

ASSASSIN'S AMULET

Life Is A Dangerous Business



Michael K. Tumey, Mike Bourke and Johnn Four





Life is a deadly business

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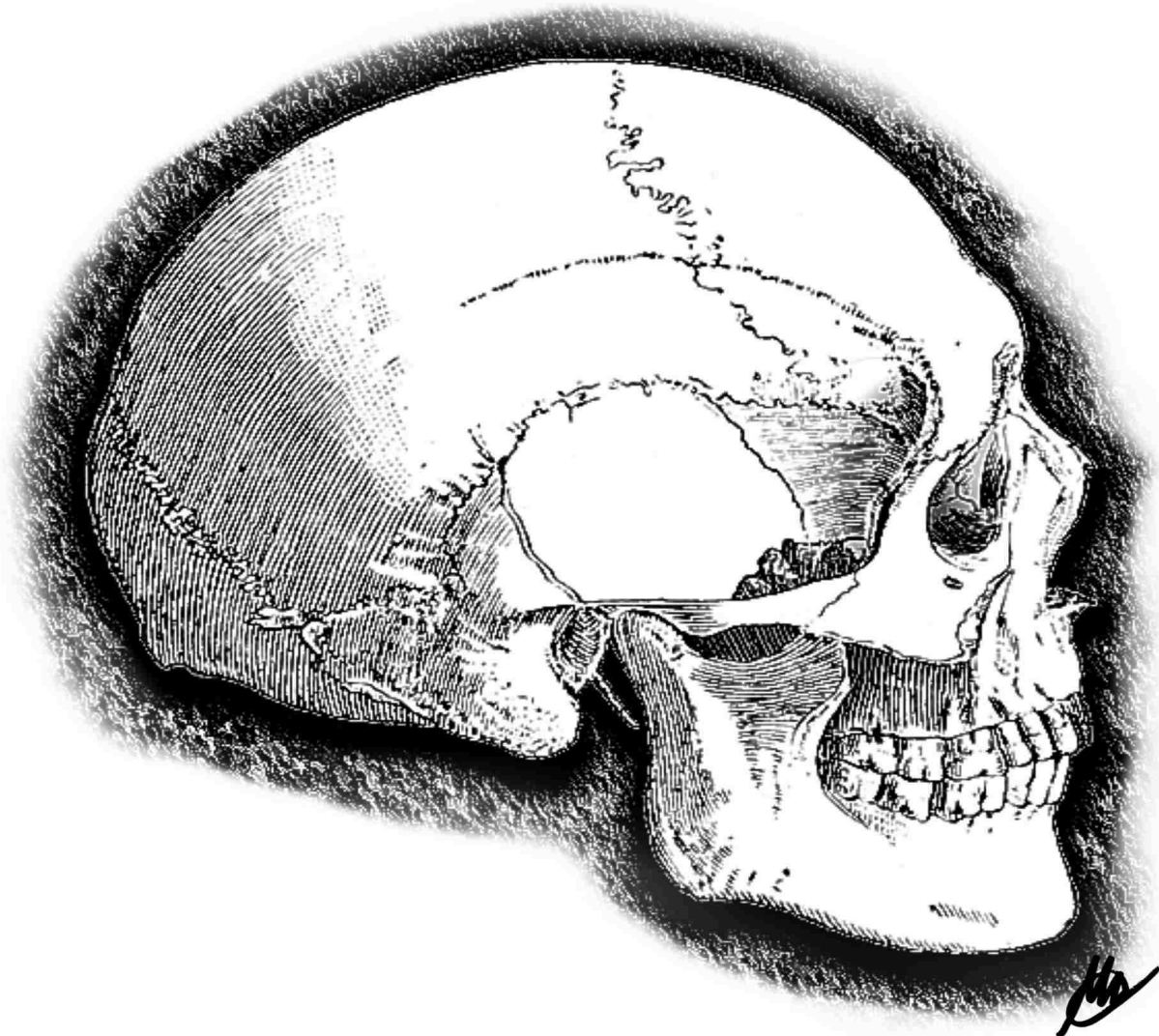
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Chapter 0: Preliminaries



Foreword

I've been following Johnn Four's Roleplaying Tips for about 10 years now, and enjoying his bits of roleplaying game wisdom immensely. When my company, 4 Winds Fantasy Gaming, began putting together a book on general roleplaying essays last year, Johnn suggested his blogging partner Mike Bourke as a contributor. Mike jumped at the possibility, and he and I began communicating off and on, mostly via Twitter. Several weeks ago, I got a tweet from Mike giving bare-bones details about this project, and asking if I would be interested in writing the foreword. As Mike had done with the offer I sent him months ago, I jumped at this chance.

The Assassin's Amulet takes a map by Michael K. Tumey and greatly expands upon it, with over 220 pages of assassin-y goodness following. There is so much good stuff in here that I can't wait to add some of it to my home Pathfinder game when it restarts in a few months, and I'm not exaggerating there. This is simply one of the most original assassin's guilds I've ever seen produced for the 3.5 or Pathfinder system.

And speaking of those two systems, John, Michael and Mike have gone out of their way to stat out all the NPCs, monsters and new character classes in both 3.5 and PFRPG stats, so there is no need to convert back and forth from one to the other if you prefer one game over the other. That's a lot of work on their part, and I believe gamers everywhere will greatly appreciate it.

But back to the guild itself – the Hands of Cyrene. As I said, it is an extremely original assassin's guild, the like I've not seen in 3.5 or PFRPG. It most reminds me of the Faceless Men of the House of Black and White in Braavos, which Arya Stark joins in *A Feast for Crows* (book four of George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*). They are assassins who do not see themselves as evil, and in fact believe they are doing good and holy work. It certainly puts a twist on things, and will make many goodly player characters take a second look at what they themselves do as adventurers. After all, is the paladin that much different from the Acolyte of Cyrene?

Between the guild hall itself (with all the variants provided), the notes and tips on running assassins and assassin-based campaigns, the new classes, monsters, and magic items, and the details on the goddess Cyrene, *The Assassin's Amulet* provides more than enough crunch and fluff to provide your group with hours and hours of great games. I know it will for mine!

Good gaming!

Robert Thomson
co-founder/publisher
4 Winds Fantasy Gaming
<http://4windsfantasygaming.com>



Preface:

The Story Behind Assassin's Amulet

by Mike Bourke

It started with the map, which Michael Tumey crafted as the winning entry in a monthly contest – more of a challenge, really – at the Cartographer's Guild website back in June 2009. When he was done, he thought, "This is too good to just throw away."

In early 2010, he contacted Johnn Four about filling the map key out with some description. Michael wanted to leverage the map and associated content to enter into the field of publishing. Johnn was taken by the quality of the map and the clever plot twist of the Amulets (no, I won't describe it here – there might be players watching). He thought, "This is too good to let get away."

If you have an assassin's lair, you need assassins to populate it. Johnn and I were already in collaboration on CampaignMastery.com and preparing to start publishing e-books together, and it was not too much of a leap to expand Michael's idea into something that would achieve our goals as well as his. That was how I became involved; one look at the quality of the map and it was clear to me it was too good to ignore, even though it would mean delaying or abandoning plans we had worked hard on over the previous year or so.

I convinced Johnn, and he told Michael we were in.

The initial concept was to provide the map, the assassins, and some GM advice on how to use assassins in a game. Over time, that concept grew until it became the map and the assassins and everything you might need to integrate them into your game, from GM advice to ready made opposition. And then grew some more. And some more after that.

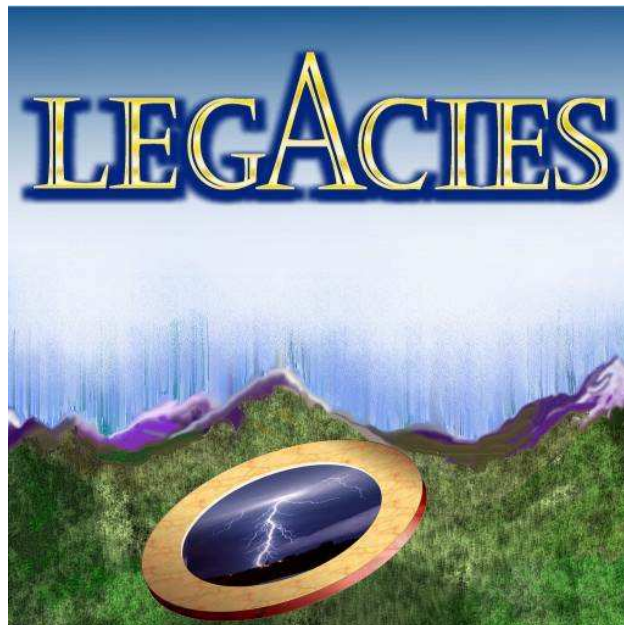
Along the journey from that time and place to this, there have been disagreements and moments of inspiration and euphoria. The result is something of which I think we can all be proud.



The Legacies Series

“Legacies (n., plural of Legacy): Gifts left by Will, objects or circumstances handed down, or inherited, from a predecessor.

The observant reader may have noticed a strange icon amongst the d20 & Pathfinder compatibility notices and our shiny new OGL icon. That icon signifies that this product is part of the Legacies series.



Legacies Products revolve around the phrase, ‘The Past Is Prologue’. Long-forgotten history and lore manifest in a series of Game supplements which can stand alone as a Campaign Setting or be integrated into a GMs existing setting. Each product examines in detail, and often re-imagines, an iconic character class which it examines in detail and makes the centerpiece of a vignette of the world, incorporating advice on how to get the most from that character class, adventure seeds, and supplemental game materials.”

AA has as it’s back cover heading, ‘You’ll never look at Assassins the same way again.’ If all goes according to plan, Legacies #2 will do the same thing for Paladins, #3 for Clerics, and so on. I already have vague ideas for #4, Rangers.

Legacy Magic Items are the glue that binds the series together, a concept that runs throughout the setting. The plotline/adventure part of #2, Paladins, will concern the impact of one such legacy item on an order of Paladins – which will afford a window into everything that makes Paladins what they are, and how to extend the character class to focus on different aspects of that central theme.

Look for **Legacies #2** [Working Title: “*The Order Of Light*”], in 2012.



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What's In Assassin's Amulet

At the heart of this supplement is the gorgeous map by Michael Tumey. Surrounding that is a unique and original assassin's guild (1 core class and 4 prestige classes) and all manner of supporting material specifically relating to them, including new feats, a new deity, and new magic items. While intended for NPCs, there is nothing preventing you from permitting a PC assassin in a lawful good party – usually a recipe for disaster. We have deliberately stepped beyond the bounds of what is usually possible, then crafted the game resources to support the result. Resources such as a new class to provide opposition to the Hands of Cyrene and an example character presented in snapshots taken every three levels, complete and ready to run.

Loosely connected to that is a content layer containing anything else we thought might be useful in running the assassin's guild in a game, including this one – everything from assassin plot hooks, to advice on how to equip an assassin, to a system for setting prices for assassination contracts. While some of this material relates specifically to the guild created for Assassin's Amulet, most of it is independent in nature with supplementary notes where necessary to ensure compatibility with the core content.

Also contained in this layer is a system for generating a new class of magic item, capable of integrating everything from the Orb of Aldur to the One Ring into your campaigns.

Around the fringes, we offer inspirational material to help you integrate everything we have provided into your campaigns. Some of this material might be further fleshed out in future products, but most of it is presented as-is.

Chapter 1 contains the maps of the lair, targets where assassinations might be likely to occur, and some props with instructions on how to print and use them.

Chapter 2 is the key to the lair map, and some advice on how best to use it repeatedly in play.

Chapter 3 holds several articles of GM advice relating to the use of assassins in games, covering everything from combat strategies to assassination targets. This material is suitable for use with any assassin's guild.

Chapter 4 is devoted to character classes and NPCs. We start with the deity who stands behind the Assassin's Guild, Cyrene, then progress through the core class and prestige classes that make up the guild. We offer a complete stat block for a current Guildmaster (and the Spirit of a former Guildmaster, used as an encounter within the Guild Headquarters), plus a new monster. Next is advice on how to roleplay an assassin and how to adapt the material provided for epic level campaigns. We conclude with another new character class and examples with which to oppose the guild.

In **Chapter 5**, we offer new magic items for use by the assassins, some new mundane

equipment, a system for the generation of magic items that fall somewhere between a typical piece of magical equipment and an artifact, and a number of examples to illustrate the process.

Chapter 6 considers the larger picture — how to integrate some or all of the material provided, and how to leave out the parts that do not appeal to you or do not fit your campaign. Everything in *Assassin's Amulet* is designed to be modular, and this chapter contains the blueprints to the jigsaw puzzle and how it can be reconfigured to suit your specific needs.

Central Concepts of *Assassin's Amulet*

Cyrene is a Goddess of Life, concerned with slaying those who try to extend their mortality beyond natural bounds by unnatural means. Only the deadliest of assassins serve her, and only the best among those receive her amulet to bear in pursuit of their holy ritual murders.

Each Amulet of Cyrene, also referred to as an assassin's amulet, acts as the key to a secret base for a guild of chosen assassins. This lair serves as home, refuge, and headquarters, central to the operations of the local Guild. The amulet also controls the lair's environment and defenses.

These are no ordinary assassins; they have the full backing and support of a greater deity. As a plot device, the Amulet of Cyrene offers a fantastic means of getting assassins into your adventure storyline. For example, an assassin currently targeting

your party's employer for assassination could wear an amulet.

For divination, as well as exit and escape, the amulet serves to make its wearer well prepared and elusive—ideal for setting up one or more assassins as recurring foes and helping you solve the problem of escapes without railroading the action. The amulet also forms a natural hook (a mysterious magic item) and unique plot twist (it doubles as a map of the assassins' lair).

However, the assassins are different in other ways, because Cyrene is a Goddess of Life, and they believe they have good reason for what they do. The very presence of the Hands of Cyrene poses moral, intellectual and philosophical dilemmas for the players and renders their consequences as tangible products, as real as life-and-death.

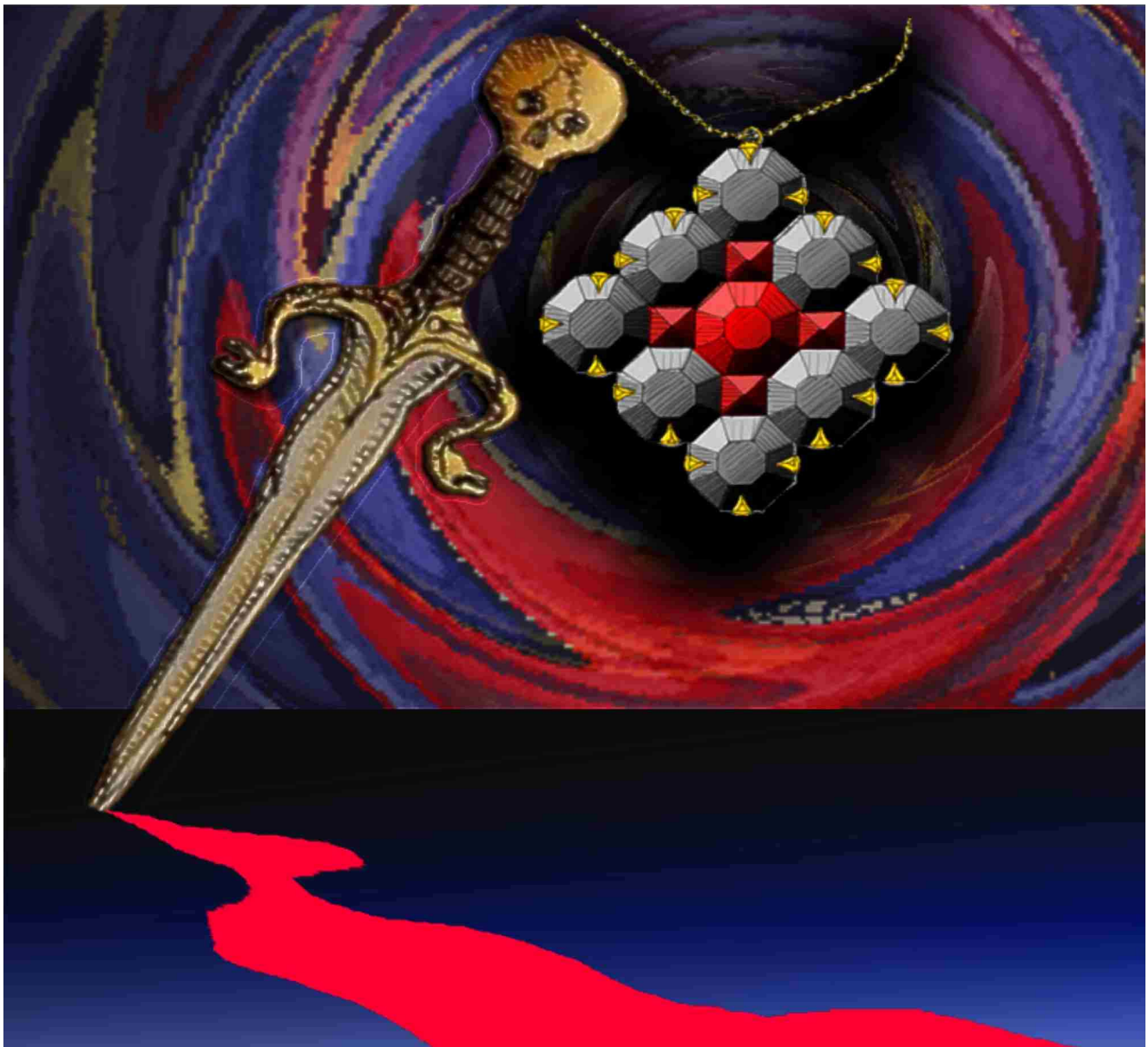
Assassin's Amulet can be a background element, an adventure, or the central focus for an entire campaign or series of campaigns. It contains the foundations for years of gaming.

About this product

The content of *Assassin's Amulet* was developed for D&D 3.x but full conversions for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game are provided throughout.

Although for convenience the masculine gender is used for all terms within this book, there are no gender restrictions within the Hands of Cyrene and its sub-orders. In addition, while most members of the Hands are portrayed herein as human, this is not a requirement

Chapter 1: Maps, Floorplans, Props & Accessories



Maps and Floor Plans

This chapter offers the floor plan and battlemaps for the Assassin's Lair at the heart of Assassin's Amulet. Two maps of a noble's bedchamber and a to-scale carriage offer interesting battle locations as well. We then present a number of props you can use or as you see fit. (More props can be found in the Appendix).

Assassin's Lair

The heart of Assassin's Amulet is the lair designed by Michael Tumey.

This map is presented in 300dpi resolution in the Appendix, suitable for printing and use as a Battlemat. Sufficient overlap is incorporated to permit assembly. We have also provided the complete map as a single page in both 300dpi and a high-resolution version in 600dpi.

The full key to the map is provided in Chapter 2.



Assassination Venues

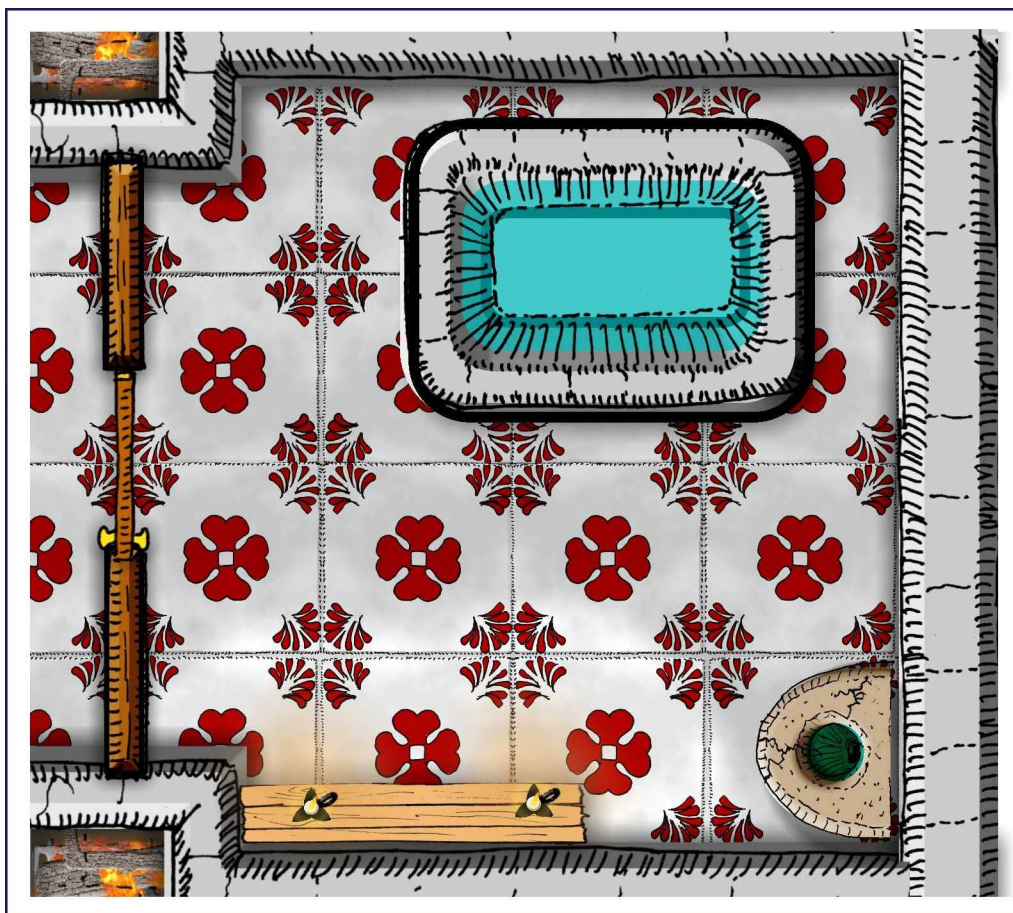
On the following pages you will find two locations suitable for use as venues for assassinations. The first is a three-room Nobleman's Chamber and the second is a Carriage suitable for a nobleman, which is also presented in mini form in "Paper Miniatures", below, suitable for use on a terrain Battlemat, in a town square or marketplace, etc.

Note that the first two chamber maps overlap. The carriage map has been split into two parts to accommodate the printed page size.



Nobleman's chamber #1: The door and walls to the right overlap with the next map. This area depicts a walk-through closet; access to the bedroom is via the

doorway to the top, while the doorway to the right leads to the Bathing Room. Where the doorway at the bottom leads is left to the GM to determine.



Nobleman's Chamber #2: This is the Bathing Room area of the Nobleman's Chambers. The door to the left connects to the closet space. Beneath the shelf is an iron oventop which connects to the southernmost of the two chimneys, permitting water to be heated in kettles for bathing in winter.

On the next page is **Nobleman's Chamber #3**.

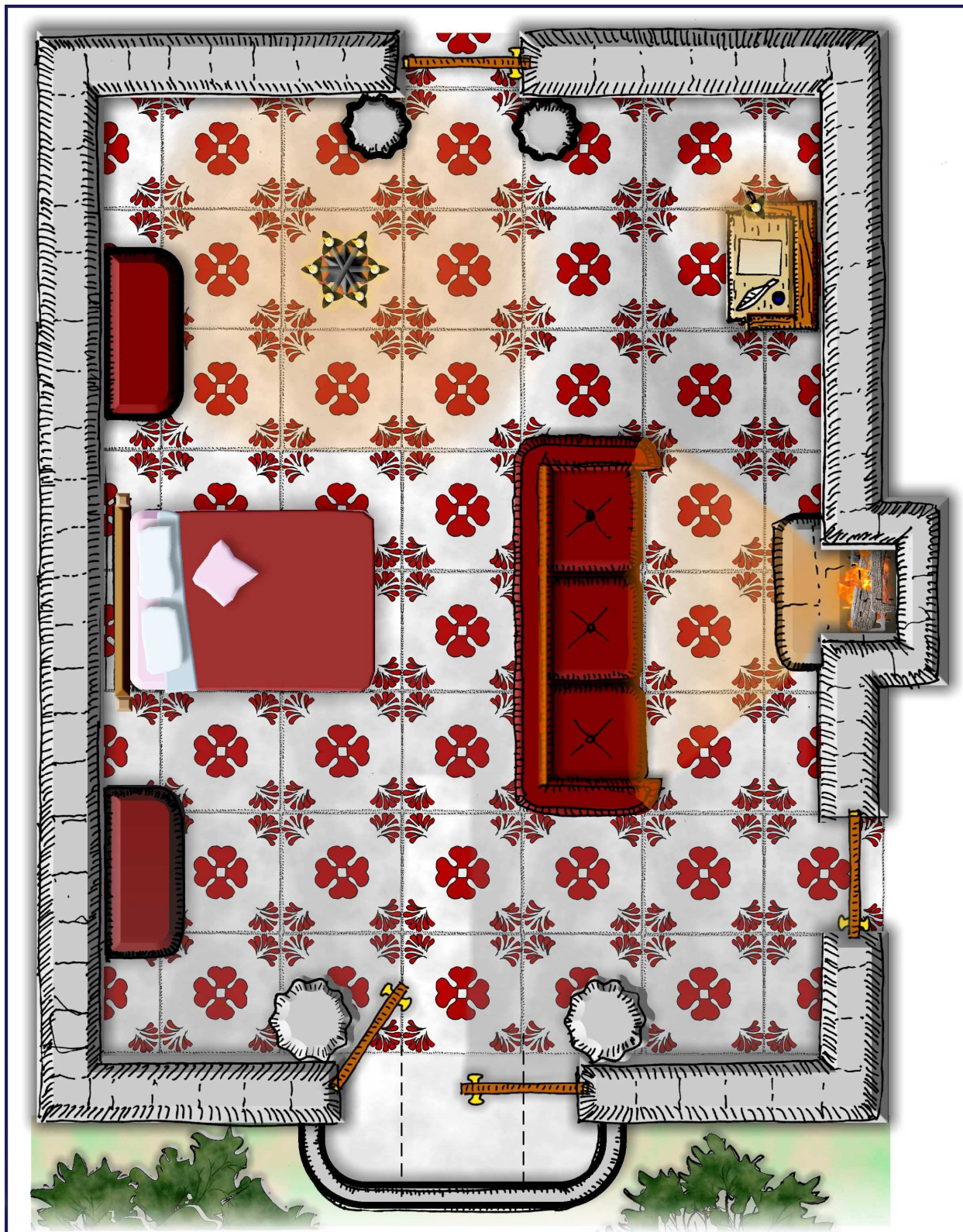
This area depicts the bedroom and other areas of activity in this small Nobleman's apartments. There are cabinets to either side

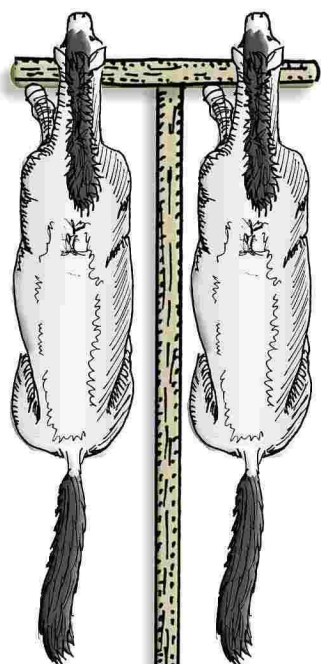
of the bed and a fresh towel or folded set of nightclothes on the bed.

In the northernmost corner is a writing desk.

There are two exits, one of which leads to the dressing room. The destination of the other exit is left to the GM.

NB: These maps may all be on different orientations. Directions are used relative only to their appearance on the printed page.





The image to the left depicts a Carriage, suitable for a Nobleman or Official – or simply a target with wealth or political connections.

Props and Accessories

We have provided a number of Props and Accessories for use with Assassin's Amulet or for general purposes within your game.

Reward For Information Poster

This is a poster with the details left blank for the GM to complete. To complete this poster, you will need a calligraphic font of some kind (there are thousands of free fonts available on the net) and to compose the content to be included.

This should include:

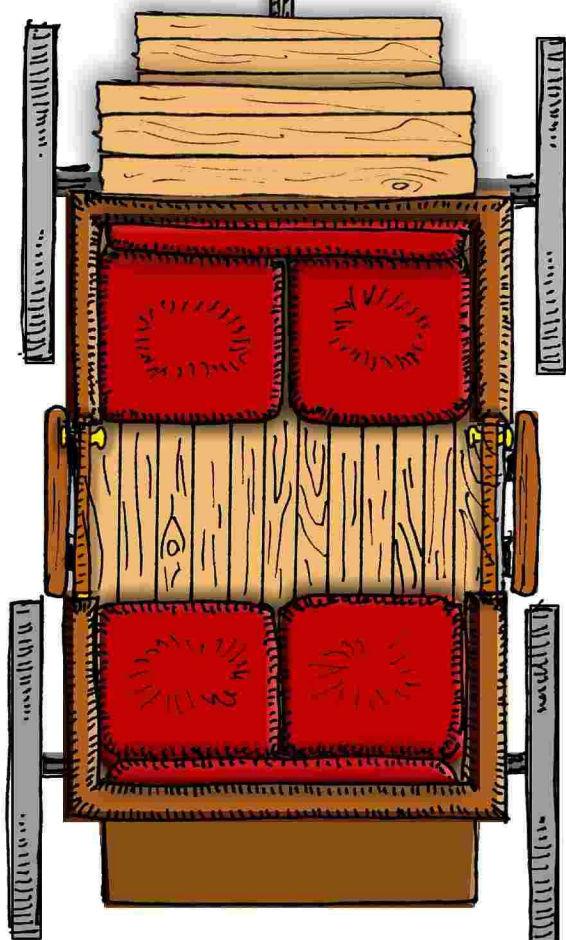
- The amount of the reward;
- Who is offering the reward;
- What the desired information is;
- How to claim the reward; and
- What conditions have to be met in order to receive the reward.

For example:

"Reward for Information:

500 Gold Pieces is offered for information relating to a man in a black cloak seen leaving the Central marketplace on the 7th day of the month of Hesperus, carrying a mattock and hessian sack. The reward is on behalf of the Brewers & Vintner's Guild and has been placed with and bonded by the Moneylender Jalius Harthrow. It will be paid to the first individual or individuals providing information to the Town Watch enabling the man in the black cloak to be questioned by the Watch."

The poster should be printed in two passes, one to produce the blank poster and the second to print the GM's added text onto the blank.



REWARD

FOR INFORMATION

Printing the poster on Letter-sized pages (8.5 x 11 inches)

The poster should be printed with a left margin of 0.48 inches (12.19 mm) and should start 0.5 inches (12.7 mm) from the top of the page. Margins on the previous page have been set to these values, so they should automatically be correct.

This permits text to be printed in the empty space bounded by the following dimensions:

- Left Margin 0.9 inches (22.86 mm);
- Right Margin 1.05 inches (26.67 mm)
- Top Margin 3.65 inches (92.71 mm)
- Bottom Margin 0.95 inches (24.13 mm).

Printing the poster on A4-sized pages (210 x 297 mm)

The poster should be printed with a left margin of 12.19mm (0.48 inches) and should start 12.7mm (0.5 inches) from the top. Margins on the previous page have been set to these values, so they should automatically be correct, but users may encounter problems with automatic resizing by their PDF software.

These settings define the blank area of the poster as having the following margins:

- Left Margin 22.79 mm (0.89 inches);
- Right Margin 19.61 mm (0.76 inches);
- Top Margin 97.7 mm (3.65 inches);
- Bottom Margin 41.73 mm (1.65 inches).

Wanted Posters

This is provided in three forms over the next three pages: a completed prop for general use (showing a figure that will become eerily familiar by the end of this chapter), a blank version with a 500gp reward, and a completely empty version.

Printing the sample Wanted poster

The completed poster should be printed with the same settings as given above.

Blank with 500gp reward on Letter Paper (8.5 x 11 inches)

This should be printed with a left margin of 0.5 inches (12.7 mm) and should start 0.5 inches (12.7 mm) from the top of the page. The margins on the page in AA have been set to these values, so they should automatically be correct.

This permits text to be printed in the empty space bounded by the following dimensions:

- Left Margin 0.94 inches (23.9 mm);
- Right Margin 1 inch (25.4 mm)
- Top Margin 3.45 inches (87.6 mm)
- Bottom Margin 2.05 inches (52.1 mm).

WANTED

DEAD OR ALIVE



*For the killing of two known personages
and unknown other victims, Harbor Ward*

500 Gold Pieces

WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE

500 Gold Pieces

Blank with 500gp reward on A4 Paper (210 x 297 mm)

Print the poster with a left margin of 12.7 mm (0.5 inches) and a top margin of 12.7 mm (0.5 inches). The margins used on the relevant page in AA have been set to these values, so they should automatically be correct, but users may encounter problems with automatic resizing by their PDF software.

