



## XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

# Dark Portents

## Cabal of Shadows Faction Scenario #12

An Adventure for 13<sup>th</sup>-Level Characters  
(Scaled for 11<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Levels of Play)

### CABAL OF SHADOWS™ Faction SCENARIO 12 for the XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS™ Campaign

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The oracles speak of a time of darkness that is at hand. Now is the time for the Cabal to move, but they will need allies if they are to see their foul plans through. If not friends, then allies of convenience will have to do. A Cabal of Shadows faction adventure for levels 13-16.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

Sources: Dungeonscape [Jason Bulmahn and Rich Burlew]; Secrets of Xen'drik [Keith Baker, Jason Buhlman, Amber Scott]; The Forge of War [James Wyatt, Wolfgang Baur, Ari Marmel]

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# Adventure Background

Nearly a year and half ago, the Cabal of Shadows claimed the Hand of Stalwart Reverie (*CSH02 – Shadows Over Stormreach*) as its secret lair, but they are not alone inside this redoubt. The minds of Deondag the Master of Rites and his clan of cloud giants inhabit psionic constructs at the pinnacle of the tower where all of them (with the exception of Deondag) languish in madness brought on during the last invasion of Xen'drik by the realm of dreams, Dal Quor. As part of their agreement with Deondag, the Cabal promised that they would restore the cloud giants to sanity and install them in new bodies that the entire clan might be brought into the shadowy embrace of the Cabal.

The first step in fulfillment of this devil's bargain is to restore the minds of their giant allies. Unfortunately none of the standard spells or items function on the giants in their glass prisons, and more severe methods are called forth. Ever the students of madness, the Children of Xoriat are well acquainted with ways to drive others to insanity or foster the madness within. However Sublime, the fallen angel who leads the bloodthirsty Obscura, has access to the rites of both Heaven and Hell and he has knows of a blessed ritual that can sooth the most troubled brow. This ritual requires a drop of blood from each of the four elements. To cure the entire clan, he postulates that more will be needed and so an entire heart must be ripped from one dedicated and spawned of each of the elements. The hearts of air, earth, fire, and water have since been recovered by agents of the Cabal and the ritual is ready to begin.

But before the ritual is undertaken, a portion of the Draconic Prophecy makes itself known on the walls of the Hand of Stalwart Reverie. The Council of the Obscured adjourned to private quarters to discuss its significance and after some debate they believe that a great trial is about to before the Cabal of Shadows, and indeed all the factions who seek to control the Prophecy. Their only hope lies in finding new bodies for the soldiers that they are about to create.

## Adventure Synopsis

**Adventure Start:** The party is present on the Hand of Stalwart Reverie to take part in the ritual to restore sanity to the giant clan, but the appearance of a fragment of the draconic prophecy disrupts the ritual and the PCs are directed on a mission to recover bodies to put the giants into.

**Part One:** The party meets with their Blackwheel Company contact who admits that the company does indeed have a creation forge that they recovered from the wilds of Xen'drik. It would be possible to create warforged titan bodies for the giants to inhabit, but to properly control the bodies will require dozens of docents which cannot be made. However, there be some in ancient ruins tied to the creation forge.

**Part Two:** Entering into the ruins, the party finds that guardians still remain and in order to get inside, they will have to fight.

**Part Three:** Once inside the ruins, the party is able to locate the docents they require but a set of final guards stand in their way.

**Part Four:** The party takes the docents and infiltrates the Blackwheel Company's creation where they corrupt the process in order to start a whole new line of warforged titans possessed of the intelligences of ancient cloud giant psions. It is likely that a fight ensues and the PCs must be careful to hide all signs of their presence and leave quietly.

**Ending the Adventure:** The adventure ends as the first Deondag the Master of Rites is created as the first of the new titans.

## Troubleshooting

**Adventure Secret:** Should any of the PCs use a card or ability to unlock an adventure secret, through a word on the street or dusty tome while researching the ruins of Nylluras (as appropriate for the ability or card), they learn that the stories say the ruins are populated by constructs created by the ancient giants.

**Content Warning:** As members of an evil faction, Cabal of Shadows adventures often deal with mature themes such as violence or depravity. It is the DM's job to keep the sensibilities of the players in mind when running any adventure and adjust accordingly. Always remember that everyone should be having fun and not made to feel uncomfortable.

**Obscura:** Some members of the Cabal of Shadows also belong to Obscura, sub-factions within the Cabal. The Obscura often have secret missions for their members, and this time is no different. Ask each player to hand you a note listing his or her Obscura, if any. All players should hand in a note, even if they are not a member of any Obscura in order to keep suspicions evenly spread throughout the party. Return the correct player handout to each player so they understand the details of their secret mission. This should be done immediately following the **Adventure Start** but before **Part One**.

# Adventure Start

As the adventure begins, the PCs, along with many other important members of the Cabal, have been invited to participate in the ritual to restore the cloud giants to sanity. They are not specifically together and are dispersed throughout the crowd.

***You have gathered with the other notables of the Cabal to participate in a ritual lead by Sublime of the Children of Xoriat with the intention of restoring some measure of sanity to the cloud giants you share your home with. You presence here with the Council of the Obscured and other esteemed members of your faction proves the measure of your importance. You are clothed in ceremonial robes and arrayed around the edges of the hall, with the glass brain constructs spread throughout the room upon their black pedestals, each housing the consciousness of one giant. A hush falls over the assemblage as Sublime, clothed in black robes with his white feathery wings spread behind him, raises his hands to begin the evocation over the four elemental hearts.***

***The sound of crackling fire fills the room, and blue light shines down from above. Writing, Draconic writing, appears upon the domed ceiling of the room illuminating all. Shocked, all stare open mouth as the Draconic Prophecy appears directly to the followers of the Cabal of Shadows.***

The PCs have only a brief moment to act before the Council of the Obscured orders the room cleared of all Cabal members. Anyone that understands Draconic may read the fragment of the Prophecy written across the ceiling (give the player Handout #2). The writing appears authentic to any spells the PCs might think to cast. None of the Council has time to speak with the PCs as they are busy arguing amongst themselves.

