descend into war and chaos over what is essentially a private conflict. This unpleasantness is between the humans of Jehannum and the drow who were expelled from that country many years ago. Let them settle it between themselves.

### Vella

**Delegate:** Dressed in dark yellow velvet and bearing an ebony cane, Grole of Aspen Water (Brd 13) is clearly a gnome of means. He is the best speechmaker in the Halls and is frequently able to reconcile opposing views by the power of his words. His bardic training is undoubtedly responsible for this. He is more concerned with making the Halls work as they should than with gaining anything for himself or his country, since Vella's status as cultural capital of the world is undisputed.

**Political Leanings:** The rulers of Vella are protesting neutrality on the grounds that they are not a warlike people. Their cities are places of beauty and ingenuity, not warlords' fortresses. In truth, they can see the invasion taking place close by and are terrified that they will be next. Grole is furious about his superiors' decision but has no choice in the matter.

### Visk

**Delegate:** Visk's representative is Warwolf Ral Hakk (Bar 15), a huge bewhiskered barbarian who insists on bringing a jar of metheglin with him into council meetings. He sneers at the other delegates, puts his feet on the table and acts with contempt for the whole

idea of the Halls. As far as he is concerned, if Visk wishes to strike, it will need no permission, nor will it give any warning. However, he is under instruction to convey a message from the Emperor, so he is slightly more subdued than usual when the Player Characters encounter him.

**Political Leanings:** Emperor Caranacus sees the drow invasion as a golden opportunity to rub Jehannum's nose in the dirt after several centuries of rivalry. Following his lead, the empire of Visk views the drow as courageous underdogs fighting back against those who have oppressed them in the past. Moral judgements are less important than warrior pride. The drow have captured a whole country *overnight*. That is a deed for a warrior to be proud of. Visk offers the hand of brotherhood to the drow. Emperor Caranacus would sooner have such people as friends than enemies.

### Brexel, Delegate for Jehannum

Brexel (see below) is bald, with sagging jowls and twinkling eyes. He dresses in soft black leather that, strangely, has no shine to it at all and looks like black velvet from a distance. He seems perpetually amused by what happens around him and never seems to take matters entirely seriously, even when he discusses the deaths of thousands of people. Player Characters with good memories will remember that Brexel was in Crom Calamar very recently working as the Amazing Brexel, putting on a shadow puppet show.

Brexel is himself a shadowy puppet of the drow, a human disciple of the Dark who has chosen to side with the enemy. He was only in Crom Calamar to meet with his masters, help with the invasion and receive his instructions for the next phase of the war. The drow have sent him to Xoth Sarandi as their representative because the presence of actual drow on the island would almost certainly rile the Council out of its detached neutrality.

The former ambassador was Karil Sturvin, the nephew of Duke Ashforth, one of the Iron Dukes of Jehannum. If Brexel is questioned about this, he will explain that 'the former ambassador for Jehannum has been *recalled*' and give a merry wink. Karil is, in fact, dead. The Shadow Troupe slew him shortly after they and Brexel arrived in town.

Brexel is not so affable if the Player Characters try to confront him alone. He evades them if he can, ducking into dark doorways and shadow jumping to safety. If they make a concerted attempt to attack, he turns on them, snarling, and tries to kill them all.



Brexel commands the Shadow Troupe, his gang of assassins. They have taken up residence in the outer city (see below).

**Brexel, Male Human Rog10/Shd6:** CR 16; Medium humanoid; HD 10d6 plus 6d8; hp 62; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +11; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d6+4/18–20, +2 *rapier*) or +14 melee (1d4+3/19–20, +1 *dagger*) or +15 ranged (1d10, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +13/+8/+3 melee (1d6+4/18–20, +2 *rapier*) and +12/+7 melee (1d4+2/19–20, +1 *dagger*); or +15 ranged (1d10, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA crippling strike, *shadow illusion*, sneak attack +5d6, summon shadow; SQ darkvision 60 ft., defensive roll, evasion, hide in plain sight, improved uncanny dodge, shadow jump, trapfinding, trap sense +3; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +15, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 14.

**Skills & Feats:** Bluff +15, Craft (trapmaking) +3, Disable Device +2, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +5, Gather Information +9, Hide +16, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +12, Move Silently +16, Open Lock +11, Perform (dance) +6, Search +4, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +11, Use Rope +7; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Two-Weapon Fighting.

**Hide in Plain Sight (Su):** Brexel can use the Hide skill even while being observed. As long as he is within ten feet of some sort of shadow, he can hide himself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind. He cannot, however, hide in his own shadow.

**Shadow Illusion (Sp):** Brexel can create visual illusions. This ability's effect is identical to that of the arcane spell *silent image* and may be employed once per day.

### Involving Other Countries

The adventures here assume that the Player Characters will only be dealing with countries represented in the Halls of Concord. What if they try to approach other countries for assistance? A Player Character might, for example, remember Jamie MacReith of Ghael, and ask him if his clan would be willing to pitch in to the fight.


The Games Master should allow the Player Characters to do this as much as possible, given the limited information provided here. However, the help that uncivilised or anarchic countries can give is extremely limited. At best, they will be able to provide up to 5,000 troops, who will then need to be brought to Jehannum somehow. They are also highly unlikely to help the Player Characters on moral grounds, so the troops must be paid for. Assume a rate of five silver pieces per man per day.

**Summon Shadow (Su):** Brexel can summon a shadow, an undead shade. Unlike a normal shadow, this shadow cannot create spawn and is lawful evil. The summoned shadow cannot be turned, rebuked or commanded by any third party. This shadow serves as a companion to Brexel and can communicate intelligibly with him. The shadow's statistics are given below. If the shadow is destroyed or dismissed, Brexel cannot replace it for 30 days.

**Shadow Jump (Su):** Brexel has the ability to travel between shadows as if by means of a *dimension door* spell. The limitation is that the magical transport must begin and end in areas with at least some shadow. Brexel can jump up to a total of 40 feet each day in

### Summary of Initial Political Standings

Country	Delegate	Allies	Enemies	Position
Caldraza	Sir Cavallin	None	None	Depends on the Player Characters
Chillhame	Lady Arigane Zakawe	None	None	Against the drow
Kahoor	Her Serenity Lembi Tapel	Shumil	None	Neutral
Kandang	Honoured Fangthane Barbiculus	Visk	Valjinn	For the drow
Murduk Râm	Master Zu	None	None	Neutral
Shumil	Muftah Freyne	Shumil	None	Neutral
Svarth	Tammas Brandobast	Jehannum	Visk	Against the drow
Topaz Dominions	Ata Huara	None	None	Against the drow
Valjinn	Ambassador Wantano	None	Kandang, Visk	Neutral
Vella	Grole of Aspen Water	None	None	Neutral
Visk	Warwolf Ral Hakk	Kandang	Valjinn	For the drow



this way. This amount can be split among many jumps, but each one, no matter how small, counts as a ten-foot increment.

*Defensive Roll (Ex):* Once per day, when Brexel would be reduced to zero hit points or less by damage in combat (from a weapon or other blow, not from a spell or special ability), he can attempt to roll with the damage. He makes a Reflex saving throw (DC = damage dealt) and if successful takes only half damage from the blow. He must be aware of the attack and able to react to it in order to execute his defensive roll. If he is in a situation that would deny him any Dexterity bonus to Armour Class, he cannot attempt a defensive roll.

*Possessions:* +2 dagger, +1 rapier, +4 studded leather armour, 10 crossbow bolts, masterwork heavy crossbow.

**Brexel's Shadow:** CR 3, Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +2; Spd fly 40 ft. (good); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp —; Atk +4 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); SA strength damage; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to turning, incorporeal traits, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8\*, Listen +9, Search +4, Spot +9; Alertness, Dodge.

\*The shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

*Strength Damage (Su):* The shadow's touch deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to Strength 0 by the shadow dies. This is a negative energy effect.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by the shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

The shadow has a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks.

### Plot Event: The Lines Are Drawn

This event is the crux of the entire campaign. Here, the nations of Ashfar decide whose side they will be on in the coming drow war. Some support Jehannum, others sympathise with the drow and still others attempt to remain neutral.

Archimandrus (and any other allies) will urge the Player Characters to find a way to attend the summit meeting, even if they have to use magic or stealth to get in. The sooner they know how the nations have chosen, the better; if there is any hint of private dealing, intimidation or even magical manipulation, the Conclave needs to know about it. Even if the Player Characters do not attend, they will find out the results of the meeting soon enough.

Those who are present at the meeting can observe the delegates as, one by one, they summarise their positions regarding the crisis in Jehannum. Once the meeting is over, they can attempt to speak to the delegates. Brexel, Fangthane Barbiculus and Warwolf Val Hakk immediately decamp to Barbiculus' ship, grinning like conspirators. They refuse to talk to the Player Characters.

### Information: What the Player Characters Need to Achieve

During this section, the Player Characters should form a clear idea of what they have to do in the course of the coming adventures. Their objectives fall into two broad categories.

**Form an Alliance Against the Drow:** As an ongoing task, the Player Characters have to help assemble a force large enough to retake Jehannum from the drow. To do this, they must negotiate with the representatives of the various countries. This is essential and will not happen unless the Player Characters make it happen. Unless there is mass military opposition to the drow, they will continue to occupy Jehannum and exploit the human populace.

It is important that the Player Characters know what this will require. One of their allies, such as Tamm Brandobast, can spell it out to them if they are unsure:

To have a fair chance of recapturing the city of Crom Calamar, without which there is no hope of retaking the rest of Jehannum, they will need approximately 100,000 troops – twice the number of drow warriors estimated to be in the city. To even stand a chance of victory, they will need at least 50,000; any attempt made with fewer than that is doomed to failure from the start. This is a loose estimate which does not take 'weapons of mass destruction' such as Scallandriax the black dragon into account. Some other means of dealing with that creature must be found.

To begin with, the Player Characters can procure offers of 25,000 troops from the Topaz Dominions, 10,000







from Svarth and 10,000 from Caldraza (if the country in question is on the Player Characters' side).

The Games Master should only include this objective if the Player Characters are likely to enjoy the experience. If the Player Characters really have no taste for a campaign involving intrigue, politics and diplomacy as well as adventuring, they can leave the military side of things up to Archimandrus and their other allies.

**Investigate Possible Tactical Strikes:** The drow only hold Crom Calamar because they were able to plunge the city into darkness and call upon an ancient dragon. If the odds are to be improved, the Player Characters must find out as much as they can about what the drow have been up to and what they plan for the future. Nimian Archimandrus and his conclave are their best source of guidance here. Archimandrus is happy to carry out research and send the Player Characters on quests to gain new information or to strike at the drow. See the section below on the Conclave.

### Event: Playing Politics

After the tempestuous meeting in the Halls of Concord, it is clear that there are three sides: those in support of the drow, those against them and those who are neutral. Visk, Kandang and the drow themselves form an axis of powers; they immediately begin to make plans and bind themselves to a formal alliance.

The anti-drow countries, by contrast, are not even allied. They all oppose the drow for their own reasons: Chillhame on principle, the Topaz Dominions through religious conviction and Svarth through loyalty to the humans of Jehannum. Caldraza may also be on this side, depending on how *Book One* played out. Unless there is a common rallying point, there is no chance of concerted action and victory will go to the drow.

**The Coalition:** The Player Characters' first task is to arrange an alliance. This means persuading the delegates of the anti-drow countries to meet and sign a treaty with one another. The Games Master should not make this an easy task. The dwarves of Svarth are suspicious of the sun-loving humans of the Topaz Dominions, while Chillhame and Caldraza have never been on good terms. Plenty of Diplomacy checks should be called for.

The Games Master should bear in mind that the Player Characters, though heroes, do not have any political authority. Any one of the delegates can shout them down on the grounds that they are mere citizens with no right to represent anyone. If this becomes a problem, Lady Arigane steps down as Chillhame's representative

and gives the office to one of the Player Characters. Being spokesman for a small island is not much of an office but it does at least guarantee a seat in the Halls of Concord.

If there are bored combatants in the group while all the politics is going on, the Shadow Troupe can always mount an attack!

Successfully forming a coalition should net a story award equivalent to overcoming a CR 15 challenge, as it is such a critical objective.


**Bringing In New Countries:** This is an ongoing task, not one that will be resolved in one session. As the war unfolds, the political map is likely to change and both the coalition and the axis will gain new allies.

In order to bring a new ally onto their side, the Player Characters must of course meet with the country's delegate and discuss terms but there are also hidden conditions that must be met. The list below explains what each country needs before it will even consider joining the coalition. The Player Characters must meet these conditions themselves and cannot look to the other countries to do so. For example, if a financial incentive is specified, they must provide the money out of their own pockets instead of asking a friendly country to come up with it.

Every new ally that the Player Characters bring on board should grant them a story award equivalent to overcoming a CR 14 challenge. The game effects of these alliances are narrative rather than mechanical. They determine how likely the Player Characters' assault on Crom Calamar is to succeed.

**Kahoor:** The ruling Kahoori are chauvinists *par excellence*, totally convinced of their own superiority – a trait they inherited from the elves back when that race ran the country. The Player Characters must offer them tribute if they intend to open negotiations. Without a gift of at least 500,000 gold pieces in coin or items, the Kahoori will not spare them the time of day.

King Parhav XXXI sees no obvious profit in helping the humans of Jehannum, who seem to him to be warlike. He does, however, want to expand his empire. The legions of Kahoor are willing to participate in an attack on Jehannum to drive out the drow, so long as they can retain one-fifth of Jehannum as a dependency of Kahoor once it is reconquered, along with the city of Dun Brondel. Naturally, the Player Characters cannot speak for the people of Jehannum but they can guarantee that



their alliance will support a land claim by the Kahoori after the war is won. If the coalition forces all support Kahoor's claim, then there will not be much that the people of Jehannum can do about it.

Kahoor is extremely strong militarily and can supply 40,000 troops, along with ships to transport them, so the Player Characters may consider the Kahoori invaluable allies. Their demand of land is, however, blatant colonialism and will cause problems for the Player Characters if they accede to it. Some of the more fair-minded nations such as Murduk Râm and Chillhame may not be willing to stay in an alliance with such a land-hungry nation.

**Murduk Râm:** King Kallimon sincerely believes that he can do more good as a politically neutral force than he could by involving his fighting monks in the war. To change his mind, the Player Characters must engage him in debate and win, which will mean travelling to Murduk Râm somehow and seeking audience. King Kallimon is a 20<sup>th</sup> level monk with 23 skill ranks in Diplomacy and a Charisma score of 17. Just making rolls is not enough. The Player Characters must argue their case properly. The Games Master should definitely reward good roleplaying and clever argument on the Player Characters' part with a circumstance bonus of +2 to +4 to the check.

If the Player Characters fail to persuade King Kallimon to become involved by their Diplomacy skills but still persist with requests for help, he changes tack. The mind of man does not decide everything by reason alone. Perhaps these Starborn are destined to oppose the drow and it is the will of the Universe that Murduk Râm should stand by them.

King Kallimon puts one of the Player Characters through a rigorous test, as described in the ancient scrolls, to find out if his spirit is truly that of a hero of fate. This involves three steps, each one involving a saving throw: drinking poison and surviving (Fortitude DC 20, initial damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 2d6 Con); walking from one end of a hall to another while drops of acidic dew fall from the ceiling, without sustaining a wound (Reflex DC 20, failure deals 2d6 points of acid damage); and looking into the eyes of a magical statue of Aghoora, the Kandang demon of fear, and not flinching (Will DC 20, failure results in panic for 2d6 hours). Attempting to use any magical or alchemical assistance is deemed cheating and disqualifies the character immediately. Immunities gained from class features, such as a paladin's immunity to fear or a monk's immunity to poison, are not considered cheating.

If the Player Character passes the test, Murduk Râm can muster thousands of disciplined monks in a day. King Kallimon allocates three thousand monks to one of the Player Characters to command. These monks count for four times their number when calculating how many troops the Player Characters have available, because of their special training.

**Shumil:** Shumil looks to Kahoor for guidance. Unless Kahoor has already joined the coalition, Shumil will not do so under any circumstances. As Shumil is itself a dependency of Kahoor, it supports Kahoor's demand for more land. Bringing Shumil on board requires increasing Kahoor's land claim to two-fifths of Jehannum, including the cities of Dun Brondel and Esveltarn. Shumil can supply 10,000 troops, with ships to transport them.

**Valjinn:** Valjinn is opting out of the war because it believes the conflict can be contained. To bring the country into an alliance, the Player Characters must demonstrate that Valjinn is involved whether it wants to be or not. The best way to do this is by proving that Kandang has made a deal with the drow in order to gain support for an invasion of Valjinn. The Player Characters can do this by spying on Fangthane Barbiculus or raiding Brexel's den. If they can show that Valjinn is the next target after Jehannum, Valjinn abandons its neutrality and sides with the allies. Valjinn can supply up to 20,000 troops without leaving itself exposed, though it cannot transport them quickly.

**Vella:** The gnome island wants one thing above all else: protection. If it joins an allied force, then it is exposing its beautiful cities, museums and galleries filled with priceless works of art to the chaos of war. The Player Characters must swear to come to Vella's defence when the gnomes call. If the Player Characters do not attempt to enlist Vella's help, the gnomes side with the drow, purely in order to preserve their beloved island intact. They believe that it would be better to live under foreign rule than have their cities torn down and their works destroyed. Vella has only a tiny standing army but it has plenty of ships; assume that for game purposes, there are enough to transport a force of any size.

**Xoth Sarandi:** To bring the elves onto their side, the Player Characters must shame the High Council and expose its hypocrisy. See 'Shaming the Council' below. The elves can supply 40,000 warriors and the ships to transport them. These will be sent from Shallenoi via Xoth Sarandi.





## Non-Player Character Group: The High Council of Xoth Sarandi

The High Council is a group of nine elders, led by a silver-haired spokesman garbed in a white robe with blue silk edging and wearing a golden laurel crown of authority. This is Ashellus of the Tree.

All the Council members are titled after images from ancient, almost forgotten elven tales. Other members are Vandil of the Seven Stars, Maradith of the Pool, Luceni of the Scroll, Tamberlin of the High Peak, Scarulan of the First Flint, Jaspel of the Lute, Haveranti of the Laughing Sun and Corcoram of the Ashes.

The meeting place of the Council is in the centre of the dome, on simple wooden benches under the shade of a single silver tree.

### Plot Event: Meet the Council

Nimian Archimandrus urges the Player Characters to meet with the Council as soon as they have had a chance to rest from their journey. It is up to them when they choose to do this. So long as they are in his company or Azbeth's, the sentries in the Inner City allow them to pass and enter the Council dome. The Games Master should read or paraphrase the following when the Player Characters encounter the Council:

*The air within the dome is still and silent. The nine figures seated before you, beneath the shade of a tree that seems to be wrought from fine silver, do not move at all. Their gaze is fixed upon you as you approach. Although you have never been here before, the place feels weirdly familiar, as if you had seen it in a dream or when you were very young.*

*'We bid you welcome, Starborn,' says the aged elf at the centre. 'Sit and rest in this place of sanctuary. No doubt you have many questions.'*

The Player Characters are now free to ask the Council any questions they see fit. The following are their responses to likely subjects:

### Who are the Starborn? Why were they created?

*The events you see unfolding before you now, the conflict men are calling the Drow War, is no mere bid for power. It is the most recent stage in a cycle many thousands of years old. There is a power that we call the Dark, a terrible, devouring force that has been excluded from the balanced universe since the Creation. It works through agents... it favours the drow and their hideous goddess, and her sorcerous counsellor.*

*The machinery of the cosmos tilts the balance now to this side, now to that. At certain times, which we call the Equinoxes, the forces of life and the forces of the Dark come into conflict. The Dark becomes able to manifest itself within the world. At these times, it sets about destroying all variety, all semblance of liberty... everything that is different from itself. We do not truly understand what it wants, but our greatest sages believe that we cause it agony simply by being alive. Our existence disrupts the continuity of the Dark, like stars in the night.*

*The first time when we were able to prepare for the rising Dark was three thousand years ago, as men reckon time. The Dark had champions, avatars infused with its power, who could not be slain by ordinary means. We petitioned the goddess Nuith, Our Lady of the Stars, to aid us in creating champions of our own, who would lead the fight against the Dark and its agents. The souls of the stars were channelled into mortal bodies. Thus were the Starborn created. That is who you are.*

### Are we reincarnations of former heroes?

*Yes and no. Your hearts and minds are as lanterns, within which an undying flame burns. The flame is continual. The lantern breaks and is replaced.*

### Do we have no choice in this? Why should we fight this war? What about free will?

*You have a choice. You will always have a choice. Remember this: although you have powers that others do not and they were given to you for a reason, we cannot make you use them. You are champions, not mere tools in the hands of the gods. It is not for the powers above to write your lives for you. To you alone belongs the responsibility – and the glory.*


### What help can you give us?

*We are no longer a part of this war. Our influence is gone from the world. We cannot involve ourselves in the battles of younger races. It is enough that we caused you to be created, as champions against the Dark. We forged unique artefacts of power, which you bear now and which your predecessors bore before you. And you ask more of us than this?*

If Nimian Archimandrus is with the Player Characters at this point, a Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals that he is furious but doing his best to keep it from showing.

So long as the Player Characters remain courteous, they can continue to talk to the High Council. If they lose their tempers, the Council glares, makes comments about the folly of youth and has them thrown out of the Council chamber.





When the discussions have ground to a halt or the Player Characters have been expelled, Archimandrus apologises for their stubborn refusal to be of any use:

*'I am sorry. I thought that having you there might change their minds. I should have known better. Those who have ruled for centuries do not change. Melmoth forgive me for saying it, but they are blind old fools! They think they can sit here in splendid isolation while the rest of the world devolves into chaos around them! Come – let me take you to people who are not afraid to fight.'*

With that, he attempts to escort them to the Conclave (see below).

**Conclusion:** The official stance of the High Council is that the Starborn are the elves' contribution to the war effort. They set the magical events in motion that led to the Player Characters being gifted in the way that they are, with their signature weapons and power to return from the dead. Since they have already given so much, the elves are not under any obligation to do more. This is not their fight and they will not be joining any coalition. Their day is done and the humans must now stand against the darkness without the elves to hold their hands.

This attitude, as the Player Characters may well notice, is brazen hypocrisy. The elves know very well that they are responsible for the drow problem. Their own chief deity created the mother of all drow in a cowardly act of self-mutilation, by refusing to face his own dark side. The elven race has been in collective denial ever since.

**Shaming the Council:** The Player Characters may be unwilling to accept this neutral, uninvolved stance. If they confront the Council and make a speech that, in the Games Master's opinion, exposes the Council's avoidance tactics for what they are, then the Council may relent and agree to send troops to help the humans. A spectacular Diplomacy check (DC 30) is needed to achieve this, and the Player Characters also have to find some way to address the Council, which probably means *teleporting* into the city hall or some such tactic.

The Player Characters may have other ideas, such as a public rally or mass protest. The Games Master should judge any such approach by the amount of effort and dedication the Player Characters put into it rather than by dice rolls. Whatever they do, it must have the effect of making the Council ashamed of its own neutrality in order to be effective.

Even if the Council does relent, it should not appear to at first. A good cinematic way to reward the Player Characters' effort is to have the elven troops arrive to help attack Jehannum just as the assault is about to begin. This is even more effective if the Player Characters are about to make the assault with far fewer troops than they need!

### **Information: The Real History of Jehannum**

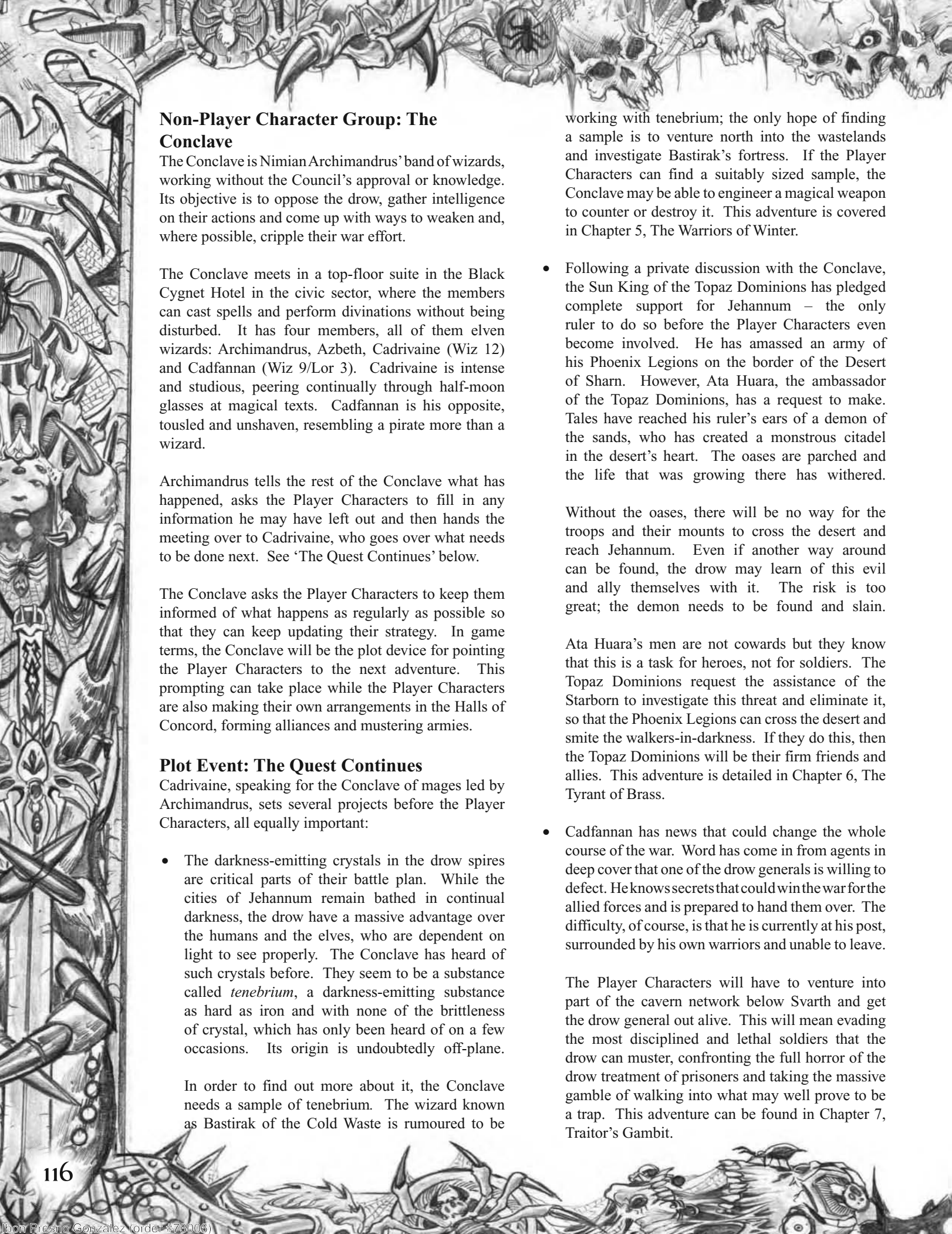
All of the members of the High Council know this information, as do the members of the Conclave. They are not happy to discuss it, but the Conclave will at least explain it, if the Player Characters press them.

At the end of the last Equinox of Heroes, the drow were soundly defeated. Many drow women and children were left above ground, with their menfolk dead and no way to return home. In a spirit of compassion, the people of Jehannum allowed them to have a few settlements above the ground, on the understanding that there would be no aggression so long as the humans were left in peace. The drow had originally occupied the tunnels below Jehannum long before humans had ever arrived there and many of them viewed the place as their homeland, so being allowed to stay was a great comfort.

The drow did not adapt well to their surface existence, but coped with it as best they could. Several generations passed and the settlements began to prosper, isolated though they were. Many humans still loathed the drow and there were many beatings and lynchings. The authorities turned a blind eye and the drow endured their treatment with silent patience.

The drow communities in Jehannum were finally destroyed when the elves of Xoth Sarandi offered the humans a massive shipment of tribute if they would withdraw their protection from the drow. The humans not only cancelled the drow's right to live in their kingdom but also went hunting and killing them in return for bounties paid by the elves. Though this 'scalp price' was not part of the official arrangement, so many elves were willing to offer it (and so many humans were willing to take it) that the government of Jehannum took no notice. The drow fled the country with what possessions they could carry, taking to the sea and to the mountains, promising that one day a reckoning would come. Evidently, that day has arrived.





## Non-Player Character Group: The Conclave

The Conclave is Nimian Archimandrus' band of wizards, working without the Council's approval or knowledge. Its objective is to oppose the drow, gather intelligence on their actions and come up with ways to weaken and, where possible, cripple their war effort.

The Conclave meets in a top-floor suite in the Black Cygnet Hotel in the civic sector, where the members can cast spells and perform divinations without being disturbed. It has four members, all of them elven wizards: Archimandrus, Azbeth, Cadrivaine (Wiz 12) and Cadfannan (Wiz 9/Lor 3). Cadrivaine is intense and studious, peering continually through half-moon glasses at magical texts. Cadfannan is his opposite, tousled and unshaven, resembling a pirate more than a wizard.

Archimandrus tells the rest of the Conclave what has happened, asks the Player Characters to fill in any information he may have left out and then hands the meeting over to Cadrivaine, who goes over what needs to be done next. See 'The Quest Continues' below.

The Conclave asks the Player Characters to keep them informed of what happens as regularly as possible so that they can keep updating their strategy. In game terms, the Conclave will be the plot device for pointing the Player Characters to the next adventure. This prompting can take place while the Player Characters are also making their own arrangements in the Halls of Concord, forming alliances and mustering armies.

### Plot Event: The Quest Continues

Cadrivaine, speaking for the Conclave of mages led by Archimandrus, sets several projects before the Player Characters, all equally important:

- The darkness-emitting crystals in the drow spires are critical parts of their battle plan. While the cities of Jehannum remain bathed in continual darkness, the drow have a massive advantage over the humans and the elves, who are dependent on light to see properly. The Conclave has heard of such crystals before. They seem to be a substance called *tenebrium*, a darkness-emitting substance as hard as iron and with none of the brittleness of crystal, which has only been heard of on a few occasions. Its origin is undoubtedly off-plane.

In order to find out more about it, the Conclave needs a sample of *tenebrium*. The wizard known as Bastirak of the Cold Waste is rumoured to be

working with *tenebrium*; the only hope of finding a sample is to venture north into the wastelands and investigate Bastirak's fortress. If the Player Characters can find a suitably sized sample, the Conclave may be able to engineer a magical weapon to counter or destroy it. This adventure is covered in Chapter 5, The Warriors of Winter.

- Following a private discussion with the Conclave, the Sun King of the Topaz Dominions has pledged complete support for Jehannum – the only ruler to do so before the Player Characters even become involved. He has amassed an army of his Phoenix Legions on the border of the Desert of Sharn. However, Ata Hwara, the ambassador of the Topaz Dominions, has a request to make. Tales have reached his ruler's ears of a demon of the sands, who has created a monstrous citadel in the desert's heart. The oases are parched and the life that was growing there has withered.

Without the oases, there will be no way for the troops and their mounts to cross the desert and reach Jehannum. Even if another way around can be found, the drow may learn of this evil and ally themselves with it. The risk is too great; the demon needs to be found and slain.

Ata Hwara's men are not cowards but they know that this is a task for heroes, not for soldiers. The Topaz Dominions request the assistance of the Starborn to investigate this threat and eliminate it, so that the Phoenix Legions can cross the desert and smite the walkers-in-darkness. If they do this, then the Topaz Dominions will be their firm friends and allies. This adventure is detailed in Chapter 6, The Tyrant of Brass.

- Cadfannan has news that could change the whole course of the war. Word has come in from agents in deep cover that one of the drow generals is willing to defect. He knows secrets that could win the war for the allied forces and is prepared to hand them over. The difficulty, of course, is that he is currently at his post, surrounded by his own warriors and unable to leave.

The Player Characters will have to venture into part of the cavern network below Svarth and get the drow general out alive. This will mean evading the most disciplined and lethal soldiers that the drow can muster, confronting the full horror of the drow treatment of prisoners and taking the massive gamble of walking into what may well prove to be a trap. This adventure can be found in Chapter 7, Traitor's Gambit.

The Player Characters can choose the order in which they tackle these missions. They can also choose to skip them if they wish, though they will miss out on opportunities for experience and treasure. In game terms, they all have encounters with ELs ranging from 14 to 16, so no single adventure should be too easy or too hard.

### **Information: The Abyssal Altar**

Before the Player Characters depart to continue their quest, the Conclave advises them to be on the lookout for any information they can acquire concerning the Abyssal Altar. Archimandrus sums up this artefact as follows:

*None of us has seen it in person but we know it exists, from visions and such reports as have reached us from former agents in Bahl-I-Shabran, the city of the drow. You may have seen it in visions yourselves. The Starborn of former aeons occasionally glimpsed it in their dreams. We do not know if the Host intended these dreams as intimidation or the Lady of the Stars sent them as a warning.*

*The Abyssal Altar is a piece of black stone, kept in continual darkness. It is the focus of worship for the Ennead, the leaders of the nine houses of the drow. They perform rituals around it that we do not recognise.*

*Although we do not know exactly what the Altar is, we know something of its history. It dates from the very first Equinox of the Heroes, 3,000 years ago, when the Dark manifested itself in this world in the form of a colossus. It was called the Black Titan and marched on the city of Shallenoi, bringing with it 'a cloak of 100,000 darknesses', as the records recount; that is, an enormous army of drow warriors. The Titan was destroyed and its body broken but the champions of the drow were able to remove its heart and bear it away underground. Although the*

*connection has never been proven, it seems that the Titan's black stone heart became the Abyssal Altar.*

*The Altar is not merely a religious object. It is somehow important to the work of the Host on this world. We are not sure how or why it is important but we do know that high-ranking members of the Host carry shards broken off the Altar, by means of which they are able to corrupt the Nodes. From that, it seems obvious that the Altar concentrates the force of the Dark in the same way that the Nodes concentrate the force of the Stars. A member of the Host, if slain, could be restored to life there.*

*Find out what you can about the Altar, especially from any drow you meet. We believe that it is still kept under guard at Bahl-I-Shabran, but if it does indeed act in a similar way to the Nodes, then logic dictates that the Host would move it to where it would be needed most. They have attacked our places of power, so it would be sweet revenge were we to destroy theirs.*







# Warriors of Winter

Following maps given to them by Cadrivaine, the Player Characters travel into the cold waste in the north-eastern corner of the Eagle Nations, in search of the frost citadel of Bastirak the Ice Mage. Their maps show a large trading town, Ommersdale, before the cold waste begins; but upon arriving there they discover only the snow-covered remains of what was once a human settlement.

The boundary of the cold waste has expanded by more than 20 miles since it was last mapped. If the Player Characters had been expecting to find supplies at Ommersdale, they are out of luck. As they progress further in, they encounter monstrous humanoids fleeing the region and signs of bizarre extraplanar creatures making their homes in the waste. Clearly, there is something afoot at the citadel of Bastirak.

The Player Characters must reach and confront the ice mage to learn the truth about his newfound power. He has indeed been working with tenebrium, gathering huge amounts of it on his travels off-plane and trading it with emissaries from the drow. Bastirak has made a pact with them, pledging to supply them with the largest tenebrium crystals he can. In return he has received the direct assistance of a group of drow wizards, who are now resident in his citadel, helping him with his magical experiments and fortifying the building with their spells.

## Journey to the Waste

Nobody in the Conclave is entirely sure where the citadel of Bastirak is. The wizard does not welcome visitors, nor is it possible to *scry* on the place, so accounts of its whereabouts are impossible to find. Those who have found the frost citadel tend to have stumbled upon it by accident. There is no other option than to travel to the nearest settlement, Ommersdale, and ask questions there. The townsfolk will undoubtedly have heard of Bastirak and may be able to point the Player Characters in the right direction.

The Player Characters have two options for travelling to the Waste. They can either travel by ship all the way, using the closest sea-portal to cut down on travel time or they can allow Cadrivaine to *teleport* them there.

Cadrivaine has been to Ommersdale once before and offers a good chance of arriving on-site accurately. This method would also avoid any unpleasant encounters with sea monsters. If anyone thinks to *scry* Ommersdale first in order to improve the chances of hitting the target, they can see that it has been devastated and have more warning.

If the Player Characters opt for *teleportation*, then the Games Master may assume for narrative purposes that Cadrivaine misses the mark slightly and arrives a mile to the south of Ommersdale, thus allowing the Player Characters to discover it in its wrecked state. Alternatively, the Games Master may have the Player Characters *teleport* into the ruins of Ommersdale and have Cadrivaine panic that he has sent them to the wrong place.

## Location: The Ruins of Ommersdale


*The devastation around you makes it hard to believe that for a determined group of people, this place was once a home. Walls and roofs that must have taken hours of hard work to build are now reduced to a jumble of timbers again.*

*In the empty roads lies the debris of people's lives: copper kettles, smashed plates, sodden blanket and even a woven wicker cradle. These are all simple items but valuable out here on the frontier, and it is strange to see them scattered like rubbish. There seems no sense or purpose to the destruction. It is as if something huge had smashed in cabin after cabin, flung the contents out into the snow and then moved on.*

*Whatever it was that struck here, the people tried to fight it. Broken weapons lie half-buried in the snow, close to the stiffened remains of those who wielded them. It is hard to see details because of the gentle white covering of snow, but it looks as though the bodies are crushed and broken, flung about like toys. They were killed quickly – perhaps even playfully.*

Characters who search around the ruins can find the following:

**Tracks:** The tracks that lead into and out of Ommersdale are relatively easy for a tracker to follow. The raid took place three days ago and although snow has fallen since



then, the tracks are numerous and deep. A Survival check (DC 13) and the Track feat are needed to find and follow each of these trails:

- The tracks of multiple humanoid creatures lead south out of Ommersdale. There were around 25 creatures, heading hurriedly south, including some child-sized creatures. These are the tracks left by Ommersdale's women and children, who were sent south to the next town, Scarsby. It is 30 miles away over rough, cold ground, but by the time the Player Characters arrive on the scene they have already arrived in safety.
- Heading into the town from due north are the tracks of around six Large creatures wearing boots, accompanied by a Huge quadruped, possibly an elephant or mammoth. These are the tracks left by the wreckers as they descended upon Ommersdale.
- Heading northeast out of the town are the tracks of approximately five Large booted creatures and two Huge bipeds with footprints like those of the quadruped from the north. There are some chunks of frozen blood further down in the snow and a few scattered oats. These are the tracks left by the wreckers as they headed away with their spoils, with some of the band in hybrid form. The Player Characters can follow these to the wreckers' lair.

**Buildings:** None of the buildings are left intact. A large, central building that seems to have been a supply depot is completely gutted, with marks left behind where barrels and sacks used to be. Oats are spilled over the floor from a burst sack. There is still a large stockpile of furs here, which is unusual for a raiding party to leave behind. Either the raiders did not need furs to keep the cold off, or they were not intending to steal anything but foodstuffs.



**A Strange Lament:** As the Player Characters explore the ruins, the Games Master should have them make Listen checks. The Player Character with the best result (irrespective of what the result is) hears a mournful sound from the northwest, like a simple and doleful melody played on a gigantic pipe organ. It is as if the wind is singing. If the Player Characters choose to investigate, they can follow the sound to the windshaper hills (see page 123).

### Event: The Kings in Darkness

This event can be included at any point after the Player Characters leave Ommersdale. A group of three chattermen (see below) who have gone wandering, following the desecration of their graves, pick up on the Player Characters' trail and start to follow them.

Introduce the chattermen as distant figures glimpsed during a snowfall, too far off to see clearly. They lope along behind the Player Characters, keeping their distance. If the Player Characters camp for the night, then they use the time to catch up, though they will not attack until they have watched them for several days, if possible. They follow the Player Characters into the Great Tunnel or over the mountains if necessary. When they finally do attack, it should come as a shock.

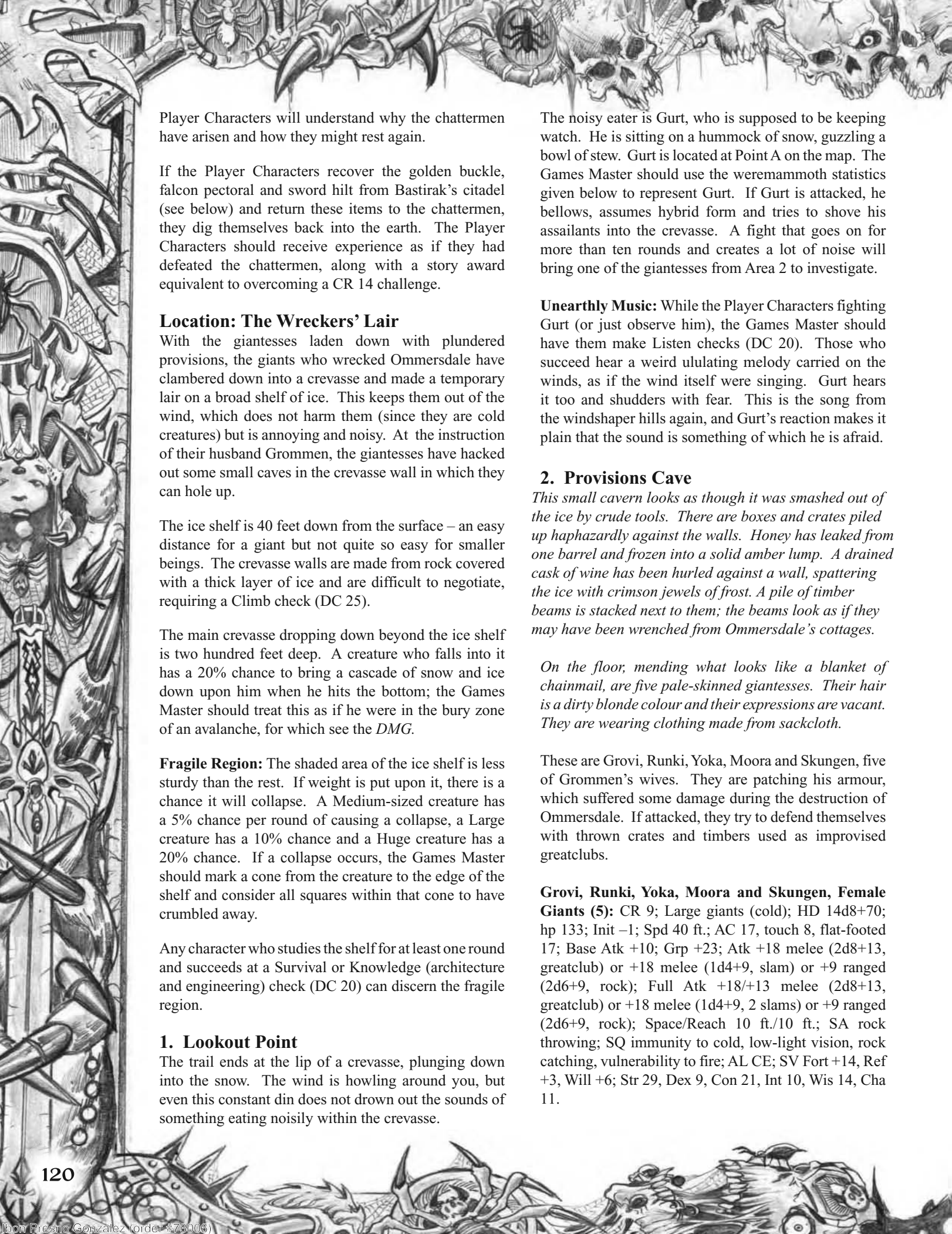
**Background:** Some months ago, Bastirak learned of a burial ground not far from Ommersdale where several tribal chieftains had been interred. The graves dated from a time when the earliest human colonists came to the land, before the elves built their sea-portals to span the ocean with magic. Curious to know what might have been buried with them, he sent his minions to dig up the mounds and fetch any treasure that might be there.

The minions broke the mounds open and ransacked the contents. The dead within, outraged by the desecration, arose as chattermen (see Unusual Creatures of the Cold Waste, page 157) and now prowl the wastes seeking living creatures to drain of heat.

There are three undead chieftains hunting together. They work as a team, stalking the Player Characters from a distance, pacing after them with tireless patience. If their initial attempt to devour the Player Characters' body heat fails, they fall back rather than fighting on. The chattermen are intelligent and see in the Player Characters a possible means to recover their stolen grave-goods.

From this point on, they follow the Player Characters, not to attack them but to show them the truth. They try to lead them towards their burial ground, so that the





Player Characters will understand why the chattermen have arisen and how they might rest again.

If the Player Characters recover the golden buckle, falcon pectoral and sword hilt from Bastirak's citadel (see below) and return these items to the chattermen, they dig themselves back into the earth. The Player Characters should receive experience as if they had defeated the chattermen, along with a story award equivalent to overcoming a CR 14 challenge.

### Location: The Wreckers' Lair

With the giantesses laden down with plundered provisions, the giants who wrecked Ommersdale have clambered down into a crevasse and made a temporary lair on a broad shelf of ice. This keeps them out of the wind, which does not harm them (since they are cold creatures) but is annoying and noisy. At the instruction of their husband Grommen, the giantesses have hacked out some small caves in the crevasse wall in which they can hole up.

The ice shelf is 40 feet down from the surface – an easy distance for a giant but not quite so easy for smaller beings. The crevasse walls are made from rock covered with a thick layer of ice and are difficult to negotiate, requiring a Climb check (DC 25).

The main crevasse dropping down beyond the ice shelf is two hundred feet deep. A creature who falls into it has a 20% chance to bring a cascade of snow and ice down upon him when he hits the bottom; the Games Master should treat this as if he were in the bury zone of an avalanche, for which see the *DMG*.

**Fragile Region:** The shaded area of the ice shelf is less sturdy than the rest. If weight is put upon it, there is a chance it will collapse. A Medium-sized creature has a 5% chance per round of causing a collapse, a Large creature has a 10% chance and a Huge creature has a 20% chance. If a collapse occurs, the Games Master should mark a cone from the creature to the edge of the shelf and consider all squares within that cone to have crumbled away.

Any character who studies the shelf for at least one round and succeeds at a Survival or Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 20) can discern the fragile region.

### 1. Lookout Point

The trail ends at the lip of a crevasse, plunging down into the snow. The wind is howling around you, but even this constant din does not drown out the sounds of something eating noisily within the crevasse.

The noisy eater is Gurt, who is supposed to be keeping watch. He is sitting on a hummock of snow, guzzling a bowl of stew. Gurt is located at Point A on the map. The Games Master should use the weremammoth statistics given below to represent Gurt. If Gurt is attacked, he bellows, assumes hybrid form and tries to shove his assailants into the crevasse. A fight that goes on for more than ten rounds and creates a lot of noise will bring one of the giantesses from Area 2 to investigate.

**Unearthly Music:** While the Player Characters fighting Gurt (or just observe him), the Games Master should have them make Listen checks (DC 20). Those who succeed hear a weird ululating melody carried on the winds, as if the wind itself were singing. Gurt hears it too and shudders with fear. This is the song from the windshaper hills again, and Gurt's reaction makes it plain that the sound is something of which he is afraid.

### 2. Provisions Cave


*This small cavern looks as though it was smashed out of the ice by crude tools. There are boxes and crates piled up haphazardly against the walls. Honey has leaked from one barrel and frozen into a solid amber lump. A drained cask of wine has been hurled against a wall, splattering the ice with crimson jewels of frost. A pile of timber beams is stacked next to them; the beams look as if they may have been wrenched from Ommersdale's cottages.*

*On the floor, mending what looks like a blanket of chainmail, are five pale-skinned giantesses. Their hair is a dirty blonde colour and their expressions are vacant. They are wearing clothing made from sackcloth.*

These are Grovi, Runki, Yoka, Moora and Skungen, five of Grommen's wives. They are patching his armour, which suffered some damage during the destruction of Ommersdale. If attacked, they try to defend themselves with thrown crates and timbers used as improvised greatclubs.

**Grovi, Runki, Yoka, Moora and Skungen, Female Giants (5):** CR 9; Large giants (cold); HD 14d8+70; hp 133; Init -1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +10; Grp +23; Atk +18 melee (2d8+13, greatclub) or +18 melee (1d4+9, slam) or +9 ranged (2d6+9, rock); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (2d8+13, greatclub) or +18 melee (1d4+9, 2 slams) or +9 ranged (2d6+9, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ immunity to cold, low-light vision, rock catching, vulnerability to fire; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 29, Dex 9, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11.





*Skills & Feats:* Climb +13, Craft (armoursmithing) +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +17, Spot +12; Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

### 3. Sleeping Cave

*The smell in here is strong enough to overpower the bitter cold that usually numbs your senses. It is the reek of unwashed skins and rancid sweat. A pile of sodden furs lies in the centre of the cave and is the obvious source of the stench.*

Grommen and his concubine of the moment, Sneg, are sprawled under the covers. If the Player Characters have taken pains to be quiet they are both asleep, but any noise wakes them. Sneg cowers rather than fights.

If Grommen hears fighting in the nearby chamber, he comes roaring out to slaughter those who dare interfere with what is his. If he only hears the sounds of small creatures moving, he hides behind the cave opening, ready to ambush anyone who steps through.

The Games Master should use the weremammoth statistics given on page 122 for Grommen. He fights with an adamantite greataxe, an heirloom of his lycanthropic lineage. It is engraved with scenes of mammoths trampling hundreds of tiny humans underfoot.

**Grommen's Hoard:** Grommen's only wealth is carried on his person. He wears a platinum torc (worth 4,500 gp) and carries a ceremonial shortspear, useless in combat, carved from a mammoth tusk (worth 500 gp). A skull like that of a wolf with little horns forms a clasp for his fur cape. It is made from a pearl-like substance; a Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 20) identifies it as extraplanar in origin. This is the mother-of-pearl skull of a skitterjinx (see Unusual Creatures of the Cold Waste, page 157), worth 1,300 gold pieces.

Grommen carries a pouch in which are several tiny, dried fungi. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 20) identifies these as a rare toadstool, the berserker fungus, used by the barbarian warriors of Boskenland. Consumption of one of the berserker fungi allows a barbarian to extend his rage period by five rounds. If a non-barbarian consumes one of the fungi, he temporarily enters rage as if he were a 1<sup>st</sup> level barbarian; however, at the end of the rage, he must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) or be nauseated for 1d4 rounds. There are eight dried toadstools in the pouch.

### Non-Player Character Group: The Wreckers

The wreckers of Ommersdale are a band of especially savage and degenerate frost giants led by a pair of weremammoths, who have moved south away from their original home because the land is being overrun by unfamiliar monsters. They are tired of being eaten by glacial oozes and soul-drained by whiteladies. The region around Ommersdale is not as cold as they would like but it will suffice for now.


Grommen, the leader of the troupe, and his son Gurt are the weremammoths. The other frost giants are females, considered inferior and reduced to the status of cooks and concubines. Grommen wishes to extend the line of giant weremammoths, though none of his brood but Gurt has shown the signs of inherited lycanthropy yet, which is why Grommen killed his other children before they grew any older.

The female giants have accepted their lives of servitude but would welcome freedom. If the Player Characters kill one or both of their overlords they beg to be spared, promising to help the Player Characters on their quest. They offer themselves, in all seriousness, as cooks and companions. They will accompany the party for as long as it suits them, offering to tend to animals and guard the camp. However, they will refuse to fight enemies and



## Weremammoths (Frost Giant Lycanthropes)

	Giant Form	Hybrid Form	Mammoth Form
	Large Giant (Cold, Shapechanger)	Huge Giant (Cold, Shapechanger)	Huge Giant (Cold, Shapechanger)
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	14d8+70 plus 11d8+110 (292 hp)	14d8+70 plus 11d8+110 (292 hp)	14d8+70 plus 11d8+110 (292 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	-1	-1	+0
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft. (8 squares)	40 ft. (8 squares)	40 ft. (8 squares)
<b>Armour Class:</b>	23 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +11 natural, +4 chain shirt) touch 8, flat-footed 23	16 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +11 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 16	17 (-2 size, +9 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 17
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+18/+31	+18/+45	+18/+45
<b>Attack:</b>	Greataxe +26 melee (3d6+13/x3) or slam +26 melee (1d4+9) or rock +17 ranged (2d6+9)	Large greataxe +35 melee (3d6+28/x3) or slam +35 melee (1d6+19) or gore +35 melee (2d8+19) or rock +17 ranged (2d8+19)	Gore +35 melee (2d8+28)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Greataxe +26/+21/+16/+11 melee (3d6+13/x3) or 2 slams +26 melee (1d4+9) or rock +17 ranged (2d6+9)	Large greataxe +35/+30/+25/+20 melee (3d6+28/x3) and gore +30 melee (2d8+9); or 2 slams +35 melee (1d6+9) and gore +30 melee (2d8+9); or rock +17 ranged (2d8+19)	Slam +35 melee (2d6+19) and 2 stamps +30 melee (2d6+9); or gore +35 melee (2d8+28)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.	15 ft./15 ft.	15 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Rock throwing	Curse of lycanthropy, rock throwing	Curse of lycanthropy
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Alternate form, immunity to cold, low-light vision, mammoth empathy, rock catching, scent, vulnerability to fire	Alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver, immunity to cold, low-light vision, mammoth empathy, rock catching, scent, vulnerability to fire	Alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver, immunity to cold, low-light vision, mammoth empathy, rock catching, scent, vulnerability to fire
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +21, Ref +10, Will +12	Fort +26, Ref +10, Will +12	Fort +26, Ref +10, Will +12
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 29, Dex 9, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 11	Str 49, Dex 9, Con 31, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 11	Str 49, Dex 9, Con 31, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 11
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +13, Craft (armoursmithing) +6, Intimidate +17, Jump +17, Listen +15, Spot +18	Climb +25, Craft (armoursmithing) +6, Intimidate +17, Jump +29, Listen +15, Spot +18	Climb +25, Craft (armoursmithing) +6, Intimidate +17, Jump +29, Listen +15, Spot +18
<b>Feats:</b>	Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Endurance, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Listen)	Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Endurance, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Listen)	Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Endurance, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Listen)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	14	14	14
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard	Standard	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always chaotic evil	Always chaotic evil	Always chaotic evil
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character class	By character class	By character class
<b>Level Adjustment:</b>	+7	+7	+7



will turn traitor if the chance presents itself. They only care about their own survival and will happily exploit the good nature of any good-aligned Player Characters.

*Note:* The mammoths of the Waste are omnivorous man-killers, not at all like their placid elephant relatives in Kahoor and Kandang. Were-elephants are an impossibility, as herbivores do not have lycanthrope relatives; weremammoths are, fortunately, extremely rare.

### Event: Questioning the Giants

The Player Characters may attempt to interrogate the giants, as they have few other leads to go on in their search for Bastirak. Only the giantesses talk. Grommen and Gurt are more interested in splitting skulls.

- They used to live further north, in Grommen's ice fortress, with a herd of mammoths as pets. Life was good until many strange creatures came from the northwest, the place where the lights dance in the sky and the giant shadows walk. At first little things came, like walking dogs that would sneak into your room and steal your weapons and your tools. Then there were the pale women whose laughter fills you with fear. Finally came the noises on the wind that gave everyone terrible headaches. Grommen could not tolerate this anymore and attempted to go and put an end to the ice wizard's meddling. When this attempt failed, he commanded the giant gang to pack up and leave. The noises have followed the giants, though they are not so close as they were.
- The raid on Ommersdale was Grommen and Gurt's idea. The giantesses only went along with it because they were afraid not to. All they needed was food, in case the hunting in their new home was not good. Grommen and Gurt found wine and mead in Ommersdale, drank it all and smashed the entire town to pieces. Many little humans ran away. Everyone else was killed.
- They do not know of any wizard. They are afraid of such things. If he were anywhere, he would be in the strange place northwest of Grommen's fortress. Grommen went to the strange place just before the giant gang abandoned the fortress. He came back half mad, with a sack full of objects that he did not show to anyone. A few days later he told everyone to leave for the south. The fortress is empty now. Grommen left many of his possessions there. That is where the sack will be.

### Location: The Windshaper Hills

*The environment is becoming little more than an endless blank sky in which motes of snow dance above an endless plain of white that crunches underfoot. The wind howls constantly, but despite this the peculiar music grows louder. You can make out more than one melody; there seem to be at least three, one slow and sorrowful, one shrill and whining, and another deep and ominous.*

*Up ahead through the thickening snow, you see a cluster of low hills. On top of the nearest is a group of three shapes, each one around 15 feet high. At this distance it is hard to tell. The shapes are perfectly still and remind you of dancing people or petrified creatures of some kind. As the wind rises and falls, the melodies become louder and softer. You realise that these objects are the source of the music.*

To deter the giants from coming too close, the windshapers (see Unusual Creatures of the Cold Waste, page 157) have built a sculpture of terror, a sculpture of pain and a sculpture of sorrow on the hilltop.

The windshaper coven lives in a set of small caves beneath the sculptures. They are listening to the sounds the sculptures make, in silent contemplation. If they hear the melody from any of the sculptures cease, implying that the sculpture has been destroyed, they make themselves *invisible* and come out to investigate.

#### 1. Cave Entrance

A six-inch-thick window of ice, over which snow has settled, closes off the entrance. A Search check (DC 25) is needed to find this concealed ice pane. It has 18 hit points and can be hit automatically. If the windshapers hear their door being smashed in, they imbue their weapons with thunder in preparation for a fight.


#### 2. Meditation Chamber

This hemispherical room is lined with smooth ice. There are four raised bumps on the floor, like seats. There must be some acoustic trick at work here; every sound you make seems amplified.

The windshapers have crafted the ice lining in this room to amplify sound. All Listen checks made here are at a +2 circumstance bonus.

The four windshapers who dwell here are seated, invisible, on the ice pedestals. They are hoping that they will not have to interact with the Player Characters. They intend to ignore them until they go away. If the Player Characters attack, they defend themselves. Otherwise, they quietly wait for them to leave.





If the Player Characters make a concerted, respectful attempt to talk to the windshapers and do not vandalise their home, the windshapers grudgingly appear and converse with them. They want nothing more than to be left in peace. They can also reveal the following:

- They came to this plane as prisoners of the ice mage Bastirak, taken from their home plane of Baiiko. By the careful use of magic and the manipulation of stupid guards, they were able to escape and set up this humble retreat. They miss their home; one snowy wilderness is as good as another, so long as the wind keeps up, but this place has too many annoying little mortal creatures in it.
- The windshapers observed Bastirak's citadel invisibly after they escaped, and heard him giving instructions to a pack of bipedal canine creatures. Bastirak was furious that a 'lumbering oaf', presumably the weremammoth Grommen, had stolen something of value to him and offered to reward the canines if they brought the items back. The skitterjinx pack made a tentative attempt to sneak into the fortress, but the giants had already fled by then and the whiteladies proved too frightening for them.
- If the Player Characters explain that they are intent on confronting Bastirak, the windshapers offer to help. If the Player Characters can find a way to return them to their home plane, then they will do what they can to assist, including leading them to the fortress. They will not re-enter Bastirak's fortress or engage in combat, but they will create ice sculptures for the Player Characters' use.
- The lands near Bastirak's citadel are extremely dangerous. There is something roaming among the mountains that looks like a living avalanche or an immense tidal wave of snow. The weremammoths have fled the region, but worse creatures have moved into their fortress home.

### Location: The Ransacked Graves

*The snow here has been dug through and a group of three hollows exposed, each one lined with wet, rotting leather hides. Based on the sizes and shapes of the hollows, they can only have been burial mounds. There are no signs of the bodies, nor of any of the goods with which they might have been buried.*

These graves are those from which the chattermen arose (see The Kings in Darkness, above). They return here if their treasures are retrieved and given back to them.

### Location: The Abandoned Fortress

*The edifice up ahead of you looks like a sandcastle built by a child, only made from boulders and grey cement and built to a massive scale. The walls are crudely built and uneven. There are no signs of life. A single doorway leads into the place. The door, ten feet high and made from ironbound planks, stands ajar.*

Even when this fortress was inhabited, there was little in the rooms save rough furniture. Now that the giants have abandoned it, the majority of the rooms are empty, home to nothing but shadows and gloom. The exceptions are noted below.

#### 1. Skitterjinx Lair

This area has an odd reek to it, unmistakably animal and yet acrid and unfamiliar. You hear quiet conversation in yapping, breathy voices.

The five skitterjinxes that Bastirak sent have made themselves at home in this empty gatehouse. They are discussing what to do next. A character who approaches quietly enough not to be heard can hear their whiny voices arguing:

*'I say we forget white wizard! Baldy head jag-jaw! His fault we here anyway. Forget giant sack and just run-run aways. If we stayings, the laughing ones will gets us, break our bones and suck the marrow they will. Seen them do it.'*

*'Pah. You sing a runt's song. Is easy job. The ice ladies have no quarrel with us. They wants to live just as we do. We can sneak past stupid one. Then we speak nice to many-legs and she let us take what wizard wants. Is all easy. Then wizard sends us back home. Or gives us shiny things.'*

*'Too many things are not knowing. I say you both wrong. We waits. See what the ladies do. If they comes and talks peace-things, then perhaps we go down, fetch what we sent to bring. But not now. Now is for stealth. Now is for the waiting.'*

If the skitterjinxes are disturbed they immediately scatter like cockroaches. They do not want a fight. Once the Player Characters have given up pursuit (assuming they do) the skitterjinxes sneak back to watch them, always curious to see what will happen. If they think they can manipulate the Player Characters into disposing of the whiteladies for them, then they will. They promise to lead the Player Characters to stores of buried treasure, help them to find a secret way into Bastirak's castle, show them where to find his stores of tenebrium and

anything else they can think of to offer. The skitterjinxes are chaotic and will happily make promises that they do not intend to keep.

## 2. Fetish Altar

*This long dirt-floored chamber must have been used for some kind of primitive worship. From the red stains splashed upon the walls, you can guess what kind. The skull of a mammoth, yellow as candle grease, is set on a massive boulder over which a woolly pelt has been spread. Beneath, on the ground, two tusks have been placed opposite one another, creating an oval space in which a large wooden bowl sits. The bowl contains a rust-coloured mass of ice.*

This is where Grommen would worship his mammoth spirit ancestor, taking hallucinogenic mushrooms and going on mad raving vision quests. A bag of ten berserker fungi is secreted inside the mammoth skull (see Grommen's character description for details). The frozen fluid in the bowl is a brew made from the mushrooms.

The bones of Grommen's son Kergal, ritually killed by his father, lie two feet under the dirt floor. He is the symbolic guardian of the shrine, a foundation keeper (see sidebar). Grommen decided that since Kergal had not grown into a weremammoth as he was supposed to, he might as well be useful for *something*.



If the Player Characters desecrate the altar, such as by moving the mammoth skull and searching around, Kergal becomes a more literal guardian, waking up and attacking. The first the Player Characters know of this is when an incorporeal bony arm thrusts up through the earth.

Kergal is a ghostly giant with his lower jaw torn completely off, a slack tongue hanging in the space where it should be. This ghostly wound was caused by the death-blow Grommen gave him.

**Kergal:** CR 11; Large undead (cold, incorporeal); HD 14d12; hp 91; Init -1; Spd 40 ft.; fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10 or AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17 against ethereal foes; Base Atk +10; Grp +23; Atk +8 melee or +18 against ethereal foes (1d6 or 1d6+9 against ethereal foes, incorporeal touch); or +18 melee (3d6+13/x3, greataxe) or +18 melee (1d4+9, slam) or +9 ranged (2d6+9, rock); Full Atk +8 melee or +18 against ethereal foes (1d6 or 1d6+9 against ethereal foes, incorporeal touch); or +18/+13 melee (3d6+13/x3, huge greataxe) or +18 melee (1d4+9, 2 slams) or +9 ranged (2d6+9, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA corrupting gaze, corrupting touch, horrific appearance, rock throwing; SQ +5 turn resistance, immunity to cold, low-light vision, rejuvenation, rock catching, vulnerability to fire; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 29, Dex 9, Con —, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 15.

**Skills & Feats:** Climb +15, Craft (armoursmithing) +6, Hide +3, Intimidate +6, Jump +19, Listen +10, Search +8, Spot +20; Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

**Corrupting Gaze (Su):** Kergal can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet his gaze must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 17) or be dealt 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

**Corrupting Touch (Su):** Kergal's incorporeal touch deals 1d6 points of damage, or 1d6+9 against ethereal foes.

**Horrific Appearance (Su):** Any living creature within 60 feet that views Kergal's hideous form must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 17) or immediately be dealt 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature who successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by Kergal's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

**Equipment & Treasure:** Greataxe.





### Foundation Keepers

Those who uncover the buried ruins of primeval temples occasionally find the skeletons of sacrificial victims buried down among the foundations. Primitive superstition holds that the soul of the sacrificed creature will guard the building and make sure that it stands firm.

A foundation keeper is a ghost created according to a complicated ritual. First the victim must be prepared by being fed a cocktail of hallucinogenic herbs and fungi that require a Craft (herbalism) or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20) to prepare properly. Next the victim must be ritually slain within the precincts he is to guard, with a single blow (such as a *coup de grace*). If more than one blow proves necessary, a foundation keeper is not created. The creature's blood is then used to anoint the boundaries of the space to be protected, which cannot exceed ten square feet per Hit Die or character level that the creature had. Finally, the body must be interred in the place to be guarded.

Foundation keepers have the following special features:

- +5 turn resistance, which replaces the ghost's standard turn resistance of +4.
- Foundation keepers never have the *malevolence* special ability.
- A foundation keeper reforms itself 1d6 hours after being destroyed, rather than taking 2d4 days.

A foundation keeper cannot leave the marked region that it has been set to guard. It cannot be 'laid to rest', but if its remains are dug up and moved from the site it is permanently destroyed. Otherwise it reforms itself after being dispelled, as is usual for a ghost.

### 4. Mammoth Pens

These vast stalls must have been used to house animals. They have been recently abandoned, as there are mounds of fresh dung and elephantine footprints in the frozen muck on the floor. Scattered about are chunks of chewed bone, too crushed to be identifiable.

Grommen's band kept a herd of domesticated mammoths in these stalls, caring for them like family. As they were

omnivorous, he mostly fed them captured humanoids from the forest. The arrival of the whiteladies made the mammoths skittish. Eventually they panicked and broke through their stall gates, and they now roam the waste again.

A character searching through the refuse and making a Search check (DC 15) can find a chewed goblin skull. With a Knowledge (nature) check (DC 15) or Survival check (DC 15), a character examining the footprints can conclude that a mammoth made them.

### 4a: Winter Wolf Cadavers

The stiff, frost-sparkling bodies of five white wolves lie here, twisted as if they had died in pain. There is no sign of any blood.

These predators came sniffing around the fortress and were unlucky enough to run into the whiteladies, who drained their life essence in moments. The positions of the bodies suggests that they were backed into the corner and desperate to get away.

### 5. Blocked Stairs

*This set of stone steps leads down only a few feet before a gleaming wall of ice blocks it off. You glimpse something pale embedded in the ice, perhaps a body or swatch of white cloth.*

There is a whitelady (see page 166) at the bottom of the stairs, hovering behind five feet of ice. If the Player Characters come close without disturbing her, they are able to get a good look. She resembles a beautiful human woman, her long hair hanging veil-like in the ice, looking somehow artificial like a carnival exhibit. Assuming the Player Characters do not do anything hostile, she remains asleep. If they attempt to break the ice or affect her in any way, her eyes suddenly flick open and she darts away into the ice like a vanishing mermaid.

### 6. Partially Blocked Stairs

*White mist seeps up these huge steps, chilling against your flesh. The steps lead down into a cellar built for giants. The stairs are partly blocked by fallen rubble, but you believe you can squeeze through. The roof above does not look sound.*

A Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (DC 15) ascertains that the roof is not especially robust, but should hold up so long as nothing disturbs the supports or shakes the ground too much.



## 7. Caverns of the Whiteladies

Your breath steams in the freezing air. The region under the fortress is all ice – the walls, floor and roof are encased in it. The tunnels leading through it look smooth, as if they had been shaped by hands rather than worked with tools. Presumably there is rock and earth somewhere under all this ice.

On entering the caverns for the first time, all characters should make Knowledge (dungeoneering) skill checks. Any result of 20 or more means that the character notices that the ceiling is extremely loose. The glassy bulk of the ice is all that holds it up. The whiteladies have clearly chosen their lair carefully. Anyone trying to dig them out risks being buried alive!

The average height of the rooms in this section is 15 feet. The frost giants built it to their scale, so the passages are much larger than an ordinary cellar would be.

**Slippery Floors:** The floor underfoot is slippery with ice. It costs two squares of movement to enter ice-covered squares and the DCs of Balance and Tumble checks made there are increased by five. Characters

who attempt to run or charge across an ice sheet must make Balance checks (DC 10) to do so.

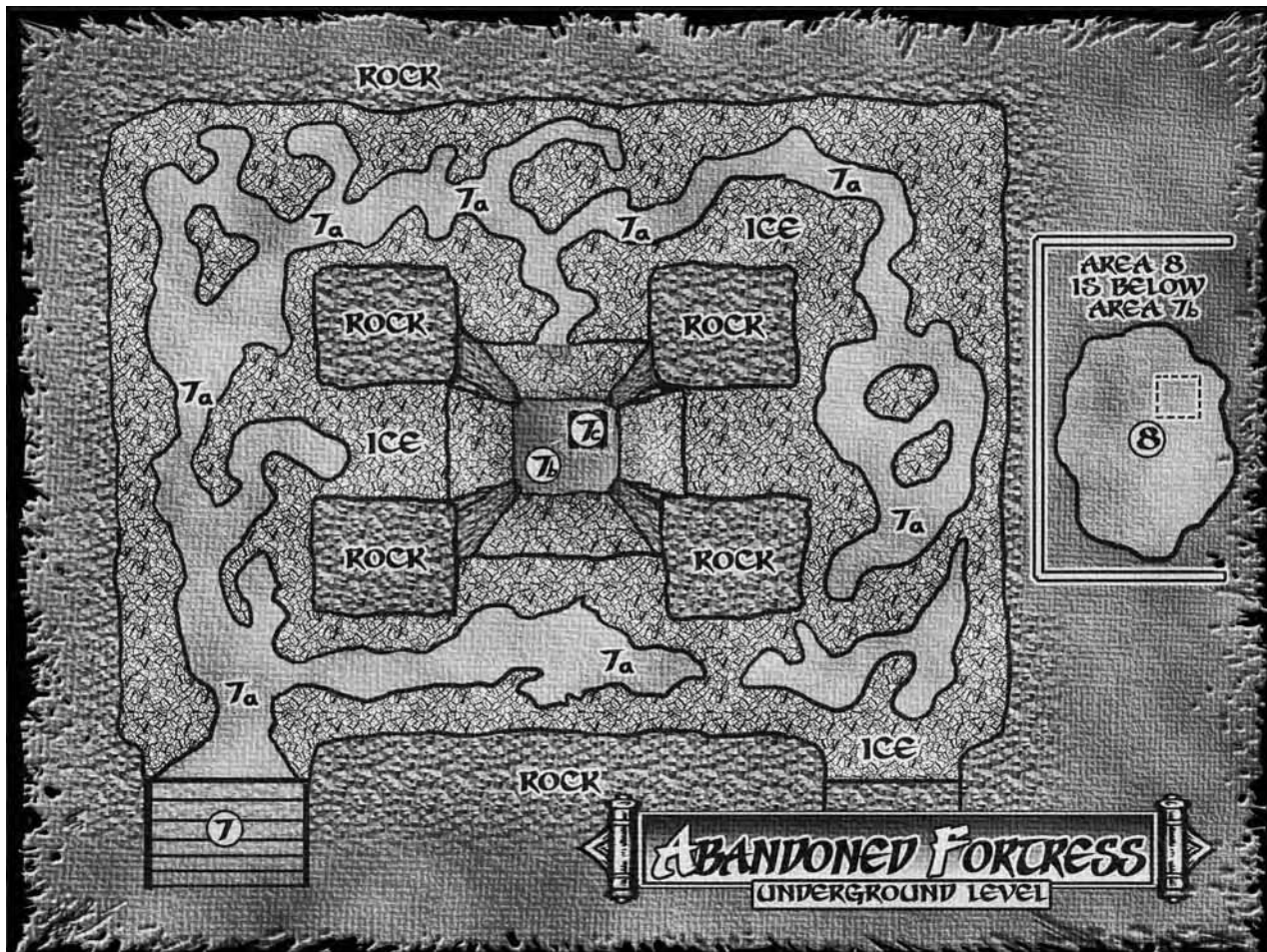
**Causing Cave-ins:** The Player Characters may attempt to smash or melt through the ice to reach the fleeing whiteladies. However, melting large amounts of ice in these caves is asking for trouble. The ceiling is unstable, and only the ice prevents it from crashing down.


Whenever two or more adjacent squares are cleared of ice, the Games Master should make a percentile dice roll to see if a cave-in occurs. The base chance is 10% plus 10% for each additional adjacent ice square cleared. Cave-ins are dealt with in the *DMG*.

If the Grun (see below) makes a stunning stomp attack or explodes in an icy detonation, the Games Master should make a check to see if a cave-in occurs, as these events forcibly shake the caverns.

### 7a. Maidens in the Ice

*The mist is thicker down here, swirling around your feet like a layer of grey-white fluid. On either side of the passageway, immobile shapes hang in the ice – the*





*perfectly preserved bodies of human women, themselves as pale as the ice around you. As you observe them, you realise that they are not corpses after all. They are moving in the ice, swimming slowly as if it were water.*

At each point marked 7a there are two whiteladies present, one on each side of the passage. If the Player Characters are lower than 15<sup>th</sup> level on average, the Games Master should have one of the whiteladies stay out of the fight until later.

The whiteladies are curious to see what is happening above. They are responding either to the Player Characters' presence or to that of the skitterjinxes, who were poking around down here before the Player Characters arrived. They swim through the ice and into the passageway, then begin to drift through the cellars.

If the whiteladies have reason to believe that the Player Characters are hostile, they remain in the ice and watch fearfully. If the Player Characters try to dig them out, one of them swims off to alert the Grun.

The whiteladies use the ice walls to move about and watch the Player Characters while remaining safe (or so they think). The Player Characters should feel almost as though they are in an aquarium, with sinister white figures staring at them from behind the glassy surfaces.

### **7b. Guardian of the Brood**

*This chamber seems to be the heart of the ice labyrinth. Steps lead down from all sides into a sea of freezing fog. The mists are thick in the air here, rippling out from the centre of the room like water from a fountain. You cannot tell what lies under the cloudy layer but it is clearly the source of all this mist.*

The steps lead down into an amphitheatre-like area, currently full of mist from the Grun's mist shroud. The Grun is hunched, silent, under the mists. Nearby, a ten-foot-square shaft drops down to the queen's chamber (Room 8). The Grun uses its mist shroud to keep this hidden.

If the Player Characters threaten the whiteladies, the Grun lumbers off to attack them. The whiteladies do not attack alongside it, which should make the encounter more survivable. If the Grun falls, however, one of the whiteladies attempts to finish the Player Characters off, trusting that the icy detonation has crippled them.

### **7c. Shaft**

This shaft is coated with ice. It drops down and slopes gently, so that the bottom is out of sight.

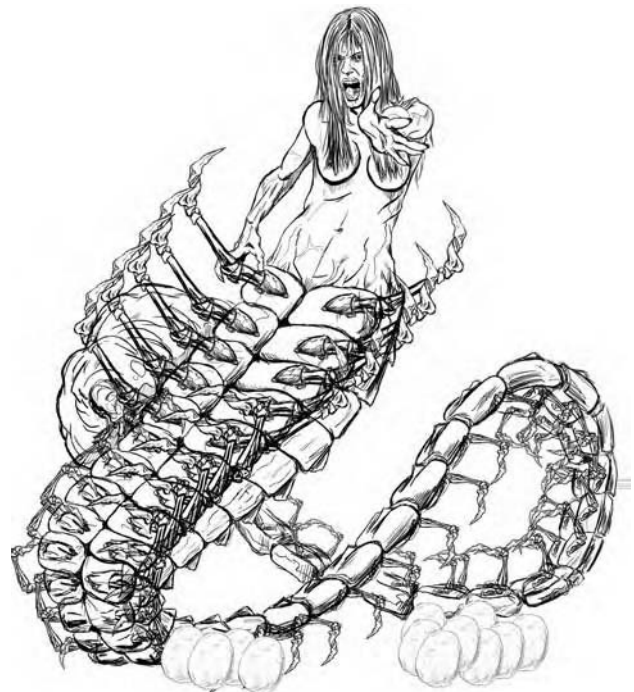
The shaft is 30 feet deep, with slick slippery walls. It leads down into the whitelady queen's egg chamber (see below).

### **8. The Monstrous Mother**

*You cannot tell what use this cavern was put to when the giants lived here. Its purpose now is all too clear. This is an egg chamber. Pearly-white eggs three feet high stand in clutches against the walls. Nearby, coiling upon itself, is a grotesque creature, woman from the waist up and a centipede-like travesty from the waist down. Its bloated lower body means that there are surely more eggs to come.*

This is the whitelady queen. She viciously attacks the Player Characters if they threaten her eggs. So long as they refrain from damaging the eggs and do not attack her, she holds back and parleys. If the Player Characters think to communicate with her, they may learn the following:

- Grommen's bag is down here, with its interesting contents. He must have flung it down here before the band of giants left for good. The queen is willing to trade it to the Player Characters in exchange for something of similar value. She is, in fact, willing to give it up in return for being left undisturbed, but the Player Characters should not know this at first.



- There is indeed a wizard of the ice based in a citadel to the northwest of here. The whiteladies are no friends of his. He brought them to this plane as curiosities, then turned them out into the waste when he grew weary of them. The only beings worse than the wizard are those wretched windshapers, beings of evil and treachery who turn the air itself into an instrument of torture.

**The Eggs:** The eggs have 30 hit points a hardness of 3 and can be hit automatically. Smashed eggs prove to have unformed, foetal whiteladies in them.