These settings define the blank area of the poster as having the following margins:

- Left Margin 23.4 mm (0.92 inches);
- Right Margin 18.3 mm (0.72 inches);
- Top Margin 87.6 mm (3.45 inches);
- Bottom Margin 67.9 mm (2.67 inches).

Completely Blank on Letter Paper (8.5 x 11 inches)

The poster should be printed with 0.5 inches left and top margin, as presented on the following page. This gives a printable area of:

- Left Margin 0.94 inches (23.9 mm);
- Right Margin 1 inch (25.4 mm)
- Top Margin 0.9 inches (22.9 mm)
- Bottom Margin 0.9 inches (22.9 mm).

Completely Blank on A4 Paper (210 x 297 mm)

The poster should be printed with 12.7 mm margins top and left, as presented on the following page. This should give a printable area as shown below, but be wary of automatic resizing of pages which can throw these measurements off.

- Left Margin 23.4 mm (0.92 inches);
- Right Margin 18.3 mm (0.72 inches);
- Top Margin 23.4 mm (0.92 inches);
- Bottom Margin 40.7 mm (1.6 inches).

Amulet Of Cyrene

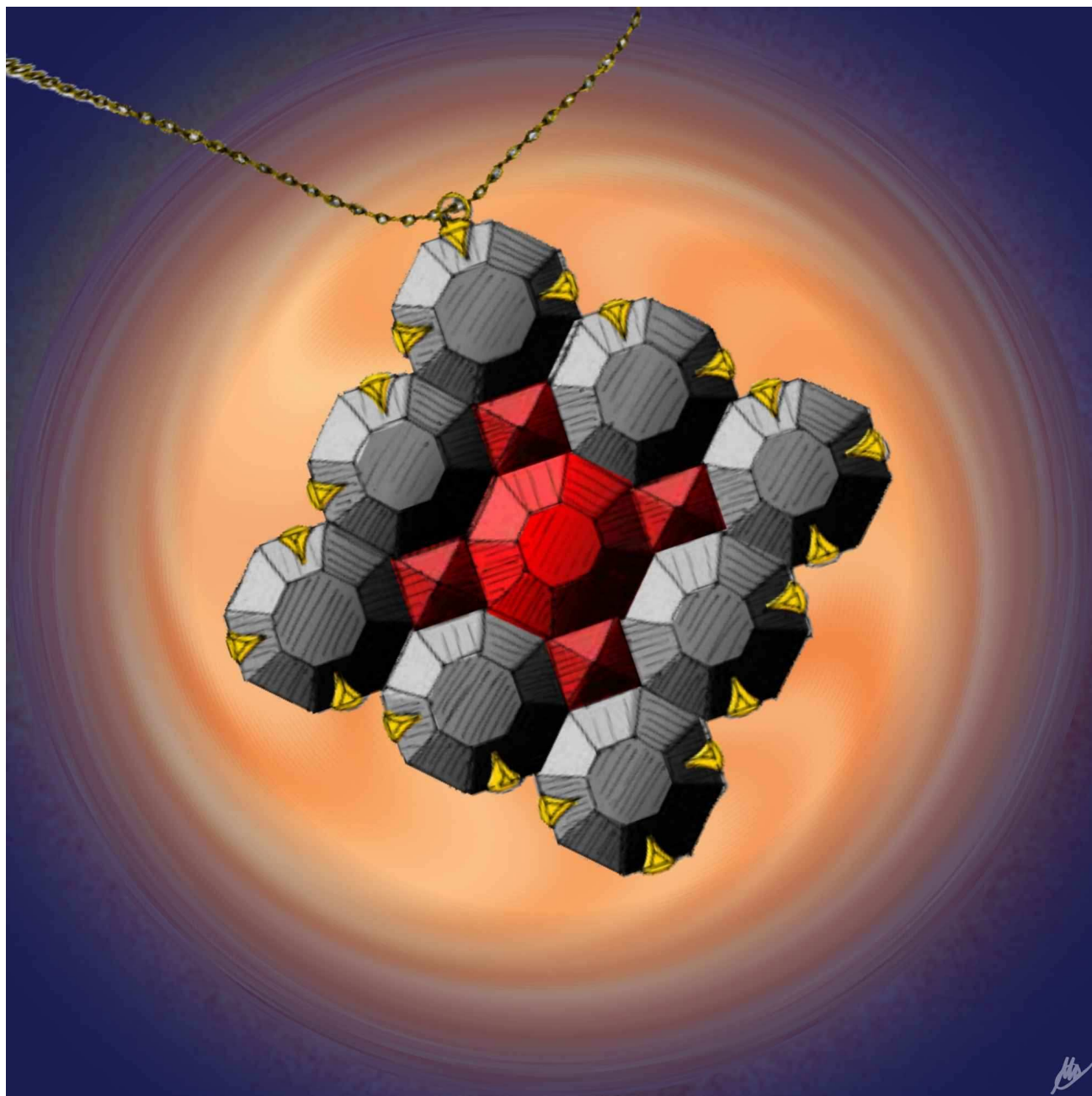
Following the blank reward poster are two large-sized images of the Amulet Of Cyrene (the significance of which will become clear in Chapter 2) – one dark and moody, matched to the significance and likely circumstances under which the players will encounter the amulet, and one against a white background. Either are suitable as a handout.

A Note regarding Printers

Many Inkjet printers use toner for every dot of printable area whether or not there is something on the page in that dot or not (it used to be all, but some modern printers have gotten smarter). With most printers, therefore, there is no advantage in choosing a page without a lot of dark area.







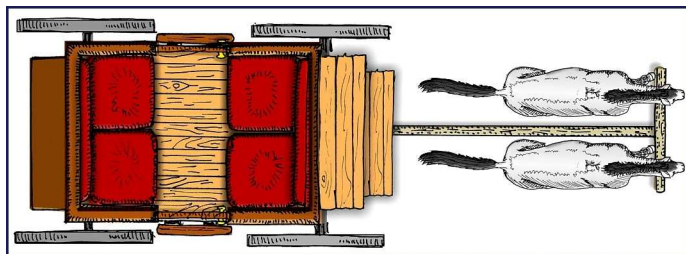
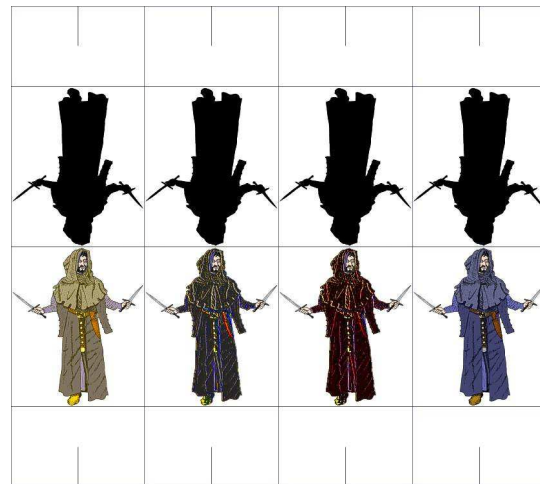
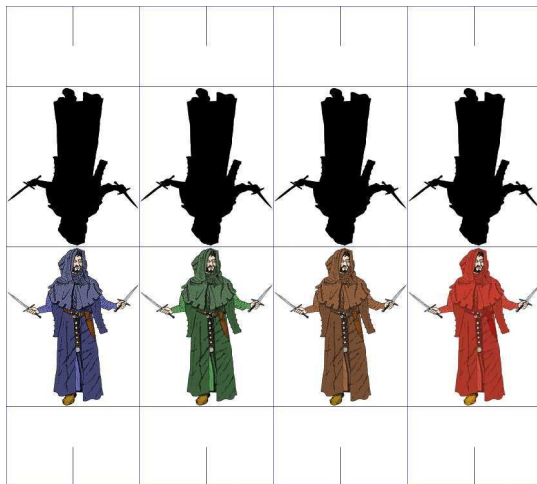


Paper Miniatures

We conclude this chapter with a series of paper miniatures. More props can be found in an appendix.

Assassin Paper Minis

We start with a set of assassins for printing on cardboard. On the presumption that you may need to keep track of a number of different assassins in the course of a battle, 8 slightly different figures are provided below, with assembly instructions.



For several of the figures, we have also provided clip art in two different sizes which can be given to the players.

Carriage Mini

There is also a smaller version of the Nobleman's Carriage presented earlier for use on tactical maps.









Chapter 2: Locations



Overview of the Holy Assassins' Lair

Each windowless, octagonal shaped chamber of the lair measures 20' x 20', and is comprised of mortared stone walls, floor and ceiling. Alarms and wards, placed throughout the lair, are keyed to the wearer of the assassin's amulet attuned to this particular lair. Any being not wearing an assassin's amulet triggers the alarms and activates traps in the vicinity. A command word in the Language of the Gods, "Kaas" (cease), uttered by the wearer of an assassin's amulet attuned to the lair, or the wearer of the Guildmaster's Amulet, can end the alarms and secure all traps. When the wearer of an attuned amulet exits the portal all alarms and traps reset automatically.

Location

Operations centers for the Hands of Cyrene are always located close (within 500 meters or 200 yards) to a Temple Of Cyrene and are constructed underground. There is usually no direct access between the two sites.

Alarms and Traps

An audible alarm protects the entry portal. It activates should anyone not wearing an amulet attuned to the site enter that lair. Simultaneously, a visual alarm in the nearby Temple of Cyrene notifies the Guildmaster and any holy assassins wearing an assassin's amulet of a breach in security.

The hall chamber between the entry portal chamber and the shrine contains a heightened Hold Person spell that triggers when anyone not wearing a properly attuned assassin's amulet attempts to pass into or exit the shrine. This hall also contains two hidden portcullises that drop from the ceiling when the spell triggers, to trap anyone in the chamber, prevent entry into the training center and block access to the rest of the lair. Opening a portcullis takes a combined 30 strength. An amulet wearer can say "Unaah" (open) to raise or lower either portcullis.

The hall chamber between the entry portal and the residential area contains a mechanical sleep poison trap with an arcane trigger. The trap releases should anyone not wearing a properly attuned amulet attempt to pass into the residential section.

The chamber connecting the entry portal and the assassin's office area (the most sensitive part of the lair) contains a Power Word Kill spell that triggers when anyone attempts to pass the hallway while not wearing an attuned amulet.

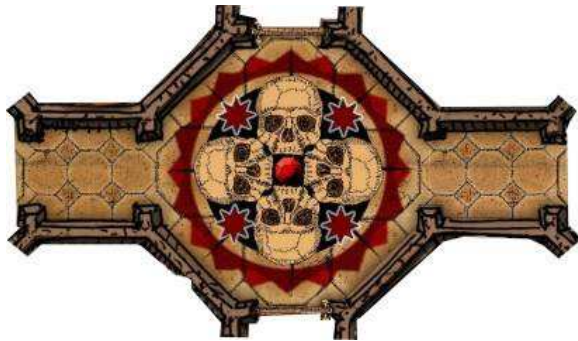
The wearer of the Guildmaster's Amulet can override all triggering mechanisms and activations within any assassins' lair by uttering the command word "Fael" (pass).

Map Key to the Assassins' Lair

You can create many variations of the lair contained within Assassin's Amulet by varying the contents of the Map Key. This might be useful, for example, if you make Assassin's Amulet a campaign and you place the guild in multiple cities in your world. After each area description, we offer

a number of variation suggestions, permitting reuse of the same Battlemat in many different cities and towns. You can mix-and-match as desired to create even more lair variations. The Hands of Cyrene are designed to scale to your campaign and needs, whether they are a kingdom-wide organization, bigger, or smaller. They can be as large as necessary to match your plot purposes. They may have lairs in many settlements or in only one.

1. Portal Chamber



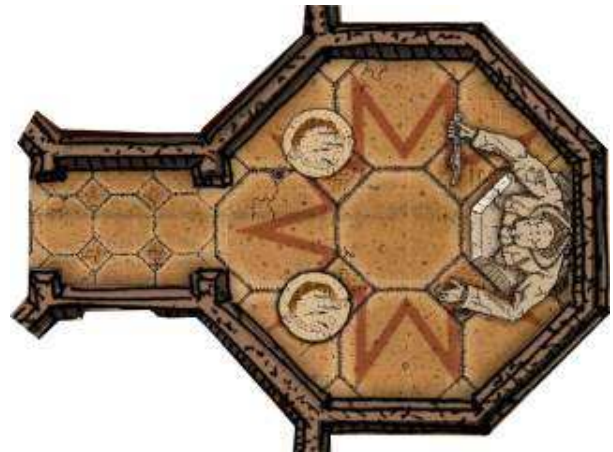
This area allows entry and exit from the holy assassins' lair through the utterance of the command words. Four open doorways lead in cardinal points to the rest of the lair. In the center of the portal chamber lies a large ruby incised into the floor in an octagonal cut 6 inches across. The ruby could fetch 10,000gp from a buyer, but removing the jewel disables the portal and prevents all magical entry and exit, though the wearer of the Guildmaster's Amulet can enter and exit as normal. The portal functions again once the stone is returned in place.

The chamber has expensive tiling that at first glance is simply abstract, and at second glance resolves into four skulls arranged around the central gem. Characters who are transported into the chamber appear facing the gem and 5' away from it in a random direction relative to the rest of the lair.

Variations: Variations on this chamber are predominantly decorative. One guild's lair may sport an array of weapons mounted on the walls (none magical, minimal value); another has trophies from completed contracts; a third may have statues of Cyrene and a tiled pattern of religious icons. It would be extremely unusual for this chamber to have any access from the outside.

Under variation B of areas 7-9 (see below), there will be one or two temple guardsmen on duty as security guards in this chamber. Duty positions would be on either side of the central gem in the chamber corners.

2. Chapel of Cyrene



The chapel lies east of the portal chamber and contains a complete chapel with stone incense bowls and a 12-foot high statue of the goddess in robes. Daily prayer is expected and performed here. Incense sticks and a holy book written in the god's tongue sit at the foot of the statue. Adherents to Cyrene consider the books treasures, but they have no real market value under normal circumstances.

Rumors amongst the assassins hold that the layout of a guild lair always has this chamber on the closest line between the

Temple Of Cyrene (which they refer to as "The Mother Chapel" or simply "The Mother") and the gem in Area 1. Others think it always points the way from the gem to the graveyard associated with the temple. One or neither may be correct.

The chapel is consecrated to Cyrene and you should impose effects accordingly. Turning attempts may receive +1, undead may fear to enter, clerical spells are enhanced in some fashion (+1 caster level or automatically maximized, for example), and so on. Blasphemy against Cyrene in the chapel has a 1 in 20 chance of gaining the attention of the Goddess, who may choose to punish the blasphemer in some fashion (and would certainly alert the assassins if the alarms had been deactivated or bypassed).

Variations: The chapel is function-oriented and there would be few substantial variations. The statue of the Goddess may reflect another of her aspects (see Chapter 4, "Cyrene"). The floor might have different tiling. There might be pews or prayer mats for more organized services. A font of holy water might offer assassins a place to wash their hands before a service. The book might be a scroll or a holy symbol.

3. Training Chamber



Opposite the chapel, to the west of the portal chamber, a complete dojo waits for weapons and stealth practice. A *Phantasmal Foe* (see Chapter 4) provides realistic training in application of techniques. Four stones of a different color mark the perimeter within which the Foe is confined. This chamber is lit by four lanterns mounted at the cardinal points around the room, offset 45° from the doorway.

If someone other than an amulet wearer enters the chamber, the illusionary opponent will try to grapple the trespasser and hold them in place until an amulet wearer arrives. Various masterwork and enchanted weapons line the walls, secured by locked metal bands, as this chamber doubles as an armory. These metal bands will unlock themselves if an amulet wearer requests they do so with the command words "Ja Sur" (for life) while touching the hilt of a weapon. The weapons available here are (clockwise from the entrance):

- Military Pick +1
- Quiver of 14 +1 arrows
- Shortbow +1
- Long Sword +2
- (Empty Space)
- Battle Axe +2
- Morning Star +1
- Spear +2
- Mace +1
- Crossbow of Accuracy +1
- Scimitar +1
- Flail +1
- (Empty Space)
- (Empty Space)
- Dagger +2
- Shortsword +2
- Greatsword +1
- Net +2

Take the four highest level PCs and total their levels. For every 15 levels total, add +1 enhancement to the weapons to help balance the lair to your campaign. These enhancements can take the form of additional combat bonus or additional weapon abilities. For example, if the top four PCs are levels 12, 11, 11 and 10, their total levels are $12+11+11+10=44$, which is just short of 3x the target of 15, so the GM should add +2 enhancement to the armaments listed. This could make the Mace a +3 Mace, or a Mace of Disruption +1. If these four adventurers were accompanied by a fifth of level 10 or less, the fifth character's levels would not count toward the total.

Variations: The longer a particular Guildmaster has been in residence, the more this room will reflect their personality and that of their chief trainer (if there is one amongst the assassins based in this guild chapter). Instead of weapons being evenly distributed around the walls, there may be a single rack. If the Guildmaster favors a particular type of weapon, that might be almost exclusively present. If the Guildmaster is unusually fervent in his worship of Cyrene, the other walls may bear motivational displays.

Additional variations are possible in floor decorations and tiling. If this chamber contains the entrance to the lair used during initial construction, one wall might contain an obviously bricked up doorway, or this might be hidden behind tapestries, tiles, or even relief-sculpted panels.

4. Assassin's Office

A desk and bookshelves contain all the records, maps, handbooks and other documents necessary to operate the business of the guild. This chamber and the

two attached are the most sensitive areas of the lair. Should someone not wearing an assassin's amulet bypass the trapped hallway from the portal chamber, the ghost of a former Guildmaster (see Chapter 4, "Leebuk Hagan, Deceased") is summoned into the chapel chamber and begins to stalk the intruder.

Other than the furnishings described, this chamber is unadorned. Two lamps on either side of the desk provide illumination.



Variations: This room should reflect the Guildmaster's identity and personality. It is the first area within the lair to change in description when a new Guildmaster takes power. Decorations could include such things as a family portrait, personal keepsakes, religious icons, weapons, the skull of the first kill, deer antlers, an easel and canvas with a set of oil paints, or a bunch of wildflowers.

The documents may be in Common, or in the Language of the Gods, or in any other tongue in which the Guildmaster is adept (which can cause problems if a Guildmaster faces eternal judgment unexpectedly). Some Guildmasters employ codes and ciphers. The list of contracts accepted is the most sensitive document, followed by a master list of the local members of the guild and the locations of safe houses and other guild related sites. The loss of any one of these can bring down the local guild and may even trouble the entire guild. It is common for a Guildmaster to maintain a set of false books containing this information while artfully hiding the real documents.

Although it is unlikely any disused entrance would lead to the Guildmaster's office chamber, some Guildmasters disrupt their entire Guilds upon taking over and choose a different chamber to be their office – one that just happens to contain the (long lost, long disused) secret entrance – for whatever reason they can invent (they need some excuse to prevent speculation).

5. Equipment Chamber



This room contains mundane tools necessary for man slaying, including vanity and mirror for facial disguises, wardrobe of costumes, rogues' tools (climbing gear, lock picks) as well as a workshop for the repair and manufacture of other specialized equipment. It is located to the southwest of the office. The assassins also manufacture poisons here, and various areas are coated with contact poisons to kill or paralyze intruders. There is a 1-in-6 chance any surface touched will be so treated. The equipment in this room would bring no more than 250gp if sold.

The clothing rack contains the accoutrements for a variety of roles at different social standings and in different sizes. While the quality appears excellent, closer inspection reveals most are more akin to stage costumes – poor workmanship that would not stand up to regular usage, and that an assassin on the run can easily tear up and discard. Note that most guild members will have their own accumulated set of disguises and costumes that are generic items kept here as spares or for when something is needed on short notice.

Small wall tiles in an assortment of strange patterns decorate this room:

- A circle and a dot to its right
- Three parallel lines running vertically and crossed by a fourth angled line
- A distorted square shape similar to a diamond lying on one side
- A set of concentric rings in different colors

These examples of simple optical illusions are used by the assassins as training aids:

1. Train awareness of the blind spot
2. Teach assassins to correct aim when at an unusual angle, used in conjunction with the climbing gear
3. Teach the knack of correcting for perspective seen close to a surface
4. Practice concentrating for long periods (staring at the rings makes the eyes water and their outline seem to blur and shimmer).

The ceiling is also tiled, with white tiles against black suggesting a night sky. The star field does not match any real constellations. This conceals a series of tiny ventilation shafts to permit the safe release of any noxious byproducts of the poison manufacturing process.

Variations: This utility chamber can be repurposed as necessary. In some guild lairs, the room might be used as a small wardroom for Temple Guards or as a barracks for four. In others, it could be used as an armory, or there might be rack upon rack of green clothing (forest camouflage). In still other variations, there might be racks of peasant clothing or earth tones or even garb that is more ninja in concept. Variations in Guildmaster lead to variations in technique and local guild makeup, which express themselves as variations in the usage of this chamber. GMs should also bear in mind the vulnerabilities of the most common targets when outfitting this chamber—an area with many giants would have different equipment to an area with many lizardmen. Think of this area as a combination workshop and attic.

If the chamber with the original entrance has not been repurposed by the Guildmaster for his office (area 4), this is the room in which it will most frequently be located, hidden beneath the tiled surface.

6. Arcane Chantry

The chantry lies opposite the equipment chamber to the southeast of the assassin's office.



Simple bookshelves of cedar line the walls, while a small table occupies the center of the room. The bookshelves contain a small library and a treasury of sorts for the various arcane tools required for assassination. On the table is a scrying ball (refer Chapter 5, Orb of Divine Sight), which can be used to configure the destination of an Assassin's Amulet.

Two dozen +2 flying poisoned daggers linked to the Guildmaster's Amulet are strategically placed throughout the chamber and will attack anyone entering the chamber not wearing an assassin's amulet. Four of these daggers will fly at intruders each round, as if thrown using the

Guildmaster's BAB, for six rounds or until the intruders leave or die. The daggers have the same contact poison used on surfaces in the equipment chamber.

At any given time, there is a 5% chance per guild member that the chantry is occupied by an assassin spying on his next target or the locations frequented by that target. While many high-level targets are protected against direct scrying, assassins will still use the ball to map out escape routes, hiding places and the like. When more than twenty assassins operate from a guild lair, demand for the use of the scrying ball can be greater than the time available. This chamber opens off the Guildmaster's office to permit the administration of access to the scrying ball.

The books on the shelves are far too bulky (about 4½ cubic ft in volume, 4800# weight*) to simply throw into a backpack. Even using a bag of holding or handy haversack will require one round per volume to place. This should entice the characters to evaluate the titles on the shelves (one round per book to read the title and evaluate the reputation). The titles and subjects are sufficiently interesting that discussion and indecision should add considerably to the time required. This is a happy coincidence for the residents; the library is functional in purpose, but these delays offer time to organize, prepare traps and ambushes, or make escapes. A few of the volumes are exceedingly rare, others are commonplace, some are the equivalent of minor wondrous items; the total value is 12,147gp. See below for individual values.

* Includes paper/ parchment, bindings, covers, ink, gold leaf, and so on for 40 volumes totaling approximately 9600 pages. Average volume size is 10.25" x 8.75" x 2.4".

Contents of the bookshelves

Shelf 1: Practical References (10 books)

- *A Treasury of Family Recipes* by Valkin Fesagist. Grants +1 Profession (Cook) skill if character has less than 8 ranks in the skill, for the purposes of creating good quality meals only. Value 250gp.
- *Fundamentals of Poisons* by Ararba Rascelte. Grants +1 to Knowledge (Poisons) skill if character has less than 6 ranks in the skill. Value 250gp.
- *Vulnerabilities of Government* by Keava Levae. Grants +1 to Knowledge (Politics) skill if the character has less than 12 ranks in the skill, for purposes of attacking policy only. Value 350gp.
- *The Black Tome of Engraving and Woodwork* by Fifdor Calloe. Grants up to +2 to any checks to conceal a trap or secret door if the character has less than 12 ranks in the skill. Value 350gp.
- *Herbs, Spices, and Stews for the Discerning Scholar* by Kannis Declave. Grants up to +1 to any knowledge checks related to these subjects if the character has between 8 and 16 ranks in the skill. Grants +1 profession (Cook) skill if the character has between 8 and 16 ranks in the skill. Grants up to +1 to survival checks for the purposes of locating a naturally occurring poisonous plant if the character has less than 12 ranks in the skill. Value 900gp.

- *The Commoner's Guide to Great Tavern Recipes* by Kethis Othonia. Grants +1 Profession (Cook) skill if character has less than 8 ranks in the skill, for the purposes of creating poor quality meals only. Value 50gp.
- *The Apprentice's Book of Leatherworking, Tanning, and Taxidermy* by Garvut Aashalom. Grants +1 to any craft check relating to the named occupations if the character has less than 8 ranks in the skill. Value 600gp.
- *A Cut So Deep: Knifecraft* by Brufon Bloodbark. Grants +2 to any craft check for the manufacture of knives or blades provided the character has at least 12 ranks in the skill. Value 800gp.
- *Standards in Castle Design and Construction* by Arrat Horstia. Grants +1 Knowledge (Architecture) if the character has less than 8 ranks in the skill. Value 200gp.
- *The Game of Foxes and Hounds* by Yarnad Stishfen. Grants +1 skill at evading pursuit or pursuing a target, grants +1 skill at tracking if the character has less than 8 ranks in the skill. Value 950gp.
- *Abjuration Essentials* by Dharu Gendalli . The definitive introduction to the subject. Value 20gp.
- *Alchemic Recipes* by Damas Owerlith. This rare tome is hard to understand because it is written in code to keep the recipes out of the wrong hands. Each recipe is scattered amongst several different non-sequential pages, and each page uses a different code. There is no table of contents, so who knows what may be hidden amongst these pages? Value 200gp.
- *A Summoning Bestiary* by Darru Nechadrus. An interesting volume describing the (purported) strengths, powers and vulnerabilities of anything that can be summoned by spells of 6th level or below. Grants +1 to Knowledge (Nature) checks relating to any creature that meets the summoning criteria. Value 500gp.
- *Twisted Insights* by Liggam Afran Ionastis The Greater. Propounds an unproven theory that the inclusion of metamagics in a spell can expose it to hidden vulnerabilities that, if exploited, would make it easier to counterspell, and even possible to turn the spell against the caster. Value 80gp.

Shelf 2: Arcane References (14 books)

- *Elements of Divination* by Anak Jeraewin. An excellent section summarizes the conditions that can improve or disturb scrying. The rest is simplistic, error-prone and worthless. Value 50gp.
- *Fatal Charms* by Druda Dygrestus. A light romance that seems to have found its way into the library by mistake. This is so out-of-place that it should raise PC suspicions. Value 2gp.

- *Insights Into the Dark Arts* by Gilguar Mersat. A compendium of plagiarized extracts from a number of other books thrown together with no rhyme or reason save the subject matter. There may well be a genuine insight or two included, but there is so much twaddle surrounding any such that they may never be found. Value 20gp.
- *Collected Lore* by Ishtahak Zurvess. An excellent summary of the various superstitions, social practices, domestic wisdom and home remedies from everywhere the characters have heard of in the Prime Material Plane and several places that are new to them. A minor magic in the pages keeps the day of authorship appearing to be a decade-and-a-day later than the current date. Value 250gp.
- *Bewitching Souls Parts I, II, III, and IV* by Druda Dygrestus (4 volumes). Another light romance, but the enchantment spells contained within the storyline, and the protections against them, are accurate and functional. A character would have to read the whole dreary story to know that, however. Value (of the set) 500gp.
- *Innate Conjunction* by Becnywe Murehto. A treatise on the differences between the spellcraft of Sorcerers, Druids, Bards, Clerics and Mages, with some outlandish theories and the occasional startling insight. Telling the difference between the two is the tricky part. Value 40gp.

Principles of Necromancy by Nergir Kyltha. This book is easy to understand due to incredibly well done and helpful illustrations. The book's high quality allows one to easily discover it has a lot of useful information but few areas of deep insight. Several passages have been crossed out and others have notations beside them. Reading these shows the book is an excellent guide to recognizing and identifying necromantic practices and practitioners through the side effects of the practice. Value 60gp.

Shelf 3 - Religious and Spiritual References (16 books, most much thinner than those of the previous shelves)

- *Collected Spiritual Essays of Veraldric Korfal* by Veraldric Korfal II. A preachy but insightful tome of spiritual philosophy by one of the leading thinkers of the last 400 years. Value 20gp.
- *Blessings for all Occasions* by Galom Kultak. Exactly what it says on the label. None of the blessings has any particular spiritual power unless the deity addressed chooses to listen, but they sound impressive. Value 10gp.



- *Weathering the Storm* by Laban Maulgrin. A prayer book for Clerics of Cyrene and collection of general purpose essays on the role of her temple in society. Value 5gp.
- *Thoughts Upon Death* by Nojun Heawyr. The fundamental philosophy of the Hands of Cyrene and their nature, making this an exceptionally rare volume. Possession undoubtedly marks the owner for death at the hands of the guild. Value 800gp due to rarity.
- *Structure and Composition of Rituals and Prayers* by Siljat Jileanth. Propounds the unpopular theory that rituals and prayers should have a formalized format to achieve full effectiveness, then constructs such a format. Any cleric reading this volume will realize that all formal ceremonies within their church reflect at least part of the structure proposed by Siljat, increasing the plausibility of the conclusions. Banned by almost every temple. Value 750gp due to rarity.
- *The Greater Justice* by Laban Maulgrin. This rare book is an examination of morality and ethics from the perspective of Cyrene and the Celestial Tribunal that fully justifies the existence and operations of the Hands of Cyrene while never mentioning their existence. Value 500gp due to rarity.
- *Divinity and Omnipotence* by Proust Wythial. An exceptionally rare volume so abstruse that no character with less than 18 ranks in Knowledge (Religion) can possibly understand it.

When examined by such a character, they will find it attempts to understand why the gods have the natures they do, where devils and demons come from, why they have the natures they do and other questions of advanced theology.

It would require years of further study (and another 7 ranks of Knowledge (Religion) above the 18 minimum) to determine whether its propositions, arguments and conclusions make sense. Value 1000gp due to rarity.

- *Divine Relationships* by Arilimar Tariodok. Divided into five sections. The first discusses relationships between deities within the pantheon. The second, relationships between temples and clerics. The third, relationships between the faithful of different congregations. The fourth attempts to establish cause and effect chains connecting the different levels of relationship. The fifth summarizes and categorizes all theological relationships, showing which are from the gods, which are church politics, and which are due to historical mischance or misunderstanding. Value 10gp.
- *Societal Structure Within Theologies* by Tarshor Legigowan. A practical analysis of social and political structures within a temple or church. Think Machiavelli's *The Prince* for church politics. Value 25gp.

- *Aspects of Cyrene* by Laban Maulgrin. A discussion of Cyrene's roles within the pantheon and theology. All information provided in Assassin's Amulet on the subject of Cyrene is (translated) extracts from this book. Value 20gp.
- *Prayers & Blessings* by Tharian Rendath. A collection and concordance of the prayers and blessings of many different temples and even a couple of pagan faiths. The author postulates that these have descended from a pure form corrupted by mortal error and frailty, and seeks to reason out that pure form.

This position is, of course, blasphemous, and the book is officially banned by all faiths (even the demon worshippers and pagans), but the collected prayers and blessings are so useful that almost every temple has at least one copy in someone's private collection. Value 100gp due to rarity.

- *Pithy Advice for the Well-Intentioned* by Urkar Adrilatha. Laymen have long suspected an instruction manual such as this exists to teach those friendly community priests the right things to say in response to the personal problems of their parishioners, and now at last it has been proven by the presence of this exceedingly rare volume (outside a temple). This is a tome of fortune-cookie wisdom and vague but high-sounding advice suitable for any faith. Memorizing it grants +5 to Bluff checks when pretending to have a Wisdom up to 5 higher than it actually is. Value 1500gp.