After a minute, the Council orders everyone out of the room. Once the room is cleared, the majority of the attendees drift away to other parts of the tower, leaving the PCs a chance to speak with one another as the only folk who linger. The PCs may introduce themselves to each other or speculate about what the Prophecy might mean. Once the PCs have had a chance to meet, but before any of them wander away from outside the great hall, the door opens and the Voice of Storms sees them and orders them back inside.

***As you converse in the hallway, the door opens and the masked Voice of the Storm looks out at you. "You, friends, come here. I need you." Without sparing a glance to see if you follow, he turns back into the room."***

All four members of the Council of the Obscured (Sublime, The Voice of the Storm, Melancholy, and the The Discordant Voyage) are in the room, are as well as the great glass brain that houses Deondag, the Master of Rites and leader of the gaints.

***It is clear that a heated discussion has occurred in the last few moments. The Melancholy offers a guarded smile, "We have been discussing the significance of this momentous occurrence and it is clear that our Cabal cannot ignore the timing. It appears that a great trial will soon be upon us and we will need these new allies more than ever."***

***"As I have said in the past! We must give physical form to my clanmates." The glass brain of Deondag floats into the air and electricity crackles along the surface of his constructed prison.***

***"As we have always intended, but now the Traveler makes known to us that there is less time than expected," says the Discordant Voyage in the form a plain looking half-elven woman. "That is why we asked you in. It is clear that if we are succeed and bring about the Traveler's kingdom on Eberron, we will must acquire the bodies for our allies sooner rather than later. The prophecy suggests that we need warforged and we have long toyed with the idea of using warforged titans to give physical strength to great psionic power of our cloud giant allies. Unfortunately there is no way we can acquire enough titans in time, and so we must finally ask something of our allies of convenience, the Arclight of the Blackwheel Company. If there is a way to acquire the warforged we need, they will know of it. Do not fail. Time is short and the future of the prophecy is in your hands."***

The PCs may ask a few questions if they are unclear about what they should do:

- What exactly do you want us to do? ***Seek out Oslan Terth of the Blackwheel. We have a method of contacting him that we have used in the past. Tell him we require approximate fifty warforged titans, but at the time of their creation we wish to use them to be possessed by a consciousnesses that we will provide. Do whatever you must to make certain this happens.***
- What if he wants a bribe/pay/favor? ***Say what you must, as long as it is believable. We may or may not make good on your promises once we have the titans.***

- Should we just kill him? ***NO! This alliance is critical to our success. Do nothing to jeopardize it.***
- What if he wants details/specifications about what we need? ***We will provide you with detailed instructions to hand over to him that explain the physical and arcane specifications for our needs.***
- What if he needs us to do something to get it done? ***Then do it, no matter what it may be.***
- What will you give us to help us perform this task? ***You have our training and our confidence. That should be sufficient.***
- What do you know about the Oslan Terth? ***Agents of the Cabal first met this human male on the island of Maggago when infiltrating the Captain's Alliance. He approached our agents and brokered an alliance between the Arflight Battalion of the Blackwheel Company and ourselves, because the Arflight believes the time has come to break away from the Dragonmarked Houses and they believe we can help them. We know that Oslan has always been fair and honest with us in the past. It is known that he has been excoriated from House Orien bares a lesser dragonmark of passage. (CSH-08 Racing Midnight)***
- How do we find him? ***Here is a detailed description of the contact protocols.***
- How do we contact you once we succeed/Do we come back here? ***We will give you a sending stone that you may contact us directly. You should activate once you succeed and we will give you further instructions on how to proceed.***

Once the PCs have asked their questions, proceed to Part One. They have been given a scroll detailing the contact protocols for Oslan and a magical *sending stone* that allows the party to contact the Council of the Obscured once they succeed.

### **Role-playing Members of the Council of the Obscured**

The four individuals that sit upon the Council of the Obscured make decisions for the Cabal of Shadows. All of them are old and powerful individuals whose goals exceed the daily concerns of normal folk. Their powers exceed anything the PCs may muster. When portraying them, it is important that they maintain an air of otherworldly mystery.

**The Discordant Voyage:** The Discordant Voyage leads the Instruments of Change and is their representative to the Council of the Obscured. The Voyage is a zealot of the Traveler and is the only member of the Council who never appears masked. Rather each time, the Discordant Voyage appears in a different form with a different, often inappropriate, voice. From a small halfling boy with the voice of a raging firestorm to the humble minotaur, the leader of this Obscura is never the same.

**The Melancholy:** The Melancholy speaks for the Mourners of Yore in the Council of the Obscured. While her true identity is unknown, the voice and mannerisms are decidedly female. The Melancholy is generally a moderating force among the Council that urges solidifying the position of the Cabal by active recruiting of new members and the establishment of safe houses.

**Sublime:** The speaker of the Children of Xoriat takes the form of masked teen of indeterminate sex with fine white angel-like wings. The child, known as Sublime is disturbingly calm for one of the Children and speaks of the eradication of whole cities with the same intensity one might discuss the weather. During discussions on how to proceed, Sublime generally urges the most violent and bloody methods.

**Voice of the Storm:** The Voice of the Storm speaks for the Obscura known as the Defiance. A skilled leader and orator, the Voice has no fear of the coming darkness and he urges all to embrace it. He is prone to motivating speeches, filled with grandiose imagery. Among his fellows on the Council of the Obscured, the Voice of the Storm has urged frequent retribution against the Cabal's enemies. In general, though, he would rather see foes suffer than kill them quickly.

## **Part One: Alliances**

Following the protocols provided, the PCs have arranged a meeting with Oslan. This encounter occurs four hours after the fragment of the Prophecy appeared in the Hand of Stalwart Reverie.

***Contacting the Blackwheel operative was not all the difficult. You left a message at the Broken Spoke Tavern for "Zillion" and within an hour you received a courier with details on where to meet. Now you approach a warehouse near the docks and just as you were told, there is a light on in the office window. Inside, a single man waits.***

Oslan is a smooth agent, appearing friendly but not giving too much away. This is the first time that the Cabal has ever directly contacted Arflight looking for a favor, so he is eager to help and place the Cabal in

his Battalion's debt. He smiles as they enter and asks how he can help them. Once he hears their request, he asks to see the specifications they've brought.