### Grommen's Bag

The bag contains three items that Grommen looted from Bastirak's citadel before he was driven off. These are a platinum idol in the shape of a beetle-headed goddess, a fist-sized chunk of glowing green crystal and a heavy key made from adamantine.

**The Idol:** This is clearly not the work of any known culture of Ashfar. A Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 20) identifies it as the creation of one of the denizens of Tingrith, an obscure plane of Law. From its material value alone, it is worth 2,000 gold pieces. Bastirak picked it up on one of his off-plane jaunts.

The idol has the aura of a lawful alignment and moderate Divination magic. It is a Counselling Icon, a common possession on Tingrith. Every hour, as regularly as a cuckoo clock, it proclaims a piece of random 'wisdom' of a sagely sort. It does this clearly and audibly, which can make life difficult for stealthy characters or those who are trying to rest. Typical phrases that the idol may utter might include:

*'The fox hunts, the chicken scratches, but only the pig seeks truffles with its nose.'*

*'The world of magic is a mirror, wherein he who sees muck is muck.'*

*'The wise need not to ask; the fool asks in vain.'*

**The Crystal:** Another item ransacked from Bastirak's collection of extraplanar souvenirs, this is a Khemidian dream-cluster. A Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 25) identifies it. The purpose of a dream-cluster is to aid in planar navigation. A character who sleeps within 30 feet of a dream-cluster must make a Will saving throw (DC 15) or suffer unnerving dreams of other planes, in which he flies like a bird through unearthly landscapes and over alien architecture.

A character who has these dreams does not rest well and wakes up fatigued. However, any *plane shift* spell he casts is rendered many times more accurate. Instead of arriving 5–500 miles from the intended destination, he arrives only 4–80 (4d20 miles) miles away.

**The Key:** This key unlocks the adamantine doors closing off the Great Tunnel. Grommen, being a giant, clambered over the glacial peaks to reach Bastirak's citadel. The journey was so harrowing that when he reached the place he stole a tunnel key, vowing that if he ever came back he would take an easier route.

### Event: Choosing a Path

To reach the citadel, the Player Characters must negotiate the Glacial Peaks that form a natural barrier around the plateau. There are three ways to do this.

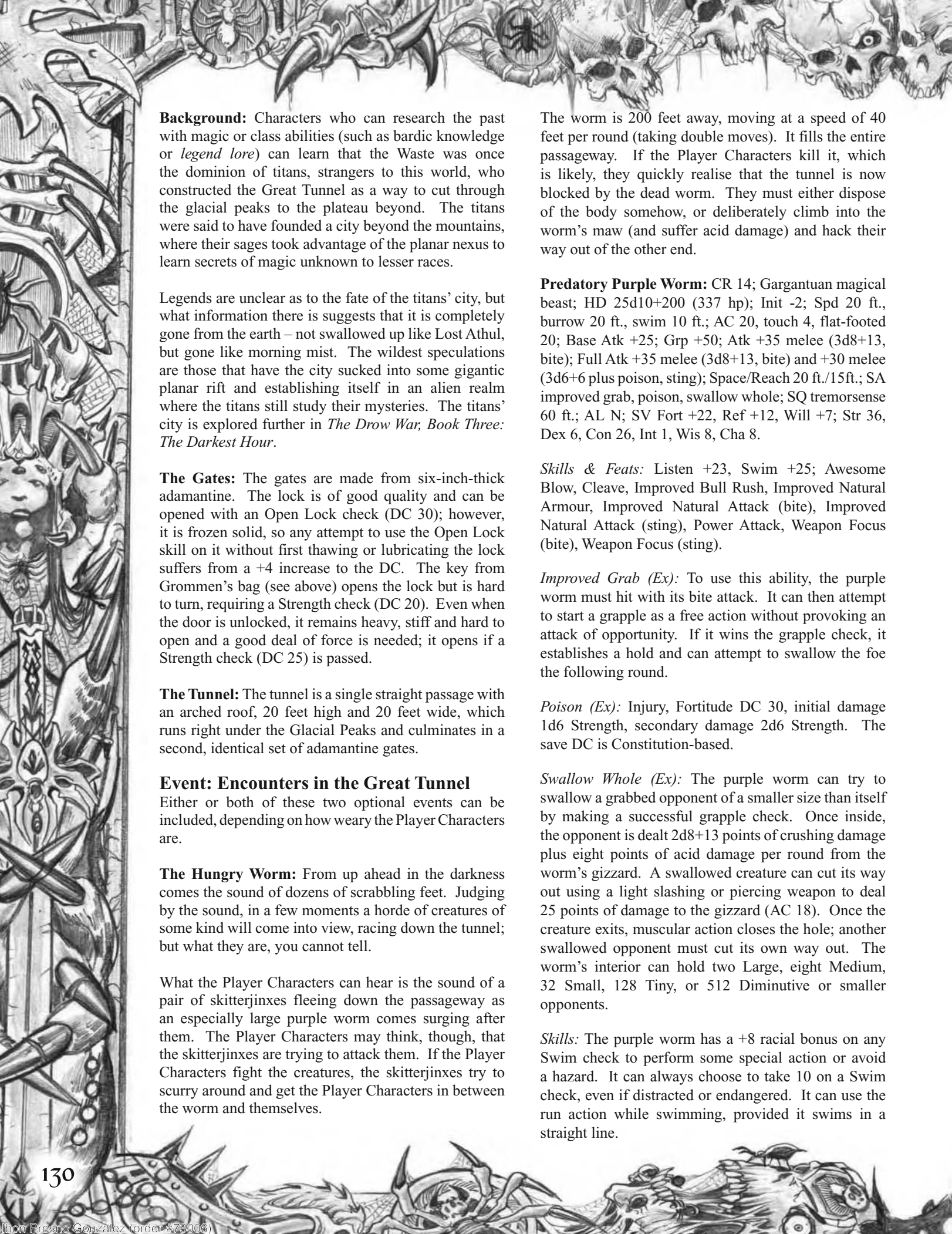
- The conventional approach is to go the hard way, climbing over the mountains and following whatever trails can be found. If they take this route, the Player Characters risk all the hazards of mountain climbing (avalanches, uncertain footholds and treacherous slopes) as well as the menace of the brocken spectres and dreaded glacial ooze.
- If the Player Characters have the ability to fly, they can take to the air and avoid most of the hazards of the mountains. This, however, exposes them to attack from the flying horrors that haunt the peaks, such as the brocken spectres and the arctic lights.
- If they have Grommen's key or some other way of opening the adamantine gates, they can take the easiest route of all, following the Great Tunnel carved through the rock by the titans. The Great Tunnel is not without monsters of its own, however; there are immense purple worms tunnelling in the roots of the mountain, and extraplanar horrors more sinister still, relishing the unbroken darkness and silence.

### Location: The Great Tunnel

*Set into the side of the mountain before you, black and forbidding in the endless white of the waste, are two massive doors. The featureless surfaces give away no clues as to who built them or what lies beyond. Only a single keyhole, almost invisible in the smooth black metal, suggests that the doors are even meant to open.*

*In the distance, on the mountainsides flanking the gate, you see titanic figures carved into the rock. They must be hundreds of feet tall. These are crude and humanoid, each one raising its hands up as if to support the sky.*





**Background:** Characters who can research the past with magic or class abilities (such as bardic knowledge or *legend lore*) can learn that the Waste was once the dominion of titans, strangers to this world, who constructed the Great Tunnel as a way to cut through the glacial peaks to the plateau beyond. The titans were said to have founded a city beyond the mountains, where their sages took advantage of the planar nexus to learn secrets of magic unknown to lesser races.

Legends are unclear as to the fate of the titans' city, but what information there is suggests that it is completely gone from the earth – not swallowed up like Lost Athul, but gone like morning mist. The wildest speculations are those that have the city sucked into some gigantic planar rift and establishing itself in an alien realm where the titans still study their mysteries. The titans' city is explored further in *The Drow War, Book Three: The Darkest Hour*.

**The Gates:** The gates are made from six-inch-thick adamantine. The lock is of good quality and can be opened with an Open Lock check (DC 30); however, it is frozen solid, so any attempt to use the Open Lock skill on it without first thawing or lubricating the lock suffers from a +4 increase to the DC. The key from Grommen's bag (see above) opens the lock but is hard to turn, requiring a Strength check (DC 20). Even when the door is unlocked, it remains heavy, stiff and hard to open and a good deal of force is needed; it opens if a Strength check (DC 25) is passed.

**The Tunnel:** The tunnel is a single straight passage with an arched roof, 20 feet high and 20 feet wide, which runs right under the Glacial Peaks and culminates in a second, identical set of adamantine gates.

### Event: Encounters in the Great Tunnel

Either or both of these two optional events can be included, depending on how weary the Player Characters are.

**The Hungry Worm:** From up ahead in the darkness comes the sound of dozens of scabbling feet. Judging by the sound, in a few moments a horde of creatures of some kind will come into view, racing down the tunnel; but what they are, you cannot tell.

What the Player Characters can hear is the sound of a pair of skitterjinxes fleeing down the passageway as an especially large purple worm comes surging after them. The Player Characters may think, though, that the skitterjinxes are trying to attack them. If the Player Characters fight the creatures, the skitterjinxes try to scurry around and get the Player Characters in between the worm and themselves.

The worm is 200 feet away, moving at a speed of 40 feet per round (taking double moves). It fills the entire passageway. If the Player Characters kill it, which is likely, they quickly realise that the tunnel is now blocked by the dead worm. They must either dispose of the body somehow, or deliberately climb into the worm's maw (and suffer acid damage) and hack their way out of the other end.

**Predatory Purple Worm:** CR 14; Gargantuan magical beast; HD 25d10+200 (337 hp); Init -2; Spd 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 10 ft.; AC 20, touch 4, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +25; Grp +50; Atk +35 melee (3d8+13, bite); Full Atk +35 melee (3d8+13, bite) and +30 melee (3d6+6 plus poison, sting); Space/Reach 20 ft./15ft.; SA improved grab, poison, swallow whole; SQ tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +22, Ref +12, Will +7; Str 36, Dex 6, Con 26, Int 1, Wis 8, Cha 8.


**Skills & Feats:** Listen +23, Swim +25; Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Armour, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (sting), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (sting).

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the purple worm must hit with its bite attack. 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 can attempt to swallow the foe the following round.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 30, initial damage 1d6 Strength, secondary damage 2d6 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Swallow Whole (Ex):** The purple worm can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of a smaller size than itself by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent is dealt 2d8+13 points of crushing damage plus eight points of acid damage per round from the worm's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 18). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. The worm's interior can hold two Large, eight Medium, 32 Small, 128 Tiny, or 512 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

**Skills:** The purple worm has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.



**The Walker in Darkness:** *The darkness of the tunnel seems all at once to come alive, flowing into the form of a figure many times taller than a man, hunched over and loping towards you far more swiftly than anything that huge ought to move. You feel your very life force recoil at the sight of it. This is not just another foe to fight; this is one of the faces of the enemy itself, a soldier of darkness, sent from the shadow to snuff out your souls.*

The Dark is continually aware of the Starborn as a threat to itself. Now, with the Player Characters moving through the deep blackness under the mountains and so near to a weakness in the barrier between worlds, it can sense them more clearly. It sends a manifestation of itself, a nightwalker, to pursue and destroy them.

The nightwalker becomes manifest only when the Player Characters are nearly at the gates at the end of the tunnel. There should be daylight outside for this encounter to work best (even if the Games Master has to ‘fudge’ the proceedings slightly). With a Challenge Rating of 16, it is a very tough monster for the Player Characters to face, so if they can flee from it into the daylight that it abhors, they stand a better chance of surviving. It does not pursue them into daylight. Of course, the door is stiff, so there is an opportunity for high drama as they fight to get it open while the horror bears down on them. It is technically a summoned creature, so it is vulnerable to magic that would return it to its own plane (such as *dictum*).

**The Walker in Darkness (Nightwalker):** CR 16, Huge undead (extraplanar); HD 21d12+42; hp 178; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., fly 20 ft. (poor); AC 32, touch 10, flat-footed 30; Base Atk +10; Grp +34; Atk +24 melee (2d6+16, slam); Full Atk +24 melee (2d6+16, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA crush item, desecrating aura, evil gaze, spell-like abilities, summon undead; SQ aversion to daylight, damage reduction 15/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, spell resistance 29, telepathy 100 ft., undead traits; SV Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +19; Str 38, Dex 14, Con —, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 18.

**Skills & Feats:** Concentration +28, Diplomacy +6, Hide +18\*, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Listen +29, Move Silently +26, Search +29, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +31, Spot +29, Survival +5 (+7 following tracks); Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*unholy blight*).

\*When hiding in a dark area, the walker in darkness gains a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks.

**Aversion to Daylight (Ex):** If exposed to natural daylight (not merely a *daylight* spell), the walker in darkness takes a –4 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks.

**Crush Item (Su):** The walker in darkness can destroy any weapon or item of Large size or smaller (even magic ones, but not artefacts such as the signature weapons) by picking it up and crushing it between its hands. The nightwalker must make a successful disarm attempt to grab an item held by an opponent. The item is entitled to a Fortitude saving throw (DC 34) to resist destruction.

**Desecrating Aura (Su):** The creature gives off a 20-foot-radius emanation of utter desecration, imbuing its surroundings with negative energy. This ability works much like a *desecrate* spell, except that the creature’s evil is so great that it is treated as the shrine of an evil power. All undead within 20 feet of the walker in darkness (including the creature itself) gain a +2 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls and saving throws, and +2 hit points per HD. Charisma checks made to turn undead within this area take a –6 penalty. The walker’s desecrating aura cannot be dispelled except by a *dispel evil* spell or similar effect. If the effect is dispelled, the creature can resume it as a free action on its next turn. Its desecrating aura is suppressed if it enters a *consecrated* or *hallowed* area, but the creature’s presence also suppresses the *consecrated* or *hallowed* effect for as long as it remains in the area.

**Evil Gaze (Su):** Fear, 30 feet. A creature who meets the gaze of the walker in darkness must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC 24) or be paralysed with fear for 1d8 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, the same nightshade’s gaze cannot affect that creature again for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will – *contagion* (DC 18), *deeper darkness*, *detect magic*, *greater dispel magic*, *haste*, *see invisibility*, *unholy blight* (DC 18); 3/day – *confusion* (DC 18), *hold monster* (DC 19), *invisibility*; 1/day – *cone of cold* (DC 19), *finger of death* (DC 21), *plane shift* (DC 21). Caster level is 21<sup>st</sup>. The saving throw DCs are Charisma-based.

**Summon Undead (Su):** The walker in darkness can summon undead creatures once per night: 7–12 shadows, 2–5 greater shadows or 1–2 dread wraiths. The undead arrive in 1d10 rounds and serve for one hour or until released.





### Location: The Glacial Peaks

If the Player Characters do not want to risk the tunnel, they can always hike over the mountains. The going is rough but bearable for a well-equipped party. The Games Master should have one of the Player Characters make a suitable Survival check and give the group this information, so that they are aware that they have a choice and are not being railroaded into the tunnel.

Rather than detailing every stretch of the journey and having the Player Characters make Climb checks every five minutes, the Games Master can introduce the following events:

**Spectres in the Mist:** As the Player Characters skirt around the side of a mountain on a narrow ledge (five feet across), they encounter a difficult section to negotiate. The ledge is broken in several places, with gaps of between five and 15 feet. To make matters worse, there is a thin mist in the air, making visibility poor. All vision is obscured beyond 20 feet and creatures 20 feet away have concealment.

As the Player Characters work out how to traverse this obstacle, a pair of brocken spectres (see page 158) rise up out of the valley to the west. The spectres use their *shadow illusion* abilities to confuse the Player Characters, making broken sections of ledge seem sound.

If the Player Characters think to investigate the area from whence the brocken spectres come, they may find the remains of the climbers who became the spectres. The Player Characters have to descend into the valley to do this, which means climbing down the sheer mountainside.

A Search check (DC 25) uncovers the bodies of two male humans preserved by the ice. They are wearing winter clothing and are clearly adventurers who died from falling. In addition to rope and climber's kits, one carries a *type IV bag of holding* and the other has a pair of *boots of the winterlands*. The *bag of holding* contains a two-man tent, enough iron rations for four weeks, a pot-belly stove, five sacks of coal, a shovel, two bedrolls and four barrels of water. The iron rations are musty but still edible; everything else is in good condition. If the Player Characters use magic to find out who they were, they discover that they were part of a group led by Gustave Colombe of Chillhame two years ago. Gustave was attempting to find a legendary artefact called the Cirlet of Chill Bone.

**The Living Avalanche:** As the Player Characters progress along the floor of a small valley between two mountain slopes, they hear the loud cawing of birds and see a flock of arctic terns take to the air ahead of them. Immediately afterwards there is a rumble from above and to the east and a few loose chunks of ice come scattering down. The Games Master should have all the characters make Spot checks (DC 20); those who succeed notice a huge mass of snow beginning to come loose on the upper slopes to the east.

This is not an avalanche, but a glacial ooze (see page 161) charging down the mountain slope. It is responding to the stimulus of the tern flock taking off and is heading towards what it thinks is food. If the Player Characters run around to escape the 'avalanche', it homes in on them instead. They may try to head for the opposite slope, in which case they see the white mass crash into the base of the valley and then slide *up* the opposite slope in pursuit of them.

**Encounters in the Air:** The Player Characters may try to fly over the peaks with a *fly* spell or something similar. Even the sky is not safe. There are arctic lights (see page 157) hovering in the air above the mountains. These rabidly territorial energy beings do not like strangers invading their space unannounced. 2–3 arctic lights descend on any Player Character who enters their airspace.


The brocken spectres can also fly, though not so dextrously, and look upon flying adventurers with special hate. The spectres are cursed to remain here because they fell from the crags, and seeing a group of smug adventurers go sailing overhead is an insult to them. Two brocken spectres rise like smoky giants from the mountains and try to cast the Player Characters down to their deaths.

### Location: The Colombe Camp

*On the edge of the mountains, where the crags meet the flat ice sheet, you see a collection of vague shapes that you recognise as the collapsed remains of a camp. This is no recent disaster like Ommersdale. By the looks of it, these tents were set up more than a year ago. The snow has piled against them, and many of the canvas walls have collapsed under the weight, leaving only a skeletal tangle of ice-crusting tent poles. There are no signs of life – not that you expected any.*

The Player Characters may remember Gustave Colombe, the mad noble from *The Drow War, Book One: The Gathering Storm*, who was driven insane on a trip into the Waste to seek out the Cirlet of Chill





Bone. This was as far as his expedition got before they succumbed to the blue devils. They had already lost two members on the mountain ridge and were down to three.

Gustave himself was the blue devils' key victim. He became obsessed with the idea of killing and eating the other expedition members, believing that by doing this he could carry their souls safely into the citadel. They would get new bodies later on, though he was not sure how. As leader, it was his job to make sure that everyone reached the final destination. Believing that he was fulfilling his responsibility, he killed and partially devoured the other two men.

He came to his senses suddenly, with blood on his hands and a dreadful taste in his mouth. In a moment of lucidity, he saw and killed the blue devil who had driven him mad. Then, surrounded by carnage and alone in the wilderness, he promptly went mad again. The rescue party found him wandering the ice sheets singing to himself; in his madness he had somehow climbed back across the mountains, following a memory of home.

Characters investigating the ruined camp can find the following items, each one requiring a separate Search check (DC 20) to find:

- The frozen, partly eaten remains of two explorers.
- A compass that points towards the citadel instead of pointing north. On examination, all compasses are found to be pointing this way. This is because of the lodestone golem.
- A dead blue devil with a +2 *axiomatic dagger* driven through it.
- One or more living blue devils, disguised as useful pieces of camping equipment such as a mallet, a water bottle and a piton (climbing spike).
- A cast-aside jerkin. In the pocket is a page torn from a diary, partly spoiled by the damp. The following can be made out with a Decipher Script check (DC 20):

'The jungle witch-men of Kandang are right. The body is inconsequential. The soul is all. As leader, I must carry the souls to our final destination. (Here a passage is obliterated by water damage.) The men are beginning to fear me; were I to explain what I must do, they would fear me even more. It must be done quickly. They shall thank me when we have the Cirlet and they are in new bodies. Their souls can stand to dwell in my body for a little while. I shall eat Cerdin first, I think, for he is the more eager to reach the Citadel. Jerg I shall eat as I walk, a little at a time.'

**The Blue Devils:** There are still blue devils (see page 162) lurking near the ruin of the camp. They attempt to weasel their way into the Player Characters' equipment, either by disguising themselves as objects that are then picked up and stowed, or by jumping on board any vehicles or mounts that the Player Characters have. If there seems to be no other way to do it, then they use *suggestion* to make a Player Character pick them up.

Once they are hiding in the equipment, the blue devils try to give the Player Characters the same delusions that Gustave Colombe suffered from, picking on the target who seems most susceptible (usually a fighter type). They avoid wizards, clerics and sorcerers.

## The Citadel on the Cusp

Bastirak's stronghold is built on a point of planar weakness where the fabric of the universe folds worlds closer together. He chose the site for this reason, finding it easier to bridge the planes from here.

Using powerful magic, he was able to force open a planar rift, making access to other planes easy. He no longer needs to cast spells to open up the gateways. The citadel's doors and passageways open onto different planes. The problem is not how to open them but how to keep them closed.


The citadel is now a more hazardous place than ever. Along with the monsters that Bastirak commands, uninvited visitors from other planes roam the corridors and lurk in the shadows. Too busy to ward the problematic planes off, Bastirak instead isolates himself in his sanctum sanctorum and has his overworked minions deal with any incursion.

### First View of the Citadel

*From here, you can see that the mountainous barrier you have now crossed was part of a great circle of peaks, mile upon mile of mountains screening the inner region from view. This cannot have arisen naturally and you wonder what event raised these mountains – or flattened the region in the centre.*

*In the middle of the plain of ice stands a structure that looks like the bald head of a buried colossus, wearing a crown of tall thin spikes. This must be the citadel of Bastirak. You have reached your destination at last!*

*As you watch, it fades from view like a ghost vanishing into the ether; then, in an eyblink, it is back. It stands so solid and firm that you wonder if what just happened was an illusion of the snow and ice. Then it flickers out of existence again and snowflakes wheel through the space where it stood. Once more, it returns after half a second.*



*Surrounding the citadel are stationary figures, some large, some small. All of them are semitransparent and seem to be frozen in place.*

From the outside, it seems as though the whole citadel shimmers in and out of reality. One moment it is unquestionably solid, the next it is pale and transparent, barely there at all. A successful Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 20) concludes that it is on a planar junction point of some kind, so its existence extends into multiple planes. This means that it is not quite on any of them.

Inside the citadel, this effect does not occur and it seems to be quite solid and real. The outer world seen through the windows, however, shifts and blurs as if it were unreal.

### **1. The Planar Ghosts**

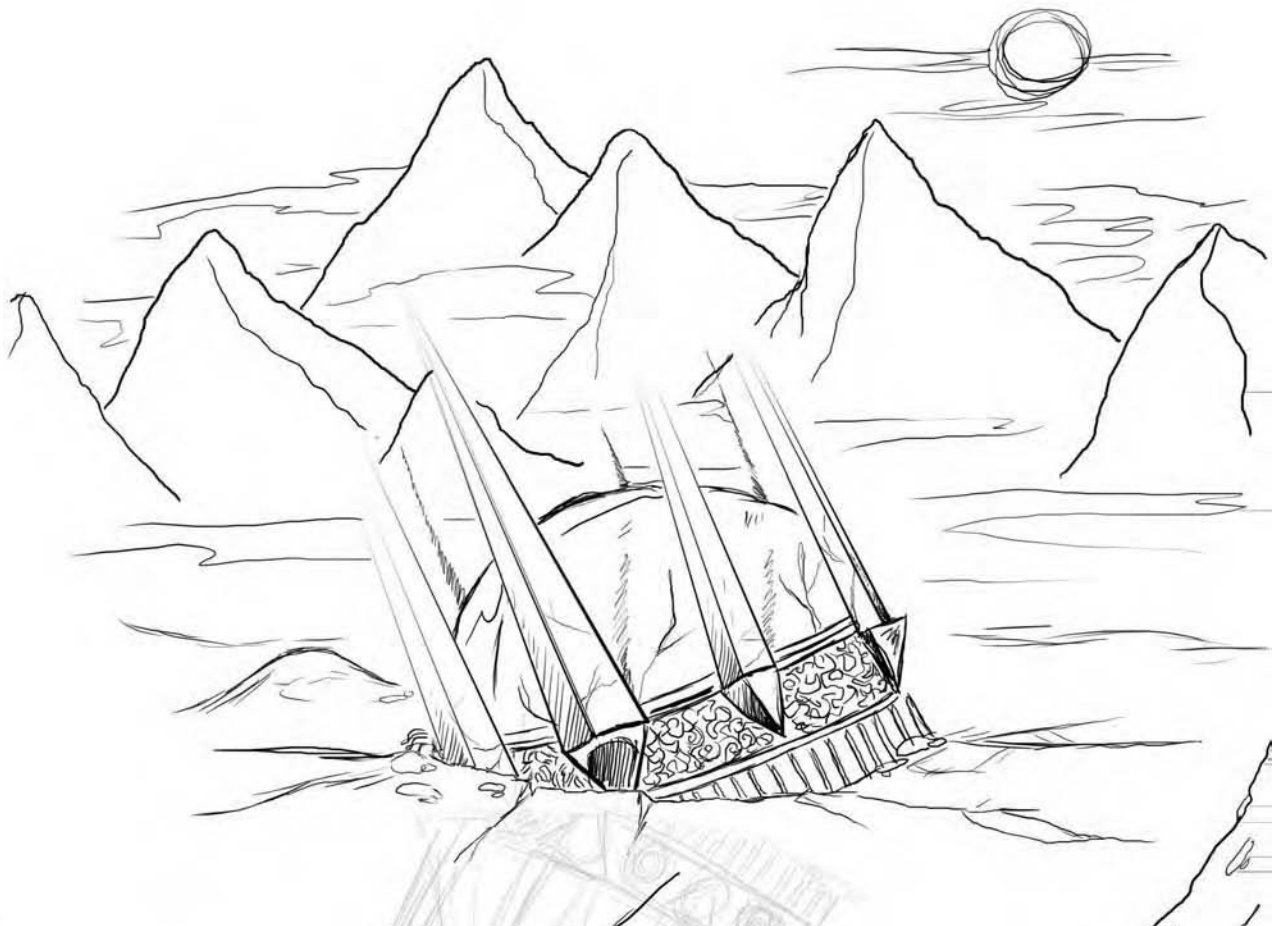
*As you draw closer to the immobile figures, you see that many of them are of strange races you have never seen before. They seem to have no relation to their surroundings at all. A blue-skinned, eyeless ape is frozen in the act of pouring a yellow liquid from one*


*alembic to another. A horned ogre with a tail is caught in mid-leap. A woman with a fox's tail is brandishing a rapier. Three creatures like halflings, their bare feet oddly large, huddle around a fire.*

There are hundreds of similar images caught in the space around the citadel. The Games Master can let his imagination run riot here making up new ones. They have no effect on the Player Characters, nor can the Player Characters affect them.

The curious flux around the planar junction point traps images from various planes parallel to this one, preserving them as incorporeal, transparent, frozen moments in time. They are not solid and can be walked through. The denizens of the citadel have grown used to them, since they do not do anything and are no threat, but they may take the Player Characters by surprise. The ghosts steadily fade into view and out again over the course of weeks. A Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 25) identifies this phenomenon for what it is.

One of the phantoms is potentially useful to the Player Characters, as it gives a hint of what is coming. The





Games Master should have the Player Characters make Spot checks (DC 25) to notice this group among all the rest. A group of three drow (the three from the ambassador's chambers inside the citadel, for which see below) stands around a half-buried crystal in the earth. This crystal is a mass of raw tenebrium.

If the Player Characters spend too much time investigating these phantoms, the Guardian of the Outer Gate sees them and stomps out to confront them.

## 2. The Guardian of the Outer Gate

*The entrance to Bastirak's citadel is a great doorway sculpted from ice, including two female caryatids holding the lintel aloft. Their blank eyes watch you approach. Between them stands a giant made from black craggy rock, perhaps another one of the ghostly images you saw out on the plains. The citadel blinks momentarily out of existence, but the giant stays where it is.*

*There is no door between the caryatids; nothing but a swirling white mist blocks access to the inner dome.*

The giant is a lodestone golem (see page 163) in service to Bastirak. Player Characters who approach within 120 feet feel a gentle tugging on all the metal gear they wear, as if a magnet was pulling them. This should give them some idea of what sort of rock the golem is made from. A Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Knowledge (geology) check (DC 20) identifies the golem as a creature made from lodestone.

The golem is under instructions to accept visitors but to disarm them first. If it sees intruders, it comes out to meet them and speak to them in Bastirak's voice (a hoarse whisper), demanding to know their business in the domain of the ice mage. Depending on their answers, the golem attacks them outright, disarms them and brings them in or ignores them altogether and stomps back to its post.

**The Citadel Walls:** All of the walls, ceilings and floors within the citadel are made from solid ice unless otherwise specified. The outer walls are 40 feet thick and opaque. Between these walls and the inner section is a special five-foot-thick layer of vapour before the inner wall, in case creatures try to break in. This vapour is *acid fog* (see below) and is continually pumped around the hollow section. If the outer walls are breached, the *acid fog* slowly seeps out of the breach to a distance of 15 feet. Player Characters can avoid this easily if they are not immobilised.

Beyond the *acid fog* layer is a five-foot-thick inner wall of glasslike, transparent ice. Creatures on the inside can clearly see other creatures floundering about in the fog layer, so long as they are adjacent to the wall. This allows the guards to mobilise quickly if a creature is trying to break into the citadel through the walls.

Any guard on the inside of the citadel has a chance to overhear creatures breaking in, even if he is not watching the clear ice. Assuming the creatures smash through the outer ice, a Listen check (DC 20) is needed to hear them through the clear ice walls. If they melt their way in, a more difficult Listen check (DC 30) is required.

**The White Mist:** This mist continually swirls from four black iron cauldrons set into the floor, embedded deep in the ice; these are marked on the map. This is *acid fog*, as per the spell (caster level 18<sup>th</sup>). All creatures entering the *acid fog* are dealt 2d6 points of acid damage per round (as is all their gear), as well as having their sight obscured and their movement slowed.

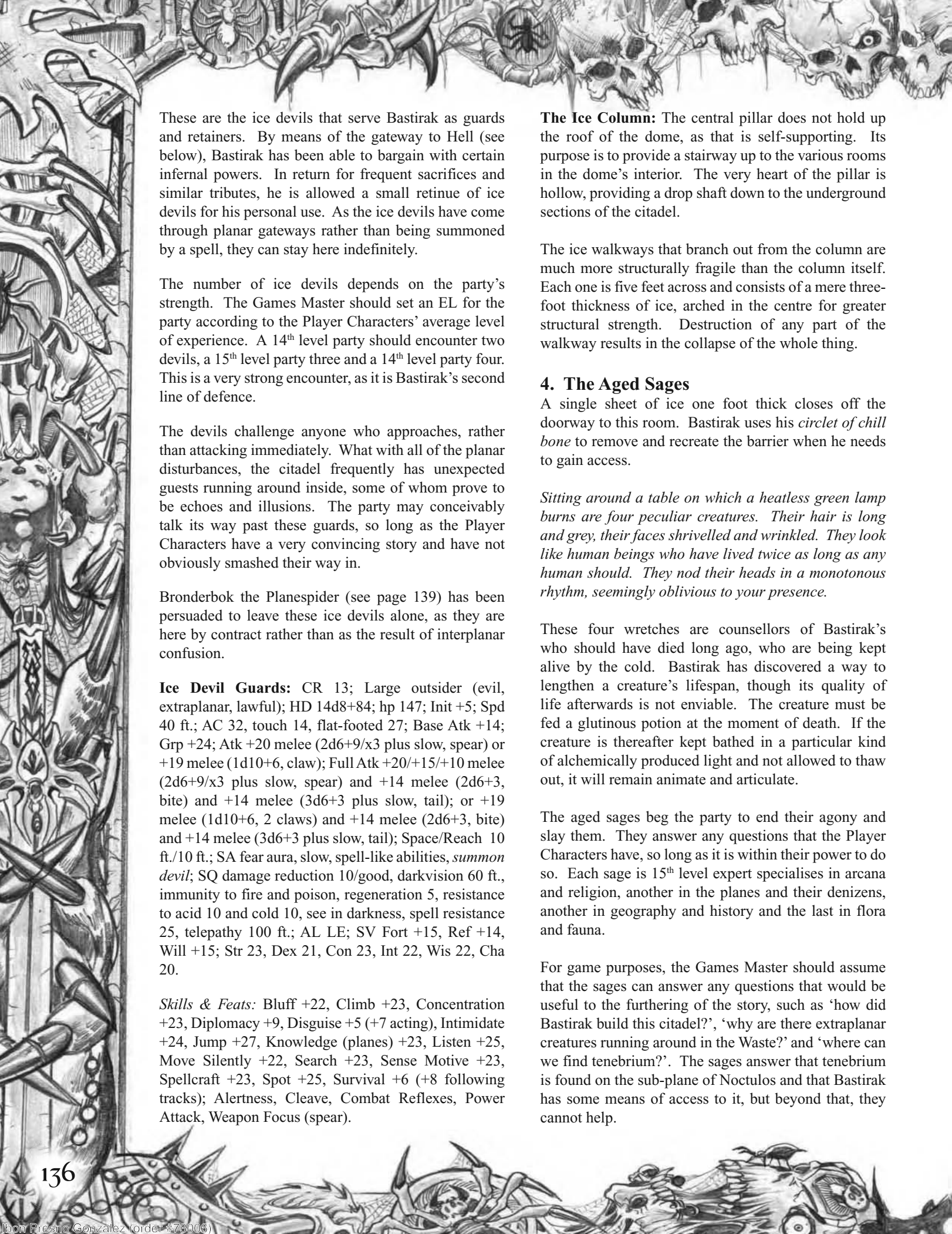
*Note:* While the Player Characters' magic items may have a good chance of making it through the fog intact, their warm clothing is almost certainly destroyed if they enter the fog, leaving them unprotected against the cold.

Each cauldron has a hinged lid which, when closed, prevents the cauldron from emitting any more fog. When the lodestone golem needs to admit guests, it simply concentrates and pulls the lids shut, thus clearing the passageway of mist. The Player Characters can attempt to free the cauldrons from the ice if they wish. To do this, they must somehow melt or smash away the ice around the cauldrons, then lift the cauldrons out of their holes. Each one is three feet high and weighs 70 pounds. The cauldrons must be kept fed with ice in order to function. Each one consumes five pounds of ice per hour.

## 3. The Dome of Bastirak

*The inside of this stronghold is one vast hollow space, dimly lit by the cold light of day filtering through the ice mass. Rising through the centre is a frozen column like a mutated tree or fountain of ice, with pylons arching out from the trunk and connecting to walkways on the sides of the dome. Around the column's base stands a group of hideous bipedal insectoid creatures 12 feet in height, with skin like white leather, mantis-like heads and wicked-looking spears.*





These are the ice devils that serve Bastirak as guards and retainers. By means of the gateway to Hell (see below), Bastirak has been able to bargain with certain infernal powers. In return for frequent sacrifices and similar tributes, he is allowed a small retinue of ice devils for his personal use. As the ice devils have come through planar gateways rather than being summoned by a spell, they can stay here indefinitely.

The number of ice devils depends on the party's strength. The Games Master should set an EL for the party according to the Player Characters' average level of experience. A 14<sup>th</sup> level party should encounter two devils, a 15<sup>th</sup> level party three and a 14<sup>th</sup> level party four. This is a very strong encounter, as it is Bastirak's second line of defence.

The devils challenge anyone who approaches, rather than attacking immediately. What with all of the planar disturbances, the citadel frequently has unexpected guests running around inside, some of whom prove to be echoes and illusions. The party may conceivably talk its way past these guards, so long as the Player Characters have a very convincing story and have not obviously smashed their way in.

Bronderbok the Planespider (see page 139) has been persuaded to leave these ice devils alone, as they are here by contract rather than as the result of interplanar confusion.

**Ice Devil Guards:** CR 13; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 14d8+84; hp 147; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 32, touch 14, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +14; Grp +24; Atk +20 melee (2d6+9/x3 plus slow, spear) or +19 melee (1d10+6, claw); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (2d6+9/x3 plus slow, spear) and +14 melee (2d6+3, bite) and +14 melee (3d6+3 plus slow, tail); or +19 melee (1d10+6, 2 claws) and +14 melee (2d6+3, bite) and +14 melee (3d6+3 plus slow, tail); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA fear aura, slow, spell-like abilities, *summon devil*; SQ damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, regeneration 5, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 25, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +15, Ref +14, Will +15; Str 23, Dex 21, Con 23, Int 22, Wis 22, Cha 20.

**Skills & Feats:** Bluff +22, Climb +23, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Intimidate +24, Jump +27, Knowledge (planes) +23, Listen +25, Move Silently +22, Search +23, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +23, Spot +25, Survival +6 (+8 following tracks); Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (spear).

**The Ice Column:** The central pillar does not hold up the roof of the dome, as that is self-supporting. Its purpose is to provide a stairway up to the various rooms in the dome's interior. The very heart of the pillar is hollow, providing a drop shaft down to the underground sections of the citadel.

The ice walkways that branch out from the column are much more structurally fragile than the column itself. Each one is five feet across and consists of a mere three-foot thickness of ice, arched in the centre for greater structural strength. Destruction of any part of the walkway results in the collapse of the whole thing.

#### 4. The Aged Sages

A single sheet of ice one foot thick closes off the doorway to this room. Bastirak uses his *circlet of chill bone* to remove and recreate the barrier when he needs to gain access.

*Sitting around a table on which a heatless green lamp burns are four peculiar creatures. Their hair is long and grey, their faces shrivelled and wrinkled. They look like human beings who have lived twice as long as any human should. They nod their heads in a monotonous rhythm, seemingly oblivious to your presence.*

These four wretches are counsellors of Bastirak's who should have died long ago, who are being kept alive by the cold. Bastirak has discovered a way to lengthen a creature's lifespan, though its quality of life afterwards is not enviable. The creature must be fed a glutinous potion at the moment of death. If the creature is thereafter kept bathed in a particular kind of alchemically produced light and not allowed to thaw out, it will remain animate and articulate.

The aged sages beg the party to end their agony and slay them. They answer any questions that the Player Characters have, so long as it is within their power to do so. Each sage is 15<sup>th</sup> level expert specialises in arcana and religion, another in the planes and their denizens, another in geography and history and the last in flora and fauna.

For game purposes, the Games Master should assume that the sages can answer any questions that would be useful to the furthering of the story, such as 'how did Bastirak build this citadel?', 'why are there extraplanar creatures running around in the Waste?' and 'where can we find tenebrium?'. The sages answer that tenebrium is found on the sub-plane of Noctulos and that Bastirak has some means of access to it, but beyond that, they cannot help.



Slaying the sages is easy; they put up no resistance. Extinguishing the lamp or increasing the temperature in the room by even a few degrees causes them to disintegrate.

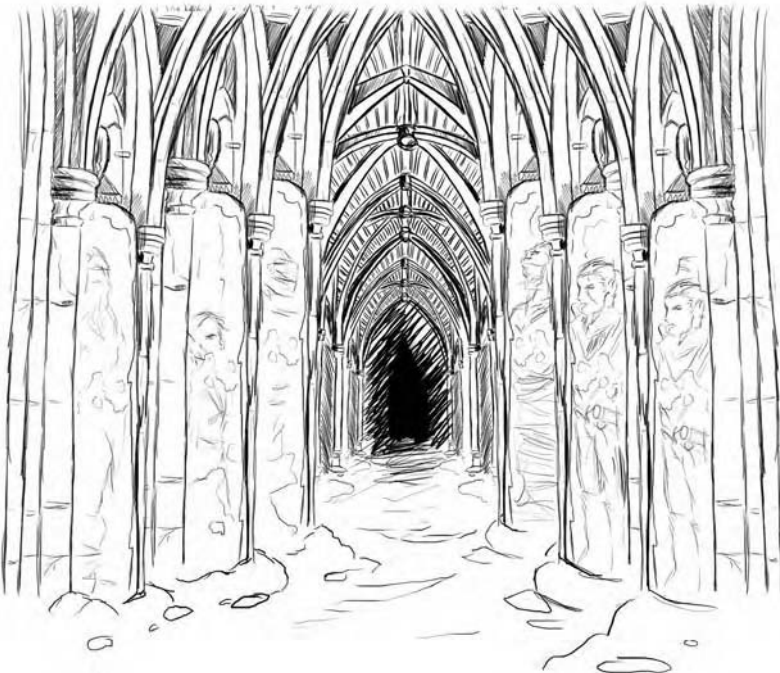
## 5. The Halls of the Fallen

*This long gallery, dim and gloomy in the feeble light, has dark shapes embedded in the walls. As you draw closer, you see that they are the bodies of men and women, lifeless and encased in ice. By their clothing and weapons, you guess that they are – or were – adventurers. You wonder if they will jerk to life and open blank white eyes as you come near; you are used to that kind of thing happening by now! It seems, however, that these poor souls are merely dead.*

*This room can only be a grisly trophy cabinet, in which Bastirak keeps the bodies of those who have entered his citadel against his will. There is plenty of room left in the walls for the likes of you.*

A single ice devil (see above for statistics) patrols up and down this hall keeping watch for intruders. If the party is at least 15<sup>th</sup> level on average, the Games Master should give him a companion ice devil.

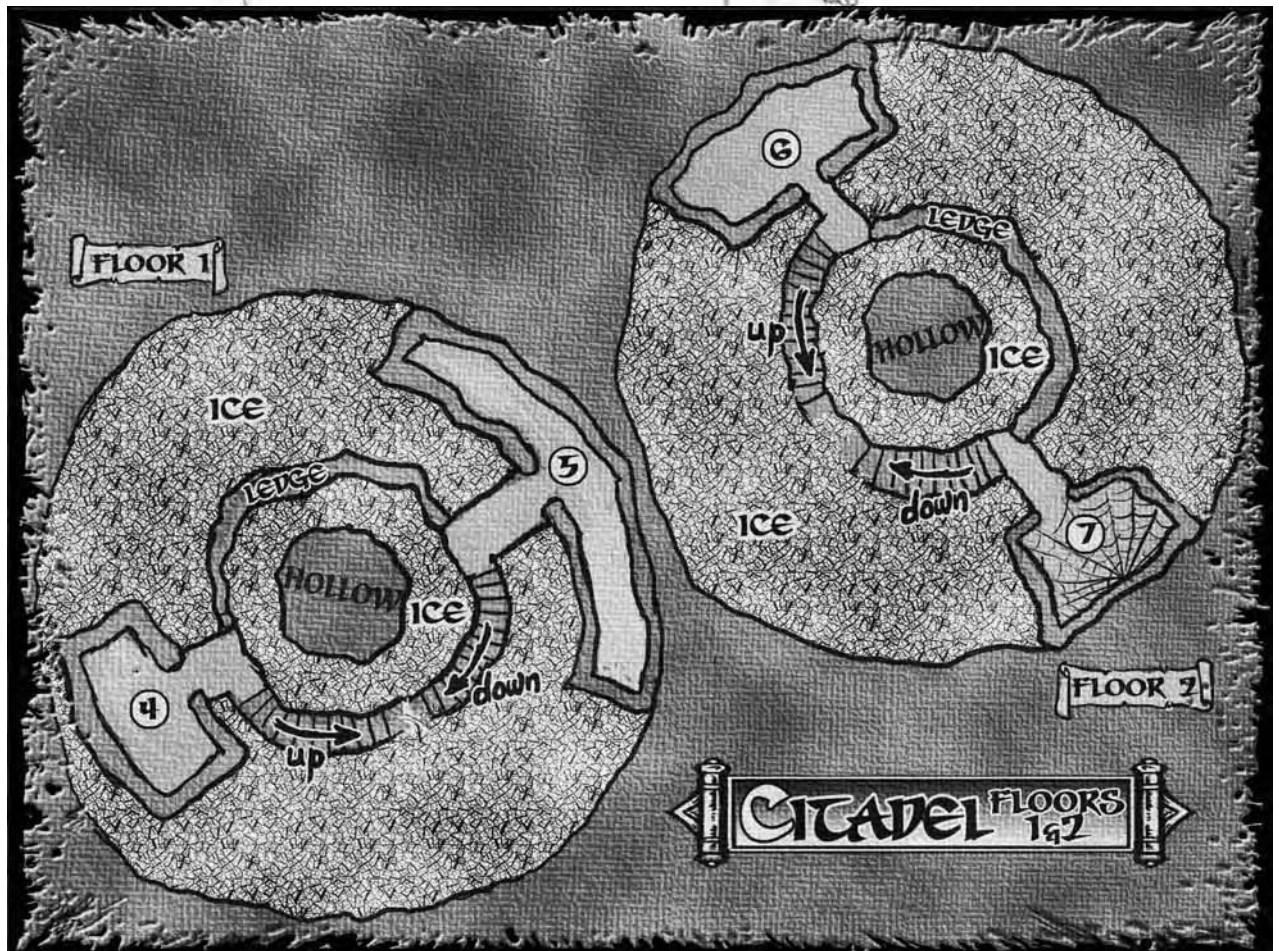
The bodies are still wearing the clothes they arrived in and carrying the gear they bore. Bastirak likes to preserve them as they were. The Player Characters may attempt to break the ice and reach the corpses in order to loot them. Each one is behind three feet of ice. The Games Master should bear in mind that fire attacks,



though they may melt large quantities of ice at once, have a chance to damage the gear that the corpses are wearing. Bastirak has already taken anything that he can use himself, so the gear that is left is useful only for character classes other than wizard. The bodies and their gear include the following:

- A young male halfling, who appears to have died from repeated blows with a blunt object. He carries 458 gold pieces in coin, two small sapphire earrings worth 600 gold pieces each, a +3 *short sword*, a set of masterwork rogues' tools and an *improved ring of climbing*.
- A female elf with blonde hair, with no visible sign of the cause of her death; Bastirak killed her with *slay living*. She carries a silver symbol of the god Brith worth 50 gold pieces, a set of +1 *full plate of moderate fortification*, a +5 *cold iron dagger* and a +1 *vorpal greatsword*.
- A bald-headed human male in his 60s wearing colourful silk robes, who appears to have been crushed to death, so that his body is mangled and misshapen. He wears a *ring of mind shielding*.
- Two half-elf males, apparently twins given their identical facial features, one wearing blue traveller's garments, the other red. They appear to have died from stab wounds from a large spear-like object. They carry identical *minor rings of cold resistance*, identical +1 *silver longswords*, and identical gold-inlaid black lacquer scroll cases worth 120 gold pieces each. The contents of the blue-clad half-elf's scroll case have been ruined by seeping water; the red-clad half-elf has a *scroll of feeblemind*, a *scroll of greater invisibility* and two *scrolls of mass bear's endurance*.
- A grey-haired human female, almost completely decapitated by a slashing blow to the neck. She carries a +2 *darkwood shield*, a set of full plate made from wood (intended for use with the *ironwood* spell), a +3 *scimitar* and five bottles of potion that have been frozen solid and thus ruined.
- There are five other bodies, which appear to be those of henchmen or followers of the others. Their gear is all mundane and has been spoiled by the ice.





## 6. The Tropical Garden

*As you enter this ice chamber you feel unexpected warmth in the air. There is a strong light source in the ceiling which radiates heat like a small interior sun. There is a smell of plant life, rich and earthy.*

*The room is filled with plants growing from ceramic troughs laid along the room's length. There are roses, lilies, daffodils and even blackberries, completely out of place in this frigid realm.*

Bastirak has created a garden of plants in the middle of an ice palace. The warm air is kept confined to this room and does not melt the walls. The secret of the room is the light source, which is a magical *sunlamp*.


**The Gardens:** The plant beds are each within the area of effect of a permanent *alarm* spell, shaped so as to sound an alarm if anything falls or stumbles into them. The alarm sounds in the ice devil barracks (Room 11) and brings the ice devils in that room running down to investigate.

**Guardians:** These laboriously cultivated plants cannot be left unsupervised or some denizen of the citadel might blunder into them. The ice devils are uncomfortable about spending time in this room as it is too hot for them, so Bastirak has assigned two barbed devils to watch over the garden. They are bored, irritable and spoiling for a fight.

**Granyang and Sconk, Barbed Devils:** CR 11; Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 12d8+72; hp 126; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 29, touch 16, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +12; Grp +22; Atk +18 melee (2d8+6 plus fear, claw); Full Atk +18 melee (2d8+6 plus fear, 2 claws); SA fear, impale 3d8+9, improved grab, *summon devil*; SQ barbed defence, damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 23, spell-like abilities, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +14, Will +12; Str 23, Dex 23, Con 23, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 18.

**Skills & Feats:** Concentration +21, Diplomacy +6, Hide +21, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Listen





+19, Move Silently +21, Search +16, Sense Motive +17, Spot +19, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Cleave, Improved Grapple, Iron Will, Power Attack.

**Sunlamp:** This extraordinary lantern consists of a blown glass sphere cradled in a bronze ring, which then hangs from three chains attached to a hook. When the *sunlamp* is activated, it establishes a spherical field beneath itself that functions as a *tiny hut*, with the notable difference that the walls of the *hut* are transparent. Within the sphere, the *sunlamp* sheds light as bright as full daylight. This light is the equivalent of actual sunlight for creatures who are damaged by daylight or intolerant to it.

The *sunlamp* can be lit or extinguished with a command word. A third command word sets it to grow brighter and dimmer over time, emulating the cycle of day and night.

## 7. The Hall of Bronderbok, the Jailer of the Worlds

*This ice sphere is filled with orange light shining through thick strands of webbing that gleam like spun sugar. Crouching at the top of the room is an eerily beautiful sculpture of a giant spider made from glass and steel, glowing from within with a light like embers.*

Here dwells Bastirak's most powerful ally, who keeps the rogue planes sealed behind mighty barriers. Bronderbok is a planespider, serving the evil wizard in the interests of keeping the planar rift under control, Bastirak's own planar voyaging has been severely curtailed. Bastirak grudgingly concedes that this arrangement is better than having a citadel full of uncontrolled extraplanar creatures.

Bronderbok descends into the realm of planar gateways every day and weaves webbing barriers across them, temporarily preventing outsiders from crossing through into the mundane world. Bastirak is only permitted to enter one of these each day. At present he keeps his expeditions confined to the plane of Noctulos.

Bronderbok investigates the Player Characters to ascertain whether they are 'anomalies' or not. So long as they do not use magic that accesses other planes or brings outsiders into the Prime Material (such as *summoning* spells or *planar ally*), it leaves them alone. It recognises the devils present in the citadel as being here by lawful contract. However, the devils are not permitted to *summon* other devils to their aid. If they forget this strict rule, Bronderbok will descend from its web, locate the 'anomaly' and *disintegrate* the summoned creatures.

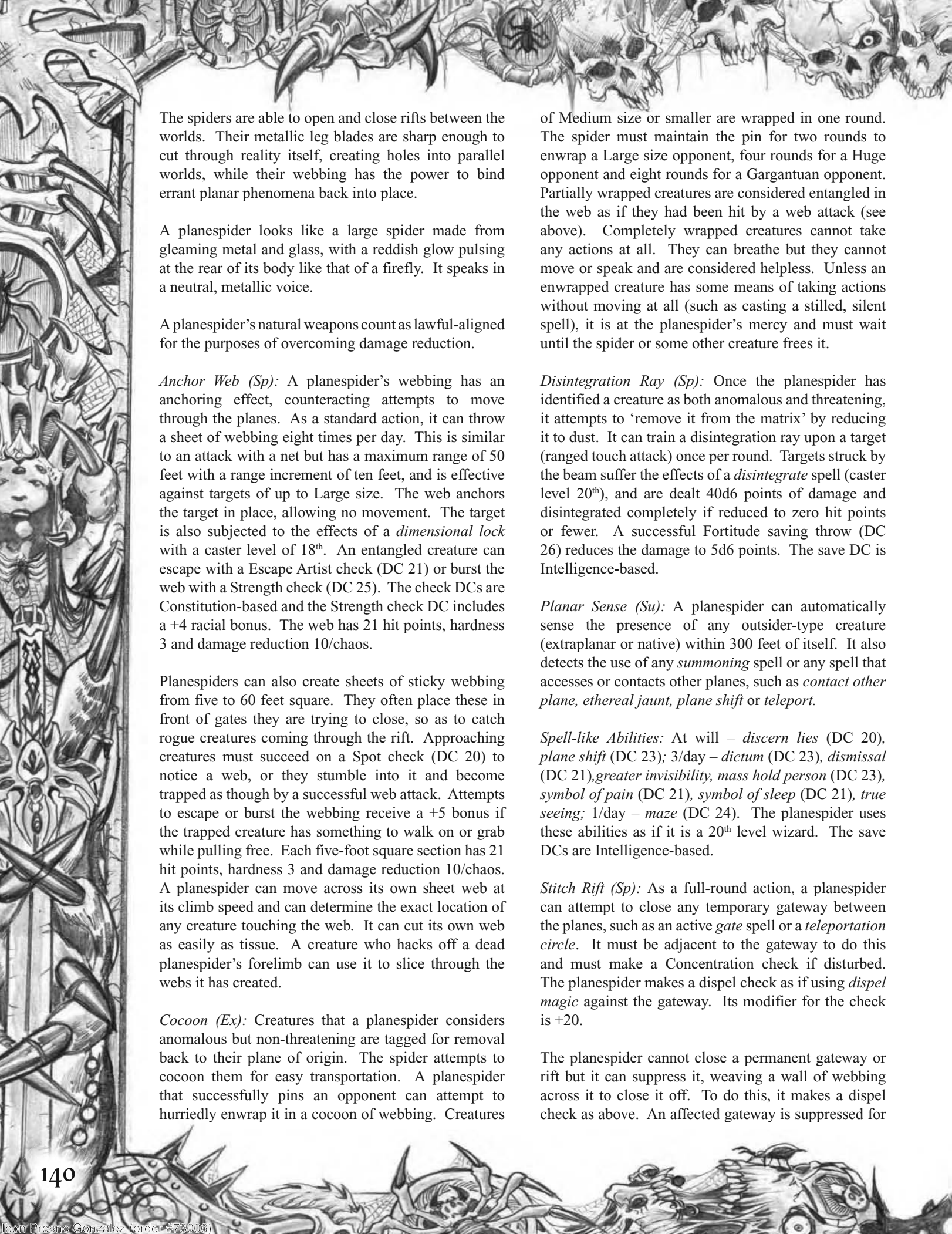
**Bronderbok's Mandala:** The planespider has brought a mandala (a stylised meditation aid) from its home plane. It uses this as a meditative focus. The mandala is circular and made from a thin platinum disc two feet across, engraved with beautiful and complex designs that symbolise the various subdivisions of the Astral Plane, with tiny gems representing the intersections of the planes. In material terms, it is worth 9,500 gold pieces.

**Planespider:** CR 15; Large outsider (extraplanar, lawful); HD 20d8+20; hp 110; Init +7; Spd 60 ft. (climb 30ft.); AC 36, touch 16, flat-footed 29; Base Atk +20; Grp +35; Atk Claw +31 melee (2d6+11, 19–20); Full Atk 4 claws +31 melee (2d6+11, 19–20); SA *anchor web*, cocoon, *disintegration ray*, spell-like abilities, *stitch rift*; SQ Damage reduction 15/chaos, darkvision 60 ft., telepathy 100 ft., planar sense, spell resistance 31; AL LN; SV Fort +13, Ref +19, Will +15; Str 33, Dex 24, Con 13, Int 23, Wis 16, Cha 11.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +24, Diplomacy +23, Hide +26, Move Silently +30, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (the planes) +29, Listen +26, Sense Motive +26, Sleight of Hand +30, Spellcraft +29, Spot +26, Survival +26, Use Rope +30; Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw).

These highly intelligent arachnids originate from a lawful neutral plane called Coax, where they build magical thinking machines to perform stupendous calculations far beyond the powers of human minds to grasp. A small group of volunteers dwells on the Astral Plane, from whence they observe the behaviour of other planes and intervene to prevent the worlds from becoming muddled. Phase spiders are thought by some sages to be a degenerate offshoot of this race. Whether this is true or not, planespiders viciously attack phase spiders on sight, using their *anchor web* to keep them from shifting to the Ethereal Plane and back.

A planespider's greatest concern is to keep everything in its proper place. This means dispatching extraplanar creatures back to their own planes whenever possible. If a creature does not go willingly, the planespider attempts to erase it with its *disintegrate* ray. To the spider, all extraplanar creatures appear as anomalies – disruptions to the perfect order of the universe. Creatures who have survived encounters with planespiders report that lengthy, reasoned arguments can persuade a planespider to show mercy, while appeals to its (presumably nonexistent) better nature are likely to result in disintegration.



The spiders are able to open and close rifts between the worlds. Their metallic leg blades are sharp enough to cut through reality itself, creating holes into parallel worlds, while their webbing has the power to bind errant planar phenomena back into place.

A planespider looks like a large spider made from gleaming metal and glass, with a reddish glow pulsing at the rear of its body like that of a firefly. It speaks in a neutral, metallic voice.

A planespider's natural weapons count as lawful-aligned for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

*Anchor Web (Sp):* A planespider's webbing has an anchoring effect, counteracting attempts to move through the planes. As a standard action, it can throw a sheet of webbing eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet with a range increment of ten feet, and is effective against targets of up to Large size. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. The target is also subjected to the effects of a *dimensional lock* with a caster level of 18<sup>th</sup>. An entangled creature can escape with a *Escape Artist* check (DC 21) or burst the web with a *Strength* check (DC 25). The check DCs are Constitution-based and the *Strength* check DC includes a +4 racial bonus. The web has 21 hit points, hardness 3 and damage reduction 10/chaos.

Planespiders can also create sheets of sticky webbing from five to 60 feet square. They often place these in front of gates they are trying to close, so as to catch rogue creatures coming through the rift. Approaching creatures must succeed on a *Spot* check (DC 20) to notice a web, or they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing receive a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each five-foot square section has 21 hit points, hardness 3 and damage reduction 10/chaos. A planespider can move across its own sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching the web. It can cut its own web as easily as tissue. A creature who hacks off a dead planespider's forelimb can use it to slice through the webs it has created.

*Cocoon (Ex):* Creatures that a planespider considers anomalous but non-threatening are tagged for removal back to their plane of origin. The spider attempts to cocoon them for easy transportation. A planespider that successfully pins an opponent can attempt to hurriedly enwrap it in a cocoon of webbing. Creatures

of Medium size or smaller are wrapped in one round. The spider must maintain the pin for two rounds to enwrap a Large size opponent, four rounds for a Huge opponent and eight rounds for a Gargantuan opponent. Partially wrapped creatures are considered entangled in the web as if they had been hit by a web attack (see above). Completely wrapped creatures cannot take any actions at all. They can breathe but they cannot move or speak and are considered helpless. Unless an enwrapped creature has some means of taking actions without moving at all (such as casting a stilled, silent spell), it is at the planespider's mercy and must wait until the spider or some other creature frees it.

*Disintegration Ray (Sp):* Once the planespider has identified a creature as both anomalous and threatening, it attempts to 'remove it from the matrix' by reducing it to dust. It can train a disintegration ray upon a target (ranged touch attack) once per round. Targets struck by the beam suffer the effects of a *disintegrate* spell (caster level 20<sup>th</sup>), and are dealt 40d6 points of damage and disintegrated completely if reduced to zero hit points or fewer. A successful *Fortitude* saving throw (DC 26) reduces the damage to 5d6 points. The save DC is Intelligence-based.

*Planar Sense (Su):* A planespider can automatically sense the presence of any outsider-type creature (extraplanar or native) within 300 feet of itself. It also detects the use of any *summoning* spell or any spell that accesses or contacts other planes, such as *contact other plane*, *ethereal jaunt*, *plane shift* or *teleport*.

*Spell-like Abilities:* At will – *discern lies* (DC 20), *plane shift* (DC 23); 3/day – *dictum* (DC 23), *dismissal* (DC 21), *greater invisibility*, *mass hold person* (DC 23), *symbol of pain* (DC 21), *symbol of sleep* (DC 21), *true seeing*; 1/day – *maze* (DC 24). The planespider uses these abilities as if it is a 20<sup>th</sup> level wizard. The save DCs are Intelligence-based.

*Stitch Rift (Sp):* As a full-round action, a planespider can attempt to close any temporary gateway between the planes, such as an active *gate* spell or a *teleportation circle*. It must be adjacent to the gateway to do this and must make a *Concentration* check if disturbed. The planespider makes a *dispel* check as if using *dispel magic* against the gateway. Its modifier for the check is +20.

The planespider cannot close a permanent gateway or rift but it can suppress it, weaving a wall of webbing across it to close it off. To do this, it makes a *dispel* check as above. An affected gateway is suppressed for

one hour per Hit Die of the planespider. Creatures can reopen the gateway by slicing through the webs; these have 21 hit points, hardness 3 and damage reduction 10/chaos.

## 8. Zamelak's Chambers

As the Player Characters approach these rooms, they hear the following:

*A shrill scream comes from up ahead, followed by a torrent of insane laughter. Then there is the sound of a little girl's voice speaking in a babyish singsong tone as if telling a story. There is silence for a moment, then a low keening moan.*

The room is curtained off with a fringe of silver wires on which quartz crystals have been strung (an array worth 120 gold pieces). Inside the room, the Player Characters find the following:

*An attempt has been made to cover the ice walls of this chamber with brightly coloured hangings, but they are soaked through and dark with damp. A brass bed, similarly sodden, stands against the wall, with a doll the size of a small child propped up on it.*

*A wild-haired woman, barefoot in a tattered white dress, sits cross-legged next to the doll. On the woman's lap is an open book and she is reading from it in a murmuring voice. You catch the words '...and then the Sun King of Elfland came and melted the snowmen all away, all away into puddles and steam.' She looks up from the book. You see that her fingers end in talons and her face is not quite human. Her nostrils are reptilian slits and her eyes have hourglass pupils.*

These are the chambers of Zamelak the insane wind-witch, Bastirak's unfortunate sister-spouse. Occasionally she goes raving up and down the battlements instead of lingering in her room, so the Games Master can have the Player Characters see her sooner than this if desired.

The Games Master should portray Zamelak as completely mad and changeable as the winds. One moment she will welcome the Player Characters as if they were childhood playmates; the next, she will use her breath weapon on them, then burst into tears and beg their forgiveness. She is more evil than good, but her behaviour is so erratic that she can easily be mistaken for either depending on what mood she is in. Her dominant personality is one of a curious, playful and inventively cruel child.

If the Player Characters treat her kindly and patiently, they can gain useful information from her. The Games Master should not, however, let the Player Characters gain this information without effort or without putting themselves in a vulnerable position. Zamelak should be an irritation at best and a major threat at worst, despite her potential usefulness. The information she can give the Player Characters includes the following:

- The great black dragon who has risen with the drow, spreading his wings over Jehannum, is called Scallandriax. He is one and the same as the dragon who ravaged Kandang after the last war against the drow.
- Her mother's sister, the silver dragon Aristeele, is not dead. She is imprisoned in the mountains in the northeast of Svarth.
- She, Bastirak and Azarak are all half-siblings descended from a king.
- Bastirak has visitors right here in the citadel, right now. 'Dark they are and silver-haired'.
- Titans used to live in this place. Now the titans are all gone, back to their own world.
- Bastirak often ventures into the places below the citadel, where the planes crack against one another like plates piled too high in a sink. He goes to strange places and brings back strange things – statues, creatures, stones that shed darkness instead of light.





- Her brother has angered the dead by sending out ice devils to dig up old graves. There are dead chieftains out in the snow who wait patiently for the return of what he has stolen.
- There was a time when the planes leaked into the world. Her brother came and went to the other planes as he pleased but the citadel was always full of confused creatures who had wandered in from other dimensions. Then the spider came and mended all the holes. Now Bastirak is not allowed to travel as much as he used to, but at least the citadel is quieter.

**Zamelak, Priestess of Gahaira, Female Half-Silver Dragon Clr13:** CR 15; Medium dragon (augmented humanoid); HD 13d8+26; hp 84; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +9; Grp +14; Atk +14 melee (1d4+5, claw); Full Atk +14 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws) and +9 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA breath weapon, rebuke undead, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, paralysis and *sleep*, low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +12; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 12.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +10, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (religion) +4, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Spellcraft +10; Combat Casting, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Counterspell, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (Necromancy).

*Breath Weapon (Su):* 30-ft. cone of cold, dealing 6d8 points of cold damage, Reflex saving throw (DC 12) allowed for half damage, usable once per day.

*Spells prepared (6/6+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/2+1/1+1, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, detect poison, guidance, read magic, resistance (2)*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *command, divine favour, inflict light wounds, obscuring mist\**, *protection from good, sanctuary, shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bear's endurance, bull's strength, death knell, hold person, shatter\**, *owl's wisdom, wind wall*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *bestow curse, blindness/deafness, contagion\**, *dispel magic, magic vestment, protection from energy*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *death ward, divine power, inflict critical wounds\**, *poison (2), spell immunity*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *dispel good, greater command, mass inflict light wounds\**, *spell resistance*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *blade barrier, chain lightning\**, *harm*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *destruction, disintegrate\**.

\*Domain spell.

*Domains:* Air (turn earth creatures and rebuke air creatures as if undead, 3 + Charisma modifier/day), Destruction (smite attack with +4 bonus on attack roll and +13 to damage, 1/day).

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crystal orb, *The Book of Fairytales*.

**Crystal Orb:** Zamelak's only treasure is hidden in a box beneath her bed, protected by a *glyph of warding* (5d8 damage to target and all within five feet, Reflex saving throw (DC 17) for half damage). It is a crystal orb three inches across, set into a silver mount. Inside the orb is a continuous animated *illusion* of a silver dragon flying across a stormy sky. This is Zamelak's mother, who was killed when the drow attacked Kandang. The orb is worth 1,400 gold pieces as a curio.

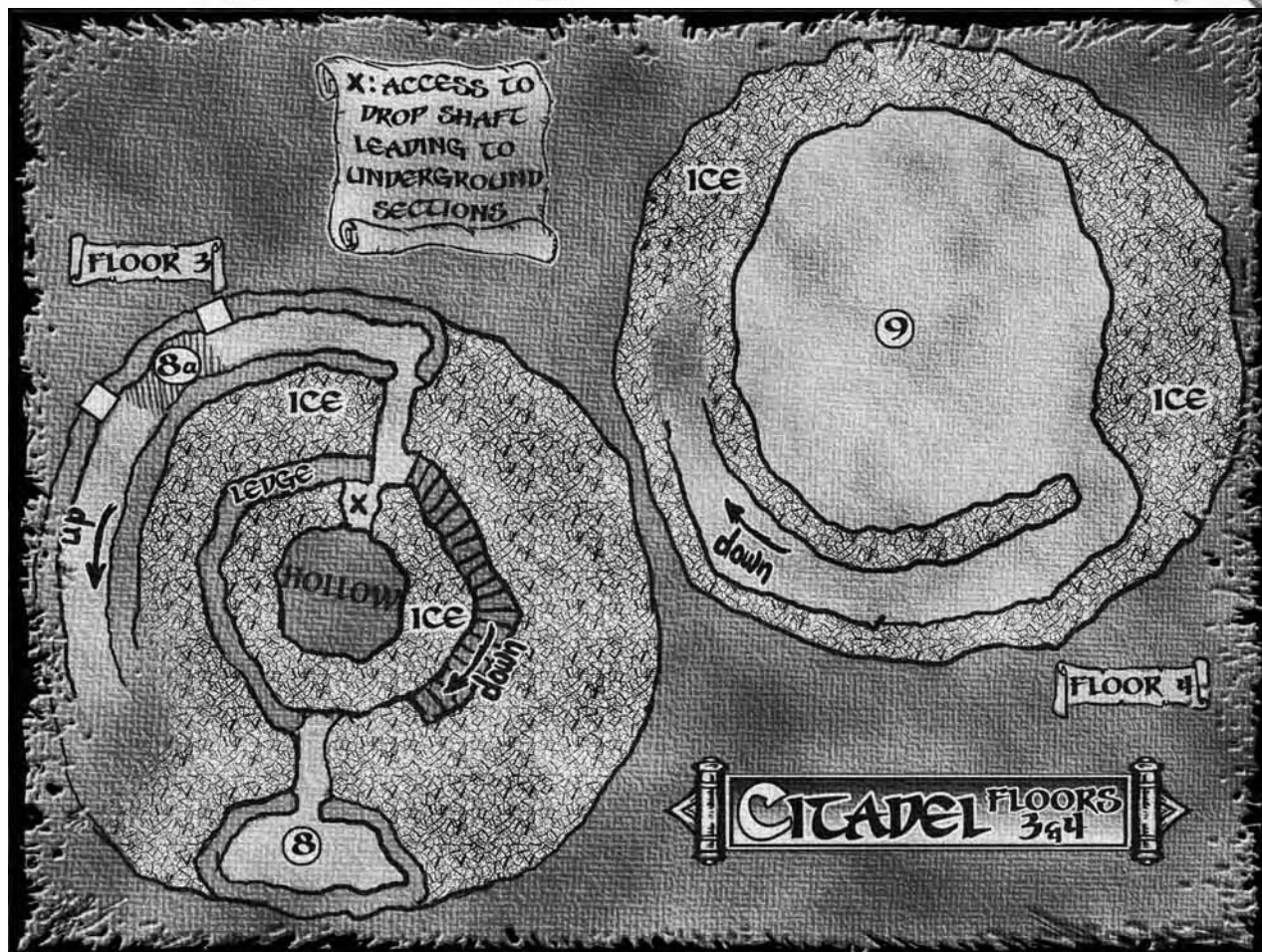
**The Book of Fairytales:** This book has been hand-drawn and contains many familiar folktales of Ashfar. Any character who has knowledge of folklore (such as a bard) who studies it can identify one tale that is not part of the oral tradition, the story of the Three Dragon Brides. The story tells of how King Hazrad of Argantia married many beautiful women, but none of his wives found greater favour than the three dragons who took on mortal form and bore him children, two sons and a daughter. This is the tale of how Azarak, Bastirak and Zamelak came to be born. The last page of this story has been torn from the book.

## 8a. Fake Ice Block Trap

The walls at this point in the corridor are trapped. When a creature other than Bastirak, Zamelak or an ice devil passes the shaded area, two ten-foot cubes of translucent rock slide from the walls at the locations indicated and block off the corridor. They then slide inwards towards each other, moving at a rate of ten feet per round until they finally grind together.

The translucent rock cubes look almost exactly like ice. Only deliberate investigation on the Player Characters' part (chipping at the 'ice', attempting to melt it and so forth) reveals them to be anything else. Trying to melt the walls with *fireballs* and the like does not work, of course; the best way to escape is to melt a hole through the walls or floor.

**Crushing Walls:** CR 16; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; walls move together (20d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in enclosed area); never miss; onset delay (2 rounds); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.



## 9. The Ice Globe Prison

This vast chamber is shaped somewhat like a beehive, with a ceiling some 80 feet high. In the shadows far above you see a globe of ice suspended from the outer walls by frozen spars. The sphere is hollow. It is hard to see details from here but you can make out the dim figure of a man inside.

Beneath the sphere, a huge reptilian creature with purple skin grunts and heaves its bulk back and forth across the room. A dozen snakelike heads crane around to watch the prisoner from all angles. A forked tongue flickers from one of them, as if to mock his captivity.

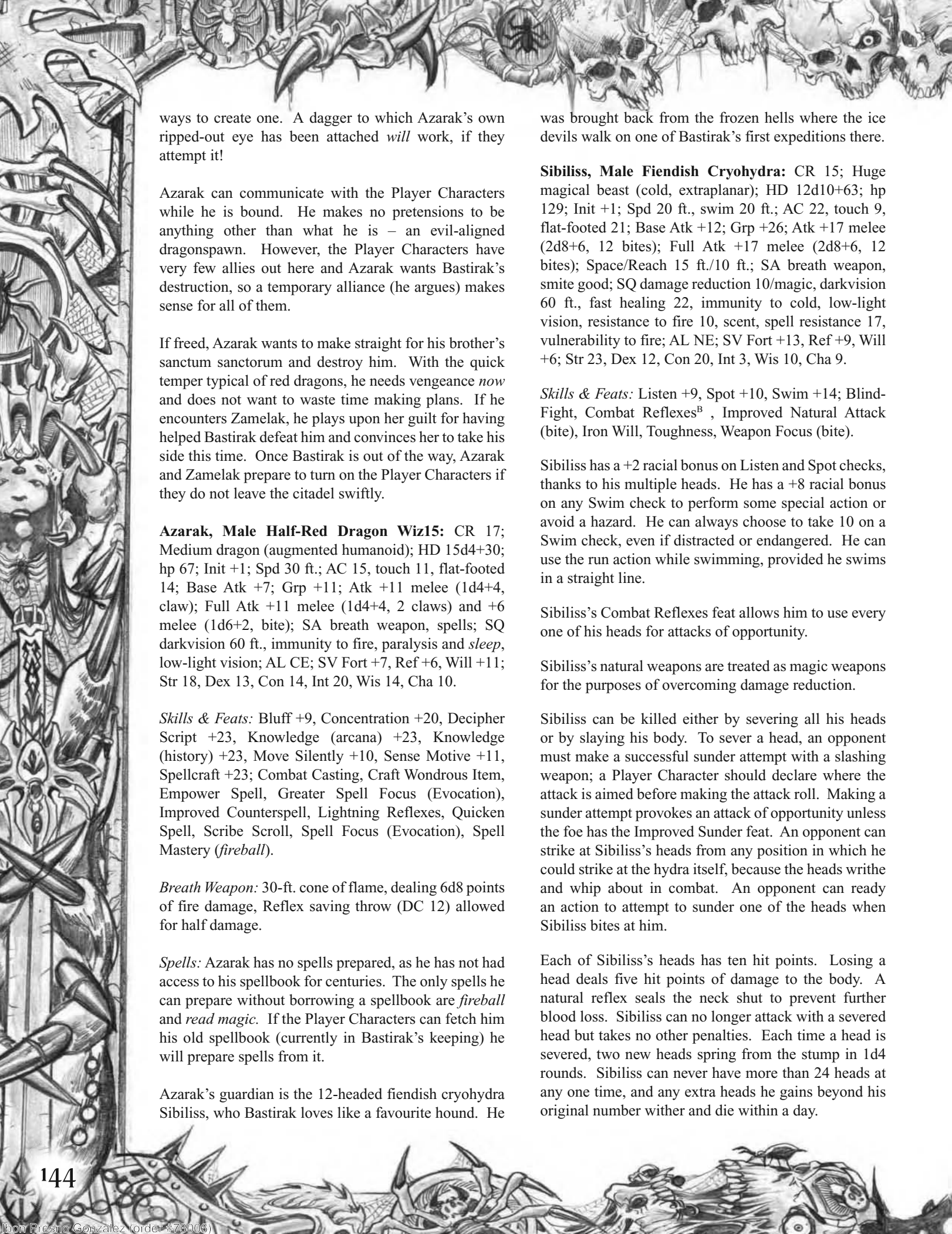
If the Player Characters are able to examine the sphere more closely, the Games Master should read the following:

Inside, with chains on his wrists and ankles, is a humanoid figure, his face contorted with agony and bitter hatred. His eyes are livid red sparks and his skin is blotched with crimson patches like a rash.

In the centre of the sphere, bound by a *binding* spell, is Bastirak's hated rival, the half-dragon fire-mage Azarak, brother to himself and Zamelak. The Player Characters can try to free him, though if they do they may unleash a far worse evil than Bastirak ever was.

The *binding* chosen was the chains variant, meaning that Azarak is surrounded by an *antipathy* effect extending 50 feet out. Creatures feel an overpowering urge to leave this area. They can force themselves to enter it if they make Will saving throws (DC 20) but suffer a -4 penalty to Dexterity while in the area due to the discomfort. Azarak cannot move from the area, nor can any force break the *binding* save for an *antimagic field*, a *mage's disjunction* or the appointed release condition.

When Bastirak placed the *binding*, he reasoned that he might need to release Azarak again at some point in the future, if only to move him to a new stronghold. He thus set a release condition: a dagger with a dragon's eye set into the hilt can sever the chains. Bastirak owns just such a dagger (*Nightwatch*, for which see below), but the Player Characters can doubtless come up with



ways to create one. A dagger to which Azarak's own ripped-out eye has been attached *will* work, if they attempt it!

Azarak can communicate with the Player Characters while he is bound. He makes no pretensions to be anything other than what he is – an evil-aligned dragonspawn. However, the Player Characters have very few allies out here and Azarak wants Bastirak's destruction, so a temporary alliance (he argues) makes sense for all of them.

If freed, Azarak wants to make straight for his brother's sanctum sanctorum and destroy him. With the quick temper typical of red dragons, he needs vengeance *now* and does not want to waste time making plans. If he encounters Zamelak, he plays upon her guilt for having helped Bastirak defeat him and convinces her to take his side this time. Once Bastirak is out of the way, Azarak and Zamelak prepare to turn on the Player Characters if they do not leave the citadel swiftly.

**Azarak, Male Half-Red Dragon Wiz15:** CR 17; Medium dragon (augmented humanoid); HD 15d4+30; hp 67; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d4+4, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +6 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA breath weapon, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, paralysis and *sleep*, low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills & Feats:** Bluff +9, Concentration +20, Decipher Script +23, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (history) +23, Move Silently +10, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +23; Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (Evocation), Improved Counterspell, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Mastery (*fireball*).

**Breath Weapon:** 30-ft. cone of flame, dealing 6d8 points of fire damage, Reflex saving throw (DC 12) allowed for half damage.