- *Wonders of Existence Volume II* by Vassor XXIX. Descriptions of a number of awe inspiring, incredible or picturesque locations in multiple planes through theological eyes (Volume I contains locations described in the Manual Of The Planes or other official sources, Volume III contains locations derived from other sources; neither of these volumes are present). Consulting this reference might give a +1 bonus to Knowledge (The Planes) at the GM's discretion for answering general questions about the properties of the planes of the wonders listed, and gives +4 bonus to the checks answering questions about the specific wonders. Value 750gp. The wondrous locations described are:

- The Firefalls of Dinastus† (Pandemonium)
- The Escher Stairs† (Astral Plane)
- The Winding Library† (Brux, 2nd layer of the Beastlands)
- The Eternal Clock† (Abellio, 1st layer of Arcadia)
- The Shattered Mountain† (Ysgard)
- The Pool Of Reflection‡ (indeterminate location)
- The Glade of Rshezt† (Gehenna)
- The Inverted Cloud-Palace† (Lunia, 1st layer of Celestia)
- The Bones of the Great Dragon† (Dothion, 1st layer of Bytopia)
- The Celestial Bootprints† (Avalas)

† Details left to the GM

‡ Refer Chapter 4, NPCs

- *Conduct Becoming a Priest or Priestess* by Arilimar Tariodok. A system of ethics and ethical behavior for representatives of a (generic) temple. Value 10gp.
- *Conduct Unbecoming a Priest or Priestess* by Arilimar Tariodok. The sequel to the previous tome, listing punishments and appropriate atonements for various infractions. While "Conduct Becoming" is over-concerned with petty details and the system is impractical, it functions as an index for this volume, which is the standard across most temples. Value 25gp.
- *Lessons for the Novitiate of Death's Maiden* by Veraldric Korfal II. A lesson plan for novitiates of Cyrene. The text assumes the actual lessons will be taught by an experienced and high-level Cleric of Cyrene, and therefore leaves out much explanation and context. The text is artfully vetted to veil all references to the Hands of Cyrene and other 'controversial' issues in double-meanings, as though the author assumed a copy would fall into the hands of an unbeliever at some point. Value 200gp due to rarity.

Variations: The only essential element in this room is the Scrying Ball, and in some guilds, it might be located elsewhere, for example on the desk of the Guildmaster, reflecting a more controlling personality. Some of the books would probably be found within the guild headquarters, but the GM should feel free to invent his own using those listed as a template. Even if this chamber is still a chantry in other guild headquarters, the furniture should vary—stone shelves here, pine there, mahogany somewhere else. Similarly, the table might

be replaced with a dais, or (if the Scrying Ball is elsewhere), replaced with a comfortable chair for long hours of reading. Some Guildmasters with different areas of caution may use this chamber as the armory or training chamber (use the description from Area 3) and that as the chantry.

It is possible the original entrance to the guild connects to this room, which would indicate that more of the work was carried out by the guild themselves and less by hired workmen. This could indicate a more patient Guildmaster, or that the city is one with an active and competent internal intelligence operation, such as the Shields of [Urban Gumshoe Favored City #1] (see Chapter 4: NPCs, Urban Gumshoe) or the Whisper Guardians (see Chapter 4: NPCs).

7, 8 and 9. Residential Chambers





The residential chambers of the lair are located in the southern area. At least five major variations of these areas are possible; take care to ensure consistency and internal logic.

In no particular order, these areas are:

- Guildmaster In Residence
- Temple Guardsmen's Barracks
- No Residents
- Guildmaster's Pet

In addition to the obvious issues, such as suitable furnishings to accommodate the number of residents, two primary considerations should be addressed in this context: supply and stealth. Supply asks the question of how the needs residents are met—fuel for the ovens, fresh food and water, and so on. Stealth and its related concern, security, impose restrictions on the possible answers to the first, but also pose further questions such as, "how is smoke from the oven removed from the lair without revealing its location?"



Descriptions of these three areas are provided below in self-contained sections matching each of the primary variations, with some notes on the implications and assumptions.

Variation A: Guildmaster in Residence

This arrangement implies that the guild members live off-site and only attend the guild lair in preparation for a mission, when they have some other duty to perform, for training, or when summoned by the Guildmaster. The Guildmaster may live an abstentious existence on the low-quality food provided, or may regularly visit local inns. If the former, he will shop for fresh fruit and vegetables once a week (or have another guild member do it for him), unless he normally relies upon a Heroes Feast spell to provide his food. If you choose this variation, one of these three chambers will contain the original entrance used for the construction of the facility, most probably the bedroom (area 9a).

7A. Kitchen

Ladles and small metal pots hang from the walls. Jugs of water, milk, honey, herbs and jam are visible on a shelf located above small sacks of other cooking ingredients such as salt and flour. A small meat locker contains dried and salted pork and beef. Another cupboard contains preparation tools. To one side is a small table.

Enough food is stored to feed the Guildmaster for six months, though the fare would be simple and relatively unappetizing. A small fire elemental who resides in the oven in repayment of the accommodations and protection provided by the guild handles the cooking. A coward who will flee from confrontation and only fight if cornered, the elemental presents no serious threat to anyone and is worth no XP.

8A. Infirmary and Lavatory

This area serves to maintain the hygiene of the lair's inhabitant, with full bath and toilet facilities. Potions and devices for healing and health restoration for the assassins: two Potions of Cure Critical Wounds and one Potion of Spider Climb for each assassin currently working out of the lair, plus a total of three Potions of Reduce Person, a Potion of Water Breathing and a Potion of Haste.

9A. Guildmaster's Quarters

This chamber contains the Guildmaster's personal quarters, which consist of bed, cupboard, chest, private desk and comfortable chair. The furniture is sturdy but well appointed without being luxurious. The area's design relaxes the inhabitant and induces feelings of being out of the office. There are no identifying marks on clothing or furniture. The private desk is for personal correspondence and a small

collection of mementos, and is the only personalized property within the room. The bottom drawer is steel-lined and with a strong lock (DC 20 to pick) and contains the Guildmaster's personal fortune and any identification papers he has had forged. A hidden quick-release under the drawer above this one permits the entire lockbox to be lifted out without unlocking it.

Variation B: Temple Guardsmen's Barracks

A Guildmaster more interested in his own comfort or prestige might prefer to live offsite and turn the internal accommodations over to Temple Guardsmen. Three shifts of guardsmen would share the space, with two on duty in the portal chamber at all times, two receiving training or supporting assassination missions or outside the lair enjoying free time, and two sleeping in the barracks (area 9b).

This arrangement implies the Guildmaster is only present in the lair when a mission is underway, when performing administrative or training duties, or when conducting a religious service in the chapel. If you choose this setup, then the original entrance used for the construction of the facility will rarely be found in one of these three chambers.

7B. Kitchen/Mess

Large pots continuously cook a stew. Immediately after consuming a serving, the guardsmen must add additional meat, chopped vegetables, barley, salt, water, and other ingredients sufficient to replace what they have consumed. Each day in rotation, one pair of guards are responsible for buying loaves of fresh bread while off-duty, while another pair must buy and transport

wood each week. Ladles and other cooking implements hang from the walls. Jugs of water, milk, honey, herbs, and jam are visible on a shelf located above small sacks of other cooking ingredients such as salt and flour. A small meat locker contains dried and salted pork and beef. To one side is a small table, large enough for two. Enough food is stored to feed all three shifts of guardsmen for two months, though the fare would be increasingly simple and unappetizing.

The smoke from the stove is carried off by a chimney in the wall to an unknown location, probably a nearby bathhouse (either public or private) or perhaps secretly connecting to the chimney of a nearby inn.

8B. Infirmary and Lavatory

This area serves to maintain the hygiene of the guardsmen stationed here with full bath and toilet facilities. A roster showing when the facilities are available will be pinned to one wall by a small spike or dagger. A simple stretcher hangs from the wall for use in healing injured assassins. The stand upon which the bathtub is situated can come apart to provide more durable support off the ground for the stretcher, turning it into a field bed (but forcing the guardsmen to bathe elsewhere while it is in use). One cupboard contains potions for healing the injured and a couple of miscellaneous potions for use on missions: two Potions of Cure Critical Wounds and one Potion of Spider Climb for each assassin currently working out of the lair, plus a total of three Potions of Reduce Person, a Potion of Water Breathing and a Potion of Haste.

9B. Barracks

Six small chests arrayed next to two small bunks make the purpose of this chamber clear. Currently occupying the bunks are

two Temple Guardsmen, sleeping uneasily. The furniture is of poor quality but robust construction. Within each chest a number of changes of clothing and the occasional set of forged papers can be found, with some small personal wealth—a few dozen gold coins apiece. There are no identifying marks on clothing or furniture.

Variation C: No Residents

Under certain circumstances, Guildmasters may choose to have the entire guild reside away from the lair, reducing it to a central headquarters:

- The Guildmaster is more confident in the security of the guild lair
- The Guildmaster is more solicitous of the wellbeing of the assassins under their command
- The guild is short of members of the Eyes Of Cyrene or Spirits Of Cyrene (refer Chapter 4, Charting A Career As A Holy Assassin)
- The guild is preparing to move, especially if the Guildmaster has reason to believe the guild has been compromised.

This arrangement weakens lair security, but increases the variety of positions and locations within the community under watch—a drastic solution, but sometimes necessary.

7C. Locker Room

With no need to feed residents, the kitchen area has been changed into a bathhouse antechamber. The walls are lined with tall cupboards, each only a few inches across

and an inch deep. Opening one reveals that they contain magicks similar to those of Heward's Handy Haversack; they have three times the capacity but are considerably less portable, and cannot be opened unless placed with their backs to a wall or other flat surface. The assassins who work from the lair use them to hold clothing, towels, and personal possessions when using area 8D, the Thermae.

8C. Lavatory and Infirmary

This area serves to maintain the hygiene and health of the assassins who look to this lair. The facilities are provided for use while the assassins plan for missions, train and clean up after missions. A simple stretcher hangs from the wall for use in transporting injured assassins to the infirmary, and the stand upon which the bathtub is situated divides into two parts to provide more durable support off the ground for the stretcher, turning it into a field bed. One cupboard contains potions for healing the injured and a couple of miscellaneous potions for use on missions: two potions of Cure Critical Wounds and one Potion of Spider Climb for each assassin currently working out of the lair, plus a total of three Potions of Reduce Person, a Potion of Water Breathing and a Potion of Haste.

9C. Planning and Dining Room

This chamber is dominated by a blackboard nailed flat onto a tabletop, and by various maps of the city and surrounding area attached to the walls. Assassins use this area to plan difficult assignments, especially those that require two or three assassins to cooperate. Eight chairs surround the table. A small cupboard contains chalk, dust cloths, ink, pens and parchment. The blackboard table might be blank or contain full or partial details of a current contract.

Variation D: Guildmaster's Pet

In a fully mature installation, there is no longer a need for accommodations within the Lair, each assassin being submerged within the populace of the city. While most Guildmasters would convert the disused chambers into storage facilities and chambers for the training of new recruits, a few might choose to house a watchdog of sorts—a personal pet of the Guildmaster who can be given free rein to wander the facilities if all the residents are away.

7D. Kitchen/Novice Chamber

Meat for the pet is chopped here. At other times, new recruits are trained in this place while the more proficient guild members practice in the main training hall. One cupboard contains potions for healing the injured and a couple of miscellaneous potions for use on missions: two potions of Cure Critical Wounds and one potion of Spider Climb for each assassin currently working out of the lair, plus a total of three Potions of Reduce Person, a Potion of Water Breathing and a Potion of Haste.

8D. Meat Locker

Several sides of beef (or other meat) hang from hooks in this area, which is kept chilled by a small water elemental in return for the accommodations.

9D. Pet's Quarters

The pet lairs here, with a collar and heavy chain to restrict its movement. The choice of pet is left to you, since it should be tailored to the party's levels. Anything from a dire wolf to a wyvern with its wings docked would be suitable.

Defending the Lair

The greatest asset the Hands of Cyrene have at their disposal is their ability to backstab at range, using either spells or archery as the conduit. They also have members, Temple Guardsmen, who specialize in hanging around in melee for a reasonably long time. Spellcasters create their biggest vulnerability, as they operate at full effectiveness at a distance, and receive protection from companions. Guild lair defenses and tactics should be based on these on these facts.

Encounters will be hit-and-run in nature. Their heavy hit-pointers will engage any invaders to confine and restrict the mobility of their enemies, and will operate in fully defensive mode. Their role is not to kill the enemy, but to pin them down, especially those who shelter the mages and clerics within the attacking force. This group neutralizes the mobility of attackers.

A mobile force of more rogue-like assassins, the Eyes of Cyrene, will then slip past the enemy lines and pin down the primary targets; their function is not to kill the enemy either, but to prevent the successful use of spells against the assassins. This group neutralizes the effectiveness of attackers.

This permits a third force of attackers, the Acolytes of Cyrene, to utilize their *backstab at range* abilities and stealth to target a priority enemy to maximum effect. This force should attack in waves, hiding in shadows and maneuvering after each shot, so that should a member of one of the other forces fail momentarily, they are hard to target.



Once the spellcasters are down, the Eyes of Cyrene can reinforce the blockers so the high-level assassins can pick off the rest of the attackers one by one.

Flaws in the Lairs' Design

Although the lair is designed according to the religious symbolism of Cyrene, which is also reflected in the appearance of the amulets that grant access to the facility, it is possible to design a more secure location and one that takes better advantage of the guild members' abilities. In particular, lowering the floors and installing a raised landing that runs around the perimeter of the lair, with crossings, would provide a substantial improvement in defense. This would only be suitable if the lair was constructed with variations C or D. The alternative would be for lower-ranking guild members to have the facility to spy into the private quarters of the Guildmaster (intolerable) or disturb the sleep of the resident guardsmen who are off-duty (unwise).

Background

Considerations When Designing Your Own Variations

When crafting a variation on the key, take care to always address one important question: *how was the lair constructed without a lot of people noticing?*

Workers need access to the site, preferably from somewhere isolated, and plentiful raw materials will need to be delivered there.

While some might assume the assassins themselves would carry out this work, it seems more likely they would employ specialist labour and then deal with the resulting security concerns - Permanently. Only when the central chamber is complete and the gemstone emplaced (refer the description of area 1, the portal chamber) can this original entrance be closed.

Several chambers within the map key include references to such access points in the variations text. Only one disused access should exist in each Lair.

Examples of where these lead include:

- A disused well run dry and is now used by the locals for general junk
- The sewers
- A smugglers' warren
- A room within the Temple Of Cyrene

- The basement of an inn or other safe house maintained by a Spirit Of Cyrene (see Chapter 4, Cyrene)
- The cells of the town watch (requires at least one senior watchman or former senior watchman to be a guild member)
- The dungeon or torture chamber of the local noble (requires an advisor or former advisor to be a guild member)
- A sheltered grove or crypt within the local cemetery
- A local abattoir
- An aqueduct or ground level water tower (assumes the lair was constructed at the same time).

When the need for the external entrance has passed, it will be bricked up at the lair end and concealed. The tunnel will then be filled in with rock, rubble and debris (part of the volume excavated to create the lair can be used for this purpose if suitable). Finally, the outside entrance is sealed or hidden.

However, some Guildmasters may secretly re-excavate the tunnel for use as their own private emergency exit. That this poses a security threat does not occur to them, or if it does, they opt for better concealment and security rather than closing the exit once again.

GMs should not permit characters to find such entrances until *after* they have penetrated the secret of using the Amulets to gain access – unless they begin to speculate on how such a lair could have been secretly constructed under the noses of the locals in the first place, of course!

Hours of Operation

Assassinations can occur at any hour of the day. However, if assassins need to maintain outside occupations, or at least appear to do so, they will only be able to access the lair outside of the hours in which they normally work. For an innkeeper, that means early in the mornings, and from mid-morning until late at night, mundane activities will occupy

him. Other circumstances can also affect the normal hours of operation, particularly as they pertain to the conduct of missions.

Because the circumstances vary so widely, a simplistic answer such as "the lair is operational at night" or "the lair conducts its business during the day" will usually not work. GMs should consider this when determining who will be present within the guild headquarters/lair at any given time.



Chapter 3: GM Advice



126 Assassin Hooks

Hook Format:

Most hooks that follow are universal, and apply equally to the Hands of Cyrene and to assassins in general.

Variants: In a few cases, the unique nature of the Hands of Cyrene dictates that a hook will work differently. When this occurs, a variation on the generic hook may be provided in italics following the generic hook.

A hook might also have ramifications for the Hands of Cyrene beyond, or different to, the generic case. A summary of the ramifications unique to the Hands follows the hook where necessary, also in italics.

† Some hooks uniquely relate to the Hands of Cyrene, and have no generic assassin applicability. These hooks are preceded by a dagger.



Hooks have been organized into categories for easy reference. In addition, if you plan to use multiple hooks in the same adventure or campaign, please note some hooks are not compatible with each other.

The Hooks:

Personalities and Motives

1. This assassin founded a suicide cult involving family and friends but could not go through with his own death, and as the sole survivor, his twisted spirit now seeks solace in the killing of others.

Variant: for use with the Hands of Cyrene, substitute "redemption" for "solace."

2. Deeply in debt, an assassin struggles to earn enough from killing to fund his paradise getaway and retire.

Cover Occupations

3. By day, this assassin is a timid scribe; at night, wielding his intelligent sword Black Razor, he kills without mercy.

4. At three feet tall, nobody suspects this jester of being the infamous 'Nightstalker'.

5. The assassin's day job is as the commander of the day shift of the city watch.

6. †An assassin works as the assistant to the best apothecary in town to identify those who need killing.

7. An assassin delivers fresh milk daily to the homes of the wealthy, enabling him to monitor the health and activities of those who can afford to flout the law.

Assassins Who Have Been Cheated

8. A member of the watch paid to have a romantic rival eliminated, but he short-changed the payment. Now the assassins must punish the cheater without arousing the wrath of the watch.

9. An arrogant noble has cheated the guild and thinks he has gotten away with it by becoming a vampire and surrounding his castle with dangerous creatures. To reach him, the assassins will pose as porters for a party of adventurers (the PCs) hired by a third party (actually the assassins) to rid the land of the threat posed by the vampire and his pets.

10. A mage who has dabbled in dark powers seeks to avoid paying his debt to a devil, which is disguised as a lay preacher, by sending the assassins' guild after him.

11. An assassin has travelled from a far land to sell a rare gem, the payment for his last commission, only to discover it is a fake. Without funds, he must start building his reputation all over again, in a land where (as a foreigner) he is already a subject of suspicion.

12. An assassination is paid for with a magic item, but the command word given seems to be wrong. The assassin has to get the (very recognizable) item identified without revealing his identity.

Assassins Shopping

13. The most famous bard of the realm receives an unexpected commission to compose music to honor a particular *baker*, and becomes suspicious when the baker's income far outstrips his profits from selling bread.

14. A consignment of rare spices is purchased by a secretive party (the assassins' guild) from afar; the PCs are hired to guard the shipment.

Assassins Enjoying Luxuries

15. The money is good, and though this assassin hates his work he continues to take on contracts.

Note: since the temple would keep most of the payments made to the Hands of Cyrene for assassination contracts, this assassin must be pilfering the treasury of the temple, or planning to do so. This would be an interesting crime to get the PCs to investigate. It places the moral quandaries posed by the mission of the Hands of Cyrene front and centre without making the plot all about an assassination. In addition, if the PCs decide to oppose the Hands, they cannot say they did not know what they were getting themselves into.

16. Noble sons who frequently relax at the highest-priced brothel in the city are surprised when a mason and candlemaker become regular patrons of the establishment.

17. The King's pastry chef is renowned as the best cook in the kingdom, and regularly receives commissions to cater feasts for minor nobles and wealthy merchants on the side. However, he has never been asked to bake a cake with black icing before....

Assassin Employers

18. A glutton is furious when a rival outbids him for a consignment of rare Green Dragon Pate, and hires the Hands to punish the rival and retrieve the rare food.

19. The Count's son is tired of waiting to inherit his father's estate. The father suspects his son's plans and hires the Hands to stop him.

20. A Baron has many children, all of them spoilt rotten. He hires the Hands to try to kill them, one by one – they will prove themselves worthy by surviving.

21. The Captain of the City Watch is a semi-retired adventurer who fears losing his edge, so he hires the Hands to stage a series of mock assassinations. One of his lieutenants wants a promotion and has paid the guild to make these attempts more real than the Captain is expecting.

22. A wealthy merchant's business is under threat from a new trading consortium. He hires the Hands to disrupt the trading consortium.

23. A collector of art hires the Hands to assassinate the painters of several of his pieces to increase their value.

Assassin Enemies

24. The Captain of the Guard is pressing for permission to launch an official search for the rumored assassins. He secretly desires to destroy the proof that he paid to have his first wife assassinated. The Hands might leak the information to discredit him, but the contract was organized through a third party, so they do not know what they have and are puzzled by his motives.

25. †A secret order of corrupt paladins from the distant past spend their lives in debauchery and luxury, and have extended their lives for centuries rather than face eternal judgment; they have progressively struck bargains with darker and darker powers to live beyond their naturally-allotted spans. They know that eventually, the Hands of Cyrene will discover and oppose them, and have launched a pre-emptive strike.

26. A ranger who operates as an amateur detective (see the Urban Gumshoe class in Chapter 4: NPCs) has come to the city in search of the people who slew his sister, following a trail of assassinations.

27. †A cabal of mages decides the Hands of Cyrene are interfering with their search for arcane knowledge and begins a secret war against the order.

28. †A gathering of Druids decides the Hands of Cyrene are intruding upon their domain – *they* are the guardians of life – and seeks to hire supporters to engage the assassins.

Assassin Alliances

29. †Children have been disappearing near the village of Ashlop. The tiny hamlet is served only by a priest of death to officiate over funerals, and a priest of fertility to handle marriages and crop-plantings. Both priests are old and infirm, and suspect that some black art is being practiced in the region. They send word to the Temple of the Goddess of Life to investigate. Before the Temple's response is received, the PCs happen to pass through the village....

30. A somewhat paranoid assassin out to enhance his reputation hires the PCs to scout the defenses of his next target. He poses as a member of the target's household concerned for his safety.

Assassin Family Life

31. An assassin's wife is discovered having an affair. Distraught, he performs an unsanctioned kill, before fleeing, disguised as a guide or porter working for the PCs, and is now hotly pursued by the Hands....

32. The merchant who supplies the hidden assassins with additional foodstuffs on the side contracts the guild to watch over his son, who is a hotheaded lothario, certain to end up in a duel and get himself killed without protection. The guild assigns several of their members to watch over him and intervene as necessary, but one of the assassins falls head over heels for the amorous son.

33. †A deeply religious man argues constantly with his son about the younger man's seeming lack of piety, unaware that

he is secretly a member of the Hands of Cyrene and impiety just his cover.

34. An assassin's daughter, whom he loves dearly, is kidnapped by someone who then forces him to divulge guild secrets and kill on their behalf. Knowing he cannot turn to the guild for help because he has betrayed them, he hires the PCs to rescue his daughter and kill the kidnapper to protect the guild secrets he has divulged. Unknown to him, the daughter gave him up to the enemy in the first place in a bid to attempt to force him into an honorable line of work, and the kidnapping is a sham. She does not know her naivety is now being exploited by someone she trusts and confided in.

35. †The daughter of a member of the Hands of Cyrene is about to marry the son of a local Baron in a big society wedding (think the movie "Father of the Bride"), which has him running all over town. Somewhere in the course of all these trips, he loses or drops instructions from the Guildmaster on his next target. He hires the PCs to take over management of the wedding preparations while he searches frantically, leading the PCs to become increasingly curious and suspicious of his activities.

Assassin Rivalries

36. The enemy took his girl and he doggedly pursues her while working for a secret organization of killers.

37. †Because of their adherence to faith, there are certain targets against which the Hands of Cyrene will not accept commissions. A professional assassin is hired from a foreign land to kill one of these protected persons.

38. Thieves' guilds and assassins guilds frequently make uncomfortable bedfellows, sharing information sources and hidden paths through the city – the sewers and rooftops. Eventually, one of the two tries to take exclusive control of these vital resources, and an underground war breaks out.

39. †A rival assassins' guild begins to impersonate the Hands of Cyrene, confident the Hands will bear the brunt of official displeasure. Through a go-between, the assassins hire the PCs to investigate and prove their order's innocence. Unbeknownst to the guild, their rivals kill to empower a great necromantic ritual that will raise an army of undead under their control.

Assassin Victims

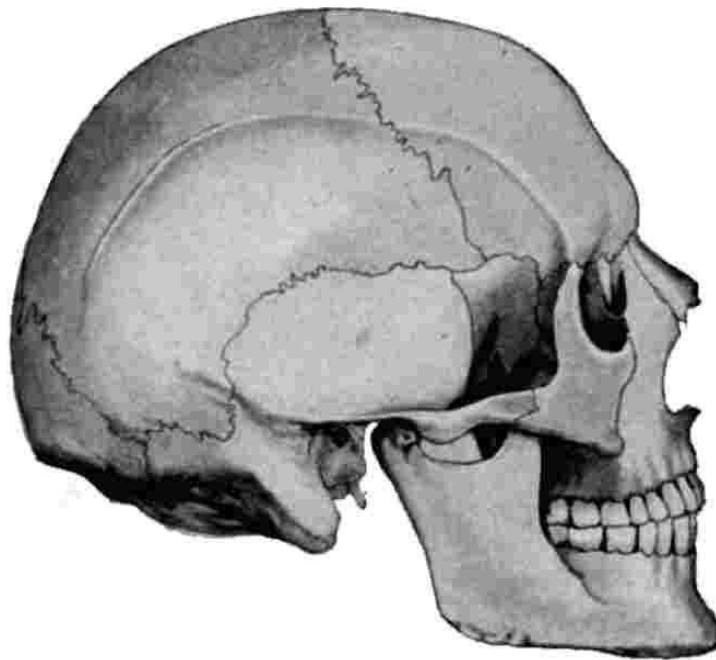
40. †The son of a man killed by the guild for suspected theological violations seeks to resurrect his deceased father as a demilich.

41. The wife of a guild victim becomes an amateur assassin herself and begins staging a series of murders to raise public outcry against the guild.

42. †The half-crazed partner of a victim of the Hands was made penniless years ago when the trade coalition put together by the victim collapsed in the wake of his death, and was left to rebuild his fortune in a foreign land. Now armed with wealth, exotic powers and abilities, and a completely new identity and appearance, he has returned. His mission is threefold: to expose the Hands, discover who commissioned the contract on the victim, and kill them and their families in revenge.

Assassin Meetings

43. †Once every 7 years, the guild headquarters must be sanctified again by a true priest of Cyrene of at least 16th level.



That time is now approaching, and the guild must determine whom they can trust with their secrets. If they find no one, they must get leverage to force someone to comply and then kill them, despite the hue and cry that may result, and the divine punishment that will ensue.

That was eight months ago, and the body of a priest of Cyrene has just washed ashore, throat cut. The PCs are hired by the temple to investigate.

Assassins Socializing

44. The 10th anniversary of the Guildmaster's achievement of his rank approaches, and the members of the guild have begun *shopping* for appropriate gifts and planning a social gathering.

45. It has become traditional for the guild to gather for a celebration following the completion of a contract in a certain inn in the city. Unknown to them, their most recent victim turned the tables on his would-be killer and used magic to take his identity. The PCs just happen to be staying at the same inn as the (private) celebration gets underway....

Assassins with a Grudge

46. The assassin was the King's champion until a setup caused his downfall; now he seeks vengeance against his foes.

Note: this hook can be interpreted either as a member of the Hands with a preference for certain types of target, or as an assassin who is saving what the Hands pay him until he can purchase contracts of his own against his enemies. If the latter, it should manifest as a subplot while the assassin is gathering funds, and the main plot should be the carnage he has purchased.

47. The King's men killed his parents, and after years of training, the assassin is finally ready to exact revenge, but the King and his family are now more powerful than ever.

48. †He founded a death cult but was converted by a Paladin, so now an assassin targets the cult at every opportunity.

Note: this implies that Cyrene also has an order of Paladins in her service for more public activities. GMs using this hook should think carefully about how these Paladins will interact with the Hands of Cyrene. Other hooks may contain pertinent information.

49. The assassin cuts an ear off every victim and keeps them at home to remind himself he will one day find and slay the torturer who sliced off both his ears years ago.

50. On a recent mission everything that could go wrong, did, and a relative *nobody* did not merely thwart the assassins, he humiliated them, without even noticing that anything was taking place. Now the assassins want to reclaim their pride and dignity by targeting the nobody, who has taken to hanging around a group of adventurers (the PCs).

Note: This hook requires a little set-up by the GM ahead of time to introduce the 'Nobody'.

51. Dovan the Sage, aka The Beloved of Dragons, was paid to **lie** to the guild to protect one of his customers from assassination. Dovan the Sage is now a dead man walking. However, his nickname is a bit of a worry....

52. †An old friend and sometimes-ally of a member of the Hands of Cyrene begins to speak out publicly against the organization. The Guildmaster directs the assassin to silence this new enemy. The assassin chooses to interpret his instructions literally, poisoning his old friend with a substance that reduces the voice to a painful whisper, and recruits the PCs to discover the true cause behind the old friend's change of heart and undo it.

Assassins Recruiting

53. †An especially pious temple boy, the younger brother of a PC, is tapped as a possible recruit for the Hands of Cyrene. Now he must weigh his faith against his conscience. Will he seek out his brother for advice, marking them both targets for assassination to keep the secrets of the guild safe? Alternatively, will his new profession erect a wall of secrets between the two siblings?

54. The PCs encounter a skilled but young street urchin and pickpocket. A little later, they see an older man hand the child a small pouch of coins and lead the boy away, hand-in-hand. However, this is not what it might seem to a modern audience: the older man is an assassin, and the young boy is going to be the guild's newest recruit. Will the morals of the PCs lead to a confrontation with the bringers of death? Alternatively, if they do nothing and later encounter the young assassin on the job, will they blame themselves for what he has become?

55. A freight hand at the docks is a slow-witted but strong brawler. When a fight breaks out between a stranger and another dockworker, he intervenes in what quickly becomes a general melee that draws in all those nearby (including the PCs). In gratitude, the man – secretly a member of the assassins' guild – takes the freight hand into the guild.

Assassins in Training

56. Still an apprentice to the world's greatest assassin, a trainee secretly takes small contracts to pay for extra equipment, special herbs and magic.

Variant: since the Hands of Cyrene have their own hierarchy and training methods, the "world's greatest assassin" would be an independent contractor, a rival to the Hands. The best way to employ this hook with Assassin's Amulet is to have the apprentice accept a contract to assassinate a seemingly-ordinary citizen, who is secretly one of the Hands, then drag the PCs in as neighbors or witnesses, trapping them between the independent assassin and the Hands.

57. Thinking they are chasing a would-be thief, the PCs become embroiled in a race across the rooftops as assassins are trained to navigate the city this way.

58. A poisoned trainee assassin must follow a series of clues to decipher the name of the antidote he needs before it is too late. He inadvertently involves the PCs in his desperate search when he mistakes one of them for the next link in the chain.

Assassin Cover-Ups

59. After an especially messy public assassination, the guild needs a fall guy. They choose a member of their order who is suspected of taking commissions on the side. They manufacture evidence of his being the lone assassin and arrange to have it fall into the hands of the PCs.

The difficult part will be ensuring he can never reveal the secrets of the guild, so another guild member poses as a long-lost relative of the deceased who is obsessed with revenge (and who can take out the fall guy at an opportune time).

60. †A nobleman has come into possession of a mystic portrait that can age instead of the owner. The Hands of Cyrene consider this to be a prohibited artifact within their theology and set out to steal it from amongst the rare art collection of the nobleman. To conceal the real purpose of the crime, they plan to steal several other artworks at the same time and then set fire to the building where the collection is housed, making the whole thing look like a bungled robbery. Unbeknownst to the assassins, the PCs are commissioned by another art collector to rescue another piece of art the collector has obtained illegally, on behalf of the rightful owner. Both attempted robberies will take place at the same time.

Crossing the Line

61. An assassin takes on contracts but always tries to find a way to save the victim.

Variant: breach of contract by an assassin is always a serious matter, but even more so when the contracts are accepted by an organization such as the Hands of Cyrene, who believe their missions are blessed by their goddess. This assassin would be both a heretic and a traitor to the group, probably planted in the organization as a spy. You should think carefully about how the Hands would verify the loyalty of prospective and current members, and how this character overcomes these tests.

68. The assassin slew the previous Guildmaster but could not hold power and now hides from his enemies and former allies; he only takes work after thoroughly investigating clients for fear of a trap.

Note: this assassin cannot be a current member of the Hands of Cyrene, though he could be a former member who got ambitious.

69. †The PCs are employed to escort a fussy, bureaucratic, arrogant bookkeeper from one city to another. What the PCs do not know is that he is a specialist member of the Hands of Cyrene who audits the books of remote chapters. The Guildmaster of the chapter to be audited has been secretly diverting funds to further his political ambitions, and knows that an auditor is coming (thanks to his spies); he falsifies a contract on the auditor and sets the assassins under his command to fulfill that contract.