**Mark's Man Oslan Terth:** Male N human fighter 2/ranger 1/blade of Orien 5.

*"Hmmm... what you ask is no small feat. I can tell you that the Company does have a creation forge. Not that we would admit it publically, but it has been in operation almost since we've arrived in Stormreach. We could use it, along with the resources there to make the warforged titans, but I don't think they will work as you require. Warforged are "born" with the programming to run their bodies. They inherently understand how to manipulate and move them. That won't happen in this case. In order to properly interface the consciousness you supply with the bodies you will need a docent to act as a go between for each one and there is no way we can supply that many. In fact, I imagine since no one knows how to make them, that it is unlike we could even get our hands on one; much less fifty. I'm afraid your mission may be over before it starts."*

Once the party has a chance to question Oslan further, he ponders where that many docents might be found. After some time there is only one place he can think to try: Nylluras.

*"There is one possibility. When we recovered the creation forge out of the heart of the jungles there were runes that our scholars said tied those ruins to a giant outpost called Nylluras. We even went so far as to locate Nylluras but aerial surveillance suggested it was not only destroyed, but that there wasn't much to it if it had been intact. It was rated a low priority and never explored. If the docents you need are anywhere, that's the place. I think I can even arrange a ride."*

Oslan arranges for each of the PCs to get Blackwheel Company uniforms (some Cabal PCs may already have these), and then directs the PCs to coordinates where they will meet a Company airship that will drop them off at the ruins. The crew will believe that the PCs are a Blackwheel team and won't know the true purpose of the PCs mission. When the PCs are ready to proceed, move to Part Two. If any of the PCs wish, they have four hours to purchase equipment in Stormreach using the rules provided in the Campaign Standards.

## **Part Two: The Ruins of Nylluras (EL 15)**

This part of the adventure begins with the PCs aboard the *Firestorm*, a small newly built airship, constructed for speed. They are undercover as a Blackwheel squad on a secret mission.

*The wind whips your hair back forth and tugs at the unfamiliar black uniforms that you wear. You have been aboard the Firestorm for only a few hours, and the speed at which the newly crafted airship has put miles behind you is truly impressive. The crew is giddy at their maiden voyage flying this Blackwheel Company prototype for a Company squad on a top secret mission.*

*You stand at the side of the rail when you hear the first mate yell over the roar of the flaming ring that encircles the ship, "All hands, prepare for MAAD insertion! Jump on my mark. Five, four, three..." The crew turns its attention expectantly towards your group as a crewman slams a feather fall talisman into your hand and shoves you over the side just as the first mate shouts "... One!"*

Assuming the PCs are well-trained members of the Company, no one thinks to warn them or even discuss the insertion. They are simply shoved over the side without warning. Have each PC and monster roll Initiative. Once each PC jumps, also have them make a DC 20 Spot check. Success indicates that they spot movement as something metallic in the foliage flashes in the sun. The fiery ring encircling the *Firestorm* has given away the PCs' approach and the warforged protecting the site are moving to attack. The titans move to get a good charge lane, while the raptors move to Flyby Attack PCs in the air.

### **Magic-Assisted Airship Drops**

Successfully activating a *feather fall talisman* at the appropriate time during a MAAD means succeeding at a DC 11 Will save. The PCs make their Will save as soon as they jump. It takes two full rounds to land. Use the chart below to determine the success of their check.

**Modifiers:** Few situations are as difficult as a Magic-Assisted Airship Drop. While risk must exist, it's unrealistic to penalize 5% of players for rolling natural 1's on the Will save. Natural 1 rolls are not instantly fatal. Treat them as you would any other roll of the d20 in this unique situation. Players may always add an action point roll to this save. NPCs may (and perhaps should) encourage PCs with negative Will save modifiers to use magic or other means to help augment or offset that weakness during the drop. A DC 15 Tumble check successfully reduces any damage taken by 1d6 points. Casting a spell during freefall requires

a Concentration check (DC 20 + spell level) due to the extreme conditions. The PCs may choose to take up to two half actions (standard or move or swift actions) during the drop but doing so imposes a -5 penalty to their MAAD-drop roll.

Final Will Save Total	Result
1 or less	Death—Talisman not activated before impact, or talisman activated too soon ( <i>feather fall</i> spell expires before impact)
2-3	3d6 falling damage, land prone—Talisman activated too early
4-5	2d6 falling damage, land prone—Talisman activated too early
6-7	1d6 falling damage, land prone—Talisman activated too early
8-9	Land Prone—Hard landing
10-19	Acceptable Landing
20-24	Flawless Landing—PC lands with a flourish, +2 competence bonus on Spot, Move Silent, Hide, and Listen checks as well as Initiative and attack rolls within three rounds rounds of landing.
25+	Precision Landing—PC gains all the benefits of a Flawless Landing and may pick which square on the map they land.

**Landing:** To simulate the randomness of the landing, pick up all the PCs' minis (if plastic, but if metal use a proxy to avoid damaging it) and drop them from arm's length above the center of the MAAD landing zone marked on the map.

**Strange creatures, looking like great humanoid warforged made of metal, wood, rock and other natural materials prowl on the ground. Other strange bird-like warforged take to the air, streaking towards you. Their construction is like nothing you've ever seen before.**

**Foes:** Four ancient warforged are eternally on patrol outside the ruins, and immediately attack anyone they run across. They are witness to the rapid approach of the *Firestorm* and attack the PC intruders. These warforged are ancient creations made during the giant-quori wars and do not easily match any types the PCs may have previously witnessed. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) is required to identify them due to their unusual construction. The bushes on the map do not block charges, though any square with difficult terrain (Δ) does. The bushes can be used to gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide checks.

**Advanced Warforged Titan (2):** Hp 178; See *Combat Statistics*.

**Advanced Warforged Raptor (2):** Hp 178; See *Combat Statistics*.

**Tactics:** The titans attempt to take advantage of their greater powerful charge and charge a nearby foe. If they find that a foe is hard to damage, they use their awesome blow or trample abilities to move onto another, softer, target and leave the difficult foe for the raptors. The raptors prefer to strafe targets on the ground focusing on ranged attackers, but should any PC take to the air, they become the raptors immediate concern. If ground targets defend well against ranged attacks (deflect arrows, *entropic shield* or similar effects), the raptors will use their power dive. All warforged fight to the death.

**Development:** Unless the PCs are somehow able to mask all the noise and vibration of this fight, the warforged inside the ruins (Part Three) are ready and prepared for the PCs' entrance.