**Spells:** Azarak has no spells prepared, as he has not had access to his spellbook for centuries. The only spells he can prepare without borrowing a spellbook are *fireball* and *read magic*. If the Player Characters can fetch him his old spellbook (currently in Bastirak's keeping) he will prepare spells from it.

Azarak's guardian is the 12-headed fiendish cryohydra Sibiliss, who Bastirak loves like a favourite hound. He

was brought back from the frozen hells where the ice devils walk on one of Bastirak's first expeditions there.

**Sibiliss, Male Fiendish Cryohydra:** CR 15; Huge magical beast (cold, extraplanar); HD 12d10+63; hp 129; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +12; Grp +26; Atk +17 melee (2d8+6, 12 bites); Full Atk +17 melee (2d8+6, 12 bites); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon, smite good; SQ damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 22, immunity to cold, low-light vision, resistance to fire 10, scent, spell resistance 17, vulnerability to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 9.

**Skills & Feats:** Listen +9, Spot +10, Swim +14; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite).

Sibiliss has a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks, thanks to his multiple heads. He has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. He can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. He can use the run action while swimming, provided he swims in a straight line.


Sibiliss's Combat Reflexes feat allows him to use every one of his heads for attacks of opportunity.

Sibiliss's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Sibiliss can be killed either by severing all his heads or by slaying his body. To sever a head, an opponent must make a successful sunder attempt with a slashing weapon; a Player Character should declare where the attack is aimed before making the attack roll. Making a sunder attempt provokes an attack of opportunity unless the foe has the Improved Sunder feat. An opponent can strike at Sibiliss's heads from any position in which he could strike at the hydra itself, because the heads writhe and whip about in combat. An opponent can ready an action to attempt to sunder one of the heads when Sibiliss bites at him.

Each of Sibiliss's heads has ten hit points. Losing a head deals five hit points of damage to the body. A natural reflex seals the neck shut to prevent further blood loss. Sibiliss can no longer attack with a severed head but takes no other penalties. Each time a head is severed, two new heads spring from the stump in 1d4 rounds. Sibiliss can never have more than 24 heads at any one time, and any extra heads he gains beyond his original number wither and die within a day.





To prevent a severed head from growing back into two heads, at least five points of fire or acid damage must be dealt to the stump (a touch attack to hit) before the new heads appear. A flaming weapon (or similar effect) deals its energy damage to the stump in the same blow in which a head is severed. Fire or acid damage from an area effect may burn multiple stumps in addition to dealing damage to Sibiliss's body. Sibiliss does not die from losing his heads until all his heads have been cut off and the stumps seared by fire or acid. Targeted magical effects cannot sever Sibiliss's heads (and thus must be directed at his body) unless they deal slashing damage and can be used to make sunder attempts.

*Breath Weapon (Su):* Sibiliss can breathe jets of frost ten feet high, ten feet wide and 20 feet long. All of his heads breathe once every 1d4 rounds. Each jet deals 3d6 points of cold damage per head. A successful Reflex saving throw (DC 21) halves the damage.

*Fast Healing (Ex):* Each round, Sibiliss heals 22 points of damage.

*Smite Good (Su):* Once per day, Sibiliss can make a normal melee attack to deal +12 damage against a good foe.

## 10. The Honoured Ambassadors

*This large, open ice cave is empty but for one startling feature – a small stone cottage, from whose chimney a plume of smoke ascends. The windows are shuttered.*

A Spellcraft check (DC 14) identifies the structure as a *secure shelter* produced by means of the spell. This is where the three drow ambassadors reside while they wait for Bastirak to bring back their tenebrium. Bastirak has provided the *secure shelter* as a courtesy, as the drow are not able to tolerate the cold.

The three drow are Zerabin, Lusche and Quan'la, representatives of Rannirak, who have been sent here to ensure that Bastirak delivers the tenebrium he has been contracted to provide. They have been here for two months now and are sick of the cold waste. They long to return to the dark caverns of their home. To make the time go by more quickly, they spend their evenings drinking and smoking their dwindling supply of dried mushrooms.

**Zerabin, Male Drow Ftr6/Blk7:** CR 14; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 6d10+6 plus 7d10+7; hp 84; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +13; Grp +17; Atk +22 melee (2d4+12/19–20/x4

plus poison, *Fellraven*) or +17 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, +3 *hand crossbow*); Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (2d4+12/19–20/x4 plus poison, *Fellraven*) or +17 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, +3 *hand crossbow*); SA command undead, detect good, poison, smite good, sneak attack +2d6, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ aura of despair, aura of evil, dark blessing, drow traits, spell resistance 24; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14.

*Skills & Feats:* Hide +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +3, Ride +5, Search +2, Spot +3; Cleave, Improved Critical (scythe), Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (scythe), Weapon Specialisation (scythe).

*Aura of Despair (Su):* All enemies within ten feet of Zerabin suffer a –2 modifier to all saving throws.

*Aura of Evil (Ex):* Zerabin radiates a strong aura of evil.

*Command Undead:* Zerabin commands undead as a 5<sup>th</sup> level cleric.

*Smite Good (Su):* Twice per day, Zerabin may attempt to smite a good opponent with a normal melee attack. The attack has a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals an additional +7 points of damage.

*Sneak Attack (Ex):* Zerabin may make sneak attacks as a rogue does, for +2d6 damage.

Spells per Day: (3/1/1, save DC 11 + spell level): 1<sup>st</sup> – *cause fear, doom, summon monster I* (evil only); 2<sup>nd</sup> – *shatter*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *deeper darkness*.

*Equipment & Treasure:* +2 *full plate armour*; crossbow bolts (10), drow blade venom (3), *Fellraven*, masterwork +3 *hand crossbow*.

Zerabin is a rarity in drow society – an honoured male who is not a wizard. His devotion to the Dark has earned him high favour among the priestesses, who have designated him Rannirak's representative out here in the wastes. Zerabin's preferred tactic is to fight from horseback, charging at foes and severing their heads with *Fellraven* in a terrible all-out assault.

Zerabin's servant is Balebrand, a fiendish horse who serves him as a mount.





**Fellraven:** +4 keen scythe; AL NE; Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14; Speech, 120 ft. vision and hearing; ego score 15.  
*Lesser Powers:* bless allies 3/day, hold person on enemy 3/day.

*Special Purpose:* Defend the drow race.

*Dedicated Power:* Can use phantasmal killer.


*Personality:* The drow crusader Fellraven was feared and revered by her kin and her enemies alike. She marched at the head of the drow forces that entered the Horned Reaches with the intent of crushing Shallemoi, flying the pennant of the Black Titan, several thousand years ago. It was the Titan itself that doomed her, for when the assembled magi of Shallemoi devastated the construct she was crushed by its toppling mass. The Fellraven's bones were taken back to the drow homeland and revered in a Shrine of Sorrow, until the magician Rannirak (guided, he said, by visions) broke open the shrine and took the relics. Fellraven's spine and ribs were turned into the handle of a mighty scythe in which a fragment of her soul still remains. She fights alongside her people once again, sending nightmare visions against those who would assail them. Fellraven

is haughty and allows herself to be borne by none but the elite of the drow fighting forces.  
 Strong illusion: CL 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Balebrand, Fiendish Horse:** CR 3; Large magical beast (extraplanar); HD 8d8+24; hp 60; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (1d6+5, hoof); Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+5, 2 hooves) and +5 melee (1d4+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA smite good; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, resistance to cold 10, resistance to fire 10, scent, share saving throws, share spells, spell resistance 9, speak with master; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Balebrand's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

*Skills & Feats:* Listen +7, Spot +6; Endurance, Run



*Smite Good (Su):* Once per day, Balebrand can make a normal melee attack to deal +8 damage against a good foe.

**Lusche, Female Drow Clr13:** CR 14; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 13d8; hp 58; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d8+2 plus poison, +1 *morningstar*) or +11 ranged (1d10/19–20 plus poison, masterwork heavy crossbow), Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+2 plus poison, +1 *morningstar*) or +11 ranged (1d10/19–20 plus poison, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA poison, spells, spell-like abilities, turn/rebuke undead; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 24; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +12; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 10.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +16, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +16, Heal +10, Hide +7, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +6, Search +5, Spellcraft +8, Spot +6; Combat Casting.

*Spells prepared (6/6+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/2+1/1+1, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *create water, detect magic (2), guidance, purify food and drink, read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *disguise self\*, divine favour, doom, endure elements (3), entropic shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *aid, bull's strength, desecrate, hold person, invisibility\*, resist energy, spiritual weapon*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *bestow curse, create food and water, invisibility purge, nondetection\*, prayer, protection from energy*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *confusion\*, divine power, greater magic weapon, poison (2), spell immunity*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *false vision\*, flame strike, scrying, wall of stone*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *animate objects\*, antilife shell, harm*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *mass inflict serious wounds, word of chaos\**.

\*Domain spells.

*Domains:* Chaos (casts chaos spells at +1 caster level), Trickery (add Bluff, Disguise and Hide to class skills).

*Equipment & Treasure:* +1 *morningstar*, +1 *full plate armour*, bottle of murky mushroom wine heavily laced with drugs, crossbow bolts (10), drow blade venom, masterwork heavy crossbow, silver facemask (worth 350 gp).

The priestess Lusche is a servant of Arosi, the goddess of poisons and intoxication, the only goddess to be worshipped by elves and drow alike. Lusche has fallen from favour among the drow following excessive wantonness and rumours that she had seduced novices who were meant to be dedicated to the drow deity She. While the drow do not frown upon such activities *per se*, taking that which rightfully belongs to the main

goddess of the race is a serious offence. Lusche's face was partially burned off with acid as a warning; she now wears a full-face mask fashioned from bright silver.

On this mission, she has been sent purely as a magical support agent, to make sure Zerabin and Quan'la are well looked after. This assignment is her last chance to regain favour with her House. Unfortunately for her, the monotony and the dismal surroundings are driving her steadily out of her mind. She has been forced to cause trouble to liven things up; it is only a matter of time before she offends Bastirak or pushes Zerabin's patience too far. Zerabin has respect for her status as a priestess, and so has tried to keep her out of mischief, but he is beginning to think that he would be serving his own goddess better by abandoning Lusche to her fate.

**Quan'la, Male Drow Rog13:** CR 14; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 13d6-13; hp 32; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +16 melee (1d6+4/18–20 plus poison, +2 *rapier*) or +15 melee (1d4+3/19–20 plus poison, +1 *dagger*) or +15 ranged (1d10 plus poison, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d6+4/18–20 plus poison, +2 *rapier*) and +13/+8 melee (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, +1 *dagger*); or +15 ranged (1d10 plus poison, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA crippling strike, defensive roll, sneak attack +7d6, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trap sense +4; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +13, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 20, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +10, Craft (trapmaking) +8, Disable Device +8, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +13, Gather Information +10, Hide +13, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +13, Search +12, Sleight of Hand +13, Spot +13, Tumble +13; Dodge, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defence (already added to AC above), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse.

*Equipment & Treasure:* +1 *dagger*, +2 *rapier*, +4 *studded leather armour*, crossbow bolts (10), drow blade venom, masterwork heavy crossbow.

This young, skinny drow is Zerabin's squire, catamite and adoring servant. Lusche finds his devotion to Zerabin, and complete lack of interest in her, intolerable. She had hoped to seduce him on this long trip into the desolate wilderness but, for obvious reasons, has been completely unsuccessful. Quan'la has the formal role of scout and the informal role of spy. He has been brought along in case the group needs to investigate Bastirak's rooms or possessions without his knowledge.





### The Letter

On the wooden writing desk inside the cottage is an unfinished letter from Zerabin to Rannirak:

*Honoured Archmage Rannirak,*

*My comrades and I have celebrated your victory in Crom Calamar in fine style. Lusche became falling-down drunk and a little too intimate with one of our host's pet devils, which could potentially have led to an incident but for the ready availability of ice-water, with which she revived herself.*

*Our host assures us that tenebrium can still be found in comparable quantities to those he provided before, though we have naught but his word on this. I cannot deny that the samples he has produced are of exceptional purity, the best to date. Their size, though, is barely that of a thumbnail, far too small for our purposes. I am including them with this missive, so that you may see for yourself.*

*Naturally, he remains secretive about the source, though it is clearly one of the alternate planes to which this citadel affords him access. Quan'la believes you could craft one of those forked rods and bear us there directly with magic, bypassing Bastirak entirely, if he could only visit the place and study it. I have twice had to restrain him from following our host secretly. Such a brave boy; I am proud.*

*These delays unsettle me. The chippings he gives us seem almost like a sly insult. Could Bastirak, perhaps, be playing both sides against the middle? Has he had some better offer than ours? If this were so, only Kandang could have proffered it. We have promised him gems and the rulership of an island. Kandang has the power to recognise the royalty of his dragon blood. They are proud, the half-bloods. Bastirak may crave royal titles and archaic privileges more than he desires the kind of power we can give.*

*If necessary, I am prepared to...*

Beside the letter is a small cloth bag containing four chips of a dark mineral. If brought out of the bag, they radiate a sphere of faint, smoky darkness two feet across, not dark enough to conceal anything but definitely noticeable. These are the tenebrium samples Bastirak has provided.

A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) reveals that these samples would probably not be adequate for the Conclave to find out anything useful about the tenebrium

itself, though an expert on the planes might be able to use them to engineer the material components for a *plane shift* spell to reach their origin plane.

### 11. The Mirror Gallery

*On the walls of this circular room hang six tall mirrors in oval frames of riveted iron, each one reaching from the floor to the ceiling. The mirrored surfaces ripple slightly, as if they were made from mercury held suspended in the air. Images play across them.*

Bastirak uses these mirrors to *scry*; they were taken from one of the planes he visited and radiate a moderate Divination aura. The mirrors are indeed liquid, magically suspended in frames. Dealing even a single point of damage to one breaks the surface, ruining the mirror and sending silver fluid splashing across the floor.

Five of the mirrors are *scrying* surfaces, while the sixth is a magical trap (see below). When the *scrying* spell is cast in connection with one, the mirror continues to relay images of the subject even after the spell expires. The subject, however, is allowed a new saving throw each morning to break the link. Currently the mirrors are *scrying* on the following subjects, counting them clockwise from the entrance:

**Mirror 1:** This mirror is trained upon Sibiliss, the hydra who guards Azarak in his prison of ice; see Room 9.


**Mirror 2:** This mirror shows Quan'la, the drow rogue from Room 10. Bastirak is quite aware that the rogue intends to follow him and find out the source of the tenebrium, so he wants to make sure he can see the rogue at all times.

**Mirror 3:** This mirror looks onto a dark, rocky plain where an immense worm-like creature is crawling. This is a glimpse of the plane of Noctulos; Bastirak has focused upon a nightcrawler.

**Mirror 4:** This mirror is blank. Bastirak was trying to *scry* upon the Player Characters and failed.

**Mirror 5:** This mirror is focused upon Grommen, if he is still alive.

**Mirror 6:** The sixth mirror is a magical trap. The images that play across its surface are vague and chaotic, showing nothing definite. The mirror is a hole leading to a ten-foot-square extradimensional space (similar to a *portable hole*) in which a mercurius lurks (see below). If a creature approaches closer than ten



feet, the mercurius attempts to grab them and drag them into itself.

**Mercurius:** CR 14; Large Outsider; HD 14d8+28; hp 91; Init +10; Spd 60 ft.; AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +14; Grp +29; Atk Slam +24 melee (2d4+11 plus 2d6 acid); Full Atk 2 slams +24 melee (2d4+11 plus 2d6 acid); SA absorb, acid, constrict, disarm, engulf, improved grab, *rainbow pattern*; SQ blindsense 60 ft., fast healing 15, immunity to slashing and piercing damage, magic reflection; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +19, Will +9; Str 32, Dex 30, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 3.

**Skills & Feats:** Hide +23, Move Silently +27; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Disarm<sup>B</sup>, Mobility, Power Attack.

A *mercurius* (plural *mercurii*) is a shifting, ooze-like blob made from silvery metallic fluid. Mercurii are native to planes where intelligent machines dwell, such as the Inevitables. They digest metal and are especially attracted to magical metals, meaning that these constructs are wary of them. They are typically trained to be guardians or hunters.

Mercurii move with blinding speed; they race along vertical surfaces as easily as horizontal ones.

**Absorb (Su):** A mercurius that snatches a magical item (other than one made from stone) can absorb it, draining its enchantment and disintegrating its substance. On each round on which the mercurius holds the item, the item is dealt 19 points of acid damage; on reaching zero hit points, it is absorbed. When a mercurius absorbs an item, it gains ten temporary hit points, irrespective of the item's magical strength. Artefacts cannot be absorbed.

**Acid (Ex):** The metallic blob secretes a digestive acid that dissolves organic material and metal quickly but does not affect stone. Any melee hit deals acid damage; the opponent's armour and clothing immediately dissolve and become useless unless they succeed on Reflex saving throws (DC 19). A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a mercurius also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds on a Reflex saving throw (DC 19). The saving throw DCs are Constitution-based. The mercurius' acidic touch deals 19 points of damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the creature must remain in contact with the object for one full round to deal this damage.

**Constrict (Ex):** With a successful grapple check, the silver tentacle of a mercurius constricts for 2d4+11 damage plus 2d6 acid damage.

**Disarm (Ex):** Mercurii are adept at snatching objects. They receive a +2 racial bonus to their attack rolls when making a disarm attempt.

**Engulf:** A mercurius can dart forth swiftly and envelop a foe in its gleaming mass. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The mercurius merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the mercurius but if they do so they are not entitled to saving throws. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on Reflex saves (DC 28) or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the blob moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the mercurius' acid damage and are considered to be grappled and trapped within its body. The saving throw DC is Strength-based.

**Improved Grab:** To use this ability, a mercurius must hit with its slam attack. 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 can constrict.

**Magic Reflection (Su):** The mercurius' gleaming form reflects all rays, lines, cones and *magic missiles*. There is a 30% chance that any such spell is reflected back at the caster; otherwise it is simply negated.

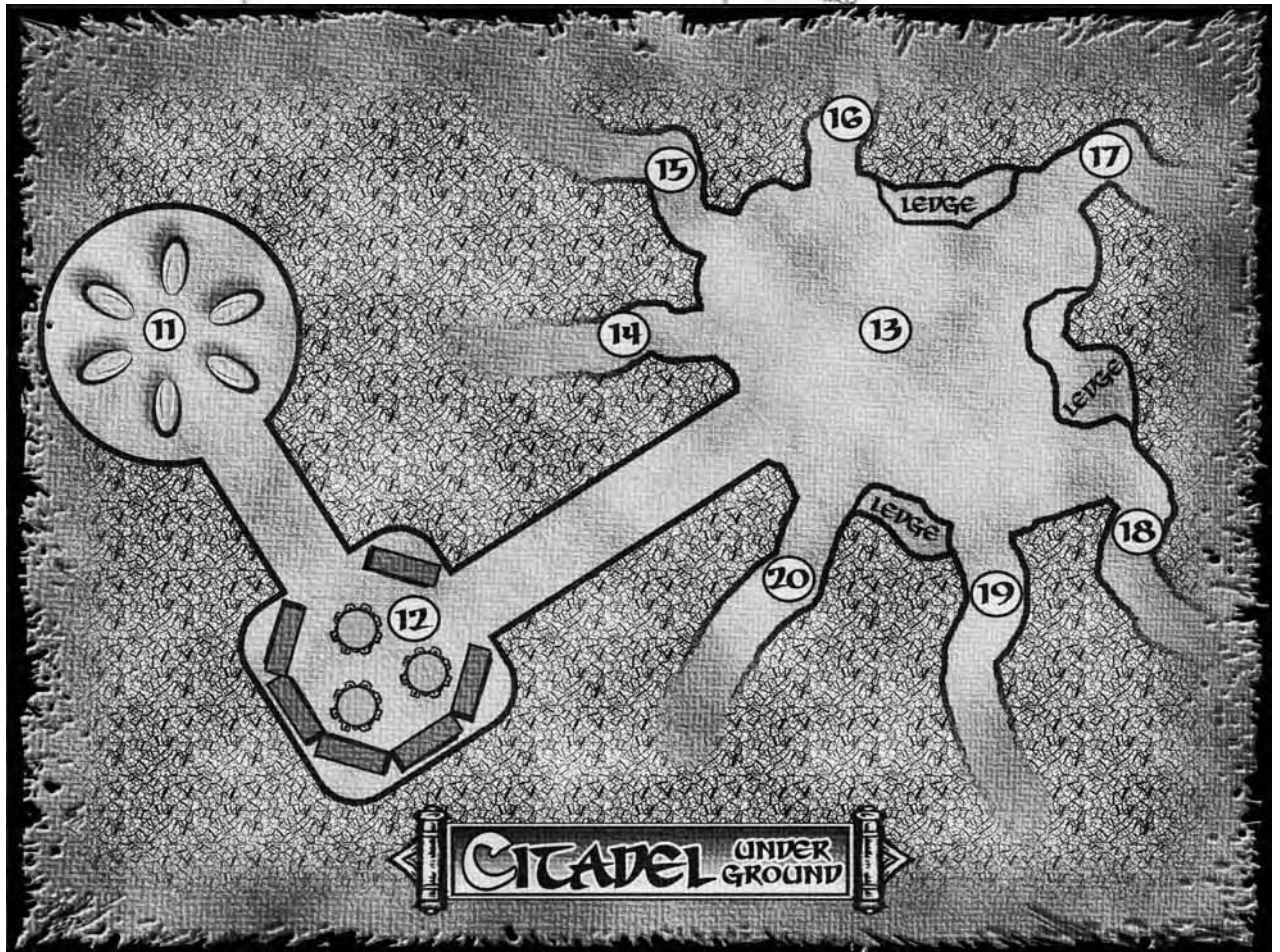
**Rainbow Pattern (Sp):** The mercurius can generate a *rainbow pattern* around itself at will as a standard action, as per the spell, with a Will saving throw (DC 19) allowed to resist the effect. The mercurius cannot maintain the pattern and move. If it moves, the effect is broken. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## 12. The Repository of Tomes

*This room contains three circular tables of white marble veined with blue, around which are chairs made from wrought iron. Against the walls stand bookcases of strange dark wood, with glass panels in the front that show the closely packed volumes within.*

The bookcases are made from *ironwood*, the most practical substance to protect the books from wet ice. There are six cases in total, each one locked (Open Lock DC 40) and trapped with a magical deterrent:

**Energy Drain Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged touch; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17<sup>th</sup> level wizard, 2d4 negative levels for 24 hours, Fortitude saving throw (DC 23) negates); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.



The books in the cases are almost all scholarly treatises on magic art, the history of religion, the structure of the multiverse (with special attention given to the planes) and the nature of deity. Characters who use the books for research can add a +5 equipment bonus to any relevant Knowledge check they make while in this room. As treasure, the hoard consists of 541 rare books and scrolls of various sizes, each one worth approximately 100 gold pieces to a collector and weighing between one and three pounds.

Hidden away among the other texts are a few magical ones. A Search check (DC 30) locates them; a *detect magic* spell finds them instantly.

**Scrolls:** The hoard contains scrolls of *animate dead*, *control water*, *divination*, *prayer*, *repel vermin*, *restoration and searing light*, all with a caster level of 7<sup>th</sup>. These are all divine magic scrolls which Bastirak has stuffed into the bookcases precisely because they are useless to him.

**Azarak's Spellbook:** This thick volume is bound in ancient, peeling dragon hide and has a stout lock on it that was clearly broken long ago. The book contains the following spells:

0<sup>th</sup> – all spells; 1<sup>st</sup> – *burning hands*, *colour spray*, *detect secret doors*, *mage armour*, *magic missile*, *magic weapon*, *shocking grasp*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *continual flame*, *flaming sphere*, *pyrotechnics*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *explosive runes*, *fireball*, *flame arrow*, *haste*, *stinking cloud*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *fire shield*, *fire trap*, *mnemonic enhancer*, *resilient sphere*, *wall of fire*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *blight*, *cloudkill*, *mage's faithful hound*, *teleport*, *transmute rock to mud*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *acid fog*, *eyebite*, *repulsion*, *wall of iron*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *delayed blast fireball*, *forcecage*, *prismatic spray*; 8<sup>th</sup> – *incendiary cloud*, *sunburst*.

Also concealed among the books is Bastirak's description of the plane of Noctulos. This requires a Search check (DC 25) to find. It is written on several sheaves of parchment held together by string. The relevant passages are as follows:



The plane, I have discovered, is named Noctulos. It is accessible via the rift that occasionally manifests directly beneath the Cyst. To reach Noctulos by means of plane shifting, one would have to construct a fork of cold iron, with the tines exactly three and seven-eighths of an inch apart, as the key component. Noctulos has the richest tenebrium deposits of any shadow plane I have yet explored. The drow will surely be delighted with these. I fancy I know what their purpose is to be. Splendid: the more they conquer, the more I may demand.

### 13. The Cyst

This round-ceilinged room has an atmosphere of dread that you cannot account for. It is as if some memory of horrible deeds has been locked away here and kept where nobody should ever find it. The floor of the room is a mere sheet of ice, whose thickness you guess is probably around three or four inches. Beneath the sheet is water. You catch a glimpse of something huge moving under the ice. It is impossible to tell what it is.

There are three ledges on the walls of the room, fashioned from the ice. On one sits a bronze coffer. On another is the bleached skull of a dragon. On the last sits a grotesque humanoid figure, bald and jag-jawed, draped in silk cloth like a macabre idol. On its head is a circlet of finger bones connected with silver wire. You wonder if it is alive at all, until it blinks – and nictating membranes briefly close its eyes sideways.

This figure is Bastirak, the lord of the citadel. If the Player Characters confront him here rather than elsewhere in the edifice, they find him as described, sitting in meditation. If they have been careless, such as by allowing the guards to report that there are intruders in the castle or by creating too much noise and chaos, Bastirak comes to deal with them personally.

**Bastirak, Male Half-White Dragon Wiz15:** CR 17; Medium dragon (augmented humanoid, cold); HD 15d4+30; hp 67; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +15 melee (1d4+8/19–20, *Nightwatch*) or +11 melee (1d4+4, claw); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d4+8/19–20, *Nightwatch*) or +11 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +6 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA breath weapon, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, paralysis, and *sleep*, low-light vision, resistance to fire 20, vulnerability to fire; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills & Feats:** Concentration +20, Decipher Script +23, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (the planes) +23, Listen +11, Spellcraft +25, Spot +11, Swim



+13; Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Maximise Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration.

**Breath Weapon:** 30-ft. cone of cold, dealing 6d8 points of cold damage, Reflex saving throw (DC 12) allowed for half damage.

**Spells prepared (4/5/5/5/5/3/2/1, save DC 15 + spell level):** 0<sup>th</sup> – ray of frost (2), resistance, touch of fatigue; 1<sup>st</sup> – charm person, magic missile, protection from good, shield, true strike; 2<sup>nd</sup> – ghoul touch, hypnotic pattern, protection from arrows, spectral hand, web; 3<sup>rd</sup> – displacement, fly (already cast), sleet storm, vampiric touch (2); 4<sup>th</sup> – black tentacles, detect scrying, greater invisibility, ice storm, lesser globe of invulnerability; 5<sup>th</sup> – baleful polymorph, feeblemind, mage's faithful hound, mind fog, wall of force; 6<sup>th</sup> – forceful hand, freezing sphere, globe of invulnerability; 7<sup>th</sup> – mage's sword, mass hold person; 8<sup>th</sup> – polar ray.

**Equipment & Treasure:** Bracers of armour +6, circlet of chill bone (see below), ironwood key to the bookcases in Room 12, *Nightwatch* (see below), five small tenebrium crystals in a silk pouch.

The ice-mage has a protruding lower jaw with jagged teeth, wisps of beard like those that cling to skulls, and a great gleaming bald head with the suggestion of a



## The Family

Azarak, Zamelak and Bastirak are all more than human. They are all the children of different dragons – one red, one white, one silver – begotten on draconian mothers while they were in human form by the ambitious King Hazrad of Argantia. He kept a harem of many different creatures, including demonesses and dragonesses of all kinds. King Hazrad paid the price for his exotic tastes when his harem finally turned on him and tore his palace down, and the tiny kingdom of Argantia is long since gone.

The three half-siblings grew up under the guidance of Bwarran Yin, one of the golden dragons of Kandang, in the era when those wise creatures ruled the region. Bwarran Yin's guidance kept the evil in Bastirak and Azarak in check but could not remove it altogether. Zamelak, child of a silver dragoness, grew up good and true, while her brothers hated lesser creatures only slightly less than they hated each other.

The fall of Kandang sent the half-dragons fleeing out into the world as nobles cast down from their place. Bastirak and Zamelak lost no time in building power bases and attacking one another, at last free to give vent to the hatred that consumed them. Zamelak stayed by Bastirak's side (as she was more able to tolerate his icy home than Azarak's fiery realm) and tried to persuade him to stay his hand.

However, it was Bastirak that changed his sister's mind, not the other way around. With a combination of vicious magic, torture and mental manipulation, he perverted her to the cause of evil, finally marrying her in a twisted, incestuous ceremony. Zamelak abandoned the worship of her benign goddess and embraced the cult of Gahaira, the devastating north wind. Together the two of them fought and overcame Azarak.

Victory came at a price. The sight of her brother's battered, defeated form brought home the truth of what Zamelak had done and how far she had fallen. This cracked her already weakened mind. Unable to reconcile the evil deeds that she had done with the good in her blood, she sought refuge in insanity. She now raves in continuous madness, reliving her childhood, while Bastirak lords it over his arctic palace, his brother Azarak locked forever in a sphere of ice.

## Bastirak's Circlet of Chill Bone

Legends of this potent magical item were what first drew Bastirak to the Waste. He bored great tunnels in the ice seeking for it and finally opened the Cyst where the circlet's bearer, a lich-lord named Venderesc, lay in torpid slumber. Bastirak wrested the *Circlet* from the lich and destroyed him.

The circlet appears to be a set of bleached finger bones strung together with wire. The item's features are as follows:

- The circlet's wearer is treated as a creature of the Cold subtype for as long as he wears it.
- The wearer gains resistance to fire 20.
- The circlet's wearer may move large quantities of snow and loose ice fragments at will, as if by the *move earth* spell cast by a 20<sup>th</sup> level wizard, affecting snow rather than earth. This ability cannot be used to reshape solid ice.
- The circlet's wearer may shape ice at will, as if by the *stone shape* spell cast by a 20<sup>th</sup> level wizard, affecting solid ice rather than stone.
- The circlet's wearer may produce a *wall of ice* three times per day, as if by the spell cast by a 20<sup>th</sup> level wizard. The ice created does not disappear at the end of the spell's duration and will remain indefinitely if the background temperature is not sufficient to melt it. Bastirak used this power to build the citadel.
- The circlet is evil-aligned. Any non-evil wizard who touches it is dealt 16d6 points of damage.
- Immersing the circlet in the heart's blood of a red dragon, which must be a wyrm or great wyrm, can destroy it.

bone ridge running along it; this last is a reminder of his dragon parentage. He wears a long ragged-edged robe of dirty white silk, embroidered with characters in the language of Kandang that proclaim the royalty of his line.

**Nightwatch:** This intelligent dagger has a silvery-blue hilt and a long thin blade. Set into the cross guard is the wet, living eye of a young dragon, which swivels and looks around.



+4 *ghost touch dagger*; AL CN; Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14; Speech, 120-ft. vision and hearing; Ego 15.

*Lesser Powers*: Spot 10 ranks, Listen 10 ranks.

*Special Purpose*: Defeat/slay non-spellcasters.

*Dedicated Power*: Can use *crushing despair*.

*Personality*: *Nightwatch* was forged to protect the young sorcerers of Kandang's royal line. When on expeditions into the wild, they would drive the dagger into the ground and the unblinking eye would keep watch for them, alerting the designated wielder to any danger. Many noble lives have been saved by the weapon's diligence; its harsh, metallic voice barks out a warning when it sees an enemy hiding in the shadows or a trap waiting to be sprung.

Strong divination: CL 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Note for the Games Master:** If the Player Characters have Azarak with them, this final encounter may well be too easy. To increase the challenge, the Games Master may do any of the following: have Zamelak, if she is still alive, come to Bastirak's aid (this is especially effective if she is already with the party, as she can turn traitor); give Bastirak two ice devils as bodyguards; have two devourers emerge from the gate to Noctulos, smash through the ice sheet and attack.

**The Ice:** The ice is thin and fragile as well as slippery. Characters who place heavy weights on it risk breaking the surface. It can support weights of 33lb. or less without danger. A weight of 100 to 150 pounds has a 50% chance per round to break the ice. A weight of 151 to 300 pounds has an 80% chance per round to break the ice and any weight heavier than this automatically breaks it. Characters who are standing on ice when it breaks must make Reflex saving throws (DC 20) or fall through into the water beneath. Bastirak likes to catch foes floundering in the water with *freezing sphere*.

Beneath the ice is a 60-foot shaft filled with ice-cold water. 20 feet below the surface is a swirling vortex of livid black and purple energies, the source of the motion that the Player Characters can see above the ice. This is the gateway to Noctulos, which Bastirak has cunningly concealed. Noctulos is dealt with in a subsequent chapter, Following Darkness Like a Dream.

**The Skull:** The skull is all that remains of Azarak's mother, a red dragon. Bastirak has kept it as a souvenir. Secreted within it are three gleaming treasures: a golden belt buckle (worth 1,200 gold pieces), a pectoral ornament in the shape of a falcon with spread wings (worth 1,000 gold pieces) and a sword hilt decorated with knotwork patterns (worth 1,400 gold pieces). An Appraise, Bardic Lore or Knowledge (history) check

(DC 20) identifies these as grave-goods of the kind that used to be buried with tribal chieftains in places like Jehannum and Visk, about two thousand years ago. If the Player Characters return these to the chattermen, they gratefully return to their snowy graves.

**The Coffer:** Inside the coffer are the skeletal remains and smashed skull of the lich Venderesc, kept by Bastirak partly as a trophy and partly because he fears the lich may reanimate and come back to claim the *circlet*. Venderesc is quite dead but Bastirak remains paranoid.

## The Planar Gateways

The tunnels leading away from the Cyst end in planar rifts. These are ragged, blurry-edged holes in reality leading into other planes of existence. Bronderbok the planespider has woven its anchoring webs across them but the Player Characters can easily break these and enter the various planes. However, breaking the webbing may alert Bronderbok, who will not be at all pleased.

The following sections allow the Player Characters to explore bizarre alternate realities and learn important information. None of this section is crucial to the campaign, nor do the different planes offer much in the way of traditional adventuring of the 'combat and treasure' kind. Each plane is deliberately constructed so that the Player Characters cannot travel far from the entry point. Their main purpose is to allow a complete break from the kind of adventures that the Player Characters have had up until now while supplying some interesting hints for the future.


### 14. The Halls of the Apathy Gods

*Beyond the gateway is a gigantic hallway, the roof many hundreds of feet above you, the walls held up by grey pillars. The air smells stale and tired. Slumped on thrones the size of houses are ten Colossal beings dressed in togas and crowned with withered laurels. They are all male, with beards down to their knees, seemingly endless hair tangled over everything and long fingernails that spiral in horrid corkscrew lengths. Their expressions are of utter boredom and apathy. They barely register your presence.*

The Player Characters can attempt to talk to these beings but the only answer is a disinterested groan. This is a group of deities who have been confined to their (extremely limited) universe for so long that they have given up on immortality altogether. There is nothing left to create, nothing to do, nothing to say.







The plane does not extend beyond the boundaries of this hallway. Even if the Player Characters try to persuade them that they could leave, the titanic figures take no notice. As they are deities, the Player Characters cannot harm them at all.

### 15. The Imprisoned Archangel

*The gateway opens onto a horrific scene. You stand in a cathedral-like chamber at the top of a broad shaft of stone blocks many hundreds of feet across. Empty windows in the walls look out over a scene of total devastation, with a boiling red sky raging above a parched landscape.*

*Hanging from cruel iron hooks in the centre of the shaft is a beautiful male figure, the size of a titan, with bloodied swanlike wings. His skin is golden and his eyes pale blue. Turning his gaze to you, he gasps like the roaring of a furnace. 'The heroes! The heroes are come! Surely it is the fated hour at last! Free me and we will begin the Last War!'*

If the Player Characters do attempt to free the creature, they find that their efforts are fruitless. It is imprisoned by a form of *binding* so strong that only a deity could have placed it.

If the Player Characters ask it who it is, it is momentarily confused, as if it expects them to know already: 'I am Adrastraël, the head of the comet that shall awaken the world to war!'

The archangel is awaiting the fulfilment of a prophecy and naturally believes that the Player Characters are those who are destined to release it, since no other creature has ever before come to this place. The more futile attempts the Player Characters make to set it free, the more it realises that they are the wrong heroes. Eventually it cries aloud:

'Alas! You are not those who are destined to free me! Where is Alliolyle with his trident? Where is Sudanha, bearer of the Cup of Violent Mercy? Alas! Most bitterly cruel the deception!'

The Player Characters can gain nothing of use from this unfortunate creature, nor can they harm it. Its tears do have magical properties, however; any non-evil creature coming into contact with them is healed of 4d8+4 points of damage.

### 16. The Web of the Stars

*Beyond the gateway is a stunning scene: a network of metallic walkways and balconies hanging against a black void. There seems to be no end to it. Paths of shining metal fan out from the platform where you stand, leading to nodes where machines stand behind railings. These machines resemble low tables with flywheels mounted on them and glass bell jars in the centre. Floating in each bell jar is a living brain made from translucent blue gel. You see the shapes of mechanical spider-like beings pacing to and fro along the balconies, attending to the machines and then moving on. One such being is hastily approaching you.*

This is the plane of Coax, where the planespiders dwell (see page 139). One of them has detected the breach and is hastening to repair it. It believes the Player Characters to be an 'anomaly', as they do not belong here. If the Player Characters prove themselves to be intelligent, it converses with them for a while before insisting that they return to their plane, asking that they do not disrupt any more webbing. It explains the arrangement between Bastirak and the resident planespider and can describe where the entrance to Noctulos is located, if the Player Characters have not found it already.

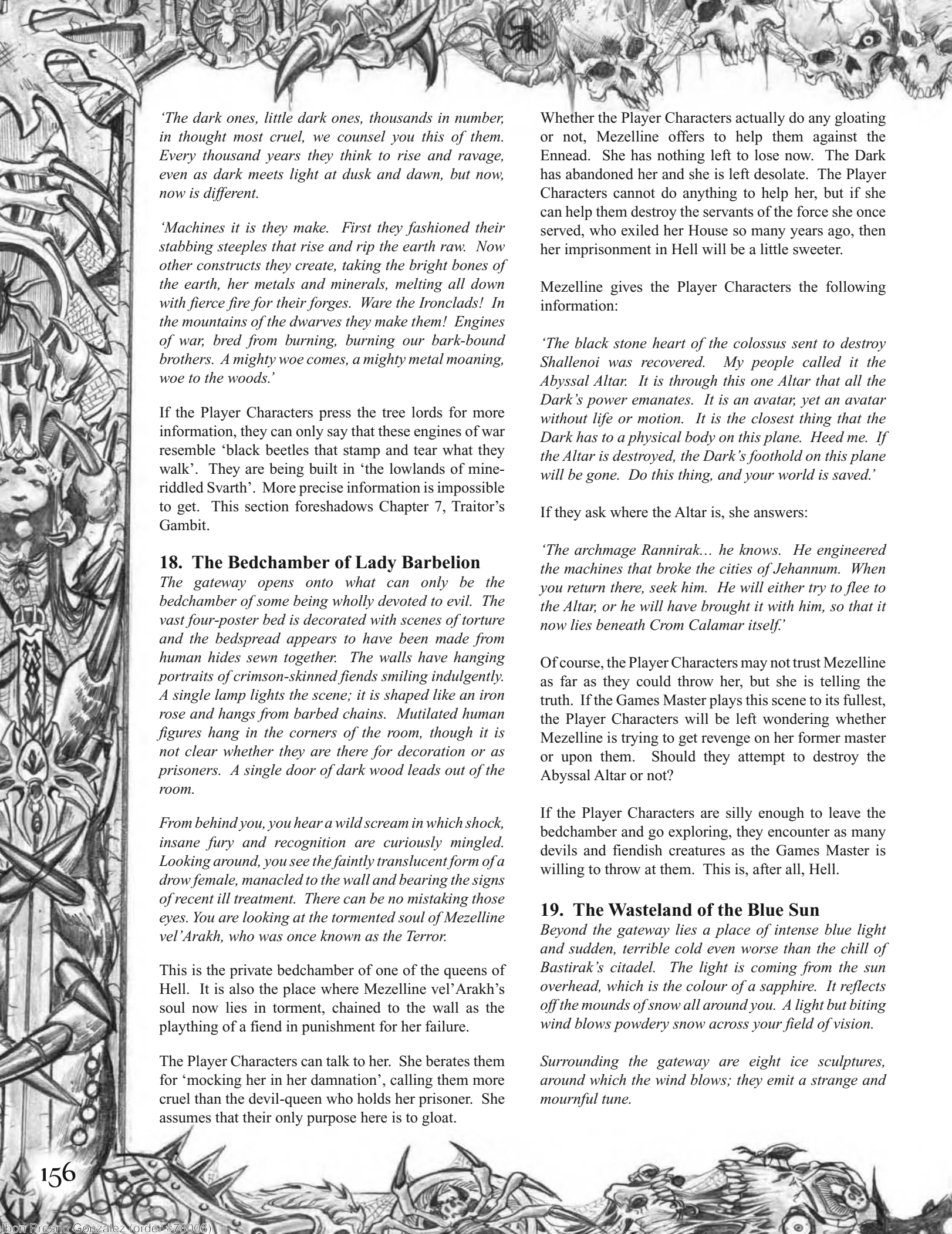
Hostility towards the planespiders is a completely suicidal move. There are so many of them here that the Player Characters cannot hope to prevail against them.

### 17. The Council of Trees

*The space beyond the gateway is a lush forest of oak trees where the air smells clean and the noises of birds sound clearly from close by. You have stepped into a clearing. Shafts of honey-coloured light slant down through the leaves. There is a feeling of profound peace and safety; but you also have a strong sense of being watched.*

This is a neutrally-aligned plane where plant life forms are dominant. The Player Characters have unwittingly stepped into the centre of a group of six elder tree lords, who are observing them before deciding what to do. If the Player Characters do not treat the forest with respect, the tree lords call for its guardians – an unlimited number of treants, who herd the Player Characters back to the gateway. If they are cautious and respectful, or if they address the trees directly, the trees speak to them.

The trees know who they are and the nature of the crisis they face. Their power allows them to *scry* other planes and observe the fates of the forests there. They have this to say about the world of Ashfar:



*'The dark ones, little dark ones, thousands in number, in thought most cruel, we counsel you this of them. Every thousand years they think to rise and ravage, even as dark meets light at dusk and dawn, but now, now is different.'*

*'Machines it is they make. First they fashioned their stabbing steeples that rise and rip the earth raw. Now other constructs they create, taking the bright bones of the earth, her metals and minerals, melting all down with fierce fire for their forges. Ware the Ironclads! In the mountains of the dwarves they make them! Engines of war, bred from burning, burning our bark-bound brothers. A mighty woe comes, a mighty metal moaning, woe to the woods.'*

If the Player Characters press the tree lords for more information, they can only say that these engines of war resemble 'black beetles that stamp and tear what they walk'. They are being built in 'the lowlands of mine-riddled Svarth'. More precise information is impossible to get. This section foreshadows Chapter 7, Traitor's Gambit.

## **18. The Bedchamber of Lady Barbelion**

*The gateway opens onto what can only be the bedchamber of some being wholly devoted to evil. The vast four-poster bed is decorated with scenes of torture and the bedspread appears to have been made from human hides sewn together. The walls have hanging portraits of crimson-skinned fiends smiling indulgently. A single lamp lights the scene; it is shaped like an iron rose and hangs from barbed chains. Mutilated human figures hang in the corners of the room, though it is not clear whether they are there for decoration or as prisoners. A single door of dark wood leads out of the room.*

*From behind you, you hear a wild scream in which shock, insane fury and recognition are curiously mingled. Looking around, you see the faintly translucent form of a drow female, manacled to the wall and bearing the signs of recent ill treatment. There can be no mistaking those eyes. You are looking at the tormented soul of Mezelline vel'Arakh, who was once known as the Terror.*

This is the private bedchamber of one of the queens of Hell. It is also the place where Mezelline vel'Arakh's soul now lies in torment, chained to the wall as the plaything of a fiend in punishment for her failure.

The Player Characters can talk to her. She berates them for 'mocking her in her damnation', calling them more cruel than the devil-queen who holds her prisoner. She assumes that their only purpose here is to gloat.

Whether the Player Characters actually do any gloating or not, Mezelline offers to help them against the Ennead. She has nothing left to lose now. The Dark has abandoned her and she is left desolate. The Player Characters cannot do anything to help her, but if she can help them destroy the servants of the force she once served, who exiled her House so many years ago, then her imprisonment in Hell will be a little sweeter.

Mezelline gives the Player Characters the following information:

*'The black stone heart of the colossus sent to destroy Shallenoi was recovered. My people called it the Abyssal Altar. It is through this one Altar that all the Dark's power emanates. It is an avatar, yet an avatar without life or motion. It is the closest thing that the Dark has to a physical body on this plane. Heed me. If the Altar is destroyed, the Dark's foothold on this plane will be gone. Do this thing, and your world is saved.'*

If they ask where the Altar is, she answers:

*'The archmage Rannirak... he knows. He engineered the machines that broke the cities of Jehannum. When you return there, seek him. He will either try to flee to the Altar, or he will have brought it with him, so that it now lies beneath Crom Calamar itself.'*

Of course, the Player Characters may not trust Mezelline as far as they could throw her, but she is telling the truth. If the Games Master plays this scene to its fullest, the Player Characters will be left wondering whether Mezelline is trying to get revenge on her former master or upon them. Should they attempt to destroy the Abyssal Altar or not?


If the Player Characters are silly enough to leave the bedchamber and go exploring, they encounter as many devils and fiendish creatures as the Games Master is willing to throw at them. This is, after all, Hell.

## **19. The Wasteland of the Blue Sun**

*Beyond the gateway lies a place of intense blue light and sudden, terrible cold even worse than the chill of Bastirak's citadel. The light is coming from the sun overhead, which is the colour of a sapphire. It reflects off the mounds of snow all around you. A light but biting wind blows powdery snow across your field of vision.*

*Surrounding the gateway are eight ice sculptures, around which the wind blows; they emit a strange and mournful tune.*





The cold here is severe (see the *DMG*) and causes damage to creatures who are not adequately protected.

This is the home plane of many of the outsiders the Player Characters have encountered so far, including the skitterjinxes, the windshapers and the whiteladies. The sculptures are to mark the rift and have no magical effect. The denizens of the plane stay away from the rift, not wishing to be trapped on an alien world.

Wandering from this point is likely to get the Player Characters lost in an endless wilderness of white. The only creatures they encounter are a pack of four skitterjinxes who attempt to trick them into wandering away from the gate so that they can steal their possessions.

## 20. The Necropolis

*The moment you step beyond the gateway you smell the unmistakable odours of damp, mould and turned earth that signify a freshly opened tomb. The gateway has led you to a low vaulted corridor with low niches set into the walls like shelves. Each of these contains a stone sarcophagus large enough to contain a single body. The corridor runs on as far as you can see, with coffin after coffin laid end-to-end into the distance. This must be some immense storehouse of the dead.*

The Player Characters can explore this labyrinth if they wish. They are inside a single edifice the size of a small city, with millions of biers holding the remains of the dead. None of the coffins is marked and each one contains a skeleton, whole or piecemeal. These skeletons are those of elves, humans, halflings and other familiar humanoid races. Once the Player Characters have explored for a while, the following happens:

*You hear the sound of echoing steps, and a figure comes into view at the end of the corridor, dragging a sack. The figure is a large humanoid made from black stone, with the face of a mourning angel.*

If statistics are needed for this creature, the Games Master should use those of a stone golem; however, it does not attack. It carries a sack of bones which it carefully deposits into coffins that were previously empty. If it notices the Player Characters, it hails them and asks their business here 'on a dead world'. The Player Characters can learn the following:

The world on which they have arrived is dead. The Player Characters are the only truly living things here. Only constructs move among the remains. The

world's population perished in a mighty war against the followers of a force called the Dark. Both sides were eventually annihilated and the Dark scoured the remaining life from the planet's surface.

The stone creature is a gravewarden, created by the former living occupants of this world to perform the duty of entombing the dead. It and its fellow gravewardens have spent the last 70,000 years building this tomb from the stones of dismantled cities. Every day they go out and collect the dead, then bring them back here to their places of rest. It is all they know how to do.

The Player Characters may attempt to contact the spirits of the dead. If successful, they can learn that the Dark manifested itself in physical form on this world towards the end of the great war and enclosed the place in a globe of living darkness that blotted out the sun. This foreshadows the events of *The Drow War, Book Three: The Darkest Hour*. It should be obvious that the fate of this world is going to be shared by Ashfar if the Player Characters are unsuccessful in their quest.

## Unusual Creatures of the Cold Waste

The gateways in Bastirak's citadel have released extraplanar creatures into the world of Ashfar. Some of these were deliberately brought back and released to see how they would fare, while others escaped from captivity or came through open *gates* on their own initiative. As a result, the Waste is now infested with strange and terrible beings not found anywhere else on the planet.

### Arctic Light

**Small Aberration (Air)**

**Hit Dice:** 18d8 (81 hp)

**Initiative:** +13

**Speed:** Fly 50 ft. (10 squares) (perfect)

**Armour Class:** 32 (+1 size, +9 Dex, +12 deflection), touch 32, flat-footed 23

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +13/+4

**Attack:** Shock +23 melee touch (2d8 electrical)

**Full Attack:** Shock +23 melee touch (2d8 electrical)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

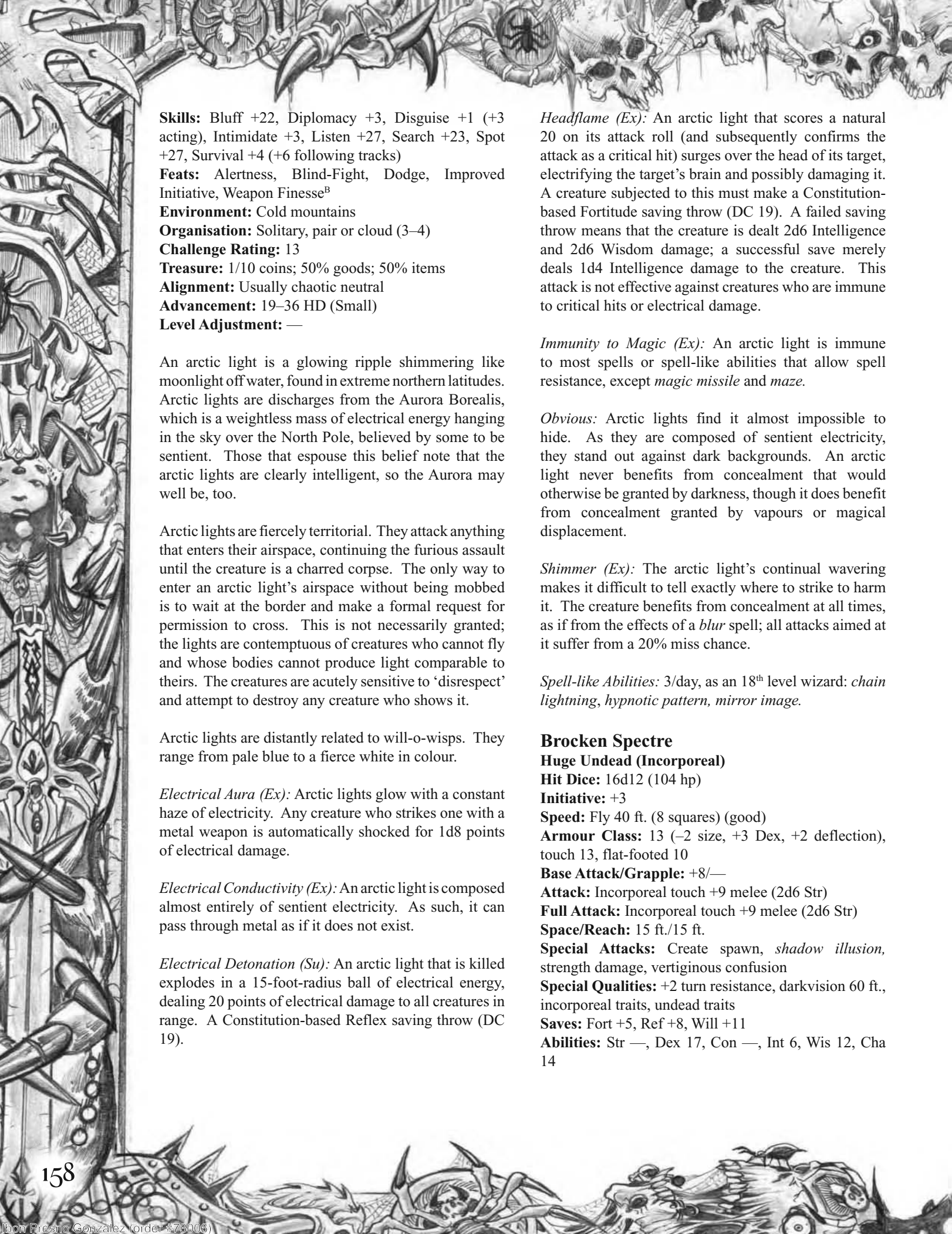
**Special Attacks:** Electrical aura, electrical detonation, headflame, spell-like abilities

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., electrical conductivity, immunity to electrical damage, immunity to magic, obvious, shimmer

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +15, Will +15

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 29, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 12





**Skills:** Bluff +22, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Intimidate +3, Listen +27, Search +23, Spot +27, Survival +4 (+6 following tracks)

**Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>

**Environment:** Cold mountains

**Organisation:** Solitary, pair or cloud (3–4)

**Challenge Rating:** 13

**Treasure:** 1/10 coins; 50% goods; 50% items

**Alignment:** Usually chaotic neutral

**Advancement:** 19–36 HD (Small)

**Level Adjustment:** —

An arctic light is a glowing ripple shimmering like moonlight off water, found in extreme northern latitudes. Arctic lights are discharges from the Aurora Borealis, which is a weightless mass of electrical energy hanging in the sky over the North Pole, believed by some to be sentient. Those that espouse this belief note that the arctic lights are clearly intelligent, so the Aurora may well be, too.

Arctic lights are fiercely territorial. They attack anything that enters their airspace, continuing the furious assault until the creature is a charred corpse. The only way to enter an arctic light's airspace without being mobbed is to wait at the border and make a formal request for permission to cross. This is not necessarily granted; the lights are contemptuous of creatures who cannot fly and whose bodies cannot produce light comparable to theirs. The creatures are acutely sensitive to 'disrespect' and attempt to destroy any creature who shows it.

Arctic lights are distantly related to will-o-wisps. They range from pale blue to a fierce white in colour.

**Electrical Aura (Ex):** Arctic lights glow with a constant haze of electricity. Any creature who strikes one with a metal weapon is automatically shocked for 1d8 points of electrical damage.

**Electrical Conductivity (Ex):** An arctic light is composed almost entirely of sentient electricity. As such, it can pass through metal as if it does not exist.

**Electrical Detonation (Su):** An arctic light that is killed explodes in a 15-foot-radius ball of electrical energy, dealing 20 points of electrical damage to all creatures in range. A Constitution-based Reflex saving throw (DC 19).

**Headflame (Ex):** An arctic light that scores a natural 20 on its attack roll (and subsequently confirms the attack as a critical hit) surges over the head of its target, electrifying the target's brain and possibly damaging it. A creature subjected to this must make a Constitution-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 19). A failed saving throw means that the creature is dealt 2d6 Intelligence and 2d6 Wisdom damage; a successful save merely deals 1d4 Intelligence damage to the creature. This attack is not effective against creatures who are immune to critical hits or electrical damage.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex):** An arctic light is immune to most spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance, except *magic missile* and *maze*.

**Obvious:** Arctic lights find it almost impossible to hide. As they are composed of sentient electricity, they stand out against dark backgrounds. An arctic light never benefits from concealment that would otherwise be granted by darkness, though it does benefit from concealment granted by vapours or magical displacement.

**Shimmer (Ex):** The arctic light's continual wavering makes it difficult to tell exactly where to strike to harm it. The creature benefits from concealment at all times, as if from the effects of a *blur* spell; all attacks aimed at it suffer from a 20% miss chance.

**Spell-like Abilities:** 3/day, as an 18<sup>th</sup> level wizard: *chain lightning*, *hypnotic pattern*, *mirror image*.

## Brocken Spectre

**Huge Undead (Incorporeal)**

**Hit Dice:** 16d12 (104 hp)

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** Fly 40 ft. (8 squares) (good)

**Armour Class:** 13 (–2 size, +3 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 10

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +8/—

**Attack:** Incorporeal touch +9 melee (2d6 Str)

**Full Attack:** Incorporeal touch +9 melee (2d6 Str)


**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Create spawn, *shadow illusion*, strength damage, vertiginous confusion

**Special Qualities:** +2 turn resistance, darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, undead traits

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +11

**Abilities:** Str —, Dex 17, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 14



**Skills:** Hide +10, Listen +13, Search +8, Spot +14  
**Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Weapon Finesse  
**Environment:** All hills and mountains  
**Organisation:** Solitary, gang (2–5), or swarm (6–11)  
**Challenge Rating:** 13  
**Treasure:** —  
**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil  
**Advancement:** 17–32 HD (Huge), 33–48 HD (Colossal)  
**Level Adjustment:** —

A brocken spectre is a towering shadow many times the height of a man, which stalks misty mountaintops. Shimmering colours like a rainbow surround its head. The spectres are the ghosts of those who have died from falling, magnified by the strange powers of the lonely mists.

Although they are incorporeal and cannot simply haul climbers off the cliffs, the spectres have many other means to send them to their doom. Their colourful auras induce vertigo, causing many a climber to miss his footing and slip; they are also able to create illusions from the shadow-stuff of their own bodies, such as a handy ledge on which to rest or a set of handholds hacked into the rock.

Climbers on isolated peaks live in dread of the spectres, who like nothing better than to send presumptuous mortals falling to their deaths. The mountains are lonely places and the spectres are eager to create new spectres for company...

Brocken spectres have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks. A brocken gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination or thick mist. In brightly lit areas, it takes a –4 penalty on Hide checks.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid reduced to zero Strength by a brocken spectre becomes a brocken spectre itself within 1d4 hours. In addition, a brocken spectre can cause the corpse of a victim who has died from falling to become a brocken spectre, provided it remains in the corpse's space for one hour.

*Shadow Illusion (Sp):* A brocken spectre may create static, silent illusions at will as per the *silent image* spell cast by a 14<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer. A creature that attempts to climb on a section of cliff face (or other surface) that has been altered by *shadow illusion* is treated as if it had rolled a 1 on its Climb check. If this produces a Climb check result five less than the target DC for the surface, the creature falls. This does count as interaction with

the illusion, so the creature gets a Will saving throw to disbelieve it on the way down, which may be some small consolation.

*Strength Damage (Su):* The touch of a brocken spectre deals 2d6 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to zero Strength by a brocken spectre dies. This is a negative energy effect.

*Vertiginous Confusion (Su):* The pulsing colours around a brocken spectre's head can cause dizziness and vertigo in creatures. Any creature within 60 feet who sees a brocken spectre's halo must make a Charisma-based Will saving throw (DC 20) or be stricken with dizziness for 3d6 rounds. Dizzy creatures move at half speed, suffer a –10 penalty to Climb, Balance, Move Silently and Tumble checks and take a –2 penalty to Armour Class. This is a mind-affecting effect. Creatures can avert their gazes or look away altogether to reduce the risk of glimpsing the dizzying halo, as if avoiding a gaze attack.

## Chatterman Medium Undead (Cold)

**Hit Dice:** 14d12 (91 hp)

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armour Class:** 23 (+3 Dex, +10 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 20

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+10

**Attack:** Claw +11 melee (1d4+3 plus fatigue)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +11 melee (1d4+3 plus fatigue)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Fatigue, hurl frost, improved grab, shivering blight, *steal the heart's fire*

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 20/blunt, immune to cold, regeneration 7, vulnerability to fire and warmth

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +12

**Abilities:** Str 17, Dex 17, Con —, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 20

**Skills:** Climb +8, Hide +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +18, Spot +20, Survival +10, Tumble +13

**Feats:** Dodge, Power Attack, Stealthy, Track, Weapon Focus (claw)

**Environment:** Cold hills

**Organisation:** Solitary or tumulus (2–5)

**Challenge Rating:** 14

**Treasure:** Standard


**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** —







These dreadful creatures are the undead corpses of those who have frozen to death in desolate places and have never received a decent burial. They seek each other out, thronging together as if in re-enactment of some dim memory of human companionship. They crave the heat of living creatures and can drain it from their bodies. They cannot, however, venture out of a cold environment, as the cold is all that keeps their desiccated bodies together.

Some chattermen are the risen revenants of those who were buried properly in cold regions and have then had their burial mounds disturbed. Boskenland and Visk both have strict customs regarding the taboos on burial sites. Grave robbing is the worst of all crimes there, because the chattermen do not distinguish between the grave robber and the ordinary peasant when they come looking for prey.

Chattermen resemble human skeletons encased in tattered, dark, tight-fitting leather – the mummified, snow-tanned remains of skin. They sometimes wear the grave-goods they were buried with. Their lips are drawn back from their teeth in horrible snarls and their eye sockets are empty. Their name comes from the chattering sound of their victims' teeth. They move with unnatural silence.

Chattermen are completely mute. They can only communicate by hand signs or by scrawling messages in the ground.

*Fatigue (Su):* Chattermen sap the vitality of their prey; once they have begun the attack, the victim is soon too weary to flee or defend himself. A creature struck for damage in melee by a chatterman's claw must make a Charisma-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) or become fatigued. If the creature is already fatigued, it becomes exhausted.

*Hurl Frost (Su):* Chattermen have mystic ties to the snow and ice in which they have lain for so long. If it is in a square where there is snow or ice on the ground, a chatterman can scoop up a claw full of frost (a move action) and hurl it at a single target within 30 feet as a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet. This deals 4d6 points of cold damage to the target, who must also make a Charisma-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) or be dealt 1d3 points of Strength ability drain. Chattermen pelt their victims with frost to weaken them before closing in for the kill.


*Improved Grab (Ex):* A chatterman who successfully hits with a claw attack may immediately attempt to start

a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the chatterman successfully grapples the target, it attempts a pin on its next turn, which may bestow shivering blight (see below).

*Steal the Heart's Fire (Sp):* A chatterman can drain all of the life-giving heat from a creature, killing it instantly. This ability is only effective upon creatures that are vulnerable to critical hits and are not of the Cold subtype. The chatterman must succeed in a melee touch attack against the target, who is then entitled to a Charisma-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 22). A creature who fails its saving throw is slain instantly. Creatures who succeed are dealt 3d6 points of damage instead. *Stealing the heart's fire* grants the chatterman ten temporary hit points. Once it has used the ability, it cannot attempt to use it again for 1d4 rounds.

*Shivering Blight (Su):* Any target the chatterman successfully holds in a pin must immediately make a Charisma-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) or be stricken with shivering blight, a condition like having ice water in the marrow of one's bones. It must attempt a new saving throw on each turn when it is pinned. The shivering blight makes it impossible for the victim to do anything other than stand on the spot and shiver uncontrollably. The effect imposes a -4 penalty to Armour Class and a -10 penalty on Reflex saving throws; it also negates any Armour Class bonus granted by a shield the target holds. The shivering subject provokes attacks of opportunity each round on its turn. Shivering blight lasts for 3d6 rounds.





*Regeneration:* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a chatterman.

*Vulnerability to Warmth:* A chatterman who enters an environment in which the background temperature is higher than five degrees Celsius begins to deteriorate. He loses one point of Strength per hour and no longer benefits from the regeneration special quality. A chatterman reduced to zero Strength disintegrates completely.

## Glacial Ooze

### Gargantuan Ooze (Cold)

**Hit Dice:** 20d10+160 (270 hp)

**Initiative:** -3

**Speed:** 15 ft. (3 squares)

**Armour Class:** 2 (-8 size, -3 Dex, +3 natural), touch -1, flat-footed 2

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +15/+39

**Attack:** Slam +23 melee (2d6+12 plus 3d6 cold)

**Full Attack:** Slam +23 melee (2d6+12 plus 3d6 cold)

**Space/Reach:** 20 ft./20 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Paralysis, surge

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight 60 ft., damage reduction 20/bludgeoning, ooze traits, snow crust

**Saves:** Fort +14, Ref +3, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 34, Dex 4, Con 27, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

**Skills:** —

**Feats:** —

**Environment:** Cold hills

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 15

**Treasure:** —

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 21–30 HD (Gargantuan), 31–40 HD (Colossal)

**Level Adjustment:** —

This gigantic, amorphous mass of gel consists of a faintly bluish translucent substance crusted on the outside with snow and rime. Glacial oozes appear almost identical to mounds of snow, especially when the weather makes visibility poor. They blend in seamlessly with their environments, engulfing their prey in sudden swift surges which can easily be mistaken for minor avalanches. Glacial oozes typically prey upon seals but can easily devour polar bears and even mammoths.

*Engulf (Ex):* Although it moves slowly, a glacial ooze can simply mow down Huge or smaller creatures as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The glacial ooze merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity

against the ooze but if they do so they are not entitled to saving throws. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on Reflex saving throws (DC 32) or be engulfed; on success, they are pushed back or aside (Games Master's choice) as the ooze moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the ooze's paralysis and cold damage and are considered to be grappled and trapped within its body. The saving throw DC is Strength-based.

*Freeze (Su):* Glacial oozes continually leech heat from their environment. A creature trapped inside a glacial ooze is dealt 3d6 cold damage each round.

*Paralysis (Ex):* A glacial ooze can freeze opponents where they stand. A target hit by a glacial ooze's melee or engulf attack must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 28) or be paralysed for 3d6 rounds. The ooze can automatically engulf a paralysed opponent. The saving throw DC is Constitution-based.

*Snow Crust (Ex):* A glacial ooze is hard to identify when against a background of snow and gains a +20 racial bonus to all Hide checks made in snowy environments. Creatures who fail to notice a glacial ooze and walk into it are automatically hit with a melee attack for slam and cold damage.

*Surge (Ex):* Unlike other oozes, glacial oozes can abruptly surge forward to absorb prey. They instinctively attack by surging down the sides of mountains or snow-covered hills. When it surges, a glacial ooze may move up to double its speed and gains a +2 bonus to the DC of the Reflex saving throw needed for targets to avoid being engulfed. Once a glacial ooze has surged, it cannot do so again for 1d4 rounds.

## Grun

### Large Outsider (Cold, Evil)

**Hit Dice:** 16d8+64 (136 hp)

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 30 ft.

**Armour Class:** 22 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +10 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 19

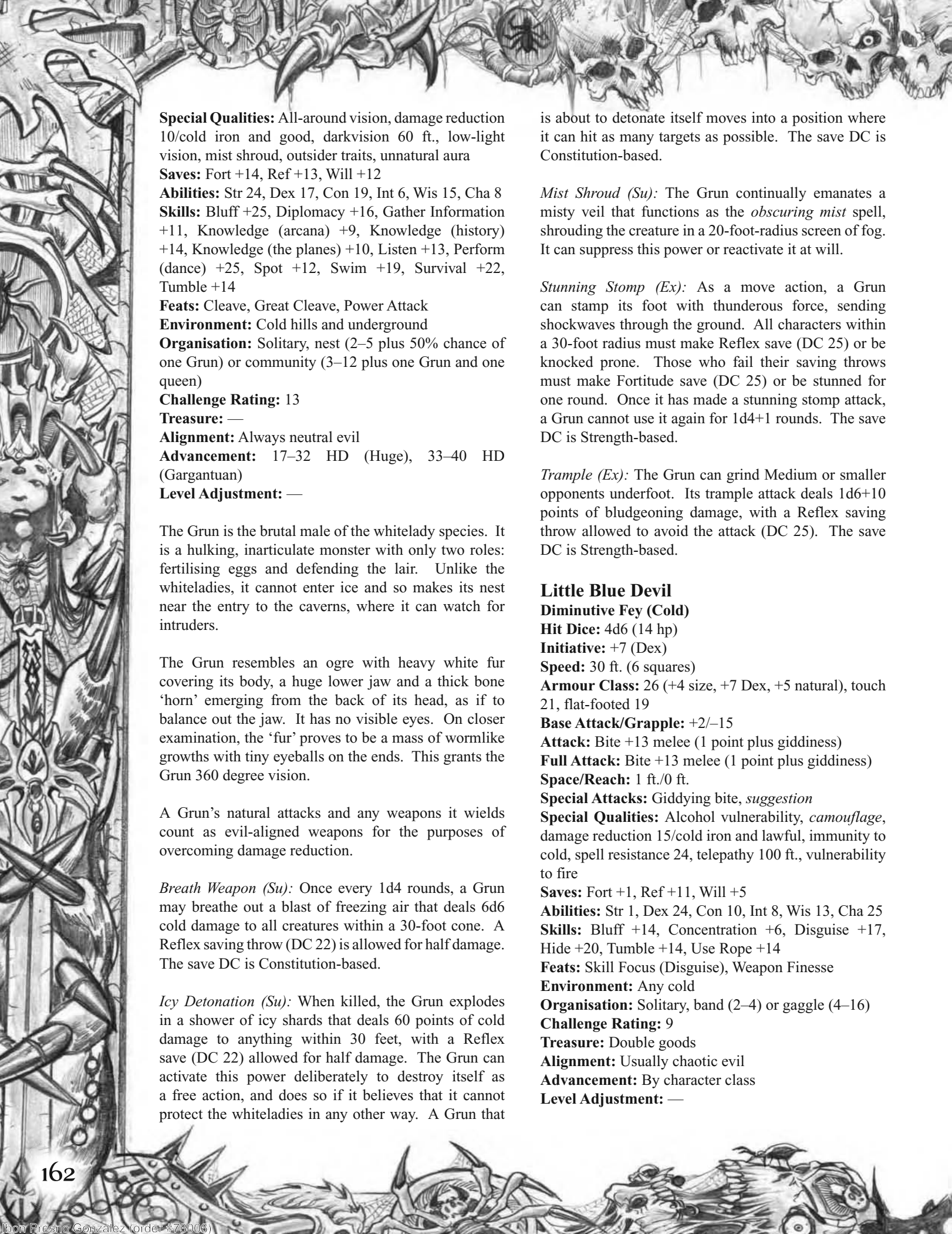
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +16/+27

**Attack:** Greatclub +22 melee (2d8+10)

**Full Attack:** Greatclub +22/+17/+12 melee (2d8+10) and horn +17 melee (1d8+3) and bite +17 melee (1d8+3)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Breath weapon, icy detonation, stunning stomp, trample



**Special Qualities:** All-around vision, damage reduction 10/cold iron and good, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, mist shroud, outsider traits, unnatural aura

**Saves:** Fort +14, Ref +13, Will +12

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 8

**Skills:** Bluff +25, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +11, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +13, Perform (dance) +25, Spot +12, Swim +19, Survival +22, Tumble +14

**Feats:** Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack

**Environment:** Cold hills and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary, nest (2–5 plus 50% chance of one Gyun) or community (3–12 plus one Gyun and one queen)

**Challenge Rating:** 13

**Treasure:** —

**Alignment:** Always neutral evil

**Advancement:** 17–32 HD (Huge), 33–40 HD (Gargantuan)

**Level Adjustment:** —

The Gyun is the brutal male of the whitelady species. It is a hulking, inarticulate monster with only two roles: fertilising eggs and defending the lair. Unlike the whiteladies, it cannot enter ice and so makes its nest near the entry to the caverns, where it can watch for intruders.

The Gyun resembles an ogre with heavy white fur covering its body, a huge lower jaw and a thick bone ‘horn’ emerging from the back of its head, as if to balance out the jaw. It has no visible eyes. On closer examination, the ‘fur’ proves to be a mass of wormlike growths with tiny eyeballs on the ends. This grants the Gyun 360 degree vision.

A Gyun’s natural attacks and any weapons it wields count as evil-aligned weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Once every 1d4 rounds, a Gyun may breathe out a blast of freezing air that deals 6d6 cold damage to all creatures within a 30-foot cone. A Reflex saving throw (DC 22) is allowed for half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Icy Detonation (Su):** When killed, the Gyun explodes in a shower of icy shards that deals 60 points of cold damage to anything within 30 feet, with a Reflex save (DC 22) allowed for half damage. The Gyun can activate this power deliberately to destroy itself as a free action, and does so if it believes that it cannot protect the whiteladies in any other way. A Gyun that

is about to detonate itself moves into a position where it can hit as many targets as possible. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Mist Shroud (Su):** The Gyun continually emanates a misty veil that functions as the *obscuring mist* spell, shrouding the creature in a 20-foot-radius screen of fog. It can suppress this power or reactivate it at will.

**Stunning Stomp (Ex):** As a move action, a Gyun can stamp its foot with thunderous force, sending shockwaves through the ground. All characters within a 30-foot radius must make Reflex save (DC 25) or be knocked prone. Those who fail their saving throws must make Fortitude save (DC 25) or be stunned for one round. Once it has made a stunning stomp attack, a Gyun cannot use it again for 1d4+1 rounds. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Trample (Ex):** The Gyun can grind Medium or smaller opponents underfoot. Its trample attack deals 1d6+10 points of bludgeoning damage, with a Reflex saving throw allowed to avoid the attack (DC 25). The save DC is Strength-based.

### Little Blue Devil

**Diminutive Fey (Cold)**

**Hit Dice:** 4d6 (14 hp)

**Initiative:** +7 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armour Class:** 26 (+4 size, +7 Dex, +5 natural), touch 21, flat-footed 19

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/–15

**Attack:** Bite +13 melee (1 point plus giddiness)

**Full Attack:** Bite +13 melee (1 point plus giddiness)

**Space/Reach:** 1 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Giddying bite, *suggestion*

**Special Qualities:** Alcohol vulnerability, *camouflage*, damage reduction 15/cold iron and lawful, immunity to cold, spell resistance 24, telepathy 100 ft., vulnerability to fire

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +11, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 24, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 25

**Skills:** Bluff +14, Concentration +6, Disguise +17, Hide +20, Tumble +14, Use Rope +14

**Feats:** Skill Focus (Disguise), Weapon Finesse

**Environment:** Any cold

**Organisation:** Solitary, band (2–4) or gaggle (4–16)

**Challenge Rating:** 9


**Treasure:** Double goods

**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** —





Those who have survived expeditions into the far north often tell tales of the terrible beasts to be found there. They spin yarns of woolly mammoths, barbaric frost giants and elder ice wyrms in nests of snow that have not seen a thaw since the world was begun. There is one creature, though, that is never mentioned; one nightmare that is perhaps feared above all others.

This is the tiny terror the ice-dwellers call the 'little blue devil', though it is not a devil at all but a species of fey. According to legend, the little blue devil hides itself away among one's equipment. When it is snugly hidden away, it begins to whisper terrible things in a voice only the individual carrying it can hear. The strangest thoughts enter the victim's head. In the middle of the arctic wilderness, far from civilisation, the victim begins to go insane. He becomes convinced that his team mates are plotting to abandon him. He gets crazy notions, such as the belief that there is a secret passage to a safe haven hidden under the ice, so he has to smash his way through it. The victim can even end up believing that the only way to remain safe against the evil spirits of the mountain is to eat human flesh – the flesh of his companions.

When rescue parties come across the shattered remains of explorers' camps, they usually imagine that monsters are responsible. When it becomes apparent that the team members killed each other, the blame is usually placed on the endless monotony of the snowy waste driving people mad. Those who live in those wastes know better. The little blue devils have been at work.

The blue devils look like tiny, bald, blue-skinned men with sneering expressions and thin tails. They are completely malicious and love nothing better than causing havoc. The more a creature's sanity suffers before dying, the more they like it. They live off carrion.

**Alcohol Vulnerability:** Alcohol is a deadly poison to the little blue devil. It functions as a contact poison (saving throw DC 20, primary damage death, secondary damage 2d6 Con). The devils will not attack nor come within ten feet of a creature who even smells of alcohol. A creature who has drunk alcohol is left alone until the effect wears off (usually 2–4 hours), while a creature who has rubbed himself with alcohol is safe from the blue devils for eight hours.

**Camouflage (Sp):** The little blue devil uses an inherent Illusion ability to assume the form of an object of Diminutive size such as a bag of provisions or even a rock, as if by the *alter self* spell cast by a 10<sup>th</sup> level

sorcerer. Unlike an ordinary caster, the blue devil is not limited to assuming the form of a creature and may become an object. When it does this, it makes a Disguise check at a +10 bonus to assume the new form convincingly. If it suffers damage, it must make a Concentration check to maintain the illusion.

**Giddy Bite (Su):** Those bitten by a blue devil must make Charisma-based Will saving throws (DC 19) or become groggy and light-headed. A giddy character is stunned for one round. In addition, he immediately forgets what he was doing prior to the bite, as if affected by a *modify memory* spell cast by a 12<sup>th</sup> level caster. The blue devil uses this memory lapse to avoid detection.

**Suggestion (Sp):** The blue devil's primary mode of mischief-making is its *suggestion* ability, which it can use at will. It implants the *suggestion* telepathically and must have line of effect to do this. The target is entitled to a Charisma-based Will saving throw (DC 23, including a +4 racial bonus). This is a mind-affecting enchantment. If the saving throw is successful, the target knows what it was being prompted to do and that it was a *suggestion* but not where the effect came from. The target is also immune to that blue devil's *suggestion* for the next 24 hours. The blue devil manipulates its victims carefully, using one *suggestion* to build on the next. For example, it may *suggest* to a character that another character is acting in a suspicious manner and clearly has something to hide. If the character then confronts the 'suspicious' person, who denies the allegation, the blue devil will *suggest* that the denials are excessive and thus clear evidence of guilt. Successive suggestions that build on the first are considered exceptionally plausible and this bestows a –1 or –2 circumstance penalty to the saving throw.