70. †A member of the Hands of Cyrene humiliates his victims and their families before killing the target for his own pleasure, then cooks and eats parts of the victims. He has been warned, and reformed his ways for a time, but the Guildmaster suspects he is beginning to slip, and assigns another member of the guild to follow the sociopath to monitor his activities.



71. †A member of the Hands of Cyrene believes that those who would commission assassinations are no better (and possibly worse) than the victims. He has started killing those who commission assassinations from the guild after completing each assignment. While there is nothing wrong with doing so per se—provided he waits for the contract to be completed—the Guildmaster is concerned that if this continues, people will stop employing the guild, leaving them undertrained when one of their real targets comes onto their radar. He has hired the PCs to cut off one of the assassin's toes as a warning.

72. †A member of the Hands of Cyrene begins to doubt his calling, but knows the guild will not let him simply retire; he must falsify his own death. But who is strong enough to (theoretically) commit such an act and never be forced into a position where the truth is revealed? And how can one hide the truth from a goddess?

Rogue Assassins

73. A mercenary at heart, this assassin is willing to accept higher payments from victims to return and slay the one who placed the original contract; he is happy to bounce back and forth several times until somebody gets killed at the end of his bidding war.

Note: the assassin from this hook should be an independent operator, given the beliefs of the Hands of Cyrene. However, the losing bidder might well contract with the Hands to kill his enemy, and one or both sides could hire the PCs as bodyguards.

74. The assassin specializes in *sending a message* with his killings according to his employer's wishes, but secretly he is a frustrated and underappreciated poet who cannot make a full-time income from his books.

75. A drug addict, and dulled because of it, an unskilled assassin feeds his need by taking on work from clients too poor to pay killers that are more competent.

Variant: a drug addict, and dulled because of it, has a fearsome reputation built upon many kills, and charges a premium fee; no one knows he charges so much because he subcontracts all his kills to the Hands, keeping the balance for himself. What might he do when the Hands turn down a contract? Hire the PCs to do it instead?

Assassins and Mages

76. †Mages are just like anyone else when it comes to most assassins—they will hire them, buy from them, sell to them and kill them if that's what they are paid to do. However, the ideologies of mages and the Hands of Cyrene are in opposition. A consortium of Mages hires a traditional assassins' guild to put the Hands out of business, and the streets of the capital become a hidden war zone.

Assassin Treasures

77. A famous bard, and friend to the PCs, is known to possess a Hat of Disguise, which he uses in his role as the greatest stage actor in the kingdom. An assassin has decided he needs that hat to fulfill a difficult contract, but the bard will not give it up willingly.

78. †The Book of Cyrene is a compilation of prophecies and discoveries made using Cyrene's Pool of Reflection. Long ago, a bold and somewhat stupid thief stole the Book and vanished with it. Now a party of adventurers (the PCs) has discovered its hiding place.

Assassin Material Targets

79. †Rumors reach the Hands of Cyrene that the Celestial Oracle has been discovered, an artifact of great power that permits the user to experience directly the thoughts and desires of the deity to whom it has been consecrated. Legend has it there was one created for each of the gods, and myth suggests these devices were a byproduct of the creation of the gods in the first place.

Like all priests, the Hands of Cyrene know divine thought is too complex for mortals to correctly interpret; that is the function of the temples. The Hands seek to recover the Oracle to secure it from casual abuse, or to destroy it if this Oracle is consecrated to an enemy of Cyrene in the hopes this will also unmake the god. At the same time, a sage employs the PCs to recover the Oracle. (Think of it as an equivalent to The Ark of The Covenant from Indiana Jones.)

Assassins and Religion

80. †Forever misunderstood by those who (they think) should know better, the Hands of Cyrene are frequent targets of blistering denunciations by priests from other temples. Now one of the Hands has been captured by such a priest and is being tortured for the information that will lead the temples' followers to the guild headquarters. He must be silenced or

rescued. While the Hands attempt the former, an intermediary from the guild hires the PCs to attempt the latter. If they should learn too much, the PCs will also become an inconvenient liability....

81. †The PCs encounter a group of adventurers, recently killed, who were morally ambiguous and had a reputation for both greed and generosity, cruelty and kindness, honor and dishonor. With the Celestial Tribunal deadlocked in their judgment, Cyrene has set the shades on a quest to earn her favor in the final judgment: the destruction of the Jade Golem, which houses, and is controlled by, the spirit of a high-level necromancer. Destroying the golem would tip Cyrene's judgment because it is being used by the Necromancer to extend his life unnaturally.

82. †A dispute has arisen between the temples of Thanastis, God of Death, and Lumina, Goddess of Life. (See Chapter 4 for more information about the gods.) Each alleges interference in their congregation by followers of the other.

The Temple of Cyrene has investigated at the request of these temples, and found that an unknown outside party is responsible, attempting to foment civil unrest for their own purposes. The Temple of Cyrene has sent priests to mediate an end to the dispute, while the PCs will be hired to discover who is behind the plot.

When one of the negotiators is killed, ostensibly by a follower of Thanastis, the Hands of Cyrene are called upon to provide bodyguard services for the remaining mediators.

Assassins in Politics

83. †While no government will have official contact with the Hands, the guild is frequently hired on the quiet for intelligence missions and the occasional assassination in neighboring realms. When a paranoid nobleman hires the PCs to ensure he has no spies in his midst, it puts them on a collision course with the Hands of Cyrene.

84. †It is traditional for priests of each recognized deity to bless the heir to the throne upon his coming of age in a single grand ceremony and feast. When Prince Taliph's ceremonial blessing is interrupted by an assassination attempt, seemingly by the Hands of Cyrene, the temple comes into official disfavor and active investigation by the authorities.

The real Hands must evade such scrutiny, discover the identity of the true culprits, obtain proof and arrange for the government to come into possession of the documents, all without revealing themselves. The government hires the PCs to investigate the temple and discover the truth of the matter, because the priests in attendance at the ceremony swear the followers of Cyrene are innocent and no such organization exists within the temple walls.

The Hands must lead the PCs to the evidence, ensuring they succeed in their commission, while making sure the solution does not come so easily to them that it will not be believed, even as the Hands continue to fulfill contracts and conceal their existence.

The Long Arm of the Law

85. The assassin fights for a good cause and only kills evil targets.

Note: since this hook applies to all normal members of the Hands of Cyrene, it is necessary to take it to extremes if this assassin is to be a member of the guild.

86. Always clad in skin-tight black clothing made from monster hide, an assassin is choosy about his targets and prefers to fight corruption and oppression using his special talents.

Note: this is not sufficiently noteworthy compared to the typical member of the Hands of Cyrene. The best way to correct that is for the assassin to freelance on the side as a Robin Hood-type swashbuckler. That puts him in a position to befriend the PCs, who will be unaware of the moral quagmire they have stumbled into.

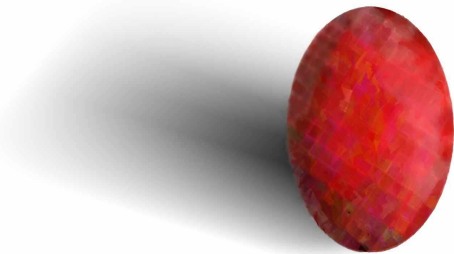
87. With the rise in political power of the Trade Guilds, barristers emerge as a profession to represent them to the courts and present their cases, to defend the members of their clients, and so on. Old age recently claimed the life of the barrister used to defend assassins captured by the Crown, and the Hands need a new mouthpiece that can be trusted with their secrets, quickly.

They choose the barrister already representing the PCs, who were caught up in a barroom brawl and charged with disturbing the peace and contributing to the death of another (one of the brawlers died).

he PCs begin to grow suspicious of their lawyer's new client. Then a short-lived prisoner's revolt ends in the suspicious death of both barrister and captured (alleged) assassin, apparently at the hands

of one of the PCs. The PCs can escape during the fracas, but must prove their innocence while hunted by law enforcement and the alleged assassin's allies.

88. The PCs are in the wrong place at the wrong time and witness a guild member paying off one of the Town Guard, who feeds intelligence on guard activities to the guild.



Dealings on the Shady Side

89. A PC takes a fancy to a piece of jewelry in the marketplace, not realizing the item was stolen from the rooms of a merchant who was assassinated. Wearing the item openly at a public function, it is recognized by a member of the town guard.

90. A known fence commissions the assassins' guild to obtain a magic item or other unique object currently in the possession of the party, on behalf of a mystery buyer.

Non-Humans

91. †Most elves distrust the Hands of Cyrene and consider their theology to be an expression of human jealousy over their long lives. However, some elves realize the

theology is aimed at those humans who are envious of the elvish lifespan, who seek to emulate it, and who have surreptitious dealings with assassins.

One elf takes this a step further and petitions to join the assassins' guild, and it is the guild's turn to be suspicious, even paranoid. It begins to investigate the beliefs and bona fides of the would-be member. However, elvish culture is not the same as human; the elves are far more aware of what is going on around them, and the investigation has been discovered (though the guild does not know that). The elves are not sure how to react to this; opinions are strong and divided – a volatile mixture into which the PCs stumble.

Fighters

92. A target marked for assassination is surrounded by a large number of trained fighters hired to defend him. The contracted assassin does not want to share the bounty with other assassins, as he's trying to build a reputation amongst them for reliability and professionalism, because only the best get awarded the difficult (and most lucrative) contracts. He decides to hire adventurers of loose morals to take out the guards and get him close enough to fulfill the contract, and is prepared to lie to them about the target if necessary. The first group he approaches just happens to be the PCs.

93. A Champion of the Arena is beginning to slow down, but if he retains his championship for one more year, he will become the greatest in the history of the Games and can write his own ticket in retirement. The problem is there is a young hotshot primed to take over and the Champion does not think he can beat him –

and neither do the bookmakers. The Champion hires the assassins' guild to do whatever is necessary to ensure that he wins — starting by giving him an edge in the combat and progressing through to the kidnapping of the young fighter's beloved wife. With wagering on the contest heavy, the ruler of the city employs the PCs to guard against cheating. Will they discover the match fixing and rescue the challenger's wife in time?

Assassins in Nature

94. †Most druids respect the theology of the Hands of Cyrene, and many with a more militant perspective actively support and model the Hands' activities. However, there are also those who contend the Hands assume of a position of superiority over nature, just as other enemies of the druids do, and this druid faction actively opposes the assassins. Whenever such a druid meets a member of the assassins' guild, what follows is usually a game of cloak-and-dagger as each side probes the other's intentions and loyalties. Therefore, it is a matter of concern when Lumens Oaktree, leader of the druid faction that bitterly opposes the Hands, requests a private meeting with the Hands' Guildmaster. Word of the summit leaks through the druidic community (vines are natural gossips) and a member of a disparate faction employs the PCs to spy on the summit.

From the Outside

95. An outsider trapped on this plane uses his special abilities to kill so he can pay for a way to return home.

96. †Outsiders are considered outside nature and not bound by terrestrial definitions of natural and unnatural. If they just minded their own business, the Hands of Cyrene would normally be happy to reciprocate. However, so few of them do, always meddling and promising rewards like wealth and long life in exchange for service, that the Hands consider any outsider to be an enemy until proven otherwise. All guild members have instructions to investigate any reported visitations by outsiders immediately after their current contracts are complete. This is why a curious stranger has begun poking and prying in the area the PCs have made their home base, where locals reported seeing a strange apparition a few weeks earlier.

The Unliving

97. †Undead pose a special problem for the Hands of Cyrene because undeath can be considered an *unnatural extension* of life, but undead are not susceptible to assassination, only destruction. Since undead are immune to the greatest powers of the Hands, they rather conveniently define them as beyond the scope of their theological mandate, and leave them to other groups who are better-equipped to deal with the situation, especially a sister organization within the Temple of Cyrene, the Order of Cyrenia.

There occasionally arise situations where this is not an available alternative, such as when a *hit* is contracted on a high-level undead—a lich, vampire, mummy or similar. When this happens, doctrine requires recruitment of a party of adventurers to assist the assassin, who poses as a relatively junior priest of Cyrene for the duration of the mission. These adventurers should possess abilities only barely adequate to the task, as it will be necessary for the assassin to dispose of them should his identity be revealed in the course of the mission.

98. †A paladin of Cyrene whose order's mission is to seek and destroy undead calls upon the guild for assistance in eliminating a vampire mage whose defenses confound the lone paladin. The target learns of this by keeping watch on the paladin and, concealing his true nature, hires the PCs to stop the guild without warning them of what they face.

Inherited Enemies

99. †An agent of Calumnus, God of Knowledge and Magic, arrives to stir trouble between the temples of Cyrene and Hathandros, God of Storms and Seas. This should distract those deities sufficiently for an attempt by Calumnus to unseat Cyrene, who occupies a place on the Celestial Tribunal that Calumnus considers rightfully his.

However, Calumnus himself is being manipulated by Dirsha, Goddess of Vengeance, who has disguised herself as Calumnus' wife, Stariah, Goddess of the Moon. The real Stariah is being held prisoner by Dirsha's husband, Aronthis, God of Lies. Only Doravia, Goddess of

Temptation, and Averinis, God of Justice, suspect that more may be going on than the usual games between Calumnus and Cyrene.

Averinis has decided to bring in some minor mortals—the PCs—to investigate, because they will be beneath the notice of the deities involved—but Doravia will interfere for the sheer love of meddling. Can the PCs get the heart of this tangled web? (See Chapter 4 for Temple Relationships.)

100. There was just one contract the previous Guildmaster never found a way to fulfill, so heavily guarded and paranoid was the target. Now that his successor has established his command of the guild, he is desperate to prove himself to the old guard (who are not happy they have been passed over for a younger man) by fulfilling that contract, using the PCs as stalking horses to distract the target.

Cooperation

101. †The Hands of Cyrene are, in their own minds, virtuous and upright citizens. They will come to the aid of their city or nation of residence should it be attacked, they will defend the church, and they shelter and protect anyone they choose who is not the target of a contract (many are like boy scouts, helping old women, protecting children, and performing charitable works). Should the city or nation of their residence come under serious threat, the ruling nobles of that city might be surprised at the skills of those who come to its defense.

Ducks Out Of Water

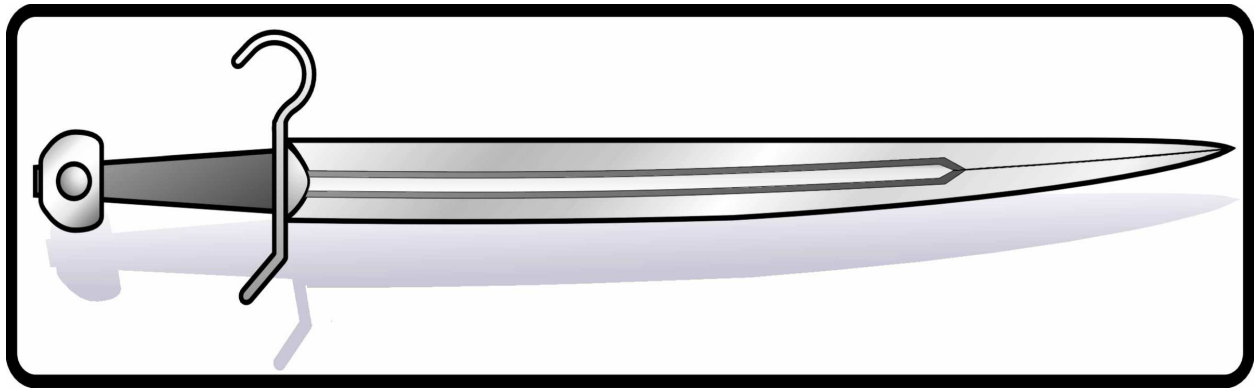
102. Assassin guilds are underground organizations by nature. Most assassins are uncomfortable being in the spotlight. So when an assassin reacts instinctively to save a stranger attacked on the streets without warning, with the assistance of other passers-by (the PCs), he is discomfited to learn the stranger is actually a visiting nobleman from another nation who insists on making a big fuss about the rescue.

Note: this hook is more plausible if the guild is the Hands of Cyrene because they think of themselves as The Good Guys.

104. An assassin lodges at an inn like many others, only to fall victim to a burglar who has been active in the neighborhood. Hidden within the stolen goods is proof of the assassin's identity and the tools of his trade. He has to find the thief before the assassins' guild learns of his carelessness.

I Dated an Assassin

105. An assassin is a complete sucker and always seems to fall in love or befriend targets so he cannot kill them in the end.



Home Truths

103. An assassin makes his home in the sewer, where he stumbles across a plot to replace the King with a doppelganger. Will he reveal himself to the King? Will he try to stop the plot himself? And who is behind it?

Variant: A member of the Hands of Cyrene might get away with this behavior for a while, but there would be a limit to their tolerance. This hook works better as an assassin who cultivates friendships or romances with his victims to get them into a vulnerable position, and maintains these relationships until he can arrange circumstantial evidence pointing at someone else as the killer. So, when a friend of the PCs has a contract put on their lives, the PCs will get to know the killer socially. They might even be able to persuade him or her to put their friend first, promising to defend the pair from the wrath of the guild.

You Never Know What You Might See

106. The PCs witness a bungled assassination, a clumsy attempt on the life of a rich merchant. Are the assassins so desperate they would make a public and ill-prepared attempt on the life of the merchant? Is this just a diversion? Are the assassins trying to conceal their true effectiveness to divert suspicion away from themselves? Is someone trying to stir up official sentiment against them? Or did someone pay to have a deliberately botched attempt made on the life of the merchant for their own purposes – and what might those purposes be?

Thrill Seekers

107. A legendary adventurer has degenerated into a jaded thrill seeker. He pays the guild to assassinate him for the thrill of fighting them off and the challenge of preventing his own death, with no regard for others who might be harmed. One of those innocent bystanders is a PC's friend.

Prejudices

108. Disguised as a man, this assassin fights for her place in a difficult world and delights in slaying oppressors.

109. In a world brimming with sin, an assassin enjoys cleansing the evil that taints every being's soul.

Unusual Assassins

110. An assassin is killed and his place taken by a doppelganger.

111. An assassin is secretly in league with a necromancer; he kidnaps his targets and uses them as sacrifices in necromantic rituals designed to increase the personal power of the participants. However, something went wrong last time, and the mutilated remains were discovered before they could be disposed. The PCs have been hired to discover who is responsible and to stop them.

Will the guild support the assassin? Will they feel betrayed and endangered, and turn on him? Or will they simply cut him loose after reminding him of his vows to die before betraying the guild?

Note: the Hands of Cyrene are more likely to turn on this assassin, as necromancy is likely to lead to an unnatural extension of life at some point; and by pursuing his personal agenda, the assassin has also placed the guild at risk. When the guild decides to act, they have to do so in a way that ensures the assassin's guilt is proven, and yet at the same time, ensure he cannot betray guild secrets. The best method might be to feed intelligence to the PCs and follow them until the assassin can be eliminated.

Assassins with Style

112. This assassin revels in complicated killing plans, using tricks and traps to torture victims first.

113. Blunt, brutal and powerful, an assassin kills without grace but is effective at his work.



114. A monster master, the assassin uses strange, exotic and deadly creatures to complete his contracts – but not snakes, because his arch enemy, The Asp, uses those animals to do his dirty work.

115. Always a sneaky person, a thief accidentally killed someone during a break-and-enter and realized murder would pay better.

116. Raised by animals, the assassin is nearly one himself and uses instinct, keen senses and stealth to stalk his prey.

117. This assassin disguises he is a mute and wants to build a street reputation as The Silent Killer.

118. Preferring poison over steel, the assassin plans his missions carefully and always finds a way to observe his victim's final moments.

119. With a great sense of entitlement earned from a noble upbringing, the

assassin sees everyone else as objects beneath him worth stepping on if there is a benefit.

120. His favorite trick is levitating victims and dropping them repeatedly, but the assassin has lost all sense of purpose and finds it harder and harder to rise himself out of bed each morning.

Note: within the context of the Hands of Cyrene, this amounts to a crisis of the faith. It is not something likely to come upon one unexpectedly, there would have to have been some trigger that aroused the assassin's doubts.

121. Always the pun master, this assassin kills his audiences with his special brand of humor.

122. An assassin who faints at the sight of blood uses strangulation, poison and crushing as preferred methods of doing his nasty work.

123. A neat freak with chivalry and manners, the assassin works wearing expensive suits and aims to make clean kills and getaways.

124. An arcane purist, the assassin only uses magic to complete his missions.

125. A gadgeteer, his fellow guild members sneer at this assassin, yet his kill rate is the highest and he has started landing higher profile contracts.

Leadership and Inspiration

We saved the following long and juicy hook for last. It outlines a complete adventure, or even a campaign. While the PCs enter the plot near the end in this version, you could

game it out using Vertti as an active villain instead, and use the provided details as backstory. His plans are all laid out for you.... As a bonus, all the example characters and backgrounds in Chapter 4 are completely compatible with this hook.

126. † Vertti Setlak leads the Hands of Cyrene. A coldly passionate and ruthless man, he elbowed a number of people aside in his rise to power.

Setlak first heard the calling of Cyrene when his son was stillborn and his wife died in labor. It is always easier to blame others for our misfortune, and Setlak heard – and believed – the key philosophy of the Hands that laid the blame for his personal tragedy at the feet of someone else extending their lifespan through unnatural means. He grew frustrated over the level of caution displayed by Kolun Wathsor, then Guildmaster, who demanded proof before sanctioning an uncommissioned contract, and who was protective of the secrecy and reputation of the Hands.

Vertti began his rise to power by establishing a protection racket that targeted the warehouse district using the guise The Holy Terror. By passing much of the proceeds to the thieves' guild and dockworkers' guild, he was able to gather a small band of loyal recruits to spy on the rich and powerful on his behalf. He then turned his attention to blackmail, and used his assorted contacts and guild training (as needed) to promote those officials under his thumb. When his power seemed to have reached its zenith under these arrangements, he sold out his cats paws amongst the dockworkers to leverage a promotion for one of his corrupt officials.

Each time he found his path to external power blocked, Vertti either removed the man positioned above his pawn through

assassination or falsified evidence against them, which he presented through another of his corrupted officials. Each time one of his pawns came under suspicion, another of his minions was given the proof to expose that pawn. Burning his bridges behind him, he took control of key positions in the civil administration.

Upon gaining access to his primary goal – the royal spy network – he used it to further the goals of the Hands and ingratiate himself with the temple hierarchy. When a vacancy amongst the guild lieutenants was *arranged* through hidden outside connections, he was the obvious appointee, despite being junior to several other more skilled and better-qualified guild members.

He immediately set about winning over his fellow lieutenants. Those he could not pacify he removed by disgracing them in the eyes of the guild by forewarning their targets, falsifying evidence against them outside the temple or having them shipped off to other branches of the Hands where their expertise was *needed more*.

Once secure, he began to undermine the authority of Wathsor, Guildmaster at that time, both within the temple hierarchy and within the Hands, while complaining amongst his fellows about the cautious line taken by Wathsor. He began diverting evidence of the guilt of certain minor offenders from Wathsor's attention – his own passion for the cause would not permit him to do so in the more serious cases. He used his old trick of falsifying evidence to show Wathsor had accepted bribes to let these minor offenders escape the just retribution of the guild. He then presented this '*proof*,' with the evidence of their guilt in the eyes of Cyrene, to the Mother Hall of the Hands, and received permission to eliminate the Guildmaster as a traitor to Cyrene.

Given his obvious zeal, his proven *loyalty* to the guild, and the esteem in which he was held by both the Central Committee of the Hands and the high priest of the Temple of Cyrene, his accession to the position of Guildmaster was assured.

He immediately adopted a more proactive stance, issuing contracts to scourge those suspected of minor infractions and eliminate those suspected of more serious acts. Proof was no longer needed – just capability, motive, and some cause for suspicion. Now, the hazy suspicion of the guild’s existence has become an undeniable truth, commonly known in the city, and authorities have issued warrants for the arrest of various members. The guild serves as a soft target for politicians seeking to distract from other issues. Promises to *get tough* or demands for investigations are now commonplace. The friends and relatives of guild victims have begun hiring professionals to exact revenge. In addition, the Temple of Cyrene has had to distance itself publicly from any association with the Hands, but even so their congregation is subject to harassment and their priests shunned.

Unknown to Setlak, Wathsor survived his apparent assassination. Assuming Setlak's abandoned guise as The Holy Terror, and protected by a near-impenetrable disguise, he has gathered proof of the criminal acts committed by Setlak in the course of his rise to power.

Now has come the time for the final confrontation – first, the elimination of those remaining pawns who furnish intelligence and political power to the current Guildmaster, and then, a raid on the temple itself.

Wathsor cannot do all this alone, so he plans to recruit adventurers to even the score without making his involvement known. He intends to see the guild apparently wiped out while he covertly establishes a new one, and to lurk in the shadows until Setlak has nowhere to hide. He will do **whatever it takes** to protect the wider guild from the damage done by the obsessed Guildmaster of the local branch, and to have his revenge.



14 Assassination Targets

♦ In this section, we offer 14 possible NPC targets for assassination attempts within your game. Each target exemplifies one of seven possible motives:

1. Wealth
2. Power or Position
3. Personal Relationships or Personal History
4. Revenge
5. Self-Protection
6. The target Witnessed Something
7. Other

We have left the contracts incomplete and even vague. While personality profiles of each target have been offered, we have given nothing more than a client name and motive beyond that. Some of the motives seem fairly obvious, but in all cases, determining exactly how the target's death will satisfy the motive, and what the events were that led up to the contract, are up to you. This approach maximizes the potential for integration into different campaigns.

For example, for the first one on the list, how will killing the rather gloomy and depressing Ericka Hennigan gain Losa Zertuche's wealth? Some possibilities:

- Ericka is wealthy and Losa will inherit that wealth upon Ericka's death.
- Ericka is in a position to block some plan of Losa's.

- Ericka is going to inherit money and Losa wants to impersonate her.
- There is an entrance to a treasure cache down in the sewers in Ericka's hovel, courtesy of a prior owner, or a hidden treasure map.
- Ericka has something in her possession that is far more valuable than she knows.

These ideas emerge before we get into whatever Ericka does for a living, and all the possibilities that can derive from *that* source.

1. Ericka Hennigan

The Target: Ericka misinterprets all events and developments as being bad for her in some way. Taciturn and controlled, she never shows anything other than a gloomy face to the world.

The Client: Losa Zertuche

The Motive: To gain wealth

2. Clauton Grinnell

The Target: Clauton is a man going places, at least to listen to him. A schemer who always has some new get-rich-quick scheme underway, with cool and cautious temperament, he is totally convincing as a prospect for success.

Yet, his every enterprise eventually flounders. Either he was too cautious to take the opportunities when they came his way, too bold in reaching for the brass ring, too suspicious of what seemed like a golden opportunity, too incautious in his choice of investors or partners, or he came under suspicion of having done something unwarranted or illegal at exactly the wrong time. Others have adopted several of his schemes after he abandoned them as unworkable and became the foundations of small business empires and minor fortunes. Yet, happy-go-lucky in his own way, he always makes enough to keep the wolf from his door and his creditors satisfied, enabling him to hatch his next grand scheme.

The Client: Kut Milbrandt

The Motive: To gain wealth

3. Lenore Killinger

The Target: Lenore raises apathy to the level of an art form. She is literally waited on hand and foot by servants, who she constantly berates for their inadequacies and poor performance. Living this lazy life to a point well beyond excess has left her grossly overweight and sluggish, with cold, clammy skin. She delights in public appearances in which she can demean her servants in such a way as to metaphorically slap everyone else in the face.

The Client: Cormell Lazosus

The Motive: To gain position or power

4. Darren Aldrete

The Target: Darren is a natural dissident, finding something to complain about in every government, official, decision or policy. He is also naturally suspicious of those around him at any given moment, sure that the authorities will seek to undermine his ability to *speak the truth* , if not close his mouth more permanently. You could consider him paranoid if it were not that he so often tweaks the noses of authority that he has genuine enemies.

The Client: Xone Nathor

The Motive: To gain position or power

5. Lancet Easler

The Target: Hair-splitting and untrustworthy, Easler serves as a public barrister for hire. While he always stays within the literal terms of any agreement, he serves himself first, his employers second and anyone else a distant third.

The Client: Nayse Leight

The Motive: Personal relationship or history

6. Hailett Liriano

The Target: Liriano is an army veteran who remains sullen and quiet when stressed until he can no longer contain himself, at which point he explodes into a vehement verbal explosion.

The Client: Saura Oyurs

The Motive: Personal relationship or history

7. Erenett Giegar

The Target: Giegar was a brutal roughouser who killed for the pettiest of reasons until he was declared an outcast from his native lands. A mid-ranking officer in the military, Giegar so resented his treatment at the hands of his fellow citizens that he betrayed the military secrets and vulnerabilities of his own people to their hostile neighbors for 30,000 pieces of silver. Irredeemably evil, he was declared an outlaw for his treasonous activities once the resulting invasion was beaten back at the cost of thousands of lives.

The Client: Ermia Landman

The Motive: Revenge

8. Danna Lembo

The Target: Danna is a saint who works to the point of exhaustion out of tender-hearted sympathy toward those who are less privileged than she considers herself. However, Danna hides a secret beneath this charitable exterior — she burns homes, snitches on her neighbors and acquaintances, and starts mean-spirited rumors just so she can enjoy the thanks she gets when she then helps her victims.

The Client: N'kel Dibiase

The Motive: Revenge

9. Hestise Ashalintu

The Target: Hestise is so old his mind perpetually wanders back in time and he imagines himself as a child, with a superficial and oversimplified view of every issue, and with the satisfaction of his own immediate needs and desires his only concern. This would not normally be a concern were it not for the fact that he was once an important official within the government, and he knows where many of the bodies — and their secrets — are buried.

The Client: Maor Grekt

The Motive: Self-protection

10. Schendel Meundorfer

The Target: Schendel is an arrogant man, smugly confident in being superior in every way to those around him. He loathes with a superior-strength passion anyone who proves themselves his better in any way. Unfortunately, Schendel is also unremittingly gullible, so there are many who have earned his hatred over the years — and he is not that old.

The Client: Jaze Zabala

The Motive: Self-protection

11. Lour Ferustin

The Target: Lour is a dynamo of destruction. He cannot go anywhere without leaving a trail of debris in his wake. Some is the result of his inordinate strength, some due to a naturally large size, some results through clumsiness and some is sheer coincidence or bad luck. However, the fact remains that if he passes a glass window, that window will break. If there is no glass window, something within will break. If there is a cake cooking, it will fall, as might anything else raised above arm's height. If there is a vehicle crossing, it will lose a wheel, it will take a corner too fast, the driver will be distracted or its cargo will come loose. Horses throw their shoes, milk sours, ladders fall, bolts snap, hinges jam and liquids spill.

Lour thinks he must have been cursed as a child, but no cleric has ever been able to lift the curse. The gods must hate him. Something about the way their temple roofs tend to collapse when he tries to pray, he is guessing. He is a simple man, poorly educated, plainspoken and completely inoffensive in every other way.

The Client: Jamit Witellow

The Motive: Witnessed something

12. Ashylee Haweur

The Target: Ashylee is renowned for her crop of fiery red hair and her equally fiery temper. She can go from calm to a shrill fury and back to calm in moments. She is also prone to clumsiness and heavy-handedness when it comes to emotional expression. Her most kindly advice sounds

like nagging, her outpourings of affection come across as soppy and maudlin and shallow. These traits have conspired to keep her unwed despite being stunningly beautiful. Life in her vicinity is always tempestuous, but the numbers of men who choose to worship her from afar are legion. She dreams of saying the right thing at the right moment to a prince on a white stallion who will sweep her into his arms and whisk her away from the chaos of her life, but so far it has not happened.

The Client: Lirra Nembard

The Motive: Witnessed something

13. Tyrone Engelard

The Target: Normally meek and cowardly, Tyrone's personality changes markedly when under the influence of alcohol, becoming hot-tempered, unruly, impolite, and even deviant, purely to shock his audience. Unfortunately, Tyrone is a drunkard.

The Client: Starin Gatts

The Motive: Other

14. Jessie Wyse

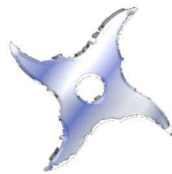
The Target: If there was ever one word that describes every aspect of a person, that word is "limp" as applied to Jessie Wyse.