<b>COMBAT STATISTICS</b>	
<b>ADVANCED WARFORGED TITAN</b>	<b>CR 11</b>
LN Huge construct	
<b>Init</b> -1; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1	
<b>Languages</b> understands giant	
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<b>AC</b> 25, touch 7, flat-footed 25 [-2 size, -1 Dex, +18 armor]	
<b>hp</b> 178 (24 HD); <b>DR</b> 11/adamantine	
<b>Immune</b> Construct immunities	
<b>Resist</b> acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, sonic 10	
<b>Fort</b> +7, <b>Ref</b> +6, <b>Will</b> +8	
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<b>Speed</b> 50 ft. (10 squares)	
<b>Melee</b> axe +28 (2d8+11/x3) AND	
<b>Melee</b> maul +22 (2d8+11/x3)	
<b>Space</b> 15 ft.; <b>Reach</b> 15 ft.	

**Base Atk** +18; **Grp** +35

**Atk Options** Awesome blow, magic strike, power Attack, powerful charge +4d6, trample 2d6+16

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**Abilities** Str 30, Dex 8, Con –, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 1

**SQ** Construct traits

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Greater Powerful Charge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Damage Reduction, Power Attack, Powerful Charge, Weapon Focus (axe)

**Skills** Jump +45

**Possessions** *amulet of mighty fists* +1

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**Trample (Ex)** Reflex DC 26, 2d6+16

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**Hook** *The sound of huge stomping feet running shaking the ground as they run through the jungle.*

## ADVANCED WARFORGED RAPTOR CR 11

LN Large construct

**Init** 3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +28

**Languages** understands giant

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**AC** 24, touch 14, flat-footed 21 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +2 deflection, +10 natural)

**hp** 178 (24 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine

**Immune** Construct immunities

**Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, sonic 10

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

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**Speed** 15 ft. (3 squares); fly 90 ft. (average); Flyby Attack

**Melee** slam +26 (1d8+10/x4) AND

**Melee** 2 wing buffets +21 each (1d6+6)

**Ranged** rock +15 (2d6+7)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with slam)

**Base Atk** +18; **Grp** +29

**Atk Options** Power attack, mighty throw, point blank shot, power dive, precise shot, precise swing, strafe

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**Abilities** Str 29, Dex 16, Con –, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 1

**SQ** Construct traits

**Feats** Flyby Attack, Hover, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Precise Swing, Wingover

**Skills** Listen +1, Spot +28

**Possessions** *amulet of mighty fists* +1, *ring of protection* +2

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**Mighty Throw (Ex)** A warforged raptor uses its Strength rather than Dexterity for its ranged attacks.

**Power Dive (Ex)** If a flying warforged raptor makes a charge attack against an opponent on the ground, it can make a full attack.

**Rock Throwing (Ex)** A warforged raptor can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 lbs each, with a range increment of 120 ft. It has an extradimensional space that draws the rocks from and has an effectively unlimited supply.

**Strafe (Ex)** If a flying warforged raptor moves its full speed in a straight line, it can make three ranged boulder attacks over the course of its flight, rather than one. Each attack occurs roughly one-third of the way along its line of movement. Thus, for a standard raptor, the first occurs at 30 feet from its starting point, the second at 60 feet, and the third at 90 feet. Each of these attacks must be made against separate targets, even if the rocks' range increment would normally allow them to all strike the same one.

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**Hook** *The whistling sound of a rock plummeting through the air, as a shadow grows around the target.*

## Scaling the Encounter

**11th Characters:** Remove one warforged raptor and one warforged titan

**12th Characters:** Remove one warforged raptor.

**14th Characters:** Add an additional warforged raptor.

**15th Characters:** Add an additional warforged raptor and an additional warforged titan.

**16th Characters:** Add an additional warforged raptor and an additional warforged titan and each warforged is enchanted with a +4 enhancement to their armor and a +4 enhancement bonus to all of their melee attacks. Increase their AC, to hit, and damage accordingly.

## Part Three: Eternal Guardians (EL 16)

Once the PCs have regrouped and defeated the warforged outside the ruins, they may advance inside.

*There is little left on the surface of the ruins besides huge weatherworn stones. Some of the mammoth stones have been cleared away from a stairway that descends into the darkness. The walls on either side of the stairwell suggest a combination of natural worked stone underneath centuries of dirt and growing plants.*

The PCs have entered into the only remaining part of the ruins. It is here that a handful of ancient warforged live and have stored all the warforged components they have been able to scavenge from the ruins. With the exception of where the PCs enter the map, all other exits are blocked by rubble.

**Features of the Area:** There are a number of terrain features that will make fighting in these caves more challenging.

**Crevasse:** There are two deep crevasses, formed long ago by geological action that felled the rest of the tunnels. The crevasses are 5 to 10 ft. across but plummet down to a depth of 50 ft., and causing 5d6 points of damage to anyone falling into them. The walls of the crevasses are quite sheer and dripping with water and cave mould; requiring a DC 25 Climb check to climb out.

**Light:** Green gloworbs are placed through the cave around the room providing shadowy illumination out to four squares from each. The tunnels are otherwise unlit. Since they were designed to work underground in small places, all of the ancient warforged have darkvision and have never thought to add additional light.

**Stream:** There is a small stream flowing into the cavern. It is not deep enough disrupt movement, but imposes a -2 penalty to Balance, Move Silently and Tumble checks for anyone moving through it.

**Room:** The room is the only place that still looks well-cared for and has unlocked doors. There is no vegetation inside, and the room is littered with warforged components and tools. One of the chests in the southeast corner is filled with docents.

**Rubble:** All of the areas marked by a  $\Delta$  are filled with rubble and vegetation that makes passage harder than normal and should be considered difficult terrain.

**Vegetation:** Due to the magical ministrations of Terra, there is vegetation everywhere in the caverns with the exception of inside the room. This serves as an acceptable target for an *entangle* spell.

**Foes:** Terra and her warforged guardians have dwelt in the ruins since they were whole and now as time progressed, Terra grew closer to the land and became leader of the small band. The only command they remember from their creators is to defend the ruins from any intruders. It is a command they take seriously. Much like the warforged outside, the construction of these warforged is strange and ancient.