**Telepathy (Su):** The blue devil can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet.

## Lodestone Golem

### Large Construct

**Hit Dice:** 14d10+30 (107 hp)

**Initiative:** –1

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Armour Class:** 26 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +18 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 26

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +10/+25

**Attack:** Slam +20 melee (2d10+11)

**Full Attack:** 2 slams +20 melee (2d10+11)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Ferrous attraction, magnetic drag, magnetic slow



**Special Qualities:** Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 32, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

**Skills:** —

**Feats:** —

**Environment:** Any

**Organisation:** Solitary or gang (2–4)

**Challenge Rating:** 12

**Treasure:** —

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 15–21 HD (Large); 22–42 (Huge)

**Level Adjustment:** —

One of the strangest of Bastirak's creations, the lodestone golem is an experimental construct that taps into the powerful magnetic energies clustered at the North Pole. It resembles a lumpy stone golem made from a rough black mineral. Lodestones are magnetic, a quality which makes the lodestone golem a fearsome opponent for creatures using metal equipment.


*Ferrous Attraction (Su):* The lodestone golem's powerful magnetic field causes ferrous metal objects to cling to it. This has two consequences, the magnetic disarm and the magnetic grapple.

- *Magnetic Disarm:* Whenever a creature strikes a lodestone golem with a ferrous metal weapon, the golem may make an immediate disarm attempt as a free action, with a +3 bonus to its roll if the weapon's head is made from metal (such as a halberd) and a +6 bonus if the weapon is mostly or entirely made from metal (such as a spiked chain). If the golem disarms the opponent, the weapon sticks to the golem rather than falling to the floor. To retrieve the weapon, the creature must make a disarm attempt, as if he were trying to remove an object in the golem's possession. A golem cannot wield a weapon that is stuck to it, though it can remove the weapon from its body and wield it. This counts as 'drawing' the weapon.
- *Magnetic Grapple:* The golem gains the benefit of the Improved Grab special ability when attacking a creature wearing ferrous metal armour; it can immediately attempt a grapple as a free action after successfully hitting such a target. The golem gains a +3 bonus to all grapple checks made against creatures wearing medium ferrous metal armour and a +6 bonus to grapple checks made against creatures wearing heavy ferrous metal armour.

*Magnetic Drag (Su):* As a standard action, a lodestone golem can focus its magnetic energy and attempt to pull a ferrous metal object or a creature (or group of creatures) wearing metal armour towards itself. The target creature or creatures must be within 120 feet and must all be within a 30-foot radius. The golem makes an opposed Strength check with the target creatures, using its single result to affect all of them. Creatures who are resistant to being moved against their will, such as dwarves, add any bonuses that they would have against a bull rush attack to this opposed Strength check. A target creature who beats the golem's Strength check remains where it is. Creatures who fail to beat the golem fly towards it in a straight line to a distance of ten feet for every five points by which the golem's check result beat their own. At the end of this movement, they must make successful Balance checks (DC 15) or fall prone. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity as if it had been voluntary and does not count towards the creature's movement for the round. The movement counts as flight, so creatures can be pulled over pits and chasms. They do not fall in unless their movement ends over such features.

*Magnetic Slow (Su):* Fighting in the vicinity of a lodestone golem while wearing metal armour is extremely hard, as one has to struggle continually against the magnetic tugging. Creatures wearing heavy ferrous metal armour are *slowed* when they start their





turn within ten feet of a lodestone golem, as if by the spell cast by a 16<sup>th</sup> level wizard. Creatures wearing medium ferrous metal armour are *slowed* when they start their turn adjacent to a lodestone golem. *Free action* cancels this *slow* effect.

## Skitterjinx

**Medium Outsider (Chaos, Cold)**

**Hit Dice:** 14d8+14 (77 hp)

**Initiative:** +10

**Speed:** 50 ft. (10 squares)

**Armour Class:** 22 (+6 Dex, +6 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 16

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +14/+15

**Attack:** Claw +20 melee (1d4+1 plus entropy)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +20 melee (1d4+1 plus entropy) and bite +15 melee (1d6+1)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Damage reduction 10/lawful, dying curse, entropy, *misdirection*, spell-like abilities

**Special Qualities:** Discern voice, expert mimic, immunity to cold, spell resistance 23, vulnerability to fire

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +15, Will +12

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 22, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 16

**Skills:** Balance +16, Bluff +20, Climb +11, Diplomacy +13, Hide +23, Move Silently +23, Sleight of Hand +23, Survival +10, Swim +8, Tumble +23, Use Rope +13

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse

**Environment:** A cold chaotic-aligned plane

**Organisation:** Solitary, pack (3-6) or den (10-20 plus one sorcerer alpha male plus 50% non-combatants)

**Challenge Rating:** 11

**Treasure:** No coins, double goods

**Alignment:** Always chaotic neutral

**Advancement:** 15-28 HD (Medium)

**Level Adjustment:** —

These denizens of wild and icy planes resemble werewolves in their hybrid form: bipedal canine creatures lean as greyhounds, with lashing tails and short silvery-grey fur. They have small pearl-coloured horns and large ears. They speak in whining, breathy voices unless they are mimicking another creature.

Skitterjinxes are minor nuisances on trips through cold countries, as they are sneaky and curious and often steal foods and goods. This is done out of inquisitiveness and boredom rather than malice. It is not uncommon for travellers to wake up and discover their equipment strewn all over their campsites, where curious skitterjinxes have left it. Catching a skitterjinx in the act is difficult as they are masters of stealth.

The skitterjinx has a skeleton made from a substance identical to pearl, so those who do not know any better often hunt the unfortunate creature for its bones as well as its seal-like pelt. A full skitterjinx skeleton is worth between 1,000 and 3,500 gold pieces, depending on its condition and age. Skitterjinx hunting, however, is almost unknown in arctic communities, for one good reason. The skitterjinx's name comes from folktales which hold that it is dreadfully bad luck to kill one. These tales are founded in fact. With one of the strangest defence mechanisms known to zoology, a dying skitterjinx is able to bestow a potent curse on its killer.

Skitterjinxes excel at mimicry. They survive by learning the calls of large predators and imitating them, to scare off smaller creatures. Their agility and long legs help them to flee if they are in serious danger.

A skitterjinx's natural weapons count as chaotic-aligned for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.


*Discern Voice (Su):* The skitterjinx can imitate the voice of any creature it has studied for three rounds, whether it has heard it speak or not.

*Dying Curse (Su):* The killer of a skitterjinx immediately suffers a *curse* of exceptional power (effective caster level 20<sup>th</sup>). A Charisma-based Will saving throw (DC 20) is allowed to avoid this. The *curse* bestows a -4 luck penalty on saving throws, ability score checks and skill checks. This curse is permanent until dispelled with a *remove curse* spell or something similar. Direct blood relatives of the dead skitterjinx (parents, children or siblings) may also remove the curse at will as a standard action, though they very rarely do so. Unless they are convinced that the death was an accident, they demand hefty compensation and/or acts of penitence before they will consider removing a skitterjinx death curse.

*Entropy (Su):* The skitterjinx's natural attacks have an entropic effect on the target, making his behaviour less and less co-ordinated. This is where the 'skitter' part of the creature's name comes from. A creature hit in melee for damage by a skitterjinx's claw attack must make a Charisma-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) or suffer a -1 luck penalty to Armour Class. These penalties stack, with a maximum penalty of -5. When a pack of skitterjinxes attacks a target, they can bring it down rapidly by removing its protection with this ability.

*Expert Mimic (Ex):* A skitterjinx has a +10 racial bonus to any Bluff check made to imitate another creature's voice.





*Misdirection (Sp)*: To put hunters and predators off the scent, the skitterjinx can attempt to misdirect them. It does this as a standard action. The ability has a range of 250 feet and can affect up to 15 creatures, no two of whom may be more than 30 feet apart. Affected creatures must make Charisma-based Will saving throws (DC 20). Those who fail suffer a *suggestion* that the direction in which they are travelling is wrong and that they should alter their course slightly. A creature who successfully saves against a skitterjinx's *misdirection* cannot be affected by the ability from that skitterjinx again for 24 hours.

*Spell-like Abilities*: The skitterjinx uses these abilities as a 14<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer. 3/day – *chaos hammer*, *dispel law*, *entropic shield*; 1/day – *animate objects*, *word of chaos*.

## Whiteladies

**Medium Outsider (Cold, Evil)**

**Hit Dice:** 16d8 (72 hp)

**Initiative:** +9

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Armour Class:** 20 (+5 Dex, +5 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 15

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +16/+16

**Attack:** Slam +21 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 cold plus energy drain)

**Full Attack:** 2 slams +21 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 cold plus energy drain)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Energy drain, *snow blindness*, spell-like abilities, spells, spell resistance 25, *terrible laugh*

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 10/cold iron and good, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, ice penetration, outsider traits, unnatural aura

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +15, Will +12

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 20, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 22

**Skills:** Bluff +25, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +11, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +13, Perform (dance) +25, Spot +12, Survival +21, Swim +19, Tumble +14

**Feats:** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike<sup>B</sup>, Track<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Finesse

**Environment:** Cold hills and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary, nest (2–5 plus 50% chance of one Grun) or community (3–12 plus one Grun and one queen)

**Challenge Rating:** 13

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always neutral evil

**Advancement:** 17–32 HD (Medium)

**Level Adjustment:** —

The whiteladies are horrors distantly remembered in some elven folktales. Delirious travellers lost in the snow sometimes see them gliding above the ground or hear their inhuman laughter. Often mistaken for undead, they are actually creatures from a plane of endless ice, drawn to the earth by the prospect of souls to devour. They can subsist on the bland souls of animals but enjoy the richer souls of intelligent creatures far more. They enjoy playing with illusions, creating mirages to mislead the lost.

Whiteladies make their lairs in ice caves. As they can move through ice as easily as water, they lurk close to the surface, sometimes pretending to be human women embedded in the ice. They have stark white skin, dark eyes and black lips, and never smile except when they feed.


Whiteladies have short lifespans, perishing in ecstasy when they have devoured sufficient souls (approximately a hundred). Depending on how many victims they can reach, this may take only a few months or many years. Their remains disintegrate into a slush which is reverently carried back to the queen, who then consumes it. All whiteladies hatch out from pearly eggs laid by the queen. The single male of the brood is called a Grun (see below) and is wholly unlike his sisters, resembling an ogre covered with white fur.

A whitelady's slam attacks and any weapons she wields count as evil-aligned weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

*Energy Drain (Su)*: A whitelady's slam attack bestows two negative levels upon the target. A Charisma-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 24) removes one negative level.

*Ice Penetration (Su)*: Whiteladies can pass through ice as if it were water. They use their Swim skill to manoeuvre when they are encased in ice. They cannot pass through snow, though they can swim in water. While in an ice square, a whitelady gains concealment (20% miss chance) and a +4 shield bonus to Armour Class. She can attack adjacent opponents and be attacked. If there are one or more whole ice squares between the whitelady and an opponent, the opponent does not have line of effect and must break through the ice or melt it somehow in order to reach her. When wounded, whiteladies flee deep into the ice to recover, aware that very few foes can come after them there.

*Snow Blindness (Sp)*: Whiteladies can attempt to afflict their victims with snow blindness as a standard action.



The whitelady sends forth ice-white beams from her eyes (a ray attack with a range of 120 feet); if these successfully hit, the target must make a Charisma-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 24) or be blinded until he leaves the snowy environment and for 1d4 hours thereafter.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* At will, as 10<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer – *dancing lights, scrying, silent image*; 3/day – *cone of cold, fire shield* (chill blue flames only), *sleet storm*.

*Spells:* A whitelady casts arcane spells as a 10<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer.

*Terrible Laugh (Sp):* Three times per day, a whitelady can trill forth a laugh so cold and malicious that those who hear it are struck with terror. All targets within a 60-foot spread must make Charisma-based Will saving throws (DC 24) or be panicked for 3d6 rounds. This is a mind-affecting sonic fear effect.

*Unnatural Aura (Su):* Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a whitelady at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and will panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

## Whitelady Queen

Any whitelady can become a queen after ingesting the liquid remains of her sisters, though broods only have one at a time. This flightless abomination is a whitelady from the waist up but has a long, jointed, many-legged body beneath, like a human-millipede cross. Its attributes are different from the regular whitelady.

A whitelady queen rarely leaves her cavern lair, trusting to the Grun and the other whiteladies to defend her. The whitelady queen deposits eggs which the Grun then renders fertile by a process best not described.

**Whitelady Queen:** CR 14; Large outsider (cold, evil); HD 16d8 (72 hp); Init +9; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +16; Grp +20; Atk +20 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 cold plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +20 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 cold plus energy drain, 2 slams) and +15 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 cold plus venom, sting); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft; SA energy drain, *snow blindness*, spell-like abilities, spells, *terrible laugh*; SQ damage reduction 15/cold iron and good, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, ice penetration, outsider traits, unnatural aura; SV Fort +10, Ref +15, Will +12; Str 10, Dex 20, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 22.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +25, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +11, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +13, Perform (dance) +25, Spot +12, Survival +21, Swim +19, Tumble +14; Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike<sup>B</sup>, Track<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Finesse.

*Venom (Ex):* The queen's sting swiftly rots muscular tissue, dealing 2d4 points of primary Strength damage and 3d4 points of secondary Strength damage. The Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) to avoid its effects is Constitution-based and includes a +4 racial bonus.

## Windshaper

**Medium Outsider (Cold, Law)**

**Hit Dice:** 12d8 (54 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 80 ft. (good)

**Armour Class:** 18 (+1 Dex, +7 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 17

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +12/+12

**Attack:** +3 *silver hammer* +15 melee (1d8+3/x3)

**Full Attack:** +3 *silver hammer* +15/+10 melee (1d8+3/x3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Craft ice sculpture, imbue thunder, spells, *weathermongering*

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 10/chaos, *ice shaping, invisibility*, immunity to cold, spell resistance 21, vulnerability to fire

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +9

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

**Skills:** Concentration +5, Craft (ice) +20, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +14, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +16, Move Silently +11, Perform (sing) +19, Spellcraft +17, Spot +6, Survival +6

**Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Skill Focus (Craft (ice)), Spell Penetration

**Environment:** A cold lawfully-aligned plane

**Organisation:** Solitary, coven (2–4) or stead (8–12)

**Challenge Rating:** 10

**Treasure:** —

**Alignment:** Always lawful neutral

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** —

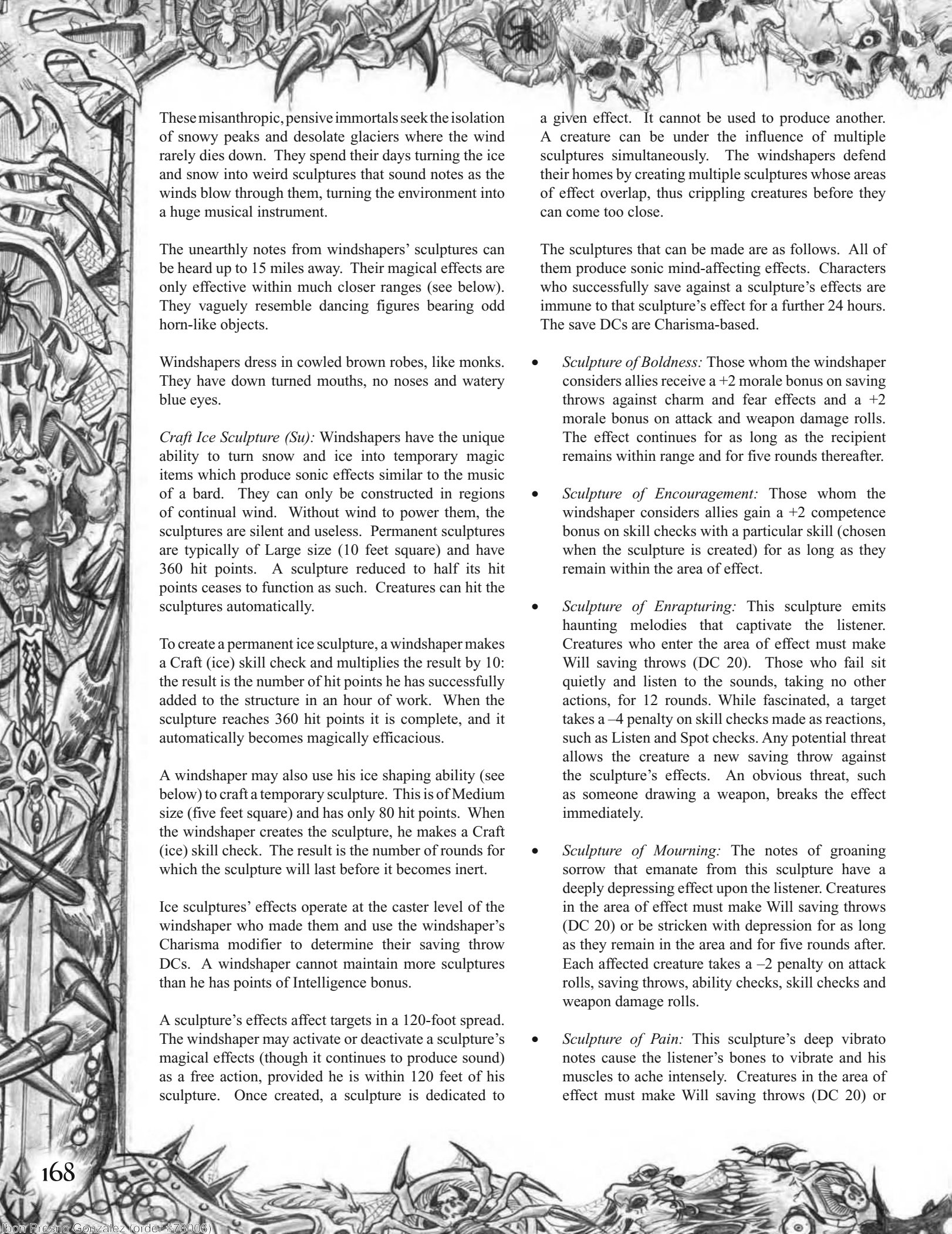
**Treasure:** —

**Alignment:** Always lawful neutral

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** —





These misanthropic, pensive immortals seek the isolation of snowy peaks and desolate glaciers where the wind rarely dies down. They spend their days turning the ice and snow into weird sculptures that sound notes as the winds blow through them, turning the environment into a huge musical instrument.

The unearthly notes from windshapers' sculptures can be heard up to 15 miles away. Their magical effects are only effective within much closer ranges (see below). They vaguely resemble dancing figures bearing odd horn-like objects.

Windshapers dress in cowed brown robes, like monks. They have down turned mouths, no noses and watery blue eyes.

*Craft Ice Sculpture (Su):* Windshapers have the unique ability to turn snow and ice into temporary magic items which produce sonic effects similar to the music of a bard. They can only be constructed in regions of continual wind. Without wind to power them, the sculptures are silent and useless. Permanent sculptures are typically of Large size (10 feet square) and have 360 hit points. A sculpture reduced to half its hit points ceases to function as such. Creatures can hit the sculptures automatically.

To create a permanent ice sculpture, a windshaper makes a Craft (ice) skill check and multiplies the result by 10: the result is the number of hit points he has successfully added to the structure in an hour of work. When the sculpture reaches 360 hit points it is complete, and it automatically becomes magically efficacious.

A windshaper may also use his ice shaping ability (see below) to craft a temporary sculpture. This is of Medium size (five feet square) and has only 80 hit points. When the windshaper creates the sculpture, he makes a Craft (ice) skill check. The result is the number of rounds for which the sculpture will last before it becomes inert.

Ice sculptures' effects operate at the caster level of the windshaper who made them and use the windshaper's Charisma modifier to determine their saving throw DCs. A windshaper cannot maintain more sculptures than he has points of Intelligence bonus.


A sculpture's effects affect targets in a 120-foot spread. The windshaper may activate or deactivate a sculpture's magical effects (though it continues to produce sound) as a free action, provided he is within 120 feet of his sculpture. Once created, a sculpture is dedicated to

a given effect. It cannot be used to produce another. A creature can be under the influence of multiple sculptures simultaneously. The windshapers defend their homes by creating multiple sculptures whose areas of effect overlap, thus crippling creatures before they can come too close.

The sculptures that can be made are as follows. All of them produce sonic mind-affecting effects. Characters who successfully save against a sculpture's effects are immune to that sculpture's effect for a further 24 hours. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

- *Sculpture of Boldness:* Those whom the windshaper considers allies receive a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against charm and fear effects and a +2 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls. The effect continues for as long as the recipient remains within range and for five rounds thereafter.
- *Sculpture of Encouragement:* Those whom the windshaper considers allies gain a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with a particular skill (chosen when the sculpture is created) for as long as they remain within the area of effect.
- *Sculpture of Enrapturing:* This sculpture emits haunting melodies that captivate the listener. Creatures who enter the area of effect must make Will saving throws (DC 20). Those who fail sit quietly and listen to the sounds, taking no other actions, for 12 rounds. While fascinated, a target takes a -4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat allows the creature a new saving throw against the sculpture's effects. An obvious threat, such as someone drawing a weapon, breaks the effect immediately.
- *Sculpture of Mourning:* The notes of groaning sorrow that emanate from this sculpture have a deeply depressing effect upon the listener. Creatures in the area of effect must make Will saving throws (DC 20) or be stricken with depression for as long as they remain in the area and for five rounds after. Each affected creature takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, skill checks and weapon damage rolls.
- *Sculpture of Pain:* This sculpture's deep vibrato notes cause the listener's bones to vibrate and his muscles to ache intensely. Creatures in the area of effect must make Will saving throws (DC 20) or





suffer terrible pain, imposing a -4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks. Affected creatures remain agonised for as long as they remain in the area and for five rounds after.

- *Sculpture of Slumber:* The soothing music that ululates from this ice figure has creatures yawning, nodding and keeling over. Creatures in the area of effect must make Will saving throws (DC 20) or fall asleep. If left undisturbed, they remain asleep for eight hours. Attempting to wake an affected creature, such as by shaking him, allows him a fresh saving throw for each such attempt.
- *Sculpture of Terror:* The shrill screams from this sculpture cause panic in affected creatures. Those who fail their Will saving throws (DC 20) are panicked for as long as they remain in the area and for 3d6 rounds thereafter. A creature who re-enters the area of effect once the panic has worn off must make a fresh saving throw at a -2 circumstance penalty.

*Ice Shaping (Sp):* Windshapers may shape ice three times per day as if by the *stone shape* spell cast by a 14<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer, affecting solid ice rather than stone.

*Imbue Thunder (Su):* Windshapers can temporarily imbue weapons with the *thundering* quality as a standard action. Weapons so imbued deal an additional 1d8 points of sonic damage on a successful critical hit. If the weapon has a critical modifier of x3 it deals 2d8 points, and if the modifier is x4 it deals 3d8 points. Subjects dealt a critical hit by a thundering weapon must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 14) or be deafened permanently. This quality lasts for one hour. Windshapers imbue their own weapons before going into battle.

*Invisibility (Sp):* A windshaper may become *invisible* at will, as per the spell cast by a 12<sup>th</sup> level bard.

*Spells:* A windshaper casts spells as a 12<sup>th</sup> level bard.

*Weathermongering (Sp):* Windshapers may use *control weather* at will, as per the spell cast by a 16<sup>th</sup> level druid. They commonly use this ability to ensure a continual supply of strong wind.

## Aftermath

Once the Player Characters have overcome Bastirak and collected some tenebrium samples, they can return to Xoth Sarandi, where the Conclave of mages analyse the crystals thoroughly. Their discoveries, along with Bastirak's notes (if the Player Characters were smart enough to find these and bring them along), are sufficient to track down the origin plane of tenebrium – a place called 'Noctulos' in the elven scrolls. It proves to be, unsurprisingly, adjunct to the Plane of Shadow and only reachable through there.

The tenebrium samples brought back from Bastirak's citadel are not large enough to test properly. The Player Characters will have to travel into the Plane of Shadow and venture into Noctulos in order to bring back a suitably sized piece of tenebrium for testing. This expedition is covered in Chapter 8, Following Darkness Like a Dream.





# Tyrant of Brass

This adventure follows on from the Topaz Dominions' pledge of assistance to the coalition against the drow. Ata Huara, the ambassador for the Topaz Dominions, asks the Player Characters to help his monarch, since they are now allies. If the Player Characters ask the Conclave for advice, they urge co-operation with the ambassador, so long as the Player Characters are of high enough level to tackle this adventure. If they are not, the Conclave suggests (after suitable divinations) that other concerns should come first. This way, the Games Master can use the Conclave to gently nudge the Player Characters towards adventures that are not too tough for them to handle, without railroading them.

The Player Characters travel to the Topaz Dominions, where they receive the hospitality of the Sun King himself. He explains the situation: there is a dark presence in the desert, something unwholesome and corrupting, and it has scorched and dried out the few green places in the sandy waste.

There are tales of a desert horror that would do this, but such things inhabit the Plateau of Skulls, where nobody ever goes, nor would want to. All the desert people avoid it, and no foreigner could possibly reach the plateau without help. Some fool may have ventured there in defiance of taboo, but the Sun King cannot think of anyone who would want to thus imperil his soul.

In any event, the Phoenix Legions cannot cross the desert to liberate Crom Calamar if the oases are destroyed, so the matter must be dealt with. No denizen of the Topaz Dominions is allowed to enter the Plateau of Skulls, because of ancient taboos; if the Sun King sends any of his men there, he will prevent their souls from ever entering paradise. The Player Characters, however, are foreigners, so they are ideally placed to enter the foul place and defeat the evil. He equips the Player Characters with the best mounts he has along with supplies for the journey, and sends them to talk with his men who are camped on the border of the Desert of Sharn.

When the Player Characters reach their destination (passing withered oases on the way), they find an almost unbelievable sight. The village of Astercote, which was

torn out of the ground by the magic of a potent artefact in *Book One*, hovers close to the ground, tethered there by an enormous length of rope as if it were a balloon.

Humans have indeed ventured into the Plateau of Skulls, though not by choice. Astercote was carried here by the winds of random chance. The villagers have managed to tether the floating island in place and explore the ruins. They have carelessly unleashed the entity that turned the forest into a desert so long ago, the entity called the Tyrant of Brass, which had lain dormant in the wreckage of the plateau for nearly a millennium. It has resumed its original task, namely to wipe out all plant life in the Sharn region.

**Levels:** The Player Characters should undertake this adventure between 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> level if possible.


## Event: Arrival at the Topaz Dominions

How the Player Characters reach the Topaz Dominions is up to them. The easiest route is to take the sea-portal, but *teleportation* can also be arranged through the Conclave if necessary. Ata Huara insists on escorting them to the Sun King's palace, as he can vouch for their identities and present them to his monarch in person.

The following description suffices for most Topaz Dominion settlements:

*The civilisation here seems to be a strange blend of a rigidly stratified society in which everyone keeps to his or her place, and an almost surreal dependence on magic. There are sorcerers openly practising on the street corners, offering oracles to passers-by, and priests sell animals for sacrifice in the temples of the Sun God. It seems that whenever anything other than basic manual work needs doing, from mending broken tools to healing a child's grazed knee, a spellcaster is visited to take care of it.*

*The place seems trapped somehow, locked into an endless cycle of days in which nothing ever needs to change. The buildings, made from clay and reeds, seem more like those from books of history than from the times you know. The hunters hunt, the fishers fish, and nobody seems to want to be anything other than what he is. The people seem to be happy, at any rate.*



## History of the Desert

This history is accessible to any character who succeeds on a Knowledge (history) or Bardic Lore check (DC 20) or who researches the subject in a library.

The Desert of Sharn was originally equatorial forest stretching from the borders of the Topaz Dominions to Jehannum, with the ocean to the west. It was one of the outposts of elven civilisation and provided a retreat for fugitives from the bordering kingdoms. In the centre of the forest was the Plateau of Peace, a raised zone above the tree-line, where the majority of the elven settlements were located.

The elves finally abandoned their domains before the last Equinox of the Heroes and retreated back to Xoth Sarandi, hoping to opt out of the coming war and leave the other races to fight it. Finding the forest uninhabited but for a few die-hard elves who refused to leave, the drow went on a mad orgy of destruction. They swore that the forest would never again shelter either man or elf.

How the forest was destroyed so swiftly, nobody knows. Dragons are definitely believed to have devastated part of it, but accounts also tell of something else: a huge glowing figure that breathed out spumes of flame the size of cornfields, turning the ancient trees to ash. Whatever it was that worked the destruction, it was thorough. Within ten years Sharn was a desert of sand and ash, with only a few struggling patches of green life left. The Plateau of Peace was renamed the Plateau of Skulls, after the charred skeletons that were found there in abundance. It quickly acquired the reputation of being a haunted place. Travellers who ventured there did not return.

**Games Master's Note:** The glowing being that destroyed the forest was a construct called the Tyrant of Brass, an artefact retrieved from the Elemental Plane of Fire. During the last war, the drow set it loose, ordering it to destroy all of the green growing things from Jehannum to the Topaz Dominions. They were unsure whether it could, in fact, do this; their doubts soon vanished. The Tyrant devastated mile after mile of forest, until the scale of the destruction troubled even the drow, who wondered if it would actually *stop* as it had been told to do. They were quietly relieved when, once the forest had been devastated, the entity vanished altogether.

Any obvious spellcasters in the party can be told: *The people look at you with wide eyes as you pass, smiling and nudging one another. They seem pleased that magic-workers from other lands have visited them here.*

Wizards, sorcerers and clerics – even those who follow other deities than the Sun God – find that they are waited on hand and foot while in the Topaz Dominions. Nobody ever asks them to pay for anything. If they need to buy any item more valuable than a good meal or a drink in an inn, they are given a 40% discount (not including magic items, since these can only be had from fellow spellcasters). However, they are also expected to perform their magic for free, as and when needed.

Non-spellcasters are treated as if they were retainers. A native of the Topaz Dominions who sees a group of adventurers automatically assumes that the fighters and rogues are the wizards' and sorcerers' bodyguards or pack bearers.

## Location: The Palace of the Sun King

*You stand before the Sun King's palace, where Ata Huara has led you. There is no possible room for doubt that the sun is a sacred symbol to these people, as they seem to plaster it over every available surface. The larger and more golden the better. The domed golden roof of the palace before you is topped by a stylised sun-disc that shines blindingly bright in the rays of the actual sun above. Gilded sun-faces glow from the lintels of the archway at the palace's entrance and a vast solar mosaic spreads across the floor of the echoing entrance hall. All of the palace staff wear sun medallions, like gold coins on chains. Every room that you pass features a sun-shrine in the corner, many of which are wet with blood from recent sacrifices. This kingdom is powerful and strongly lawful but it does not seem entirely benevolent. Although the ruler of this realm has promised his assistance, you cannot help but wonder whether his actions are not motivated by an expansionist ambition.*

*Without warning you hear a flare of trumpets, and a shrill voice from a balcony above – doubtless that of a eunuch – announces that 'The Earth-Born Presence of the Lord is among us!' With that, a powerfully built man strides in through the archway at the end of the room, bared to the waist, dressed in a white kilt and a simple golden headband. His eyes are amber, his face sombre and thoughtful.*

*'Welcome to my Father's blessed land,' he says in flawless Common. 'I have gifts for you. First you must present the gifts you have brought for me.'*





JESHMAL OASIS

ALBEYAHN OASIS

ASTERCOTE

PLATEAU OF SKULLS

DEVOURER'S MOUND

FAZZ'AVOQ OASIS

OASIS OF THE CRODDEN SERPENT

PASHAR OASIS

OASIS OF THE SLEEPING STARS

CAMP OF THE PHOENIX LEGIONS



# DESERT OF SHARN



This is the Sun King (Ftr 10/Clr 5/Sor 5), who his people believe to be a god in the flesh. The ten trumpeters on the balcony above are not only musicians but highly trained warrior-priests (Clr 8/War 8) with bows at their feet, ready to grab them and fill any would-be assassin full of arrows.

The Sun King does not actually expect the Player Characters to have brought gifts, and Ata Huara has not advised them that this is necessary, so unless they thought to do so themselves, they are forced to improvise on the spot. The Sun King is only doing this to test their reactions to the unexpected. So long as they respond intelligently, he is pleased. An especially clever or witty response brings a slight appreciative smile, which is as close as the king usually comes to laughter.

The Sun King presents each Player Character with one of the *tezillim* or Destriers of Heaven, his best horses (see sidebar), and proceeds to explain why he has need of them.

**The Sun King's Story:** *'Like you, I yearn to strike down the dark ones and cast their souls into eternal torment. My army stands ready to bring the vengeance of Heaven down upon them. An army must eat and drink, however; and if we are to cross the desert to reach Jehannum, we must keep our mounts and our men well watered.'*

*'It seems the dark ones know this and seek to thwart us by rendering the desert impassable. Word has reached me that two of the oases, the Oasis of Sleeping Stars and the Oasis of Pashtar, are burned to the ground, their waters all but dried up and stinking like a dead thing.'*

*'We cannot cross the desert without the oases. I call upon you, my allies, to go into the desert, find what is doing this and put an end to it. I cannot send my own men, for I believe that the evil has come forth from the Plateau of Skulls, where none of my people may tread. My father the Sun has forbidden it. You are not of the faith, so you may go. When this is done, we shall take the fight to our enemies, and spill our blood together as brethren.'*

The Player Characters may now ask questions. Some likely ones are given below:

**Why not just load the legions onto ships and sail them up to Jehannum? Why go through the desert?**

*'We are a desert people. It is what we know. My people are not sailors; if they were to be attacked on board ship, they would have no experience of the proper way'*





### The Destriers of Heaven

The Sun King's most prized possessions are his white silver-maned horses, the *tetzillim* or heavenly destriers, which he firmly believes are descended from the steed of the Sun God himself. Since they are the descendants of half-celestial winged horses, the line was certainly sired by a good outsider at some point in the past.

**Tetzillim:** Large outsider (native); HD 3d8+9; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 60 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (1d4+3, hoof); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+3, 2 hooves) and +0 melee (1d3+1, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA *daylight*; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, resistance to acid 5, cold 5, and electrical 5, scent; AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 15, Cha 8.

*Skills & Feats:* Listen +7, Jump +6, Spot +7; Endurance, Run.

*to fight. My spies tell me that the dark ones have made pacts with pirate tribes, who would have the advantage if we met at sea. I believe we should keep to the land, where we are invulnerable.'*

**Why not just have clerics provide food and water for the legions? Why depend on the oases?** *'The priests of my Father can, indeed, keep the soldiers fed; but to do so would require too many. We would need one priest for every three men. We have many priests, as you have seen! Yet I cannot spare that many. Also, outlanders, know that the oases are the gift of my Father. It is my duty as monarch to preserve them.'*

### Location: The Camp of the Phoenix Legions

*The tents massed here on the border of the desert are made from white silk, rippling in the light breeze. The men of the Phoenix Legions move among them, swarthy and confident, their golden armour shining like the sun they venerate. Seeing you approach, they greet you with salutes; their expressions show deep respect.*

*Looking at the thousands of gold-clad warriors before you, each one ready to die in the fight to drive the drow back from Crom Calamar, you know that the odds have changed since you left that darkened city. There is much left to do, but with allies like this, you know that you at least have a fighting chance.*

The overall commander of the expeditionary force, General Mashoul Wassim (Ftr 12/Rgr 5), comes out to welcome the Player Characters to the camp and provides them with dates and sherbet. He is a strong man in the prime of life, eager to move against the drow and frustrated at the delays that have arisen.

Over lunch, General Wassim tells the Player Characters that there have been strange phenomena in the sky. One man claims to have seen a floating island, while another saw a plume of black smoke that moved across the horizon. Shortly afterwards, nomads riding in from the desert reported that two of the oases to the south of the Plateau of Skulls had been destroyed, namely the Oasis of the Sleeping Stars and the Oasis of Pashtar. He is deeply saddened at the loss of the former; 'the Sun King himself set up a shrine there'.

General Wassim can provide the Player Characters with a rudimentary map of the desert showing where the oases and the Plateau of Skulls lie. He cautions them not to rely on compasses because the 'spirits of the desert play tricks.' They should navigate by the stars, or they will be misled (in fact, massive lodestone deposits under the sand are what confuse compasses). He recommends that they investigate the burned oases first, to see if any clues remain.

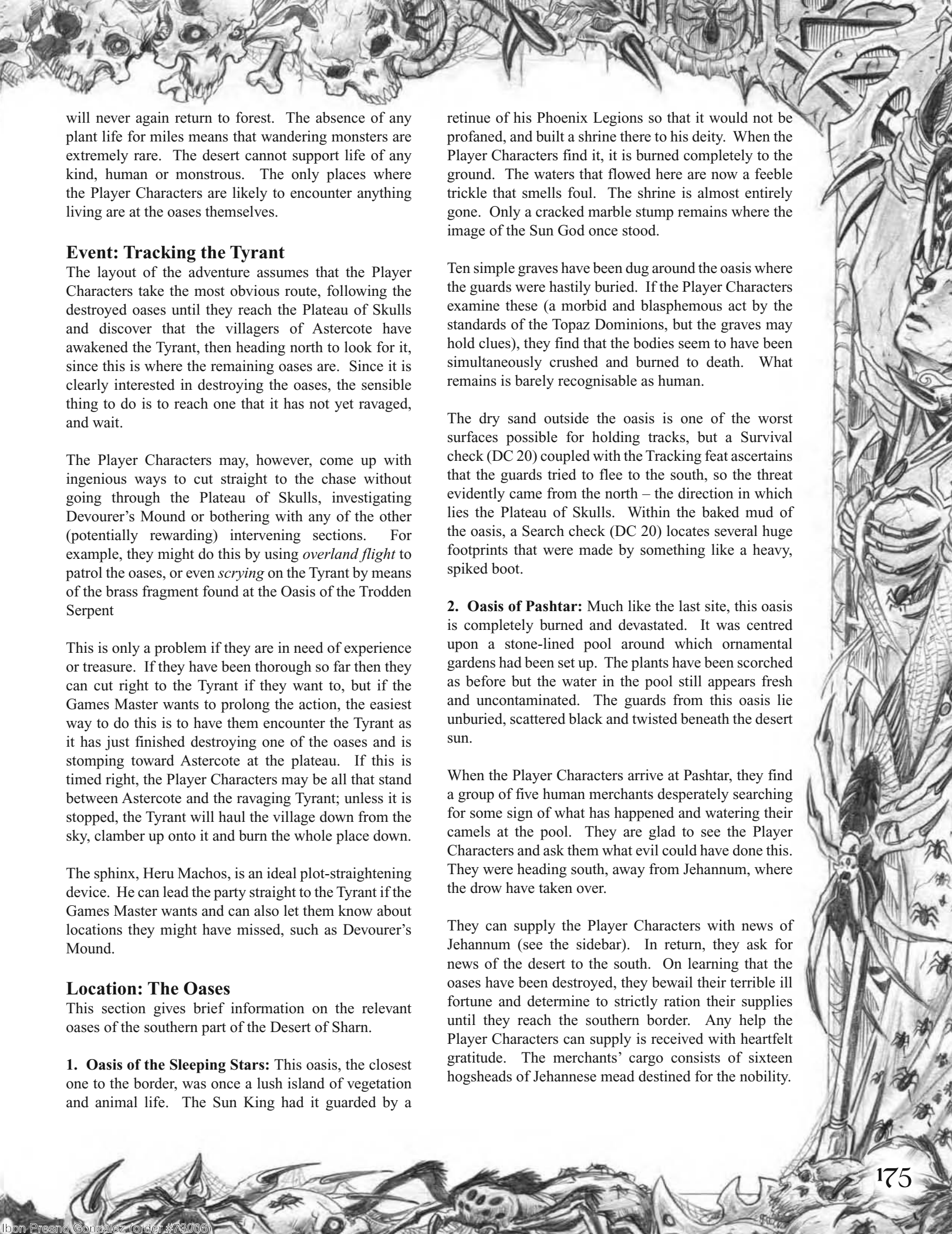
### Event: Into the Desert

*The border of the desert can hardly be plainer. On one side the cultivated terraces of the Topaz Dominions stretch away into the distance. White sheep and goats feast on the lush grasses and fishermen pole their boats down the coast spearing fat gleaming fish. On the other side lies a baked, sandy plain simmering under the sun, the sand an unhealthy grey colour like the flaking skin of a leper. The very land seems dead. It is no wonder that travellers do not like to cross the desert; it looks as though it would parch the life out of the soul as well as the body.*

*Strange though it seems, there is green life out there (or so you have been told), and it is being destroyed. You have a new appreciation for the value of any water source or green shady place in a lifeless zone like this. You understand now why the Sun King is so troubled. Even if he did not have an army to bring across the desert, no monarch can allow some unknown force to destroy even one oasis upon which so many different lives depend, let alone all of them.*

The Desert of Sharn is not natural. It was created by the devastating magical fire of the Tyrant, aided by goutts of fire and acid from the dragon allies of the drow. It





will never again return to forest. The absence of any plant life for miles means that wandering monsters are extremely rare. The desert cannot support life of any kind, human or monstrous. The only places where the Player Characters are likely to encounter anything living are at the oases themselves.

### Event: Tracking the Tyrant

The layout of the adventure assumes that the Player Characters take the most obvious route, following the destroyed oases until they reach the Plateau of Skulls and discover that the villagers of Astercote have awakened the Tyrant, then heading north to look for it, since this is where the remaining oases are. Since it is clearly interested in destroying the oases, the sensible thing to do is to reach one that it has not yet ravaged, and wait.

The Player Characters may, however, come up with ingenious ways to cut straight to the chase without going through the Plateau of Skulls, investigating Devourer's Mound or bothering with any of the other (potentially rewarding) intervening sections. For example, they might do this by using *overland flight* to patrol the oases, or even *scrying* on the Tyrant by means of the brass fragment found at the Oasis of the Trodden Serpent

This is only a problem if they are in need of experience or treasure. If they have been thorough so far then they can cut right to the Tyrant if they want to, but if the Games Master wants to prolong the action, the easiest way to do this is to have them encounter the Tyrant as it has just finished destroying one of the oases and is stomping toward Astercote at the plateau. If this is timed right, the Player Characters may be all that stand between Astercote and the ravaging Tyrant; unless it is stopped, the Tyrant will haul the village down from the sky, clamber up onto it and burn the whole place down.

The sphinx, Heru Machos, is an ideal plot-straightening device. He can lead the party straight to the Tyrant if the Games Master wants and can also let them know about locations they might have missed, such as Devourer's Mound.

### Location: The Oases

This section gives brief information on the relevant oases of the southern part of the Desert of Sharn.

**1. Oasis of the Sleeping Stars:** This oasis, the closest one to the border, was once a lush island of vegetation and animal life. The Sun King had it guarded by a

retinue of his Phoenix Legions so that it would not be profaned, and built a shrine there to his deity. When the Player Characters find it, it is burned completely to the ground. The waters that flowed here are now a feeble trickle that smells foul. The shrine is almost entirely gone. Only a cracked marble stump remains where the image of the Sun God once stood.

Ten simple graves have been dug around the oasis where the guards were hastily buried. If the Player Characters examine these (a morbid and blasphemous act by the standards of the Topaz Dominions, but the graves may hold clues), they find that the bodies seem to have been simultaneously crushed and burned to death. What remains is barely recognisable as human.

The dry sand outside the oasis is one of the worst surfaces possible for holding tracks, but a Survival check (DC 20) coupled with the Tracking feat ascertains that the guards tried to flee to the south, so the threat evidently came from the north – the direction in which lies the Plateau of Skulls. Within the baked mud of the oasis, a Search check (DC 20) locates several huge footprints that were made by something like a heavy, spiked boot.

**2. Oasis of Pashtar:** Much like the last site, this oasis is completely burned and devastated. It was centred upon a stone-lined pool around which ornamental gardens had been set up. The plants have been scorched as before but the water in the pool still appears fresh and uncontaminated. The guards from this oasis lie unburied, scattered black and twisted beneath the desert sun.

When the Player Characters arrive at Pashtar, they find a group of five human merchants desperately searching for some sign of what has happened and watering their camels at the pool. They are glad to see the Player Characters and ask them what evil could have done this. They were heading south, away from Jehannum, where the drow have taken over.

They can supply the Player Characters with news of Jehannum (see the sidebar). In return, they ask for news of the desert to the south. On learning that the oases have been destroyed, they bewail their terrible ill fortune and determine to strictly ration their supplies until they reach the southern border. Any help the Player Characters can supply is received with heartfelt gratitude. The merchants' cargo consists of sixteen hogsheads of Jehannese mead destined for the nobility.



### News from Jehannum

The merchants encountered at the Oasis of Pashtar have this to say:

*'The situation is worse than anyone could have imagined, outlander! The dark domes still keep the blessed Sun from shining His light upon the people of the Five Cities, and now the drow have entrenched their rule by executing the captured soldiery en masse. They hang outside the city walls as a warning to the others. The rumours from inside the city say that they sometimes spare those who do... degrading things. They make the men beg for their lives and promise them that the pain will stop, if only they do the unmanly things that are asked, with the drow, or with each other. Ai, it is not good to talk of this.'*

*'Some of the city people have fled to the northern limits of the desert, others into the countryside of Jehannum. There is talk of a resistance but it is only words, words to keep alive the dream of having once been free. The drow let the people talk, for it is cruel to give them hope and then to take it away. To break the people's spirit would rob the drow of their sport.'*

*'The Bright Lord knows that no real resistance ever has a chance. Even now, drow captains mounted upon black horses that snort flame like things of Hell are leading troops into the villages to hunt for escaped warriors. Sheltering an infantryman means death for the family who provided the shelter, while villages where a human is found guilty of sheltering a commander are put to the torch. Surely these are the last days. Surely this can get no worse.'*

**3. Fazz'avoq Oasis:** The smoke is still billowing from this inferno as the Player Characters approach. From the scale of the destruction, this was not merely an oasis but a small, fertile valley fed by a plentiful underground water supply. The blackened patches that were once areas of light vegetation stretch for several acres on each side and the variety of different scorched animal corpses testify to the abundant life that was once found here. Most of them are goats but there is one lion carcass, burned along with its prey. They seem to have been roasted alive.

**Rocs Fall:** The oasis has never been built upon nor guarded, as it is unsafe. The goats that drank and grazed here were the habitual prey of a pair of rocs, unusually large even by their standards, roosting on the hills to the west. They are hungry, since there have been no animals nearby for several days, and swoop down to attack the Player Characters on sight, thinking them to be easy meat.

**Rocs (2):** CR 16; Colossal animal; HD 33d8+297; hp 445; Init +4; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 18, touch 6, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +24; Grp +56; Atk +33 melee (2d8+16/19–20, talon); Full Atk +33 melee (2d6+16/19–20, 2 talons) and +31 melee (4d6+8, bite); Space/Reach 30 ft./20 ft.; SQ low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +27, Ref +22, Will +15; Str 42, Dex 18, Con 28, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 11.

**Skills & Feats:** Hide –5, Listen +18, Spot +19; Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (talon), Improved Natural Armour, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (talon), Wingover.

**4. Oasis of the Trodden Serpent:** This oasis presents a now familiar scene of scorched plants, dead animals and humans and a water source turned sluggish and stinking. This oasis was marshier than the others, so the marks of spike-soled feet can be seen clearly without the need to make Search or Spot checks. If the prints are examined further, a Search check (DC 25) finds a single brass spike left behind in one of the indentations.


**5. Jeshmal Oasis:** This is an underground spring rather than a patch of vegetation, so the Tyrant has ignored it. Granite steps lead down into a cool, shadowy chamber rather like a tomb, with troughs in the walls where the water collects. The walls have been partly decorated with ceramic tiles in geometric designs, now old and cracked.

**6. Albeyahn Oasis:** This oasis has not yet been assaulted. The Tyrant is heading towards it even now.

### Event: Seven Ragged Tigers

This encounter can be slotted in anywhere in the desert but works best close to Jeshmal Oasis or Devourer's Mound.

The desert close to the Plateau of Skulls is home to numerous evils, among them a clan of rakshasa. These cunning shapeshifters love to masquerade as friends, leading travellers into peril – especially by bringing them close to the lairs of monsters – and then looting their bodies. For several months now they have been searching through the ruins at the Plateau of Skulls, looking for buried art objects and other treasures to loot from the dead. Rakshasa have no fear of tribal taboos. They want to investigate old legends of treasures in Devourer's Mound but fear the creatures that lie within, so they hope to trick some do-gooder adventurers into going in first.



There are six rakshasa males led by a sorceress, Jasmuheen, the most callous of them all. When they first appear they assume the appearance and character of a group of nomads:

*Camped in a rough circle are seven dark-skinned humans, six male and one female, their faces and bodies wrapped in gauze cloth. By their dress you can tell that they are desert nomads. Only their eyes can be seen clearly; the rest is protected against the dust. Rising to their feet, they raise their hands in what may be signs of greeting. As if to confirm this, the female holds out some sort of waterskin, gesturing for you to take it.*

The 'nomads' use few words, preferring signs, though they speak Common. They claim to be concerned that these outsiders (the Player Characters) have come so far into such a hostile place. They offer water for everyone and their mounts and suggest that the Player Characters accompany them to the nearest oasis (Jeshmal), which they confirm is undamaged.

Whether or not the Player Characters accompany them to Jeshmal Oasis, the rakshasa attempt to establish trust by giving freely of what they have. If the Player Characters are most interested in information, they can certainly provide that. They saw the great floating island pass overhead a few weeks or so ago; more recently they saw a huge fiery shape walking in the darkness, heading for Albeyahn Oasis, which was a smouldering ruin by morning.



The rakshasa offer to escort the Player Characters to any location they may have in mind. If the Player Characters refuse, they feign offence, claiming that only an ill-bred ingrate refuses an offer of help in the desert. If this does not persuade the Player Characters to accept their offer, they leave petulantly but remain where they can watch the Player Characters from a safe distance and follow them. If challenged on this, they claim they are doing it out of a duty to watch over the foolish. If the Player Characters accept, the rakshasa lead them straight to Devourer's Mound, no matter where they are supposed to be going.

*Note:* If the Player Characters are 16<sup>th</sup> level, the Games Master should reduce the number of rakshasa to four. If they are 15<sup>th</sup> level, he should reduce the number to two.

This is not supposed to be a heavy combat encounter but one of deceit and betrayal. The rakshasa do not like fighting up close and much prefer to inflict a slow and malicious death. The rakshasa hope that the Player Characters will deal with the occupants of the mound, after which the rakshasa will be able to go in and loot it. They feign surprise when the undead attack and scurry back as if frightened, asking the Player Characters to help them against the 'desert fiends'. If the occupants of the mound do not finish the Player Characters off, the rakshasa watch for a suitable moment, then try to subdue them all, take their equipment and leave them stranded in the desert. The Games Master should aim to end this encounter with the Player Characters crippled or left in an awkward situation, rather than dead.

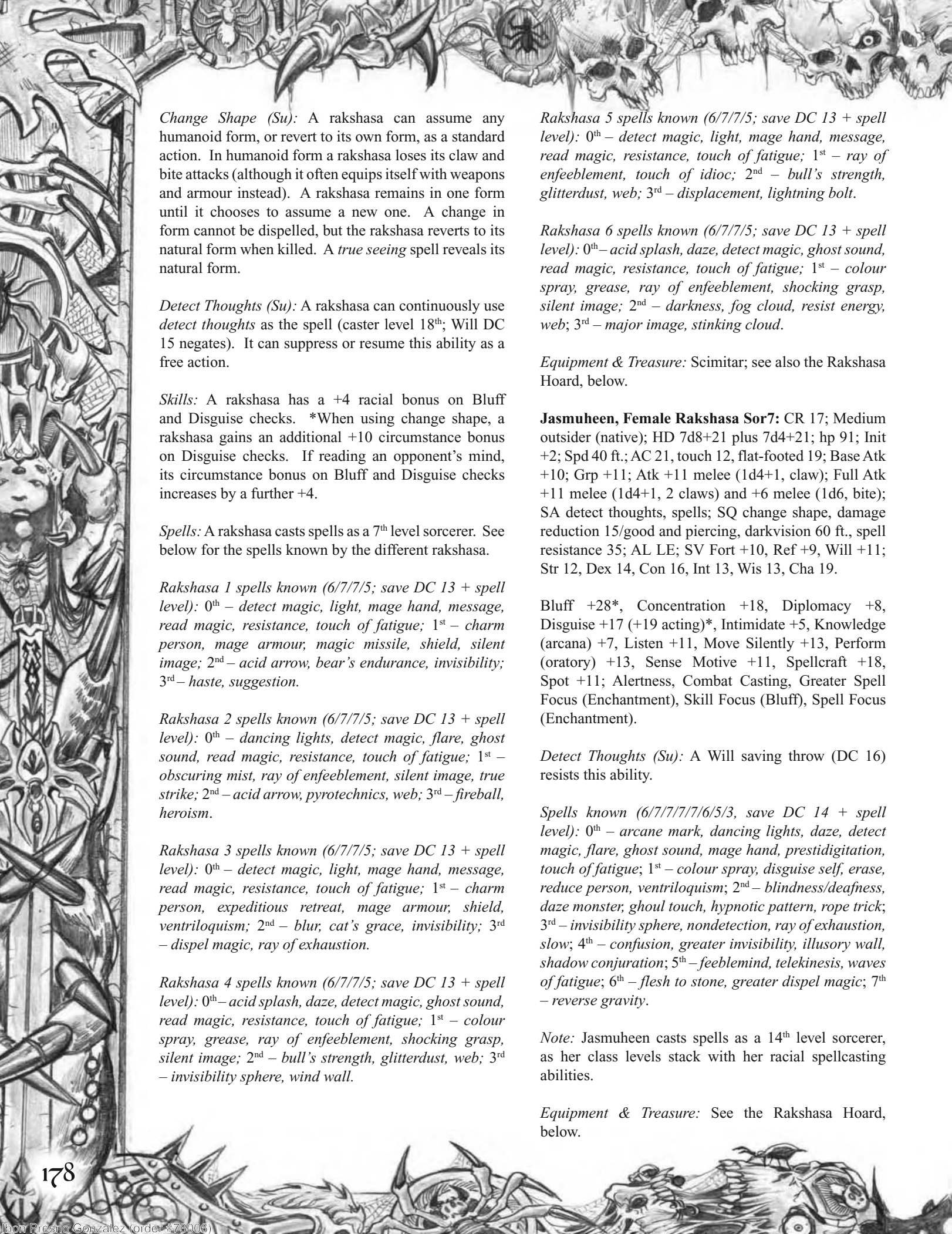
### **Non-Player Character Group: The Rakshasa**

**Male Rakshasa (6):** CR 10; Medium outsider (native); HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +8 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +8 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d6, bite); SA detect thoughts, spells; SQ change shape, damage reduction 15/good and piercing, darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 27; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 17.

*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +17, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +17 (+19 acting), Intimidate +5, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Perform (oratory) +13, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +11, Spot +11; Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge.







*Change Shape (Su):* A rakshasa can assume any humanoid form, or revert to its own form, as a standard action. In humanoid form a rakshasa loses its claw and bite attacks (although it often equips itself with weapons and armour instead). A rakshasa remains in one form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but the rakshasa reverts to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell reveals its natural form.

*Detect Thoughts (Su):* A rakshasa can continuously use *detect thoughts* as the spell (caster level 18<sup>th</sup>; Will DC 15 negates). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

*Skills:* A rakshasa has a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks. \*When using change shape, a rakshasa gains an additional +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If reading an opponent's mind, its circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks increases by a further +4.

*Spells:* A rakshasa casts spells as a 7<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer. See below for the spells known by the different rakshasa.

*Rakshasa 1 spells known (6/7/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, light, mage hand, message, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person, mage armour, magic missile, shield, silent image*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *acid arrow, bear's endurance, invisibility*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *haste, suggestion*.

*Rakshasa 2 spells known (6/7/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *dancing lights, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement, silent image, true strike*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *acid arrow, pyrotechnics, web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *fireball, heroism*.

*Rakshasa 3 spells known (6/7/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, light, mage hand, message, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person, expeditious retreat, mage armour, shield, ventriloquism*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *blur, cat's grace, invisibility*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel magic, ray of exhaustion*.

*Rakshasa 4 spells known (6/7/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *acid splash, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *colour spray, grease, ray of enfeeblement, shocking grasp, silent image*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bull's strength, glitterdust, web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *invisibility sphere, wind wall*.

*Rakshasa 5 spells known (6/7/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, light, mage hand, message, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *ray of enfeeblement, touch of idiocy*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bull's strength, glitterdust, web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *displacement, lightning bolt*.

*Rakshasa 6 spells known (6/7/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *acid splash, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *colour spray, grease, ray of enfeeblement, shocking grasp, silent image*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *darkness, fog cloud, resist energy, web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *major image, stinking cloud*.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Scimitar; see also the Rakshasa Hoard, below.

**Jasmuheen, Female Rakshasa Sor7:** CR 17; Medium outsider (native); HD 7d8+21 plus 7d4+21; hp 91; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +10; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +6 melee (1d6, bite); SA *detect thoughts, spells*; SQ *change shape, damage reduction 15/good and piercing, darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 35; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 19*.


Bluff +28\*, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +17 (+19 acting)\*, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Perform (oratory) +13, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +18, Spot +11; Alertness, Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (Enchantment), Skill Focus (Bluff), Spell Focus (Enchantment).

*Detect Thoughts (Su):* A Will saving throw (DC 16) resists this ability.

*Spells known (6/7/7/7/6/5/3, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation, touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *colour spray, disguise self, erase, reduce person, ventriloquism*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *blindness/deafness, daze monster, ghoulish touch, hypnotic pattern, rope trick*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *invisibility sphere, nondetection, ray of exhaustion, slow*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *confusion, greater invisibility, illusory wall, shadow conjuration*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *feblemind, telekinesis, waves of fatigue*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *flesh to stone, greater dispel magic*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *reverse gravity*.

*Note:* Jasmuheen casts spells as a 14<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer, as her class levels stack with her racial spellcasting abilities.

*Equipment & Treasure:* See the Rakshasa Hoard, below.



**The Rakshasa Hoard:** The rakshasa's bags and pouches contain the following looted goods: 16 gold and silver rings of various sizes (worth an average of 70 gp each); a slightly scorched reliquary in need of cleaning but made from finely wrought gold, for carrying holy objects (worth 2,500 gp); three jewelled statues of obscure elven deities (worth 1,100 gp each); the broken silver-shod ends of a shattered *staff of the magi* (the silver is worth 20 gp); two *figurines of wondrous power (golden lions)*, still coated with ash from the great burning many years ago.

### Location: Devourer's Mound

*This ugly outcrop of rock rises from the sand like the back of a creature breaking through waves. The stone has a rotten look to it, unlike that caused by natural erosion.*

This place was avoided even when the Desert of Sharn was a forest. It is a knot of old evil left over from the days when the world was formed. Exploration of the mound reveals tunnels bored into it, though it is impossible to tell whether these were shaped naturally or artificially.

If the rakshasa lead the Player Characters here, they claim that their route takes them past this place, which has been accursed since olden times. They allude to dark powers from the days when this was a forest and try to imply that what the Player Characters are seeking might lie within. One way or another, they want the Player Characters to go inside that mound.

**A.** Examination of the tunnel entrance at this point with a Spot check (DC 20) reveals two faded inscriptions cut into the rock, one regularly spaced and formally laid out, the other scrawled as if in haste. A Decipher Script check (DC 25) for each one is needed to make any sense of them. Characters who make their checks can read all of the inscriptions; characters who fail theirs cannot read the words in italics.

**Neat Inscription:** *'Laid reverently in darkness, Moch and Krunna, the husband and wife that loyally served the maggot god, the great devourer. May the curse of He Who Consumes The Dead fall upon those who seek to plunder the golden grave goods. Let their bones run with hot lead, their eyes be made a feast for the vultures.'*

**Hurried Inscription:** *'Brith send your blessing to cleanse this cursed place! May the dead lie still and rise no more to plague us!'*

**B.** Each of the tunnels ends in a seeming dead end. The tunnel at Point B, however, has a crack at the end a mere foot across and two feet in height which is easily missed; a Spot check (DC 15) is needed to notice it. A creature whose head fits through this gap may be able to squeeze through with an Escape Artist check (DC 25). Examination of the rocks, along with a successful Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (DC 20), reveals that the tunnels were deliberately sealed off with engineered cave-ins.

Just inside the burial chamber, a skeletal human hand can be seen protruding from beneath a fallen rock, clear evidence that those who brought the roof down either were not allowed to escape or did not want to.

### 1. Burial Chamber

*This room is little more than an irregular cave at the heart of the rock. The air is dry and has a sickly sweet reek of mastic and spices, like an old unopened jar of pickles that has gone rotten. A few light grains of sand rattle from the roof, which you see is made up of rock slabs that look none too stable. Fortunately, four thick wooden posts have been set in place, supporting some of the weight.*

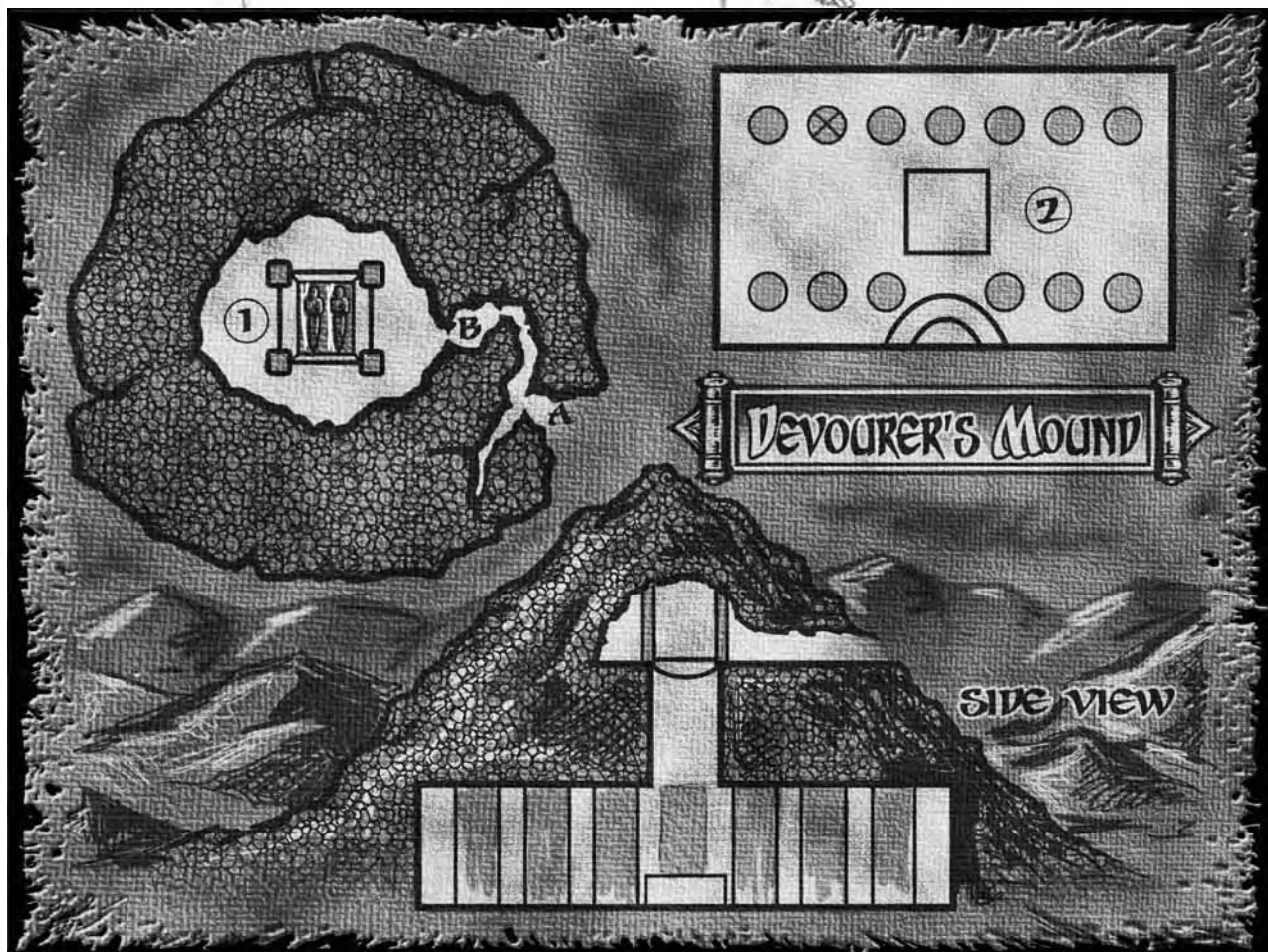
*These posts stand at the corners of a square shallow pit, around two feet deep, scraped out of the centre of the cave. The mummified bodies of two humanoids lie in it side by side, with bronze plates covering them like an antique style of armour. They appear to have the skulls of huge cats instead of people. Around the pit, in the shadows at the edges of the room, lie heaps of yellowing human bones.*

In place of their human skulls, the skulls of lions have been fixed to the mummies' neck bones with metal wire, creating composite mummies. This does not grant the two mummy lords any additional powers; it just makes them look fearsome to tomb-robbers.

Surrounding the pit are the jumbled bones of around a dozen humans. It is difficult to tell how they died, but examination of the remains quickly reveals a small golden cup (worth 75 gp) encrusted with black filth lying close to each one, so it seems they took poison and died willingly.

The two bodies are mummy lords. They remain dormant while the Player Characters remain outside the pit. If they approach, the mummy lords lurch to life and attack them.





**Moch and Krunna, Mummy Lords, Clr10 (2):** CR 15; Medium undead; HD 8d12 plus 10d8; hp 97; Init +5; Spd 15 ft. ; AC 30, touch 11, flat-footed 29; Base Atk +11; Grp +19; Atk +20 melee (1d6+12/19–20 plus mummy rot, slam); Full Atk +20 melee (1d6+12/19–20 plus mummy rot, slam); SA despair, mummy rot, rebuke undead, spells; SQ damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 60 ft., resistance to fire 10, undead traits, vulnerability to fire; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +18; Str 26, Dex 12, Con —, Int 8, Wis 20, Cha 17.

**Skills & Feats:** Concentration +8, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +18, Move Silently +5, Spot +18; Alertness, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (slam).


**Despair (Su):** At the mere sight of the mummies, the viewer must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC 17) or be paralysed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the saving throw is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same mummy's despair ability for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Mummy Rot (Su):** Supernatural disease: slam, Fortitude DC 16, incubation period one minute; damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha. Unlike normal diseases, mummy rot continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or is cured. See the *MM* for special rules relating to curing mummy rot. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Moch's spells prepared (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/3+1, save DC 15 + spell level):** 0<sup>th</sup> – inflict minor wounds (3), resistance (2), virtue; 1<sup>st</sup> – bane, cause fear\* (2), inflict light wounds, obscuring mist, sanctuary; 2<sup>nd</sup> – darkness, death knell, inflict moderate wounds, shatter\*, spiritual weapon; 3<sup>rd</sup> – animate dead\* (2), bestow curse, blindness/deafness, contagion; 4<sup>th</sup> – giant vermin, inflict critical wounds\*, poison, summon monster IV; 5<sup>th</sup> – insect plague (2), slay living\*, spell resistance.

**Krunna's spells prepared (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/3+1, save DC 15 + spell level):** 0<sup>th</sup> – inflict minor wounds (3), resistance (2), virtue; 1<sup>st</sup> – bane, cause fear\* (2), inflict light wounds, obscuring mist, sanctuary; 2<sup>nd</sup> – death knell\*, desecrate, hold person, shatter, spiritual weapon; 3<sup>rd</sup> – animate dead (2), contagion\*, invisibility





*purge, stone shape; 4<sup>th</sup> – dispel magic (2), poison (2); 5<sup>th</sup> – inflict light wounds (mass)\*, righteous might, summon monster V, spell resistance.*

\*Domain spell.

*Domains:* Death (melee death touch attack kills a creature if a roll of 10d6 exceeds its current hit points; 1/day), Destruction (smite attack with +4 bonus to attack roll and +10 damage, 1/day).

*Equipment & Treasure:* +2 half-plate armour, ring of minor elemental resistance (fire), holy symbol (adamantine maggot gnawing in a skull's eye); Moch only: *minor cloak of displacement, scroll of circle of death*; Krunna only: *rod of flame extinguishing, scroll of create greater undead*. A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 25) identifies the holy symbol as that of the Maggot God.

**The Slab:** Beneath the spot where the mummies lay, an inscription is faintly legible, though unpleasant brown stains mar much of it. A Decipher Script check (DC 25) is needed to read it. Characters who fail cannot read the words in italics:

*'May the two who served the Great Coiling One in life now guard his earthly avatar in death, protecting him against all harm, until it is his will to rise from the earth once more and go devouring.'*

A Spot or Search check (DC 25) reveals that the shallow pit is more than it seems. It is not just a square recess sunk into the ground, but the top of a shaft whose walls slope slightly inward. The flat floor of the pit is in fact a stone slab with tapered sides, fitted neatly into the shaft like a plug. Clearly there is something else down there.

The slab is wedged tightly into place. A Strength check (DC 28) is needed to prise it up. Some sort of crowbar or prying device is needed, as the stone is flush with the sides of the shaft and there is nowhere for fingers to get a grip.

## 2. Pillared Halls of the Coiling One

This additional optional encounter is designed to give the Player Characters a good tough monster to battle against.

*The square-sided shaft drops down for 30 feet before emerging 20 feet above the floor of a long hall whose roof is held up by pillars. The pillars are decorated with images of writhing, snakelike creatures. You can only guess at how long this sealed chamber has lain*

*undisturbed. Perhaps it is even older than the forest that grew here before the land was turned into desert.*

A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 25) identifies this as a temple to the Maggot God, a very obscure cult deity that primitive humans were believed to worship before the clerics of the Avillon pantheon brought their religion to the area.

Lurking in the darkness in the back of the ruined temple is Yahg, a creature that was once a spirit naga, worshipped as an eidolon of the Maggot God. It was transformed into a lich in an attempt to preserve it for all eternity, in accordance with prophecies that the Maggot God's favoured would one day arise and consume the upper world. Guarded by the two mummy lords above, it has been lying in torpor, waiting for that day to come. Now it hears the sounds of mortals approaching. It is time to rise...


**Yahg:** CR 18; Huge undead; HD 25d12; hp 162; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 8, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +18; Grp +35; Atk +25 melee (4d6+13 plus 1d8+5 negative energy plus poison, bite) or +25 melee (1d8+5 negative energy plus paralysis, touch); Full Atk +25 melee (4d6+13 plus 1d8+5 negative energy plus poison, bite) or +25 melee (1d8+5 negative energy plus paralysis, touch); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA charming gaze, damaging touch, fear aura, paralyzing touch, poison, spells; SQ +4 turn resistance, darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 15/bludgeoning and magic, immunity to cold, electrical, *polymorph* and mind-affecting attacks, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +18; Str 28, Dex 11, Con —, Int 14, Wis 19, Cha 21.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +19, Hide +0, Listen +33, Move Silently +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +16, Spot +33; Ability Focus (charming gaze), Alertness, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armour (2), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will.

*Charming Gaze (Su):* As *charm person*, 30 feet, Will save (DC 27) negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Fear Aura (Su):* Yahg is shrouded in a dreadful aura of ancient pre-human malice and hunger. Creatures of less than five Hit Dice in a 60-foot radius who look at Yahg must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC 27) or be affected as though by a *fear* spell from a 1<sup>st</sup> level sorcerer. A creature who successfully saves cannot be affected again by Yahg's aura for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.





**Paralysing Touch (Su):** Any living creature that Yahg hits with its touch attack must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 27) or be permanently paralysed. *Remove paralysis* or any spell that can remove a curse can free the victim (see the *bestow curse* spell description). The effect cannot be dispelled. Anyone paralysed by Yahg seems dead, though a Spot check (DC 20) or a Heal check (DC 15) reveals that the victim is still alive. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 27, initial and secondary damage 1d8 Con. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Spells:** Yahg casts spells as a 7<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer. It can also cast spells from the cleric spell list and from the Chaos and Evil domains as arcane spells. The cleric spells and domain spells are considered arcane spells for Yahg, meaning that it does not need a divine focus to cast them.

**Spells known (6/7/7/5, save DC 15 + spell level):** 0<sup>th</sup> – *cure minor wounds, daze, detect magic, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost, read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *command, divine favour, entropic shield, magic missile, shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *cat's grace, invisibility, summon swarm*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *displacement, fireball*.

Yahg is a vast bony serpent with a fanged human skull for a face, slithering among the dust and debris of forgotten ages. Its body looks like the result of a horribly botched mummification job. Swatches of cloth are tied around some sections as if to hold them together. Patches of crackling hide have been crudely stitched in place with leather thongs. It speaks in an archaic dialect of Common that requires an Intelligence check (DC 15) to understand.

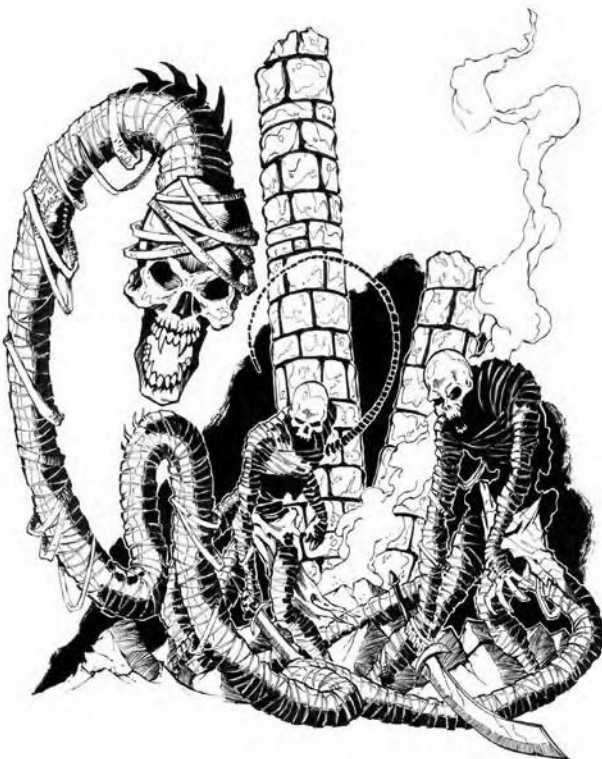
If it has heard the Player Characters coming, which is likely given the amount of noise that opening the stone slab makes, it casts *invisibility* and waits for them to approach. The Player Characters will probably notice the figure on the altar first (see below) and take it for some kind of undead creature.

**The Altar of the Maggot God:** The southern end of the temple features an altar upon a raised stone dais, where a composite figure sits with its arms raised and snakelike coils beneath. This is a hideous composite mummy made from the lower part of a giant snake and the torso of a human male. Unlike the other creatures in the Mound, it is merely dead and not undead. It gleams golden in the radiance of the Player Characters' light sources; the whole thing has been covered with thick gold foil and ornamented with jewels.

Some of the mummy's ornaments are valueless, or apparently so. It wears earrings of looped bone, a girdle made from the skulls of dozens of small rodents and (for some unknown reason connected to the cult) has a tongue made from iron in its mouth. Strung around the mummy's neck is a string of prayer beads that seems to be ordinary but is in fact a *greater strand of prayer beads*.

A character who takes the time to pick off all of the precious metals and jewels, which takes about three hours, can retrieve 500 gold pieces' worth of gold and an assortment of gems: 230 worth ten gold pieces each, 47 worth 50 gold pieces each and two small ruby lenses covering the eyes, worth 1,100 gold pieces each.

**Yahg's Phylactery:** The lich-naga concealed its phylactery – a mere clay tablet covered with magical scrawls into which diamond dust has been mixed – in the column marked with an X. As this column was sealed up and plastered over, there is no door to find, so attempts to find secret doors do not work. A Search check (DC 30), that includes tapping, detects that the column is hollow.





## Location: The Plateau of Skulls

Up ahead the desert is broken by a bulge of sheer rock rising up like the top of a loaf. The rock is whitish in colour, like bone. This can only be the plateau you were told about. Just above the plateau, hanging immobile in the air, is a strange dark shape like a disc or shield. You guess that it is perhaps half a mile in diameter.

The outer edges of the plateau are steep and rocky, calling for Climb checks (DC 5). Such Climb checks are easy to make, but since the character is climbing, he cannot apply his Dexterity bonus to Armour Class.

The rocky slopes soon show why the plateau was given its name. White bones lie among the rocks, bleached by the sun, in such profusion that it is impossible to avoid climbing over them. Smooth stones that look like good footholds turn out to be half-buried skulls. The pale colour of the rock and the ash-like dust and sand in the crevices blend the bones into the background.

## Event: Scuttling Doom

This encounter takes place while the Player Characters are at the base of the rock slope or have just begun to climb:

*Ahead of you on the rocky slope, you see a huge black shape like a tree branch rise above the skyline. It is the limb of some gigantic insect or crustacean, as it ends in a pincer. The body heaves itself into view and you see that it is a scorpion larger than an elephant, the tail arching up high overhead. It is not alone. A second and a third lurch ponderously over the rise.*

The slopes are infested with these beasts. The Player Characters have time to avoid them before they charge but they are bound to encounter more on the way up the slope. If they end up in serious trouble, the Games Master should have Heru Machos the Androsphinx arrive early and use his healing spells to help.

**Colossal Giant Scorpions (6):** CR 12; Colossal vermin; HD 40d8+120; hp 300; Init -1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 26, touch 1, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +30; Grp +58; Atk +34 melee (2d8+12, claw); Full Atk +34 melee (2d8+12, 2 claws) and +29 melee (2d8+6 plus poison, sting); Space/Reach 40 ft./30 ft.; SA constrict 2d8+12, improved grab, poison; SQ darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +25, Ref +12, Will +13; Str 35, Dex 8, Con 16, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +16, Hide -12, Spot +4.