Her foot was deformed by a childhood disease, so she walks with difficulty. She has strong opinions on everything that just happen to match those of the last person to

she speak aloud, and which will last only until the next opinion is voiced. She has no moral strength whatsoever, but cannot bestir herself to do anything immoral or illegal.

The Client: Narden Lamaro

The Motive: Other



Five Effective Combat Tactics for Assassins

The most important lesson for Assassins: to learn concerning combat situations: avoid combat whenever possible.

The most favorable combat situations involve fighting with allies. However, assassins tend to work alone, which causes tactical problems. In all the tactics below, hit-and-run is the only reliable method to combine with any combat tactic. Using an assassin's amulet in combination as a means of escape makes this even more reliable.

1. Maximize Sneak Attack Opportunities

Sneak attack is the best option for assassins in combat. Do anything you can to give NPC assassins this opportunity so they can cause damage while trying to get away. It is difficult, though not impossible, to flank an opponent without an ally – anything that removes an opponent's Dexterity bonus or causes him to become flat-footed will grant such an opportunity.

Feint/Improved Feint: using the feint option of the Bluff skill, the assassin spends his first round trying to cause the opponent to be off-balance or otherwise unready. This denies the opponent his Dexterity bonus to his Armor Class on the assassin's next attack, giving the killer a sneak attack. This tactic usually doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity, but use it carefully. Give the assassin the Improved Feint feat when it becomes available.

Foes defeat this tactic using Sense Motive, if they have that skill, or a raw check aided by their Wisdom modifier. Therefore, an assassin should scout out foes to determine their ability to sense others' motives or see through such tricks as feinting. The killer must know in advance if a foe can defeat feint. This saves the assassin a full round of futility plus exposure to a potential attack of opportunity.

Invisibility: except for class dipping with caster levels, which is not recommended, becoming invisible means using a magic item and the Use Magic Device skill. An invisible assassin initiating combat denies their opponent a Dexterity bonus to that attack, and so the foe must suffer a sneak attack.

Blindness: like invisibility, if the opponent is blind, the assassin is effectively invisible (see above).

Possessing the feat chain Critical Focus and Blinding Critical is helpful, though unreliable, as the NPC must engage in at least one round of combat with no advantages, and he must succeed on a critical hit, which can never be counted on.

Use of mundane items that cause blindness, such as eggshells filled with pepper that an assassin can throw at targets, also works well. With a successful hit affecting a five-foot area, the opponent is blind, though he gets a save to avoid the circumstance. Any magic item that causes blindness will also do this.

2. Single Striking

A one shot kill relies on high Strength combined with Power Attack and using a two-handed weapon, granting half-again Strength bonus on attacks. Unfortunately, Strength is generally a tertiary stat for assassins, following Dexterity and Intelligence.

Focus on causing as much damage as possible with a single attack using magic, magic items and equipment to eke out all the extra damage you can.

Enhance this tactic with Dodge, Mobility and Spring Attack, as well as the vital strike feat chain. While this is feat intensive and takes away valuable feat slots to make an effective assassin combatant, the three feats mentioned allow him to strike without attacks of opportunity, so offer better survivability.

Having the Quick Draw feat also gets the weapon in hand quickly. Combine this with sneak attack and it could be a one-shot kill.

3. Two Weapon Fighting

Using two weapons in combat means more opportunities for sneak attack. The assassin should possess the Weapon Finesse feat to rely on the character's Dexterity instead of Strength. While effective, this combat tactic does not cause as much damage as the single strike tactic, though it uses far fewer feat slots for combat.

4. Sniping—Using Ranged Weapons

If the assassin can prepare to choose a hidden spot to attack from this can be an effective combat tactic; however, it requires time unseen to prepare such an opportunity. The assassin must hide, shoot at target, and then move to another location to repeat the process. The assassin must be skilled with ranged weapons and will spend his combat feat slots doing so. This tactic does not accommodate being caught unawares and forced into melee, so the two previous combat tactics are more reliable.

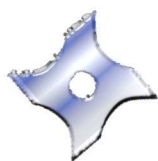
Take the Arcane Trickster prestige class instead of Assassin so ranged sneak attack is possible to make this a more viable combat tactic.

5. Using Traps

Indirect combat offers a usable strategy, but also requires some time in preparation prior to engaging in combat. Simple is sometimes more effective — for example, tossing caltrops in areas of expected movement by oncoming combatants, or using tanglefoot bags.

Consider allowing assassins to use portable traps either mundane or arcane, where the assassin can arm, disarm, move and rearm such a device in a move and wait or move and run away tactic.

Always consider poisoning any blade, ranged weapon or traps to improve damage and escape chances, as well.



Give Assassins a Worthy Opponent

With a powerful group like an Assassins Guild, GMs need to ask themselves why they have not overrun everything. The best answer is to supply an opposition to keep them in check, or at least restrained.

Choose Active or Passive Opponents

The assassin guild's enemy comes in two flavors. A passive enemy just gets in the way and has not made the guild a long-term target. The guild and enemy cross paths, have conflicting missions or have employers who are enemies. It is like an ecosystem where the enemy preys upon the assassins as part of its nature, but it does

not go out and target assassins for a specific purpose.

That is where the active enemy comes in. This NPC or faction has declared war on the guild and makes plans specific to harming the guild. Create a good motive for this type of enemy, with a brief backstory, to flesh out your campaign further for this excellent conflict.

Craft Multiple Opponents

One enemy that restrains the guild creates a tenuous balance in your campaign. Multiple enemies create a delicious stew of conflicts. Opponents might all gang up on the assassins, but more likely, the whole group is a knot that turns upon itself frequently. Brief alliances of expediency form to face off against each other and small, stable alliances of trust emerge. Sides of the conflict change often.

In this scenario, create multiple goals to drive faction activities. Survival is not enough to build interesting conflicts for the PCs to be caught up in. In such an environment, a pure defensive strategy is the best, and you get a boring stalemate. Pure attacks against one another create good encounters, but mix these up with other goals to keep your campaign fresh. At minimum, the assassins will be hired for new missions, and that should stir up the ecosystem.

Choose Opponents

Use the following four steps to determine the assassin guild's enemies:

Step 1

Start with a list of ideas. Draw two columns on a page and label one *Active*, the other *Passive*. Think about all the factions and NPCs in your campaign. Write those names down in the column you think applies best.

- Religions, cults, churches
- Typical targets of assassins – authority, leaders, nobility, wealthy
- Opposing alignments
- Those deeply affected by past assassin guild activities – survivors, friends, relatives
- Competing factions – Thieves' guild, Paladin orders
- Opportunists and thrill seekers

Step 2

Review your list and toss out opponents who do not fit. Either it would not make sense for them to tangle with assassins, or you have other plans for them.

Step 3

Give each *Passive* opponent a one-line goal that will put it in conflict with the assassins' guild once in awhile.

What do the *Active* opponents hope to accomplish and why? Give each a one-line motive about why it targets assassins.

Step 4

List potential actions each opponent could take for each goal. Actions could range from scouting and harassment to removing specific assassins to eradicating the entire guild. Draw on these action ideas as you manage your campaign. One action from one faction could spawn a whole adventure, while some actions will generate encounters and still others can create excellent background events and flavor.

Do not neglect the history of the conflict, either – each past clash between the guild and its enemies will leave its mark on bystanders and can provide information for the PCs. Urban myths should spring up about the presence of the assassins and their abilities. Think of ninjas and their supposed capabilities. These anecdotes are a great source of color for the campaign.

See our article at Campaign Mastery, Giving Players the Power to Choose Their Own Adventures, for advanced techniques on how to create a living campaign with factions:

<http://www.roleplayingtips.com/url/aa1>

PCs are an Ideal Enemy

If it suits your campaign, let the PCs become an enemy of the assassins' guild. This brings Assassin's Amulet to the fore, giving it maximum re-use value. The guild is a tough opponent, and it will give PCs many interesting encounters.

Let players determine how they will tackle the guild and its members. Some groups might prefer frontal assault. Others will try politics, stealth or careful planning. Give the PCs a reason to hate the guild or one or more of its members. Provide motives for the guild to have to tangle with the PCs.

The Urban Ranger "Gumshoe"

We offer you a ready-made opponent in Chapter 4: NPCs, in the form of an Urban Ranger Gumshoe. Use the Gumshoe as the guild's sole opponent, or add him into the mix. We recommend encounters between the Gumshoe and PCs so they understand each other better, and hopefully, their mutual enemy in the process.

Unless you intend to make the Gumshoe obsessively focused on the guild, he will have outside enemies as well. If he is obsessive, he will probably have trodden on toes in pursuit of the guild. Use encounters between the Urban Ranger and his non-guild enemies to introduce the character before bringing in the guild. Alternatively, the PCs might get interested in the guild and consult the Gumshoe for information and assistance.

Other Opposition

We also offer some additional ideas on enemies of the guild in Chapter 4: NPCs.



How to Contact and Hire an Assassin

This is a game world decision you need to make to suit your desired campaign atmosphere and gameplay style. You have two contact options and two hiring options.

Contact Options

- A. Assassins do open business. They are easy to contact
- B. Assassins are secretive and difficult to contact.

Hiring Options

- A. Assassins have easy contractual terms and are easy to hire. Often it is just a matter of money.
- B. Assassins are choosy about what clients or targets they accept, and are difficult to hire.

The A options put employing assassins at the easy end of the spectrum, and the B options put assassins in your game at the rare or difficult end of the spectrum. You are free to make the requirements fall somewhere in between or lie at the extreme end.

For example, assassins might have a guild and front themselves with a pasta restaurant. This makes them easy to contact once the PCs gather a bit of information and learn about this place and its nature. However, during a meeting the PCs learn only evil targets are accepted, and their chosen victim is neutral. You might allow some negotiation to take place and let the assassins break their rules, but overall the hiring process is difficult.

Open and accessible assassination makes it common and frequent. Decide if you want this theme in your world. It also means assassination encounters will be more common in your campaign, especially if the PCs earn enemies willing to take a contract out on them.

If you want a one-encounter, or to have assassins play a minor role in your game, make them difficult to contact and hire. Put a number of barriers and requirements in place so it is logical that assassination happens rarely, occurs in the background in your world and is unlikely to trigger against the PCs.

Organization or Freelancers?

Also, consider whether assassins operate as a group or individuals. Perhaps you have both modes in your game because each creates fun gameplay and world development opportunities.

In the freelance environment, there will be famous assassins who charge a lot more than the amateurs. This environment of notable NPCs oozes with flavor. However, it is a dangerous game because no guild or organization with great resources will protect freelancers from assassin-hunters and other threats.

An organization of assassins gives you great campaign options as well. Run like any other faction, with a leader, goals, enemies and resources, you have a wonderful source of plot hooks and NPC inspiration.

There is no reason you cannot do both in your game, as well.

For example, in a recent campaign of Johnn's, assassins operated as freelancers. Being individuals, there was a range of access, hiring and quality options. The freelancers had reputations ranging from thug who rendered fast and brutal service to a mysterious and elite individual known only as The Rain Dancer who only existed in rumors and legend. In addition, a group of mages formed a shadow guild leveraging a demonic ally who gave them access to shadow demons to do their dirty work. He used a draft of Assassin's Amulet for their base and way of operations.

Create Layers of Contact

Put up various contact barriers to weed out law enforcement, enemies and non-serious enquiries. Do this via layers of contact. The pasta restaurant, for example, might be an intermediary in all transactions. The owner meets with clients and ferries messages and payment between the assassins' guild and clients. What the restaurateur does not know is his contact is just another layer, and not a member of the actual guild. The contact watches the restaurant ongoing to

ensure the owner is not betraying the guild, shaving payments or causing problems. The guild is protected because it can eliminate either contact to stop anyone from tracking the guild down.

Individuals might also employ agents and screens to keep distance for self-protection. Perhaps a private investigator has a way to make contact with one or two assassins when his clients want that type of service. A great hook might be an Urban Ranger insinuates himself as an agent so he can work out details of the guild and possibly strike its top members when the time is right.

The Tone of Contact

While the preceding paragraphs detail the mechanics of contacting assassins, you should try to maintain the proper tone of the contact. Smoke and mirrors, shadows and shadowy figures—these should be maintained at all times. The assassins will not negotiate, either; they will either operate on a fixed price high enough to fund the occasional mission with extraordinary requirements, or they will separate the process of commissioning an assassination with the process of setting a fee appropriate to the difficulty of the mission.

The second approach is unusual because it more than doubles the exposure of the assassins, but sufficient creativity on your part should make it plausible. It also runs the risk of the assassins alerting the target in the course of the investigations used to set a price on the assignment.

Obtaining knowledge of the target and his defenses before setting a cost compensates for these hazards, as does the opportunity to refuse a contract fully informed.

Arranging the payment poses the third risk. Again, this step can either be separate and carried out only after the mission is complete—which exposes the assassins to customers unable or unwilling to pay, and all manner of other such troubles—or it can be incorporated into another step. Perhaps an estimated price is nominated when the target is first named and the final price when the contract is accepted.

GMs should be careful to put themselves into the assassin's shoes when contemplating these arrangements. Think about what they need, what they can afford to have publicly known about the way they work and how much they would charge.

Application to Assassin's Amulet

If you use the background material built into *Assassin's Amulet*, much of the decision-making discussed in previous sections has been done for you. The assassins are somewhat secretive, they have a formal organizational structure and they usually operate in small teams from one or more central locations. At the same time, they are not especially discriminating when it comes to targets, provided their price is met, but the organization as outlined in these pages has substantial overheads, so those fees would be relatively pricy.

Remember that the contracts accepted by the Hands of Cyrene serve multiple purposes for the organization. The fees not only fund it, they also provide training and experience to the assassins, and they camouflage the contracts the Hands undertake in pursuit of their primary mission.

Two competing considerations come into play due to guild pricing of its services.

If they charge higher fees:

- Fewer outside contracts will be acceptable to both guild and customer
- The guild will attract less trouble from established authorities
- The assassins will be less skilled
- The Hands of Cyrene will have fewer resources for the pursuit of their primary mission
- Assassins will be relatively few in number

If they charge lower fees:

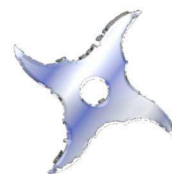
- Assassination services will be more available
- More customers can afford their services
- The organization can grow larger
- The organization will attract more trouble
- Assassins will be more skilled
- The Hands of Cyrene can devote more resources to their primary mission

Ultimately, the price assassins charge should be a reflection of how large a role you want the Hands of Cyrene to play in your campaign. The smaller that role, the smaller the organization, and the more they should charge. The larger the role, the

larger the organization, and the more affordable their services should be.

This same logic dictates the solutions to other questions posed here. If the organization is widespread and takes on many contracts, the less they need to allow for the expense of completing any specific contract, and the more likely they are to simplify their problems by charging a fixed rate. Their security increases as a result, which is fortunate because of the increased trouble they will face from authorities. The more contracts they take on, the less secretive their existence is—if no one knows your organization exists, how can they use your services?

This one decision drives just about every other choice you have to make concerning the integration of the Hands of Cyrene into your campaign. Make it carefully and you are assured the best possible opportunity to integrate the Hands of Cyrene into your campaign.



The Price of Murder

Setting a price for an assassination is a tricky business, and you should take into account several factors. This section will discuss each of these to give you some guidance.

Step 1: Risk Versus Reward

The assessment of risk versus reward forms the foundation of all contract prices. The assassins determine the risk, and set a price they consider appropriate for that risk—a reward that justifies the risk they will run in attempting to fulfill the contract.

Risks are relative. Small guilds face higher risks because price variation affects them more. Large guilds have additional resources to draw upon in fulfilling a contract, giving them a buffer against price swings and other unexpected losses. Economies of scale also play a part with a larger guild, but a larger guild also has a larger infrastructure to support.

Taking this into account complicates everything else involved in calculating a price.

The price of a contract derives from the **Risk Total**. You derive Risk Total from the target's Character Level (or the CR if the target does not have character levels) and adjust for various factors. This measure represents the total risk posed and difficulty level involved with the contract.

We have used the NPC Gear Value table from the D&D 3.5 Core Rulebook II as the basis of a **Pricing Table**, which converts the Risk Total into a price.

Contract price in gold pieces = Risk Total

Risk Total = Character Level +/- Modifiers

Step 1 is to note the Character Level of the target and modify it in each of the following steps.

Step 2. Modify Character Level by Guild Size

Rate your guild on a 1-5 scale:

Guild Rating	Guild Size	# of Assassins and Supporters	Notes
1	Small	Less than 10	
2	Medium	10-20	
3	Large	21-50	Big enough to cover a small kingdom with branches in the two or three largest cities.
4	Huge	51-100	Big enough to cover a large nation with branches in the top 5 or more communities.
5	Massive	Over 100	Covers several nations and kingdoms, with branches in twenty or more cities and major communities

You will also use guild size to adjust the other contract price factors. The next major consideration is the target of the contract.

Step 3. Modify Character Level by Target Factors

The target and circumstances he presents affects price a great deal. Use the following table of suggested factors to cover most of

the questions assassins would take into consideration. Answer each factor and apply the corresponding Guild Size modifier to the Character Level.

Use the table below to modify the Guild Rating according to various factors. Feel free to add in other factors pertinent to the target as you see fit and use values from other factors in the table as a guide to determine the modifier based on Guild Size.

Target Assassination Factors

Target Factor	Guild Size 1	Guild Size 2	Guild Size 3	Guild Size 4	Guild Size 5
What is the target's character level? If he does not have one, what is the target's CR?	+1	+1	-	-	-1
Does the target have unusually potent arcane or supernatural powers, or extraordinary abilities?	+3	+2	+2	+1	+1
Does the target have divine or supernatural protection or protectors?	+3	+2	+1	+1	+1
Does the target have significant mundane protections or security?	+2	+2	+1	-	-
Are there significant henchmen who will have to be bought off or killed to reach the target?	+2	+2	+2	+1	-
Is the target unusually mobile, capable of teleportation, astral travel or flight?	+4	+3	+2	+1	+1
Does the target have significant divination abilities that may forewarn him?	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
Has the target already been forewarned by the person contracting the assassination?	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Will there be substantial reprisals or repercussions for the assassins because of the assassination?	+2	+2	+2	+1	
Is the target an ally of the guild?	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3
Is the target a member of the guild?	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5
Does the target have a fearsome or intimidating reputation?	+3	+3	+2	+1	+1

If the character is significantly weaker than is typical in any one of these areas, reduce the target's effective character level accordingly.

There is no need to allow for the frequency of occurrence of higher-level characters, because the higher a character's level, the more likely they are to have enemies who will want them assassinated; the two factors cancel each other out.

Step 4. Modify Character Level by Contract Factors

Consider next exactly what the assassins are committing to doing to earn their reward.

Assassination Contract Modifiers

Contract Factor	Character Level Modifier
A single attempt on the target's life	-5
As many attempts as necessary to kill the target	+3
Humiliating the target first or some other complication	+2
Contract must be completed by a particular deadline that is <i>soon</i>	+2
Contract must be completed in a particular way or in a particular location	+3
Can the guild expect any unusual out-of-pocket expenses in carrying out the contract?	+2
Is the guild required to commit to unusual or unusually extensive preparation in order to complete the assignment?	+1
Is the guild required to undertake unusually extensive travel in order to reach the target?	+1 or +2 levels, doubled for a location on a different Plane

Step 5. Modify Character Level by Campaign Level

The final price also depends on the average level of all the characters (PC and NPC) the guild might be called upon to *service*. This will be roughly the same as the average level of encounters throughout the

campaign. In a high-level campaign, risks are amplified, while in a low-level campaign there is little scope for extreme challenges.

Select an appropriate Campaign Level using the table below:

Campaign Level	Average NPC Level We Recommend	Character Level Modifier
Low Level	5	-5
Medium Level	10	0
High Level	15	+5

Step 6. Consult the Pricing Table

The Character Level you modified in steps 2 to 5 now gives a difficulty measure the guild associates with the contract – the risk. We based the Price Table below on the *NPC*

Gear Value Table in the D&D 3.5 Core Rulebook II (Table 4 – 23, page 127). Look up the Character Level you calculated to determine the Contract Price. Increase From previous Level gives you an idea of how price rises in case you want to customize contract prices for your campaign.

Modified Character Level	Contract Price	Increase From Previous Level	Modified Character Level	Contract Price	Increase From Previous Level
1	900		21	280,000	+60,000
2	2,000	+1,100	22	350,000	+70,000
3	2,500	+500	23	430,000	+80,000
4	3,300	+800	24	520,000	+90,000
5	4,300	+1,000	25	620,000	+100,000
6	5,600	+1,300	26	730,000	+110,000
7	7,200	+1,600	27	850,000	+120,000
8	9,400	+2,200	28	980,000	+130,000
9	12,000	+2,600	29	1.12 Million	+140,000
10	16,000	+4,000	30	1.27 Million	+150,000
11	21,000	+5,000	31	1.43 Million	+160,000
12	27,000	+6,000	32	1.6 Million	+170,000
13	35,000	+8,000	33	1.78 Million	+180,000
14	45,000	+10,000	34	1.97 Million	+190,000
15	59,000	+14,000	35	2.17 Million	+200,000
16	77,000	+18,000	36	2.38 Million	+210,000
17	100,000	+23,000	37	2.6 Million	+220,000
18	130,000	+30,000	38	2.83 Million	+230,000
19	170,000	+40,000	39	2.6 Million	+240,000
20	220,000	+50,000	40	2.85 Million	+250,000

At lower levels, no easily discernable pattern within that table emerges. Only at levels 18-20 does it settle down into a predictable pattern. Once established, the pattern continues for all the entries that follow.

If the price does not seem to be rising quickly enough for you, you could rule that the pattern from levels 18-20 is not what it appears to be, and instead it is ten times 1,000 less than the increase from levels 10-12. In this case, we would expect the level 21 value to be +70,000, and level 22 to reset at +100,000, to be followed by +140,000, +180,000, +230,000, and so on.

Currency Scale

The Price Table makes the perfect basis for conversion of our risk assessment into a cash price, but one obvious piece of information remains missing: the currency type. We leave the final decision to you, but we have some guidance for you to consider: base your decision on the campaign's overall level, not just now, but throughout its history – past, present, and future.

Currency of the actual transaction will probably not be in gold pieces. 220,000gp is *a lot* to charge for the attempted assassination of a (modified) 20th level character in a low-level campaign, though typical in a high-level or epic campaign. In a cash-rich campaign, however, prices might not be high enough to deter casual assassination contracts, even when paid in gold pieces; switching gold pieces to platinum pieces in the table might be a more appropriate currency scale. However, 16,000 does not seem an unreasonable price for going after a 10th level character, though it also might be considered too low.

Our recommendation is the currency scale be in silver pieces if you want assassination to be common in a low-to-medium level campaign, and in gold pieces if you don't; in silver pieces in a medium-to-high level campaign; and in platinum pieces in a high-to-epic level campaign.

Metagame Considerations

At this point, you should consider the metagame implications a given pricing foundation will bring into your campaign. As was touched on above, 16,000gp becomes somewhat affordable for a group of 10th level PCs. This means most groups can commission assassinations with ease and speed, which implies the need for a large assassins' guild. If one does not exist, someone will soon step in to fill that vacuum. However, the price is large enough that characters will think twice about it.

If you wish assassination to be commonplace within the culture, as they are in the Empire series by Raymond E. Feist and Janny Wurtz, halve the price given above. If you want assassination to be rare, multiply the price shown by as much as 5 or 10.

If assassination is cheap and affordable, the PCs may wish to employ it themselves to get rid of impediments you have placed in their way. That will have implications throughout the campaign.

Profit Versus Non-Profit and Bargaining

With cost and price calculated for the service, next ask what sort of profits over and above the base price an assassins' guild will want. If the assassins run a non-profit

organization, then the scope for bargaining shrinks, though support and assistance might reduce a target's Assassination Level factor, possibly quite considerably. This is the case for the Arms of Cyrene, who are the subject of this entire game supplement. However, we wanted to make the GM advice as general as possible, which in this case, means considering other organizations.

We recommend assassins (in general) start with a +50% profit margin in mind, and that you reduce this by 10% for each point of difference in an opposed die roll for whatever bargaining takes place. For example, the character doing the bargaining chooses Diplomacy as his negotiation tactic and makes a Diplomacy roll. For every 5 points the PC beats the DC, price is negotiated down by 10%. You decide the guild's Starting Attitude for DC calculation, but we recommend Indifferent. Change to Friendly if the mission aligns with the holy mission of the Hands of Cyrene, or to Unfriendly or Hostile if the mission opposes it (if the Hands take on the mission at all). A shrewd negotiator could get a price below cost!

Ideology

Targets defined by the guild's Ideology should cost one-half or even one-tenth the usual fee. You can even rule the guild takes a profit on non-ideological targets so they do not have to charge for ideological targets—they may even pay finder's fees and give rewards for information. Personally, I (Mike) like the profit-now-and-free-later approach, but you might disagree or want to keep it simpler. This is true in particular if the PCs will never hire an assassin themselves.

Still Another Metagame Consideration

One more point: whatever the assassins charge, someone must be willing to pay, and someone has to have paid it for each assassination that takes place within your campaign. Consider carefully the implications of giving those who commission assassinations that level of wealth—rogues might want to relieve them of it. Consider the impact on the economy of too much cash draining into the assassins' coffers, as well! And think about how much cash the assassins might have on hand within their lair when the PCs come a-raiding!

The Ultimate Price

The final price an assassins' guild will charge for its services is up to you. Feel free to ignore this section of the game supplement if it does not fit your campaigns, or it seems too much like work. At best, use this as a guideline, consider the value of a typical target, and make the decisions herein to suit your game.

A shortcut for GMs in a Hurry

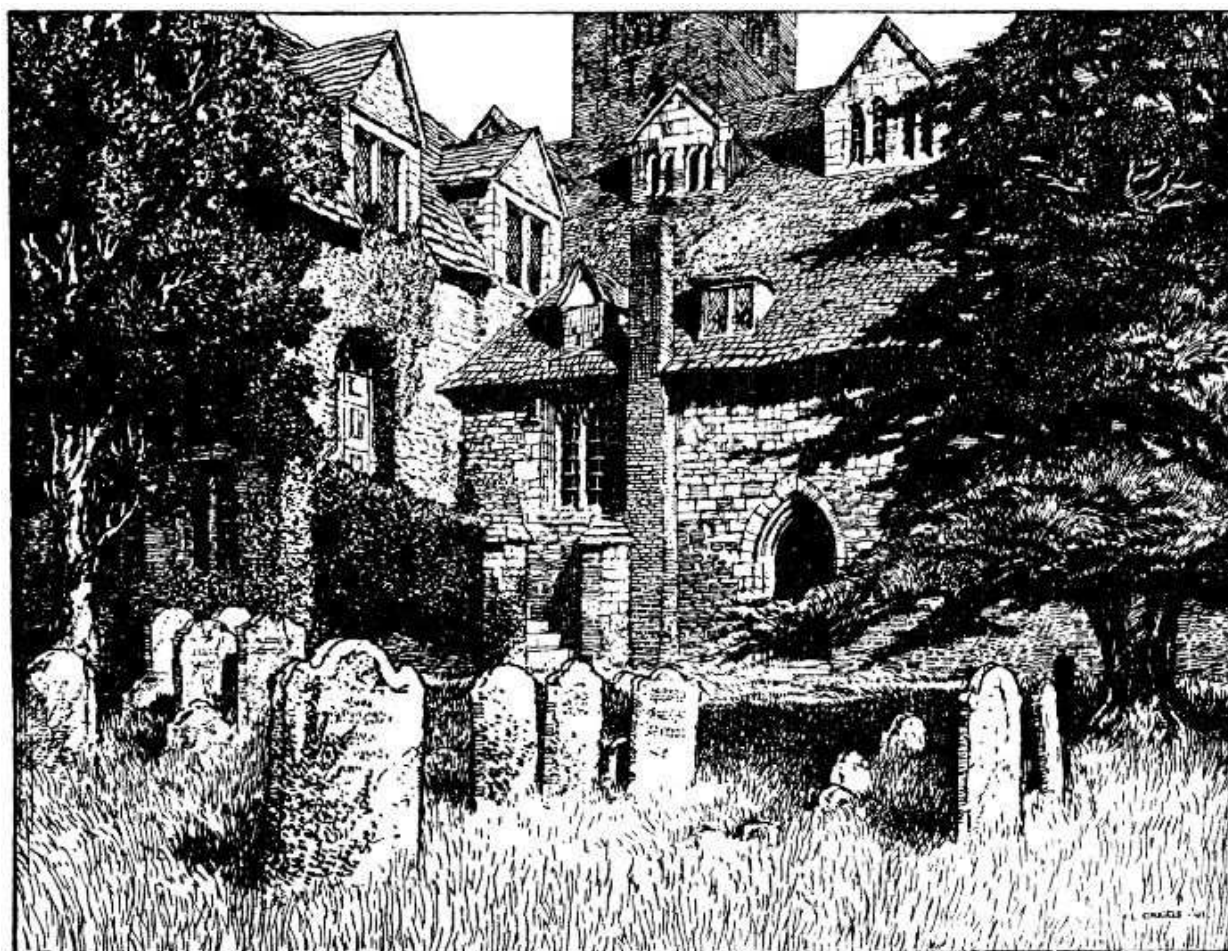
This process detailed process should probably be roleplayed point-by-point as the assassins consider the various factors; think of our pricing calculation method as translating a work order, line by line, into game mechanics. However, there will be times when you will need to jump straight to a price.

Recognizing the need for one, we are including a shortcut:

Guild Size	Target has	Target has	Target has	Target has	Target has
Small	6	13	21	36	40
Medium	6	13	20	34	38
Large	5	11	17	29	33
Huge	5	10	16	24	29
Massive	4	9	15	20	24

Locate the correct number on the table and go directly to the Contract Section. After adjusting for Contract Factors, go directly to the Price Table and use the resulting price. This will give you a rough answer, fast.

This quick-and-dirty technique makes assumptions about the resources targets of a certain level will have at their disposal. It also biases prices high towards the upper-right corner (small guild, Epic level target, very high risk) and low towards the bottom left corner (massive guild, low-level target, least amount of risk).



How to Equip an Assassin

The most important element of an assassin's equipment is the garments he wears. Forget the ninja night suits or camouflage dress of modern operatives. An assassin's best asset is to blend into their surroundings, which means appearing as a typical local person appropriate for the area in which missions occur. He will dress as a priest, farmer, merchant, laborer, slave — any way possible to be considered harmless and nondescript until the last possible moment.

The assassin requires a weapon of choice limited to light blades and simple weapons that often become signature weapons of infamy. These weapons must be safely hidden from view when carried, but quickly retrievable when needed.

In many cases an assassin works alone, so he must be well prepared for any unexpected obstacles in the pursuit of her missions and to aid in quick escapes. The most important tools are ones that help an assassin approach targets successfully, make clean escapes, and make fast getaways.

- Climbing tools from cleats and hand-claws, to climbing daggers and small grappling hooks with knotted cords of silk or hemp hidden as a worn belt or sash.
- Standard thieves' tools for disabling traps and opening locks are part of an assassin's basic kit, as rogue is often the primary class that precedes the assassin prestige class.
- Caltrops, tanglefoot bags, glass beads, snares, trip wires, thunderstones.
- Smoke bombs and egg grenades — a handheld device that safely holds an active coal to light the item's fuse. Smoke bombs release thick white smoke that screens movement and escape. While the cloud burst can extend to a 20 foot radius, most of it is concentrated in a 10 foot radius from the ignited bomb itself. Egg grenades can contain fire bursting material, toxic powder or fumes.
- Blinding powder — a fine dust of irritants often including metal filings, pepper or caustic soda held in egg grenades. Sometimes the powder sits in handheld containers with wax lids that when removed allow the assassin to toss the fine powder at faces, causing temporary or permanent blindness.
- Small, compartmentalized metal boxes for containing these special items as well as healing kits, and other vials and potions, including poisons and antidotes.
- Spy glasses and listening cones.
- Vials of stink salves that attract or repel animals such as hunting and guard dogs
- Machine oil for working mechanisms and other specialized equipment.
- Contact poison that not just kills but paralyzes, blinds or stuns.

Portable Traps

Portable Traps come in three common types, which are all contained in cigar box-sized metal containers. A trigger mechanism, in the form of a sensitive vibration detector that works when footfalls pass within a 10 foot radius with a 3 second (half a round) delay before full activated when set, allows the trap setter to escape the immediate vicinity.