**Warforged Guardian (2):** warforged fighter 8/warforged juggernaut 5, Hp 133; See *Combat Statistics*.

**Terra:** warforged druid 8/landwalker 5, Hp 129; See *Combat Statistics*.

**Fang:** viper animal companion, Hp 43; See *Combat Statistics*.

**Tactics:** Hearing the fight above, the two warforged guardians drink their *potions of haste* and *potions of invisibility* once the PCs are about to descend into the caverns, and spread out to the right and to the left, hoping to catch the PCs between them as they move towards the light of their home. They use their Improved and Superior Bull Rush to knock the unwary into the crevasse. If that is impossible, they try to focus on separate targets while attacking from separate sides, trying to force the party to cluster so as to make them more vulnerable to Terra's spells.

Terra holds Fang in reserve to attack the first PC to cross the distance to the home, hoping to tie them up while she continues to use her spells. She leads off with *wall of thorns* to control the battlefield and limit the usefulness of melee attacking enemies. She then picks off troublesome enemies with *fireseeds* and *flame strike* spells. If enemies in the *wall of thorns* prove capable with ranged attacks, she places a *wall of stone* by using her scroll to block line of sight. Due to their programming, the warforged fight to the death.

### COMBAT STATISTICS

#### WARFORGED GUARDIAN CR 13

Warforged fighter 8/warforged juggernaut 5  
N Medium construct (living construct)

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

Languages Giant

**AC** 27, touch 10, flat-footed 27 (+8 armor, +4 shield, +5 *barkskin*)

**hp** 133 (13 HD); **DR** 4/adamantine

**Immune** warforged immunities, construct immunities

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2

**Weakness** Cannot heal lethal damage naturally

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**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Melee** +1 *flaming battlefist* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+9 plus 1d6 fire)

**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +12 (1d8/19-20)

**Base Atk** +11; **Grp** +17

**Atk Options** Cleave, Greater Powerful Charge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, armor spikes 1d8, charge bonus +2, expert rush +5, extended charge +5 ft., superior bull rush (*ECS84*)

**Combat Gear** *potion of haste*, *potion of invisibility*

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**Abilities** Str 22, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9

**SQ** construct traits, reserved (*ECS84*), warforged traits

**Feats** Adamantine Body, Cleave, Greater Powerful Charge, Greater Weapon Focus (battlefist), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Damage Reduction (2), Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Powerful Charge, Weapon Focus (battlefist), Weapon Specialization (battlefist)

**Skills** Bluff -6, Climb +10, Diplomacy -6, Gather Information -6, Intimidate +6, Jump +6, Listen -1, Sense Motive -6, Spot -1, Survival +8

**Possessions** combat gear plus +2 *heavy shield*, +1 *flaming battlefist*, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *belt of giant strength* +2

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**Power-Up Suite:** *barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *freedom of movement*

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**Hook** "Die fleshling!"

## TERRA CR 13

Female personality warforged druid 8/landwalker 5

N Medium Construct (living construct)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +20

**Languages** Druidic, Giant, Sylvan

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**AC** 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (-1 Dex, +3 armor, +1 deflection, +2 natural, +5 *barkskin*)

**hp** 129 (13 HD); **DR** 2/slashing

**Immune** polymorphing, warforged immunities

**Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, healing half effect, fortification (50% chance to ignore criticals/sneak attacks)

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +2, **Will** +11; +4 against mid-affect effects and spells and spell-like abilities of fey

**Weakness** cannot heal lethal damage naturally

---

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares); woodland stride

**Melee** slam +9/+4 (1d4+1)

**Ranged** sling +8/+3 (1d4+1)

**Base Atk** +8; **Grp** +9

**Special Actions** plant shape 3/day (13 hrs, Small to Huge plant up to 13 HD, as wild shape), wild shape 3/day (5 hrs, Small to Large animal up to 8 HD)

**Combat Gear** 2 *scrolls of greater magic fang*, *scroll of wall of fire*, *scroll of wall of stone*, *wand of bear's endurance* (18 charges)

**Druid Spells Prepared** (CL 12th):

6th—*fire seeds* (2, DC 20 or +7 ranged touch)

5th—~~*animal growth*~~, ~~*death ward*~~, *wall of thorns*

4th—*dispel magic*, *flame strike* (DC 18), ~~*freedom of movement*~~ (2)

3rd—~~*extended barkskin*~~, *call lightning* (DC 17), *daylight*, *snare*, *spike growth* (DC 17)

2nd—~~*barkskin*~~ (3), *flame blade* (+9 melee touch), *warp wood* (DC 16)

1st—*charm animal* (DC 15), *entangle* (DC 15), ~~*faerie fire*~~, ~~*longstrider*~~, *magic fang*, *produce flame* (+9 melee touch or +7 ranged touch)

0—*detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th):

1/day—*commune with nature*, *speak with plants*

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<p><b>Abilities</b> Str 13, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 8  <b>SQ</b> body of nature (jungle), harvest herbs (3/day, move action to draw, standard to eat, heal 9 hp), trackless step, wild empathy +4 (+2 magical beats), do not need to eat or drink  <b>Feats</b> Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Ironwood Body, Natural Spell, Sudden Maximize  <b>Skills</b> Concentration +21, Diplomacy +3, Handle Animal +6 (+10 animal companion), Hide +2 (+6 jungle), Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (nature) +11, Listen +8, Spellcraft +7, Spot +20, Survival +18 (+20 aboveground natural)  <b>Possessions</b> combat gear plus masterwork sling with 20 bullets, <i>peript of wisdom</i> +2, <i>ring of protection</i> +1</p> <hr/> <p><b>Power-Up Suite:</b> extended <i>barkskin</i>, <i>bear's endurance</i>, <i>death ward</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Hook</b> "I am the land!"</p> <p><b>FANG CR –</b>  Viper animal companion  N Huge magical beast (augmented animal)  <b>Init</b> +7; <b>Senses</b> low-light vision, scent, Listen +5, Spot +6</p> <hr/> <p><b>AC</b> 27, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, -2 size, +3 Dex, +7 natural, +5 <i>barkskin</i>)  <b>hp</b> 43 (5 HD); <b>DR</b> 10/magic  <b>Fort</b> +12, <b>Ref</b> +12, <b>Will</b> +7; evasion</p> <hr/> <p><b>Speed</b> 30 ft. (6 squares); climb 20 ft.; swim 20 ft.  <b>Melee</b> bite +7 (1d6+5 plus poison)  <b>Space</b> 15 ft; <b>Reach</b> 10 ft.  <b>Base Atk</b> +3; <b>Grp</b> +11  <b>Atk Options</b> poison (DC 14, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con)</p> <hr/> <p><b>Abilities</b> Str 19, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2  <b>SQ</b> Link, share spells  <b>Feats</b> Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite)  <b>Skills</b> Balance +11, Climb +15, Hide +8, Listen +5, Spot +6, Swim +12  <b>Possessions</b> chainshirt barding</p> <hr/> <p><b>Tricks</b> attack (x2), come, defend, guard</p> <hr/> <p><b>Power-Up Suite:</b> <i>animal growth</i>, <i>barkskin</i>, <i>bear's endurance</i>, <i>greater magic fang</i>, <i>longstrider</i></p>
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### Scaling the Encounter