*Constrict (Ex):* A monstrous scorpion deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a monstrous scorpion must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

*Poison (Ex):* A monstrous scorpion has a poisonous sting. This deals primary and secondary damage of 1d10 Constitution, with a Fortitude saving throw DC of 33.

*Skills:* A monstrous scorpion has a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide and Spot checks.

## Plot Event: Protector of the Dead

Near the top of the cliff, the Player Characters meet a frightening creature:

*From far off you hear the sound of mighty wings beating, growing rapidly louder and louder. A creature is approaching from above and ahead of you. It comes into view over the top of the plateau: a creature with the body of a lion, huge wings like those of an eagle and a pitiless glaring expression.*


If the Player Characters do not conceal themselves or otherwise try to avoid the beast, the Games Master should continue:

*The lion-bodied entity makes a clumsy landing above you, sending scree rattling down the slope. It folds its wings, bares its teeth and glares, before speaking in a voice like stone millwheels grinding together: 'Little people, do you think to plunder the bones of those who died without even a decent grave to their names? Turn back, or feel the wrath of one who does not warn twice.'*

This is the androsphinx Heru Machos, who (as he has announced) has made it his business to guard the Plateau of Skulls against grave robbers. He assumes that the Player Characters are here for this reason. Although he knows about the destroyed oases and the arrival of Asercote, he has not yet sighted the Tyrant of Brass, nor has he spoken to the villagers. Even if he wants to, they all run away when they see him coming, afraid that he will eat them.

**Heru Machos, Male Androsphinx:** CR 9; Large magical beast; HD 12d10+48; hp 114; Init +0; Spd 50 ft., fly 80 ft. (poor); AC 22, touch 9, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +12; Grp +23; Atk +18 melee (2d4+7, claw); Full





Atk +18 melee (2d4+7, 2 claws); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA pounce, rake 2d4+3, roar, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CG; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 25, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 17.

*Skills & Feats:* Intimidate +17, Knowledge (the planes) +18, Listen +18, Spot +18, Survival +18; Alertness, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Track.

*Rake (Ex):* Attack bonus +18 melee, damage 2d4+3.

*Roar (Su):* Three times per day, Heru Machos can loose a mighty roar. The first time he does this, all creatures within 500 feet must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC 19) or be affected as though by a *fear* spell for 2d6 rounds. If he roars a second time during the same encounter, all creatures within 250 feet must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) or be paralysed for 1d4 rounds, and all those within 90 feet are deafened for 2d6 rounds (no saving throw). If he roars a third time during the same encounter, all those within 250 feet must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) or be dealt 2d4 points of Strength damage for 2d4 rounds. In addition, any Medium or smaller creature within 90 feet must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) or be thrown to the ground and be dealt 2d8 points of damage. The force of this roar is so great that it deals 50 points of damage to any stone or crystalline object within 90 feet. Magic items and held or carried items can avoid damage with a Reflex saving throw (DC 19). Other androsphinxes are immune to these effects.

*Spells:* Heru Machos casts divine spells as a 6<sup>th</sup> level cleric from the cleric spell list and from the Good, Healing and Protection domains.

*Spells prepared (5/4+1/4+1/3+1, save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, light, resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *divine favour, protection from evil\**, *remove fear, shield of faith, summon monster I*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bull's strength, remove paralysis, resist energy, shield other\**, *summon monster II*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *cure serious wounds\**, *daylight, invisibility purge, searing light*.

\*Domain spell.

*Domains:* Good (cast good spells at +1 caster level), Healing, (cast healing spells at +1 caster level).

If the Player Characters can convince him of their good intentions, Heru Machos becomes their ally. He will *not* allow anyone to ride him – he is far too proud for that – but he fights alongside the Player Characters and

offers such magical healing and protection as he can give, as well as scouting ahead on the wing to locate the Tyrant once the Player Characters have found out that it is behind the destruction.

Once the Player Characters reach the top of the plateau, they can clearly see the village of Astercote floating in the air above.

### **Location: Astercote**

*You have seen some wondrous sights in your lives, but few have been stranger than this. A great shield-shaped island of earth is hovering in the air, about three hundred feet up, casting a massive shadow across the rocks of the plateau. A hawser of woven ropes connects the island to a large rock, which is somehow holding it anchored. On top of the island is, of all things, a small village.*


*Sitting at the base of the rock are two men with glum expressions.*

The two men at the rock are Boskin and Rummald (see below). The Player Characters may remember Astercote from *The Drow War, Book One: The Gathering Storm*, in which the village was torn from the earth and sent drifting through the sky by the ill-advised use of an artefact.

As they drifted aimlessly, the villagers made a plan. They found every single piece of rope there was in the village and lashed them all together, making as long and strong a hawser as they could. The idea was to send a volunteer to moor the island in place, if any suitable anchor came close enough.

When the island drifted near to the Plateau of Skulls, the lookouts noticed that there were rock formations passing by very close that might be usable as anchors. Two of the braver villagers in Astercote, Boskin and Rummald, volunteered to go. The villagers threw the hawser overboard and the two men climbed down. They hastily dragged it around a nearby rock pillar, winding it tight. To everyone's amazement the village stopped moving and hung tethered in the air.

It seemed that their situation was at least *slightly* improved, since the village was no longer drifting, but they were nonetheless in the middle of a desert with no signs of life anywhere. Still, the ruins on the plateau were signs that a settlement had once stood here; maybe there was also a water source somewhere. Boskin and Rummald set off to explore the place and came across the inert Tyrant of Brass at the bottom of a cleft in the rocks.



Thinking that this entity might be able to help tow the village somewhere more hospitable – preferably all the way back to Chillhame – they examined it and found what seemed to be a furnace. Logs were thrown down from the village above and the Tyrant was activated. It ignored the villagers completely and strode off to the south, where it began to destroy the oases, trying to finish its task.

**Boskin's Story:** *'We didn't mean to wake it up! It were just that, well, there were a place in the back of it where you could put wood or coals, like... we knew, 'cause there was ash still in there... so it were clear what you was meant to do with it... and we thought it were some kind of golem, that could maybe help us pull the village back down to earth, help the people get off. You can't blame us for thinkin' that! We weren't to know it would go stompin' off into the desert and start torchin' the oasiseses! Now there's these ruddy great bugs climbin' over everything... I want to go home.'*

**The Village:** If the Player Characters fly or climb up to Astercote to investigate it, they find it to be a perfectly ordinary little country village with a population of around 1,200 humans. The village wizard disappeared shortly after the place was wrenched into the air. He absconded by means of a fly spell and left the villagers to their fate, fearing that he would be lynched if he stayed around.

**The Stone of Caradeth:** The megalith responsible for raising the village is in the cellar of the wizard's house, which he has now abandoned. The villagers have not dared to come here, as they are too frightened of what they may find.

The command words for the Stone are nowhere to be found. There is thus no way to bring the village gently back down to earth again. A *dispel magic* or *antimagic field* spell, if it can overcome the Stone's CL of 30, will cause the village to drop out of the sky like a very big rock, dealing 20d6 points of falling damage to all creatures in it and burying them as if from a cave-in.

**Evacuating Astercote:** The villagers of Astercote desperately want to get back home, or at least to a safe place. They have little food and water left, enough for two weeks at most. No good-aligned character should be willing to leave them to die.

Towing the village is possible but requires the aid of a creature with a Strength of at least 30. The village is weightless while it is levitating but is so vast an object that inertia and buffeting winds make it hard to control.

Hauling it down to earth still leaves a drop of some forty feet for the villagers to contend with because the underside of the island bulges out. Even if the Player Characters do find a way to bring the villagers down, they are still in the middle of a desert with no way to get back to civilisation and a monster on the loose. Eventually the Tyrant will come for Astercote, as it contains living plants.

Evacuating the village is not be easy; if the Player Characters manage it, they should receive a story award equivalent to a CR 16 challenge.

### **Location: The Ruins**

*The ruined structures on top of the plateau give no indication of what they might once have been. There are only a few tumbled-down walls, the stump of a pillar here and there and loose blocks lying lopsided in the sand. The marks of many enormous legs and dragging bodies prove that the colossal scorpions you saw earlier have made this place their home.*

If appropriate, the Games Master can introduce more Colossal scorpions here (see above for statistics) or, if the Player Characters are sick of scorpions by now, they can just encounter the spoor.

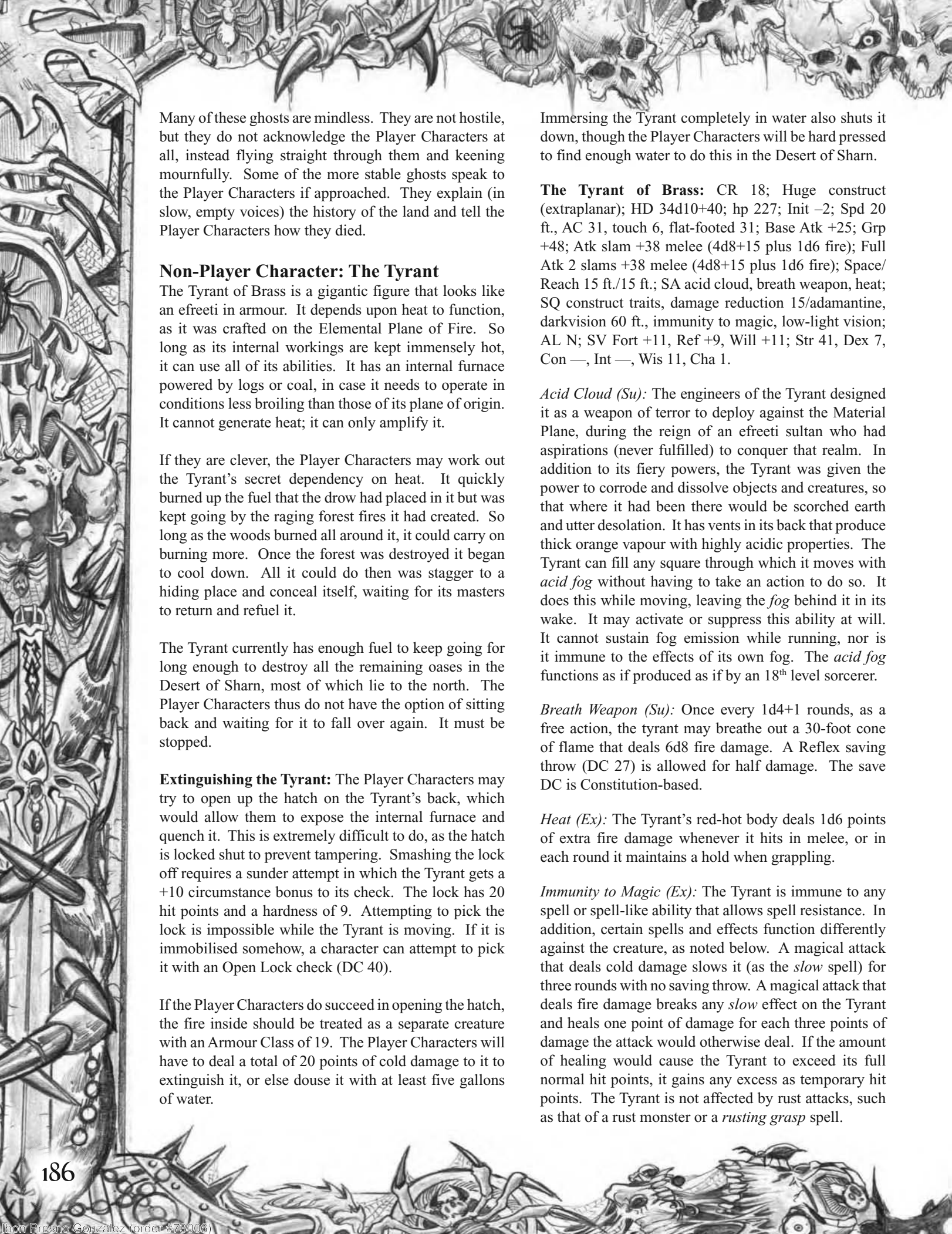
**Crevice:** This is the crack in the rocks where Boskin and Rummauld found the Tyrant. It is steep-sided, cut in a V shape into the side of the plateau. The Tyrant was wedged at the base, in the point of the V, concealed from view and partly buried in sand. There is a 30-foot drop down to the spot where it lay. Characters investigating this discover the imprint of the Tyrant's massive body, but no clue as to where it may have gone.

### **Event: The Burning Ghosts**

If the Player Characters are still among the ruins at nightfall, they may encounter the undead spirits that roam abroad, crying out for revenge so that they may move on to the next world and find peace. The ghosts that walk here are the shades of elven and human foresters who were slaughtered en masse when the Tyrant devastated the region a thousand years ago. They are terrifying to look at, as they still appear freshly burned, their bodies partly scorched and partly burned away by acid.

The Tyrant's re-awakening has stirred up the ghosts again. They want it destroyed forever. While it was dormant, so were they. Now that it walks once more, the plateau is seething with pale ghosts like a smashed termite mound. From afar they look like translucent human shapes wreathed in flame, hovering in the air like will-o-wisps.





Many of these ghosts are mindless. They are not hostile, but they do not acknowledge the Player Characters at all, instead flying straight through them and keening mournfully. Some of the more stable ghosts speak to the Player Characters if approached. They explain (in slow, empty voices) the history of the land and tell the Player Characters how they died.

### Non-Player Character: The Tyrant

The Tyrant of Brass is a gigantic figure that looks like an efreeti in armour. It depends upon heat to function, as it was crafted on the Elemental Plane of Fire. So long as its internal workings are kept immensely hot, it can use all of its abilities. It has an internal furnace powered by logs or coal, in case it needs to operate in conditions less broiling than those of its plane of origin. It cannot generate heat; it can only amplify it.

If they are clever, the Player Characters may work out the Tyrant's secret dependency on heat. It quickly burned up the fuel that the drow had placed in it but was kept going by the raging forest fires it had created. So long as the woods burned all around it, it could carry on burning more. Once the forest was destroyed it began to cool down. All it could do then was stagger to a hiding place and conceal itself, waiting for its masters to return and refuel it.

The Tyrant currently has enough fuel to keep going for long enough to destroy all the remaining oases in the Desert of Sharn, most of which lie to the north. The Player Characters thus do not have the option of sitting back and waiting for it to fall over again. It must be stopped.

**Extinguishing the Tyrant:** The Player Characters may try to open up the hatch on the Tyrant's back, which would allow them to expose the internal furnace and quench it. This is extremely difficult to do, as the hatch is locked shut to prevent tampering. Smashing the lock off requires a sunder attempt in which the Tyrant gets a +10 circumstance bonus to its check. The lock has 20 hit points and a hardness of 9. Attempting to pick the lock is impossible while the Tyrant is moving. If it is immobilised somehow, a character can attempt to pick it with an Open Lock check (DC 40).

If the Player Characters do succeed in opening the hatch, the fire inside should be treated as a separate creature with an Armour Class of 19. The Player Characters will have to deal a total of 20 points of cold damage to it to extinguish it, or else douse it with at least five gallons of water.

Immersing the Tyrant completely in water also shuts it down, though the Player Characters will be hard pressed to find enough water to do this in the Desert of Sharn.

**The Tyrant of Brass:** CR 18; Huge construct (extraplanar); HD 34d10+40; hp 227; Init -2; Spd 20 ft., AC 31, touch 6, flat-footed 31; Base Atk +25; Grp +48; Atk slam +38 melee (4d8+15 plus 1d6 fire); Full Atk 2 slams +38 melee (4d8+15 plus 1d6 fire); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA acid cloud, breath weapon, heat; SQ construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 41, Dex 7, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Acid Cloud (Su):* The engineers of the Tyrant designed it as a weapon of terror to deploy against the Material Plane, during the reign of an efreeti sultan who had aspirations (never fulfilled) to conquer that realm. In addition to its fiery powers, the Tyrant was given the power to corrode and dissolve objects and creatures, so that where it had been there would be scorched earth and utter desolation. It has vents in its back that produce thick orange vapour with highly acidic properties. The Tyrant can fill any square through which it moves with *acid fog* without having to take an action to do so. It does this while moving, leaving the *fog* behind it in its wake. It may activate or suppress this ability at will. It cannot sustain fog emission while running, nor is it immune to the effects of its own fog. The *acid fog* functions as if produced as if by an 18<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer.

*Breath Weapon (Su):* Once every 1d4+1 rounds, as a free action, the tyrant may breathe out a 30-foot cone of flame that deals 6d8 fire damage. A Reflex saving throw (DC 27) is allowed for half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Heat (Ex):* The Tyrant's red-hot body deals 1d6 points of extra fire damage whenever it hits in melee, or in each round it maintains a hold when grappling.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* The Tyrant is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below. A magical attack that deals cold damage slows it (as the *slow* spell) for three rounds with no saving throw. A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any *slow* effect on the Tyrant and heals one point of damage for each three points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the Tyrant to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. The Tyrant is not affected by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.





## Aftermath

With the threat to the oases now destroyed forever, the Sun King can move his armies across the desert and on to the border with Jehannum. He wants to move them *now*, and if the Player Characters do not give him good reasons not to, he gives the order to move out.

**Optional Twist:** His eagerness may, however, be a major tactical mistake. A force as huge as his massed Phoenix Legions will not be able to provision itself indefinitely, so the men will have to depend on the farmland on the borders of Jehannum to sustain themselves, assuming the drow have not seized all of the food supplies. More importantly, an army camped out in the open would be an ideal target for Scallandriax to rake with his fiery breath, or for a drow sorcerer to bombard with devastating spells.

Whatever choice the Sun King makes, the war must be brought to a conclusion soon.

**Rewards:** The Sun King bestows rich rewards upon the Player Characters in recognition of their service. He gives them 30,000 gold pieces in coin from the royal coffers and permits them the use of his court wizard-smiths for any magical item manufacture they might need. This allows them to have magical items made at cost price (though they must still pay for materials and other expenses).

Defeating the Tyrant and preventing the destruction of any more of the oases is worth a story award equivalent to a CR 17 challenge.







# Traitor's Gambit

The drow commander Drozen Vellish is currently stationed in one of the outer cysts of the underground cavern network, on the north-eastern fringes of Jehannum. This proves to be a dwarven iron mine that the drow are running with few personnel, in order to keep it secret. The mine is of course being worked with slave labour – imprisoned dwarves captured when Jehannum was taken, who are treated abominably. The drow are working them like dogs in order to extract enough ore to make the Ironclads, which are mighty war machines designed by Rannirak.

The Player Characters' mission is to bring Drozen out alive, so that he can betray his masters and tell the enclave of Xoth Sarandi what he knows. They will have to use stealth and subterfuge, as a frontal assault will just lead to the mine being sealed off, with reinforcements being called in from deeper in the caverns.

Making their way through to Drozen will be a harrowing experience for the Player Characters. They will have to watch captive dwarves die under the lash without lifting a finger in their defence, since they cannot blow their cover without bringing the whole installation down upon them. Of course, they can always attempt to lead the exhausted dwarves in a revolt, but if they do so they risk losing Drozen or their own lives.

Drozen Vellish has no noble motives. He is simply selling out and expects to be rewarded for it. He will refuse to tell the Player Characters anything at all until he is safe at Xoth Sarandi. Once there, his reward collected, he will tell them about the drow's new project, the Ironclads. This story thread continues in Chapter 9, Genesis of the Ironclads.

## Event: The Briefing

The adventure begins with a briefing from Nimian Archimandrus:

*'We may have our most important lead yet, my friends. One of the drow officers wants to turn traitor and tell us all he knows. Naturally he wants political asylum and the best protection we can give in return, along with a sizable sum of money, but that's for us to worry about. I've pulled what remaining strings I still have to make this happen. The response was that the High Council*

*are willing for us to go ahead with this, just so long as they never find out about it, if you see what I mean.*

*'The officer's name is Drozen Vellish. His rank is Toz'capfa, or Fourth Claw, which means he would have been trusted with leadership of multiple divisions on the battlefield. For some reason that we don't yet know, he's been serving in a mine facility since the fall of Crom Calamar, acting as supervisor. Not the most complimentary posting you can give an officer, really, which is possibly why he wants to leave... you know what the drow are like, haughty blighters to a man... ahem. Excuse me.*

*'It's not common for a Toz'capfa to be privy to important discussions at a strategic level, nor to be cleared for information that the rank and file don't also know, unless he's been given a special assignment. So, given Vellish's unusual posting, we're guessing that the drow command have given him some job that relates to a top secret project, and he's guessing that we'd be interested in knowing more about it.*

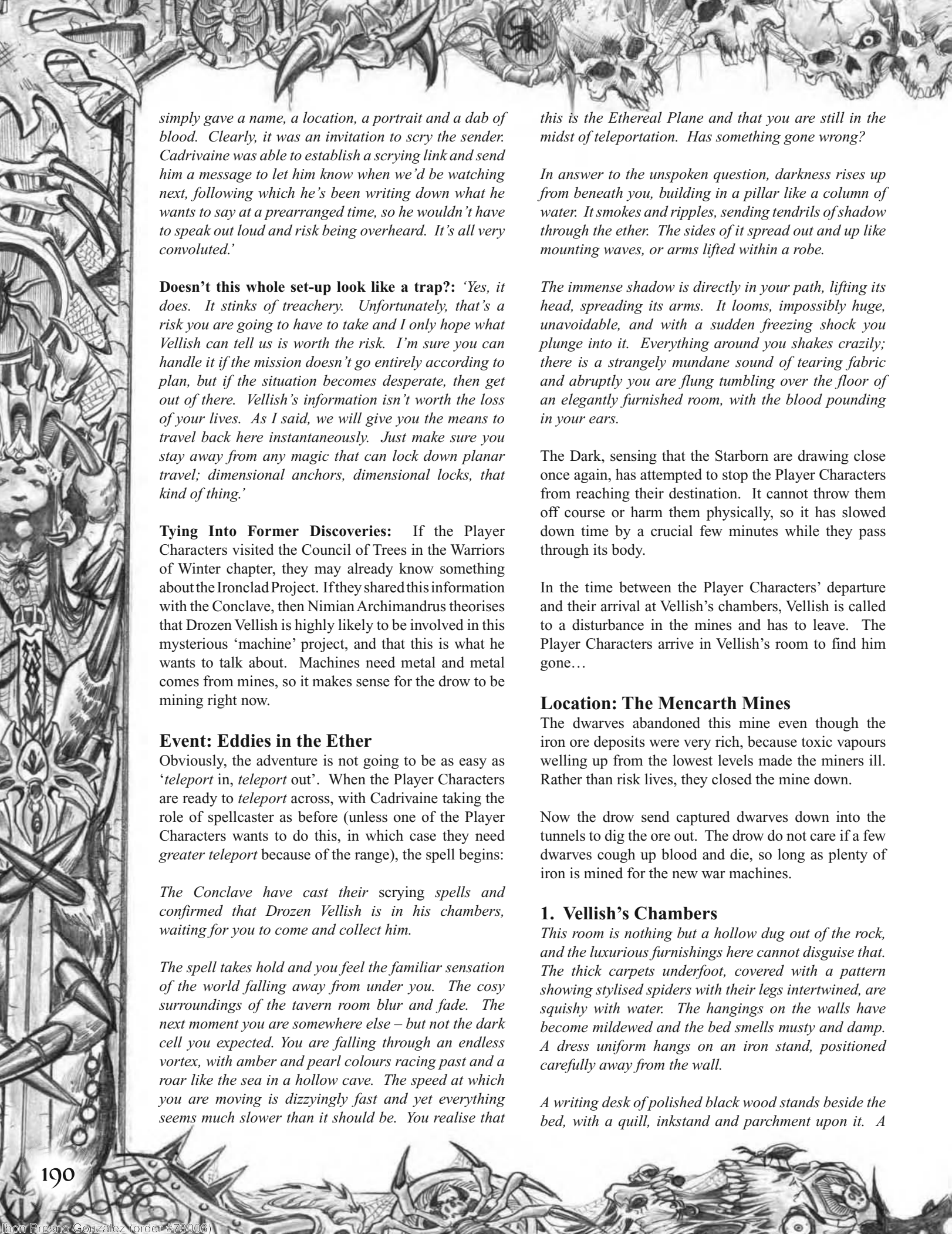
*'So far as we can tell from divinations, he is sincere in his wish to defect. We've considered using scrying on him and trying to pull the thoughts out of his head, but if he detected us he'd pull back like a scalded cat and the deal would be dead in the water.*

*'He won't talk until he's safely out of there, so we have to extract him and bring him back here to Xoth Sarandi before we can make any use of him. We have the location of the mine where he's being kept, so it should be simple enough to teleport you in behind enemy lines. If we're lucky, we should be able to send you straight to Vellish's chambers, so you could be in and out again in moments. We'll prepare a scroll of 'word of recall' that you can use to bring yourselves back here instantly, with or without Vellish. Any questions?'*

Some likely questions are listed below:

**How did Vellish make contact?:** *'He sent his familiar, a raven, with a message tied around his foot. The raven must have taken a ride on a ship – it could never have flown that distance alone. When it reached here it made straight for the Council chambers, where the Council caught it and passed it on to me. The message*





*simply gave a name, a location, a portrait and a dab of blood. Clearly, it was an invitation to scry the sender. Cadrivaine was able to establish a scrying link and send him a message to let him know when we'd be watching next, following which he's been writing down what he wants to say at a prearranged time, so he wouldn't have to speak out loud and risk being overheard. It's all very convoluted.'*

**Doesn't this whole set-up look like a trap?:** *'Yes, it does. It stinks of treachery. Unfortunately, that's a risk you are going to have to take and I only hope what Vellish can tell us is worth the risk. I'm sure you can handle it if the mission doesn't go entirely according to plan, but if the situation becomes desperate, then get out of there. Vellish's information isn't worth the loss of your lives. As I said, we will give you the means to travel back here instantaneously. Just make sure you stay away from any magic that can lock down planar travel; dimensional anchors, dimensional locks, that kind of thing.'*

**Tying Into Former Discoveries:** If the Player Characters visited the Council of Trees in the Warriors of Winter chapter, they may already know something about the Ironclad Project. If they shared this information with the Conclave, then Nimian Archimandrus theorises that Drozen Vellish is highly likely to be involved in this mysterious 'machine' project, and that this is what he wants to talk about. Machines need metal and metal comes from mines, so it makes sense for the drow to be mining right now.

### **Event: Eddies in the Ether**

Obviously, the adventure is not going to be as easy as 'teleport in, teleport out'. When the Player Characters are ready to teleport across, with Cadrivaine taking the role of spellcaster as before (unless one of the Player Characters wants to do this, in which case they need greater teleport because of the range), the spell begins:

*The Conclave have cast their scrying spells and confirmed that Drozen Vellish is in his chambers, waiting for you to come and collect him.*

*The spell takes hold and you feel the familiar sensation of the world falling away from under you. The cosy surroundings of the tavern room blur and fade. The next moment you are somewhere else – but not the dark cell you expected. You are falling through an endless vortex, with amber and pearl colours racing past and a roar like the sea in a hollow cave. The speed at which you are moving is dizzyingly fast and yet everything seems much slower than it should be. You realise that*

*this is the Ethereal Plane and that you are still in the midst of teleportation. Has something gone wrong?*

*In answer to the unspoken question, darkness rises up from beneath you, building in a pillar like a column of water. It smokes and ripples, sending tendrils of shadow through the ether. The sides of it spread out and up like mounting waves, or arms lifted within a robe.*

*The immense shadow is directly in your path, lifting its head, spreading its arms. It looms, impossibly huge, unavoidable, and with a sudden freezing shock you plunge into it. Everything around you shakes crazily; there is a strangely mundane sound of tearing fabric and abruptly you are flung tumbling over the floor of an elegantly furnished room, with the blood pounding in your ears.*

The Dark, sensing that the Starborn are drawing close once again, has attempted to stop the Player Characters from reaching their destination. It cannot throw them off course or harm them physically, so it has slowed down time by a crucial few minutes while they pass through its body.

In the time between the Player Characters' departure and their arrival at Vellish's chambers, Vellish is called to a disturbance in the mines and has to leave. The Player Characters arrive in Vellish's room to find him gone...

### **Location: The Mencarth Mines**


The dwarves abandoned this mine even though the iron ore deposits were very rich, because toxic vapours welling up from the lowest levels made the miners ill. Rather than risk lives, they closed the mine down.

Now the drow send captured dwarves down into the tunnels to dig the ore out. The drow do not care if a few dwarves cough up blood and die, so long as plenty of iron is mined for the new war machines.

#### **1. Vellish's Chambers**

*This room is nothing but a hollow dug out of the rock, and the luxurious furnishings here cannot disguise that. The thick carpets underfoot, covered with a pattern showing stylised spiders with their legs intertwined, are squishy with water. The hangings on the walls have become mildewed and the bed smells musty and damp. A dress uniform hangs on an iron stand, positioned carefully away from the wall.*

*A writing desk of polished black wood stands beside the bed, with a quill, inkstand and parchment upon it. A*



*glass-fluted oil lamp on top of the desk lights the room with a feeble glow. A wooden door lies to the south.*

The most immediate concern will likely be ‘Where has Vellish gone?’ One of the Player Characters might think to *scry* him to see where he is. If they attempt this, they see the following:

*Drozen Vellish is standing with four other drow in a low-ceilinged tunnel held up by pit props. Two of these wear plate armour and carry halberds, which they are brandishing at something you cannot see; the other two are robed. One of the robed drow suddenly frowns and looks directly at the scrying sensor. ‘I believe we are being observed,’ he says. ‘The dwarves must have a sorcerer in their midst.’*

At this point, have the Player Character or Non-Player Character who is performing the *scrying* make a caster level check. Irrespective of the result, the *scrying* link is broken; the Player Characters should now be aware that the drow *might* know exactly where they are.

If the Player Characters think to examine the desk, they find a freshly written message on the parchment, with the ink still wet. It is written as if it were a log entry and reads:

*‘The damned dwarves are rioting once again, down in the mine level. I must attend to this immediately.’*

The last line is for the Player Characters’ benefit, explaining why he had to leave in a hurry.

### 2a-d. Officers’ Quarters

*This room has a simple bed with a lush velvet coverlet spread over it, a low bookcase and a desk with a chair.*

These rooms are identical in all important respects. They are the accommodation for Drozen Vellish’s subordinate wizards.

In Room 2b, a big spider is lurking under the bed. This is Lovian’s pet. The Player Characters can kill it easily if they wish, as it is hardly a challenge.

In Room 2c, a fiddle in a protective case has been left on the bed. This is a beautiful musical instrument made from darkwood and fitted with mother-of-pearl designs, with the neck carved into the shape of a drow female arching backwards. The female figure wears body jewellery made from actual rubies. This belongs to Munniáz. It is a masterwork instrument, worth 1,500 gold pieces as a treasure.

### 3. Officers’ Dining Chamber

*This room has been converted into a private dining area. A wooden table has been covered with a cloth of fine black silk, with an oil lamp set in the centre. A dresser against the wall displays a china dinner service.*

If the Player Characters examine the china, the Games Master should read the following:

*All the plates, saucers and dishes feature the same motif: a black spider, legs extended and ending in hook-like claws, with a white skull in the middle of the body. The design is simple, ugly and surprisingly disturbing to look at. Something about the regimental order of it all makes your skin crawl. The drow have always been organised in the past but this militaristic iconography is something new.*

A drawer in the dresser contains the silverware, which is worth 250 gold pieces (110 items in all) if the Player Characters are interested in stealing it.

### 4. Command Post

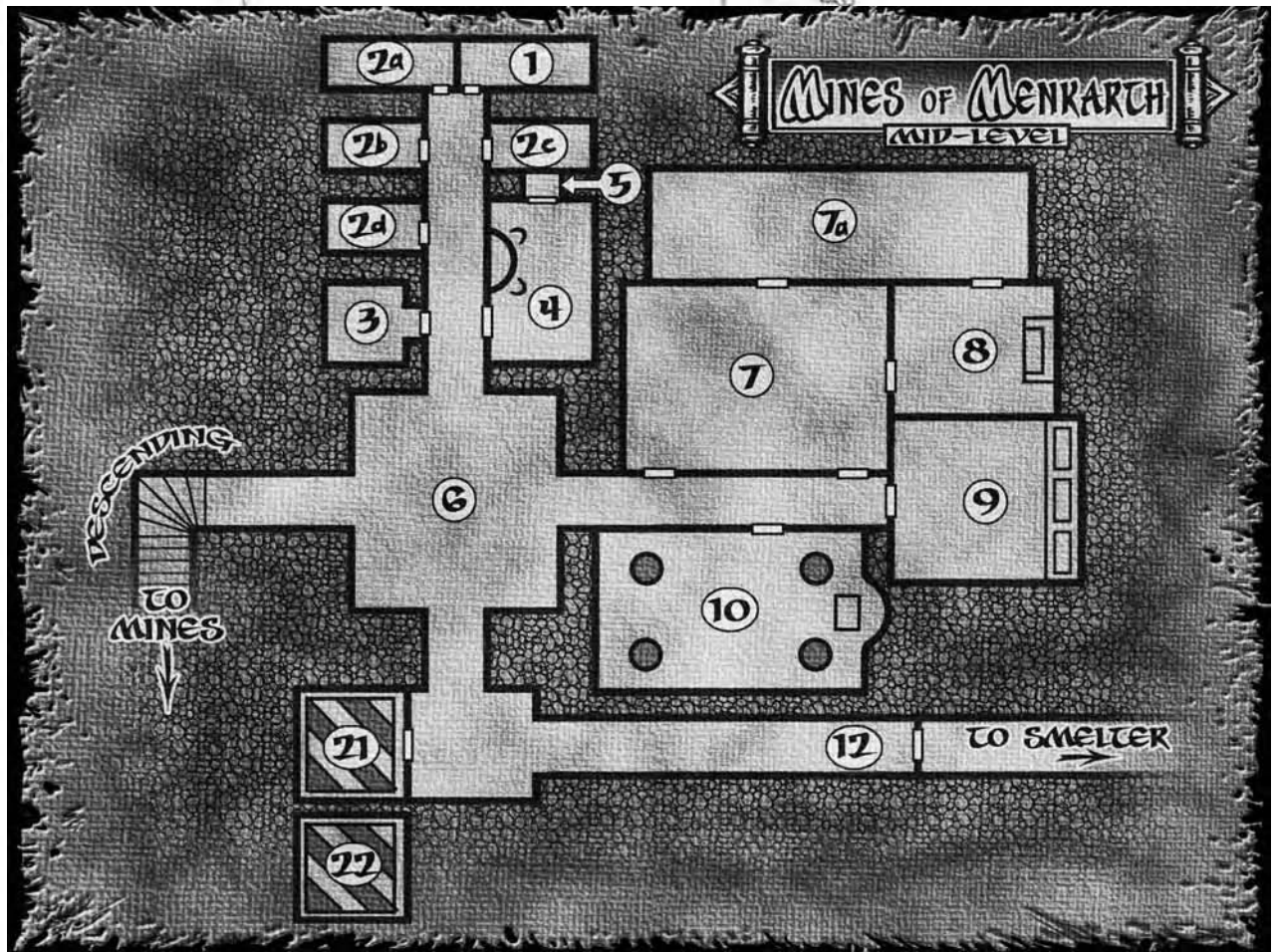
*This room has been converted into a command post. A flag hangs from the east wall, showing a design of a black spider on a crimson background, its legs extended to the corners of the cloth and hooked slightly inward. In the centre of the spider’s body is a white death’s-head. A desk piled high with papers stands against the north wall and a table with chairs is shoved against the west wall. One of the chairs is toppled over, as if the occupant left in a hurry. On the desk is a thick ledger.*

**Ledger:** The ledger contains an ongoing record of how productive the mines have been, showing its net output, the number of workers requested and the number of deaths. A suitable Profession check (DC 15) is needed to make sense of it. The ledger shows a steady increase in the production of iron ingots, with a sudden increase in the number of worker deaths attributed to ‘gas’ and further deaths explained as ‘insubordination’, ‘rebellion’, ‘starvation’ or ‘accident’.

**Desk:** A character who examines the desk and makes a Search check (DC 20) can locate a secret drawer underneath. This contains an envelope made from rough blue paper, with the name *Drozen Vellish* on the front. The envelope has already been unsealed.

Within the outer envelope is a second envelope on which Rannirak has inscribed a set of *explosive runes* (deals 6d6 points of force damage, no saving throw for the reader, all others within 10 feet allowed a Reflex saving throw (DC 18) for half damage). A rogue can find





these runes with a Search check (DC 28) and disable them with a Disable Device check (DC 28). Within the second envelope is the actual letter:

*Toz'capfa Vellish: Greetings of Night and Fire.*

*We are not at all satisfied. The iron output from Menkarch is much too slow, and the great Project demands at least a tripling of output if the construction deadlines are to be met. I do not have to tell you what the consequences will be if Archmage Rannirak does not have his new vessels to play with. I am a forgiving superior. He is not.*

*The other mines are functioning at full capacity. What can possibly be amiss at Menkarch? Why do you persist in this inefficiency? Do you, perhaps, find the responsibilities of command too much? Would you prefer to be replaced? I am sure that a veteran officer such as yourself finds the burden of years troublesome and would welcome the honour of death on the marriage-altar to a doddering old age, in which your juniors would eventually have to shoot you down like a dog to spare you any further indignity.*

*We do not wish to hear any complaints about the truculence of your workers. They are dwarves. Their backs were made for burden. Use them as the mules they are and they will respect you. If you have to make an example of the occasional troublemaker, then do so. I cannot imagine that you have gone so soft that you cannot gut a dwarf.*

*Triple the output, Drozen, or lose your station and everything that goes with it. You know what I mean by that.*

*Your wife and sisters send their regards.*


*In service to the Dark,*

*Archmage Bezenkai*

### **5. Strong Room**

*The door to this room is a stone panel set on a pivot. It appears that it had a complicated lock at one point, but this has been smashed away.*





The drow soldiery smashed their way into the mine's strong room hoping to find some stored dwarf gold, but the room was empty. Vellish now uses it to store valuables and has his wizards keep the door closed with an *arcane lock* (caster level 15, Strength check (DC 38) to break the door). Once inside:

*This bare stone room contains only a heavy wooden chest set against the wall with a small brass coffer beside it.*

**Small Coffers:** This container is locked (Open Lock DC 30) and trapped. The lock workings have been lightly smeared with concentrated black lotus extract made to look like oil:

**Poisoned Lock:** CR 14; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; poison (black lotus extract, Fortitude saving throw (DC 24) resists, 3d6 Con/3d6 Con), Search DC 30, Disable Device DC 30.

The slave dwarves taken from Crom Calamar were thoroughly searched to ensure that they were not keeping back any valuables. Some of them had hidden rings and gems on their persons, which were confiscated. Others had gold teeth which the drow pulled out with pincers. These few personal treasures have been put into this coffer for safekeeping.

The coffer contains 13 gold rings sized to fit dwarven fingers (worth 50 gp each), one small ruby (worth 900 gp), a pair of matching tiny diamonds (worth 500 gp each), a sapphire the size of a thumbnail (worth 1,000 gp) and five gold teeth with blood still on them (30 gp each). No good character would think of keeping this treasure for himself, once he knew its source.

**Heavy Chest:** This chest is locked (Open Lock DC 30) and trapped. Drow war chests tend to have ostentatiously deadly traps to dissuade the soldiery from stealing the contents.

**Explosion of Poisoned Nails:** CR 20; mechanical; touch trigger (when opened); manual reset; Atk +20 ranged, 1d4 nails per target for 1d4+10 plus poison each); poison (colossal monstrous scorpion venom, Fortitude saving throw (DC 33), 1d10 Con/1d10 Con) multiple targets (all creatures in 20 ft. burst); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 30.

The chest contains the pay for the soldiers and officers in the mine for the next three months. This is sorted into 13 velvet sacks, each one containing 2,000 gold pieces.

## 6. Guard Post

*The corridor opens out into a square room. Four drow warriors stand here, very faintly lit by a light from high above. The helmets and breastplates they wear are polished to a shine and their violet eyes glimmer below the brow guards.*

**Elite Guards, Drow Ftr12 (4):** CR 13; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 12d10; hp 66; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +12; Grp +16; Atk +18 melee (2d4+8/15–20 plus poison, masterwork falchion) or +15 ranged (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (2d4+8/15–20 plus poison, masterwork falchion) or +15 ranged (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, spell resistance 23; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

**Skills & Feats:** Climb +6, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +11, Jump +2, Listen +10, Ride +7, Search +4, Spot +11, Swim +4; Alertness, Cleave, Dodge, Improved Critical (falchion), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Focus (hand crossbow), Weapon Specialisation (falchion), Weapon Specialisation (hand crossbow).

**Equipment & Treasure:** Crossbow bolts (10), drow poison, 4d6x10 gold pieces, masterwork breastplate, masterwork falchion, masterwork hand crossbow, *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of haste*, *potion of owl's wisdom*.

The guards are expecting trouble from below, not from above. They are here guarding the command corridor while the majority of the other guards are down below, trying to deal with the dwarf slave revolt. If they are attacked, they yell to the barracks for reinforcements. The off-duty guards come to their aid.

## 7. Barracks

*This room is clearly a communal sleeping area, with tables and chairs at the opposite end. Broad wooden shelves serve as bunks. These have soft cocoons of spider silk laid along them, as if something had hatched there. There are over 40 bunks here, all of them with the silken bedrolls. You now have an idea of just how many drow soldiers are stationed in this mine.*

*Two of the bunks are occupied by sleeping drow, swaddled in their silk sacks like pupae. An ancient dwarf, naked but for a loincloth, squats motionless in the corner, gripping an onyx jug as if his life depended upon it.*



If the soldiers here have not run to assist those at the guard point, the Games Master should add the following:

*A group of four more drow are playing a dice game around a table, drinking black wine from carved onyx beakers. One of them snaps his fingers and the elderly dwarf immediately shuffles across to bring more wine.*

The Games Master should use the statistics given in Room 6 for the drow fighters. They do not have weapons ready. If the party is over 17<sup>th</sup> level on average, the Games Master should include two more drow soldiers.

**The Dwarf Slave:** The dwarf is Corbin Eosker, formerly Forge-father Corbin. He was previously a cleric of a dwarven deity, Thunor, but lost his clerical abilities when he betrayed his people to save his own life. A group of dwarves took sanctuary in the temple of Thunor in Crom Calamar. Instead of fighting to the end to defend them, Corbin allowed the drow to capture the temple and those who were sheltering there, so long as the drow promised not to harm them. Thunor immediately abandoned his spineless priest, who now

enjoys the ‘privilege’ of waiting on the drow soldiers instead of working himself to death in the choking mines below.

Corbin is bitterly ashamed of what he has done, though he will not admit it to the Player Characters. He has frequently made plans to kill himself but does not have access to anything sharp, and the drow are always watching.

If rescued, he claims that he was made to serve in the barracks because he is old and would not last a minute in the mines. He insists that the drow took him and his congregation by force, overwhelming the dwarves by weight of numbers and capturing them all. He can tell the Player Characters that there are hundreds of dwarf slaves in the mines.

Any dwarf slave that sees him wants to kill him on sight. Corbin would give anything to redeem himself and undo the wrong his fear has wrought. If a suitable moment arises, the Games Master can have Corbin sacrifice himself to help the slaves or the party escape.

**Corbin Eosker, Male Dwarf Clr10:** CR 10; HD 10d8; hp 45; Init 2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 8, touch 8, flat-footed 8; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike); SA none; SQ dwarf traits; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +11; Str 11, Dex 7, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 7.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +8, Diplomacy +8, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Spellcraft +10; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative.

*Domains:* None. Corbin is currently an apostate. He cannot cast spells or channel divine energy.

## 7a. Training Room

*This long hall has been set up as a practice area. Straw targets hang from the walls and fencing dummies stand waiting for use. A group of six drow are honing their skills with rapier and hand crossbow. As you watch, there is a zing and a thud as a crossbow bolt strikes home. One of the observing drow begins a slow, ironic clap.*

There are five drow warriors (see above) and one warlock here (see page 198 for warlock statistics). Any noisy disturbance in the barracks has a chance of being overheard via a Listen check (DC 20), though the thick intervening walls give some insulation.



## 8. Armoury

This room was clearly once a forge, judging by the wide-flanged chimney and the trough of coals. It is now a makeshift armoury. Racks of spare weapons sit waiting for use and several broken ones are laid out on a workbench.

If the Player Characters want to take the time to root through the usable equipment here, they can find three masterwork hand crossbows, four masterwork falchions, two drow-sized masterwork breastplates, a halberd, six masterwork rapiers and ten doses of drow poison wrapped in oiled paper in a small wooden box.

A Search check (DC 20) turns up a +2 *dwarven urgrosh* that someone has tried to strip down for parts, presumably in the belief that it could be turned into something a drow could use. The haft shows signs of having been sawed through and most of the binding on the grip has been unwrapped. It currently has only two hit points left.

## 9. Kitchens

The air in this area is hot and has an overpowering smell of spices, as if someone had been cooking with crumbled incense. Wrought-iron ovens fill most of the space, with pots and cauldrons bubbling on the hobs. A single stewpot the size of a barrel is slopping over with yellowish slurry that looks as if someone has already eaten it once. In the midst of all this is a sweating drow male, fleshier than most, stripped to the waist and with his white hair worn in long dreadlocks. He is adding pinches of red spice to the stews from a large bag.

This drow is the camp cook, Argenauld. The large pot is destined for the dwarf slaves and contains a stew made from pulses, roots and rat flesh.

**Argenauld, Male Drow War10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 10d8; hp 45; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +10; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d6+1/15–20, rapier) or +12 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6+1/15–20, rapier) or +12 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 21; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills & Feats:** Listen +5, Profession (cook) +8, Search +5, Spot +5; Improved Critical (rapier), Power Attack, Skill Focus (Profession (cook)), Weapon Focus (rapier).

**Equipment & Treasure:** Bag of hot chilli powder, crossbow bolts (10), heavy crossbow, rapier.

**Note:** Argenauld can throw his bag of hot chilli powder as a grenade-like weapon. He will try to do this on the first round of combat, then run for the barracks yelling for help. The bag of spices bursts in a five-foot spread from the point of impact. All creatures caught in the cloud must make Reflex saving throws (DC 15) or be blinded for 1d4+1 rounds.

## 10. Chapel

The stonework here is of a higher standard than the rest of the mine. The pillars are ornamented with blank-eyed, bearded faces staring gravely out in all directions. Beneath these are columns of runes. A half-hearted attempt to deface them has been made but the faces have suffered no worse damage than a few chips and scuffs. The flag of the Drow Empire hangs from the wall, the heraldic spider extending its limbs to encompass everything.

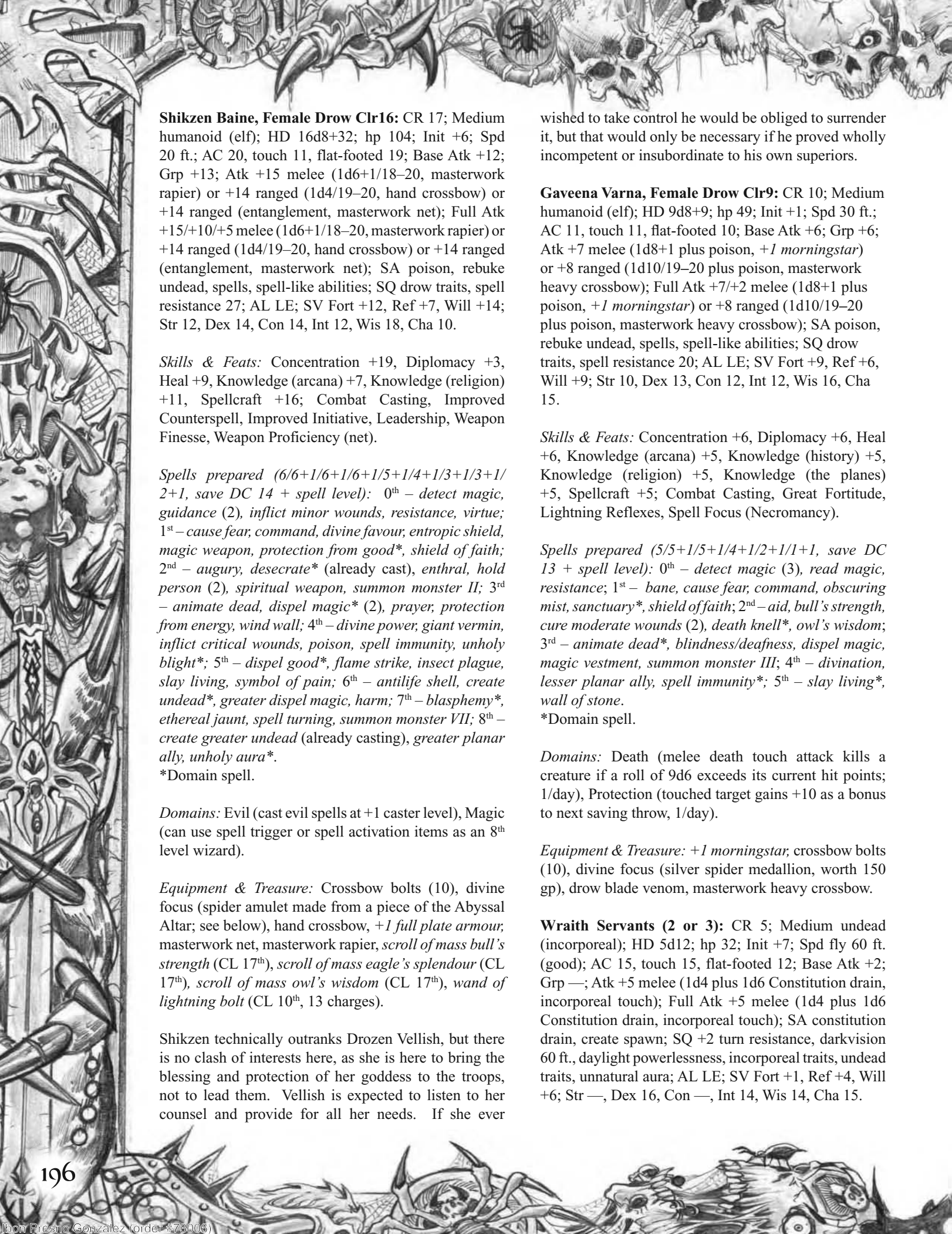
An arched recess at the eastern end of the room holds an altar draped with a velvet cloth. Two drow women are conducting some sort of rite over the skeletal remains of a dwarf. One of the women wears beetle-black plate armour fitted with long spikes and a silver headband; the other wears a long gown like that of a church novice. Both of them have white paint marking their faces in spirals and streaks. Translucent shapes, like humanoid figures in ragged robes, hover in the air nearby. Tiny red eyes gleam from their shapeless heads.

This whole area is under the effects of a *desecrate* spell. All Charisma checks made to turn undead are made at a –6 profane penalty and all undead entering the area have a +2 profane bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls and saving throws and two additional hit points per Hit Die. The women are Shikzen Baine, priestess to the forces stationed here, and her apprentice Gaveena Varna.

Shikzen is casting *create greater undead* to gain a new wraith servant; the two hovering shadowy forms are wraiths that she has already created and commanded. A Spellcraft check (DC 23) identifies the spell. A party of 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> level should arrive just as she has started casting, while a party of higher level should arrive just as the casting finishes, so there is another wraith on the loose.

**Note:** The wraith is not automatically under Shikzen's control; she must rebuke it first.





**Shikzen Baine, Female Drow Clr16:** CR 17; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 16d8+32; hp 104; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +12; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +14 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow) or +14 ranged (entanglement, masterwork net); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +14 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow) or +14 ranged (entanglement, masterwork net); SA poison, rebuke undead, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 27; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 10.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +19, Diplomacy +3, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spellcraft +16; Combat Casting, Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Proficiency (net).

*Spells prepared (6/6+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/3+1/2+1, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, guidance (2), inflict minor wounds, resistance, virtue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *cause fear, command, divine favour, entropic shield, magic weapon, protection from good\*, shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *augury, desecrate\* (already cast), enthral, hold person (2), spiritual weapon, summon monster II*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *animate dead, dispel magic\* (2), prayer, protection from energy, wind wall*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *divine power, giant vermin, inflict critical wounds, poison, spell immunity, unholy blight\**; 5<sup>th</sup> – *dispel good\*, flame strike, insect plague, slay living, symbol of pain*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *antilife shell, create undead\*, greater dispel magic, harm*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *blasphemy\*, ethereal jaunt, spell turning, summon monster VII*; 8<sup>th</sup> – *create greater undead (already casting), greater planar ally, unholy aura\**.

\*Domain spell.

*Domains:* Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Magic (can use spell trigger or spell activation items as an 8<sup>th</sup> level wizard).

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), divine focus (spider amulet made from a piece of the Abyssal Altar; see below), hand crossbow, +1 full plate armour, masterwork net, masterwork rapier, *scroll of mass bull's strength* (CL 17<sup>th</sup>), *scroll of mass eagle's splendour* (CL 17<sup>th</sup>), *scroll of mass owl's wisdom* (CL 17<sup>th</sup>), *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 10<sup>th</sup>, 13 charges).

Shikzen technically outranks Drozen Vellish, but there is no clash of interests here, as she is here to bring the blessing and protection of her goddess to the troops, not to lead them. Vellish is expected to listen to her counsel and provide for all her needs. If she ever

wished to take control he would be obliged to surrender it, but that would only be necessary if he proved wholly incompetent or insubordinate to his own superiors.

**Gaveena Varna, Female Drow Clr9:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 9d8+9; hp 49; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+1 plus poison, +1 *morningstar*) or +8 ranged (1d10/19–20 plus poison, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d8+1 plus poison, +1 *morningstar*) or +8 ranged (1d10/19–20 plus poison, masterwork heavy crossbow); SA poison, rebuke undead, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 20; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 15.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +6, Diplomacy +6, Heal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Knowledge (the planes) +5, Spellcraft +5; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (Necromancy).


*Spells prepared (5/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1, save DC 13 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic (3), read magic, resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *bane, cause fear, command, obscuring mist, sanctuary\*, shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *aid, bull's strength, cure moderate wounds (2), death knell\*, owl's wisdom*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *animate dead\*, blindness/deafness, dispel magic, magic vestment, summon monster III*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *divination, lesser planar ally, spell immunity\**; 5<sup>th</sup> – *slay living\*, wall of stone*.

\*Domain spell.

*Domains:* Death (melee death touch attack kills a creature if a roll of 9d6 exceeds its current hit points; 1/day), Protection (touched target gains +10 as a bonus to next saving throw, 1/day).

*Equipment & Treasure:* +1 *morningstar*, crossbow bolts (10), divine focus (silver spider medallion, worth 150 gp), drow blade venom, masterwork heavy crossbow.

**Wraith Servants (2 or 3):** CR 5; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +7; Spd fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp —; Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); SA constitution drain, create spawn; SQ +2 turn resistance, darkvision 60 ft., daylight powerlessness, incorporeal traits, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.



**Skills & Feats:** Diplomacy +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>.

**Constitution Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by a wraith's incorporeal touch attack must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 14) or be dealt 1d6 points of Constitution drain. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based. On each such successful attack, the wraith gains five temporary hit points.

**Create Spawn (Su):** Any humanoid slain by a wraith becomes a wraith in 1d4 rounds. Its body remains intact and inanimate, but its spirit is torn free from its corpse and transformed. Spawn are under the command of the wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

**Daylight Powerlessness (Ex):** Wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it.

**Unnatural Aura (Su):** Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

**Note:** The above does not include the benefit of the *desecrate* spell. When within the *desecrated* chapel, the wraiths attack at +7 melee, deal 1d4+2 points of damage plus 1d6 Constitution drain, and have 42 hit points and the following saving throw bonuses: Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8.

**Shikzen's Divine Focus:** This strangely primitive-looking spider carving has been made from a piece of black mineral that glows (if that is the right word!) with darkness. It emits darkness as an ember emits light. It has a strong aura of evil. Any character who has seen tenebrium knows that the divine focus has been made from that substance. In addition, any Starborn present (which should be all of the Player Characters) may make Intelligence checks (DC 15). Those who succeed instinctively recognise the object as a piece of the Abyssal Altar.

The obvious conclusion, which the players should be left to figure out for themselves, is that the Abyssal Altar is actually made from tenebrium. If the Conclave really can come up with a device that emits energy specially tuned to shatter tenebrium, perhaps it could be used to destroy the Abyssal Altar itself!

## 11. Entrance to the Mine Complex

*The passage here slopes downwards and the walls become increasingly rough. At the end of the passage a gate of metal bars stands open, with a heavy chain and padlock hanging from it. In the room beyond you can see a row of drow soldiers stationed behind a makeshift barrier made from sandbags. The soldiers stand with their backs to you, training heavy crossbows on the area beyond.*

*From far off, the sound of battle reaches you. It echoes up from the caves beyond the gate, so distorted by distance that you cannot tell what direction it is coming from.*

The ten drow soldiers here are assisted by a warlock (a wizard with fighter levels). They are holding this area against a possible dwarf rush from the mine caves. This is intended to be a fairly tough battle for the Player Characters; the drow will not yield this position easily. They are, however, expecting an attack from the other direction, so the Player Characters have the advantage of surprise, if they are wise enough to work with it. If battle does break out, the warlock's first action is to cast *haste* on his comrades.

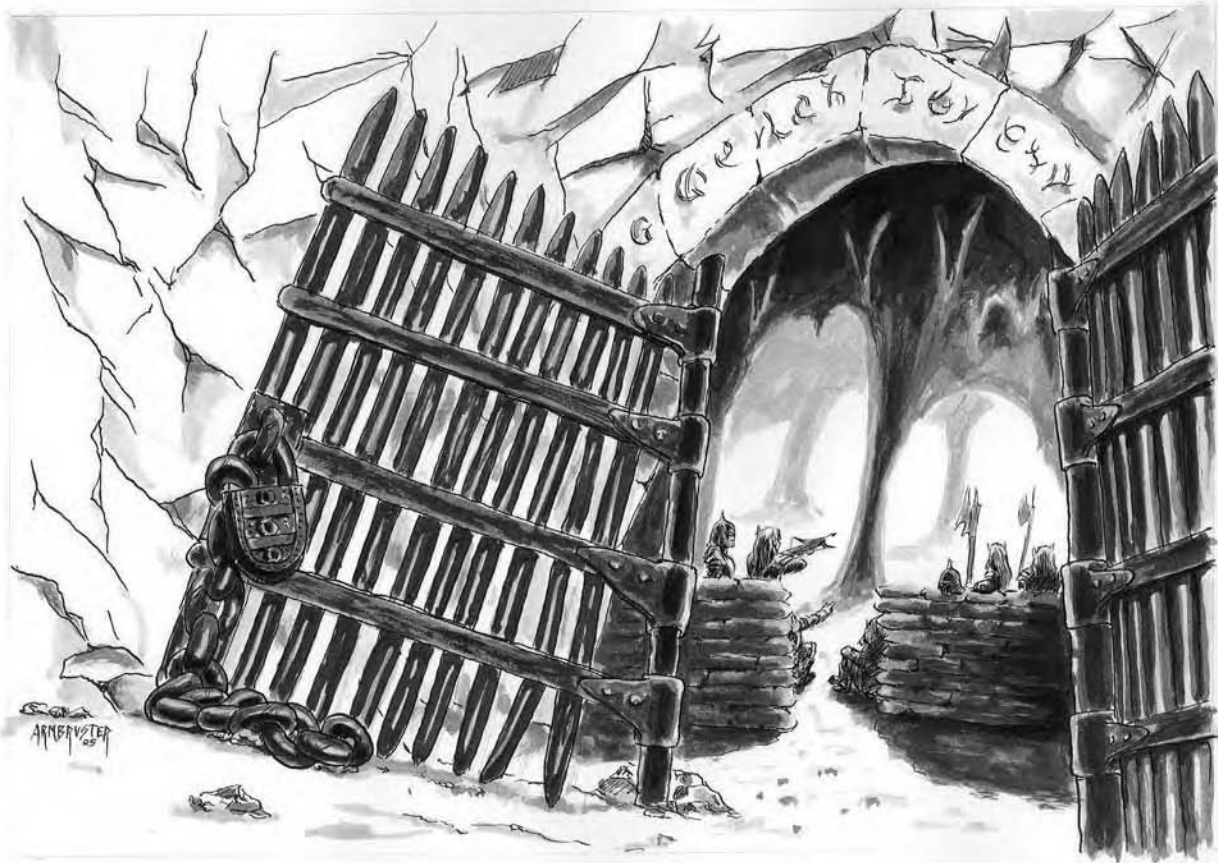
If the battle appears to be going in the drow's favour, they try to capture the Player Characters for interrogation, inflicting nonlethal damage and then fetching manacles from the storage room (Room 11a). If the drow appear to be losing, they fall back into the mines, trying to meet up with the main force at Area 15.

**Anvil:** Once the Player Characters can see the rest of the room, they notice an anvil at the point marked with an X. This is used to fit chains on the prisoners.

If the party members are above 17<sup>th</sup> level on average, the Games Master should increase the number of drow soldiers to 14.

**Soldiers, Drow War10 (10):** CR 10; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 10d8; hp 45; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +10; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d10+1/x3, glaive) or +11 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +12 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d10+1/x3, glaive) or +11/+6 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +12 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 21; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.





*Skills & Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +5, Search +5, Spot +5; Dodge, Power Attack, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (glaive).

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), glaive, heavy crossbow, rapier.

*Note:* When attacking with their glaives, the drow soldiers can attack opponents ten feet away, but not adjacent ones.

**Warlock, Male Drow Wiz10/Ftr3:** CR 14; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 10d4+10 plus 3d10+3; hp 54; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +8; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +8 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow), Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +8 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow); SA poison, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 24; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +14, Decipher Script +17, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +7, Ride +6, Spellcraft +17; Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Greater Spell Focus (Evocation), Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Focus (Evocation).

*Spells prepared (4/6/5/4/4/2, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – message, ray of frost, resistance, touch of fatigue; 1<sup>st</sup> – mage armour, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp, true strike (2); 2<sup>nd</sup> – bull's strength, cat's grace, resist energy, scorching ray (2); 3<sup>rd</sup> – blink, displacement, haste, greater magic weapon; 4<sup>th</sup> – dimensional anchor, fire shield, resilient sphere, wall of fire; 5<sup>th</sup> – cloudkill, cone of cold.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), drow poison, hand crossbow, masterwork rapier.





## 11a. Storage Room

*This room has the smell of old iron and leather, like a blacksmith's shop on a warm day. Mining supplies have been stacked against the walls. You see barrels filled with hammer hafts, picks, shovels, several spools of chain and at least two dozen sets of manacles, draped tidily over a stand.*

This is where the drow store the mining tools for the slaves and the irons with which to bind them.

## 12. Entrance to the Smelter Complex

*The passageway is blocked by a sturdy iron gate, with a lock set into it. The warm breeze in your faces has a burning, metallic smell to it that makes your throat sore. From the end of the corridor you can hear a low roaring sound like that of a furnace, as well as the scrape and rattle of workers shovelling something gritty.*

The lock is good quality, and requires an Open Lock check (DC 30) to open. The drow keep the passageway through to the smelter area locked at all times, as it is open to the air and would represent the best chance of a slave escape.

## 13. Slave Pens

The door to this room is heavy and ironbound, with a strong lock requiring an Open Lock check (DC 30) to open.

*The wooden stalls built into this huge room suggest that it was once used to stable pit ponies or mules. Now it is being used to house people, though their treatment is, if anything, worse than that of the meanest labouring animal. There are around 15 dwarves here, filthy and half-naked. Once stout and gruff, they are now pale and haggard, more like grey dwarves than their old selves. Each one bears the red weals of a recent beating.*

*A group of five drow stands guard over them, watching them with anxious contempt, as if they expected the dwarves to slip their shackles and attack. One of the dwarves coughs harshly, making the drow jump, and a few drops of blood trickle into his beard.*

These dwarves were separated off from the rest when the fighting began and were quickly overpowered. They are weak from the poison gases in the mine and their morale is all but broken.

The Games Master should use the statistics for the drow warriors from Area 11 for four of the soldiers, plus the overseer, Braz Kapra.

Braz Kapra is a ghastly drow even by the standards of his race. He is a devotee of Arkady and has filed his teeth down to points, in emulation of his goddess. He adores causing pain in others. The truly terrible thing is that he is not a mere sadist. He honestly believes that he is initiating his victims into new states of consciousness.

**Braz Kapra (Overseer), Male Drow Ftr17:** CR 18; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 17d10; hp 93; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +17; Grp +21; Atk +25 melee (1d3+8 nonlethal plus 1d6 electrical, *whip of agony*) or +23 melee (2d4+8/15–20 plus poison, masterwork falchion) or +21 ranged (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); Full Atk +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (1d3+8 nonlethal plus 1d6 electrical, *whip of agony*) or +23/+18/+13/+8 melee (2d4+8/15–20 plus poison, masterwork falchion) or +21 ranged (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, spell resistance 28; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +6, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +8, Jump +2, Listen +10, Ride +5, Search +4, Spot +13, Swim +4; Cleave, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Improved Critical (falchion), Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Focus (hand crossbow), Weapon Specialisation (falchion), Weapon Specialisation (hand crossbow).

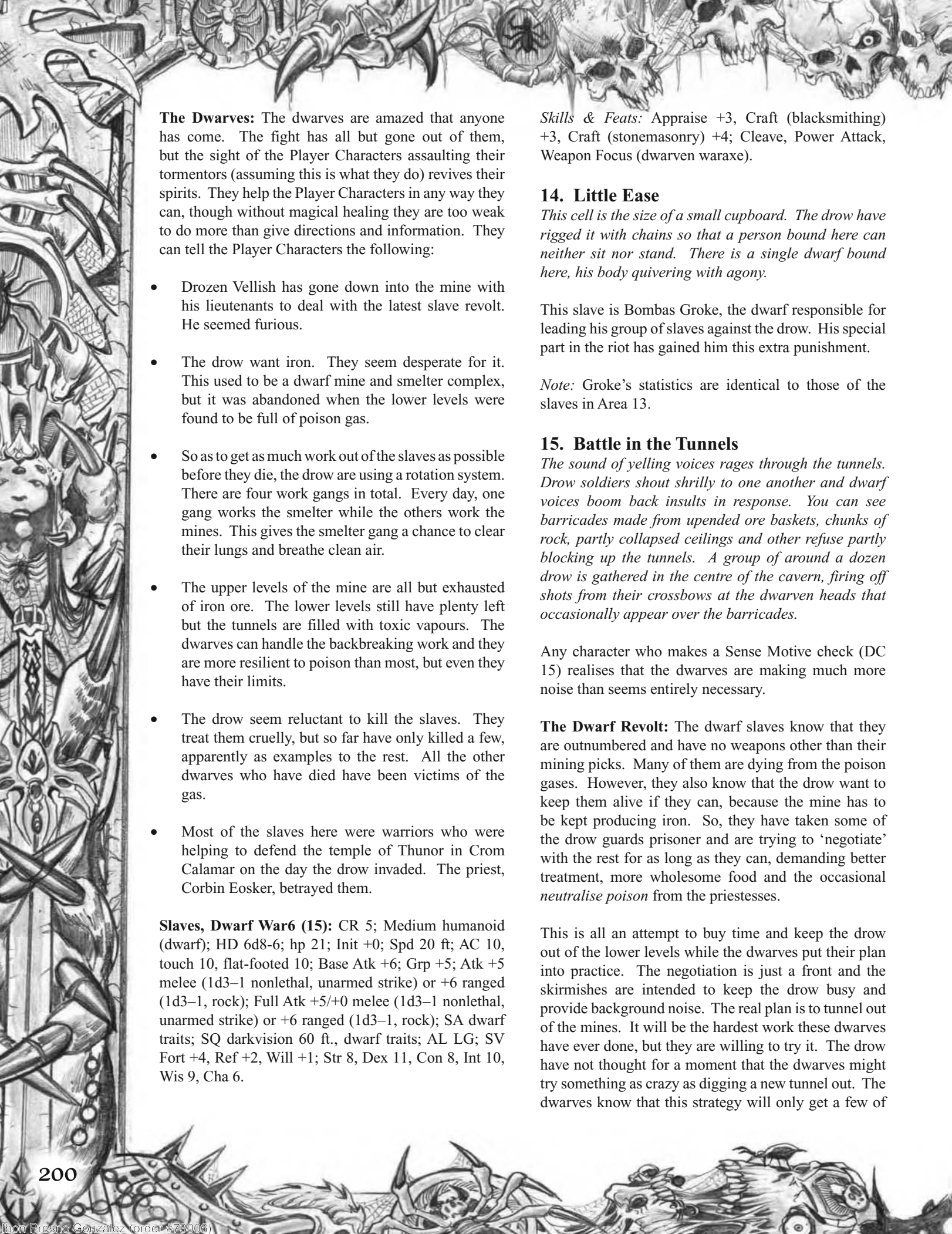
*Equipment & Treasure:* +1 breastplate, crossbow bolts (10), drow blade venom, masterwork falchion, masterwork hand crossbow, *whip of agony*.

**Whip of Agony:** This +2 whip appears to be an ordinary, if rare, enchanted weapon. In the hands of a dark elf it becomes a +4 *shocking whip* with the additional power to cause terrible pain in those it strikes. Those hit in melee for damage must make Fortitude saving throws (DC 17) or suffer wracking pains that bestow a –4 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks. These effects last for one hour. Note that creatures with an armour bonus of +1 or higher or a natural armour bonus of +3 or higher ignore the *whip's* nonlethal damage, though they still suffer electrical damage.

Moderate necromancy: CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *call lightning* or *lightning bolt*, *symbol of pain*; Price: 95,000 gp.

*Special:* Creator must be a dark elf.





**The Dwarves:** The dwarves are amazed that anyone has come. The fight has all but gone out of them, but the sight of the Player Characters assaulting their tormentors (assuming this is what they do) revives their spirits. They help the Player Characters in any way they can, though without magical healing they are too weak to do more than give directions and information. They can tell the Player Characters the following:

- Drozen Vellish has gone down into the mine with his lieutenants to deal with the latest slave revolt. He seemed furious.
- The drow want iron. They seem desperate for it. This used to be a dwarf mine and smelter complex, but it was abandoned when the lower levels were found to be full of poison gas.
- So as to get as much work out of the slaves as possible before they die, the drow are using a rotation system. There are four work gangs in total. Every day, one gang works the smelter while the others work the mines. This gives the smelter gang a chance to clear their lungs and breathe clean air.
- The upper levels of the mine are all but exhausted of iron ore. The lower levels still have plenty left but the tunnels are filled with toxic vapours. The dwarves can handle the backbreaking work and they are more resilient to poison than most, but even they have their limits.
- The drow seem reluctant to kill the slaves. They treat them cruelly, but so far have only killed a few, apparently as examples to the rest. All the other dwarves who have died have been victims of the gas.
- Most of the slaves here were warriors who were helping to defend the temple of Thunor in Crom Calamar on the day the drow invaded. The priest, Corbin Eosker, betrayed them.

**Slaves, Dwarf War6 (15):** CR 5; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 6d8-6; hp 21; Init +0; Spd 20 ft; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +6 ranged (1d3-1, rock); Full Atk +5/+0 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +6 ranged (1d3-1, rock); SA dwarf traits; SQ darkvision 60 ft., dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 11, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6.

*Skills & Feats:* Appraise +3, Craft (blacksmithing) +3, Craft (stonemasonry) +4; Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe).

#### 14. Little Ease

*This cell is the size of a small cupboard. The drow have rigged it with chains so that a person bound here can neither sit nor stand. There is a single dwarf bound here, his body quivering with agony.*

This slave is Bombas Groke, the dwarf responsible for leading his group of slaves against the drow. His special part in the riot has gained him this extra punishment.

*Note:* Groke's statistics are identical to those of the slaves in Area 13.

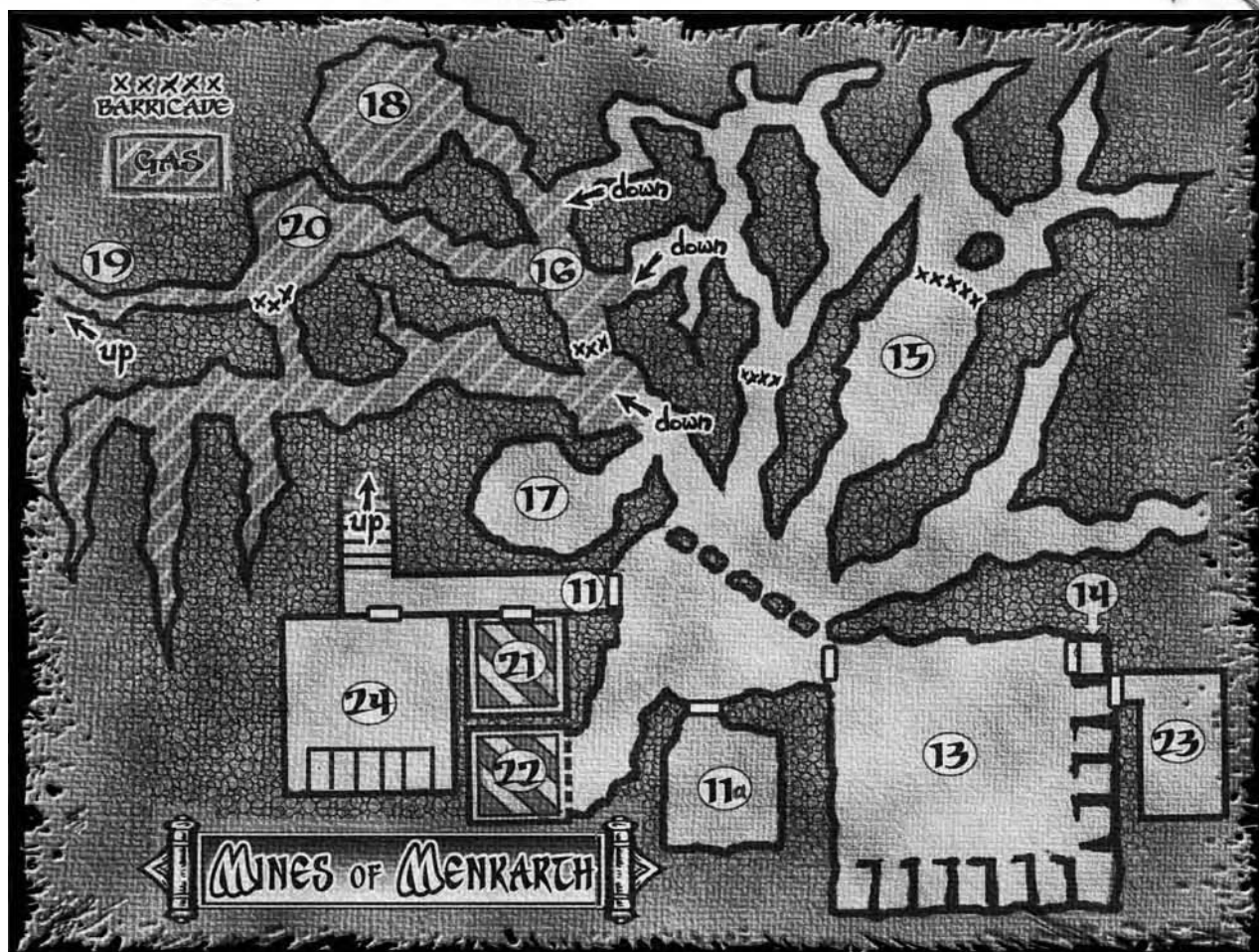
#### 15. Battle in the Tunnels

*The sound of yelling voices rages through the tunnels. Drow soldiers shout shrilly to one another and dwarf voices boom back insults in response. You can see barricades made from upended ore baskets, chunks of rock, partly collapsed ceilings and other refuse partly blocking up the tunnels. A group of around a dozen drow is gathered in the centre of the cavern, firing off shots from their crossbows at the dwarven heads that occasionally appear over the barricades.*

Any character who makes a Sense Motive check (DC 15) realises that the dwarves are making much more noise than seems entirely necessary.

**The Dwarf Revolt:** The dwarf slaves know that they are outnumbered and have no weapons other than their mining picks. Many of them are dying from the poison gases. However, they also know that the drow want to keep them alive if they can, because the mine has to be kept producing iron. So, they have taken some of the drow guards prisoner and are trying to 'negotiate' with the rest for as long as they can, demanding better treatment, more wholesome food and the occasional *neutralise poison* from the priestesses.

This is all an attempt to buy time and keep the drow out of the lower levels while the dwarves put their plan into practice. The negotiation is just a front and the skirmishes are intended to keep the drow busy and provide background noise. The real plan is to tunnel out of the mines. It will be the hardest work these dwarves have ever done, but they are willing to try it. The drow have not thought for a moment that the dwarves might try something as crazy as digging a new tunnel out. The dwarves know that this strategy will only get a few of



them out alive, and even then they will be in enemy territory; but no dwarf can bear to live as a slave, so it is better to make the attempt and die rather than rolling over and accepting defeat.

There are 40 slaves behind the barricade and 20 drow warriors in this room, panicking slightly over what to do next. They are not sure whether the dwarves are going to rush them, try to coax them into the mines, or what.

Drozen Vellish is not among them. The dwarves insisted on talking directly to the mine commander, so he has gone down to the poison levels to negotiate.

### 16. The Poison Levels

*The mining on this level is still going on. Baskets have been half-filled with iron ore and picks lie abandoned nearby. This must have been difficult work to do, as the air here smells foul, like the sulphurous muck vomited up by sick dragons. A brownish halo surrounds your lights. You do not think you could stay down here for very long before becoming ill.*

The gas in the mine has a slow-working toxic effect. After every eight hours of exposure, any creature must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 14) or suffer one point of Strength and Constitution damage. Creatures reduced to below six Constitution points begin to cough up blood.