1. Grappling Spring Trap CR 1

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20;
Disable Device DC 20

Trigger proximity; **Reset** manual

Effect A dozen coiled metal bands immediately uncoil outward in a 10 foot radius. The bands recoil around any obstruction encountered, such as legs, arms, bodies or weapons. Traps can grapple and trip a pursuer for up to two rounds on a failed Reflex check DC 15, or a single round if the trapped persons have ranks in Escape Artist skill. Cost: 1,500gp

2. Burning Trap CR 1 (varies)

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20;
Disable Device DC 20

Trigger fuse; **Reset** manual

Effect To set this trap, the assassin lights a timed fuse. When triggered, a 5 foot radius fiery burst releases a 20 foot radius smoke cloud, toxic fumes or gases (with possible poison effects). Cost: 1,500gp for the re-usable trap, 500gp for each use for the fuse, burning powder and payload ingredients.

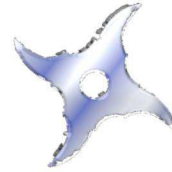
3. Arcane Trap CR 1 (varies)

Type magic; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

Trigger location; **Reset** no reset

Effect Relying on a sensitive vibration

trigger, this trap contains an energy bursting or area effect spell centered on the trap. It triggers immediately with effects as per spell. Cost 2,500gp for the re-usable trap plus spell cost per use.



Roleplaying Assassins

The following section covers how to run assassins during encounters as compelling NPCs to roleplay, and deadly adversaries to fight.

Step 1: Pick an Archetype or Example

Creating an assassin NPC personality becomes a lot easier if you have a character concept already in mind. This provides a framework to which you can just add flesh. To mask your inspiration so players will not recognize it, layer on a couple of differences or twists. You are welcome to build a complex NPC from scratch, but if in a hurry, pick a character from a book or movie to model.

Quick archetypes to mimic: James Bond, Drizzt, Chuck (from the TV show), Rorschach (from the Watchmen), Batman.

Even people you know might make excellent candidates. Consider your neighbors, relatives, co-workers and other people you frequently see.

Step 2: Add Personality

What makes the character interesting and different? Make a list of about five notable traits and behaviors. How do they act and talk? What seems to motivate them? What do they own? Who are their friends and why?

There are two kinds of NPC traits: normal and extreme. Extreme traits include strange quirks, bizarre attributes and rare personality disorders. You do not want to give every NPC an extreme trait, else your campaign becomes comical or bizarre. You need normal – but interesting – NPCs around so the extreme ones stand out.

If you run a single assassin in your campaign, go ahead and give the NPC an extreme trait plus a few normal ones. If you run several, such as the Hands of Cyrene guild, give a quarter of the group unique extreme traits plus normal ones, and the other half just a variety of normal traits.

Step 3: Pick an Assassination Style

This further distinguishes your NPC and set him apart from other assassins in the campaign. Some example styles:

- Rambo
- Master of disguise

- Tough gunfighter or swordsman
- Sniper
- Knife and hand-to-hand fighter
- The master poisoner
- Explosions and mayhem

Step 4: Pick a Personal Style

Form a personal style for the NPC out of the unique blend of archetype, traits and assassination style you have created for them. There are a few different approaches you can take when crafting NPCs, but for assassins you should design a distinct style for him and make his roleplay and game presence all about that style.

Another word for style is flavor. What kind of impression does the NPC give – first and last? If you can define a distinct flavor, then roleplaying the NPC will be fun, easy and memorable.

- Where does he live and how does he live? Perhaps he prefers grungy inns, or maybe he lives under an identity in luxury.
- How does he dress? Does he wear different clothes on the job versus off? If so, create a common element that reflects his style that is present regardless of how he is dressed, such as a color, a scarf, special glasses or a stubby cigar.
- How does he walk? Give him a swagger or special gait.

- What is his attitude towards others in general? Is he mean, kind, egotistical or indifferent?
- Does he have a catch phrase or special mannerism? Perhaps he salutes everyone, or says "death and taxes" in conversations like it has a special meaning.

Step 5: Create a One Sentence Style Summary

String a few adjectives together that describes him well, and perhaps mention the character he might be based on. Boil down what you have created in the first four steps into a short and compelling summary.

During the game, read the summary to get into the character's headspace before you start roleplaying him. The one sentence summary is short enough to read quickly, which is why it is important to keep your summary down to just a few words.

In addition, the summary should be punchy and descriptive enough so you can get into character in an instant. This is why you went through the first four steps. You needed lay out a bunch of details first, to get an idea of just who this NPC is, before you distilled him down into a compelling summary.

During play, make all the NPC's aspects mirror the style defined by the summary: methods, equipment, appearance and mannerisms. Quite often, you will improvise new features and traits as you GM. The inspirational summary will guide you so the NPC develops consistently.

- "Speed and smooth moves combined with feigned indifference, he is actually quick to judge, get offended and hold grudges."
- "Spotless, impeccable, professional and polite, he delights in inflicting pain of any kind in others."
- "A giggling flake and womanizer with a drink always in hand, he never leaves home without 10 knives secreted on his body ready for sober action at any time."
-

Additional Traits to Consider

Training

How did the assassin acquire his skills? Was he self-taught? Did he have a mentor? Was he a member of a guild or society of assassins growing up? Perhaps he acquired the skills of killing or stealth first, before recruitment.

Each situation could leave a different imprint on the NPC's personality. For example, a situation could make one NPC individualistic while another becomes reliant on a team structure.

Money

How does he spend his money? Where does he live? Does he make much income as an assassin? Does he need another job or income source? Does he live in poverty or affluence? It might be interesting, for example, to have the NPC dressed as a slob in tattered clothing but brandishing an expense of magical dagger in his belt.

Motivation

Why is the NPC in the business of killing? You might consider starting with the NPC's motivation and working his other personality aspects out from there. For example:

- Career—he is good at it, he enjoys it and he wants to excel at it
- Fun—he likes the chase, the kill, the power or a bit of all three
- Psycho—his motives are irrational, perhaps stemming from a mental disease or drama experienced earlier in his life
- Fell into it—his first job was an accident; he likes the money and plans on doing it for a little while longer
- Forced into it—he has a debt to pay off, his employer is blackmailing him or perhaps he is a slave
- Does not know anything else—he is good at his job and does not think he has any other useful or marketable skills, so he is trapped into making a living this way.

Identity

A key question that will dictate much of the NPC's behavior: does he keep his identity as an assassin a secret? James Bond, for example, rarely hides his identity; but he does not act like a killer, so he can mix with social company without fear of retribution unless he is recognized by an enemy.

Mafia hitmen do not hide their identities either, and instead build reputation and tradition so there are other options than killing to get business done.

Assassins who keep their work secret will need to create at least one alternate identity to get by with in life to do such things as shopping, romance, religious services and socializing. In most cases, this identity is different from a disguise, and gives them a way to separate work from personal time.

Create a contradiction

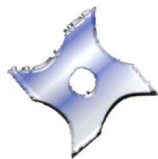
This is true of any compelling NPC, but an assassin has hardcoded into his profile a feature that is easy to contradict: he kills. Look for a character trait that seems at odds with this fact. Perhaps his hobby is painting, or he is a doctor or he has a young daughter he must sometimes take on the job with him.



Surround him with normal people

Add common people, real people, in encounters where you need to roleplay the assassin. Assassins must seem special, even if it is just in your mind. If everybody in the encounter is special or extreme, you lose a lot of the roleplay flavor with the assassin. Normal people help provide contrast so players can notice the roleplaying queues you make.

As an advanced technique, put the assassin as a mundane person amongst the PCs and other extreme-personality NPCs so the assassin appears to be the normal one. This creates a bit of irony, as well, which can make the scene a lot of fun to roleplay.



Five Unexpected Uses for Assassins

Add a twist to your campaign by using assassins for unexpected jobs. These alternatives also give you more ways an assassin can interact with the PCs without resorting to deadly force. No player wants their character assassinated. However, if they are scouted by a stealthy NPC for example, that offers just as much drama and

campaign development as an assassination attempt.

- **Theft.** Masters of stealth could also use their abilities to steal away objects in dangerous situations. Your run-of-the-mill rogue might be able to break-in, but do they have enough ability to fend off defenders and get away with the object intact?
- **Deliver a message.** Stealth and brawn also let assassins carry messages to those in dangerous or forbidden places.
- **Send a warning.** A warning is a type of message, but an assassin can deliver it with a lot more menace. Who else could place the guard captain's head in the King's bed?
- **Scout.** Most scouts rely on pure stealth to get in and away with key information. An assassin can do the same or cleave through numerous opponents, if that is what it takes to complete the mission.
- **Spy.** Some assassins master skills of deception and disguise when just sneaking around will not do the job.

Assassins might also double up on their missions. They might get paid to steal a relic plus return with a floorplan mapped out for future missions. A spy might be asked to do the occasional slaying. A delivered message might also be accompanied by releasing an important prisoner and getting him back alive.



How to Run and Manage an Assassins' Guild

There are surprisingly few decisions required in advance when introducing the Hands of Cyrene into a game, though you should examine a few big-ticket conceptual questions described in the Other Opposition Suggestions in Chapter 4. Knowing who is on whose side goes a long way towards determining the role the guild will have within the campaign and, by extension, how the PCs will interact with the guild.

Beyond that, decide the guild's size (both overall and in the local vicinity) and its competence (both overall and in the local vicinity). Those decisions, plus the conceptual framework provided by the Other Opposition questions, establish a foundation for the guild's presence and role within the campaign.

Now you can weave the presence of the Assassins' Guild into your campaign background and decide what the PCs will know about them and their activities. Create a small list of current targets. As targets are successfully dispatched, or the assassination attempts fail, news of events

should reach the PCs' ears. Do not wait until the PCs decide to interact with the guild to do this. If stuck for targets, then spread myths, legends and rumors. The target list should be periodically replenished.

Everything else can pretty much be decided just before the players interact with an element of it – though you will need to be on your toes in this respect.

For example, let us say the PCs are flush with money after a couple of lucky encounters and decide to hire the assassins to kill an enemy that is otherwise beyond their reach. You know the enemy in question is intended to be beyond their reach because he is the central villain of the campaign.

Overview

The section How to Contact and Hire an Assassin discusses the first layers of contact. In sequence, the PCs must learn:

1. That the assassins exist
2. How to contact them
3. Whether or not the assassins will accept the commission
4. How much they will charge

The first relies on the PCs having an encounter with someone else who knows about the assassins' existence, if they have not already. There are many encounter hooks provided for this purpose in the Assassin Hooks section, just pick one. Perhaps knowledge (or, at least, rumors) of the guild's existence are widespread, perhaps not.



Contacting The Guild

The next step is to find out how to contact them. Examples on doing this:

- Seek divine guidance
- Pay a seer
- Consult a sage
- Pay rumormongers
- Tour the local inns and taverns in search of someone who can point them in the right direction

Commissioning the Assassination

The PCs next contact the guild using the conduit they have identified and offer to commission the hit. Again using the guidelines laid down in the section How to Contact and Hire an Assassin decide whether this commission will be accepted and how much the PCs will be charged for the privilege. At this point, the guild becomes a significant factor within the campaign instead of simply a background element. Congratulations!

The identity of the proposed target, at a metagame level, may tempt you to have this approach fail simply to protect the overall plotline. Doing this puts you at risk of railroading the characters, which based on your group's style might be unfair and undesirable. These decisions should instead be based on what the assassins know, or can find out, about the target, and on their normal modus operandi.

There are four possible outcomes:

1. The guild accepts the commission but charges more than the PCs can afford
2. The guild accepts the commission and charges a fee within the PCs' reach
3. The guild refuses the commission for their own reasons
4. The guild refuses the commission because they are allied with the proposed target (one way or another) and might target the PCs instead.

A variation on the last is for the PCs' enemy to have already commissioned the guild to target the party – nice of them to have put the PCs' necks in the noose! However, this

does not necessarily prevent the guild also accepting a commission to target the PCs' employer so long as they can arrange to be paid before the assignment is complete.

The Assassination Attempt

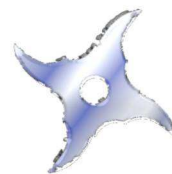
Assuming the commission is accepted, events move beyond the scope of How to Contact and Hire an Assassin. You next need to decide how the guild will attempt to assassinate the target, and whether or not they will succeed.

There are four possible outcomes:

1. The guild succeeds and the campaign changes direction completely
2. The guild almost succeeds, perhaps killing a subordinate or non-combatant close to the target (perhaps even a potential ally down the track)
3. The guild fails but gets away unscathed
4. The guild fails utterly

Consider the ramifications. If the attempt fails, the target can no doubt eventually identify those responsible. Perhaps what was an impersonal conflict between the PCs (a minor annoyance) and the enemy is now personal, because a beloved daughter or son or other NPC lies dead. The assassins might be forced to ally with one side or the other. Or perhaps whatever it was that made the target the villain of the campaign is now in their possession, and the PCs have exchanged one threat for a larger one.

Administering an assassins' guild is no different, in many respects, to administering any other guild or organization within the campaign. Just know who they are and what they are up to. Everything else will flow naturally from those two fundamental decisions.



How to Terrify Your Opponents with Assassins

Make assassins feared in your games with the simple GMing model of **awareness**, **proximity** and **threat**. Avoid the mistake of introducing assassins in your campaign by suddenly dropping one into an encounter and trying to get a surprise attack before rolling initiative. Surprise is short lived, and if you do get to continue the encounter without player arguments about detection, perception and unfairness, it just becomes another typical combat.

Instead, you want to employ this secret model to terrify players and make them respect your NPCs. Awareness, proximity and threat works on two levels: campaign and encounter. It is interesting, though, that the best strategy for each is the exact opposite of the other. In campaigns, you

want to generate slow awareness to increase the drama. Then reduce the proximity so the characters feel the impact more and more. Threat increases as awareness grows and the assassins get closer until the campaign reaches an ignition point, and a deadly event—an encounter with one or more assassins—gets triggered. What a build-up! Players will be on the edge of their seats, dying to meet this great threat, but at the same time be fearful of confronting it directly, and now the time has arrived.

The exact opposite strategy works best for encounters. Minimize awareness, choose the ideal proximity, and maximize the threat in a sudden burst of violence. Instead of a dramatic climb and heightening of emotions, you want to strike with surprise and speed at the best range for the assassin and his weapons of choice.

The Campaign Approach

Awareness: create it slowly

Tease out the existence of assassins slowly. Instead of spoiling the effect with a matter-of-fact statement, begin with hints, clues and rumors. Make the party question whether assassins exist in the world or if something else is going on.

Ways to slowly build awareness:

- a. Someone is noticed missing. Then a few others. Then a few more, over time.
- b. A body turns up—that of the first missing NPC.
- c. More bodies discovered.
- d. Mysterious killings are a frequent topic of discussion. What is going on here? Are the killings linked? What made the people targets? [The truth being they all had an enemy with enough funds to hire an assassin, making links or patterns difficult to spot.]
- e. NPCs overheard speculating about monsters and serial killers.
- f. An important NPC is slain. The killer reportedly escaped.
- g. A calling card or modus operandi starts emerging and links slayings.
- h. Speculation and evidence reveals more the one killer. The killers seem well trained and organized. What do they want? What are they after?
- i. NPCs start discussing the possibility that assassins exist, but in hushed tones as if they might be overheard and targeted next.
- j. Assassination becomes the “A word” no one will talk about but everyone worries over. Tension weighs heavy in the air.
- k. A powerful NPC is slain. Calling card left behind. Wild speculation grows. People are angry and scared; violence grows as people lash out.
- l. False killers are blamed; some might be jailed or hanged. Killings continue.

At this point in your campaign, the player characters have not even encountered a single assassin. Yet, it will be at the forefront of their minds.

They might try to investigate the murders, but in such an environment they must tread lightly or startle the herd, or even worse, suffer accusations of being the killers.

The environment becomes oppressive as contacts, friends and strangers worry more about the unknown danger than helping the PCs, getting on with daily business, or chatting to the PCs about anything else other than who is next on the dead list.

Proximity: bring it closer

Begin with distant news, rumors and evidence of assassins at work. Do not target the PCs or anything within their sphere of knowledge or influence at this point. Make it seem like the troubling situation is far away.

Bring it closer, in small steps. Unconfirmed rumors become verified facts. Killings and sightings get nearer to the PCs' neighborhood. Someone the PCs know is a witness. Someone the PCs know becomes a victim. Last night someone saw a moving shadow on the roof across the street. Tonight the shadow is spotted on the PCs' roof.

In parallel, the assassins do not affect the characters' goals, quests or lives at first. Then the fear in the area grows, making Gather Information checks and purchase of goods and services difficult. Use of Intimidation starts fights more often than subduing the targets now. Next, a killing creates a setback for a PC mission. Then another killing does the same.

Following this progression along parallel tracks builds up the atmosphere and makes the PCs take notice.

Too often, the PCs are affected by a plot but the world does not seem to change, or the opposite happens. This way, changes occur everywhere, making the players flinch.

Threat: make it grow

As awareness and proximity increases, the threat level increases all on its own. You need do nothing at this point and just let the model take care of it for you. The word *terrify* does appear in the headline, though, so there is even more you can do to increase danger levels perceived by your players.

What do players fear most? It might be different between players in your group, so find out. Then make NPCs suffer in these ways to send clear messages this could happen to the PCs as well.

For example, character death is not feared in some campaigns. Group style has it so most PCs live until campaign end. That is fine, because players fear other things, such as loss of NPC friends, allies and contacts; loss of equipment and magic items; loss of levels or acquiring negative levels; loss of ability scores, mobility and limbs. Assassins can target all these things if you choose. Do so. Players also fear being taken out of gameplay. If resurrect or raise dead are possible, then you have the option again of killing PCs.

Do your best to make characters feel the assassins are much more powerful than them. Whack tough NPCs. Give signs and clues so players think the killers are at least twice the level of the characters.

Demonstrate how assassins kill suddenly and quickly, again using other victims as evidence. Reveal how the killers tend to attack when the target is alone or at a disadvantage. When the characters start travelling as a group for protection and setting 24 hour watches, stage attacks on NPCs showing how the assassins bypassed such weak measures with ease.

Send a direct message to the PCs. Perhaps it is a note that just says, "Watch your back." Maybe the note is attached to a knife...sticking out of the body of another victim...that has been placed at the front door of the PCs' room or home base.

Weaken the PCs. The assassins might use minions or hirelings to attack specific targets to disable PC defenses or weaken their strengths. A thief might try to steal the fighter's magic sword. Minor encounters before the big one burn off spells and feats. Special attacks drain ability scores. Characters not at full strength makes mysterious enemies loom even larger.

Just before the encounter between PCs and assassins finally happens, attack a powerful NPC the characters know. It is one thing to hear rumors and see the crime scenes of strangers, but you will increase perceived threat the most when the characters know for sure the abilities and defenses of the last victim.

The Encounter Approach

Awareness: surprise the PCs

At the campaign level, you want to tease out the details, avoid direct contact, and make the assassins dark, mysterious and dangerous. Not so with encounters. The

PCs should have no awareness in the minutes or seconds before the attack. You want total surprise.

Hitting the party unexpectedly gets you more drama and player emotion than a standard encounter trigger. You can feel energy leaving the table with a setup like this: "You spot an assassin 100 feet away. He is aiming his crossbow at you. Roll initiative."

Surprise is your friend. It lets you keep details to yourself until the right moment. It lets you get at least one attack in before the PCs react, sending a message and increasing perceived threat. It lets you choose your target and attack type. Maybe you need to take out the wizard first, or poison the cleric or dispel magic on the rogue. It helps the assassin strike and live to strike another day.

Proximity: the assassin chooses time and place

Sun Tzu told it well. The wise opponent chooses the field of battle and takes the high ground before his opponent arrives.

High ground in encounters might literally be a rooftop or window or even the sky. It might also mean pre-buffing with spells and potions. It could also be a location where the PCs must clump together or spread out or split up. Ideally, the location is trapped or has combat hazards that put the assassin at advantage.

Some killers prefer melee. Some prefer ranged weapons. Others enjoy spell attacks, poison use, area effects or mounted combat. Match the assassin's attack and defense type to the time and place of the encounter – the NPC has had a lot of time to scout and prepare.

In campaigns, you want the danger to start in the distance, not even a threat, really. Then it gets closer and closer and closer until the PCs are looking over their shoulders and have actions always readied for some kind of attack.

However, for encounters your proximity starts with the assassin's surprise surgical attack that either completes his mission or best improves his chances of doing so. After that, proximity likely gets closer as the PCs fly, charge or spellcast their way toward their foe. Plan ahead for what the assassin will do. Does he strike once and fade away? Is he ready for melee? Does he have an escape route planned?

Threat: pick target and go for massive damage attack

Choose the target of your surprise attack well. Knock out a PC or disable as many of the party's defenses or abilities as possible. In a campaign, threat level grows over time to increase player paranoia. In an encounter, threat level diminishes as the PCs rally, take their turns and damage or disable their foes. Best case is your surprise attack scares the PCs so much they chose to flee and fight another day. Make this your encounter goal. Start by misleading your players. Have them make poor decisions due to assassin deception.

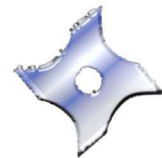
Weave descriptions that predict death and failure for the PCs. Do not lie. Adhere to the rules, including everything characters would know, observe or passively detect. However, you have a lot of leeway, especially with failed knowledge and perception checks. Play things up as much as possible.

Attack with more than one assassin, if that would help. Attack with assassin allies too, including familiars, animal companions, pets, hirelings and followers.

Awareness, Proximity, Threat and You

Use this three-pronged model to first create a campaign atmosphere of fear, paranoia and mystery. Hold off on any encounters with assassins for as long as possible. If the characters take an active stance, reward them with great build-up encounters and investigation progress, but keep the assassins tantalizingly out of reach until your chosen moment.

Once the encounter triggers, be prepared. Use props if you can. Factor in character senses, knowledge and abilities so the game is fair. But hit hard and fast and try to escape. If the first encounter with an assassin is easy, all their threat and drama leaks out of the campaign.



Using Poisons in Assassin's Amulet

The Case Against

One of the key decisions you need to make is whether assassins use poisons. I (Mike) would argue the answer should be, under normal circumstances, no. Several reasons in combination yield a compelling argument with only a few well-defined exceptions.

First, these assassins believe, rightly or wrongly, they are a holy order undertaking work sanctioned and sanctified by the blessing of their deity. Given the moral taint that comes with the use of poisons, would they corrupt the purity and sanctity of their holy works by *cheating*?

Second, given that their primary targets are those who extend their life spans through unnatural means, and those who enable others to do so, poisons are less likely to yield any benefit. This counters any reason for doing so during assignments, except in extremely rare circumstances.

Third, poisons carry a risk of detection. This might bring unwanted outside interference or alert an unsuspecting target. Both risks are unconscionable, given the relatively small likelihood of a poison conferring a benefit.

The only time poisons are likely to be effective is when the assassins are defending their hidden stronghold from intruders. At such times, any weapon that can be found is likely to be brought to bear. Yet, given the preceding reasons, the assassins are unlikely to be already armed

with poisoned blades. How likely is it they would take the time — while their *temple* was under attack — to anoint their weapons?

In many ways, the Assassins of Cyrene are more akin to fanatical samurai or paladins, dedicated to eradicating a particular form of what they perceive as injustice or impiety, than to professional killers-for-hire.

The Case in Favor

I have to admit that my take on the assassins might not be the same as yours. I immediately focused on the moral ambiguity that comes from this particular twist, because that is the sort of thing I like to put into campaigns. You might argue, justifiably, for a less ambiguous position, a more black-and-white morality. Heck, I can even do so myself:

Individuals who are targeted by the assassins for theological reasons would be relatively few and high powered to achieve the unnatural extension of their lives. To confront such with any certitude of success, the assassins would need to be skilled — well trained and with considerable practical experience. How can they achieve this except by *practicing* on lesser targets, upon whom poisons would be effective? The need to carry out their sanctions requires the guild to accept lesser commissions.

Further, the assassins are a secret order among the worshippers of Cyrene, and the operation is not a cheap one. They could not risk diverting funding from the main temple without risking exposure; and they have to get their funding from somewhere.

In addition, the targets they sanction in the name of their holy cause are almost certainly protected by lesser guardians, upon whom poisons would be effective. Such usage would maximize the efforts they could bring to bear against their real targets, and so could be considered to be blessed.

If you are going to use poisons under such circumstances, you would darned well want to be expert in their usage—and that feeds straight back into the training justification.

For operational and practical reasons, the assassins would utilize poisons. To minimize the risks described in the anti-case, they might not do so until they had acquired a sufficient standard of proficiency without their use. However, there again is a counter-argument: the lower the level of the assassin, the more advantage is conferred by poisons (or any other advantage that can be given, for that matter).

The Final Decision

Ultimately, the guild's policy with regard to poisons is so susceptible to argument that it must be a deliberate choice by you. The preceding debate should give you a starting point from which to assess the merits of the arguments both pro and con, and assess the risks and implications. It might even be a decision that varies from one Guildmaster to another! The choice is yours.



How to Set Up an Assassination Attempt without Upsetting Your Players

Allow Players to Direct Character Actions

When the time gets close you start to get excited. Will you pull this encounter off successfully? Will your players be surprised, amazed and excited?

You want everything to work out perfectly. That is when you fall into the deadly game master trap of leading the play.

It starts with an assumption. Perhaps you decide the party order or character positions without checking with the group to avoid triggering their spidey senses. Then you dictate surprise—no rolls, character perceptions or special senses taken into account. You might even skip description and jump right into the action. You just want to make this happen, so it is

easy fall into the trap of just saying everybody is surprised and start rolling. You lay out the results, including a few more actions for the assassin than might have been possible, so he gets away or gets off another shot.

This type of GM error drives players crazy. You have directed too much and players feel like they should have been given more details and interaction opportunities. Arguments might start. Players ask questions about what the situation was like a few seconds ago. With reluctance you answer and it turns out a character should have had a skill or sense check opportunity because of some rule.

Your encounter turns into chaos. The assassin is exposed. Turning back the clock means players take action fully aware an assassin or enemy is nearby. Refusing to change how things played out makes some players angry and others frustrated.

This has happened to me (Johnn), and let me tell you it is hell. Friendships and game-equitable atmosphere are more important to me than the game, so I always go the rewind route and play things out again, this time with players directing their PCs. The assassin is screwed now, as is my great gaming moment. However, I have finally learned the hard way to not direct character actions, especially because I am working hard to achieve a specific game effect.

By the Book

Play the game according to the rules. Do not sacrifice your game master style just to push for a special moment. Running your game the same way for an assassin encounter as you do all other encounters ensures fairness

and consistency. There are still ways to pull off an amazing assassination encounter and play by the book.

Pick the Place, Hide the Assassin

The assassin will want to stake out the best place to make his attack and get away. As GM, you need to choose this place ahead of time and detail it. Make a list of character perceptions. This will include skills, abilities, technology and equipment, special abilities and magic. Get it all listed out.

Detail the location against this list. For each perception item, have an idea or specific description entry ready. If the perception allows a die roll so you cannot predict what gets perceived ahead of time, assume success. If the character fails their check, that is a small victory for the assassin. The detail that ended up being unnecessary only cost you a few moments of planning, but it ensured you were ready and the game was fair.

If the assassin is aware of the PCs as a threat ahead of time, have the NPC take countermeasures for each perception he knows the PCs have. Hopefully the assassin has scouted out the PCs in this case, and knows their secrets.

If the assassination will take place so the PCs are bystanders, the NPC should take precautions against all likely perceptions, but he might miss a few unusual ones. A careful or experienced assassin will put more effort into this stage to rule out all contingencies, so it is fair to have him prepare for most, if not all items on the list.

For example, Detect Evil via spell or class ability has a range. The assassin might choose to attack well outside this range. He could get a magic item that masks his alignment. He could create a diversion so the cone of detection is unlikely to fall in his direction leading up to the attack. He could hide behind cover that blocks detection.

Regardless of what tactic you have chosen, the assassin has thought about this and you are ready for it when the encounter triggers. This makes a huge difference in your confidence. If challenged by players as to why their evil-radar did not pick up the NPC, you are ready and players will appreciate the fair reply.

Leave Time Flexible

There is a game master rule of thumb: who, where, how and why, but never when. In most cases, you can plan an encounter with all elements fixed in place except the time it triggers. Therefore, you can plan for NPCs to be at a certain place for a certain reason doing a certain thing, but you cannot make the PCs show up on time. The players control their characters. You cannot control when they travel.

You cannot control where they travel either, but if you design an encounter to trigger anytime the PCs arrive, then location is safe. In addition, a competent assassin will study his targets and learn their habitual routes. He will choose from amongst locations his targets travel regularly. Another option, after getting to know his targets, is to create a hook guaranteed to bring them to his desired location, possibly even at the most favorable time.

For the assassination, you can pick the location, the assassin, how he will attack and why, but make it so any timing is good in case the party decides to show up morning, day or night – today, tomorrow or next week.



Plan the Attack

How will the assassin take down his target? Set up the first round – a surprise round if things go your way:

- The assassin's location. It is best the assassin attacks from his current location. If he needs to move, all kinds of risks come into play.
- The attack type. Melee, ranged or spell?

We recommend pre-rolling the attack. If you fudge as a GM, then no need to roll. If you do not fudge, then record your results, make fake rolls behind your screen, and use the pre-rolled results instead. If you roll in front of your players, then you will need to do a bit more planning, but it is not a big deal.

Based on how the attack went, plan your next action. You will not know initiative order yet unless you fudge it, so you will need to plan four scenarios:

1. Attack kills target, assassin wins initiative
2. Attack kills target, assassin is last in initiative
3. Target still alive, assassin wins initiative
4. Target lives, assassin is last in initiative

Cases #1 and #2 are success cases, and now the assassin needs to make a clean escape. #3 and #4 might mean he needs to attack again, depending on the contract and how you want to play the NPC. Remember, 'He who fights and runs away lives to assassinate another day'.

For planning purposes, landing in the middle of initiative is the same as landing last – the killer becomes exposed to potentially lethal or crippling attacks, so these four cases are all that matter.

No need to pre-roll and lay out detailed actions for all four cases unless this is fun for you and you have the time. Doing so increases the NPC's chances of success, so feel free.

Otherwise, take a piece of paper and divide it into quadrants, one for each case. Label each box (target alive/dead, initiative won/lost) and brainstorm possible tactics in each box.

Some tactics might seem like excellent ideas and prompt you to redesign part of the NPC. For example, can the assassin afford a ring of blinking because there is an awesome place nearby he can hide in or

escape through if he makes it there undetected? Perhaps the assassin has excellent chances of escape if his speed was 40' or his Climb modifier was five points higher. How could you make that happen?

Keep this paper nearby when the encounter starts and let it inspire your tactics as you run the game.

The Setup

That is about all the planning you can do, so now we move onto running the game. Wait until players tell you their characters are headed to the place you have chosen to trigger the assassination. You cannot direct them to go there, unless this is an accepted style of gameplay (some groups jump directly from encounter to encounter like a movie directed by the GM, and others game out the moments between encounters as directed by the players).

Give the PCs all the incentive you can to travel to the encounter location without tipping your hand:

- NPC arranges meeting
- Place contains a clue or next stage of quest
- Place contains a reward
- Location is en route (and the only route) to an important destination
- PCs regularly visit location (e.g. it is a favorite store or tavern, their home base, near a contact)

Describe the Scene

No need for initiative or battlemats yet. Give a brief overview of the encounter location and what is going on. Keep your perceptions list and those preparations handy so you do not miss describing anything the characters might have perceived and deemed important. Make your description brief. Too much detail might alert players something else is going on other than their main purpose in visiting this location. Add a few unrelated and unnecessary details to mislead the group. You have two choices here: description of something static or description of an action.

Your best bet involves something static because perceptive players with good memories will feel less manipulated after the encounter, if they put the pieces together at all. For example, you throw in mention of an exotic plant and a nice mural.

Describing an action smacks more of GM manipulation. It is also more effective at hooking players, so go ahead and use this if you need a stronger diversion in your description. For example, a hooded figure stares at the PCs from a shadowed doorway, and a child thief attempts to steal a rat on a stick from a cleaver-wielding merchant. These hooks are likely to draw the PCs in to interact. After the encounter, sharp players might accuse you of putting these coincidences in there to trick them, and if this happens too often, you will find these tricks stop working or characters get more chaotic. However, who can resist checking out the mysterious stranger or trying to stop a homeless child from being cleaved? It works.

Give the PCs One More Action

Take a leap of faith here and let the PCs take at least one action in the scene before the assassination triggers. This gives them a sense of control and a feeling like the game is fair because they could have tried sensing other things, asked you questions to get more information, taken cover because they are paranoid and so on.