**11th & 12th Characters:** Remove one warforged guardian.

**14th Characters:** Add an ancient iron golem (*MM136*) that still answers to Terra.

**15th Characters:** Add an addition warforged guardian and ancient iron golem (*MM136*) that still answers to Terra.

**16th Characters:** Add an addition warforged guardian and ancient greater stone golem (*MM136*) that still answers to Terra. Due to ancient giantish manufacture, the stone golem possesses the breath weapon of an iron golem.

### Finding the Docents

Once the guardians have been dealt with, the PCs are free to explore the only surviving room. It is clear that the warforged have been living here, and the room smells strongly of snake. Tools, components, and raw materials fill the room. In the southeastern corner of the room are three locked trunks (hardness 5; hp 25; AC 5; Break DC 18, Open Locks DC 20). None of the warforged have the key that has long since been lost in the rubble. One of the trunks (the one with the docents) is trapped.

### TRAP STATISTICS

#### FATAL SCREAM CR 12

**Description** A magical glyph is inscribed upon the inside of the lid of the trunk, which goes off if the trunk is opened (whether picked or broken). The individual closest to the trap is targeted by an *energy drain* and then a *wail of the banshee* is triggered.

**Search** DC 34 (detects that there is a glyph inside); **Type** Magic (there is a *nystul's magic aura* spell preventing the trap from radiating magic)

**Trigger** visual trigger (*true seeing*)

**Effect** *Energy drain* (+8 ranged touch, 2d4 negative levels for 24 hours; DC 23 Fortitude negates) every 2 rounds

**Effect** *Wail of the Banshee* (17<sup>th</sup>-level wizard, DC 23 Fortitude negates; up to 17 targets)

**Duration** Continuous (every round)

**Destruction** AC 15; hp 36; hardness 5 (destroy the lid)

**Disarm** Disable Device DC 34 (each—tell any player who attempts to disarm the trap that there are two separate effects to be disarmed)

**Dispel** DC 29 (17<sup>th</sup>-level)

### Scaling the Encounter

**11th & 12th Characters:** Replace the *energy drain* with *enervation*. Decrease the Search and Disable Device by 2.

**14th Characters:** No change.

**15th Characters:** Increase the ranged touch attack bonus of the *energy drain* to +10.

**16th Characters:** Increase the ranged touch attack bonus of the *energy drain* to +10 and raise the DC of both traps to DC 25.

## Part Four: Undercover (EL 17)

The last encounter occurs three days later, the PCs have been extracted to the *Firestorm* and had the chance to chance to heal up. The boxed text assumes the PCs have been successful up until this time. The DM should adjust accordingly if that is not the case. If a PC has been slain, the Blackwheel facility has the capability to raise that PC from the dead, but due to their cover, the character must pay the full cost of the spell without any discounts from story objects. Resurrections are not available at the facility.

*Three days ago you contacted the Council of the Obscured and they were pleased with your apparent success. They immediately put the second phase of your mission into action. On direct orders from Tubal d'Cannith, the commander of the Arclight Battalion, the Firestorm has been directed to the Company's hidden forge. Once there you rendezvoused with a platoon of Company Soldiers who were to escort you into the facility. The lieutenant handed you a sealed communiqué that contained orders from the Discordant Voyage. You are to proceed to the office of the Lead Artificer and assassinate him quietly while the soldiers "reinforce" the troops already protecting the facility. The Voyage will arrive and impersonate the artificer and begin construction of the warforged titans, using the docents you have recovered. Do not allow the alarm to be raised. You stand in a quiet hallway outside the artificer's office, though loud noises echo from the floor of the main workshop. He does not expect you.*

The PCs are not currently in sight of anyone. They are to pretend to be loyal Blackwheel Soldiers and limit any chance that the lead artificer will raise the alarm. Once close to the lead artificer (Xshayârdus) they are expected to quickly assassinate him.

**Foes:** Unbeknownst to the rank and file staffing the facility, the lead artificer is not human. Two rogue inevitables work in the forge, designing new constructs and keeping the humans from making too many large technological advancements. If the PCs cast any spells in the hallway that the inevitables can hear, they are automatically suspicious and prepared for the PC's entrance. Xshayârdus uses his at will *invisibility* spell-like ability to keep Astunim unseen at all times. Astunim has his *true seeing* active at all times. Both of them wear a *hat of disguise*. Astunim appears as an ogre while Xshayârdus looks like a human baring a least dragonmark of making.

**Xshayârdus:** kolyarut artificer 6, Hp 115; See Combat Statistics.

**Astunim:** marut, Hp 112; *MM* 159.

**Tactics:** While invisible Astunim uses his *wall of force* to prevent any PCs from escaping and then moves to block access to Xshayârdus (likely in a surprise round unless the PCs detect him). He then uses *greater dispel magic* if he knows the PCs were cast preparatory spells and if not, he uses *chain lightning* and then moves to melee. Xshayârdus tries to remain at range so he can use his *enervation ray*, *hold monster*, and quickened *suggestion* (surrender). If engaged in melee in uses his vampiric touch. If Xshayârdus is slain, Astunim uses *dimension door* to get to the other side of the *wall of force* and summon help.

**Development:** If either of the inevitables manage to flee and summon help, they run into two of the Company's guards. Use Troll Hunters (MM247) to represent these thugs.