### 17. Lime Pits

*This cave has a sharp smell in the air, the unmistakable odour of lime powder. There can be only one reason for this. Lime is used to quickly break down dead bodies. The floor of this cave has been heaped with lime from sacks that now lie discarded nearby. The skeletal remains of eight or nine humanoid, dwarves by the look of them, lie half-buried in the lime. The drow obviously want to get rid of the dead as efficiently as possible.*

There is nothing unusual about the bodies; they are merely skeletons. Any character standing in the lime or coming into contact with it is dealt one point of acid damage per minute.







## 18. The Prisoners

*Four drow warriors lie here, with chains wrapped round their arms and ankles. Though their faces are calm, hatred is burning in their eyes.*

The dwarves were able to overpower these guards by tripping them up with their chains and grappling them into submission. They are now hostages. Ten dwarf slaves stand here, armed with picks and shovels, ready to bash the hostages' brains out if they try to escape. They have been told not to harm the prisoners unless they make trouble, but it is obvious that they are itching to repay the treatment they have endured.

## 19. The Tunnel

*This narrow tunnel has been hastily dug. It leads upwards at an angle of 45 degrees. You can see daylight through a crack at the upper end.*

This is where the dwarf slaves are digging their escape tunnel. Their expertise with rock led them to the best place to dig. They have almost broken through to the surface. Another 20 minutes of work will widen the tunnel sufficiently for a Medium-sized creature to squeeze through it.

## 20. The Negotiators

*As you approach, you hear voices engaged in calm discussion. One is a weary-sounding, aristocratic voice; the other is gravelly and deep, as if the speaker has a heavy cold. They seem to be discussing arrangements for the handing over of prisoners.*

Drozen Vellish is here, discussing the settlement of the revolt with Grundin Derth, the self-appointed leader of the dwarves. Derth is dying from the poisonous fumes, so he has chosen to lead the rebellion, as he has nothing left to lose.

**Vellish's Predicament:** Vellish is in a very delicate situation. He fervently hopes that the Player Characters are in the mine somewhere, so that he can leave this mess behind him. His three lieutenants are bewildered at his concession to negotiate with the dwarves. They want to know why he does not just storm the mines, kill the ringleaders, torture the rest and have done with it. The drow hostages were stupid and let themselves be caught. Since when has it been drow policy to rescue idiots?

Vellish's only answer to them has been to cite 'secret orders', which the lieutenants are now sceptical about, and to insist that 'we need the slaves alive to make the

mine work – unless you'd rather dig the ore yourself!' to which they have no answer.


**Enter the Player Characters:** How this scene plays out depends entirely on how the Player Characters approach it. If they simply pile in and attack, Vellish has no choice but to turn on his three lieutenants, who try to alert the priestesses (see above) and the other guards. The moment Vellish is revealed to be a traitor, the lieutenants flee the scene. They know they have no chance against the Player Characters and their former leader together.

If the Player Characters opt to parley first (perhaps in the hope of reading Vellish's subtle cues and finding out if this is a trap or not), Vellish tries to use his Bluff skill to send a secret message (see the Bluff skill description in the *PHB*). The message is 'Get me out of here now, damn you!' The Player Characters can make Sense Motive checks to notice and read the message. The lieutenants should have a chance to notice this, so the Games Master should give them Sense Motive checks too.

If the Games Master prefers to increase the tension at the expense of a little *deus ex machina* action, Zertivul (see below) can have *detect thoughts* running and accidentally pick up Vellish's thoughts when the Player Characters enter the area. Zertivul's first action is to tell Saranek to hit Vellish with a *dimensional anchor*, after which they *teleport* away to the nearest source of help (either the barracks or the chapel). The Player Characters can thus arrive just as Vellish is prevented from escaping with them and all hell breaks loose.

Drozen Vellish has lank, stringy hair combed back from a widow's peak. His face has heavy jowls, his eyes are sunken and his demeanour is that of a man who is jaded with decadence, as if he has indulged in every sin and vice available until nothing is interesting anymore. He seems so weary of everything that it is tiring to look at him.

Vellish's three lieutenants are Ca'varren, Zertivul and Saranek. Ca'varren is a narrow-eyed, pinch-faced dark elf whose teeth are in extremely bad condition; he has a habit of sucking on crystallised fruit. Zertivul has a round moon face, hamster cheeks and a perpetually surprised expression. Saranek, the youngest of the three, likes to glower and smirk and is proud of his long mane of white hair.



**The Three Lieutenants (Ca'varren, Zertivul and Saranek), Male Drow Wiz10/Ftr3 (3):** CR 14; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 10d4+10 plus 3d10+3; hp 54; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +8; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +10 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow), Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +10 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow); SA poison, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 24; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +14, Decipher Script +17, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Ride +6, Spellcraft +17; Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Greater Spell Focus (see below), Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (see below), Spell Focus (see below)\*.

\*The lieutenants specialise in different fields, so have different spell focus feats.

*Ca'varren's Spell Focus Feats:* Greater Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Focus (Evocation).

*Ca'varren's spells prepared (4/5/5/4/4/2, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – message, ray of frost, resistance, touch of fatigue; 1<sup>st</sup> – mage armour, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp, true strike; 2<sup>nd</sup> – bull's strength, cat's grace; resist energy, scorching ray (2); 3<sup>rd</sup> – blink, displacement, greater magic weapon, haste; 4<sup>th</sup> – dimensional anchor, fire shield, resilient sphere, wall of fire; 5<sup>th</sup> – cloudkill, cone of cold.

*Zertivul's Spell Focus Feats:* Greater Spell Focus (Divination), Spell Focus (Conjuration), Spell Focus (Divination), Greater Spell Focus (divination).

*Zertivul's spells prepared (4/5/5/4/4/2, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – detect magic (2), detect poison, message; 1<sup>st</sup> – comprehend languages, grease, mage armour, shield, true strike; 2<sup>nd</sup> – acid arrow, detect thoughts, fog cloud, see invisibility, web; 3<sup>rd</sup> – clairaudience/clairvoyance, displacement, sleet storm, stinking cloud; 4<sup>th</sup> – black tentacles (2), detect scrying (already cast), summon monster IV; 5<sup>th</sup> – cloudkill, teleport.

*Saranek's Spell Focus Feats:* Greater Spell Focus (Necromancy), Spell Focus (Enchantment), Spell Focus (Necromancy).

*Saranek's spells prepared (4/5/5/4/4/2, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – daze, message, touch of fatigue (2); 1<sup>st</sup> – charm person (2), mage armour, ray of enfeeblement, shield; 2<sup>nd</sup> – ghoul touch, hideous laughter (3), spectral hand; 3<sup>rd</sup> – displacement, heroism, ray of exhaustion, vampiric touch; 4<sup>th</sup> – confusion, crushing despair, enervation (2); 5<sup>th</sup> – mind fog, waves of fatigue.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), drow blade venom, hand crossbow, keys to smelter gate and slave pens, masterwork rapier.

**Drozen Vellish, Male Drow Ftr18:** CR 19; HD 18d10; hp 99; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +18; Grp +22; Atk +25 melee (1d8+8/19–20, +2 vorpal longsword) or +24 ranged (1d8+8/x3 plus poison, +2 composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); Full Atk +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+8/19–20, +2 vorpal longsword) or +24/+19/+14/+9 ranged (1d8+8/x3 plus poison, +2 composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)) or +22/+22/+17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+8/x3 plus poison, +2 composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, spell resistance 29; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +6, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +15, Jump +6, Listen +8, Ride +8, Search +4, Spot +8, Swim +4; Cleave, Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialisation (longbow), Weapon Specialisation (longsword).


*Equipment & Treasure:* +2 composite longbow, +3 elven chain armour, +2 heavy steel shield, +2 vorpal longsword, arrows (20), drow poison, master key to locked areas.

*This metal cage is clearly a lift for people to travel in. A large geared wheel on the side allows passengers to winch themselves up.*

The wheel allows characters to lift their equipment and each other up out of the mine. It allows a +15 equipment bonus on Strength checks to lift loads. There is room for up to two creatures to turn the wheel at once. The cage moves upwards at five feet per round. It emerges at the surface at Point 21.

## 22. Cargo Lift

*This metal cage, suspended from chains, looks as though it is meant to carry the loads of iron ore up to the surface. A two-man winch provides the necessary*



*power. There are five large baskets here, brimming with chunks of ore.*

The winch requires two creatures to operate. It can raise weights of several tonnes, but moves very slowly (three feet per round). Once the ore is brought to the surface, it is dumped into the ore shuttle (see below).

### **23. Overseer's Quarters**

*This room is a shrine to torture. Whoever lives here has an unhealthy devotion to pain and its infliction upon helpless creatures. The walls are hung with thumbscrews, man-traps, whips and spiked chains. Among these dangle grim little relics; severed ears, fingertips and something in a jar that is fortunately too badly decomposed to identify.*

This is Braz Kapra's room (see above). Hung over the back of the door is a *robe of vermin*. Kapra knows the nature of the item and uses it in his interrogations.

### **24. Ventilation System**

*A continuous groaning rhythm comes from this room, as a great wheel turns and turns. A group of ten slaves is wearily plodding inside a treadmill. From the soft breeze in the room, you guess that this is how the mine is kept ventilated. A gang of four guards is here. You expect they are meant to be watching the slaves, but they seem more interested in reading ribald poetry aloud to each other and laughing. The poetry seems to be a commemoration of the author's experiences in the sacred brothels back in the drow homeland.*

Use the standard statistics block for the slaves (see Area 13). As the ventilation system is vital to the mine's operation, the guards stationed here are elite (see Area 6 for their statistics).

The ventilation system makes it possible for creatures in the poison gas levels of the mine to survive. If it stops working, the poison becomes more thickly concentrated and a saving throw against its effects is needed every hour instead of every eight hours.

### **25. Smelter Exterior**

*This sunken pit is open to the sky above. It looks as though it has been gouged out of the hill. In the centre is a brick edifice with a tall chimney pouring forth black smoke. The rattling cable cars bring their loads of ore across from the top of the cargo lift, dump them through an opening in the roof of the brick cylinder and return for more.*

Characters can gain access to the smelter via the ore shuttle, the corridor from Area 12 (see above) or the outside door, which is not locked while the smelter is running.

### **25a. Reduction Stage**

*You are in the upper levels of the smelter, where basket after basket of iron ore comes spilling in through the roof. Raging heat comes from the furnace beneath you. Weary-looking dwarf slaves are breaking up chunks of iron ore into tiny fragments and tipping them into the smelter below. Drow guards pace up and down the platform, checking that all is in order.*

Depending on the party's level and state of health, these drow guards can either be warriors or elite guards. The default is a group of four elite guards (see Area 6). There are eight slaves in this part of the smelter. Any creature falling into the molten mass in the furnace is dealt damage as if he had fallen into lava (see the *DMG*).

### **25b. Smelting Stage**

*Soot-smearred dwarves, naked but for seamy loincloths, are shovelling coal into the furnace. Other dwarves rake out the slag and cart it off to be dumped on the heap outside. To the south, a continual stream of molten iron, bright as mercury, runs from the bottom of the smelter and flows sizzling into moulds on the ground. Next to this is a mounting pile of finished iron pigs waiting to be taken to the store. Grim-faced drow guards, sweating in the heat, watch the slaves toiling.*

As above, the six drow guards here are either warriors or elite guards, depending on how tough (or exhausted) the party is. There are eight dwarf slaves in this part of the smelter.

### **25c. Coal Storage**

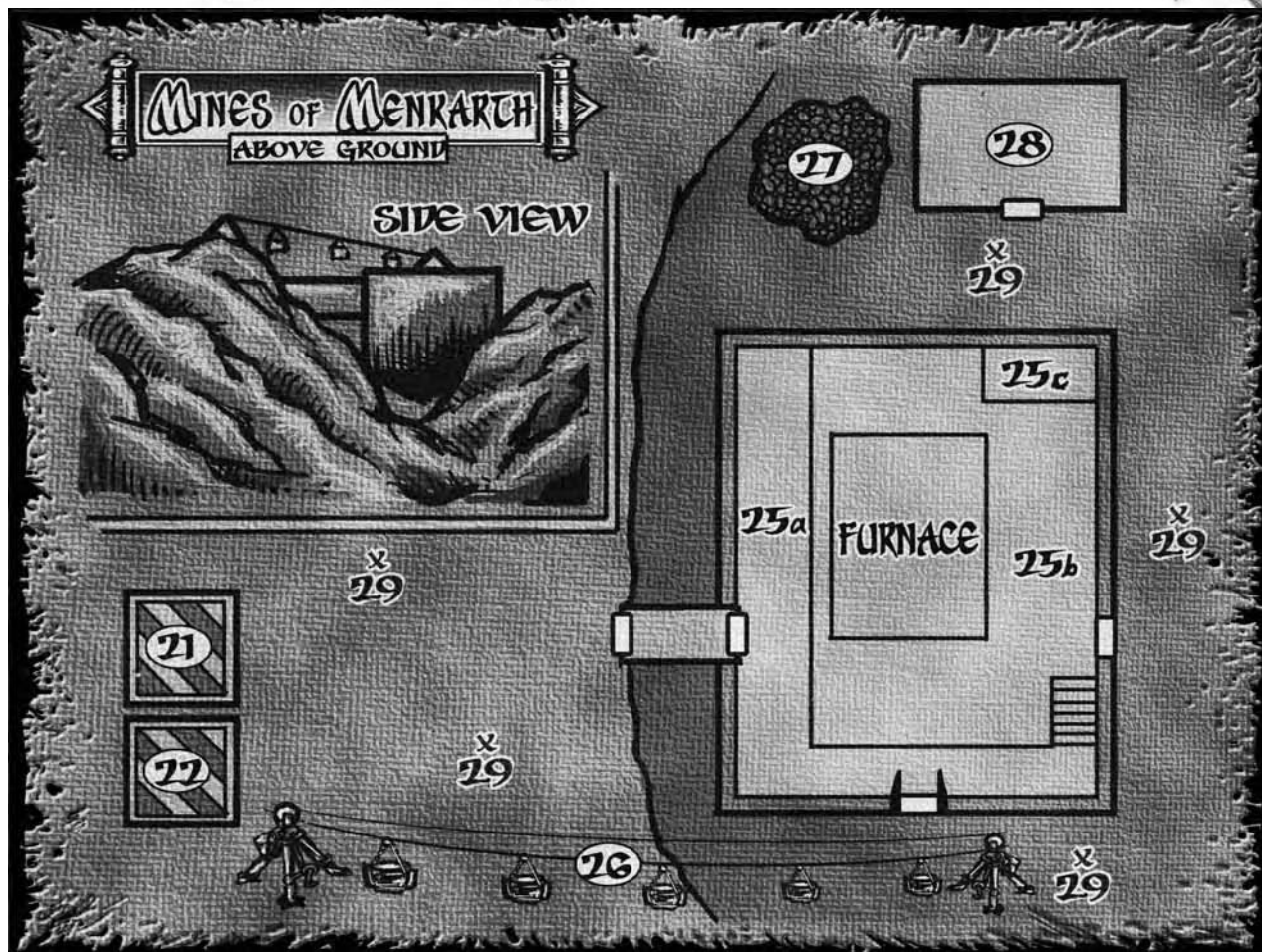
This is where the coal is stored in wooden bunkers, which are loaded from above and empty through hoppers in the base.

### **26. Ore Shuttle**

*At the top of the cargo lift is a cable car system, where the baskets of ore can be hung on hooks and sent across to the smelter to the east.*

The hooks extend from strong chains, easily strong enough to bear the weight of the Player Characters. The ore shuttle has a winch that can be worked to rotate the chain and move the baskets along.





### 27. Slag Heap

*This is a high pile of black clinker and ash, shovelled out of the furnace.*

### 28. Iron Pig Storage

*This long, windowless wooden shed is unremarkable. A wheelbarrow stands by the door, which appears to be firmly shut.*

The door is locked; and Open Lock check (DC 20) will open it. The shed is full of crates, which in turn are full of iron pigs.

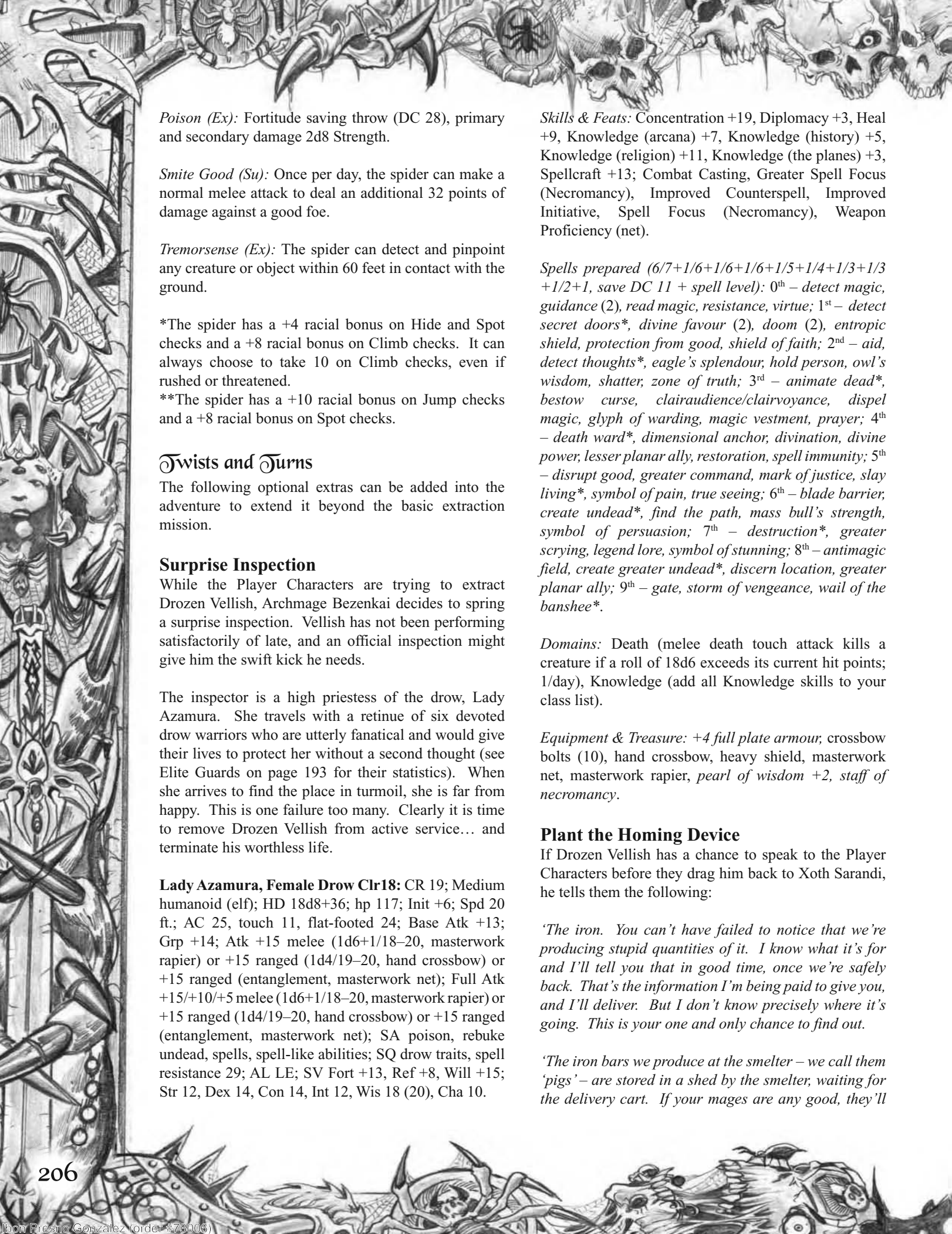
### 29. Eight-Legged Watchdogs

*A truly gigantic spider hunches here, an iron chain attached to its leg by a thick band. The chain leads to a fixture in the ground. The spider is a sickly red in colour; its body is like a vast boil, its legs like distended veins. Its eight beady eyes seem to glow slightly, as if there were something even more unnatural about it than its colossal size.*

The drow have placed several pets on guard here, Colossal fiendish spiders provided by the Ennead. These are kept restrained by long iron chains to prevent them wandering off. They have so far caught and eaten a couple of dwarves who tried to make a break for it. The spiders can roam up to two hundred feet from the tether points indicated with an 'X' on the map. The tether points are metal girders driven into the ground, the remains of an old fence now destroyed.

**Fiendish Monstrous Spiders (5):** CR 13; Colossal vermin; HD 32d8+64; hp 208; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 4, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +24; Grp +50; Atk +26 melee (4d6+15 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +26 melee (4d6+15 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 40 ft./30 ft.; SA poison, smite good, web; SQ damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., resistance to cold 10 and fire 10, spell resistance 25, tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL NE; SV Fort +20, Ref +12, Will +10; Str 31, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +16\*, Hide -10\*, Jump +20\*\*, Spot +15\*.



*Poison (Ex):* Fortitude saving throw (DC 28), primary and secondary damage 2d8 Strength.

*Smite Good (Su):* Once per day, the spider can make a normal melee attack to deal an additional 32 points of damage against a good foe.

*Tremorsense (Ex):* The spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground.

\*The spider has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. It can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

\*\*The spider has a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks and a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks.

## Twists and Turns

The following optional extras can be added into the adventure to extend it beyond the basic extraction mission.

### Surprise Inspection

While the Player Characters are trying to extract Drozen Vellish, Archmage Bezenkai decides to spring a surprise inspection. Vellish has not been performing satisfactorily of late, and an official inspection might give him the swift kick he needs.

The inspector is a high priestess of the drow, Lady Azamura. She travels with a retinue of six devoted drow warriors who are utterly fanatical and would give their lives to protect her without a second thought (see Elite Guards on page 193 for their statistics). When she arrives to find the place in turmoil, she is far from happy. This is one failure too many. Clearly it is time to remove Drozen Vellish from active service... and terminate his worthless life.

**Lady Azamura, Female Drow Clr18:** CR 19; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 18d8+36; hp 117; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +13; Grp +14; Atk +15 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +15 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow) or +15 ranged (entanglement, masterwork net); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +15 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow) or +15 ranged (entanglement, masterwork net); SA poison, rebuke undead, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 29; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +15; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 18 (20), Cha 10.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +19, Diplomacy +3, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Spellcraft +13; Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (Necromancy), Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (Necromancy), Weapon Proficiency (net).

*Spells prepared (6/7+1/6+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/3+1/2+1, save DC 11 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, guidance (2), read magic, resistance, virtue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *detect secret doors\**, *divine favour (2), doom (2), entropic shield, protection from good, shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *aid, detect thoughts\**, *eagle's splendour, hold person, owl's wisdom, shatter, zone of truth*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *animate dead\**, *bestow curse, clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, glyph of warding, magic vestment, prayer*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *death ward\**, *dimensional anchor, divination, divine power, lesser planar ally, restoration, spell immunity*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *disrupt good, greater command, mark of justice, slay living\**, *symbol of pain, true seeing*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *blade barrier, create undead\**, *find the path, mass bull's strength, symbol of persuasion*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *destruction\**, *greater scrying, legend lore, symbol of stunning*; 8<sup>th</sup> – *antimagic field, create greater undead\**, *discern location, greater planar ally*; 9<sup>th</sup> – *gate, storm of vengeance, wail of the banshee\**.

*Domains:* Death (melee death touch attack kills a creature if a roll of 18d6 exceeds its current hit points; 1/day), Knowledge (add all Knowledge skills to your class list).

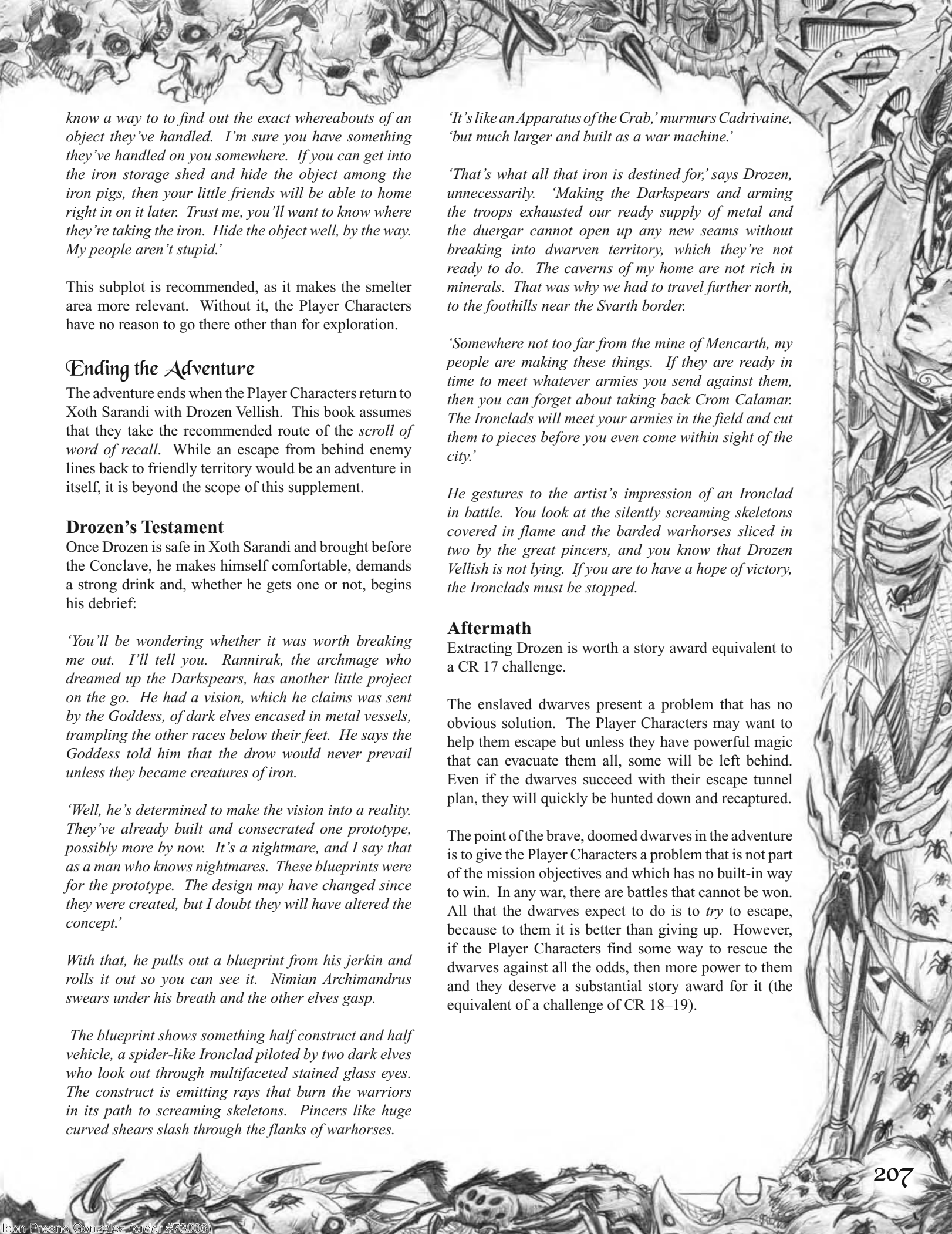
*Equipment & Treasure:* +4 full plate armour, crossbow bolts (10), hand crossbow, heavy shield, masterwork net, masterwork rapier, *pearl of wisdom* +2, *staff of necromancy*.

### Plant the Homing Device

If Drozen Vellish has a chance to speak to the Player Characters before they drag him back to Xoth Sarandi, he tells them the following:

*'The iron. You can't have failed to notice that we're producing stupid quantities of it. I know what it's for and I'll tell you that in good time, once we're safely back. That's the information I'm being paid to give you, and I'll deliver. But I don't know precisely where it's going. This is your one and only chance to find out.'*

*'The iron bars we produce at the smelter – we call them 'pigs' – are stored in a shed by the smelter, waiting for the delivery cart. If your mages are any good, they'll*



know a way to find out the exact whereabouts of an object they've handled. I'm sure you have something they've handled on you somewhere. If you can get into the iron storage shed and hide the object among the iron pigs, then your little friends will be able to home right in on it later. Trust me, you'll want to know where they're taking the iron. Hide the object well, by the way. My people aren't stupid.'

This subplot is recommended, as it makes the smelter area more relevant. Without it, the Player Characters have no reason to go there other than for exploration.

## Ending the Adventure

The adventure ends when the Player Characters return to Xoth Sarandi with Drozen Vellish. This book assumes that they take the recommended route of the *scroll of word of recall*. While an escape from behind enemy lines back to friendly territory would be an adventure in itself, it is beyond the scope of this supplement.

## Drozen's Testament

Once Drozen is safe in Xoth Sarandi and brought before the Conclave, he makes himself comfortable, demands a strong drink and, whether he gets one or not, begins his debrief:

*'You'll be wondering whether it was worth breaking me out. I'll tell you. Rannirak, the archmage who dreamed up the Darkspears, has another little project on the go. He had a vision, which he claims was sent by the Goddess, of dark elves encased in metal vessels, trampling the other races below their feet. He says the Goddess told him that the drow would never prevail unless they became creatures of iron.'*

*'Well, he's determined to make the vision into a reality. They've already built and consecrated one prototype, possibly more by now. It's a nightmare, and I say that as a man who knows nightmares. These blueprints were for the prototype. The design may have changed since they were created, but I doubt they will have altered the concept.'*

*With that, he pulls out a blueprint from his jerkin and rolls it out so you can see it. Nimian Archimandrus swears under his breath and the other elves gasp.*

*The blueprint shows something half construct and half vehicle, a spider-like Ironclad piloted by two dark elves who look out through multifaceted stained glass eyes. The construct is emitting rays that burn the warriors in its path to screaming skeletons. Pincers like huge curved shears slash through the flanks of warhorses.*

*'It's like an Apparatus of the Crab,' murmurs Cadrivaine, 'but much larger and built as a war machine.'*

*'That's what all that iron is destined for,' says Drozen, unnecessarily. 'Making the Darkspears and arming the troops exhausted our ready supply of metal and the duergar cannot open up any new seams without breaking into dwarven territory, which they're not ready to do. The caverns of my home are not rich in minerals. That was why we had to travel further north, to the foothills near the Svarth border.'*

*'Somewhere not too far from the mine of Mencarth, my people are making these things. If they are ready in time to meet whatever armies you send against them, then you can forget about taking back Crom Calamar. The Ironclads will meet your armies in the field and cut them to pieces before you even come within sight of the city.'*

*He gestures to the artist's impression of an Ironclad in battle. You look at the silently screaming skeletons covered in flame and the barded warhorses sliced in two by the great pincers, and you know that Drozen Vellish is not lying. If you are to have a hope of victory, the Ironclads must be stopped.*

## Aftermath

Extracting Drozen is worth a story award equivalent to a CR 17 challenge.

The enslaved dwarves present a problem that has no obvious solution. The Player Characters may want to help them escape but unless they have powerful magic that can evacuate them all, some will be left behind. Even if the dwarves succeed with their escape tunnel plan, they will quickly be hunted down and recaptured.

The point of the brave, doomed dwarves in the adventure is to give the Player Characters a problem that is not part of the mission objectives and which has no built-in way to win. In any war, there are battles that cannot be won. All that the dwarves expect to do is to *try* to escape, because to them it is better than giving up. However, if the Player Characters find some way to rescue the dwarves against all the odds, then more power to them and they deserve a substantial story award for it (the equivalent of a challenge of CR 18–19).





# Following Darkness Like a Dream

The Player Characters' quest to thwart the Dark takes them into the Plane of Shadow and from there to the sub-plane of Noctulos where the tenebrium crystals are found. Their journey to the gates of Noctulos leads them through a strange city that seems to be composed of the bad memories of a city on the Material Plane, in which ghosts (metaphorical and literal) roam.

Noctulos is a plane of nightmare, ruled over by a bloated vampire tyrant of the same name. His servitors, enormous bat-like undead creatures called nightwings, glide across the landscape pursuing fleeing souls. The hag-like minions of Noctulos feed him energy by slipping into the Material Plane, draining life from mortal children as they sleep and transferring it to their lord when they return.

Unfortunately for the Player Characters, most of the tenebrium in this area has already been taken. There is one huge mass that is still available, though – the throne of Noctulos himself. This is the only piece of the darkness-emitting crystal that is large enough for the Conclave's purposes.

Noctulos is a devotee of the Dark, the selfsame force that is in eternal opposition to the Starborn. Should the Player Characters defeat Noctulos, they will catch a glimpse of their enemy, the Dark itself, in humanoid form for the briefest of moments.

The Player Characters should be 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> level before undergoing this adventure.

## Plot Event: Cadfannan's Briefing

Cadfannan, the straggle-haired unshaven elf who works with the Conclave and specialises in alchemy, explains the situation to the Player Characters as follows:

*'The tenebrium crystals you brought back were, uh, a bit on the small side. No disrespect to you, we've learned a lot from them, but the thing is, we can't do much in the way of testing. That is, we know we can create an energy emission that'll set up a resonance strong enough to destroy, say, a sliver the size of a copper piece, but we don't know that the same techniques will work on a larger mass. It's definitely going to take a special spell*

*to do this, though. The stuff's resistant to shattering spells and it shrugs off most of what we can throw at it. Intrinsically magical, y'see. Not like ordinary rock. Where was I? Um, yeah. So.*

*'You're going to have to go and fetch a large enough piece for us to test the disruptor spell on. That means going to Noctulos, the plane where chummy was fetching the crystals from and selling them on to the drow. You might want to pack some decent protection against negative energy, because from what we can tell, it's undead paradise over there. Eternal gloom, great big cliffs of black rock, ruddy great bat-winged shapes flying across the sky... Yeah. Anyway. You've got a choice here. We can either plane shift you to Noctulos, or you can head back to the ice citadel and use the gate that wosname used. Once you have a nice big lump of tenebrium, say, about a cubic foot or so at least, contact us and we'll get you home.'*

*Note:* The briefing above assumes that the Player Characters return to Xoth Sarandi once they take the small tenebrium crystals from Bastirak. It is however possible that the Player Characters decide not to return to Xoth Sarandi at the end of that adventure, but instead head through the gate to Noctulos under Bastirak's citadel. So long as the players understand (out of character) that the gate marks the beginning of a new section rather than an additional bit on the end of that adventure, there is no reason why they should not just carry straight on.

## Location: The Plane of Noctulos

Noctulos is a place of shadow and murk, adjunct to the Plane of Shadow and strongly drawn towards evil. Many of its denizens are servants of the Dark.

*The vista before you is not pitch black, but rather crepuscular and gloomy. The sky is perpetually overcast with indigo clouds, dimly visible from the thin glow of light that comes through them. Distant shapes like vast deformed bats wing their way across the horizon.*

*The landscape is one of rocky outcrops, patches of sand, scrub and bleak leafless trees that seem to be dead but still growing. The highest points are mountain peaks as jagged as broken bottles, while the lowest are marshes*



*black as sump oil. Everything here has a bluish-black colour. The rocks look like obsidian or jet, the sand like ground onyx, and even the dead trees look like moonlit ebony.*

*The only illumination comes from clots of luminescent fungi on the ground, which light up the areas around them in sickly green and red. If it were not for the turbulent sky overhead, you could almost think you were in a subterranean cavern somewhere.*

Noctulos has the following planar traits:

**Strongly Evil-Aligned:** A -2 circumstance penalty applies to all Charisma-based, Intelligence-based and Wisdom-based checks made by characters not of evil alignment.

**Divination Impeded:** The shadow and gloom of the plane is metaphysical as well as physical, interfering with attempts to gain new knowledge. All spells from the Divination school of magic are impeded on Noctulos. Characters attempting to cast them must make Spellcraft checks (DC 20 + spell level). Failure means that the spell does not function but is still lost as a prepared spell or spell slot. The following spells from other schools are also impeded: *continual flame, dancing lights, daylight, flare, light, searing light, sunbeam* and *sunburst*.

**Necromantic Spells Enhanced:** All spells from the Necromancy school are maximised and enhanced on this plane. The following spells from other schools are also maximised and enhanced: *darkness, deeper darkness, greater shadow conjuration, greater shadow evocation, shades, shadow conjuration, shadow evocation* and *shadow walk*.

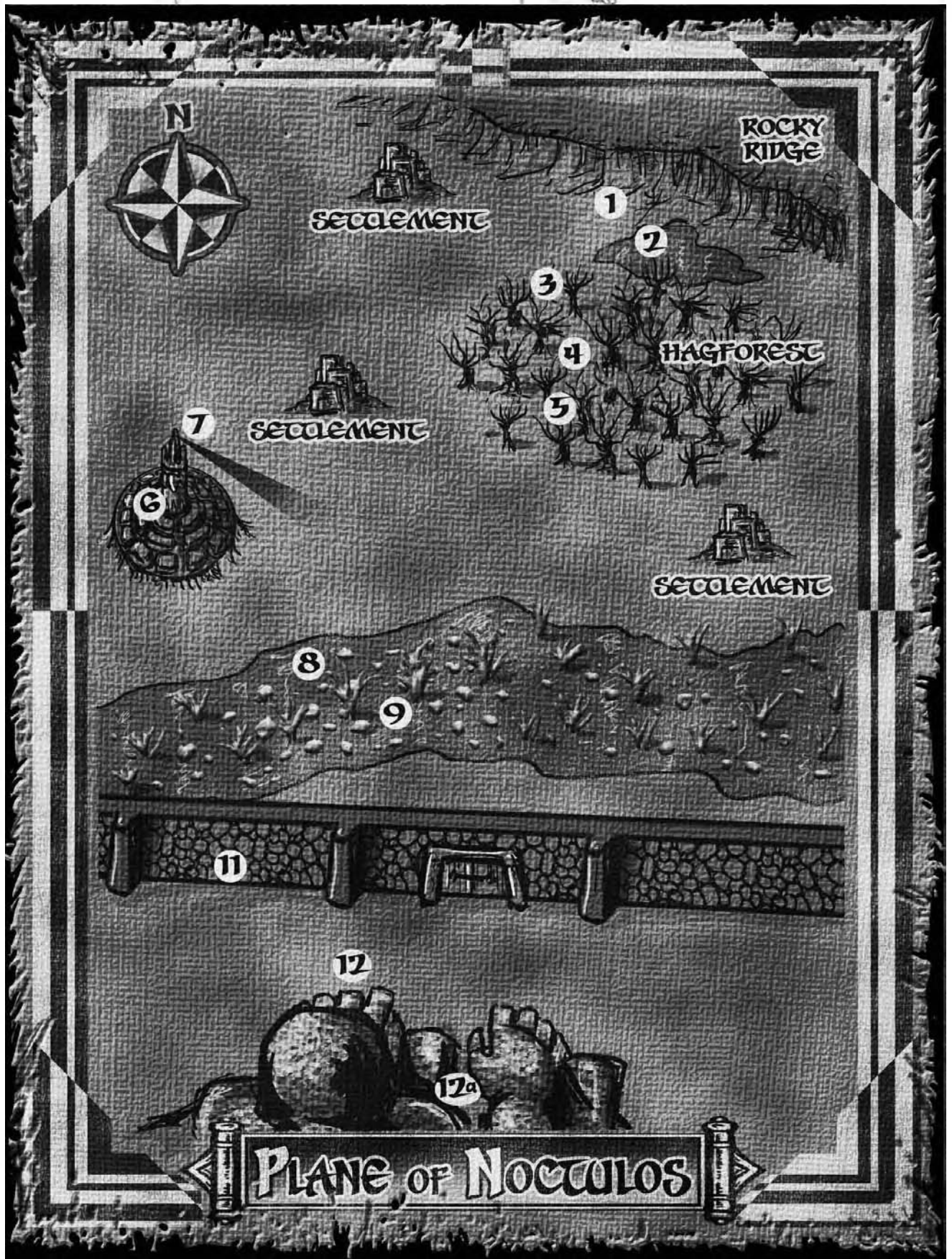
**Unique Effect:** In Noctulos, the memories of dead people are able to speak. They cannot learn anything new, nor are they the actual souls of the dead. Those who die in Noctulos have continual *speak with dead* effects upon their corpses. Those dead people who are merely mirrored here appear as shadowy versions of their original selves, going through ritualistic re-enactments of the lives they led.

### **Plot Event: Entering Noctulos**


*You have emerged on top of a rocky ledge overlooking a plain. Despite the lack of illumination, you can still make out details of your surroundings. To the south, the hill slopes downwards until it reaches a forest of diseased-looking trees. From the heart of this forest, you can see a faint green glimmer, as if strange fires were burning.*











Further to the southwest, there is a region that seems to be a town or small city. It is festooned with little red lights, as if sparks had settled on it. A dark bar sweeps across these lights, rotating like the hand of a clock from the centre of the city.

Much further to the south, barely visible through the blurring mist, is a sheer vertical wall. It cannot possibly have formed naturally. You think you see the image of a vast seated figure above it, but it is hard to see anything in this light.

**Using Divination to Find the Tenebrium:** The Player Characters may, with some justification, want to cut straight to the chase. At their current level of experience, they can cast Divination spells to locate the tenebrium and *fly* or *teleport* straight there, making for a very short adventure.

Naturally things are not quite so easy as that. The plane impedes Divination spells, making it hard to use *locate* magic to find anything. If the Player Characters do manage to locate ‘the nearest source of tenebrium’, they detect some in the heart of the City of Memories (Area 6, page 214). This is not quite enough for their purposes, but it seems to be the only deposit.

The throne room of Noctulos himself is veiled in a constant *private sanctum*, making it impossible to *scry* into it and get a lock for a *teleport* spell. The sky is hazardous to fly through, as the massive nightwings hunt there. All in all, the Player Characters can expect to do better in their search for tenebrium by keeping to the ground and asking questions of the locals.

### Non-Player Character Group: The Human Denizens

At the points marked as settlements on the map, small groups of houses can be found, occupied by human peasants. These people have never known any other life than that of Noctulos and are grimly resigned to it. Many of them are every bit as evil as the hags and undead that stalk the region. They consider Noctulos to be their rightful lord and master. They live off the pale cabbages that grow in their yards and on fat beetles that they boil up into soup.

When they wish to petition Noctulos for anything, one of their number takes a travelling staff and cloak and makes the trek to the Colossus, where he progresses up through the stone chambers to the throne of darkness. Successful petitioners are sometimes rewarded; those who approach without adequate respect or humility are never seen again.

The human denizens are all 1<sup>st</sup> level commoners. They are not at all keen to speak to outsiders and will be shocked at any suggestion of slaying or even defying Noctulos. If the Player Characters persuade them to talk, they can learn the following:

- The lord of the plane is Noctulos himself, the dark majesty, the generous giver of gifts. He dwells in the Colossus.
- The City of Memories is forbidden, as is the Hagwood. The people are not to go there.
- None has yet looked upon the face of Noctulos. He is forever shrouded by a great veil.
- The souls of mortal children sometimes pass through here. The hags bring them. They do not abide long, as they are brought up to the Colossus and do not return.

### Non-Player Character Group: The Sky Hunters

The sky of Noctulos is the hunting ground for nightwings, which are huge bat-like undead monsters. They prey upon any living creature foolish or unfortunate enough to find its way here. The nightwings hunt in flocks of 3–6 creatures. They take advantage of the abundant darkness to sneak up on victims, using their Hide skill to stay out of sight until they swoop down and attack.

Any Player Character who attempts to *fly* in Noctulos is repeatedly attacked by nightwings until he either dies or returns to the ground. The nightwings consider the sky their territory and do not take kindly to intruders.

**Nightwings:** CR 14; Huge undead (extraplanar); HD 17d12+34; hp 144; Init +8; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 30, touch 12, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +8; Grp +28; Atk +18 melee (2d6+17/19–20 plus magic drain, bite); Full Atk +18 melee (2d6+17/19–20 plus magic drain, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA desecrating aura, magic drain, spell-like abilities, summon undead; SQ aversion to daylight, damage reduction 15/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, spell resistance 27, telepathy 100 ft., undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +17; Str 31, Dex 18, Con —, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 18.

**Skills & Feats:** Concentration +24, Diplomacy +6, Hide +16\*, Listen +25, Move Silently +24, Search +24, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +24, Spot +25, Survival +5 (+7 following tracks); Combat Reflexes, Dodge,



Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative.

\*When hiding in a dark area or flying in a dark sky, a nightwing gains a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks.

*Aversion to Daylight (Ex):* If exposed to natural daylight (not merely a *daylight* spell), nightshades such as nightwings take a -4 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks.

*Desecrating Aura (Su):* All nightshades give off a 20-foot-radius emanation of utter desecration, imbuing their surroundings with negative energy. This ability works much like a *desecrate* spell, except that the nightshade's evil is so great that it is treated as the shrine of an evil power. All undead within 20 feet of the nightshade (including the creature itself) gain a +2 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls and saving throws and +2 hit points per HD. The nightshade Hit Dice, attack and saving throw entries given here include these profane bonuses. Charisma checks made to turn undead within this area take a -6 penalty. A nightshade's desecrating aura cannot be dispelled except by a *dispel evil* spell or similar effect. If the effect is dispelled, the nightshade can resume it as a free action on its next turn. Its desecrating aura is suppressed if a nightshade enters a *consecrated* or *hallowed* area, but the nightshade's presence also suppresses the *consecrated* or *hallowed* effect for as long as it remains in the area.

*Magic Drain (Su):* A nightwing can weaken magic armour, weapons and shields by making a successful touch attack. The targeted item must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) or lose one point of its enhancement bonus. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based. An item that loses its entire enhancement bonus becomes merely a masterwork item and loses any special abilities (such as flaming) as well. Casting *dispel evil* upon the item reverses the effect of the magic drain, provided this occurs within a number of days after the attack equal to the caster's level and the caster succeeds on a caster level check (DC 29).

*Spell-Like Abilities:* At will – *contagion* (DC 18), *deeper darkness*, *detect magic*, *haste*, *see invisibility*, *unholy blight* (DC 18); 3/day – *confusion* (DC 18), *greater dispel magic*, *hold monster* (DC 19), *invisibility*; 1/day – *cone of cold* (DC 19), *finger of death* (DC 21), *plane shift* (DC 21). Caster level is 17<sup>th</sup> and the saving throw DCs are Charisma-based.

*Summon Undead (Su):* A nightwing can summon undead creatures once per night: 5–12 shadows, 2–4 greater shadows, or one dread wraith. The undead arrive in 1d10 rounds and serve for one hour or until released.

## 1. The Watchers

*You become aware that there are bats in the air around you. They loop and flutter like ragged scraps of fabric caught in the wind.*

These are fiendish bats, not threatening in themselves but dangerous to the Player Characters in as much as they are Noctulos' eyes and ears. The vampire can *scream* on any bat in the plane, much as a wizard or sorcerer can *scream* on his familiar. He is thus forewarned of the Player Characters' arrival long before they reach the Colossus. A few of the bats follow behind the Player Characters wherever they go, keeping back so as not to arouse suspicion.

## 2. The Moon Pool

*This 30-foot wide lake is as black as marsh mud and as smooth as glass. Beneath its surface is a swirling of violet energies.*

This is the rift through to Bastirak's citadel. Any characters who pass through from that side emerge here, immersed in the freezing waters.



### 3. Bones of a Lonely Paladin

*You have reached the edge of a forest of skeletal trees, sparse and widely spaced, yet still oppressive and far darker than is natural. Beside the path, a skeleton in rusted plate mail armour hangs crucified upon a tree. A scrawled sign above his head reads 'They were merciful to me.'*

These are the mortal remains of Sir Benedict of Gausley, a paladin of Caldraza who led an expeditionary force into Noctulos after he discovered where the night hags had been taking their victims and became determined to wipe the evil out. The entire group was massacred. The strange effects of the plane mean that his bones are able to speak. He cannot move, nor can he do anything other than talk in a rasping moan. He begins to speak as soon as the Player Characters approach within 30 feet; if they seem to be avoiding him, he calls out to them.

Benedict can tell the Player Characters the following:

- Noctulos is ruled by some sort of bloated undead tyrant, also called Noctulos. He dwells in a fortress to the far south of the forest. Legend has it that he rules the plane from a throne of enchanted black diamond which keeps him permanently shrouded in darkness.
- There are night hags in the heart of the forest. It was they who crucified Benedict and made him watch while they roasted and ate the rest of his party. They are commemorating some foul Witches' Sabbath tonight, just as they do every night. This Sabbath is not that of the benign paganism of Caldraza but some devilish travesty.
- The night hags here have some terrible power to slip into the mortal world and steal away the souls of children, which they feed to their lord. Benedict is not sure whether this lord is Noctulos himself or some other foul fiend.
- The city nearby is full of shades, the pathetic remnants of people who were once alive.
- The black rock that sheds darkness should not be hard to find. It lies here and there on the plain. It falls from the sky like meteors. In fact, Benedict's information is out of date; he is remembering the time before Bastirak came here and took most of the tenebrum away.

A character examining the ground below Benedict and making a Search check (DC 20) can find the two broken halves of his *holy avenger*.

If Benedict's skeleton is smashed to bits, he can still speak. His skull babbles endlessly about his holy quest, the need to keep going and the fate that awaits all evildoers.

### 4. The Hags' Gloaming

*In the centre of this clearing, a raging fire of emerald green is burning under a cauldron. Blue-skinned women are dancing around it, cackling gleefully. There must be at least a dozen of them here. At their feet, floating limply like a sad deflated balloon, is a pale object like a small humanoid.*

There are 13 Hags of Noctulos (a variant on the night hag) celebrating their Sabbath here, which they do every single night. The song they are singing is given in the sidebar, if the Games Master feels like inflicting it upon the players. Once the dancing is over, the leader of the group takes any harvested child-souls up to the Colossus on her nightmare and delivers them to the gatekeeper.

The pale floating thing is a child-soul. It cannot speak or take any action; it merely stares with large eyes. The most that the Player Characters can do for it is to take it to the Astral Plane and release it there, so that it can find its way to the afterlife.

**Hags of Noctulos (13):** CR 13; Medium outsider (evil); HD 16d8+64; hp 136; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +16; Grp +21; Atk +21 melee (2d8+7 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +21 melee (2d8+7 plus disease, bite); SA spell-like abilities, child stifling; SQ damage reduction 10/cold iron and magic, immunity to charm, cold, fear, fire and *sleep*, spell resistance 33; AL CE; SV Fort +16, Ref +13, Will +17\*; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 13.

**Skills & Feats:** Bluff+20, Concentration+23, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +9 (+11 acting), Intimidate +22, Listen +19, Ride +12, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +19, Spot +19; Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Mounted Combat.

**Child Stifling (Su):** These night hags have a variant ability from the usual kind. They can use their *heartstones* to become ethereal and hover over the beds of their victims, just as do the dream-invading variety. However, the child-stiflers then steal the child's breath, dealing 1d3 points of Constitution drain. A child slain





### Song of the Night Hags

Stoke the fire and light the tapers,  
Strike a jig and cut some capers,  
Smell the foul and fuming vapours,  
'Tis the Sabbath tide again!

Now rehearse the best of sins,  
Prick the fatted child with pins,  
See how master death's-head grins!  
'Tis the Sabbath tide again!

Spin the circle faster, faster!  
Speak the spells of dark disaster!  
Praise unto the hornèd master!  
'Tis the Sabbath tide again!

in this manner becomes a disembodied shade in the service of the night hag. Unlike dream haunting, this ability is not limited to chaotic or evil victims. The hag cannot, however, drain Constitution from a child who is under the protection of a good or lawful Abjuration spell such as *protection from evil*.

**Disease (Ex):** Demon fever: bite, Fortitude DC 18, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d6 Constitution. Each day after the first, on a failed saving throw, an afflicted creature must immediately succeed on another Fortitude saving throw (DC 18) or take one point of Constitution drain. The saving throw DC is Constitution-based.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will – *detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, detect magic, magic missile, polymorph* (self only), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 12), *sleep* (DC 12). Caster level is 8<sup>th</sup>. A night hag can use *etherealness* at will (caster level 16<sup>th</sup>) so long as it possesses its *heartstone* (see below). The saving throw DCs are Charisma-based.

**Equipment & Treasure:** *Heartstone* (see the MM for details).

### 5. Tethered Nightmares

*Tethered to the trunks of the trees are thirteen night-black horses, with manes that flame like crimson gas.*

These are the nightmare steeds of the Hags of Noctulos. If the Player Characters disturb them, they attempt to break their tethers with a Strength check (DC 22) and take to the sky (see page 25 for nightmare statistics).

### 6. The City of Memories

From afar, this city seems to be an abandoned settlement:

*Now that you can see it up close, the small city before you seems to be completely empty; though there is a shadowy motion there that you find hard to focus on, as if tall trees were casting shadows over the streets. The buildings are all made from the usual materials – stone, brick, timber and thatch – and yet they all have a blackish cast to them, as if they had been dipped in ink.*

*Above the other roofs rises the spire of a central cathedral. A beam of darkness sweeps past overhead, emitted from the spire like the ray from a lighthouse. You feel a brief chill in your bones as it passes, and there is a faint moaning noise.*

*The thousands of red lights are now explained as fungal growths on the walls and roofs, which light up the areas around them with a hellish radiance. The whole place gleams in the gloom like a nest of fireflies.*


*A low wooden sign just outside the city reads: 'MEMORY VALE'*

If the Player Characters enter the city and explore, they find out the following:

*The lumps of red fungus hanging from the walls cast a sallow light across the streets. From here, you can clearly see an unsettling sight.*

*Although there is nobody there to cast them, the red light is casting the shadows of people. You see the shadows of men and women go by on the walls, as if the streets were busy, rather than empty. Through the windows, the red light shows wavering shadows of families sitting down to eat at table, in rooms that have no occupants and no furniture. The shadows talk, laugh and embrace one another, all in total silence.*

If the Player Characters watch the shadows for a while, they notice something even more disturbing. The scenes always end in violence. The crowds in the street suddenly scream and run as a shadowy figure comes running down on them, hacking away with a greatsword. The dinner scene in the house dissolves into an argument; the woman stabs the man in the chest repeatedly. The happy tavern drinkers begin to fight and knives are drawn.



Magical investigation reveals that this city is where the shadows of evil deeds go. The shadows re-enact the scenes that gave rise to them, again and again, on simulacra of the walls and floors where they were originally cast.

If a Player Character is within 30 feet of a shadow-scene when the violence occurs, it plays out to the end as usual, but then the shadow of the killer (or killers) stops and turns to look at the Player Characters. It and the other shadows rush forth from the wall as dread wraiths, summoned into being by the presence of living things. The wraiths are an emanation of the city, rather than conventional undead. From one to three dread wraiths attack at any one time. The shadows of the victims become normal wraiths, which also attack. A typical scene thus contains 1–3 dread wraiths and 2–6 wraiths.

**Dread Wraiths:** CR 15; Large undead (incorporeal); HD 32d12; hp 208; Init +15; Spd fly 60 ft. (good); AC 27, touch 27, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +16; Grp —; Atk +27 melee (2d6 plus 1d8 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +27 melee (2d6 plus 1d8 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA constitution drain, create spawn; SQ darkvision 60 ft., daylight powerlessness, incorporeal traits, lifesense 60 ft., undead traits, unnatural aura; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +21, Will +25; Str —, Dex 32, Con —, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 24.

**Skills & Feats:** Diplomacy +25, Hide +42, Intimidate +42, Knowledge (religion) +22, Listen +41, Search +38, Sense Motive +23, Spot +35, Survival +26 (+22 following tracks); Ability Focus (Constitution drain), Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Improved Natural Attack (incorporeal touch), Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch).

**Constitution Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by a dread wraith's incorporeal touch attack must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 33) or take 1d8 points of Constitution drain. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based. On each such successful attack, the dread wraith gains five temporary hit points.

**Create Spawn (Su):** Any humanoid slain by a dread wraith becomes a wraith in 1d4 rounds. Its body remains intact and inanimate but its spirit is torn free from its corpse and transformed. Spawn are under the command of the wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

**Daylight Powerlessness (Ex):** Wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it.

**Lifesense (Su):** A dread wraith notices and locates living creatures within 60 feet, just as if it possessed the blindsight ability. It also senses the strength of their life force automatically, as if it had cast *deathwatch*.

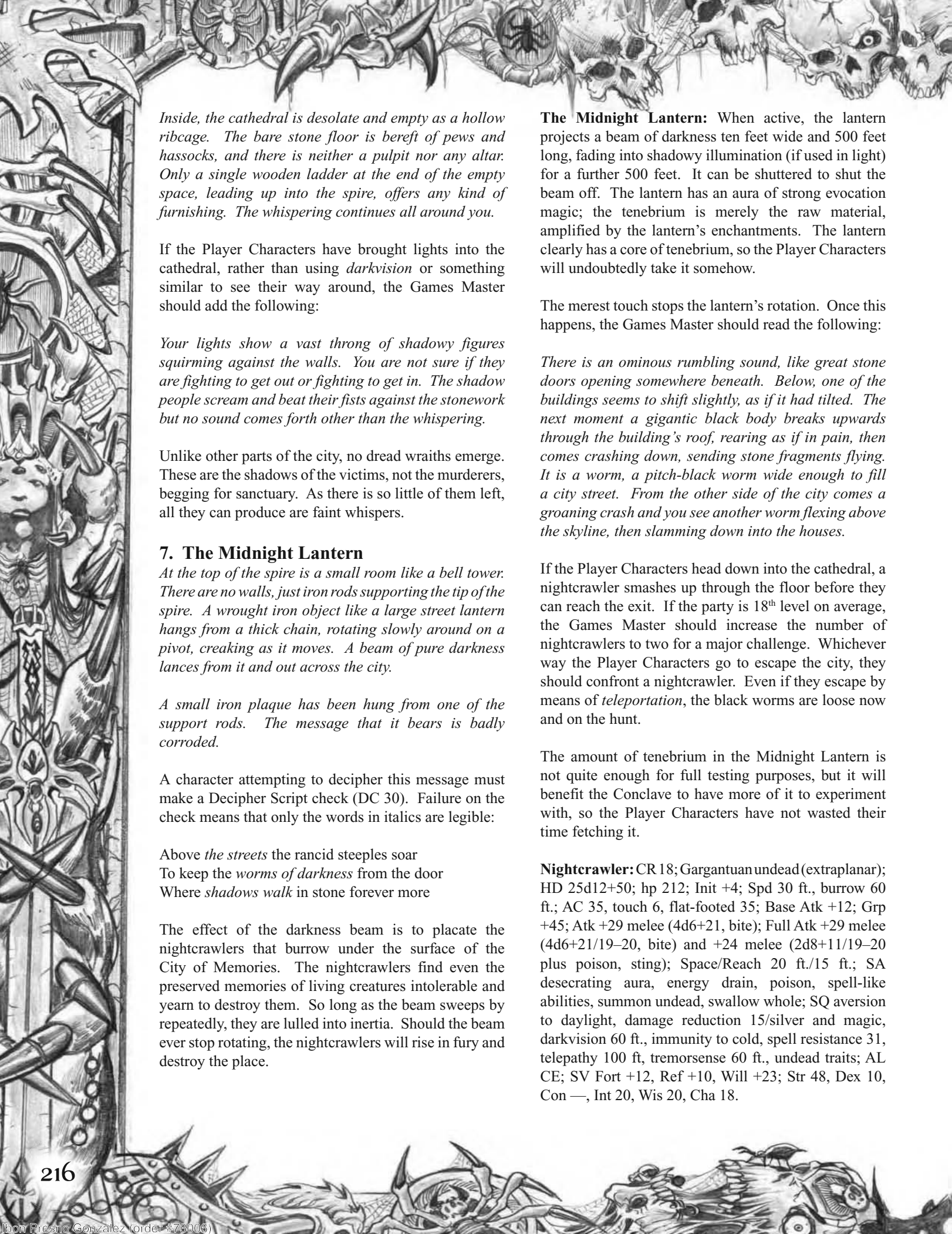
**Unnatural Aura (Su):** Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

## 6. The Cathedral of Whispers

*The cathedral towers before you, its high spire sweeping its beam of pure blackness around and around. Images of blank-eyed angels peer down from the stonework, more sinister than angels have any right to be. The windows are black and shiny as treacle, dark diamond panes in a dark iron grille. The ironbound doors are closed. From within comes a sound like a thousand voices whispering together, as if some great conspiracy were taking place.*

No matter how hard the Player Characters listen, the whispered conversation never becomes intelligible. The doors are closed but not locked. If the Player Characters enter, the Games Master should proceed:





*Inside, the cathedral is desolate and empty as a hollow ribcage. The bare stone floor is bereft of pews and hassocks, and there is neither a pulpit nor any altar. Only a single wooden ladder at the end of the empty space, leading up into the spire, offers any kind of furnishing. The whispering continues all around you.*

If the Player Characters have brought lights into the cathedral, rather than using *darkvision* or something similar to see their way around, the Games Master should add the following:

*Your lights show a vast throng of shadowy figures squirming against the walls. You are not sure if they are fighting to get out or fighting to get in. The shadow people scream and beat their fists against the stonework but no sound comes forth other than the whispering.*

Unlike other parts of the city, no dread wraiths emerge. These are the shadows of the victims, not the murderers, begging for sanctuary. As there is so little of them left, all they can produce are faint whispers.

## 7. The Midnight Lantern

*At the top of the spire is a small room like a bell tower. There are no walls, just iron rods supporting the tip of the spire. A wrought iron object like a large street lantern hangs from a thick chain, rotating slowly around on a pivot, creaking as it moves. A beam of pure darkness lances from it and out across the city.*

*A small iron plaque has been hung from one of the support rods. The message that it bears is badly corroded.*

A character attempting to decipher this message must make a Decipher Script check (DC 30). Failure on the check means that only the words in italics are legible:

*Above the streets the rancid steeples soar  
To keep the worms of darkness from the door  
Where shadows walk in stone forever more*

The effect of the darkness beam is to placate the nightcrawlers that burrow under the surface of the City of Memories. The nightcrawlers find even the preserved memories of living creatures intolerable and yearn to destroy them. So long as the beam sweeps by repeatedly, they are lulled into inertia. Should the beam ever stop rotating, the nightcrawlers will rise in fury and destroy the place.

**The Midnight Lantern:** When active, the lantern projects a beam of darkness ten feet wide and 500 feet long, fading into shadowy illumination (if used in light) for a further 500 feet. It can be shuttered to shut the beam off. The lantern has an aura of strong evocation magic; the tenebrium is merely the raw material, amplified by the lantern's enchantments. The lantern clearly has a core of tenebrium, so the Player Characters will undoubtedly take it somehow.

The merest touch stops the lantern's rotation. Once this happens, the Games Master should read the following:


*There is an ominous rumbling sound, like great stone doors opening somewhere beneath. Below, one of the buildings seems to shift slightly, as if it had tilted. The next moment a gigantic black body breaks upwards through the building's roof, rearing as if in pain, then comes crashing down, sending stone fragments flying. It is a worm, a pitch-black worm wide enough to fill a city street. From the other side of the city comes a groaning crash and you see another worm flexing above the skyline, then slamming down into the houses.*

If the Player Characters head down into the cathedral, a nightcrawler smashes up through the floor before they can reach the exit. If the party is 18<sup>th</sup> level on average, the Games Master should increase the number of nightcrawlers to two for a major challenge. Whichever way the Player Characters go to escape the city, they should confront a nightcrawler. Even if they escape by means of *teleportation*, the black worms are loose now and on the hunt.

The amount of tenebrium in the Midnight Lantern is not quite enough for full testing purposes, but it will benefit the Conclave to have more of it to experiment with, so the Player Characters have not wasted their time fetching it.

**Nightcrawler:** CR 18; Gargantuan undead (extraplanar); HD 25d12+50; hp 212; Init +4; Spd 30 ft., burrow 60 ft.; AC 35, touch 6, flat-footed 35; Base Atk +12; Grp +45; Atk +29 melee (4d6+21, bite); Full Atk +29 melee (4d6+21/19–20, bite) and +24 melee (2d8+11/19–20 plus poison, sting); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft.; SA desecrating aura, energy drain, poison, spell-like abilities, summon undead, swallow whole; SQ aversion to daylight, damage reduction 15/silver and magic, *darkvision* 60 ft., immunity to cold, spell resistance 31, telepathy 100 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +23; Str 48, Dex 10, Con —, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 18.





*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +32, Diplomacy +6, Hide +16, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Listen +33, Move Silently +28, Search +33, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +35, Spot +33, Survival +5 (+7 following tracks); Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (sting), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*cone of cold*).

*Aversion to Daylight (Ex):* If exposed to natural daylight (not merely a *daylight* spell), nightcrawlers take a -4 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks.

*Desecrating Aura (Su):* See nightwing for details.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures inside a nightcrawler's gizzard gain one negative level each round. Removing a negative level requires a Charisma-based Fortitude saving throw (DC 26). For each such negative level bestowed, the nightcrawler gains five temporary hit points.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a nightcrawler must hit with its bite attack. 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 can try to swallow the opponent in the following round.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 22, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Strength. The saving throw DC is Constitution-based.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* At will – *contagion* (DC 18), *deeper darkness*, *detect magic*, *greater dispel magic*, *haste*, *invisibility*, *see invisibility*, *unholy blight* (DC 18); 3/day – *cone of cold* (DC 19), *confusion* (DC 18), *hold monster* (DC 19); 1/day – *finger of death* (DC 21), *mass hold monster* (DC 23), *plane shift* (DC 21). Caster level is 25<sup>th</sup> and the saving throw DCs are Charisma-based.

*Summon Undead (Su):* A nightcrawler can summon undead creatures once per night: 9–16 shadows, 3–6 greater shadows or 2–4 dread wraiths. The undead arrive in 1d10 rounds and serve for one hour or until released.

*Swallow Whole (Ex):* A nightcrawler can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of Huge or smaller size by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent is dealt 2d8+12 points of bludgeoning damage plus 12 points of acid damage per round from the nightcrawler's gizzard and is subject to the creature's energy drain.

A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 35 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 21). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A nightcrawler's interior can hold two Huge, eight Large, 32 Medium, 128 Small, 512 Tiny or smaller opponents.

## 8. The Marshes

*The ground here becomes soft and marshy underfoot. There are some black boulders amid the ooze that look sturdy, but the rest of the marsh looks to be a simmering mass of uncertain depth. Spear-like plants grow in bunches across the surface.*

The boulders are indeed sturdy enough to step on, though they are 5–20 feet apart and thus sometimes difficult to jump between. The marsh ranges in depth from five feet (most places) to sudden drops of 20 feet.

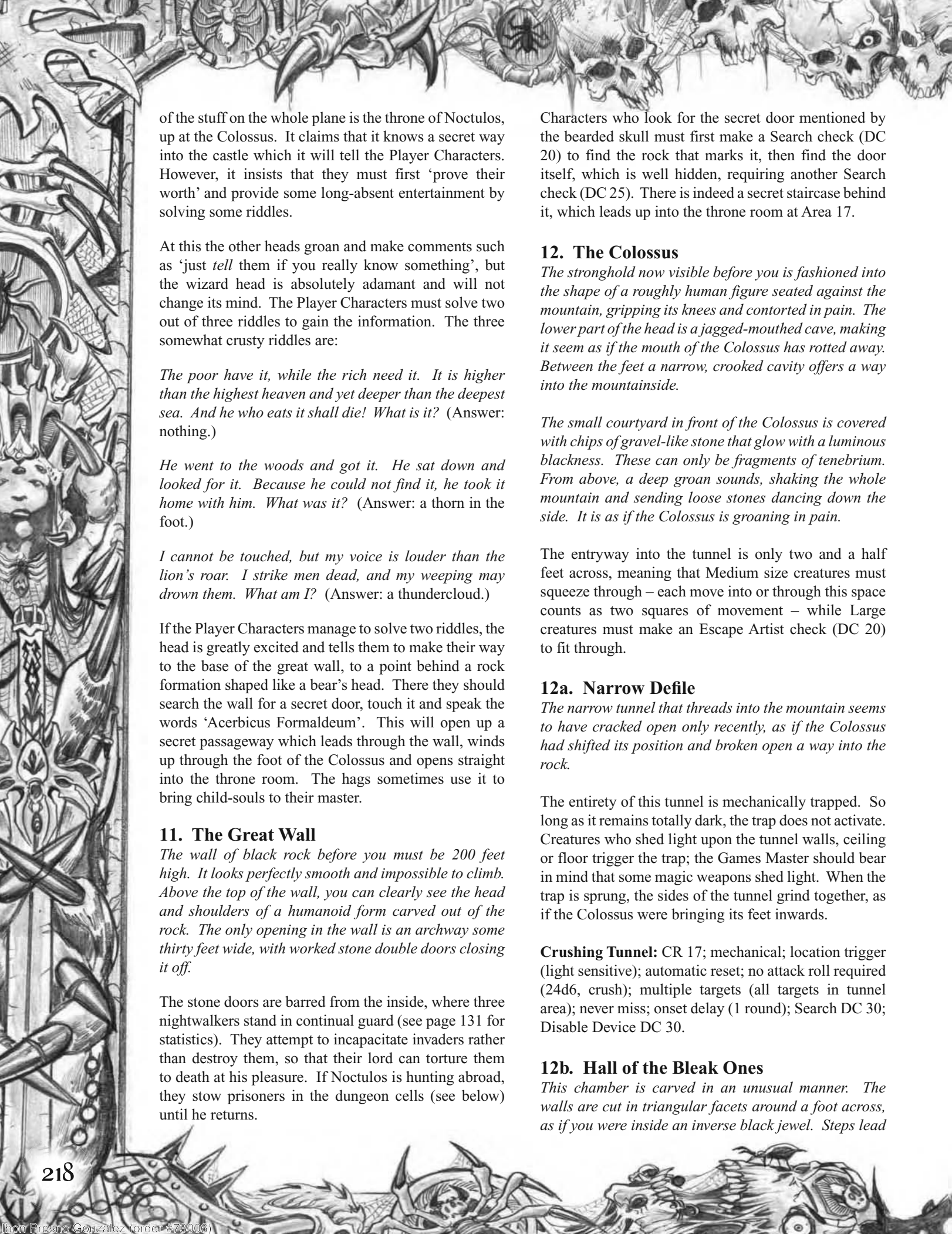
Lurking beneath the deeper parts of the marsh's surface are gangs of 3–4 nightwalkers savouring the cold lightless ambience. If they hear creatures moving by overhead, they raise themselves up to their full height and attack (see page 131 for nightwalker statistics).

## 9. The Trophy Pole

*In the centre of the marsh is a lopsided iron pole from which a mass of severed heads hangs like a cluster of grapes. The heads are mostly human in origin. Some are of extraplanar creatures such as angels and fiends. One even seems to be that of a dragon. It has clearly been here for some time, as the flesh is almost gone from it. The heads appear to be arguing amongst themselves.*

As with all dead things in Noctulos, the heads can speak. They were all taken by the nightwalkers who live in the marsh. Each one of them was on its way to confront Noctulos himself. These heads have a little more personality than most. They draw upon the imprint of the souls that once dwelled within them to argue with their neighbours, hurl abuse at the nightwalkers (who ignore them) and converse with any Player Characters who are close enough. When there is nobody else around, the angel head bickers with the demon head, the human heads either beg them to stop or mock one side or the other and the dragon head quietly ignores them all.

**The Bearded Skull:** One of the heads (that of a greybeard wizard, almost a skull) offers to help the party with some useful information. If the Player Characters ask it about tenebrium, it confirms that the largest block



of the stuff on the whole plane is the throne of Noctulos, up at the Colossus. It claims that it knows a secret way into the castle which it will tell the Player Characters. However, it insists that they must first ‘prove their worth’ and provide some long-absent entertainment by solving some riddles.

At this the other heads groan and make comments such as ‘just tell them if you really know something’, but the wizard head is absolutely adamant and will not change its mind. The Player Characters must solve two out of three riddles to gain the information. The three somewhat crusty riddles are:

*The poor have it, while the rich need it. It is higher than the highest heaven and yet deeper than the deepest sea. And he who eats it shall die! What is it? (Answer: nothing.)*

*He went to the woods and got it. He sat down and looked for it. Because he could not find it, he took it home with him. What was it? (Answer: a thorn in the foot.)*

*I cannot be touched, but my voice is louder than the lion’s roar. I strike men dead, and my weeping may drown them. What am I? (Answer: a thundercloud.)*

If the Player Characters manage to solve two riddles, the head is greatly excited and tells them to make their way to the base of the great wall, to a point behind a rock formation shaped like a bear’s head. There they should search the wall for a secret door, touch it and speak the words ‘Acerbicus Formaldeum’. This will open up a secret passageway which leads through the wall, winds up through the foot of the Colossus and opens straight into the throne room. The hags sometimes use it to bring child-souls to their master.

## 11. The Great Wall

*The wall of black rock before you must be 200 feet high. It looks perfectly smooth and impossible to climb. Above the top of the wall, you can clearly see the head and shoulders of a humanoid form carved out of the rock. The only opening in the wall is an archway some thirty feet wide, with worked stone double doors closing it off.*

The stone doors are barred from the inside, where three nightwalkers stand in continual guard (see page 131 for statistics). They attempt to incapacitate invaders rather than destroy them, so that their lord can torture them to death at his pleasure. If Noctulos is hunting abroad, they stow prisoners in the dungeon cells (see below) until he returns.

Characters who look for the secret door mentioned by the bearded skull must first make a Search check (DC 20) to find the rock that marks it, then find the door itself, which is well hidden, requiring another Search check (DC 25). There is indeed a secret staircase behind it, which leads up into the throne room at Area 17.

## 12. The Colossus

*The stronghold now visible before you is fashioned into the shape of a roughly human figure seated against the mountain, gripping its knees and contorted in pain. The lower part of the head is a jagged-mouthed cave, making it seem as if the mouth of the Colossus has rotted away. Between the feet a narrow, crooked cavity offers a way into the mountainside.*

*The small courtyard in front of the Colossus is covered with chips of gravel-like stone that glow with a luminous blackness. These can only be fragments of tenebrium. From above, a deep groan sounds, shaking the whole mountain and sending loose stones dancing down the side. It is as if the Colossus is groaning in pain.*

The entryway into the tunnel is only two and a half feet across, meaning that Medium size creatures must squeeze through – each move into or through this space counts as two squares of movement – while Large creatures must make an Escape Artist check (DC 20) to fit through.

### 12a. Narrow Defile

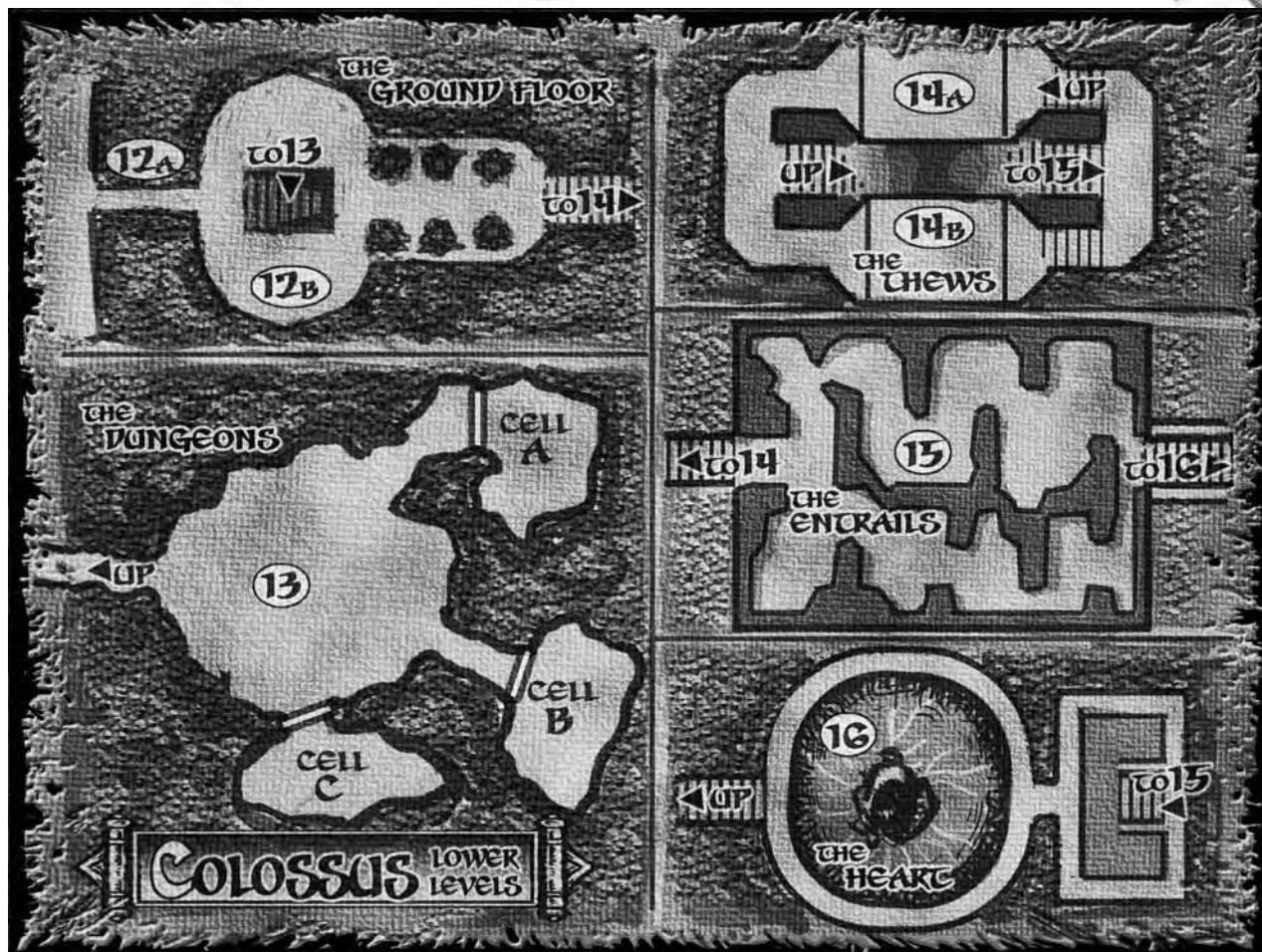
*The narrow tunnel that threads into the mountain seems to have cracked open only recently, as if the Colossus had shifted its position and broken open a way into the rock.*

The entirety of this tunnel is mechanically trapped. So long as it remains totally dark, the trap does not activate. Creatures who shed light upon the tunnel walls, ceiling or floor trigger the trap; the Games Master should bear in mind that some magic weapons shed light. When the trap is sprung, the sides of the tunnel grind together, as if the Colossus were bringing its feet inwards.