The leap of faith comes in because who knows what the characters will do. They will investigate the fake details you planted or continue with their main purpose here, with any luck. However, there is also a chance the wizard casts Detect Invisibility and aims it right at the plant where the assassin was hiding. This is the beauty of the game. Enjoy such a moment, have a good laugh, and reward the player with required information about what they perceive.

You might be tempted to move the assassin, plant another one nearby, or react in other ways to make the encounter go off as planned. That is your choice, but do not do so out of spite because your plans were foiled. In many situations, you can get away with these reactive changes. But this is a special type of encounter because it is charged with danger and emotion. Chances are your little change would have been foiled by the perceptions list that you now don't have time to run through (unless you take a quick break) or for some other reason, and you get into the same mess as you do when directing PC actions. If you decide to make a sudden change to this encounter, be very careful. In general, avoid railroading where you make what you want to have happen occur regardless of PC actions.

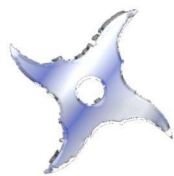
Attack

You set the scene. You gave everybody a moment to react, inquire and take action. Now is the time you have been waiting for. If the assassin has surprise, launch the attack. If not, roll for initiative and look at your paper with the four cases on it for tactical inspiration.

Congratulations

Following this path takes a bit of time. You need to plan a bit beforehand. However, you have given everyone a fair chance, you have not forced things to happen to make players mad at you, and the assassin is given the best possible chances to carry out his mission and survive it based on your knowledge of the rules, player styles and situation.

If things go awry do not beat yourself up. Learn from your mistakes and plan another assassination. If things went well then congratulations, your players will be talking about this encounter for some time to come.



Six Ways to Defend an Assassins' Guild

If you cannot find a place, it is hard to attack it. This effective strategy governs the operations of the Hands of Cyrene. Yet, the location must exist somewhere, so additional defenses are required. If you create an assassin guildhall for your campaign, be sure to consider these elements:

1. Guards

Nothing beats an active, intelligent defense that can assess threats and make quick decisions. Do not put first level novices in the guard position. A serious assassin guild will train its servants well to be observant and assess threats.

Plan a way for guards to report to the guard shift leader inside on unusual activity. The leader will then decide whether to escalate to a Guild Lieutenant, or try to contain things with just his unit.

Be sure the communication line will survive an attack. Guards who cannot raise the alarm are useless. That means positioning guards well to survive area spells, stealth attacks, and frontal assaults by large groups. Consider placing guards at high points around the area. Put some behind barriers. Put some hidden across the street or beneath camouflaged manholes so they can observe and report without being targeted.

Give each guard a fast-triggering, noise-making device, preferably one that only raises the alarm to other guards and the guard shift leader inside without alerting unknowing residents or opposing forces. The Message spell is ideal for this: (Link 1 is to the PFSRD, Link 2 is to the d20SRD).
<http://www.roleplayingtips.com/url/aa2>
<http://www.roleplayingtips.com/url/aa4>
Its great duration allows one mage to support several guards, and when the spell is about to end guards return for a recasting, making a perfect check-in and report system.

2. False Entrance

Guards offer you a dilemma. If you put them out front as a deterrent and checkstop system for minor issues, this alerts enemies something worth guarding is nearby.

Counter this with a false entrance. Place guards around it to dissuade curious onlookers and carry messages back to leadership. Be sure to have a room, alley or secret entrance guards can disappear into and then take a route to the real entrance unobserved. Any assaults on the false entrance will leave the attackers with a dead end.

Counter tracking by having guards leave fresh tracks to numerous destinations that are not the home base each shift. If possible, guards never need go near home base. They get debriefed from elsewhere and only need to visit the guild hall if the matter is urgent. The fresh false trails should delay trackers enough so leadership can react.

3. Hold Your Meetings Outside

When meeting with employers, contacts and applicants, there is no need to use the guild hall or lair. Hold meetings elsewhere, anywhere. Bringing people into your home base gives them information they do not need to know, not the least of which is the lair's location. Visitors might also observe layout, defenses, equipment, maps and other documentation, staffing, and more. Keep visitors far away.

4. Use Traps and Hazards

Lair traps can hit residents, so most factions use these sparingly, during times of low activity such as night. However, assassins are a cunning lot familiar with the use of deadly traps, so you can place more in their lair and expect members to safely avoid them. Non-assassin staff should be kept clear of trapped zones.

The first and easiest trap to place is an alarm. Place exterior alarms to alert members of unauthorized entry or breaches. Also alarm key storage areas, such as where wealth, special weapons and equipment get stored. Alarms also go well in living quarters and leadership areas.

The next best traps aim to disable, paralyze or stun. This keeps friendly victims alive in case they trigger a trap by accident. Caught foes are dragged away and interrogated. Such traps also cause minimal property damage.

Deadly traps are a last resort. The more precise they are, the better. You only want to target enemies. You also want to prevent unnecessary damage. Fireballs in the lounge get costly, and possibly attract unwanted attention from outside.

5. Surveillance

Guards are one line of defense with eyes and ears. You need more. If a ruckus erupts, leaders need a way to get reliable information about the threat. Direct observation is best so no data is lost in communication. Reports by minions work too, as long as they reach leaders intact.

- One way mirrors
- Perception spells
- Stealthy scouts
- Spy holes
- Telepathy

6. Create a Foolproof Escape

For leaders and VIPs, ensure they can get away if attackers breach the lair. Teleporting and Blinking devices are fast and effective. Escape tunnels are good if there is enough warning or other means to separate themselves from attackers. Flying is good if there is fast and easy access outside. There are risks with using disguise, illusion and transformation, but these are viable escape methods as well.

7. Use Fear and Secrecy

Fear should be another weapon employed in the defense of an organization like the assassins' guild. Ask the wrong questions, lurk too often in the wrong part of town, and you are asking for trouble. Fear will ensure people who might normally assist the PCs in seeking out the guild's hall or an assassins' lair will oppose the PCs, actively or passively. However, fear is only a deterrent, not a defense.

Having the guild leave a *calling card*, such as a black feather on a pillow or a mark in blood on the wall or door, is a great way to build up the fear. Just make sure these marks are left only where the guild can reasonably gain access—somehow. The more impossible it seems at first glance, and the more impressive, effective and threatening these actions become.

An assassins' guild is in a tricky position with regards to secrecy. If no one knows they exist, or how to commission them, they get no contracts and soon there will be no guild. Running contrary to that is the notion secrecy is an effective security measure. Resolving this contradiction is an area for you to be exceptionally creative. Perhaps scrolls left in a certain place and with a certain seal can be read remotely by the guild. Similar problems arise with respect to payment. The assassins' guild we present here might resolve this conflict by refusing outside commissions because of their Holy Calling, but that can also limit their usefulness within the campaign.

The Holy Assassins' Lair

The home base for assassins of Cyrene uses a combination of defenses: secret location, no exterior access, traps, no windows cut through outside walls, no exterior doors. The only way in is to use a spell, an assassin's amulet or break through a wall, roof or floor. See the Overview of the Holy Assassins' Lair section for detailed defenses.



Using Assassins in Your Games

1. The Trouble with Assassins

I (Johnn) have found one major problem with using assassins in my experiences so far that I feel you must deal with before using them in your campaign. Assuming assassins have some form of instant or quick kill ability, can they attack the PCs?

A double standard like this ruins sense of disbelief during play. Can NPCs assassinate PCs, especially after months of hard development by the players? If not, why?

Everybody else in the world seems like fair game, what gives the PCs such special immunity?

To make matters worse, PCs often become major targets as they grow in power. Villains and competitors would naturally seek ways to eliminate them, and assassins make a great evil choice.

Therefore, deal with this issue first before introducing killers in your game. Consider holding a group discussion. In addition, consider these options:

- Adopt a story style of GMing where the heroes always prevail, like in the movies, as opposed to a realistic and gritty style where the PCs are on a level playing field and fair game
- Fudge your dice rolls. Alert the PCs before the assassin shoots, or have the assassin miss the first shot
- Give lots of warning: foreshadowing, clues, an alert from an ally to "watch your back"
- Use slow assassination methods like poison or curses
- Provide easier access to save the PCs: Raise Dead, Resurrection, a ring of '9 lives'
- Make the assassins allies, instead
- See the How to Set Up an Assassination Attempt without Upsetting Your Players section for more tips on running assassins in campaigns and encounters

2. Figure Out the Rules First

Get a solid grasp of how assassins will operate under your game rules. This will not only prevent *accidents* during the game, such as unintentional PC kills, but will also determine how your assassins will conduct and roleplay their business in-game.

Are there instant kill or massive damage rules in your game? Learn them and think about how they will affect assassins. For example:

- The Coup de Grace rules in 3.x require a victim to be helpless first
- The Death Attack ability of the assassin prestige class in 3.x requires the killer to study their victim for 3 rounds before attacking
- The assassination table in the 1st Edition D&D Dungeon Master's Guide lets assassins instantly kill by making a simple d% roll

Each of the above rules requires a hired killer to operate differently in-game, so do a little thinking and preparation before introducing them into your game.

3. How Will They Affect Your Game World?

Have you read the Vlad Taltos series by Steven Brust where assassination is no big deal and mostly used as a warning? Compare his assassins to Raymond Feist's Midkemia books where an assassin turns a whole kingdom upside down with a poisoned crossbow bolt.

Give some thought as to how the existence of assassins changes your world:

- Are they organized into a guild or several groups? Do they only operate solo?
- Are they common or rare?
- How does law enforcement handle their existence and incidents?
- Does the average citizen know about and fear them? Are assassins only used against the powerful?
- What defense(s) do potential victims have and employ to protect themselves?
- How much does a job cost the employer or contractor?
- How does one contact the guild or an individual operative for a job offer?

In fantasy worlds, at least, I feel that assassins would have to specialize to survive. For example, dealing with a magic using victim would require a completely different set of skills than a monstrous NPC victim, or one who lives on another plane. Factor this into your assassin designs as well.

4. Use the Terms of the Contract as a Roleplaying Opportunity

There are many roleplaying opportunities to be had with assassins. For example, define an unwritten Assassin's Code of Honor that true professionals stick to:

- Never divulge the name of your employer
- You may only have one employer at a time
- Once you accept a contract you must complete it at all costs
- You must perform your mission to the letter of the contract, including all special instructions from the employer
- Leaving a personal *calling card* near the victim is encouraged
- Non-victims cannot be harmed
- Women and children are not acceptable targets

This brief list opens up all kinds of opportunities for stories, encounters, NPCs and roleplaying:

- The fallen assassin who betrayed the code
- Employers with creative requests
- Assassins with unusual calling cards and reputations
- An assassin is tricked into accepting a contract whose victim is a female PC
- Background atmosphere, such as newspaper headlines, that read "Black Rose Killer Strikes Again!"

Be creative with your world, campaign and assassins, and look for roleplaying opportunities around every corner.

5. How an Assassin Can Affect Your Stories

Hired killers usually make protecting their own hide their first priority and capping their victim their second. This means most assassins will be cautious. They will gather data, learn what they can about their victim and create a bulletproof plan that ensures a clean getaway.

With this in mind, consider how an assassin can get to know his victim indirectly or directly:

- Indirectly
 - Research
 - Observe victim for long periods of time
 - Talk with friends, family, employer, associate
 - Assassin uses his own contact network to uncover info
 - Victim's bank, doctor, accountant, hairdresser
- Directly
 - Observe the victim from a safe distance
 - Meet and interact with the victim

These methods can greatly affect your stories and generate good encounter ideas:

- A PC, as the victim, hears stories from different friends and acquaintances about a mysterious stranger asking lots of questions
- Assassin might hire capable people in the area (i.e. the PCs) to help in the research, and the PCs eventually learn the true purpose behind their tasks
- Roleplay a direct encounter (or several) between an information gathering assassin and his soon-to-be victim (a PC)
- The assassin needs to know the daily routine of his victim (a PC), which means you need to know the daily routine. So, the players are treated to several mystifying, seemingly mundane encounters focused on *a day in the life* of the PC
- The assassin decides to befriend his victim (a PC) by hiring thugs to attack the character and then showing up to save the day (killing the thugs in the skirmish to prevent the truth leaking out)

6. Use a Disguised Character Sheet

When roleplaying the assassin as an active NPC in a story, trick the players by making up a separate disguise character sheet to use at the game table. Feel free to even leave it unprotected for curious players to glance at.

It also helps a lot if you do not think of the NPC as an assassin. Play the NPC just as if his disguise were real. This will help you from accidentally spilling the beans or giving something away unintentionally.

7. Assassin's Defenses

Depending on what game you are playing, your assassins might have to take precautions against magic or technology. For example, in 3.x there are spells that can detect evil, know alignment and protect victims from evil. An assassin would learn about these things, as part of his training or experiences, and have counter measures and counter-counter measures.

Look through your rule book's spell, magic item and equipment lists and search for things that would give an assassin an edge. Most guilds would specifically seek these items out in the game world and equip their assassins accordingly. Most assassins would also funnel much of their earnings back into their equipment to ensure a long and healthy career.

Figure out what could endanger an assassin in your campaign, and then defend your NPC as well as he can afford.

8. A Good First Impression: My Only Personal Experience of an Assassin as a Player

This is not a tip but just a personal anecdote you might find amusing, and possibly useful.

The first time I played Cyberspace, a cyberpunk game from I.C.E., a fellow PC was slain by an assassin in the first minute of the game. In the first minute of the *whole campaign*, actually. A sniper took him out in the eye. Thankfully, the player took the shot in good humor, quickly rolled up another PC, and re-joined us a half-hour later.

However, the effect the encounter had on us was great. The group usually played fantasy, so this event was a hard and fast lesson about hi-tech – it is deadly at long range. It also made us feel that our PCs were constantly vulnerable to a silent, invisible killer who could be out there at any time: another coup for the GM of a cyberpunk campaign.

I am not saying you should try this trick on your players (who might be far less amused), but it is something to consider when planning to introduce assassins in your campaigns. Try to find ways to instill fear of these professionals into your players and their PCs.



9 Quick Assassin Tips

Following is a list of quick-hit caveats, tips and warnings.

1. You are always better off bungling an assassination than frustrating your players with a forced assassination.
2. Drop into combat rounds in the moments leading up to the event.
 - a. Go around the table to get actions if you do not want to roll for initiative right away to avoid tipping players off.
 - b. Track time carefully. Do not let one player get too far ahead in the timeline. Track what the assassin and target are doing behind your screen or in your head.
3. Check against all PC perceptions for assassin detection:
 - a. Physical: the five senses
 - b. Knowledge and skills
 - c. Magic
 - d. Special abilities
4. You will only get one good shot. Players will react fast. It is five players and their brains versus you, so assume the assassin is only going to get one clean shot before the PCs are all over him, protecting the victim, or in between and blocking the way.
5. Pick your target carefully. Going for the instant kill is not always the best action. In real life, it might be, but working within the game rules it might not. What are the biggest threats to getting the job done?

For example, it might be impossible for the assassin to do enough damage to kill his target in one shot. Therefore, he might disable magic in the area first, to prevent healing and ranged magic detection and counter

attacks. Then he might paralyze the target with a fast-acting poison from range. Finally, he might close in for a coup de grace.

6. Think in terms of time, space and damage per round. Unless it is an instant kill shot, the assassin will need time to make multiple attacks. He will need space to get those attacks in – nothing can intercede or waylay. In addition, he needs time and space for a successful retreat whether the mission is a success or not.

Conduct a simulated trial run:

- a. Make attacks figuring in anticipated modifiers.
- b. The assassin will also have scouted the victim out and know how much damage he will have to do. He will also estimate conservatively, so plan on him doing 25-50% more damage than is required, because the NPC would not know a target's exact hit points.
- c. Figure out the damage and compare to the victim's estimated health.
- d. Plan accordingly.

7. Getting the Battlemat out is a signal. If you do not want to tip your hand, then keep the minis and maps out of it until the last possible moment.

8. Communicate clearly. Avoid misleading unfairly.
 - a. When you jump into minor details, it signals players something is up.
 - b. Keep your poker face.
 - c. Record or remember players' own words. Never assume. Have players state what they are doing at all times until the assassination attempt.
 - d. Be clear on how the PCs are equipped, what they perceive and of any indication they are in danger or an assassin is near.
9. PC targets are always more contentious than NPC targets. Step carefully.



Chapter 4: Non-Player Characters & New Character Classes



Cyrene (Greater Deity)



Titles/Incarnations: Giver of Mercy, Weaver of Nets, Handmaiden of Death, Shelter of Travelers, Queen of Dolphins, Bringer of Rainbows, Pool of Reflection, The Final Justice, The Last Judge; member of the Celestial Tribunal (Arbiter of Life).

Cyrene is a complex deity whose worshippers derive from as many lifestyles as she has incarnations. Her province is life itself in some of its many aspects, and this makes her both feared and revered.

The Lesser Aspects

In her aspect as the Giver of Mercy, Cyrene is believed to spare the dying from pain and suffering, and a slow death is considered a sign of her disfavor. Many with suffering relatives and loved ones will donate to her temples and pray for her to relent. Those granted quick and painless deaths are considered to have been in her favor, and it is tradition to make a token offering at her temples by surviving friends and relatives of the departed.

The Giver of Mercy aspect is considered a Handmaiden of Thanastis, God of Death. She is believed to spend her time weaving and repairing death's net, "the net that catches all in the end." This leads to Cyrene's third incarnation, as the "Weaver of nets." Since it is believed she will permit death to take none before their time, this combination has made her a popular deity for fishermen and sailors, many of whom attend services regularly when not at sea, and make offerings before every voyage—the more dangerous the journey ahead, the greater the offering.

This belief has expanded slowly through the wider community, giving rise to her newest title, the Shelter of Travelers. It is said that, on occasion, lost and weary travelers near to death (but whose time has not yet come) will stumble upon a rich estate, where the mistress of the household (a woman of great dignity and beauty, well spoken and of gentle demeanor) will offer shelter for the night.

She will heal their wounds and host a great feast. When the travelers awaken the next morning, the estate and manor house will be gone, but they will be refreshed, have had their provisions resupplied and will be on or near the path to their destination. However, should any attempt to abuse the hospitality offered, they will be trapped within the estate when it vanishes and never be seen again. Because of this legend, offerings to Cyrene are now commonplace before any journey.

Fishermen also know Cyrene as Queen of Dolphins, for they believe such creatures to be animal-form incarnations of the deity. They say she sends her subjects to protect those who would otherwise meet an

untimely end at sea. Some believe that being rescued by dolphins earns a debt that must be repaid with a year's service in the temple in whatever menial capacity is necessary; some never leave this service and go on to become lay preachers.

Hathandros, God of Storms and Seas, is considered capricious, ill-tempered at best, and resentful of those who intrude upon his domain without paying the proper respect—a standard that notoriously changes with his mood. When Hathandros is in “one of his moods,” only the intervention of Cyrene can save those who have angered him. Some theologians cast Hathandros and Cyrene as husband and wife, but many dispute this. Nevertheless, it is also believed by some that Cyrene sends rainbows as a sign his ill temper has passed. Others believe Cyrene sends rainbows to mark individuals as especially blessed or in her favor to pique Hathandros's jealous nature and permit him to show off his power and manliness.

These beliefs give rise to the last of the lesser aspects of Cyrene, that of the Bringer of Rainbows. This aspect is much beloved by children, and it is believed by others that Cyrene herself is barren and can bear no children of her own, the price of some terrible struggle in the past. Some suggest she sacrificed this aspect of her femininity to acquire the power she possesses. In either regard, she is said to derive great enjoyment from the playing of children, and is believed to spend much of her life near playgrounds and parks. Certainly, this is a popular location for the establishment of temples and shrines erected in her name.



The Pool of Reflection

The myth

There are some who claim the Pool of Reflection is merely another of the wonders to be found on Cyrene's estate grounds. Others claim the estate exists merely to house the Pool, but the majority believes the Pool of Reflection is an inhuman aspect of the deity, and hence can appear anywhere.

Those who gaze into the pool at their reflections are able to perceive every significant moment of their past lives, recognize their contributions to life, society and history, glean a hint as to their role in the greater story of the world, and gain a sense of how much of their accorded lifespan remain.

The experience tends to humble the arrogant, educate the humble and bring about sudden changes in personality in many, as those who have achieved much (whether they knew it or not) are given recognition of those achievements by the gods, and those who have squandered their lives are given a final warning.

The facts

You are free to choose the true nature of the pool:

- An artifact that wanders the world aimlessly and randomly, teleporting from place to place, a magical quality that temporarily transforms ordinary pools of water
- A magical pool located upon the estates of Cyrene
- An incarnation of the goddess herself



Those who look into the pool and gaze into their own reflection must make a Perception check at DC20. Success imparts recognition of the true significance of the achievements of the individual's life, stripped of all ego, vanity, self-deception and bias, and permits a second Perception check at DC25.

- Success in the second check gives a general sense of the time-scale of the remaining years in the individual's life: none, years, decades, or centuries.
- Success in the first check confers a permanent +2 Wisdom ability score increase. Success in the second confers an additional +2 Wisdom.

The combination frequently leads individuals who experience it to make radical changes in their lives or experience radical shifts in personality.

Success at the second check also permits some individuals (at the GM's discretion) to make a third check at DC 50.

Should this succeed, the individual is accorded a glimpse of the most notable

achievement to which they can aspire in the remaining time allotted to them. Success in perceiving this is worth an additional permanent +4 Wisdom ability score increase.

Failure to pursue this potential achievement, once it has been revealed, earns the enmity of the gods. We recommend you determine the substance of the possible achievement in collaboration with the player of the character responsible rather than foisting a destiny on the character that does not accord with the player's wishes. These achievements might be mundane or even seemingly trivial, such as raising a large family, marrying the perfect mate, owning a business empire, or even living a life of destitute poverty but with spiritual grace. The achievements should not be guaranteed to happen, either. The character should have to actively work at achieving the goals.

The Final Justice

The last incarnation of Cyrene is also the most feared. As the Final Justice, Cyrene dictates whose life has run its course and whose has not. The elderly and infirm frequently make offerings at her temples. Some seek an extension of their lifespan, some a quick release from their lives and others are simply grateful for one more day. In this incarnation, God of Death Thanastis serves Cyrene, visiting those to whom she directs. This gives you some indication about the complexities of their relationship.

No matter how evil or good one's life, how rich or poor, the Final Justice is meted out equally to all, and all will face judgment before the Celestial Tribunal. In oppressive regimes, it is believed the common folk attend services in Cyrene's temples to pray for the death of their ruler. The more

enlightened amongst such rulers consider this a means of releasing anger and hostility that might otherwise lead to rebellions. The more shortsighted perceive this as fomenting such rebellions, and often seek to quell the worship of Cyrene, harassing her priests and burning her temples and shrines.

Both reactions misjudge the patience of the goddess. All will be at her disposal at their allotted time, regardless of rank or social status; she will neither hasten nor delay that moment without good cause. Temporal events are but trivial moments passing by in the interim, and eventually, those responsible will face judgment for their actions.

The Unnatural Extension of Life

The greatest crime in the eyes of Cyrene is the extension of life beyond the allocated span. There are means, arcane and spiritual, those with the knowledge and power can use to forestall the appointed hour. The priests of Cyrene preach there is but a finite amount of life at any given time, and that such blasphemous actions rob another of their turn at life. Every stillborn child is a sign that someone, somewhere, has extended their lifespan beyond its allotted years, and that the individual should be sought out and overcome by those with the strength and means to do so.

It is occasionally rumored that Cyrene's followers include in their numbers a secret order who take a more direct hand in finding those who perpetrate such blasphemies and bringing them to an end. However, nothing has ever been proven, no evidence has ever been found.

Cyrene and Undeath

While Cyrene and her followers consider undeath to be unholy and blasphemous in its own right, they perceive this as forestalling judgment and not forestalling death itself. They will not go out of their way to destroy the undead, but feel a kinship with those who do, and will support such endeavors undertaken by others.

The Celestial Tribunal

Cyrene is a member of the Celestial Tribunal, which judges each soul's fate after death and award it a place in what they deem an appropriate afterlife.

The other members of the Tribunal are:

- Averinis, the God of Justice (presiding and non-voting)
- Pellina, the Goddess of Virtue
- Lashinus, the God of Vice (who is frequently represented by his wife, Doravia, the Goddess of Temptation)

Cyrene rarely sits in judgment on the tribunal, nor argues one way or another. Her role is to report the facts of the individual's life to the tribunal, and hence remains impartial and neutral. Only in the event of tribunal deadlock will she be called upon to cast the deciding vote, which she will seldom directly do. Instead, she will place before the spirit being judged a challenge to test its worthiness.

Occasionally, she might demand an Afterlife Quest to undo some wrong or achieve some great deed in the name of the tribunal, successful completion of which will earn her favor.

The exception to this neutral posture comes when judging one who has blasphemed against life itself, either by the unnatural extension of life, or by the restoration of a life that had ended. In such cases, she is a hostile vote.

Once in awhile, one of the other members of the tribunal will abstain, and the tribunal will again be deadlocked. Since the God of Virtue and Goddess of Vice never change their votes once cast, Cyrene is the swing vote. This is the other mechanism by which an Afterlife Quest may be ordered. In effect, Cyrene demands the spirit undertake a quest to earn her forgiveness for its blasphemy against her domain—something she will not begrudge lightly.

Temple Relationships

Priests of Hathandros, God of Storms and Seas, often bicker and dislike priests of Cyrene, though this enmity can be set aside at need.

Priests of the other members of the Celestial Tribunal in general respect Cyrene's priests, but individual personalities might overrule this broad principle.

Priests of Thanastis, God of Death, consider themselves allies of the priests of Cyrene, as do priests of Lumina, Goddess of Life. Since these two temples are often opposed to each other, they frequently call upon Cyrene's followers to act as a go-between when cooperation is necessary.

Priests of Cyrene find followers of Doravia, Goddess of Temptation, manipulative and hence consider her priests unwelcome.

Priests of Calumnus, God of Knowledge and Magic, are frequently opposed to the Priests of Cyrene.

Other temple relationships are neutral unless an event occurs to change the status quo.

The Hands of Cyrene: a Unique Assassins' Guild

Most assassins and their Guilds would be considered evil without question. They get perceived as fanatics or ideologues willing to kill to advance their cause, whatever it may be, or worse, because they have been paid to do so. In popular media, these are often considered *the bad guys*.

The Hands of Cyrene are unique in that their mission would be considered good, and while they accept commissions to kill, these are treated as necessary sacrifices to the cause. They are fanatics, but fanatics on the other side of the alignment compass, and this creates a moral ambiguity about what they do that should have the PCs uncertain about whether or not they should oppose them. Even if the verdict to that question is *yes*, the positive aspect to the organization's goals leaves room for temporary alliances and other more exotic interactions.

In most assassin guilds, character backgrounds are simple: what led the character to become an assassin? What made them a sociopath, or a fanatic? Everything else about them comes down to questions of style and of what they have achieved. Motivations might have some

minor variation, but those seldom become points of uniqueness about the characters. The monotone nature of the profession restricts and confines the personalities of the members to such an extent that most assassins are interchangeable in a role-playing context.

This makes assassins, even those disguised amongst the general population, easy to spot, if they are correctly roleplayed. It also limits, to some extent, their usefulness in a storytelling context, because most adventures with generic assassins will also be constrained into a relatively low number of alternatives. It is either "find and kill the assassins' guild" or "discover an assassination plot in progress and stop it." A minor variation in the latter can derive from the nature of the target in question, but in the end, the utility of standard assassins is limited.

In broadening the moral foundations of the Hands of Cyrene, we open the doors to a far greater variety of adventures in which they can participate, and make the organization home to a far wider array of characters. There is still a place for the traditional assassin within the guild who kills for pleasure, pay or pathological need. However, the Hands (if confronted) could argue they are providing such individuals with a socially-redeeming context, harnessing their natures to the betterment of a broader society, just like the master thief who retires to become the ultimate locksmith.

This affects the range of personalities and backgrounds from which members of the guild can be drawn. The friendly bartender down at the corner pub, the good neighbor, the holier-than-thou Ned Flanders type across the street, the local priest, the schoolteacher – these all become viable assassins within the guild. The motivations

that drive them into this life also become much broader, even noble or tragic. And, because the actions sanctioned by the guild are not always evil, the organization gains more utility within a campaign.

The Language of the Gods

You have seen throughout this text examples of the gods' divine language, the Language of the Gods, such as the commands for the Assassins' Amulet. A language of power, the words resist shaping themselves correctly in the mouths of those not granted permission to use it. Text written in this language appears differently to all who behold it, save those who have sufficient ability to force the words to shape themselves correctly – Knowledge (Religion) check, DC 25.

The *granted permission* explains how the assassins can use the amulets and control their lair without having the required skill. These would start as phrases learned by rote, with no understanding of the meaning of the apparent gibberish. The phrases only become understandable with greater experience and awareness of Cyrene.

Charting a Career as a Holy Assassin

Cyrene calls people of all lifestyles into her service. The career options are many and varied. All are assassins. Any may be awarded a contract by the Guildmaster, whose is responsible for ensuring those

under his leadership are prepared to face the challenges posed by the guild's targets. They often get assigned to work in pairs or small teams, especially at more junior ranks, with a more experienced assassin assigned to monitor report on, and protect those novices who get in over their heads.

- Children of the streets are taken in and given comfort, shelter and a purpose as a member of the **Eyes of Cyrene**.
- Brawlers who murder for what the temple deems *justifiable* reasons may be sheltered from authorities and permitted to expunge their debt with service as **Temple Guardsmen**.
- The enlightened who have difficulty abandoning the ways of the material path may seek a more secular path in servitude to the **Spirit of Cyrene**.
- Those who stalk prey through the wilds by skill and tenacity may find themselves called to hunt other prey through a different jungle as **Grim Huntsmen**.
- Then there are the **Acolytes of Cyrene** themselves, chosen from the pious and faithful of the temple to step beyond normal clericism into the direct service of their deity, and at last to become eligible for the ultimate rank in the service of their goddess, a **Guildmaster** of the Hands of Cyrene.

Within the Service of Cyrene

The lives of those called to service are many and varied. At times, one may be called to live a life of abstinence and abject poverty. At other times, one may reside in comfort

within the walls of the hidden guild. At all times, while on a mission to fulfill a contract accepted by the Hands of Cyrene, they are required to assume a role suitable for the task at hand, whether that be as a toffsman working the sewers or a minor noble from a foreign land. Most will develop 1-3 specific false identities over their years of service, with appropriate costumes and accoutrements hidden in strategic locations. Those expenses deemed reasonable for the maintenance of appearance will often be defrayed by the guild. These requirements are taken into consideration when fixing the price of a contract.

Many of those in service are sent out into the world to earn a living by means of their own skill, to all appearances ordinary artisans. Only the Guildmaster knows how many members of the Hands of Cyrene there in fact are. Even if the Hands were exposed, the hidden guild headquarters burned and all within sent for judgment by the Celestial Tribunal, others would step forward from positions of hiding to take their place. Servants would construct a new guild headquarters in a different secret location. An avatar of Cyrene would suddenly appear to furnish the amulets that provide security and access. Dream messengers would convey the new location to members.

Even while submerged within the population, members of the Hands of Cyrene must report to the Guildmaster at regular intervals to receive assignments; to obtain funding, payments and rewards; to train; and to ensure he knows the status of each member and each ongoing assignment.

In the event a guild headquarters falls and the Guildmaster gets captured or dies, a new Guildmaster chosen by Cyrene would – once the new headquarters were complete (if necessary) – learn the identities

of those at his command one by one over the course of the next few weeks as they report to the new location. It might take just days or weeks before the Hands of Cyrene are back in operation.

Wise Guildmasters prepare a nominated successor, a hidden backup guild headquarters and a series of hidden caches containing funds and guild records to minimize the time and difficulty of starting over should it become necessary.

Guild Hierarchy

Some believe just one guild headquarters and Guildmaster exist. Some believe a hidden branch of the Bringers of Death dwells in every hamlet and village. The truth, as usual, is somewhere in between.

Each sub-organization has a semi-independent administration.

- After achieving five levels within their specialist class (not counting any prior class levels), a member becomes a **Junior Officer**, responsible for supervising those below him in direct rank, but with no authority over the low-level characters of the other sub-orders.
- At 10th level within their calling, a member becomes a **Provost** within their sub-organization, responsible for training the junior members of their order, with authority over the junior members of other orders and with specific administrative responsibilities.
- After achieving 15 levels within their calling, they become a **Guild Lieutenant**, with the authority to conduct negotiations on behalf of

the guild, accept contracts, train more advanced members within their order, and with more general administrative responsibilities.