## COMBAT STATISTICS

### XSHAYÂRDUS

CR 15

Kolyarut artificer 6

LN Medium Construct (extraplanar, lawful)

**Action Points** 3

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +11, Spot +11

**Languages** Common

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**AC** 30, touch 13, flat-footed 29 (+1 Dex, +2 deflection, +10 natural, +7 banded mail)

**hp** 115 (19 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/chaotic

**Immune** construct traits

**SR** 28

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12

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**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares); 30 ft. without armor

**Melee** Vampiric touch +15/+10 melee touch (5d6) OR

**Melee** +2 *longsword* +17/+12 melee (1d8+5/19–20) OR

**Melee** slam +15/+10 melee (1d6+3)

**Ranged** enervation ray +14 ranged touch (as spell)

**Base Atk** +13; **Grp** +15

**Special Actions** metamagic spell trigger

**Combat Gear** *wand of dispel magic* (10 charges), *wand of ice storm* (10 charges), *wand of repair serious damage* (10 charges), *wand of magic missile* (9<sup>th</sup>-level, 20 charges), *wand of silence* (7 charges)

**Artificer Infusions** (CL 6<sup>th</sup>; DC 13 + level of infusion; see ECS103 for a list of available infusions):

3/day—3rd

4/day—1st, 2nd

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th):

At will—*discern lies* (DC 17), *disguise self*, *fear* (DC 17), *hold person* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *locate creature*, *suggestion* (DC 16)

1/day—*hold monster* (DC 17), *mark of justice*

1/week—*geas/quest*

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**Abilities** Str 14, Dex 13, Con —, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 16

**SQ** Artificer knowledge, construct traits, craft homunculus, disable trap, metamagic spell trigger, retain essence

**Feats** Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (suggestion), Scribe Scroll

**Skills** Concentration +18, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +12, Gather Information +12, Listen +11, Search +5, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +4, Spot +11, Survival +3 (+5 following tracks), Use Magic Device +28

**Possessions** combat gear plus +2 *longsword*, +1 *banded mail*, *ring of protection* +2, *hat of disguise*, *wand bracer* (with all wands loaded in it, free action to ready a specific wand)

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**Enervation Ray (Su):** A kolyarut can fire a black enervation ray at targets within 200 feet. The effect is identical with the *enervation* spell (caster level 13th).

**Vampiric Touch (Su):** As a melee touch attack, a kolyarut can steal life force from its foe, as the *vampiric touch* spell (caster level 13th).

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**Hook** “You are breaking the rules by being here. You should never break the rules.”

## Scaling the Encounter

**11th & 12th Characters:** Change Astunim from a marut to a shield guardian (MM223).

**14th Characters:** No change.

**15th & 16th Characters:** Add Enmuranki, a second marut with similar preparations.

## Development

If the PCs flee, the Arclight Soldiers lead by the Discordant Voyage, are forced to take more drastic measures. All other soldiers and Xshayârdus are slain in a gruesome melee and the lesser artificers are enslaved. The Voyage is less than pleased in the PCs' performance but the imminent threat of the prophecy's warning forces the party's punishment to wait. Much work must be done.

# Ending the Adventure

If the PCs arrive at another conclusion than what is presented, it is up to the judge to determine the appropriate ending.

## Success

Read this if the PCs successfully recovered the docents and then managed to assassinate the lead artificer, Xshayârdus.

*As the artificer falls, the elven lieutenant who handed you your orders minutes ago approaches you. The large grin on his face that melts away as he becomes the human man the artificer once appeared to be. "Give me a hand soldiers, I need to bring some new equipment to the forge floor," he smirks. Over the next few days, the Blackwheel operatives reconfigured the forge under the guidance of the disguised Discordant Voyage. Warforged titans take shape all around you, each housing a huge glass brain protected inside its metal casing and fronting a new docent.*

*As the first titan takes its own tentative steps from the forge, it turns to you and a voice resonates painfully in your mind. "I am Deondag the Master of Rites, and now I live again!"*

PCs who receive this Conclusion receive the story object **EXCS39 Construct Bane** and the event treasure. Those PCs who return the docents but are forced to flee the artificer and need to be saved receive the same ending but receive less event treasure (see below).

## Failure

Read this if the PCs failed to recover the docents:

*You stand among the smoking ruins of the Company's forge facility. Your failure forced the Cabal's hand and its full force was brought to bare with the truly devastating power of the Council of the Obscured winning the day. The warforged titans will be made, but the cost is dear and you have no doubt some punishment will fall your way for your incompetence.*

PCs who receive this Conclusion do not receive the story object **EXCS39 Construct Bane** or the event treasure.

## Resolving Obscura Secret Missions

Any PC that completes the secret mission given to them by their Obscura at the beginning of the adventure should receive the **Obscura Reward #23: Hero of the Cabal** story object. Here is a summary of what must be done to receive this reward.

- *Children of Xoriat*: To succeed in their mission, Children must kill ALL of the warforged in Part Two and Three.
- *The Defiance*: In order to succeed in their assignment the PC must place the corrupted docent into the trunk with the docents recovered from the ruins.
- *Instruments of Change*: The PC must make sure that neither Xshayârdus nor Astunim escape to summon aid and alert the rest of the facility or force the Discordant Voyage to save the party.
- *Mourners of Yore*: The PC must give the scroll tube to Oslan Terth.
- *No Obscura*: The PC must make sure the party succeeds in recovering the docents and killing Xshayârdus.

## Event Treasure

If you are running *CSH-12 Dark Portents* as part of another event and the PCs successfully retrieve the docents, they are rewarded by the Council. Have each PC record the following event treasure upon their adventure journals in addition to any story objects to be carried on their adventure journal until the results of this event are reported and their EV is updated. Each PC may choose any one magic item from the DMG

worth 40,000 gp or less. Those PCs who return the docents but are forced to flee the artificer and need to be saved receive may choose any one magic item from the DMG worth 25,000 gp or less.