**Crushing Tunnel:** CR 17; mechanical; location trigger (light sensitive); automatic reset; no attack roll required (24d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in tunnel area); never miss; onset delay (1 round); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

### 12b. Hall of the Bleak Ones

*This chamber is carved in an unusual manner. The walls are cut in triangular facets around a foot across, as if you were inside an inverse black jewel. Steps lead*



downwards in the centre of the room and a corridor ending in a second flight of steps leads upwards from the eastern wall. Upon the floor is an engraved stone image of a long-haired man raising his hand in blessing while a crowd of supplicants bows and scrapes before him.

Six large, hooded black iron figures stand in three pairs before this staircase, facing one another. In turn, as you watch, each pair bows from the waist and grinding voices speak a phrase. The first pair says, 'Hail unto Thee who art Noctulos in thy darkness.' The second pair follows with 'Hail unto Thee who art Noctulos in thy silence.' The last finishes, 'Hail unto Thee who art Noctulos in thy majesty.' The first pair bows and speaks again and the cycle repeats itself.

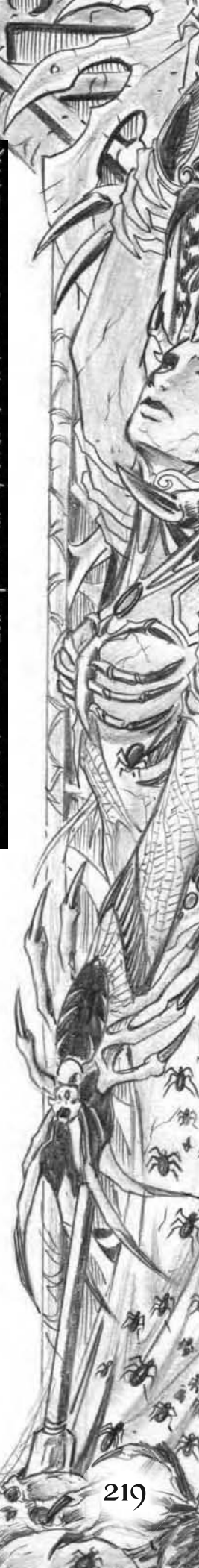
The iron guardians are there to ensure that Noctulos is approached with the proper respect. When passing the first pair, the supplicant must close his eyes. When passing the second, he must place a finger to his lips (or cover his ears). When passing the third, he must bow, crawl or give some other sign of obeisance. Failure

to make the proper sign of obeisance causes all of the statues (which are iron golems set to a continual course of action) to animate and attack.

**Iron Golems (6):** CR 14; Large construct; HD 24d10+30; HP 162; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 31, touch 9, flat-footed 30; Base Atk +18; Grp +34; Atk +29 melee (2d10+12, slam); Full Atk +29 melee (2d10+12, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon; SQ construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 34, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Ten-foot cube, cloud of poisonous gas lasting one round, emitted as a free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; initial damage 1d4 Con, secondary damage 3d4 Con, Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) negates.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex):** The golems are immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently





against them. A magical attack that deals electrical damage slows them (as the *slow* spell) for three rounds with no saving throw. A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any *slow* effect on the golems and heals one point of damage for each three points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause a golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. The golems receive no saving throw against fire effects. They are affected normally by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

**Survivability for Weaker Parties:** If the party is mostly 17<sup>th</sup> level or lower, then the Games Master should have the statues animate two at a time (as they are passed) rather than all at once.

A group that successfully passes the guardians without animating them should receive experience points as if the guardians had been defeated. In this case, however, no extra experience should be granted if the guardians are later animated and fought.

### 13. The Dungeons

*This rough-hewn area has none of the worked precision of the room above and looks as if it was hacked out of the rock by a frenzied giant. Tunnels have been broken through to the northeast, southeast and south. These have gleaming barriers across them, swirling with soap-bubble colours.*

The barriers are permanent, visible *walls of force* (CL 18) that can be activated or deactivated at will by the nightwalkers on guard (see above) or by Noctulos.

Cells A and B are empty. Cell C contains Bodesca of the Axe, a completely demented human barbarian champion who came here in search of a lost child's stolen soul. She swore an unbreakable oath to find the soul and set it free and was driven mad with grief when she found it had been consumed. She can no longer discern between normal people and the denizens of this grim plane and will attack anyone she sees.

*Calm emotions* removes her frenzy temporarily but does not cure the madness. *Greater restoration*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *miracle* or *wish* can restore her mind. Even when sane, she is bitterly depressed and wants nothing other than to destroy Noctulos. Revenge is all that gives her life meaning now.




Bodesca has dreadlock hair tied back with a leather thong, eyes darkened with burnt cork and an assortment of sacred pieces of dead animals tied on to her body in lieu of clothing.

**Bodesca of the Axe, Female Human Bbn16:** CR 16; HD 16d12+16; HP 120; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +16; Grp +19; Atk +20 melee (1d12+4/x3, masterwork greataxe) or +17 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus)); Full Atk +20/+15/+10/+5 melee (1d12+4/x3, masterwork greataxe) or +17/+12/+7/+2 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus)); SA greater rage 5/day; SQ damage reduction 4/—, improved uncanny dodge, indomitable will, trap sense +5; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +13, Craft +5, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +8, Jump +13, Listen +5, Ride +9, Survival +10, Swim +11; Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

*Indomitable Will (Ex):* While raging, Bodesca receives a +4 bonus to Will saving throws against Enchantment spells and effects. This bonus stacks with that granted to Will saving throws by rage.



*Rage (Ex):* While raging, Bodesca gains a +6 bonus to Strength and Constitution, a +3 bonus to Will saving throws and a -2 penalty to Armour Class.

*Equipment & Treasure:* 20 arrows, chain shirt, masterwork composite longbow, masterwork greataxe.

*Note:* Bodesca's equipment is in a pile outside her cell.

## 14a, 14b. The Thews

Both these rooms are identical except as described below.

*You must be inside one of the Colossus' thighs. There is a passageway leading out at the far side of the room, but a deep pool of murky water lies between you and it. The pool spans the whole room and looks as if it is about ten feet deep. At the bottom of the pool is a mosaic. It depicts a noble-faced man clad in black with a mass of hair swirling around him.*

*Around the portrait are found the words, 'Thou shalt lave me with thy scourging waters, O Noctulos, and I shall be cleansed.'*

Noctulos requires petitioners to his throne to immerse themselves in his version of a purification bath before they come any closer. The water here is *unholy* (dealing damage to good outsiders the way holy water damages evil outsiders and undead) and the pool has a potent additional effect. Any good divine spellcaster (or divine spellcaster who worships a good deity) who enters the waters voluntarily suffers profanation. He can no longer cast or prepare divine spells until he atones for this misdeed by means of an *atonement* spell. Divinations cast before entering the water reveal that the pool is one of evil baptism and will have a calamitous effect on one's relationship with the good deities.

Anyone examining the portrait and making a Sense Motive check (DC 15) concludes that it is a purposefully idealised image designed to flatter the person it depicts, especially in the areas of comeliness and hair length.

## 15. The Entrails

*The passage dips down into a network of winding passageways, filled to a depth of three feet with clear fluid.*

This fluid is magical in nature and radiates a powerful aura of Transmutation. Evil and neutral-aligned creatures who come into contact with it suffer no ill

effects. If a good-aligned creature comes into contact with it, the fluid around him turns a livid yellow in colour and becomes highly corrosive, dealing 6d6 points of acid damage per round of contact, with a Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) for half damage. A good-aligned creature who has bathed in the unholy water pool in Area 14 is immune to this effect for one hour.

An exceptionally large and deadly devourer roams through the Entrails seeking out failed petitioners to consume. Noctulos calls it 'the Gorger' and treats it as a beloved pet.

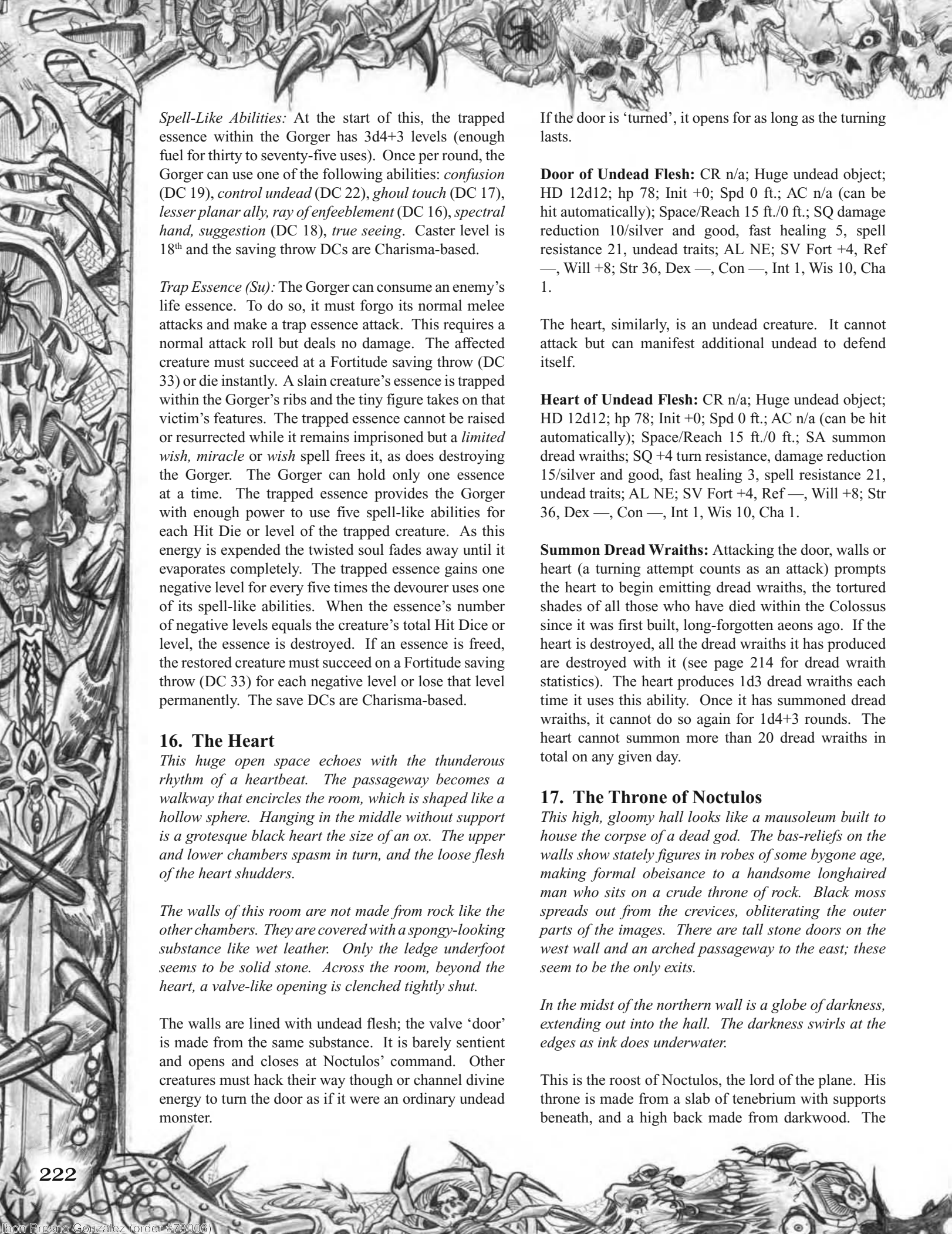
**The Gorger:** CR 18; Huge undead (extraplanar); HD 36d12; hp 234; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 27, touch 8, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +18; Grp +39; Atk +30 melee (1d8+13, claw); Full Atk +30 melee (1d8+13, 2 claws); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA energy drain, spell-like abilities, trap essence; SQ darkvision 60 ft., spell deflection, spell resistance 28, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +23; Str 36, Dex 10, Con —, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 21.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +28, Concentration +30, Diplomacy +19, Jump +28, Listen +30, Move Silently +27, Search +34, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft +15, Spot +32, Survival +27 (+30 following tracks); Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armour, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*confusion*), Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*ray of enfeeblement*), Snatch, Weapon Focus (claw).

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by the Gorger's claw attack or *spectral hand* ability gain one negative level. Removing a negative level requires a Fortitude saving throw (DC 33). The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Spell Deflection (Su):* The trapped essence provides a measure of magical protection. If any of the following spells are cast at the Gorger and overcome its spell resistance, they affect the imprisoned essence instead: *banishment, chaos hammer, confusion, crushing despair, detect thoughts, dispel evil, dominate person, fear, geas/quest, holy word, hypnosis, imprisonment, magic jar, maze, suggestion, trap the soul* or any form of charm or compulsion. In many cases this deflection effectively neutralises the spell. Some of these effects might eliminate the trapped essence, depriving the gorger of its spell-like abilities until it can consume another victim.





**Spell-Like Abilities:** At the start of this, the trapped essence within the Gorgon has 3d4+3 levels (enough fuel for thirty to seventy-five uses). Once per round, the Gorgon can use one of the following abilities: *confusion* (DC 19), *control undead* (DC 22), *ghoul touch* (DC 17), *lesser planar ally*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *spectral hand*, *suggestion* (DC 18), *true seeing*. Caster level is 18<sup>th</sup> and the saving throw DCs are Charisma-based.

**Trap Essence (Su):** The Gorgon can consume an enemy's life essence. To do so, it must forgo its normal melee attacks and make a trap essence attack. This requires a normal attack roll but deals no damage. The affected creature must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 33) or die instantly. A slain creature's essence is trapped within the Gorgon's ribs and the tiny figure takes on that victim's features. The trapped essence cannot be raised or resurrected while it remains imprisoned but a *limited wish*, *miracle* or *wish* spell frees it, as does destroying the Gorgon. The Gorgon can hold only one essence at a time. The trapped essence provides the Gorgon with enough power to use five spell-like abilities for each Hit Die or level of the trapped creature. As this energy is expended the twisted soul fades away until it evaporates completely. The trapped essence gains one negative level for every five times the devourer uses one of its spell-like abilities. When the essence's number of negative levels equals the creature's total Hit Dice or level, the essence is destroyed. If an essence is freed, the restored creature must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (DC 33) for each negative level or lose that level permanently. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

## 16. The Heart

*This huge open space echoes with the thunderous rhythm of a heartbeat. The passageway becomes a walkway that encircles the room, which is shaped like a hollow sphere. Hanging in the middle without support is a grotesque black heart the size of an ox. The upper and lower chambers spasm in turn, and the loose flesh of the heart shudders.*

*The walls of this room are not made from rock like the other chambers. They are covered with a spongy-looking substance like wet leather. Only the ledge underfoot seems to be solid stone. Across the room, beyond the heart, a valve-like opening is clenched tightly shut.*

The walls are lined with undead flesh; the valve 'door' is made from the same substance. It is barely sentient and opens and closes at Noctulos' command. Other creatures must hack their way through or channel divine energy to turn the door as if it were an ordinary undead monster.

If the door is 'turned', it opens for as long as the turning lasts.

**Door of Undead Flesh:** CR n/a; Huge undead object; HD 12d12; hp 78; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC n/a (can be hit automatically); Space/Reach 15 ft./0 ft.; SQ damage reduction 10/silver and good, fast healing 5, spell resistance 21, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref —, Will +8; Str 36, Dex —, Con —, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 1.

The heart, similarly, is an undead creature. It cannot attack but can manifest additional undead to defend itself.

**Heart of Undead Flesh:** CR n/a; Huge undead object; HD 12d12; hp 78; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC n/a (can be hit automatically); Space/Reach 15 ft./0 ft.; SA summon dread wraiths; SQ +4 turn resistance, damage reduction 15/silver and good, fast healing 3, spell resistance 21, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref —, Will +8; Str 36, Dex —, Con —, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 1.

**Summon Dread Wraiths:** Attacking the door, walls or heart (a turning attempt counts as an attack) prompts the heart to begin emitting dread wraiths, the tortured shades of all those who have died within the Colossus since it was first built, long-forgotten aeons ago. If the heart is destroyed, all the dread wraiths it has produced are destroyed with it (see page 214 for dread wraith statistics). The heart produces 1d3 dread wraiths each time it uses this ability. Once it has summoned dread wraiths, it cannot do so again for 1d4+3 rounds. The heart cannot summon more than 20 dread wraiths in total on any given day.

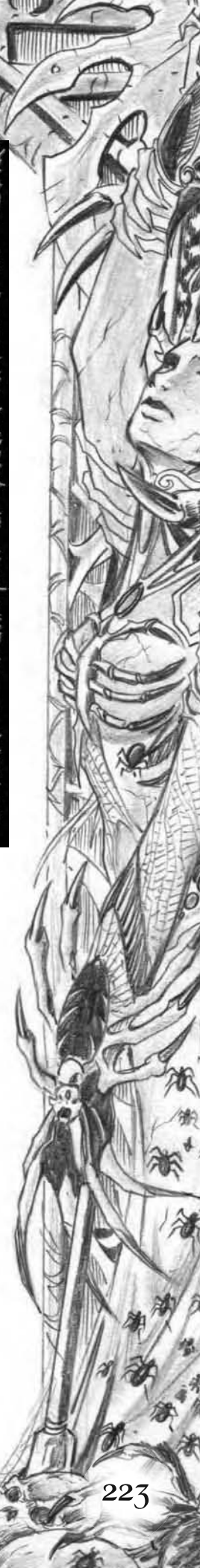
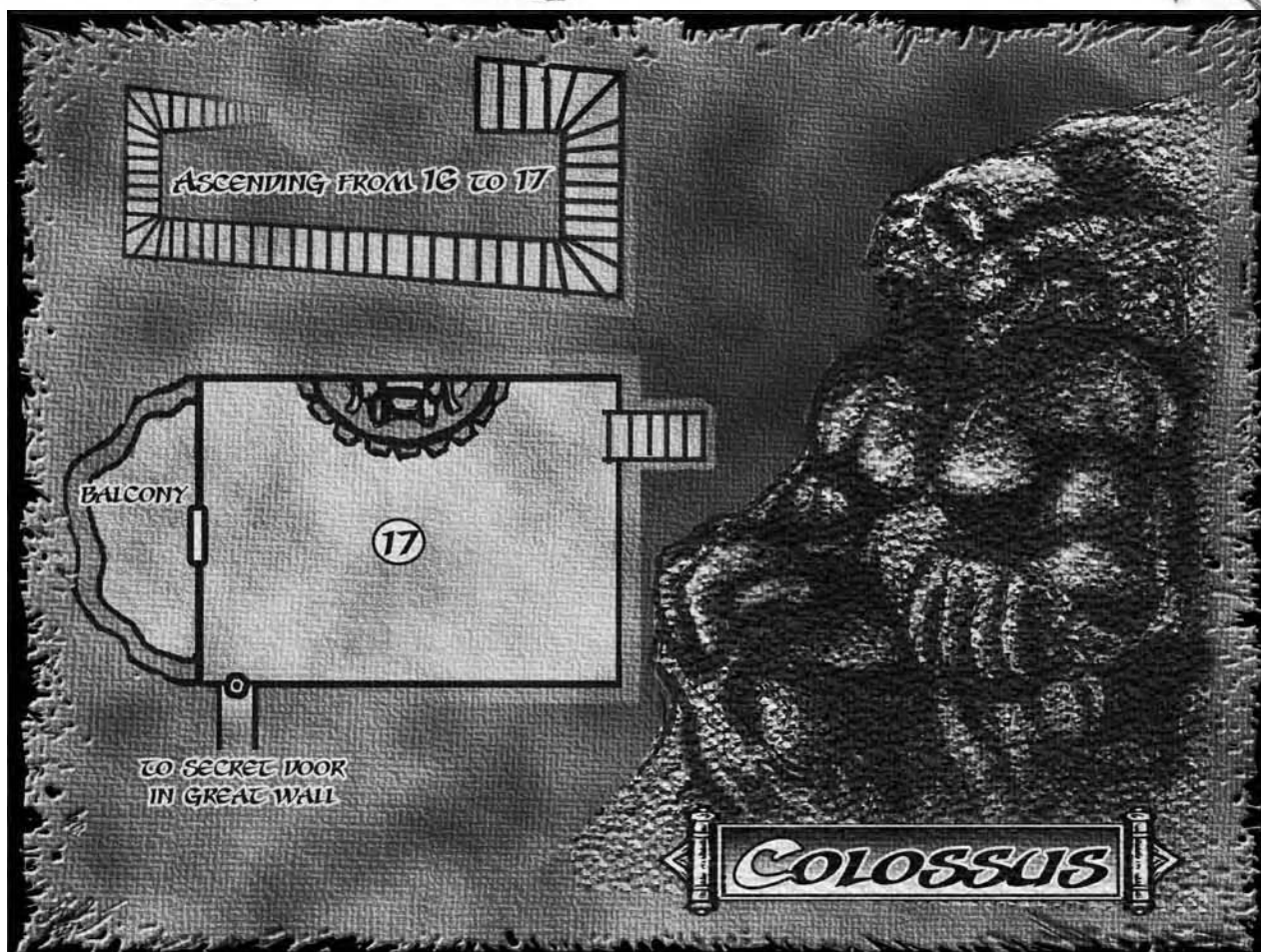
## 17. The Throne of Noctulos

*This high, gloomy hall looks like a mausoleum built to house the corpse of a dead god. The bas-reliefs on the walls show stately figures in robes of some bygone age, making formal obeisance to a handsome longhaired man who sits on a crude throne of rock. Black moss spreads out from the crevices, obliterating the outer parts of the images. There are tall stone doors on the west wall and an arched passageway to the east; these seem to be the only exits.*

*In the midst of the northern wall is a globe of darkness, extending out into the hall. The darkness swirls at the edges as ink does underwater.*

This is the roost of Noctulos, the lord of the plane. His throne is made from a slab of tenebrium with supports beneath, and a high back made from darkwood. The





tenebrium emits a spherical field of darkness 60 feet in diameter. This is not ordinary magical *darkness*, but the more mundane kind emitted by tenebrium, which dims ordinary light.

Noctulos is hiding among the black moss on the southern wall (see below).

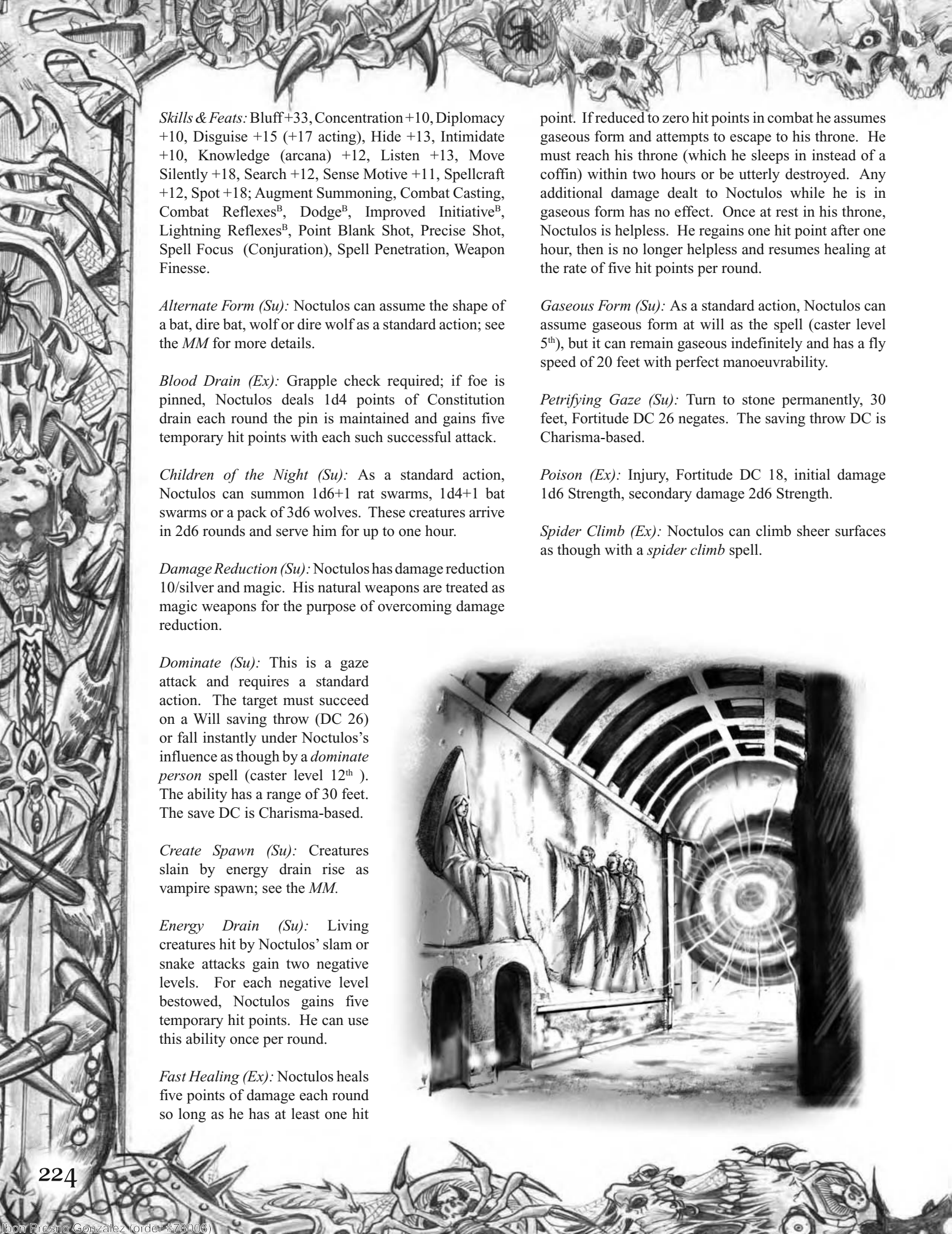
**The Balcony:** The balcony to the west of the throne room forms the lower jaw of the Colossus. Noctulos occasionally receives flying visitors here (if the nightwings have not eaten them first). Stone doors, barred from within, separate the balcony from the throne room.

From below, the balcony may seem like an easy short cut to the throne room, but this is a fatal delusion, as anyone who *teleports* up will quickly discover. In the hollows of the Colossus' upper palate, directly above the balcony, a flock of six nightwings roosts. These are usually asleep, but they awaken if they hear prey coming near.

**The Vampire Noctulos, Male Vampiric Medusa**

**Sor10:** CR 19; Medium undead (augmented monstrous humanoid); HD 6d12 plus 10d4; hp 64; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 17, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +11; Grp +14; Atk +20 ranged (1d6+7/x3, +4 *composite shortbow* (+3 Str bonus)) or +21 melee (1d4+8/19–20, +5 *dagger*) or +16 melee (1d4+3 plus poison and energy drain, snakes) or +16 melee (1d6+3 plus energy drain, slam) or +16 melee (1d6+5, *staff of power*); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 ranged (1d6+8/x3, +4 *composite shortbow* (+3 Str bonus)); or +21/+16/+11 melee (1d4+8/19–20, +5 *dagger*) and +11 melee (1d4+3 plus poison and energy drain, snakes); or +16 melee (1d6+3 plus energy drain, 2 slams) and +11 melee (1d4+3 plus poison and energy drain, snakes); or +16/+11/+6 melee (1d6+5, *staff of power*) and +11 melee (1d4+3 plus poison and energy drain, snakes); SA blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate, energy drain, petrifying gaze, poison; SQ +4 turn resistance, alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistance to cold 10 and electrical 10, spider climb, undead traits, vampire weaknesses; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +17, Will +17; Str 16, Dex 20, Con —, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 26.





**Skills & Feats:** Bluff +33, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +15 (+17 acting), Hide +13, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Listen +13, Move Silently +18, Search +12, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +12, Spot +18; Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Spell Focus (Conjuration), Spell Penetration, Weapon Finesse.

**Alternate Form (Su):** Noctulos can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf or dire wolf as a standard action; see the *MM* for more details.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** Grapple check required; if foe is pinned, Noctulos deals 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained and gains five temporary hit points with each such successful attack.

**Children of the Night (Su):** As a standard action, Noctulos can summon 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms or a pack of 3d6 wolves. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve him for up to one hour.

**Damage Reduction (Su):** Noctulos has damage reduction 10/silver and magic. His natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Dominate (Su):** This is a gaze attack and requires a standard action. The target must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC 26) or fall instantly under Noctulos's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12<sup>th</sup>). The ability has a range of 30 feet. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Create Spawn (Su):** Creatures slain by energy drain rise as vampire spawn; see the *MM*.

**Energy Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by Noctulos' slam or snake attacks gain two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, Noctulos gains five temporary hit points. He can use this ability once per round.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** Noctulos heals five points of damage each round so long as he has at least one hit

point. If reduced to zero hit points in combat he assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape to his throne. He must reach his throne (which he sleeps in instead of a coffin) within two hours or be utterly destroyed. Any additional damage dealt to Noctulos while he is in gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in his throne, Noctulos is helpless. He regains one hit point after one hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of five hit points per round.


**Gaseous Form (Su):** As a standard action, Noctulos can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 5<sup>th</sup>), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect manoeuvrability.

**Petrifying Gaze (Su):** Turn to stone permanently, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 26 negates. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 18, initial damage 1d6 Strength, secondary damage 2d6 Strength.

**Spider Climb (Ex):** Noctulos can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.





*Spells known (6/8/8/8/7/4, save DC 18 + spell level): 0<sup>th</sup> – acid splash, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, ray of frost, mage hand, message, read magic, touch of fatigue; 1<sup>st</sup> – expeditious retreat, mage armour, magic missile, shield, obscuring mist; 2<sup>nd</sup> – eagle’s splendour, hideous laughter, summon monster II, web; 3<sup>rd</sup> – dispel magic, stinking cloud, summon monster III; 4<sup>th</sup> – animate dead, dimension door; 5<sup>th</sup> – cloudkill.*

*Equipment & Treasure: +4 composite shortbow, +5 dagger, arrows (20), cloak of charisma +6, staff of power*

The secret behind Noctulos’ self-imposed exile and constant hiding away in a dome of darkness is not related to his vampiric condition at all. He is a male medusa, a hideously ugly freak of nature, monstrous because of his race and doubly so because of his aberrant gender.

The offspring of a babau demon and a medusa sorceress, he was abandoned by his kin many centuries ago and forced to fend for himself. He became a vampire voluntarily, desperate to increase his powers by any means he could find. He finally found his way to this plane, where he used his powers to set himself up as its enigmatic ruler.

The Colossus is now decorated with idealised images of him, in which he is portrayed as handsome and his hair is depicted as a virile mane instead of a hissing reptilian mass.

Noctulos is amused by the Player Characters’ attempts to persevere and confront him. He is supremely arrogant and does not believe that he is at any risk. In his long centuries of isolation, he has forgotten that he is not in fact a god but merely an undead tyrant who has fallen for his own rhetoric.

So as to prolong the game of cat and mouse (as he sees it), he is not lurking in the sphere of darkness. Instead he has used his powers to *spider climb* up the walls and hide himself among the black moss mentioned in the room description. Once the Player Characters are off guard, he selects the weakest-looking one and attempts to destroy him.

*Note:* This is intended to be a very hard fight indeed. If the Player Characters are not well prepared for it, there may be a massacre. If the Player Characters have Bodesca of the Axe with them, she rushes in and attacks Noctulos as soon as she has a chance, which buy them a little time as he tears her to pieces.

## **Plot Event: The Coming of the Dark**

If the Player Characters manage to bring Noctulos close to destruction (below 20 hit points), he screams out for assistance from his ally, the enemy of the Starborn: the Dark.

*‘Aid me, Father Night! Aid me, exiled one! Crush out these sparks of malignant life and claim their bodies for your own!’*

With that, the Player Characters feel an overpowering sense of imminent danger, as if some enormous hand had cast a shadow over them. If they can see out of the balcony doors, they see the same titanic shape appear that interfered with their teleportation at the beginning of the last adventure – a hooded, ragged shadow as huge as the Colossus in whose skull they stand. It slowly reaches out its fingers towards the throne room.

The Player Characters now have five rounds in which to finish Noctulos (if they wish to attempt this) and make off with the tenebrium from the throne. At the end of those five rounds, the substance of the Dark begins to permeate the throne room, like a wall of shadow flooding across it. It moves at a rate of 60 feet per round. The Dark is strong on this plane and can drain the life from its victims in seconds. All living creatures within the darkness must make Fortitude saving throws (DC 40) on every round on which they remain immersed or gain a negative level. The Starborn gain a +10 resistance bonus to this saving throw because of their stellar nature. The Dark remains until all living creatures in the Colossus are dead.

## **Aftermath**

With the tenebrium block from Noctulos’ throne safely in their possession, the Player Characters can return to Xoth Sarandi, where the elven mages subject it to a thorough arcane analysis.

The news is good: it is possible to create a wand that will project exactly the right kind of energy to disrupt the tenebrium’s crystalline matrix. If the Player Characters can enter the spire at Crom Calamar and discharge the wand into the mass of tenebrium at its head, the resultant discharge will destroy the crystal and probably a large part of the spire as well. With the darkness lifted, the drow will lose their advantage, and the human armies and their allies will finally be able to strike back hard against the oppressors!





# Genesis of the Ironclads

**D**rozen Vellish has passed on some critical information. The Darkspears are not the only magical constructs that Rannirak has been busy with. Vellish produces a scroll of blueprints that shows the drow's latest project.

They have designed magic-powered spider-craft that clamber across enemy defences with ease, crushing warriors underfoot. They slice straight through armoured opponents with their razor claws and exude clouds of poison gas. Human armies will be defenceless against these vehicles, and strongholds that depend on sheer walls for protection will be easy prey, as the spider-craft will just climb straight up the outside.

Under the Dolorous Peak in the southeast of Svarth, the forges of the grey ones are burning hot and bright. So far the duergar there have produced only prototypes, but soon the finished craft will be ready to deliver.

Working from Drozen Vellish's information, the Player Characters must travel to the Dolorous Peak, find the source of these ghastly weapons and destroy it. The duergar, frequent allies of the drow, are the most numerous occupants of the factory – relatively weak individually but capable of causing trouble in numbers, even for high-level characters.

This is a long subterranean adventure: it involves infiltrating and destroying an underground factory, design workshop and testing ground. The immense machines in the duergar forges are just as lethal as the grey dwarves are...

## Plot Event: Finding the Factory

This adventure can come anywhere after the Player Characters rescue Drozen Vellish. Once the Conclave has the information about the Ironclads, the next step is to find out where they are being built and see if the Player Characters can do anything to stop it.

**Using *Discern Location*:** If the Player Characters were able to slip a familiar item in amongst the iron pigs, then they (or a Conclave member) will be able to use *discern location* to find out where it has gone.

**Using Previously Received Information:** Alternatively, if the Player Characters brought back information from the Council of Trees (see Chapter 5, The Warriors of Winter), the Conclave can put this information together with what Vellish has told them and work out which installation is being used to make the Ironclads. The more the Player Characters are shown to be responsible for finding out where the Ironclads are being made, the better.

**Following On from 'Traitor's Gambit':** The Player Characters can also opt to stay at the Mines of Mencarth and use *invisibility* or some similar method to trail the iron delivery to the Dolorous Peak.

**Deus Ex Machina:** Finally, if there are no other leads to go on or some disaster befalls the party (such as Vellish being killed before he can divulge the information), the Games Master can always have one of the Conclave members use *contact other plane* to find out the necessary information.

## What the Conclave Knows about the Factory

The Conclave can only tell the Player Characters the following information about the factory at the Dolorous Peak, based on rumours that the members have gathered.

- The factory is definitely a duergar operation.
- As the top-secret Ironclad project is taking place there, security is likely to be very high. The Player Characters should expect to encounter the most elite defence forces the drow have to offer. Stealth will be preferable to confrontation, at least at first.
- There have been rumours for a while now that the duergar have some sort of souped-up mechanical manufacturing process in place to enable large amounts of metal objects to be manufactured quickly.
- The Player Characters should try to cripple the factory if they can. Destroying the finished Ironclads is important, but destroying the enemy's ability to make more of them is most important.



## Getting There

The easiest way to reach the peak is by *teleportation*. Since nobody in the Conclave has ever seen the inside of the factory, the Player Characters will have to *teleport* to the outside of the mountain and look for a way in. The only other option is to head overland, which is potentially hazardous. Unless the Player Characters come into Svarth from the direction of Ghael, they will almost certainly encounter hostile forces: drow in Jehannum, barbarians in Visk and roaming dragons in the northern mountains of Svarth.

## The Dolorous Peak

The installation set up to manufacture the Ironclads is a duergar factory situated in their region of Svarth, a small portion to the southeast. It is built under a lone grey mountain called the Dolorous Peak, named for the bleak, miserable look of the place.

Rannirak would not entrust the building of his Ironclads to anyone but the duergar smiths; nobody else has the skill and the equipment to produce them in sufficient number. He has chosen the Dolorous Peak factories as the manufacturing points despite their dangerous proximity to dwarf lands because they are ideal for his needs. The factories use experimental machinery that is unlike anything seen elsewhere on Ashfar and Rannirak likes industrial innovation.

**The Mountain:** The peak stands out like a pile of grey mortar that has fallen from a trowel among more picturesque hills. Nothing but a few patches of thorny scrub grow on its barren, rocky slopes. There is no home more fit for the grey, humourless duergar dwarves.

**The Industrial Machinery:** The duergar have been employing their own hybrid of elementary steam technology, magic and conventional smithcraft for years now, drawing on methods that the more wholesome dwarf races shun as unworthy. The source of power for their manufacturing plant is a captive storm spirit of gigantic size called Jien Zun Dum, from whom the duergar draw lightning that they seal in glass receptacles. This bottled lightning is then used to fuel their great machines.

This is an ominous development for Ashfar. The era of the elven hegemony, a time where magic, fine arts and the crafts of the woods ruled, is long past. The machines in the Dolorous Peak, the Ironclad spider-craft and the Darkspears are all manifestations of something new and threatening. Driven by their master, the Dark, the drow have chosen to embrace machinery as well as magic in this Equinox; and it is bringing them closer to victory

than ever before. The Player Characters should be aware that this new fondness for machinery is symptomatic of the drow's whole worldview. They want a world of predictable uniformity and abiding darkness, where the annoyance of individual identity is suppressed – in short, a world of soulless machines.

## Non-Player Character Group: Occupants of the Factory

There are four principal classes of people in the factory: the duergar labourers, who operate the machinery to make the Ironclads; the drow guards, who protect them while they do so; the drow master craftsmen who make the fine magical components; and the drow divine spellcasters whose responsibility it is to activate the Ironclads by magic and repair them if they are damaged.

Typical members of each group are described below. Descriptions and statistic blocks for unique creatures are provided in the room contents where they appear.

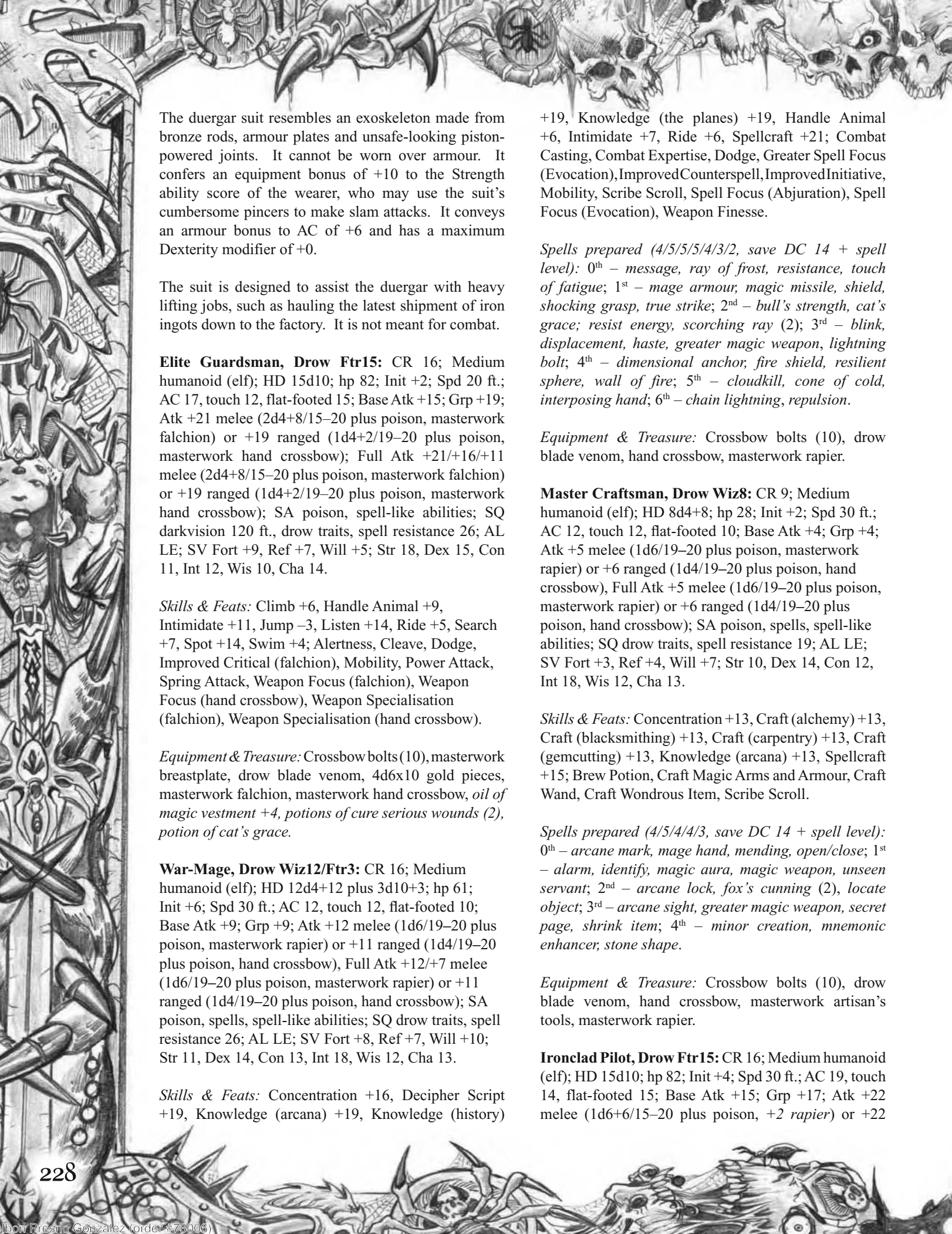
A fifth group, much smaller than the rest, is made up of those few specially honoured drow who are being trained to pilot the new Ironclads. These are expected to keep to their chambers at all times except when they are training with the prototype craft.

**Craftsman-at-Arms, Duergar Ftr10:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 10d10+30; hp 85; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d8+5/x3, masterwork warhammer) or +12 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+5/x3, masterwork warhammer) or +12 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA duergar traits, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., duergar traits; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 4.

**Skills & Feats:** Appraise +5, Climb –1, Craft (blacksmithing) +10, Craft (stonemasonry) +9, Listen +4, Move Silently +1, Spot +5; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Craft (blacksmithing)), Weapon Focus (warhammer), Weapon Specialisation (warhammer).

**Equipment & Treasure:** Chainmail armour, crossbow bolts (10), light crossbow, masterwork warhammer.

**Heavy Lifter, Duergar Ftr10:** As the Craftsman-at-Arms; however, the duergar heavy lifter is also equipped with a magically powered mechanical suit.



The duergar suit resembles an exoskeleton made from bronze rods, armour plates and unsafe-looking piston-powered joints. It cannot be worn over armour. It confers an equipment bonus of +10 to the Strength ability score of the wearer, who may use the suit's cumbersome pincers to make slam attacks. It conveys an armour bonus to AC of +6 and has a maximum Dexterity modifier of +0.

The suit is designed to assist the duergar with heavy lifting jobs, such as hauling the latest shipment of iron ingots down to the factory. It is not meant for combat.

**Elite Guardsman, Drow Ftr15:** CR 16; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 15d10; hp 82; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +15; Grp +19; Atk +21 melee (2d4+8/15–20 plus poison, masterwork falchion) or +19 ranged (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (2d4+8/15–20 plus poison, masterwork falchion) or +19 ranged (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, masterwork hand crossbow); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, spell resistance 26; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills & Feats:* Climb +6, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +11, Jump –3, Listen +14, Ride +5, Search +7, Spot +14, Swim +4; Alertness, Cleave, Dodge, Improved Critical (falchion), Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Focus (hand crossbow), Weapon Specialisation (falchion), Weapon Specialisation (hand crossbow).

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), masterwork breastplate, drow blade venom, 4d6x10 gold pieces, masterwork falchion, masterwork hand crossbow, *oil of magic vestment* +4, *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *potion of cat's grace*.

**War-Mage, Drow Wiz12/Ftr3:** CR 16; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 12d4+12 plus 3d10+3; hp 61; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +9; Grp +9; Atk +12 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +11 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow), Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +11 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow); SA poison, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 26; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +10; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +16, Decipher Script +19, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (history)

+19, Knowledge (the planes) +19, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +7, Ride +6, Spellcraft +21; Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Greater Spell Focus (Evocation), Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Focus (Evocation), Weapon Finesse.

*Spells prepared* (4/5/5/5/4/3/2, save DC 14 + spell level): 0<sup>th</sup> – *message*, *ray of frost*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *mage armour*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*, *true strike*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*; *resist energy*, *scorching ray* (2); 3<sup>rd</sup> – *blink*, *displacement*, *haste*, *greater magic weapon*, *lightning bolt*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *dimensional anchor*, *fire shield*, *resilient sphere*, *wall of fire*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *cloudkill*, *cone of cold*, *interposing hand*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *chain lightning*, *repulsion*.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), drow blade venom, hand crossbow, masterwork rapier.

**Master Craftsman, Drow Wiz8:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 8d4+8; hp 28; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +6 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow), Full Atk +5 melee (1d6/19–20 plus poison, masterwork rapier) or +6 ranged (1d4/19–20 plus poison, hand crossbow); SA poison, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 19; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 13.


*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +13, Craft (alchemy) +13, Craft (blacksmithing) +13, Craft (carpentry) +13, Craft (gemcutting) +13, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Spellcraft +15; Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll.

*Spells prepared* (4/5/4/4/3, save DC 14 + spell level): 0<sup>th</sup> – *arcane mark*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *alarm*, *identify*, *magic aura*, *magic weapon*, *unseen servant*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *arcane lock*, *fox's cunning* (2), *locate object*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *arcane sight*, *greater magic weapon*, *secret page*, *shrink item*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *minor creation*, *mnemonic enhancer*, *stone shape*.

*Equipment & Treasure:* Crossbow bolts (10), drow blade venom, hand crossbow, masterwork artisan's tools, masterwork rapier.

**Ironclad Pilot, Drow Ftr15:** CR 16; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 15d10; hp 82; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +15; Grp +17; Atk +22 melee (1d6+6/15–20 plus poison, +2 rapier) or +22





ranged (1d8+6/19–20/x3 plus poison, +2 *composite longbow* (+2 Str bonus)); Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (1d6+6/15–20 plus poison, +2 *rapier*) or +22/+17/+12 ranged (1d8+6/19–20/x3 plus poison, +2 *composite longbow*); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, spell resistance 26; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

**Skills & Feats:** Climb +11, Craft (bowmaking) +10, Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +11, Jump +11, Listen +2, Pilot (Ironclad) +7, Ride +7, Search +3, Spot +2; Blind-Fight, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Ironclad weapons), Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Critical (rapier), Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialisation (longbow), Weapon Specialisation (rapier).

**Equipment & Treasure:** +2 *composite longbow*, +3 *leather armour*, +2 *rapier*, arrows (20), drow blade venom (3 doses).

**Senior Priestess, Female Drow Clr16:** CR 17; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 16d8+32; hp 104; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +12; Grp +13; Atk +14 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +14 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow) or +15 ranged (entanglement, masterwork net); Full Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +14 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow) or +15 ranged (entanglement, masterwork net); SA poison, rebuke undead, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 27; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 10.

**Skills & Feats:** Concentration +19, Diplomacy +3, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spellcraft +16; Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Proficiency (net).

**Domains:** Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Magic (can use spell trigger or spell activation items as an 8<sup>th</sup> level wizard).

**Spells prepared** (6/6+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/3+1/2+1): 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, guidance, mending, read magic, resistance* (2); 1<sup>st</sup> – *bane, bless, cause fear, detect chaos, detect good, protection from good\*, shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bull's strength, desecrate\*, make whole, resist energy, shatter* (2), *zone of truth*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *animate dead, dispel magic, magic circle against good\*, magic*

*vestment, prayer, protection from energy, stone shape*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *divination, divine power, giant vermin, greater magic weapon, sending, unholy blight\**; 5<sup>th</sup> – *commune, dispel good\*, flame strike, righteous might, unhallow*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *animate objects, create undead\*, planar ally, word of recall*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *blasphemy\*, destruction, repulsion, spell turning*; 8<sup>th</sup> – *antimagic field, fire storm, unholy aura\**.  
\*Domain spell.

**Equipment & Treasure:** Crossbow bolts (10), drow blade venom, full plate armour, hand crossbow, heavy shield, masterwork net, masterwork rapier.

## Structure of the Factory

The factory is divided into an industrial level and a residential level, with a small observation deck above. From outside, there is no clue as to the vastness of the complex within. The Dolorous Peak has no open shafts or windows. The only point of access from the surface is the loading bay, where the iron ingots from Mencarth and the other mines are delivered.

## Sounding the Alarm

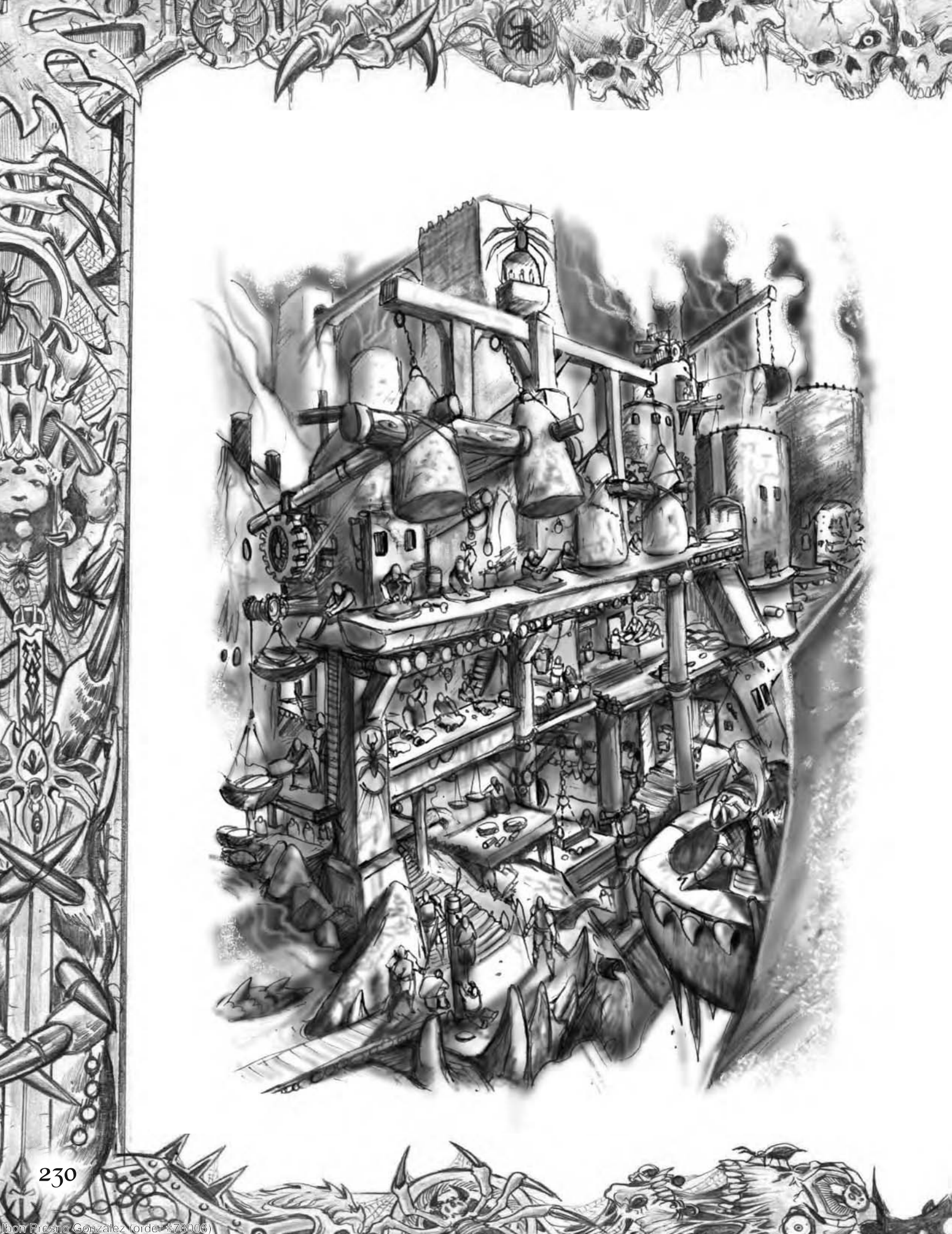
It is important for the Player Characters to be stealthy on this adventure, at least until they reach their objective. The Games Master should build tension where possible with near misses (guards seeming to have heard something, enemies who nearly reach the alarm) but err on the side of generosity – if the whole factory is roused against them, the Player Characters will face an impossible fight.

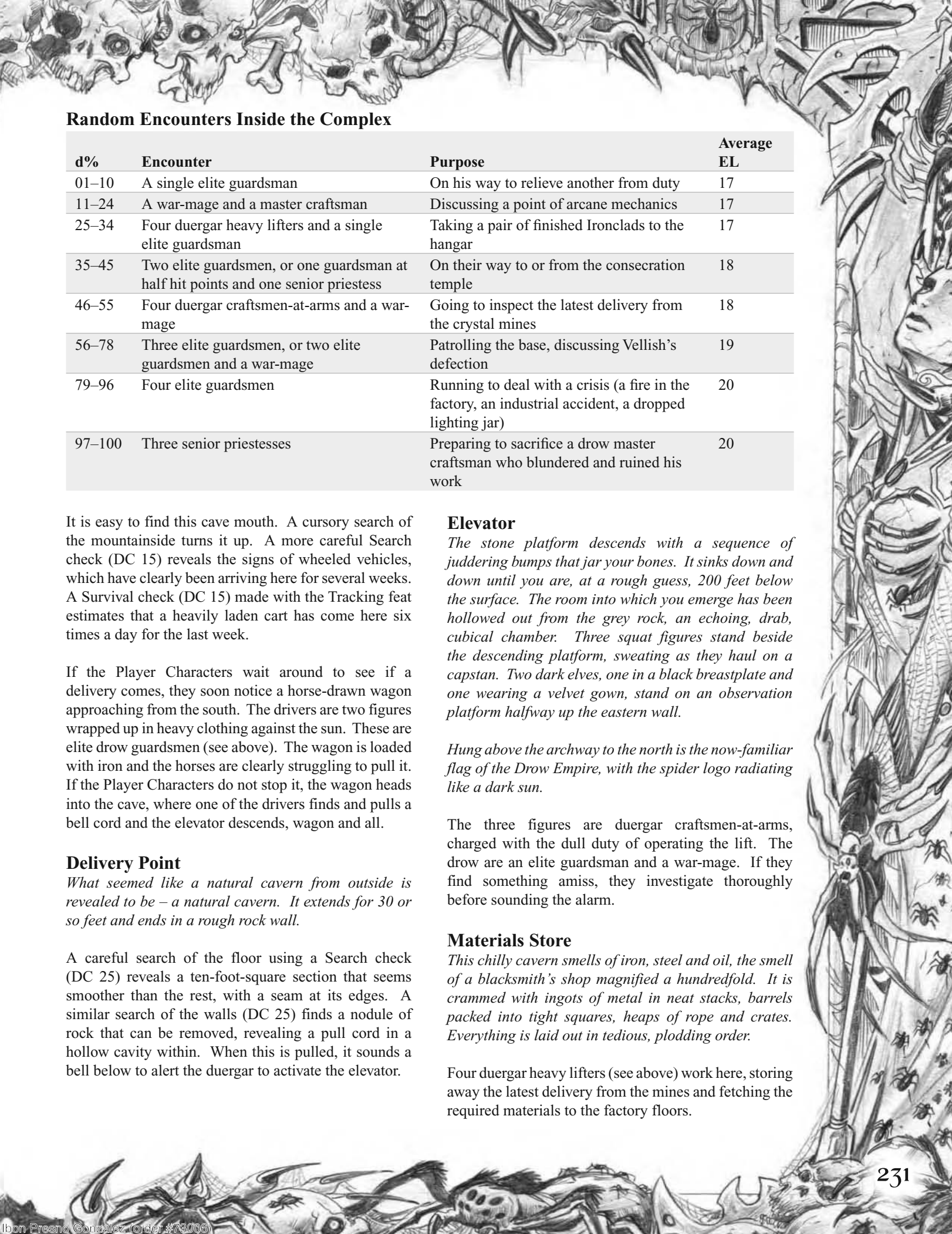
However, if the inhabitants *do* detect the Player Characters and recognise the threat they pose, they sound the alarm. This factory is vital to the war effort and has to be defended. The alarm system is a set of hand-cranked klaxons mounted on the wall. When one of these is sounded (requiring a standard action), the whole base can be assumed to have heard it, even workers with ear protection. Their response is to seal off the area of the threat, call all remaining guards to prepare to attack when the doors are opened, have the priestesses and spellcasters use divination magic to find out what is going on and then (and only then) assault the Player Characters en masse.

## Industrial Level

### Cave Mouth

*This opening into the mountain looks like an ugly ragged tear in grey fabric. There is no sign that it is inhabited. The area is quite silent. Even the wildlife seem to shun it.*





## Random Encounters Inside the Complex

d%	Encounter	Purpose	Average EL
01–10	A single elite guardsman	On his way to relieve another from duty	17
11–24	A war-mage and a master craftsman	Discussing a point of arcane mechanics	17
25–34	Four duergar heavy lifters and a single elite guardsman	Taking a pair of finished Ironclads to the hangar	17
35–45	Two elite guardsmen, or one guardsman at half hit points and one senior priestess	On their way to or from the consecration temple	18
46–55	Four duergar craftsmen-at-arms and a war-mage	Going to inspect the latest delivery from the crystal mines	18
56–78	Three elite guardsmen, or two elite guardsmen and a war-mage	Patrolling the base, discussing Vellish's defection	19
79–96	Four elite guardsmen	Running to deal with a crisis (a fire in the factory, an industrial accident, a dropped lighting jar)	20
97–100	Three senior priestesses	Preparing to sacrifice a drow master craftsman who blundered and ruined his work	20

It is easy to find this cave mouth. A cursory search of the mountainside turns it up. A more careful Search check (DC 15) reveals the signs of wheeled vehicles, which have clearly been arriving here for several weeks. A Survival check (DC 15) made with the Tracking feat estimates that a heavily laden cart has come here six times a day for the last week.

If the Player Characters wait around to see if a delivery comes, they soon notice a horse-drawn wagon approaching from the south. The drivers are two figures wrapped up in heavy clothing against the sun. These are elite drow guardsmen (see above). The wagon is loaded with iron and the horses are clearly struggling to pull it. If the Player Characters do not stop it, the wagon heads into the cave, where one of the drivers finds and pulls a bell cord and the elevator descends, wagon and all.

### Delivery Point

*What seemed like a natural cavern from outside is revealed to be – a natural cavern. It extends for 30 or so feet and ends in a rough rock wall.*

A careful search of the floor using a Search check (DC 25) reveals a ten-foot-square section that seems smoother than the rest, with a seam at its edges. A similar search of the walls (DC 25) finds a nodule of rock that can be removed, revealing a pull cord in a hollow cavity within. When this is pulled, it sounds a bell below to alert the duergar to activate the elevator.

### Elevator

*The stone platform descends with a sequence of juddering bumps that jar your bones. It sinks down and down until you are, at a rough guess, 200 feet below the surface. The room into which you emerge has been hollowed out from the grey rock, an echoing, drab, cubical chamber. Three squat figures stand beside the descending platform, sweating as they haul on a capstan. Two dark elves, one in a black breastplate and one wearing a velvet gown, stand on an observation platform halfway up the eastern wall.*

*Hung above the archway to the north is the now-familiar flag of the Drow Empire, with the spider logo radiating like a dark sun.*

The three figures are duergar craftsmen-at-arms, charged with the dull duty of operating the lift. The drow are an elite guardsman and a war-mage. If they find something amiss, they investigate thoroughly before sounding the alarm.

### Materials Store

*This chilly cavern smells of iron, steel and oil, the smell of a blacksmith's shop magnified a hundredfold. It is crammed with ingots of metal in neat stacks, barrels packed into tight squares, heaps of rope and crates. Everything is laid out in tedious, plodding order.*

Four duergar heavy lifters (see above) work here, storing away the latest delivery from the mines and fetching the required materials to the factory floors.





## Factory Floor A: Sheet Rolling and Panel Beating

*This enormous chamber is filled with the din of metal pounding on metal. Immense machines are laid end to end in two rows, with stunted grey figures working on them. The figures feed hot metal into hoppers, which send it to be rolled into sheets between gargantuan rollers and hammered into shape by devices like constructs gone mad, with mallet-like limbs rising and falling incessantly. The products that come clanging off the production belt are like pieces of metal shell, ready to be assembled into a hull. The fragments are all too familiar to you.*

*Standing behind the duergar, keeping careful watch, are several drow guards. Everyone here seems highly-strung, as if they are nervous about something important that is about to happen. There is an observation platform above one end of the room.*

There are 20 duergar craftsmen-at-arms and four elite drow guards here. The duergar wear metal helmets stuffed with cloth to protect their ears. This gives them a -4 penalty on all Listen checks and a -2 penalty on all Spot checks. In addition, all Listen checks made here are at a -4 circumstance penalty because of the background noise.

**The Machinery:** The first time any of the Player Characters examines one of the machines, the Games Master should read them the following:

*You notice that there is a strange object mounted on the machine, like a glass bell jar filled with mist and tiny electrical bolts. It looks as if someone has bottled a thundercloud. Whether this is a power source, some kind of magical brain, a defence mechanism or something even more sinister, you cannot tell.*

**Lightning Jars:** Smashing a lightning jar causes a detonation of electrical energy in a 30-foot-radius spread. This deals 25d6 electrical damage to all creatures in the area of effect, with a Reflex saving throw (DC 23) allowed for half damage. The safe removal of a lightning jar requires a Disable Device check (DC 15).

**Machinery Hazards:** The machines are extremely dangerous and can cause severe damage to characters caught in them. Treat regions of machinery as if they are trapped, with no Search check necessary to find the trap. A Disable Device check can be made to shut the machinery down. Creatures entering the machinery squares, voluntarily or not, suffer the effects of the trap each round:

- **Rolling Machine:** The rollers trap creatures and crush them for 16d6 points of damage. A successful Reflex saving throw (DC 20) avoids this.
- **Hammering Machine:** Each creature suffers 2d4 mallet attacks per round. Each attack is +18 melee and deals 1d6+10 points of bludgeoning damage.
- **Shearing Machine:** A huge blade descends to slice off segments of sprue. Single melee attack, +20 melee, damage 4d6+14 slashing.

## Factory Floor B: Component Casting

*This chamber is awash with heat, and the ceiling ripples with grisly light from many furnaces. At the eastern end of the room, cucurbits are brimming with molten iron. These are periodically tilted, allowing white-hot metal to flow hissing into moulds. The duergar working here are hard at work casting flywheels, joint sections, cogs and small odd components that you cannot identify.*

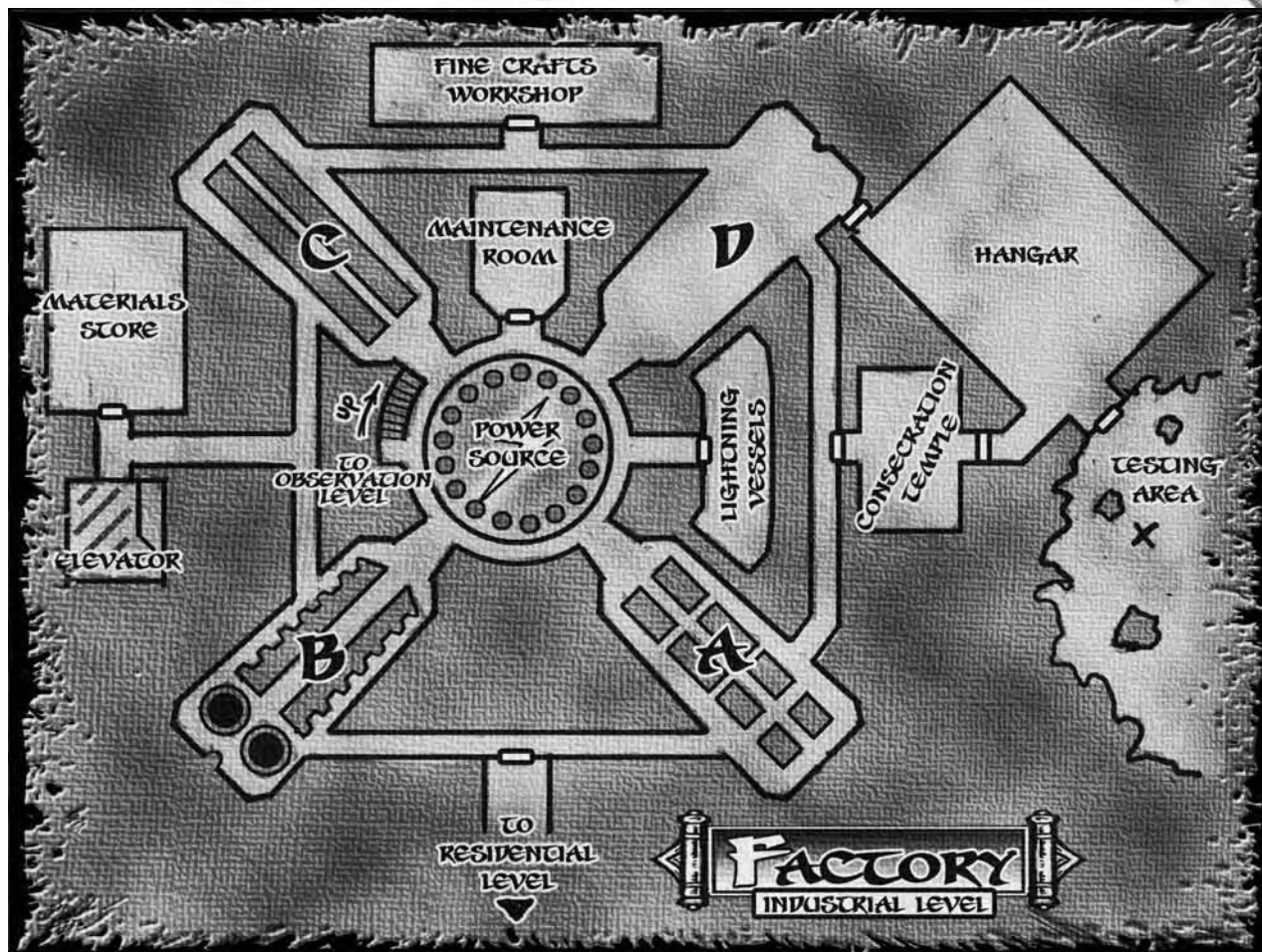
*At the western end of the room, duergar sit at benches filing away at the fresh-cast pieces. Drow guards stand watching with fearful expressions, as if they expect something to explode at any moment. There is an observation platform above one end of the room.*

There are 24 duergar craftsmen-at-arms here, along with three elite drow guards and one war-mage.

**Machinery Hazards:** The cucurbits of molten iron are only dangerous if a creature should happen to fall in them, or if the iron is spilled out. Treat the iron as lava (see the DMG). A creature adjacent to a cucurbit can tip the iron out (as a full-round action) by pulling a lever. This sends a wave of molten iron spilling out in a 30-foot spread. Creatures in the path of the iron must make Reflex saving throws (DC 15) or be washed over by the molten iron and be considered totally immersed for one round.

## Factory Floor C: Riveting and Assembly

*A low rattling sound fills this room as a conveyor belt, apparently made from worn leather, moves half-assembled Ironclad components from one duergar craftsman to the next. The grey dwarves grab the pieces off the belt, hammer rivets into place, tighten bolts and join seams with molten solder. The pieces that roll off the end of the production line into huge woven baskets are clearly recognisable as Ironclad legs, pincers and hull segments. This is not wholesome craftsmanship – this is some mechanised nightmare.*



*An observation platform, currently empty, overlooks the area.*

The crew here consists of 20 duergar craftsmen-at-arms, two elite drow guards, a drow war-mage and a drow master craftsman. The last is here to fix any pieces that are damaged in the production process. Every half hour a duergar heavy lifter comes to collect the baskets of components and take them to Factory Floor D.

**Machinery Hazards:** The machinery here is far less dangerous than on the other factory floors, as it consists of a conveyor belt. Any creature standing on the moving belt is automatically moved five feet towards the belt's end at the end of each round, on an initiative count of 1. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity. Tinkering with the machinery using a Disable Device check (DC 20) can either stop the belt dead or increase its speed to 10 or 15 feet per round, as the meddler prefers.

### Factory Floor D: Final Construction

*In this chamber, duergar workers are assembling finished pieces into a complete Ironclad. The components have been laid out in regimental order on the floor. A supervisor barks out orders – ‘Caliper brace! Main trans-axle!’ – and the workers hurry to bring him what he demands. The half-finished spidercraft looks completely lifeless, as if something more than mere components is missing.*

*An observation platform offers a view of the area from above.*

Ten craftsmen-at-arms and a heavy lifter are conducting the assembly, watched over by a senior priestess and a war-mage. If the Player Characters do not interfere, the Ironclad is finished in one hour and taken to the consecration temple.

### Hangar

*This cavern is the largest you have seen so far. For the first time, you see how far the Ironclad project has already progressed. Drozen Vellish was badly wrong*

or lying when he said that only prototypes had been produced. 20 completed Ironclads stand immobile in the darkness.

Four elite guardsmen stand watch over this area. These Ironclads have been consecrated and animated but do not have pilots.

### **Power Source: The Storm Spirit**

*This cylindrical room is lit by a strobing, pale blue light and filled with a low thunderous rumble. Girders thick as tree trunks support a cage made from silvery metal, large enough to hold a titan captive. Within is a thick, swirling cloud of dark gases giving off shuddering arcs of electricity that light up the cage's bars like white-hot wires. The cloud has a very vague humanoid form.*

*Wooden mounts around the cage's perimeter hold glass bell jars. Their contents flicker and swirl like miniature versions of the thing in the cage. To the north a metal tube has been bolted to the cage, with the bottom end immersed in the clouds and the top end open.*

*A staircase leads up the wall to a level above, where there is an observation platform opening onto this level. From the platform, a long-haired male drow looks down, his face lit from below by the glare. He has a satisfied expression. A raven perches on his shoulder.*

This is Archmage Bezenkai, the supervisor of the factory and the most powerful villain present here (see below). He remains on the observation deck most of the time, moving from room to room and keeping a close watch as the Ironclads come into being.

If the Player Characters are able to observe for a while, the Games Master should read the following:

*A duergar worker comes into the room from the east, carrying a bell jar like those around the cage, though empty and lifeless. He exchanges it for a glimmering one and leaves the room. As soon as it is set into its socket by the cage, the lifeless bell jar begins to flare with electric sparks.*

### **Non-Player Character: Archmage Bezenkai**

Bezenkai reports directly to Rannirak. He has been given the duty of making sure that the Ironclads are produced on schedule. So far, all is going according to plan.

Bezenkai has hair down to his waist and large, staring eyes. He believes that he is not only the most intelligent




and gifted of drow, but also the handsomest. He loves to be flattered and is reluctant to destroy an opponent who pays him compliments, even when he knows he should. Rannirak plays on Bezenkai's monstrous ego to manipulate him into serving his own purposes.

**Archmage Bezenkai, Male Drow Wiz17/Acm1:** CR 19; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 17d4 plus 1d4; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +7; Atk +14 melee (1d6+2/19–20 plus poison, +3 *rapier of speed*) or +7 melee (1d6-1, *staff of transmutation*) or +14 ranged (1d4+3/19–20 plus poison, +3 *hand crossbow*); Full Atk +14/+14/+9 melee (1d6+2/19–20 plus poison, +3 *rapier of speed*) or +7/+2 melee (1d6-1, *staff of transmutation*) or +14 ranged (1d4+3/19–20 plus poison, +3 *hand crossbow*); SA arcane fire, poison, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ drow traits, *scry on familiar*, spell resistance 29; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +17; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 19, Wis 12, Cha 16.

**Skills & Feats:** Appraise +7, Concentration +18, Craft (armouring) +22, Decipher Script +13, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +13, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Listen +10, Search +6, Spellcraft +22, Spot +5; Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Augmented Summoning, Combat Casting, Craft Magical Arms and Armour, Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Spell Penetration, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus





(Conjuration), Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Focus (Illusion), Spell Penetration, Weapon Finesse.

*Spells prepared (4/5/5/5/5/4/4/3/3/2, save DC 14 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, message, read magic, resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person, magic missile, shield, true strike* (2); 2<sup>nd</sup> – *acid arrow, cat's grace, fox's cunning, mirror image, web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *blink, dispel magic, fireball, sleet storm, slow*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *black tentacles, greater invisibility, resilient sphere, stonewall, wall of fire*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *summon monster V, transmute rock to mud, wall of force, waves of fatigue*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *globe of invulnerability, greater dispel magic, mislead, repulsion*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *forcecage, mass hold person, project image*; 8<sup>th</sup> – *iron body, maze, summon monster VIII*; 9<sup>th</sup> – *meteor swarm, time stop*.

*Arcane Fire (Su):* Bezenkai can change arcane spell energy into arcane fire, manifesting it as a bolt of raw magical energy. The bolt is a ranged touch attack with long range (440 feet) that deals 1d6 points of damage plus 1d6 points of damage per level of the spell used to create the effect.

*Familiar:* Bezenkai's familiar is Kronk, a raven.

*Equipment & Treasure:* +4 rapier of speed, +3 hand crossbow, crossbow bolts (10), drow blade venom, key to maintenance room, key to testing area, *robe of the archmagi (black)*, *staff of transmutation* (34 charges). The bonuses from these items have been factored in already, with the exception of the +2 bonus to caster level checks made to overcome creatures' spell resistance.

**Kronk (Raven):** CR –; Tiny Magical Beast; HD 1/4 d8 (22 hp); Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +8; Grp –5; Atk +12 melee (1d2–5, claws); Full Atk +12 melee (1d2–5, claws); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA deliver touch spells; SQ empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells, speak with birds, speak with master, spell resistance 22; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 6.

*Skills & Feats:* Concentration +18, Decipher Script +11, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +11, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Listen +5, Spellcraft +18, Spot +7; Alertness, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>.

*Speak Undercommon (Su):* Kronk can speak the Undercommon tongue.

## Non-Player Character: Jien Zun Dum the Storm Spirit

The storm spirit has been held captive in this specially wrought duergar cage for six months. It is not very intelligent but it does understand anger. The cage prevents escape; all it can do is rage and hurl electric wrath against the bars of its prison. The duergar bottle this electricity and power the machines with it.

Statistics are not given for Jien Zun Dum, as it is essentially a minor deity. While it is imprisoned, it cannot return to its own plane. If it wholly discharged itself, it could disincorporate and escape that way, but the duergar have allowed for this. They regularly 'feed' it with ampoules of magically charged mercury, which refresh its powers of lightning production. If Jien Zun Dum were not fed, it would expend itself and escape; if it were fed too much, it would become strong enough to deliver all of its stored electricity in one immense explosion and break the cage.

The Player Characters can attempt to communicate with the spirit. It has an effective Intelligence of 6. It wants to get out but does not know how this could be achieved.

**The Cage:** The cage is made from magically reinforced steel. It has a +20 resistance bonus to saving throws against magic and a hardness of 20.

## Maintenance Room

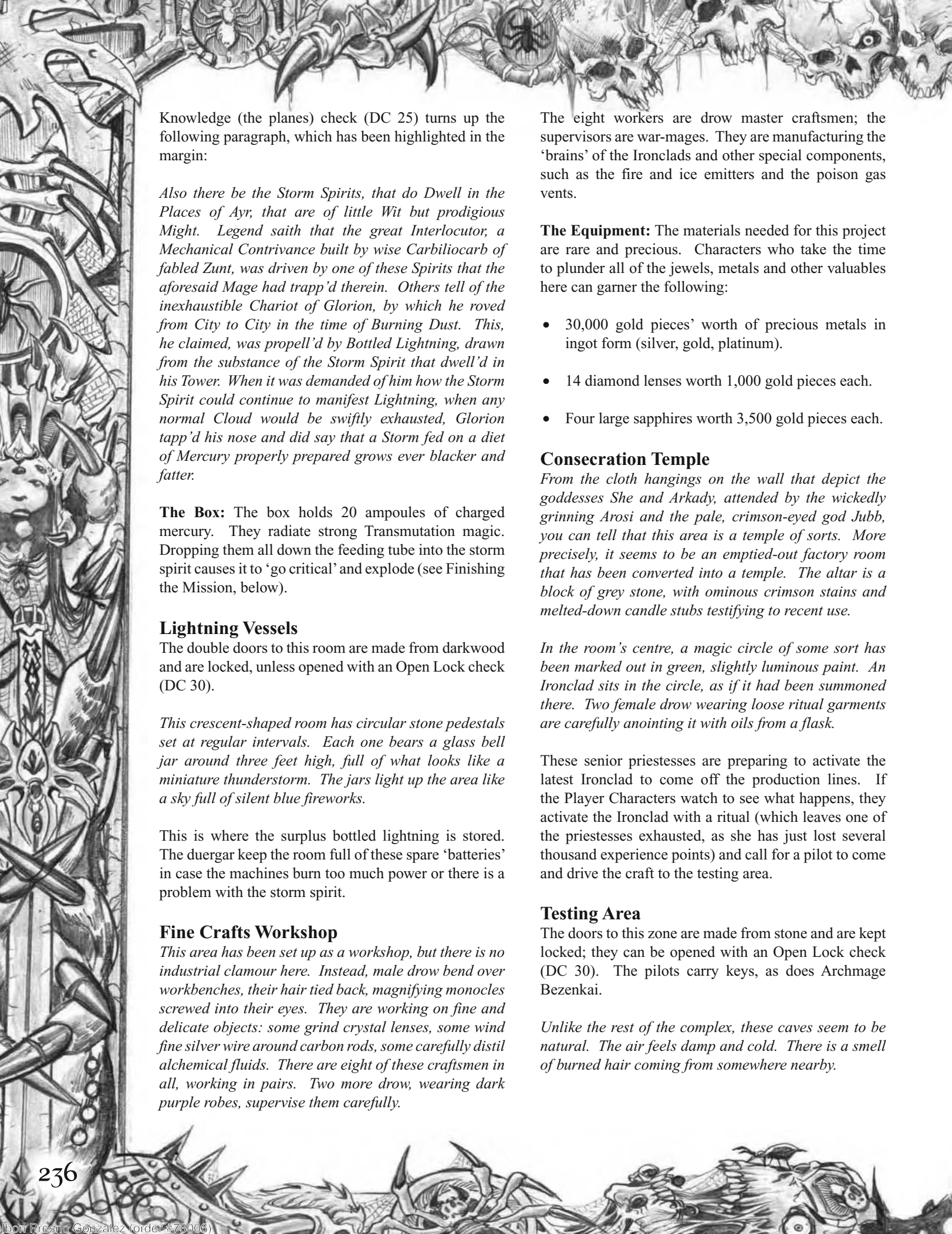
The door to this room is kept *wizard locked*; Archmage Bezenkai is the caster.

*This small room is lined with shelves of plain dark wood and has a single workbench which resembles an alchemy lab. The work here seems to involve filling glass shells with mercury. The shelves hold books with peeling leather covers and a single unremarkable wooden box.*

This is where the storm spirit's mercury ampoules are prepared. Every day, Bezenkai drops one down the metal tube and into the spirit's body, where it is absorbed.

**The Books:** The tomes are rare volumes on monsters of the various planes, theology and extraplanar magic. They all have bookplates in the front that identify them as the property of Archmage Bezenkai.

A character searching through the books and making a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 30) or



Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 25) turns up the following paragraph, which has been highlighted in the margin:

*Also there be the Storm Spirits, that do Dwell in the Places of Ayr; that are of little Wit but prodigious Might. Legend saith that the great Interlocutor, a Mechanical Contrivance built by wise Carbiliocarb of fabled Zunt, was driven by one of these Spirits that the aforesaid Mage had trapp'd therein. Others tell of the inexhaustible Chariot of Glorion, by which he roved from City to City in the time of Burning Dust. This, he claimed, was propell'd by Bottled Lightning, drawn from the substance of the Storm Spirit that dwell'd in his Tower. When it was demanded of him how the Storm Spirit could continue to manifest Lightning, when any normal Cloud would be swiftly exhausted, Glorion tapp'd his nose and did say that a Storm fed on a diet of Mercury properly prepared grows ever blacker and fatter.*

**The Box:** The box holds 20 ampoules of charged mercury. They radiate strong Transmutation magic. Dropping them all down the feeding tube into the storm spirit causes it to 'go critical' and explode (see Finishing the Mission, below).

### Lightning Vessels

The double doors to this room are made from darkwood and are locked, unless opened with an Open Lock check (DC 30).

*This crescent-shaped room has circular stone pedestals set at regular intervals. Each one bears a glass bell jar around three feet high, full of what looks like a miniature thunderstorm. The jars light up the area like a sky full of silent blue fireworks.*

This is where the surplus bottled lightning is stored. The duergar keep the room full of these spare 'batteries' in case the machines burn too much power or there is a problem with the storm spirit.

### Fine Crafts Workshop

*This area has been set up as a workshop, but there is no industrial clamour here. Instead, male drow bend over workbenches, their hair tied back, magnifying monocles screwed into their eyes. They are working on fine and delicate objects: some grind crystal lenses, some wind fine silver wire around carbon rods, some carefully distil alchemical fluids. There are eight of these craftsmen in all, working in pairs. Two more drow, wearing dark purple robes, supervise them carefully.*

The eight workers are drow master craftsmen; the supervisors are war-mages. They are manufacturing the 'brains' of the Ironclads and other special components, such as the fire and ice emitters and the poison gas vents.

**The Equipment:** The materials needed for this project are rare and precious. Characters who take the time to plunder all of the jewels, metals and other valuables here can garner the following:

- 30,000 gold pieces' worth of precious metals in ingot form (silver, gold, platinum).
- 14 diamond lenses worth 1,000 gold pieces each.
- Four large sapphires worth 3,500 gold pieces each.

### Consecration Temple

*From the cloth hangings on the wall that depict the goddesses She and Arkady, attended by the wickedly grinning Arosi and the pale, crimson-eyed god Jubb, you can tell that this area is a temple of sorts. More precisely, it seems to be an emptied-out factory room that has been converted into a temple. The altar is a block of grey stone, with ominous crimson stains and melted-down candle stubs testifying to recent use.*


*In the room's centre, a magic circle of some sort has been marked out in green, slightly luminous paint. An Ironclad sits in the circle, as if it had been summoned there. Two female drow wearing loose ritual garments are carefully anointing it with oils from a flask.*

These senior priestesses are preparing to activate the latest Ironclad to come off the production lines. If the Player Characters watch to see what happens, they activate the Ironclad with a ritual (which leaves one of the priestesses exhausted, as she has just lost several thousand experience points) and call for a pilot to come and drive the craft to the testing area.

### Testing Area

The doors to this zone are made from stone and are kept locked; they can be opened with an Open Lock check (DC 30). The pilots carry keys, as does Archmage Bezenkai.

*Unlike the rest of the complex, these caves seem to be natural. The air feels damp and cold. There is a smell of burned hair coming from somewhere nearby.*



Investigation reveals that the burning smell is coming from a very large, very dead rat that has been charred to a crisp. It is still warm.

This area is where the pilots test out the newly animated Ironclads, ensuring that all systems are functioning properly and taking shots at the wildlife. They also use the caverns to practice their piloting skills.

**The Ironclad:** Currently, a pilot is testing out an Ironclad at the point marked X on the map. Soon he returns and parks the Ironclad in the hangar, possibly meeting the Player Characters on the way.

These caverns are the only parts of the complex where a fight can take place without anyone hearing. Even if someone does hear, they *expect* the Ironclads to be firing their weapons, so the Player Characters can clash with the Ironclad without risk of detection (in which case, see Ironclad statistics on page 239).

If the Player Characters successfully defeat the pilot in the Ironclad, treat his CR as +3 to allow for the Ironclad's deadliness.

### Observation Level

This region is simply a set of walkways and balconies, designed to give the base's supervisor a good overview of the most important areas.

### Residential Level

This region is where the duergar and drow have their residences. As many of these are essentially similar, they are not detailed.

**Duergar Room:** The grey dwarves' rooms are spartan in style, with no ornamentation and only basic utensils. The beds are stone plinths with straw bedrolls on them. The duergar are devoted to work, so they only come back here to sleep when they are worn out.

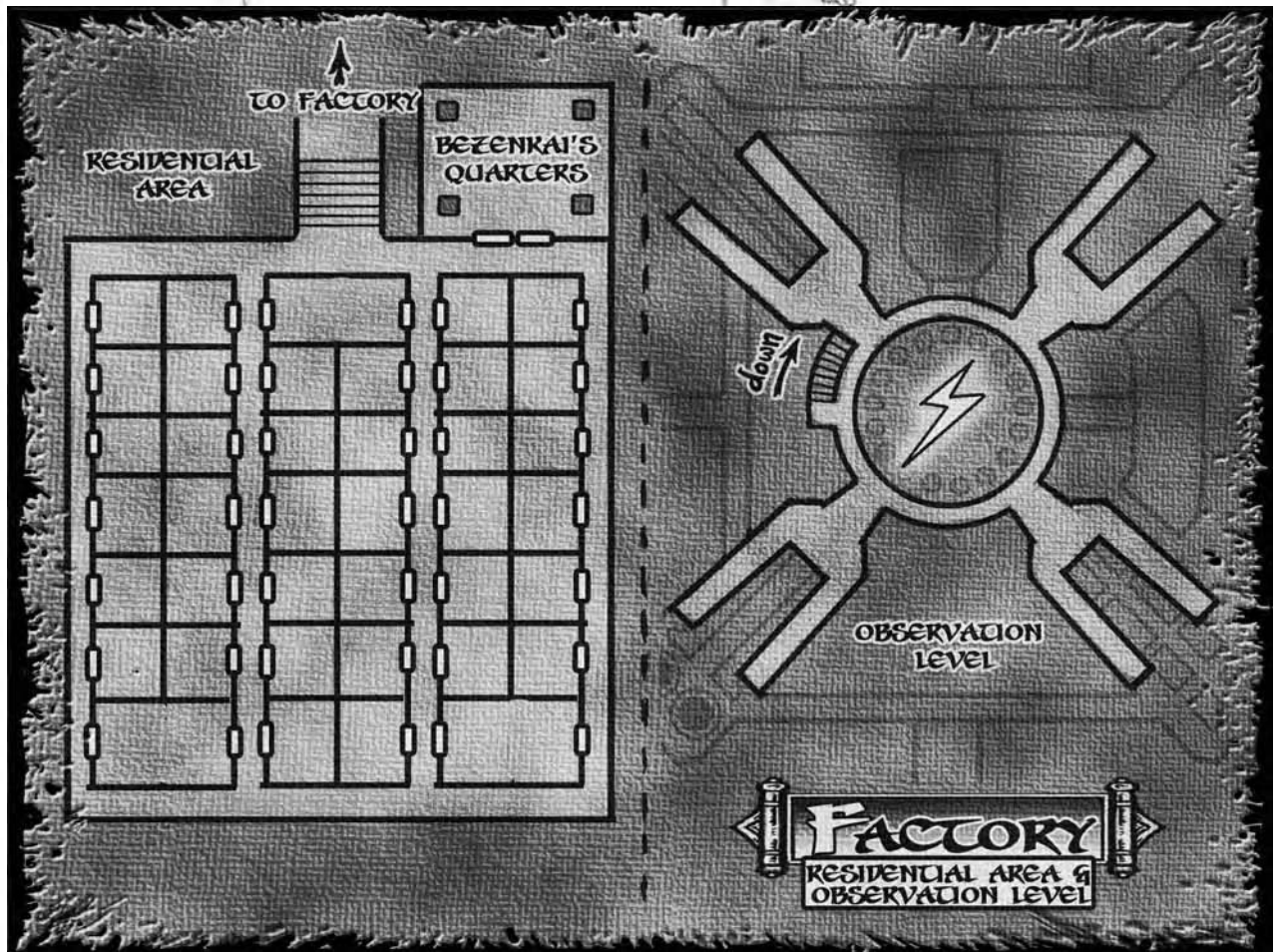
**Drow Room:** The drow quarters are more luxurious. They are temporary residents, so they try to make their rooms as comfortable as they can, hanging up velvet drapes to keep out the draughts and piling cushions into the corners of the rooms. The priestesses' rooms are the largest and include a small corner shrine, with a platinum image of the goddess She (750 gp value).

### Archmage Bezenkai's Quarters

A four-poster bed hung with purple silk dominates this room. On the wall is a life-sized portrait of Bezenkai looking thoughtful, wearing a medal in the shape of a jewelled skull. Bookcases on the walls hold volumes on arcane theory, the art of Evocation and similar subjects.







The drow twins Hester and Jazmel wait here for the return of their lord. They serve him as concubines, which flatters his ego. They are, in fact, loyal agents of Rannirak and are here to make sure that he does not deviate from the program. After Vellish's disappearance, Rannirak is paranoid about more of his officers defecting, so if Rannirak shows any sign of disloyalty, the twins are to deal with him.

The twins have identical statistics. They were trained as killers from girlhood. If they encounter the Player Characters, they put on the façade of being simpering slave girls too stupid to want to be rescued, until they can strike and kill them. They assume – or pretend to assume – that the Player Characters are guests of their lord, who they should 'entertain' until he returns. Their daggers are concealed among their clothing; the Games Master should make Hide checks for them if the Player Characters try to search them.

**Hester and Jazmel, Female Drow Rog8/Asn10 (2):**  
CR 19; Medium humanoid (elf); CR 19; HD 8d6 plus 10d6; hp 63; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-

footed 10; Base Atk +13; Grp +12; Atk +21 melee (1d4+3/19–20 plus poison, +4 *dagger of elf bane*) or +23 melee (1d4+5 plus 2d6/19–20, +4 *dagger of elf bane*) against elves; Full Atk +21/+16+11 melee (1d4+2/19–20 plus poison, +4 *dagger of elf bane*) or +23/+18/+13 melee (1d4+5 plus 2d6/19–20, +4 *dagger of elf bane*) against elves; SA death attack, poison, sneak attack +9d6, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ drow traits, evasion, hide in plain sight, improved uncanny dodge, spell resistance 29, trap sense +2; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +17, Will +8; Str 8, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 18.

**Skills & Feats:** Appraise +6, Balance +10, Bluff +20, Climb +5, Decipher Script +9, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +8, Disguise +10 (+12 acting), Escape Artist +10, Forgery +5, Gather Information +15, Hide +20, Intimidate +6, Jump +0, Listen +10, Move Silently +20, Open Lock +11, Perform (dance) +10, Search +6, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +8, Tumble +19, Use Magic Device +8, Use Rope +2; Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Mobility, Run, Weapon Finesse.

*Spells prepared (4/4/3/3, save DC 12 + spell level): 1<sup>st</sup> – disguise self, ghost sound, feather fall, true strike; 2<sup>nd</sup> – cat's grace, invisibility, spider climb, undetectable alignment; 3<sup>rd</sup> – false life, misdirection, nondetection; 4<sup>th</sup> – clairaudience/clairvoyance, greater invisibility, modify memory.*

*Equipment & Treasure: +4 dagger of elf bane, amulet of proof against detection and location (fashioned to look like an ornament on a slave collar), drow blade venom (3 doses).*

### **Event: Completing the Mission**

In order to succeed, the Player Characters have to cripple the factory and prevent the Ironclads from being deployed against the allied forces. There are several ways in which they can do this.



**Storm Spirit Goes Critical:** If the Player Characters feed Jien Zun Dum a massive overdose of charged mercury, he swells and glows with the brilliance of a dozen suns and his cage bars begin to melt. Exactly ten rounds later, the storm spirit explodes, sending waves of fire and lightning through the base, bringing down ceilings, collapsing walls and killing every creature present.

**Spanner in the Works:** Sabotaging the machines (for example, by *disintegrate*) sets the manufacturing process back severely. The duergar can build more but it is not possible to have them ready in time for the invasion of Crom Calamar. However, any Ironclads that have already been built can be deployed, so this is only a partial victory.

**Smash the Machines:** There are several ways to render the Ironclads unusable. The Player Characters can physically smash them to bits, though this takes a long time. More inventive means, such as the use of *transmute rock to mud* and *transmute mud to rock* to embed them in granite, are preferable. Given that the drow have archmagi on their side, the Games Master must assess whether the Player Characters' methods truly cripple the Ironclads or just make them harder to retrieve. If the drow can get any of the Ironclads back, they will. Rannirak believes that the drow cannot win without them, because of his prophetic vision.

### **Event: Failing the Mission**

Without the possibility of failure, victory is meaningless. The Games Master should make it clear to the players that failure *is* an option. If the party is wiped out, the Conclave can use magic to bring them back to Xoth Sarandi and have them restored to life at the Node, but by then the advantage of surprise will have been lost and the Dolorous Peak will have triple the number of guards, outside and inside.

If the mission is failed, Rannirak has the Ironclads moved to Crom Calamar, ready to send against the forces that he knows are coming.



## The Ironclads

An Ironclad is a vehicle animated by magic and piloted by a single trained drow, who may also have a co-pilot to operate the weapons while he concentrates on driving. Ironclads are given magical life in a similar way to that in which constructs are animated, but they have no independent intelligence and do not function without pilots.

As with the creation of constructs, creatures can take part in the creation of an Ironclad's body. The vehicle must, however, be magically animated by a creature who fulfils the following prerequisites:

CL 16<sup>th</sup>; Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *blade barrier*, *bull's strength*, *flame strike*, *giant vermin*; cost 5,600 xp.

Ironclads have the following statistics:

**Size:** Huge

**Speed:** 60 ft., *spider climb* 30 ft.

**Hit Points:** 80

**Armour Class:** 6

**Damage Reduction:** 15/adamantine

**Weapons:** 2 pincer claws (2d6+14/19–20)

**Special Attacks (Su):** fire ray (range 80 ft., 16d6 fire, Fortitude DC 20 half damage), ice ray (range 80 ft., 16d6 cold, Fortitude DC 20 half damage), poison gas (30 ft. spread, inhalation, damage 1d6 Con/2d6 Con, Fortitude DC 19).

When an Ironclad is reduced to zero hit points, it is disabled but not destroyed. An Ironclad reduced to –80 hit points is completely destroyed. The occupants of an Ironclad have total cover and do not suffer any damage dealt to the vehicle.

**Operating an Ironclad:** The pilot of an Ironclad must take a move action each round to move the vehicle. Ironclads cannot run, charge, take double moves or otherwise increase their movement speed beyond 40 feet in a round. The pilot must take an attack action to operate the Ironclad's weapons systems. If the Ironclad remains stationary, he may make a full attack. To negotiate a hazard while moving, the pilot must make a Pilot (Ironclad) skill check.

If there is a gunner in the Ironclad, he may give his full attention to the weapons systems and thus make full attacks each round.

**Attacking with an Ironclad:** Attacks made with an Ironclad's weapons use the pilot's ranged attack modifier, regardless of whether the claws or the rays are used. Using the claws requires an attack action (one claw) or full attack action (both claws). Attacking with the claws bestows a –2 size penalty on the attack roll; if the operator is not proficient in the use of Ironclad weapons systems, he also suffers a –4 competence penalty.

Activating a special attack is a free action, but only one special attack may be activated per round. Once a special attack has been activated, it cannot be used again for 1d4 rounds.

**Special Manoeuvres:** An Ironclad's pilot may grab opponents with the vehicle's claws, as if it were a creature with the Improved Grab special ability. The vehicle's grapple modifier is calculated as: operator's ranged attack modifier + 22 (Ironclad's Strength and size modifiers). If the Ironclad establishes a hold, it grips for 2d6+14 points of slashing damage.

An Ironclad's operator may also use it to trample Large or smaller opponents. To do this, he simply moves the Ironclad over the target creatures, as per the usual rules for a trample attack. The Reflex saving throw DC against a trampling Ironclad is 24; the damage dealt is 2d6+21 points of bludgeoning damage.

**Saving Throws:** Ironclads make saving throws as if they were attended magical items.

## Aftermath

Destroying the machinery and the Ironclads is the most decisive victory that the Player Characters can achieve and should net a story reward equivalent to a CR 20 challenge. Destroying one but not the other should only net a story award equivalent to a CR 17 challenge. If the Player Characters fail altogether, they gain no reward and the Ironclads appear in the final battle; see *If the Stars Should Fall*.

Whether the Player Characters manage to sabotage the drow's secret weapon or not, there is one last threat that must be addressed before the armies march on Crom Calamar: the black dragon Scallandriax, who now coils around the Darkspear and spreads its wings over a city in ruins...





# Fight Fire With Fire

This is a short additional adventure and is entirely optional. It concerns the threat posed by Scallandriax, with whom the Player Characters may need some additional help to deal.

## Against the Black Dragon

The drow's last and greatest ally, the black dragon Scallandriax, is powerful enough in his own right to annihilate an army of human soldiers. Nobody knows how the drow have managed to enlist his aid, but enlist it they have. The Player Characters might have a chance of victory against the wyrm but the drow will surely destroy them while they fight him; and if they go for the drow officers first, the dragon will most likely devour them. The Conclave of Xoth Sarandi has only one solution to this dilemma. To fight a dragon, one needs the help of a dragon.

## Information: The Fall of Aristeele

According to legend, the noble silver dragon Aristeele was defeated and cast down by Scallandriax over a thousand years ago and imprisoned in a labyrinth beneath Mount Graanek, in the northern part of Svarth. The legends do not say that she died, but hint that Scallandriax continued to mock her after her fall. If Aristeele is indeed still alive, she would make a powerful ally.

The archivists do not know this, but Yahven the Desolator, one of the dragons who flew with Scallandriax, was indeed cruel enough to keep Aristeele alive, bound in mortal form in a tiny cell (and thus unable to resume her draconian shape), instead of killing her. Scallandriax does not know that she still lives. Yahven and his descendants torment her every day, burning her pale flesh with their fiery breath and mocking her defeat.

## Event: Into Dragon-Haunted Hills

The Player Characters must travel into the most remote regions of Svarth, the peaks where the chromatic dragons dwell and no humanoid goes, in search of the only dragon who can be counted on to side with the allied powers and prove powerful enough to confront Scallandriax. Many dragons are not fond of mortal politics and look with contempt upon the affairs of men, but Aristeele has a score to settle.

*The hills around Mount Graanek are green and pleasing to the eye, almost like halfling lands. The mountains are an icy blue, veiled with mist at their heights. The surroundings suggest a sylvan paradise, not the dragons' playground that this region is rumoured to be.*

This impression is false, of course. The region only looks peaceful because no humanoids have settled it. The only creatures here are the wild animals on which the dragons prey.

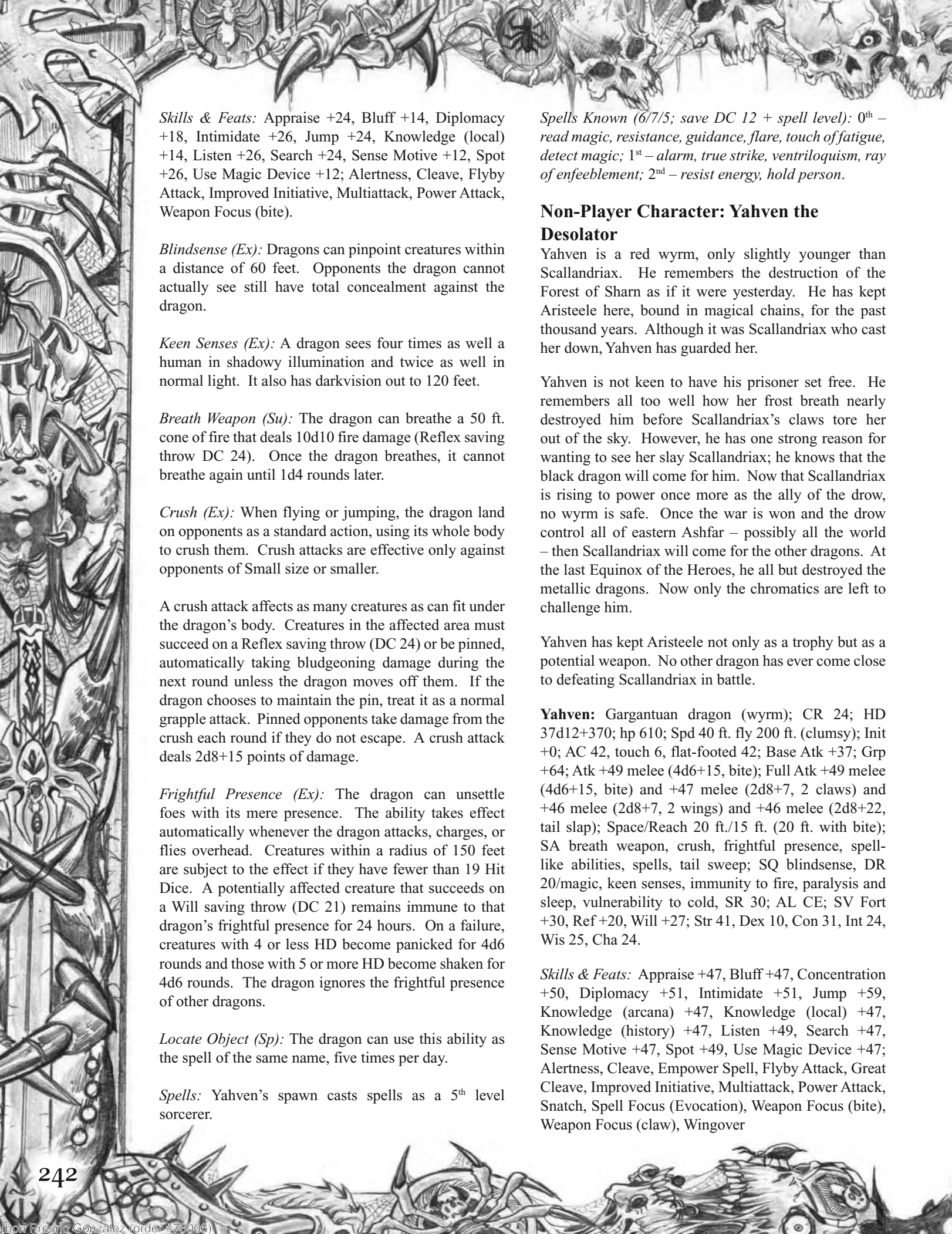
## Event: Dragon Attacks

The Player Characters soon see dragons flying overhead. Mount Graanek is the territory of the red dragons, and they guard it fiercely against incursions from the greens, who inhabit the forests beyond the hills. Fights between green and red dragons are common.

Unless the Player Characters have gone to considerable lengths to conceal themselves (such as with *mass invisibility* spells and the like), the indigenous dragons notice them. Mildly amused at the audacity of these mere humanoids in venturing this far into dragon lands, they nonetheless attempt to burn them to cinders. First a single young adult red dragon attacks, not expecting the party to be any great threat. After he is dispatched (as he doubtless will be), the threat is recognised, and young adult red dragons begin to attack in flocks of five to six.

The dragons are not stupid and are not willing to send their brood members out in flock after flock to be slaughtered. If the Player Characters prove hard to kill, the dragons appeal to the eldest dragon of all in Mount Graanek, Yahven the Desolator, to come forth and parley with them.

**Yahven's Spawn:** Huge dragon (young adult); CR 13; HD 19d12+95; hp 218; Spd 40 ft.; fly 150 ft. (poor); Init +4; AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +19; Grp +37; Atk +28 melee (2d8+10, bite); Full Atk +29 melee (2d8+10, bite) and +25 melee (2d6+5, 2 claws) and +25 melee (1d8+5, 2 wings); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon, crush, frightful presence; SQ blindsense, DR 5/magic, keen senses, immunity to fire, paralysis and sleep, *locate object*, vulnerability to cold, spells, SR 19; AL CE; SV Fort +16, Ref +11, Will +13; Str 31, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.



**Skills & Feats:** Appraise +24, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +18, Intimidate +26, Jump +24, Knowledge (local) +14, Listen +26, Search +24, Sense Motive +12, Spot +26, Use Magic Device +12; Alertness, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite).

**Blindsense (Ex):** Dragons can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents the dragon cannot actually see still have total concealment against the dragon.

**Keen Senses (Ex):** A dragon sees four times as well a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. It also has darkvision out to 120 feet.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** The dragon can breathe a 50 ft. cone of fire that deals 10d10 fire damage (Reflex saving throw DC 24). Once the dragon breathes, it cannot breathe again until 1d4 rounds later.

**Crush (Ex):** When flying or jumping, the dragon land on opponents as a standard action, using its whole body to crush them. Crush attacks are effective only against opponents of Small size or smaller.

A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under the dragon's body. Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex saving throw (DC 24) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless the dragon moves off them. If the dragon chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they do not escape. A crush attack deals 2d8+15 points of damage.

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** The dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 150 feet are subject to the effect if they have fewer than 19 Hit Dice. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will saving throw (DC 21) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. The dragon ignores the frightful presence of other dragons.

**Locate Object (Sp):** The dragon can use this ability as the spell of the same name, five times per day.

**Spells:** Yahven's spawn casts spells as a 5<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer.

**Spells Known (6/7/5; save DC 12 + spell level):** 0<sup>th</sup> – read magic, resistance, guidance, flare, touch of fatigue, detect magic; 1<sup>st</sup> – alarm, true strike, ventriloquism, ray of enfeeblement; 2<sup>nd</sup> – resist energy, hold person.

### **Non-Player Character: Yahven the Desolator**


Yahven is a red wyrm, only slightly younger than Scallandriax. He remembers the destruction of the Forest of Sharn as if it were yesterday. He has kept Aristeel here, bound in magical chains, for the past thousand years. Although it was Scallandriax who cast her down, Yahven has guarded her.

Yahven is not keen to have his prisoner set free. He remembers all too well how her frost breath nearly destroyed him before Scallandriax's claws tore her out of the sky. However, he has one strong reason for wanting to see her slay Scallandriax; he knows that the black dragon will come for him. Now that Scallandriax is rising to power once more as the ally of the drow, no wyrm is safe. Once the war is won and the drow control all of eastern Ashfar – possibly all the world – then Scallandriax will come for the other dragons. At the last Equinox of the Heroes, he all but destroyed the metallic dragons. Now only the chromatics are left to challenge him.

Yahven has kept Aristeel not only as a trophy but as a potential weapon. No other dragon has ever come close to defeating Scallandriax in battle.

**Yahven:** Gargantuan dragon (wurm); CR 24; HD 37d12+370; hp 610; Spd 40 ft. fly 200 ft. (clumsy); Init +0; AC 42, touch 6, flat-footed 42; Base Atk +37; Grp +64; Atk +49 melee (4d6+15, bite); Full Atk +49 melee (4d6+15, bite) and +47 melee (2d8+7, 2 claws) and +46 melee (2d8+7, 2 wings) and +46 melee (2d8+22, tail slap); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft. (20 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon, crush, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells, tail sweep; SQ blindsense, DR 20/magic, keen senses, immunity to fire, paralysis and sleep, vulnerability to cold, SR 30; AL CE; SV Fort +30, Ref +20, Will +27; Str 41, Dex 10, Con 31, Int 24, Wis 25, Cha 24.

**Skills & Feats:** Appraise +47, Bluff +47, Concentration +50, Diplomacy +51, Intimidate +51, Jump +59, Knowledge (arcana) +47, Knowledge (local) +47, Knowledge (history) +47, Listen +49, Search +47, Sense Motive +47, Spot +49, Use Magic Device +47; Alertness, Cleave, Empower Spell, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Spell Focus (Evocation), Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw), Wingover



*Blindsense (Ex):* See above.

*Keen Senses (Ex):* See above.

*Breath Weapon (Su):* Cone of fire (60 ft.) dealing 22d10 points of fire damage, with a Reflex saving throw for half damage (DC 38).

*Crush (Ex):* See above. Saving throw DC is 38; damage is 4d6+22. The crush affects creatures of Medium size or smaller.

*Frightful Presence (Ex):* See above. The ability affects creatures with fewer than 37 HD. Saving throw DC is 35.

*Tail Sweep (Ex):* This special attack allows Yahven to sweep with its tail as a standard action. The sweep affects a half-circle with a radius of 30 feet, extending from an intersection on the edge of the dragon's space in any direction. Creatures within the swept area are affected if they are Small size or smaller. A tail sweep automatically deals 2d6+22 damage. Affected creatures can attempt Reflex saving throws to take half damage (DC 38).

*Spell-like Abilities:* 11/day: *locate object*; 3/day: *suggestion*; 1/day: *find the path*.

*Spells:* Yahven casts spells as a 17<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer.

*Spells Known (6/8/8/8/7/7/7/4; save DC 17 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> - *detect magic, detect poison, guidance, read magic, resistance, dancing lights, touch of fatigue, mage hand, open/close*; 1<sup>st</sup> - *shield, identify, entropic shield, sanctuary, shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> - *enthral, shatter, zone of truth, scorching ray, glitterdust*; 3<sup>rd</sup> - *fireball, dispel magic, protection from energy, invisibility purge*; 4<sup>th</sup> - *black tentacles, fire shield, mass reduce person, fear*; 5<sup>th</sup> - *wall of force, telekinesis, waves of fatigue, cloudkill*; 6<sup>th</sup> - *antimagic field, greater dispel magic, forceful hand*; 7<sup>th</sup> - *mass hold person, mage's sword, repulsion*; 8<sup>th</sup> - *fire storm, protection from spells*.

## Event: Negotiations

The Player Characters can either negotiate with Yahven or go for an all-out assault and attempt to slay him. If they succeed in the latter, the other dragons shrink away and refuse to confront them. The dragon-killers can take their prize and go.

If they opt to negotiate, Yahven tries to extract a massive tribute of gold and gems from them in exchange for his hostage, just to see how serious they are. Gold alone

does not suffice, however. If Yahven concedes and allows the Player Characters to take Aristeele away, it is on two conditions. Firstly, they must take a solemn oath not to harm Yahven or any of his kin. Secondly, they must extract the same promise from Aristeele herself. She is a lawful creature and can be expected to keep her word.

## Event: Into the Fire

One way or another, the Player Characters eventually make their way inside Mount Graanek. They pass through sulphurous caverns where young dragons roost on the ledges and slither over the rocks like iguanas. Puffs of flame light up the place like a marsh at night.

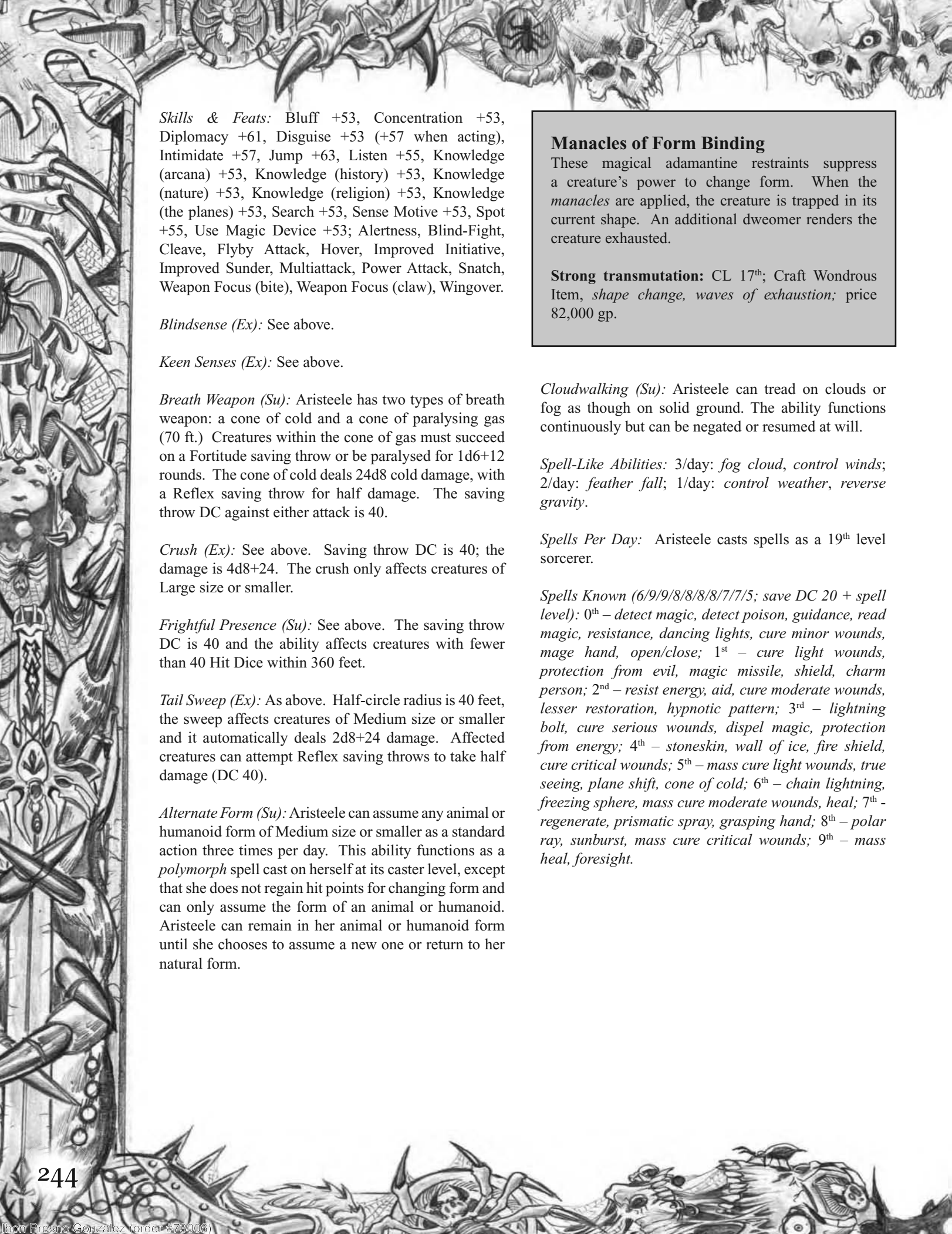
Aristeele is held in a tiny alcove deep within the mountain, a pathetic and entirely human figure. The manacles that bind her are *manacles of form binding* (see sidebar). Yahven allows the Player Characters to speak to her and watches from the other end of the cave to ensure that there is no treachery. The Player Characters must explain the situation to Aristeele, who listens mutely while they present their case.

How this scene ends depends on the players' skills at roleplaying, the persuasiveness of their arguments – the Games Master should certainly call for Diplomacy or Bluff checks – and how well they have divined Yahven's true thoughts on the matter. Ultimately Aristeele is willing to swear an oath not to harm Yahven and his kin, if that is what it takes to end her bondage. She is intensely bitter at being denied the chance of vengeance against her tormentor but she knows that Scallandriax, not Yahven, is the real cause of her being here.

Once she is freed, Aristeele resumes her draconian form, that of a great silver wyrm, the eldest of all the metallic dragons of Ashfar. She takes to the sky, rejoicing in a body she has not worn for far, far too long.

**Aristeele:** Colossal dragon (great wyrm); CR 24; HD 40d12+400; hp 660; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 41, touch 2, flat-footed 41; Base Atk +40; Grp +72; Atk +49 melee (4d8+16, bite); Full Atk +49 melee (4d8+16, bite) and +47 melee (4d6+8, 2 claws) and +46 melee (2d8+8, 2 wings) and +46 melee (4d6+24, tail slap); Space/Reach 30 ft./20 ft. (30 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon, crush, tail swipe, frightful presence, *control winds, reverse gravity*, spells; SQ alternate form, blindsense, immunity to acid, sleep, paralysis and cold, cloudwalking, keen senses, vulnerability to fire, *feather fall, fog cloud, control weather*; DR 20/magic, SR 32; AL LG; SV Fort +32, Ref +22, Will +32; Str 43, Dex 10, Con 31, Int 30, Wis 31, Cha 30.





*Skills & Feats:* Bluff +53, Concentration +53, Diplomacy +61, Disguise +53 (+57 when acting), Intimidate +57, Jump +63, Listen +55, Knowledge (arcana) +53, Knowledge (history) +53, Knowledge (nature) +53, Knowledge (religion) +53, Knowledge (the planes) +53, Search +53, Sense Motive +53, Spot +55, Use Magic Device +53; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw), Wingover.

*Blindsense (Ex):* See above.

*Keen Senses (Ex):* See above.

*Breath Weapon (Su):* Aristeele has two types of breath weapon: a cone of cold and a cone of paralyzing gas (70 ft.) Creatures within the cone of gas must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw or be paralyzed for 1d6+12 rounds. The cone of cold deals 24d8 cold damage, with a Reflex saving throw for half damage. The saving throw DC against either attack is 40.

*Crush (Ex):* See above. Saving throw DC is 40; the damage is 4d8+24. The crush only affects creatures of Large size or smaller.

*Frightful Presence (Su):* See above. The saving throw DC is 40 and the ability affects creatures with fewer than 40 Hit Dice within 360 feet.

*Tail Sweep (Ex):* As above. Half-circle radius is 40 feet, the sweep affects creatures of Medium size or smaller and it automatically deals 2d8+24 damage. Affected creatures can attempt Reflex saving throws to take half damage (DC 40).

*Alternate Form (Su):* Aristeele can assume any animal or humanoid form of Medium size or smaller as a standard action three times per day. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on herself at its caster level, except that she does not regain hit points for changing form and can only assume the form of an animal or humanoid. Aristeele can remain in her animal or humanoid form until she chooses to assume a new one or return to her natural form.

### Manacles of Form Binding

These magical adamantine restraints suppress a creature's power to change form. When the *manacles* are applied, the creature is trapped in its current shape. An additional dweomer renders the creature exhausted.

**Strong transmutation:** CL 17<sup>th</sup>; Craft Wondrous Item, *shape change, waves of exhaustion*; price 82,000 gp.

*Cloudwalking (Su):* Aristeele can tread on clouds or fog as though on solid ground. The ability functions continuously but can be negated or resumed at will.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* 3/day: *fog cloud, control winds*; 2/day: *feather fall*; 1/day: *control weather, reverse gravity*.

*Spells Per Day:* Aristeele casts spells as a 19<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer.

*Spells Known (6/9/9/8/8/8/8/7/7/5; save DC 20 + spell level):* 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic, detect poison, guidance, read magic, resistance, dancing lights, cure minor wounds, mage hand, open/close*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *cure light wounds, protection from evil, magic missile, shield, charm person*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *resist energy, aid, cure moderate wounds, lesser restoration, hypnotic pattern*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *lightning bolt, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, protection from energy*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *stoneskin, wall of ice, fire shield, cure critical wounds*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *mass cure light wounds, true seeing, plane shift, cone of cold*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *chain lightning, freezing sphere, mass cure moderate wounds, heal*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *regenerate, prismatic spray, grasping hand*; 8<sup>th</sup> – *polar ray, sunburst, mass cure critical wounds*; 9<sup>th</sup> – *mass heal, foresight*.





# If the Stars Should Fall

In this penultimate chapter, the assault on Crom Calamar begins. The Player Characters must attempt to enter Crom Calamar and destroy the tenebrium in the Darkspear, thus dispelling the dome of darkness that hangs over the city.

## Preparations for War

The background to the closing chapters of this stage of the campaign cannot be planned out as definitely as the others, as it depends upon the Player Characters' actions so far. They may only have the Phoenix Legions from the Topaz Dominions as allies, with a desperate and almost certainly suicidal battle ahead. Alternatively, the city of Crom Calamar may be on the verge of liberation, with the forces of several nations, backed by the ships of the elves from Xoth Sarandi, ready to emerge through the sea-portal (now that the kraken is gone) and land troops on the southern shores; perhaps the Caldranzans and the men of Ghael have finally set aside their differences and are approaching from the northwest, with Aristeel circling in the sky above. It all depends on how the previous adventures have played out.

## Information: The Drow Reinforcements

Reports from inside Crom Calamar tell of absurd numbers of drow warriors emerging from the Darkspear, far more than it could possibly have held when it first rose. Evidently the drow are ascending from their caverns through the Darkspear by magic or some other means.

Although many thousands of soldiers are now in position, the greater part of the drow force is still underground. Their tunnels are far below Crom Calamar, deeper than the deepest tombs or the mines of the Svarth dwarves.

When the Darkspear rose, disintegrating the rock and earth in its path, it created a wide vertical shaft connecting the tunnels of the drow to the upper world. The drow planned for this for many years and so included a cunning additional feature to make their invasion easier. As the Darkspear ascended it rotated, scything a gigantic spiral ramp into the rock walls of the shaft, so the drow forces can now march up the sides of the shaft and into the upper world. Although the march from the drow caverns to the upper realms is easily ten miles long, it is still far easier and more direct than any other route.

As if this were not enough, the Darkspear also incorporates a levitating platform in its base, by means of which whole divisions of drow soldiers can ascend the shaft in minutes. This is how they have entrenched their position so swiftly.

The Darkspear is thus not just a magical transport vehicle or a device to cloak a city in darkness; it is the gateway that closes off the route to and from the underworld. In creating this direct link, the drow have made themselves vulnerable. The Darkspear is their protection as well as their main means of attack.

## Plot Event: Presentation of the Star-Wands

This event must take place before the Player Characters leave for Crom Calamar.


*The Conclave assembles for what you all know is likely to be the last time. The elves have dressed themselves formally in robes of office – a strange thing for people to do whom you have perhaps come to see as friends. On a tavern table, covered by a silk cloth, lie three simple rods of glass. It seems strange that so much depends upon these brittle, unremarkable things.*

*'These are the star-wands,' explains Archimandrus. 'Each one can project a focused beam of energy, tuned to exactly the right arcane frequency to disrupt the tenebrium's structure. The range is 80 feet, and each one has ten charges...' His voice trails off and he seems unable to look you in the eye.*

*Cadfannan finishes for him. 'Based on what we found out, when we tested them on the chunks you brought back, well... the tenebrium explodes with quite a bit of force. To put it bluntly, if you're in range to hit the stuff with one of these, you're more than in range of the blast. Whichever one of you discharges the wand into the tenebrium core at the top of that Darkspear of theirs isn't going to have a hope in hell of escaping the explosion. And because this stuff is saturated with the Dark, we can't even be sure that your soul will survive. There's precious little that can destroy a soul, but this could.*

*'We've been able to reunite Starborn souls with their bodies before, even when there was only a scrap of flesh remaining. But we've never brought anyone back*





*whose soul was lost. We're only telling you this because you have a right to know. We need you to understand what the stakes really are.'*

*With that, the elves step back from the table. The wands are there for you to take.*

Once the Player Characters have taken the wands and said anything they need to say, the Conclave transports them to the fields outside Crom Calamar, where the armies are assembling.

## Day of the Battle

Crom Calamar has changed since the Player Characters were there last. Crucified bodies hang on the walls. Every road into the place is guarded, with bands of drow (and possibly Ironclads) patrolling the wilderness beyond. Even the sky is not safe, as Scallandriax circles above the city on the lookout for flying invaders.

## The Guards

The Games Master should refer to De Profundis, page 3, for statistics for the drow soldiery. A typical guard patrol consists of 14 to 20 soldiers, led by a captain, a lieutenant and a war-mage. If any of the Ironclads survived, these patrol the city in pairs.

## Event: Reaching the Tenebrium

The most likely option is for the Player Characters to enter the city by stealth and make a surprise assault on the tenebrium. Two forces stand between them and their goal: the dragon and a vast army of drow.

Fortunately for the Player Characters, the drow soldiers are all now much lower level than the Player Characters are. The only adversary who can present a serious challenge in his own right is Rannirak, who is far below at the Abyssal Altar. Nonetheless, detection will bring all the drow in the city down upon them, and even a 19<sup>th</sup> level character cannot withstand an entire army. Their chances of being detected depend upon the techniques they use. The drow war-mages have *see invisibility* running, so they detect invisible characters easily. Assume that every single street is patrolled every 15 minutes. Otherwise the Player Characters are not likely to be detected unless they do something stupid.

The dragon is another matter. If the Player Characters try to *fly* into the city (a likely choice for 19<sup>th</sup> level characters), Scallandriax may detect them. If he hears them approaching, the dragon casts *true seeing* and hunts them down. He keeps to his post at the top of the spire specifically to defend the tenebrium, so he will be hard to sneak past. One possible strategy might be to

call upon Aristeel to draw Scallandriax away from the Darkspear.

**The Darkspear:** The Darkspear is 200 feet high. The tenebrium is a single mass 20 feet across. The openings in the side of the Darkspear that allow the darkness to flood out grant the tenebrium a good deal of cover, and the darkness it emanates grants it total concealment (miss chance 50%). From outside, to hit the tenebrium with a ray attack from the wand requires a ranged touch attack against an Armour Class of 14.

A character can guarantee a hit by attacking from inside the Darkspear, but to do this he must enter through the open front hatch without being detected and climb or *fly* up the inside.

## Plot Event: The Long Night Ends

When a Player Character first attempts to fire a starwand into the tenebrium, the following occurs. The dazzling brilliance of the beam gives his position away to all enemies in the area, who are immediately alerted to what is happening. Moreover, even if he hits the tenebrium first time, the dark mass merely begins to groan and vibrate, with tiny pieces pinging off. Evidently the Conclave's tests on smaller pieces have led to a miscalculation. One blast is not enough.

At this point all hell breaks loose. The character who fired the wand is now the target of every drow in the area, as well as of Scallandriax if he is present. The advantage of surprise and stealth is gone. A second successful hit is needed to destroy the tenebrium. When that happens, the Games Master should read the following:

*For a second the beam of light stands out against the darkness. The vibrations become a howl and then a shriek. The next moment every single brick and tile in the city seems to explode with shattering force. The sound is like the end of the world. Silence floods back in, only to be followed by a sound like a thousand voices screaming in pain. You realise, as you blink in the sudden daylight, that this is exactly what you are hearing. Blinded drow are running through the streets, crowding into the shadows, covering their eyes and screaming like tortured cats. The top half of the Darkspear is completely gone. Only a twisted wreck of metal casing, looking absurdly like a half-peeled banana, is left.*

*And now a new sound begins. The sound is a cheer, and it comes from the windows of the houses in the city, the rooftops and the balconies. It is the sound of people who can see the sun again.*



**Explosion Damage:** As the Conclave predicted, the tenebrium explodes with terrific force. The blast radius is 140 feet. All targets within this area are dealt 6d6x10 points of damage, with a Reflex saving throw allowed for half damage (DC 30). Improved Evasion *does* reduce this damage to zero on a successful saving throw.

A character killed by this blast really is lost as Cadfannan predicted. The dark forces that infuse the tenebrium annihilate the Starborn's soul, as well as his body. A character could not wish for a more heroic end to his life than this, so if any of the Player Characters have aspirations to this kind of heroism, it is an ideal way to go.

The Games Master should, of course, completely ignore this stipulation if he feels it would not suit the Player Characters' idea of a good campaign.

### Plot Event: Attack!

The destruction of the tenebrium is the allied forces' cue to attack. With the dome of darkness gone, the Phoenix Legions and other forces begin to pound against the city gates. Aristeel smashes the gate to splinters with a swipe of her mighty tail and then flies straight for Scallandriax, intent on repaying him for her years of torture.

### Battle Statistics

If the Games Master is using the narrative combat system found in *Drow War, Book I: The Gathering Storm*, then the following statistics can be used.

### Determining Troop Strength Bonuses

The drow forces and their allies begin with a default troop strength bonus of +50. Apply the following modifiers as appropriate, according to the tasks the Player Characters have managed to accomplish. If the drow end up with a negative troop strength bonus, translate this to a positive bonus for the Player Characters.

Event	Modifier
Player Characters fail to destroy the <i>tenebrium</i>	+30 or +25
Military support from an allied nation	-1 per 1,000 troops pledged
Dragons involved in fighting	Special
Ironclad production facility destroyed	-6

### Player Characters Fail To Destroy the Tenebrium:

Not all heroic sagas go according to plan. It is possible that the attack on Crom Calamar will have to begin with the dome of darkness still in place above the city. If this is the case, then the drow warriors are at a massive advantage. If the Player Characters have military support from the dwarves of Svarth, then the bonus to the drow is only +25, as the dwarves can fight in the dark.

**Dragons Involved In Fighting:** Either Aristeel or Scallandriax can be involved in the fighting. If they are fighting each other (which they will do as soon as possible) or fighting Player Characters, then no troop strength modifier applies, as the dragon's attention is taken up with its immediate opponents.

If one of the dragons is killed or otherwise removed from the fighting (or was never present in the first place) then the remaining dragon is free to attack the enemy warriors and confers a +6 point troop strength modifier to its side.

### Defensive Modifiers

As the drow took Crom Calamar from within, the mighty outer fortifications are still intact. The battlements confer a +10 bonus to the defenders' battle checks until the attackers succeed in breaking in.

### The Gates

The gates of Crom Calamar are made from iron, in keeping with the iron-bound fortifications on the rest of the city.

Breaking through the main gate to Crom Calamar is a tactical objective with a +14 target to the battle check. If the Player Characters' forces have Aristeel on their side, she can break open the gates as a full-round action, with a successful Strength check (DC 28). Aristeel's Strength modifier is +16. The Player Characters can doubtless come up with their own tactics for breaking the gates if Aristeel is not present.

**Gate Statistics:** Thickness 2 in; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28.

### Command Bonuses

For simplicity's sake, assume that the command bonuses of the commanders on the enemy's side and those on the Player Characters' side cancel each other out, as they are of roughly equivalent competence. The sole exception is if a Player Character is in a command position. In this event, calculate his command bonus as normal.

### Combatant Statistics

The following statistics are provided for the battle encounters that Player Characters face, if they are involved in the fighting.

### Encounter Results

Opponent	Drow Infantryman*
Minor Hero	Barbarian Champion of Visk
Major Hero	Drow War-Mage*
Major Hero	Kandang Sorcerer
Minor Officer	Drow Lieutenant*
Major Officer	Drow Captain*
Army Commander	Archmage Rannirak
Army Commander	Ozzariah Yazroch*

\* Statistics for these are given on page 3.

### Minor Hero: Barbarian Champion of Visk

Visk's allegiance with the drow has brought barbarians into the city, eager for the debauchery that the drow can provide and itching to wet their blades in foreign blood.

**Barbarian Champion of Visk:** Human barbarian 8; Medium humanoid; CR 8; HD 8d12+16; hp 68; Init +1; Spd 30 ft. in armour (base 40 ft.); AC 16 (+5 breastplate, +1 Dex); Base attack/grapple +8/+11; Atk +3 *greataxe* +15 melee (1d12+7/19-20x3); Full atk +3 *greataxe* +15/+10 melee (1d12+7/19-20x3); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft; SA rage 3/day; SQ fast movement, illiteracy, trap sense +2, damage reduction 1/-, improved uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills & Feats:** Climb +6, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +6, Jump +6, Listen +8, Ride +10, Survival +8, Swim +6; Cleave, Improved Critical (*greataxe*), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*greataxe*).

**Equipment & Treasure:** Breastplate, +3 *greataxe*.

**Rage (Ex):** When raging, this barbarian gains a +4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution and a +2 morale bonus on Will saving throws, but he takes a -2 penalty to Armour Class. The increase in Constitution adds 16 hit points to the barbarian's total but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when his Constitution score drops back to normal.





### Major Hero: Kandang Sorcerer

Several of Kandang's nobles have taken up positions of honour in the drow army, following the pledge of allegiance from Kandang to the drow. The sorcerers favour illusion magic. They have an awed respect for Scallandriax, who is a legend among them.

**Kandang Sorcerer:** Human Sorcerer 16; HD 16d4+16; hp 56; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +6 *bracers of armour*); Base attack/grapple +8/+7; Atk *staff of illusion* or *staff of conjuration* +8 melee (1d6-1/1d6-1); Full Atk *staff of illusion* or *staff of conjuration* +8/+3 melee (1d6-1/1d6-1); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft; SA spells; SQ none; AL LE; SV: Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +12; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 20 (18).

**Skills & Feats:** Bluff+11, Concentration+22, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Spellcraft +19; Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Skill Focus (concentration), Spell Focus (illusion).

**Spells Per Day:** 6/8/7/7/7/6/5/3.

**Spells Known:** 0 level: *resistance*, *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *arcane mark*, *touch of fatigue*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *detect poison*; 1<sup>st</sup> level: *shield*, *magic missile*, *colour spray*, *obscuring mist*, *expeditious retreat*; 2<sup>nd</sup> level: *blur*, *hypnotic pattern*, *invisibility*, *acid arrow*, *levitate*; 3<sup>rd</sup> level: *displacement*, *invisibility sphere*, *gaseous form*, *fireball*; 4<sup>th</sup> level: *greater invisibility*, *phantasmal killer*, *rainbow pattern*, *wall of fire*; 5<sup>th</sup> level: *persistent image*, *mirage arcana*, *mind fog*, *magic jar*; 6<sup>th</sup> level: *mislead*, *chain lightning*, *acid fog*; 7<sup>th</sup> level: *spell turning*, *project image*; 8<sup>th</sup> level: *scintillating pattern*.

**Equipment & Treasure:** *Bracers of armour* +6, *staff of illusion* or *staff of conjuration*, *pink and green ioun stone*.

### Army Commander: Archmage Rannirak

Rannirak's statistics are given in the next chapter. He will *not* stand and fight, choosing instead to flee down to the Abyssal Altar.

### Determining Victory

If the Player Characters' forces manage to rout the drow, or the battle continues for ten rounds after the gates are breached without the Player Character forces being repulsed, then the Player Characters have turned the tide. The drow begin to retreat to the Darkspear. This does not end the battle, it merely moves it on to the next stage, in which the Player Characters must pursue the fleeing Archmage Rannirak underground.

**Rannirak's Retreat:** Whether the allied forces are winning or losing, Archmage Rannirak will retreat back into the Darkspear after the first five rounds. If the Player Characters do not see this happen, then a friendly soldier should inform them.

Whether the battle goes well or badly for the allied forces, the Player Characters' next target is beneath Crom Calamar, where Rannirak waits by the Abyssal Altar....

### Aftermath

Whichever route they choose to get into the Darkspear, the Player Characters must achieve three objectives, directly or indirectly: destroy Scallandriax, shatter the tenebrium and drive the drow back down into the darkness. If the tenebrium is destroyed, the dragon killed and sufficient drow forces lost, the drow begin to retreat, moving back down the great spiral shaft towards their home.



# Heart of Darkness

The final conflict in the book is with the archmage Rannirak in the tunnels below Crom Calamar. The Player Characters should, by now, realise the importance of the Abyssal Altar, which Rannirak is keeping below the city in the caverns from which the Darkspear arose. The Abyssal Altar is the Dark's anchor on this plane. If it is destroyed, the Dark's conduit of power will be broken.

## Information: What About the Rest of the Drow?

The Ennead, the ruling body of the drow, are safely within their own caverns further to the northeast. They have entrusted Rannirak with the defence of Crom Calamar. Although they knew that a force was being mustered against them, they believed that it would be cut to pieces. Not one member of the Ennead thought that the city of Crom Calamar, much less the Abyssal Altar, was in any serious danger.

## Event: Reaching Rannirak

To reach Rannirak, the Player Characters must fight their way into the Darkspear and activate the levitating stone platform that drops down into the drow caverns. If the drow are already in retreat, then hordes of them will already be heading this way, trying to escape into the underworld.

The platform is activated by a command word, but a Use Magic Device check (DC 25) activates it without needing this. If the Player Characters prefer, they can run down the stone ramp that corkscrews around the outside of the shaft or *fly* directly down. The shaft is 1,200 feet deep. Depending upon how well the battle is going for them above, drow soldiers may be falling past the Player Characters, screaming as they fall.

## The Abyssal Altar

At the bottom, the shaft opens out into a vast cave. To the north, many little tunnels lead off into the underworld. These connect to the cavern systems and underground settlements of the drow and are beyond the scope of this book.

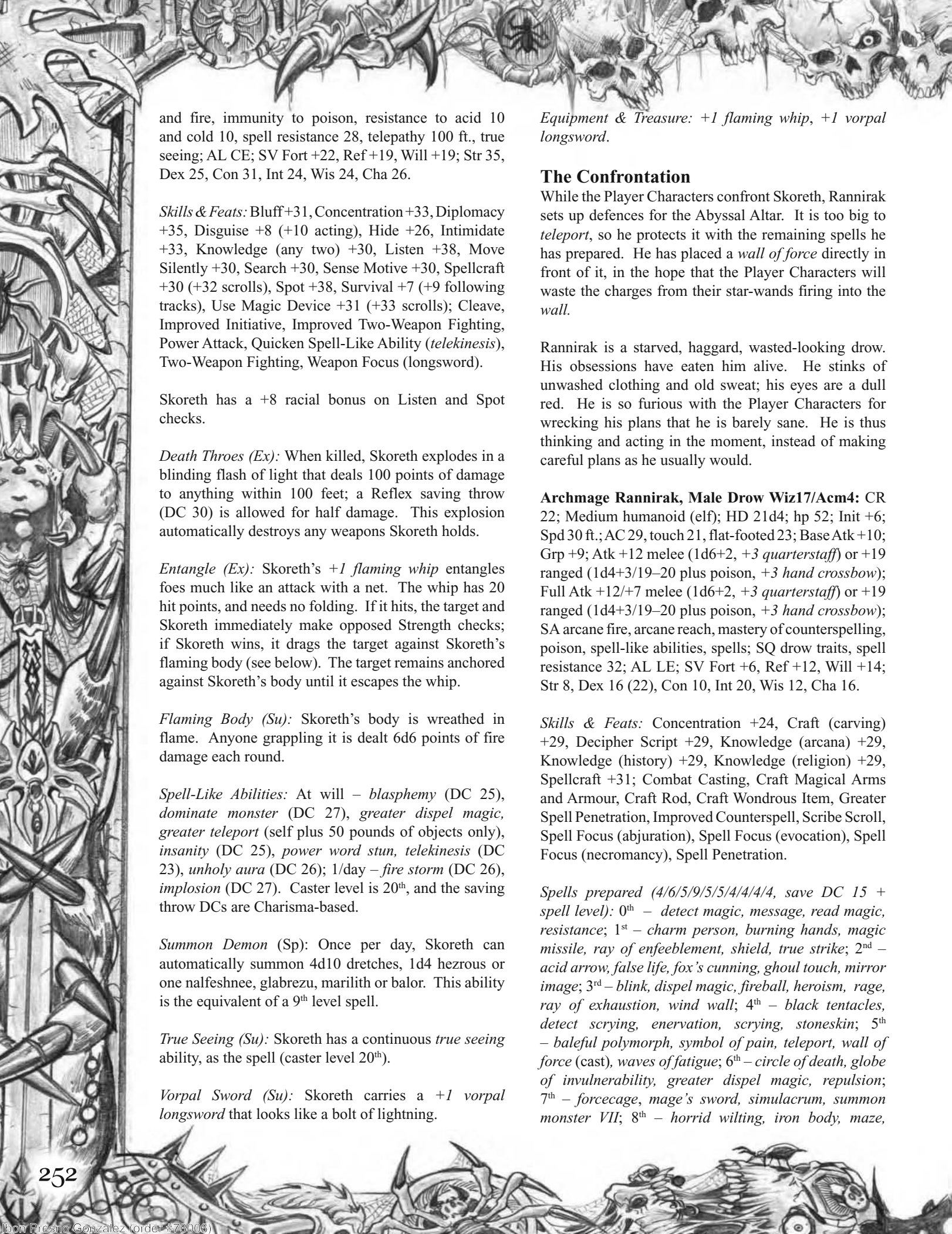
To the south is an opening ten feet across. Within it a figure wreathed in flames stands between the Player

Characters and their goal. Beyond it the Player Characters can see the Abyssal Altar for the first time.

Rannirak has *gated* in a balor, Skoreth, to slow the Player Characters down while he casts spells to prepare himself for the fight. The demon is under orders to prevent anyone from reaching Rannirak; it lashes its flaming whip at the Player Characters.

**Skoreth (balor):** CR 20; Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil); HD 20d8+200; hp 290; Init +11; Spd 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good); AC 35, touch 16, flat-footed 28; Base Atk +20; Grp +36; Atk +33 melee (2d6+8/19–20, +1 vorpal longsword); Full Atk +31/+26/+21/+16 melee (2d6+8/19–20, +1 vorpal longsword) and +30/+25 melee (1d4+4 plus 1d6 fire plus entangle, +1 flaming whip) or +31 melee (1d10+7, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (20 ft. with +1 flaming whip); SA death throes, entangle, spell-like abilities, *summon demon*, vorpal sword; SQ damage reduction 15/cold iron and good, darkvision 60 ft., flaming body, immunity to electrical





and fire, immunity to poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, spell resistance 28, telepathy 100 ft., true seeing; AL CE; SV Fort +22, Ref +19, Will +19; Str 35, Dex 25, Con 31, Int 24, Wis 24, Cha 26.

**Skills & Feats:** Bluff +31, Concentration +33, Diplomacy +35, Disguise +8 (+10 acting), Hide +26, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (any two) +30, Listen +38, Move Silently +30, Search +30, Sense Motive +30, Spellcraft +30 (+32 scrolls), Spot +38, Survival +7 (+9 following tracks), Use Magic Device +31 (+33 scrolls); Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*telekinesis*), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Skoreth has a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

**Death Throes (Ex):** When killed, Skoreth explodes in a blinding flash of light that deals 100 points of damage to anything within 100 feet; a Reflex saving throw (DC 30) is allowed for half damage. This explosion automatically destroys any weapons Skoreth holds.

**Entangle (Ex):** Skoreth's +1 *flaming whip* entangles foes much like an attack with a net. The whip has 20 hit points, and needs no folding. If it hits, the target and Skoreth immediately make opposed Strength checks; if Skoreth wins, it drags the target against Skoreth's flaming body (see below). The target remains anchored against Skoreth's body until it escapes the whip.

**Flaming Body (Su):** Skoreth's body is wreathed in flame. Anyone grappling it is dealt 6d6 points of fire damage each round.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will – *blasphemy* (DC 25), *dominate monster* (DC 27), *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *insanity* (DC 25), *power word stun*, *telekinesis* (DC 23), *unholy aura* (DC 26); 1/day – *fire storm* (DC 26), *implosion* (DC 27). Caster level is 20<sup>th</sup>, and the saving throw DCs are Charisma-based.

**Summon Demon (Sp):** Once per day, Skoreth can automatically summon 4d10 dretches, 1d4 hezrous or one nalfeshnee, glabrezu, marilith or balor. This ability is the equivalent of a 9<sup>th</sup> level spell.

**True Seeing (Su):** Skoreth has a continuous *true seeing* ability, as the spell (caster level 20<sup>th</sup>).

**Vorpal Sword (Su):** Skoreth carries a +1 *vorpal longsword* that looks like a bolt of lightning.

**Equipment & Treasure:** +1 *flaming whip*, +1 *vorpal longsword*.

## The Confrontation

While the Player Characters confront Skoreth, Rannirak sets up defences for the Abyssal Altar. It is too big to *teleport*, so he protects it with the remaining spells he has prepared. He has placed a *wall of force* directly in front of it, in the hope that the Player Characters will waste the charges from their star-wands firing into the *wall*.


Rannirak is a starved, haggard, wasted-looking drow. His obsessions have eaten him alive. He stinks of unwashed clothing and old sweat; his eyes are a dull red. He is so furious with the Player Characters for wrecking his plans that he is barely sane. He is thus thinking and acting in the moment, instead of making careful plans as he usually would.

**Archmage Rannirak, Male Drow Wiz17/Acm4:** CR 22; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 21d4; hp 52; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 29, touch 21, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +10; Grp +9; Atk +12 melee (1d6+2, +3 *quarterstaff*) or +19 ranged (1d4+3/19–20 plus poison, +3 *hand crossbow*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6+2, +3 *quarterstaff*) or +19 ranged (1d4+3/19–20 plus poison, +3 *hand crossbow*); SA arcane fire, arcane reach, mastery of counterspelling, poison, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ drow traits, spell resistance 32; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +12, Will +14; Str 8, Dex 16 (22), Con 10, Int 20, Wis 12, Cha 16.

**Skills & Feats:** Concentration +24, Craft (carving) +29, Decipher Script +29, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (history) +29, Knowledge (religion) +29, Spellcraft +31; Combat Casting, Craft Magical Arms and Armour, Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Counterspell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (abjuration), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration.

**Spells prepared (4/6/5/9/5/5/4/4/4, save DC 15 + spell level):** 0<sup>th</sup> – *detect magic*, *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person*, *burning hands*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *true strike*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *acid arrow*, *false life*, *fox's cunning*, *ghoul touch*, *mirror image*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *blink*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *heroism*, *rage*, *ray of exhaustion*, *wind wall*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *black tentacles*, *detect scrying*, *enervation*, *scrying*, *stoneskin*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *baleful polymorph*, *symbol of pain*, *teleport*, *wall of force* (cast), *waves of fatigue*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *circle of death*, *globe of invulnerability*, *greater dispel magic*, *repulsion*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *forcecage*, *mage's sword*, *simulacrum*, *summon monster VII*; 8<sup>th</sup> – *horrid wilting*, *iron body*, *maze*,





*summon monster VIII*; 9<sup>th</sup> – *gate* (cast), *imprisonment*, *summon monster IX*, *weird*.

*Arcane Fire (Su)*: Rannirak can change arcane spell energy into arcane fire, manifesting it as a bolt of raw magical energy. The bolt is a ranged touch attack with long range (560 feet) that deals 4d6 points of damage plus 1d6 points of damage per level of the spell used to create the effect.

*Arcane Reach (Su)*: Rannirak can use spells with a range of touch on targets up to 60 feet away. He must make a ranged touch attack.

*Mastery of Counterspelling*: When Rannirak counterspells a spell, it is turned back upon the caster as if it had been fully affected by a *spell turning* spell. If the spell cannot be affected by *spell turning*, then it is merely counterspelled.

*Equipment & Treasure*: +3 *hand crossbow*, +3 *quarterstaff*, *bracers of armour* +8, *crossbow bolts* (10), *gloves of dexterity* +6, *greater metamagic rod*

*of empower*, *poison*, *ring of protection* +5, *ring of wizardry III*.

**The Altar**: The Abyssal Altar has an Armour Class of 6 and total concealment from the darkness it emanates (miss chance 50%). If a star-wand is successfully discharged into it, it explodes, dealing 4d6x10 points of damage to all creatures within a 140-foot-radius burst, with a Reflex saving throw (DC 30) allowed for half damage. It is, however, allowed a Fortitude saving throw (+10 bonus, DC 22) to resist the effect. As with the tenebrium above, any Starborn characters killed in this explosion remain dead.

The destruction of the Abyssal Altar, rather than Rannirak's death, marks the conclusion of the campaign.

## The Conclusion

*The Abyssal Altar is no more. Its white-hot fragments lie scattered across the cavern floor like fallen stars. The Dark no longer has a foothold here. The curse that began so many thousands of years ago, when the Black Titan first came forth to challenge the world, is lifted.*

*There is a subtle change in the atmosphere now. Though you are exhausted and hurt, you know that this is a blow from which the drow will never recover. They can no longer call themselves the chosen race, or the favoured of some supreme power. Now they are just another kind of elf, with no manifest destiny, no right to dominate others. Perhaps, given time, they may come to learn this, if they can learn to subdue their pride and their fear.*

*The caverns still ring with the sound of fighting. Like a headless body that still kicks, it will take time for the drow to realise that they have lost more than a battle today. Indeed, they have lost more than the war. They have lost their identity. What will arise in its place, nobody can tell.*

Is this truly the last we shall see of the Dark? Can the drow really give up their dreams of global conquest? The adventure continues in *The Drow War, Book Three: The Darkest Hour*.



CHARACTER \_\_\_\_\_ PLAYER \_\_\_\_\_  
 CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ LEVEL \_\_\_\_\_  
 RACE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 SUBRACE (IF ANY) \_\_\_\_\_ ALIGNMENT \_\_\_\_\_  
 PATRON DEITY / RELIGION \_\_\_\_\_  
 APPEARANCE \_\_\_\_\_

AC WHEN  
 FLAT FOOTED  
 AC VERSUS  
 TOUCH ATTACKS  
 MAX DEX  
 BONUS  
 ARMOUR CHECK  
 PENALTY  
 ARCANE SPELL  
 FAILURE

**ABILITY SCORES**

**HIT POINTS**

**ARMOUR**

	SCORE	MODIFIER	TEMP SCORE	TEMP MODIFIER
STRENGTH				
DEXTERITY				
CONSTITUTION				
INTELLIGENCE				
WISDOM				
CHARISMA				

SUB DMG	
HIT DIE	
DAMAGE REDUCTION	

**ARMOUR**



= 10 +  
 CLASS  
 ARMOUR WORN

ARMOUR	SHIELD	DEX	WIS	SIZE	NATURAL	MISC

**SAVING THROWS**

	TOTAL	BASE	ABILITY	MAGIC	MISC	TEMP	MODIFIERS
FORTITUDE (CON)							
REFLEX (DEX)							
WILL (WIS)							

**COMBAT BONUSES**

	TOTAL	BASE	ABILITY	SIZE	MISC	TEMP	MODIFIERS
INITIATIVE (DEX)							
MELEE (STR)							
RANGED (DEX)							

**WEAPONS**

WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE	TYPE	SIZE	HARD	HPS
NOTES								
NOTES								
NOTES								

**STARBORN ABILITIES**

*PATRONSTAR:*

GRANTED ABILITIES:

	CROSS CLASS	KEY ABILITY	MODIFIERS	TOTAL ABILITY	RANKS	MISC
MAX RANKS = LVL +3 (2)						
ANIMAL EMPATHY	Y / N	CHA				
APPRAISE ✓	Y / N	INT				
BALANCE ✓	Y / N	DEX *				
BLUFF ✓	Y / N	CHA				
CLIMB ✓	Y / N	STR *				
CONCENTRATION ✓	Y / N	CON				
CRAFT ✓ ( )	Y / N	INT				
CRAFT ✓ ( )	Y / N	INT				
CRAFT ✓ ( )	Y / N	INT				
CRAFT ✓ ( )	Y / N	INT				
DECIPHER SCRIPT	Y / N	INT				
DIPLOMACY ✓	Y / N	CHA				
DISABLE DEVICE	Y / N	INT				
DISGUISE ✓	Y / N	CHA				
ESCAPE ARTIST ✓	Y / N	DEX *				
FORGERY ✓	Y / N	INT				
GATHER INFORMATION ✓	Y / N	CHA				
HANDLE ANIMAL	Y / N	CHA				
HEAL ✓	Y / N	WIS				
HIDE ✓	Y / N	DEX *				
INNUENDO	Y / N	WIS				
INTIMIDATE ✓	Y / N	CHA				
INTUIT DIRECTION	Y / N	WIS				
JUMP ✓	Y / N	STR *				
KNOWLEDGE ( )	Y / N	INT				
KNOWLEDGE ( )	Y / N	INT				
KNOWLEDGE ( )	Y / N	INT				
KNOWLEDGE ( )	Y / N	INT				
LISTEN ✓	Y / N	WIS				
MOVE SILENTLY	Y / N	DEX *				
OPEN LOCK	Y / N	DEX				
PERFORM ( )	Y / N	CHA				
PROFESSION ( )	Y / N	WIS				
PROFESSION ( )	Y / N	WIS				
READ LIPS	Y / N	INT				
RIDE ✓	Y / N	DEX				
SEARCH ✓	Y / N	INT				
SENSE MOTIVE ✓	Y / N	WIS				
SLEIGHT OF HAND	Y / N	DEX				
SPELLCRAFT	Y / N	INT				
SPOT ✓	Y / N	WIS				
SWIM ✓	Y / N	STR ★				
SURVIVAL ✓	Y / N	WIS				
TUMBLE	Y / N	DEX *				
USE MAGIC DEVICE	Y / N	CHA				
USE ROPE ✓	Y / N	DEX				
	Y / N					

✓ CAN BE USED WITH 0 RANKS, \* ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY APPLIES, ★ -1 PER 5 LBS OF EQUIPMENT

### EQUIPMENT

CURRENT LOAD	TOTAL WEIGHT CARRIED

### FEATS

--

### LANGUAGES

--

### MONEY & GEMS

CP -
SP -
GP -
PP -
GEMS -

### CLASS/RACIAL ABILITIES

--

### SPELLS

--

### EXPERIENCE

TOTAL EXPERIENCE
XPS NEEDED FOR NEXT LEVEL





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# THE DROW WAR

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system

BOOK TWO

## The Dying of the Light

### The Adventure Continues!

In the aftermath of the war for Caldera, a mysterious messenger brings news that the drow threat has by no means been wiped out and a retaliatory strike could come at any time. Meanwhile, powerful friends await the call to arms in the city of Gnam Calamar, the unconquered capital of Ishannam, Nation of Wizards. But when Gnam Calamar's battlements fall and her streets are plunged into darkness, the whole of Ashfar is thrown into turmoil and the heroes of Caldera are thrown centre stage, as the fate of the entire world falls upon their shoulders.

In distant Xoth Sarandi, the Crossroads of the World, Ashfar's diplomats convene and it is there that the heroes of Caldera must make their stand against the combined might of kings to unite the free nations against the drow.

First, though, there is an ocean to cross, and strange secrets brood in its depths. The menace of the maelstrom is not the mere ocean hazard that it appears and the pirate tribe called the Sea Harbours prove to be more than just a band of opportunistic brigands. Legends tell of sunken cities far to the south, but not all such cities remain submerged when there are deals to be made with ancient menaces long since before mankind arose.

Despite the danger of the ocean passage, Xoth Sarandi must be reached, for only there, amid the politicians and assassins, can new friends provide welcome help. Tired of their government's endless neutrality, a concave of powerful elven mages reveals the secret to breaking the drow's dark spell, directing the heroes into the most joy and remote corners of Ashfar and from there, on to worlds darker and more sinister.

The long journey towards a final confrontation with the drow takes the heroes of Caldera from uncharted sides of the free world to dream-peaks where only dragons dwell, in their quest to hold counsel with kings and lead armies to death. Whether the heroes or their enemies prevail remains to be seen; nothing is predestined and no answers are certain. Failure is always a possibility, for without the dream of failure, there can be no true reward in victory.

*The Drow War Book III - The Dying of the Light* is second in a series of three 256-page books. Each one containing a single epic story, all three tied into one overarching saga. These adventures are designed to take the characters concerned from 10<sup>th</sup> level to 20<sup>th</sup> level.

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