## Adventure Questions

1. Did the PCs cordially negotiate with Oslan Terth and preserve the Arclight Alliance?
  - a. Yes
  - b. It remains intact, but only barely.
  - c. No
2. How did the PCs deal with warforged patrolling the ruins?
  - a. They destroyed or bypassed them all.
  - b. They were defeated by them and lost some of the party.
  - c. The constructs defeated the PCs.
  - d. They never made it this far.
3. How did the PCs deal with Terra and the eternal warforged guardians in the ruins?
  - a. They killed every last one.
  - b. They drove off the dusty scum.
  - c. The PCs ran away.
  - d. They gave up long before getting to this point.
4. Did the PCs encounter the trap protecting the Docents?
  - a. They found and disabled or bypassed it.
  - b. They suffered through it.
  - c. They never got this far.
5. Did PCs recover the docents?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. How did the PCs deal with Xshayârdus and his bodyguard?
  - a. They took them by force.
  - b. They encountered them and defeated some but not before they alerted the rest of the complex.
  - c. The party was drained dry and thrown away, requiring rescuing by the Discordant Voyage.
  - d. They never got this far.
7. Rate the players' role-playing (while keeping in mind limitations of convention time restrictions)?
  - a. Excellent, they should all be on the silver screen.
  - b. Good, you had a fun time.
  - c. Fair, someone used a funny voice.
  - d. Poor, they rolled some dice and ignored chances to role-play.

## Story Objects

### Construct Bane

Code: EXCS39

The Cabal is prepared for treachery in its ranks, and so they wish to use the information on warforged that you have brought back to make you ready for treachery from Deondag and the other giants possessing the warforged titans. Once per foe, as a swift action, you may spend two action points after you make a to hit roll to ignore a construct's immunity to sneak attacks and critical hits and affect them normally. This can be used with spells that require a to hit roll, though you must contend with spell resistance as normal.

### Obscure Reward #23: Hero of the Cabal

Code: EXCS40

You have succeeded in a secret mission given to you by your Obscura and have become irrevocably tied to the dark powers of the Cabal. For every adventure you play until the end of the campaign, you receive a number of Obscura points equal to the number of Obscura Reward story objects you possess. All spell-like abilities are cast with a level equal to your hit dice and may target yourself only. You spend your Obscura

points as immediate actions according to the following list: 1 point—*cure minor*; 2 points—gain a +2 profane bonus to any roll before the roll is made; 4 points—*aid*; 5 points—gain a +2 profane bonus to any roll after the roll is made; 5 points—*cure serious*; 8 points—*divination*; 10 points—*darkness* (you see through it as though it was not there); 10 points—*greater invisibility*; 20 points—your next d20 roll is considered a natural 20.

# Player Handout #1: Obscura Orders

The DM should have each player secretly write down their membership in an Obscura, if any, and then provide them with the appropriate handout. These are SECRET orders and should only be shown to players who PCs are in the listed Obscura.

## Children of Xoriat

As you prepare to leave, Sublime pulls you aside and tells you, “This mission cannot fail. Do as you are ordered. If there are any guardians to the docents, you must slay them all that no one can use their knowledge to reproduce the docents but the Cabal.”

**Goal:** Recover the docents, slay ALL guardians in the ruins.

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## The Defiance

The Voice of the Storm tells you “We need our giant allies, but we must be always remember that they are not part of one of the original Obscura. United as an entire clan with their sanity and bodies returned, they will be extremely powerful, so we need a failsafe. I have a docent that has been corrupted that we might control the titan it is attached to. If you can slip it in with the rest of them, it will find its way to the body we use for Deondag.”

**Goal:** Place the corrupt docent with any docents you recover.

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## Instruments of Change

The Discordant Voyage tells you that he will be present in your final part of your mission, something he cryptically calls phase two. He does not wish to be exposed prematurely and demands that you not require him to save you no matter the cost.

**Goal:** Do not allow your assassination target during “phase two” to summon help or alert his allies.

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## Mourners of Yore

The Melancholy pulls you aside and tells you “I wish to entreat further with the Arclight Battalion. Please pass this magically sealed scroll tube to Oslan Terth and tell him that it is to be given to his ‘uncle.’ ”

**Goal:** Give the scroll tube to Oslan Terth.

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## No Obscura

This is the culmination of Deondag’s plans. Make sure it comes to fruition.

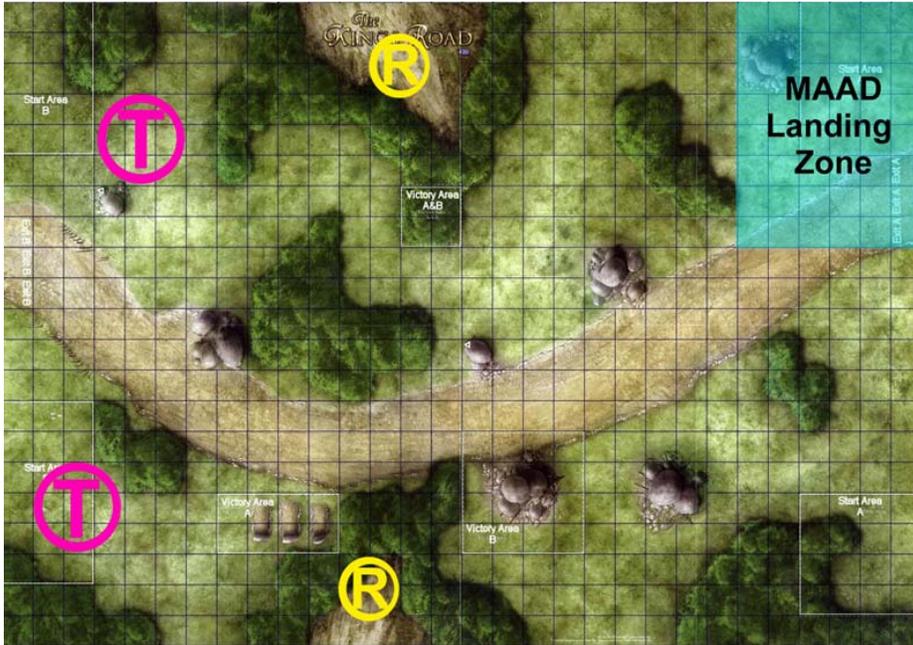
**Goal:** Do as you are told, retrieve the docents and use them as advised by the Council.



# DM Aid #1: Maps

## Part Two

T = Warforged Titan  
R = Warforged Raptor



## Part Three

G = Warforged Guardian  
T = Terra  
F = Fang



**Part Four**

X = Xshayârdus

A = Astunim