- Upon achieving 20th level, at least 16 of which must be within their order, a Guild Lieutenant becomes the head of his order, or (in the case of Acolytes of Cyrene), potential **Guildmasters**.

Upon achieving each rank, the officer is relocated to a different branch of the guild. Promotion to these ranks is always at the discretion of the direct supervisor of the potential officer.

Standing above all others is the **Senior Guildmaster**, a 20th level Cleric of Cyrene. In an epic campaign, this character would also be a 20th level member of the Acolytes of Cyrene. It is his responsibility to select and train local Guildmasters.

General Entry Requirements

The service of Cyrene is open to those of any alignment.

The Eyes of Cyrene, Temple Guardsmen, Spirits of Cyrene and Grim Huntsmen are prestige classes available respectively to rogues, fighters, monks, and rangers.

Clerics enter as Acolytes of Cyrene, losing all clerical levels and abilities and replacing them with levels in that core class and the abilities that it provides. More frequently, would-be clerics called to service in the Hands of Cyrene exit training before achieving their first character level and set on the path as Acolytes of Cyrene from the start.

Paladins may enter the service of Cyrene as Temple Guardsmen, but this may conflict with their former calling or the deity to whom they are sworn, so this choice **might** cost them their class abilities as a paladin.

Barbarians may enter the service of Cyrene if they receive a spiritual calling, but this is rare. They may choose to become Temple Guardsmen or Grim Huntsmen.

Mages rarely seek to enter the service of Cyrene, but should one do so, it will be because they find themselves conflicted over their spiritual beliefs and those of their first profession. They are required to multiclass as Acolytes of Cyrene and will usually be under intense scrutiny their entire lives.

Other core classes may enter the Service of Cyrene at your discretion using similar approaches, provided they meet the requirements of the specified prestige class or—in very rare instances—as Acolytes of Cyrene.

You can find more information on entry requirements in the descriptions of the specific classes.

Class Abilities and Format

Class abilities for all the classes given below derive from a common pool, specified in a separate section following the class descriptions. A numeric code identifies each ability so you can reference its details.

BAB and Saving Throw values for each level are expressed as the amount gained when that level is taken. For example, the values for level 1 Eye of Cyrene are +1 BAB, +1 Saves, +1 Preferred Saves. The distinction between the latter two is the result of a class ability.

Thus, if a character were to become a level 1 Eye of Cyrene with existing values of BAB +5, Will Save +2, Reflex Save +5, and Fortitude Save +2, the character would have then have BAB +6/+1, Will Save +3, Reflex Save +6, and Fortitude Save +3.



Acolytes of Cyrene

The Acolytes of Cyrene are the heart of the guild. Originally an organization of lay brothers outside normal church hierarchy, they remain the career path leading to the exalted rank of Guildmaster.

Class features derived from specialized training and instruction made available to individuals with other skills created branches of the guild with specific roles to play over time. This produced the prestige classes described above. However, this class differs from the standard clerical class and

prestige classes by its incorporation of abilities and studies outside of those normally undertaken by clerics without serious multiclassing.

The theological requirements for becoming an Acolyte of Cyrene are, if anything, even more stringent than those of a mere Cleric of Cyrene; the *cause* is elevated in the Acolytes beyond mere worship of Cyrene as a deity. Furthermore, individuals must show the right sort of personality for membership. This personality requirement

is difficult to describe succinctly, but the common characteristic is a driven quality or an air of desperation.

The Acolytes of Cyrene are composed of a mixture of those who lacked the devotion to offer their entire lives to the service of Cyrene (former clerics) and those faithful from the lay community who come to believe in the cause. This belief usually results from some profound personal experience with the price of unnatural life extension, such as someone who has lost a relative or loved one to a black rite. A significant subgroup consists of those who lack the alignment requirements to become a Cleric of Cyrene, a neutral good deity. Such characters who are otherwise worthy of priesthood and who feel the calling to Cyrene's service may be excused the spellcasting requirement of entry into the Acolytes.

In terms of game mechanics, one unique rule applies to the Acolytes. Members must possess at least one level as a Cleric of Cyrene, but then *trade* all clerical levels in for levels in the Acolyte class when Cyrene accepts them into the guild. Thus, a cleric who has fallen from grace may be offered a way back into Cyrene's good books. At any point in their careers, members of the Acolytes may choose to resume their studies and service as a standard Cleric of Cyrene, starting again at first level. Such clerics normally never again progress in level as an Acolyte of Cyrene. However, should they do so, their levels of cleric are again converted into levels of Acolyte, and the greater of the two (levels of Acolyte resulting or levels of Acolyte previously achieved) is used as the character's new level; all other levels are lost, with the experience that confers them.

For example, a 3rd level cleric becomes an Acolyte. He then replaces his three clerical

levels with three levels of Acolyte. When he reaches 8th level as an Acolyte, he opts to resume his service as a cleric. His 9th level will give him Acolyte 8/Cleric 1. If the character achieves three additional levels as a cleric beyond this point, he will then be an Acolyte 8/Cleric 4. If the character then commits some offence against the faith and is defrocked, he can resume as an 8th level Acolyte (losing four levels of cleric and the experience difference between 12th level and 8th level). Since the character will otherwise lose many of the benefits of both (e.g. Cyrene no longer grants spells), the alternative is for the character to remain at 12th level and begin progressing in a new class, losing access to any class abilities listed as Supernatural in nature.

Acolyte of Cyrene Core Class (D&D 3.5)

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify as an Acolyte of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- Alignment: any
- Skills: none
- Special: ability to cast cleric spells (without using a scroll)
- Special: any character levels of cleric are *traded in* for levels of Acolyte when the character first accepts this calling

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Acolytes of Cyrene are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Arcana), Knowledge (History) (Int), Knowledge

(Religion) (Int), Knowledge (The Planes) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis). Note that class ability 41 (see below) adds Spellcraft (Int) to this list.

Skill Points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Acolyte of Cyrene (D&D 3.5)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1, 40
2	+1	+0	+1	4
3	+1	+0	+0	19/c, 40, 45
4	+0	+1	+1	4
5	+1	+0	+0	20/c, 45
6	+1	+0	+1	7
7	+1	+1	+0	18, 45
8	+0	+0	+1	9
9	+1	+0	+0	18, 45
10	+1	+1	+1	4, 41
11	+1	+0	+0	18/c, 45
12	+0	+0	+1	5, 10
13	+1	+1	+0	18, 30, 45
14	+1	+0	+1	15, 4
15	+1	+0	+0	18, 23, 45
16	+0	+1	+1	7, 11, 35
17	+1	+0	+0	18/c, 4, 45
18	+1	+0	+1	8, 30, 36
19	+1	+1	+0	18, 4, 45
20	+0	+0	+1	6, 17, 12, 33, 37

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Acolytes of Cyrene:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: All simple weapons, all armor, all shields (except Tower Shields). Refer also Special Ability 45.

Acolyte of Cyrene Core Class (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify as an Acolyte of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- Alignment: any
- Skills: none
- Spellcasting: ability to cast first level cleric spells

- Special: any character levels of cleric are *traded in* for levels of Acolyte when the character first accepts this calling

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Acolytes of Cyrene are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Arcana) (Int), Knowledge (History) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Knowledge (The Planes) (Int), Perception (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Stealth (Dex).

Skill Points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Acolyte of Cyrene (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1, 40
2	+1	+0	+1	4
3	+1	+0	+0	19/c, 40, 45
4	+0	+1	+1	4
5	+1	+0	+0	20/c, 45
6	+1	+0	+1	Death Attack (as assassin)
7	+1	+1	+0	18, 45
8	+0	+0	+1	9
9	+1	+0	+0	18, 45
10	+1	+1	+1	4, 41
11	+1	+0	+0	18/c, 45
12	+0	+0	+1	5, 10
13	+1	+1	+0	18, +1 Deflection bonus to AC, 45
14	+1	+0	+1	4
15	+1	+0	+0	18, 23, 45
16	+0	+1	+1	11, 35, Death Attack (as assassin, reduce rounds of study by 1)
17	+1	+0	+0	18/c, 4, 45
18	+1	+0	+1	36, +1 Deflection bonus to AC, Favored Terrain (as ranger)
19	+1	+1	+0	18, 4, 45
20	+0	+0	+1	6, 17, 12, 33, 37

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Acolytes of Cyrene:



Weapon and Armor Proficiency: All simple weapons, all armor, all shields (except Tower Shields).



Eyes of Cyrene

The Eyes of Cyrene are primarily spies. They watch targets suspected of violating the natural lifespan, potential enemies, mistrusted allies, other orders of Cyrene and each other. They specialize in stealth and subterfuge.

- **Special:** Sneak Attack +1d6 and no more than +4d6

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Eyes of Cyrene are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

Eyes of Cyrene Prestige Class (D&D 3.5)

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify for membership in the Holy Order of the Eyes of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- **Alignment:** any
- **Skills:** Disguise 4 ranks, Hide 4 ranks, Move Silently 4 ranks

Skill Points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.



Eyes of Cyrene (D&D 3.5)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1, 2, 4
2	+1	+0	+1	5, 6
3	+1	+0	+0	18
4	+0	+1	+1	7
5	+1	+0	+0	8, 19
6	+1	+0	+1	9, 13
7	+1	+1	+0	14, 4
8	+0	+0	+1	18
9	+1	+0	+0	4
10	+1	+1	+1	15, 20
11	+1	+0	+0	3, 4
12	+0	+0	+1	8, 10
13	+1	+1	+0	18
14	+1	+0	+1	7
15	+1	+0	+0	16, 4
16	+0	+1	+1	17
17	+1	+0	+0	4
18	+1	+0	+1	11, 18
19	+1	+1	+0	4
20	+0	+0	+1	7

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Eyes of Cyrene prestige class:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Crossbow (hand, light, or heavy), dagger (any type), dart, rapier, sap, shortbow (normal and composite), and short sword. Light armor but not shields.

Class Abilities: Refer to common list.



Eyes of Cyrene Prestige Class (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify for membership in the Holy Order of The Eyes of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- Alignment: any
- Skills: Disguise 4 ranks, Stealth 4 ranks

- Special: Sneak Attack +1d6 and no more than +4d6

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Eyes of Cyrene are Acrobatics (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Perception (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Stealth (Dex), Swim (Str), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.

Eyes of Cyrene (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1, 2, 4
2	+1	+0	+1	5, 6
3	+1	+0	+0	18
4	+0	+1	+1	Death Attack (as assassin)
5	+1	+0	+0	8, 19
6	+1	+0	+1	9, Push Through (as urban ranger)
7	+1	+1	+0	14, 4
8	+0	+0	+1	18
9	+1	+0	+0	4
10	+1	+1	+1	15, 20
11	+1	+0	+0	3, 4
12	+0	+0	+1	8, 10
13	+1	+1	+0	18
14	+1	+0	+1	Death Attack (reduce rounds of study by 1)
15	+1	+0	+0	16, 4
16	+0	+1	+1	17
17	+1	+0	+0	4
18	+1	+0	+1	11, 18
19	+1	+1	+0	4
20	+0	+0	+1	Death Attack (reduce rounds of study by 1)

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Eyes of Cyrene prestige class:



Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Crossbow (hand, light, or heavy), dagger (any type), dart, rapier, sap, shortbow (normal and composite), and short sword. Light armor but not shields.



Temple Guardsmen

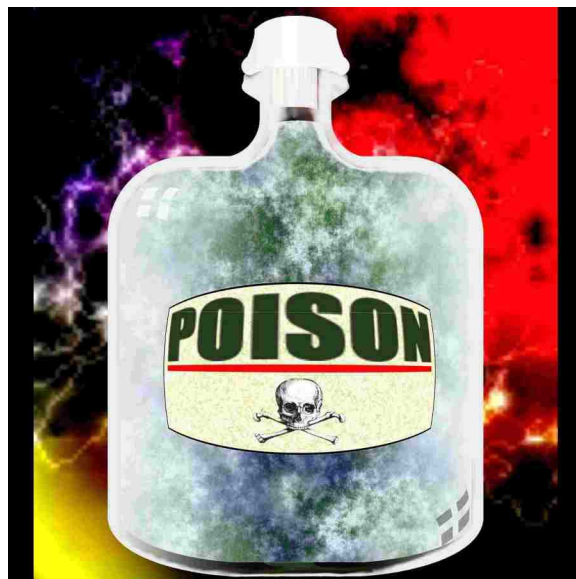
The Temple Guardsmen are the military might of the Hands of Cyrene. Their first duty is to protect the headquarters of the guild. Their second duty is to protect other installations and facilities placed in their care, such as safe houses. Their third duty is to protect the other members of the guild. Fulfilling contracts on behalf of the guild is a poor fourth, and yet is something that Temple Guardsmen are required to do on a regular basis.

There are many reasons for this. It binds the guardsman's loyalties ever closer to the guild. It also keeps their skills sharp. In addition, because they are considered expendable and if a suicide attack is the only way of taking down a target, it falls to a Temple Guardsman, supported by other guild members, to fulfill the contract. Naturally, those who fall in this way become revered as Heroes of the Cause, and given special consideration when summoned before the Celestial Tribunal.

According to myth, Temple Guardsmen are cold-hearted, grey and bleak of outlook. They have a cynical tone and sullen demeanor, their feelings and humanity worn away by years of complicity in deeds of horror and violence, numb to the warmer emotions and moods. This legend derives from the guild's role as professional killers and completely ignores the spiritual aspect of the profession. True Guardsmen feel protected and sheltered. They believe they

contribute to society, and feel comfortable and secure by the knowledge their work is blessed.

Next to the Acolytes of Cyrene, this order is generally the most pious and reverent, though they are less demonstrative of this. The awareness of shelter and of their role in life (and death) is not a burden to them—it is a source of strength and self-confidence. The most boisterous man in the bar might just be a Temple Guardsman. The most charitable man in the district might well be a Temple Guardsman. They make good neighbors and welcome company—to any who do not know of their true vocation. They tend to live large and celebrate being alive; they are frequently optimists and spiritually uplifting.



While the guild has usurped the term, these are the true Hands of Cyrene, and often the only visible face of the guild an outsider will ever see.

Temple Guardsman Prestige Class (D&D 3.5)

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify for membership in the Holy Order of Temple Guardsmen of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- Alignment: any
- Skills: none

- Special: be no more than 5th level; have at least 1 feat from the Fighter bonus feats list; be proficient in the use of all martial weapons, all armor types, and shields; have a total attack bonus (first attack) of +4 or better

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Temple Guardsmen of Cyrene are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at each level: 3 + Int modifier.



Temple Guardsman (D&D 3.5)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1
2	+1	+0	+1	6
3	+1	+0	+0	18/cr
4	+0	+1	+1	21
5	+1	+0	+0	8
6	+1	+0	+1	18
7	+1	+1	+0	7
8	+0	+0	+1	17
9	+1	+0	+0	18/c
10	+1	+1	+1	5, 8
11	+1	+0	+0	13
12	+0	+0	+1	9, 18/cr
13	+1	+1	+0	18/c (must not be the same choice made at level 12)
14	+1	+0	+1	7
15	+1	+0	+0	18/c, 8
16	+0	+1	+1	14, 17
17	+1	+0	+0	4
18	+1	+0	+1	10, 18
19	+1	+1	+0	4
20	+0	+0	+1	7, 19 <u>or</u> 20, 40

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Temple Guardsman of Cyrene prestige class:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: All simple and martial weapons, all armor, shields.

Temple Guardsman Prestige Class (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify for membership in the Holy Order of Temple Guardsmen of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- Alignment: any
- Base Attack Bonus: +4 or better
- Special: be no more than 5th level; have at least 1 feat from the Fighter bonus feats list; be proficient in the use of all martial weapons, all armor types, and shields

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Temple Guardsmen of Cyrene are Acrobatics(Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha),

Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Perception (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Stealth (Dex), Swim (Str), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at each level: 3 + Int modifier

Temple Guardsman (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1
2	+1	+0	+1	6
3	+1	+0	+0	18/cr
4	+1	+1	+1	21
5	+1	+0	+0	Favored Terrain (as ranger)
6	+1	+0	+1	18
7	+1	+1	+0	Death Attack (as assassin)
8	+1	+0	+1	17
9	+1	+0	+0	18/c
10	+1	+1	+1	5, Favored Terrain (as ranger)
11	+1	+0	+0	Push Through (as urban ranger)
12	+1	+0	+1	9, 18/cr
13	+1	+1	+0	18/c (must not be the same choice made at Level 12)
14	+1	+0	+1	Death Attack (as assassin, reduce rounds of study by 1)
15	+1	+0	+0	18/c, Favored Terrain (as ranger)
16	+1	+1	+1	14, 17
17	+1	+0	+0	21
18	+1	+0	+1	10, 18
19	+1	+1	+0	21
20	+1	+0	+1	19/20, 40, Death Attack (as assassin, reduce rounds of study by 1)

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Temple Guardsman of Cyrene prestige class:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: All simple and martial weapons, all armor, shields.



Spirits of Cyrene

The Spirits of Cyrene are drawn to her service from the spiritually enlightened. Flawed, often weak individuals unable to set aside their worldly pleasures and live a life of abstention, they are a vital element in the overall organization of Cyrene's service.

They prepare and maintain the safe houses of the guilds, create the false identities needed by other servants from time to time, establish seemingly mundane and respectable lives, and establish credentials as members of the community so they can vouchsafe or alibi others at need. Their training is no less rigorous than that of other servants, for they may need to defend themselves, the hideaways they maintain or other members of the guild. They may even be called upon to act in Cyrene's name should the primary assassination team fail. The province of the Spirits of Cyrene consists of support, logistics and backup in any forms necessary.

They must be capable of defending themselves and discharging these duties, even while unarmed (to blend into the common populace). Many of their abilities are similar to those they would have mastered early in their former lives, but with diluted focus to include other training elements. This makes them less capable in outright combat than if they remained on the monkish path, but grants far greater variety and flexibility to their repertoire. To be truly effective, they must learn to integrate these raw ingredients into a harmonious whole. Some never master this and are perpetual support staff; others, who pursue a more focused approach, become

feared members of the assassins' guild in their own right.

Spirit of Cyrene Prestige Class (D&D 3.5)

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify for membership in the Holy Order of Temple Guardsmen of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- Alignment: any Lawful
- Skills: none
- Special: have no more than 5 hit dice; have the Flurry of Blows Class Ability (Monk level 1)

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Temple Guardsmen of Cyrene are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Spirit of Cyrene (D&D 3.5)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1(+1), 24, 25, 26
2	+1	+0	+1	4,13
3	+1	+0	+0	1, 35
4	+0	+1	+1	22, 26
5	+1	+0	+0	1,7, 27
6	+1	+0	+1	31, 30, 18
7	+1	+1	+0	33, 35
8	+0	+0	+1	22, 26, 41
9	+1	+0	+0	6, 14, 18
10	+1	+1	+1	7, 9, 28, 39
11	+1	+0	+0	35, 36
12	+0	+0	+1	26, 30, 19
13	+1	+1	+0	5, 8, 15
14	+1	+0	+1	10, 22, 34
15	+1	+0	+0	7, 29, 35, 36, 37
16	+0	+1	+1	26, 18
17	+1	+0	+0	22
18	+1	+0	+1	11, 30
19	+1	+1	+0	8, 20, 35, 36, 37, 38
20	+0	+0	+1	7, 17, 26, 29

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Temple Guardsman of Cyrene prestige class:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: All simple and martial weapons, light armor.

Spirit of Cyrene Prestige Class (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify for membership in the Spirits of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- Alignment: any Lawful
- Special: no more than 5 character levels; have the Flurry of Blows class ability

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Spirit Cyrene are Acrobatics (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist

(Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Perception (Wis) Sense Motive (Wis), Stealth (Dex) and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Spirit of Cyrene (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1(+1), levels stack with monk for Unarmed Damage, Flurry of Blows, AC bonus, and Fast Movement
2	+1	+0	+1	4, Push Through (as urban ranger)
3	+1	+0	+0	1
4	+0	+1	+1	22,
5	+1	+0	+0	1, Death Attack (as assassin)
6	+1	+0	+1	31, 18
7	+1	+1	+0	33
8	+0	+0	+1	22, 41
9	+1	+0	+0	6, 14, 18
10	+1	+1	+1	9, 28, 39, Death Attack (as assassin, reduce rounds of study by 1)
11	+1	+0	+0	
12	+0	+0	+1	19
13	+1	+1	+0	5, 15, Favored Terrain (as ranger)
14	+1	+0	+1	10, 22, 34
15	+1	+0	+0	Death Attack (as assassin, reduce rounds of study by 1)
16	+0	+1	+1	18
17	+1	+0	+0	22
18	+1	+0	+1	11
19	+1	+1	+0	20, Favored Terrain (as ranger)
20	+0	+0	+1	17, Death Attack (as assassin, +2 Save DC)

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Spirit of Cyrene prestige class:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: No weapon proficiencies, light armor but no shields.



Grim Huntsmen

The Grim Huntsmen are bloodhounds and pit bulls, ruthless and relentless hunters who stalk their prey wherever it may run. They are assigned to hunt down and those who seek to escape the guild, and while trained in the fundamentals of assassination, they are rarely called upon to complete a contract solo. Instead, their task is to locate the prey when it goes to ground, and then to summon more proficient killers from the nearest guild. Their training is provided more for self-defense than for attack.

Should needs brook no delays, or should the enemy be only weakened and not dispatched by the Huntsman's cohorts, the Huntsman may be compelled to complete the assignment himself. They are the most dangerous at this time, for the huntsmen are perpetual strangers to wherever they go, with neither loyalty nor love for the local inhabitants; they will slaughter dozens or hundreds just to gain access to their target.

There are those, even within the Hands of Cyrene, who believe the Huntsmen are more animal than man, more feral and savage even than the beasts of the wild. This is an opinion deliberately cultivated by the Huntsmen (hence the self-bestowed "Grim" to their title) to ensure they will be listened to, obeyed and – more importantly – respected, by the other branches of Cyrene's organization.

On occasion, a guild member will (quietly) opine that the Huntsmen give the Hands of Cyrene a bad name. However, Guildmasters are quick to set anyone voicing such an opinion straight. Those who would flout the authority of Cyrene in her own domain and steal life that does not belong to them should know they will be

hunted down and ended by the Hands, whatever the cost, and those around them should be made fearful of standing in the Huntsmen's path. Further, the Huntsmen are only roused to such lengths when the target has proven too much for the assassins sent to carry out Cyrene's will. The Huntsmen know they must be more implacable and indomitable than any others to stand any chance of surviving. Their reputation for ferocity is just as essential in the Huntsmen's armor as the buckles and straps.

Rumors swirl that Cyrene has a soft spot for the Huntsmen, who sacrifice more of their humanity to the cause than any other branch of the Hands, foregoing most human contact and comfort. Whether this is truth or otherwise, Cyrene does not say.

Grim Huntsman Prestige Class (D&D 3.5)

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify for membership in the Holy Order of Temple Guardsmen of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- Alignment: any
- Skills: none
- Special: have no more than 5 Hit Dice; have a Favored Enemy type (ranger Level 1), but no more than one (maximum ranger level 4)

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Temple Guardsmen of Cyrene are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump

(Str), Knowledge (Geography), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.

Grim Huntsman (D&D 3.5)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1, 8, 42, 43
2	+1	+0	+1	18/c
3	+1	+0	+0	23
4	+0	+1	+1	2
5	+1	+0	+0	18/c
6	+1	+0	+1	7, 8
7	+1	+1	+0	15, 4
8	+0	+0	+1	23, 18/c
9	+1	+0	+0	5, 13
10	+1	+1	+1	44, 19 <i>or</i> 20
11	+1	+0	+0	8, 18
12	+0	+0	+1	4, 6
13	+1	+1	+0	23
14	+1	+0	+1	18
15	+1	+0	+0	4
16	+0	+1	+1	7, 8
17	+1	+0	+0	23, 18
18	+1	+0	+1	8
19	+1	+1	+0	17
20	+0	+0	+1	8, 18

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Grim Huntsman prestige class:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: All simple and martial weapons, light armor.

Grim Huntsman Prestige Class (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify for membership in the Grim Huntsmen of Cyrene, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

- Alignment: any
- Special: have no more than 5 character levels

Class Skills

The class skills for a member of the Grim Huntsmen are Acrobatics (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Geography), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Perception (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis) and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.

Grim Huntsman (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Level	BAB	Pref Saves	Class Save	Abilities
1	+1	+1	+1	1, 42, 43, Favored Terrain (as ranger)
2	+1	+0	+1	18/c
3	+1	+0	+0	23
4	+0	+1	+1	2
5	+1	+0	+0	18/c
6	+1	+0	+1	Favored Terrain (as ranger), Death Attack (as assassin)
7	+1	+1	+0	15, 4
8	+0	+0	+1	23, 18/c
9	+1	+0	+0	5, Push Through (as urban ranger)
10	+1	+1	+1	44, 19 or 20
11	+1	+0	+0	18, Favored Terrain (as ranger)
12	+0	+0	+1	4, 6
13	+1	+1	+0	23
14	+1	+0	+1	18
15	+1	+0	+0	4
16	+0	+1	+1	Favored Terrain (as ranger), Death Attack (as assassin, reduce rounds of study by 1)
17	+1	+0	+0	23, 18
18	+1	+0	+1	Favored Terrain (as ranger)
19	+1	+1	+0	17
20	+0	+0	+1	18, Favored Terrain (as ranger)

Class Features

The following are also class features of the Grim Huntsman prestige class:



Weapon and Armor Proficiency: All simple and martial weapons, light armor



Ability Descriptions

The following ability list is common to all the classes detailed above. (Ex) indicates an Extraordinary ability, (Su) indicates a Supernatural Ability.

1. Preferred Save (Ex): At first level, the character may select which of his saves will progress at the "Preferred Save" rate. If a number is specified in brackets afterwards, the increase in save at that level is increased by the amount indicated.

Example: Members of the Spirits of Cyrene normally gain improvements of +1 in both preferred and non-preferred saves with the first level of that class. At first level, they are permitted only one preferred save, but gain +1 additional improvement in that one save.

2. Gather Intelligence (Ex): Gather Information [D&D 3.5] or Diplomacy [Pathfinder] check at DC 20 reveals **one** of the following:

- Habits of target or usual paths travelled
- Preferred resting places
- Security or protection arrangements
- Estimate of combat ability (character levels within ± 3 accuracy)
- Estimate of character abilities (a list of the core character classes of the

target, in random order, possibly incomplete.

Note that some Prestige Classes mimic Core Classes and would be 'revealed' as the Core Class by the use of this ability)

- Likely activities over next 24 hours

Usable 1/day. The referee may, at his discretion, permit a +1 circumstantial modifier to any relevant skill use or attack roll based on this knowledge. These circumstantial modifiers stack and accumulate. Subsequent attempts may not target the same information. Failed checks cannot be rechecked.

3. Improved Gather Intelligence (Ex): As per *Gather Intelligence*, but usable 2/day.

If used a second time to *estimate combat ability*, it gives an answer within ± 1 level. If used a third time for a given target, it reveals BAB.

If used a second time to *estimate character abilities*, it identifies the highest character class achieved without specifying how many levels achieved. If used a third time for this purpose, it identifies the number of prestige classes the target has without specifying levels.

Failed checks can be rechecked once, but only after another check of this type has been successful.

4. Sneak Attack (Ex): This is exactly like the rogue ability of the same name. If an Eye of Cyrene gets a sneak attack bonus from another source the bonuses on damage stack.

5. Poison Use (Ex): Hands of Cyrene are trained in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

6. Quick Draw (Ex): As per the feat of the same name.

7. Death Strike (Su): This confers the character's choice of six abilities:

- **Death Strike I:** Ability to sneak attack at range with ranged weapon (maximum range 60', otherwise as per the rogue ability).
- **Death Strike II:** Ability to sneak attack with second weapon (foregoes remaining off-hand attacks, does not require target to be flanked provided all primary attacks are against the target of the sneak attack, otherwise as per the rogue ability).
- **Death Strike III:** Ability to sneak attack at range with clerical spells that do damage (otherwise as per the rogue ability).
- **Death Strike IV:** Ability to sneak attack with a ranged natural attack in melee (otherwise as per rogue ability).

- **Death Strike V:** Ability to sneak attack with the first of a Flurry of Blows (otherwise as per rogue).
- **Death Strike VI:** Ability to sneak attack with an unarmed attack (otherwise as per rogue).

The Death Strike ability may be conferred multiple times; characters must specify a different type of Death Strike each time.

8. Favored Terrain (Ex): Character selects an environment in which they will receive this miscellaneous bonus to all skill, attack and damage rolls.

- If the character chooses a vague or general description, such as small towns, cities, forests, swamps, the GM awards a +1 modifier.
- If the character chooses an urban sector, such as marketplaces, streets, rooftops, sewers, farms, the GM awards a +2 modifier. This bonus also applies if the character chooses a specific environment, for example, Longbottom Forest or Reeking Worm Swamp.
- If the character chooses a general domestic setting, such as inns, bedrooms, privies, towers, guardrooms, barracks, domestic rooftops, farmhouses, the GM awards a +4 modifier. This bonus also applies if the character chooses a specific urban location such as the town of Gidroll.
- If the character chooses a specific domestic setting, such as the rooftops of Gidroll or the Pig's Breakfast Inn, the GM should award a +6 modifier.

Selection and awards must be conferred at the time the ability is taken and cannot be changed. Subsequent occurrences of this ability do not stack with each other; use the highest available bonus. In general, most servants of Cyrene choose one general or broadly defined bonus and one specific one appropriate to their personal assassination style.

9. Iron Focus (Su): Spell immunities as per elves, once per day.

10. Steel Focus (Su): Spell immunities as per elves, twice per day.

11. Adamantium Focus (Su): Spell immunities as per elves, three times per day.

12. Mithral Mind (Su): Spell Immunities as per elves, once per day per Wisdom modifier.

13. Urban Stride (Ex): Permits the character to move over broken or slippery ground or other surface in an urban setting at his normal speed regardless of debris or other non-magical impediment. This includes caltrops but not other forms of traps. *Urban Stride* does not confer immunity to pit traps, for example, nor does it prevent some sort of alchemical glue slowing the character. It does include rooftops.

14. Uncanny Dodge (Ex): As per the rogue ability of the same name.

15. Urban Blend (Ex): Permits the character to use Hide [D&D 3.5] or Stealth [Pathfinder] skill in any urban setting even if there is no cover or concealment as a standard action. Character's check total minus 10 is the DC for him to be spotted if there is no cover or concealment.

16. Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): Permits the character to employ the Disguise skill even if being observed.

17. Wholeness of Body (Su): Permits the character to heal their own wounds to a maximum of their current Assassin of Cyrene level each day. These healings can be spread amongst several uses.



18. Special Ability Options List 1: Permits the character to choose **one** of the following special abilities:

a) Clerical Spell Use (Su): The character's ability to cast clerical spells increases by +1 level of spell. Add 1 to the spell level and multiply by 1.5, round up. Each time that many levels are gained as an Assassin of Cyrene, the character will gain one new spell in the new level of spell. *For example, a character chooses Clerical Spell Use for the first time at Assassin of Cyrene level 8. This confers on the character the ability to cast 0 and 1st level clerical spells. He starts with one 1st level spell slot (plus any bonus spells from Wisdom). Spell level 1, plus 1, is 2; $2 \times 1.5 = 3$. So every three levels in an appropriate class confer an additional 1st level spell slot, i.e. levels 11, 14, 17, and 20.*

The same character chooses the same ability upon reaching 12th level. This confers the ability to cast the next highest level of spell, i.e. 2nd level spells. The character starts with one 2nd level slot plus any bonuses from Wisdom. $2+1=3$; $3 \times 1.5=4.5$; so at 17th level as an Assassin of Cyrene, the character will gain a second spell slot for 2nd-level spells.

Note that this progression is *much* slower than that of ordinary clerical spell use. See also the note below.

b) Sneak Attack (Ex): +1d6.

c) Bonus Feat (Ex): As per fighter. Feat must be drawn from the fighter bonus feat list and all requirements must be met.

d) Combat Style/Improved Combat Style/Combat Style Mastery (Ex): As per ranger. A character may never have more than one combat style.

Note that some Servants of Cyrene may not choose this option on all occasions. These occasions will refer to "Special Ability 1/r",

i.e. "Special Ability 1 without ranger option" or to "Special Ability 1/cr" if both clerical spell use and ranger options are restricted. See also the note below.

Notations:

18/c indicates that the character may not choose *Clerical Spell Use* from the list above.

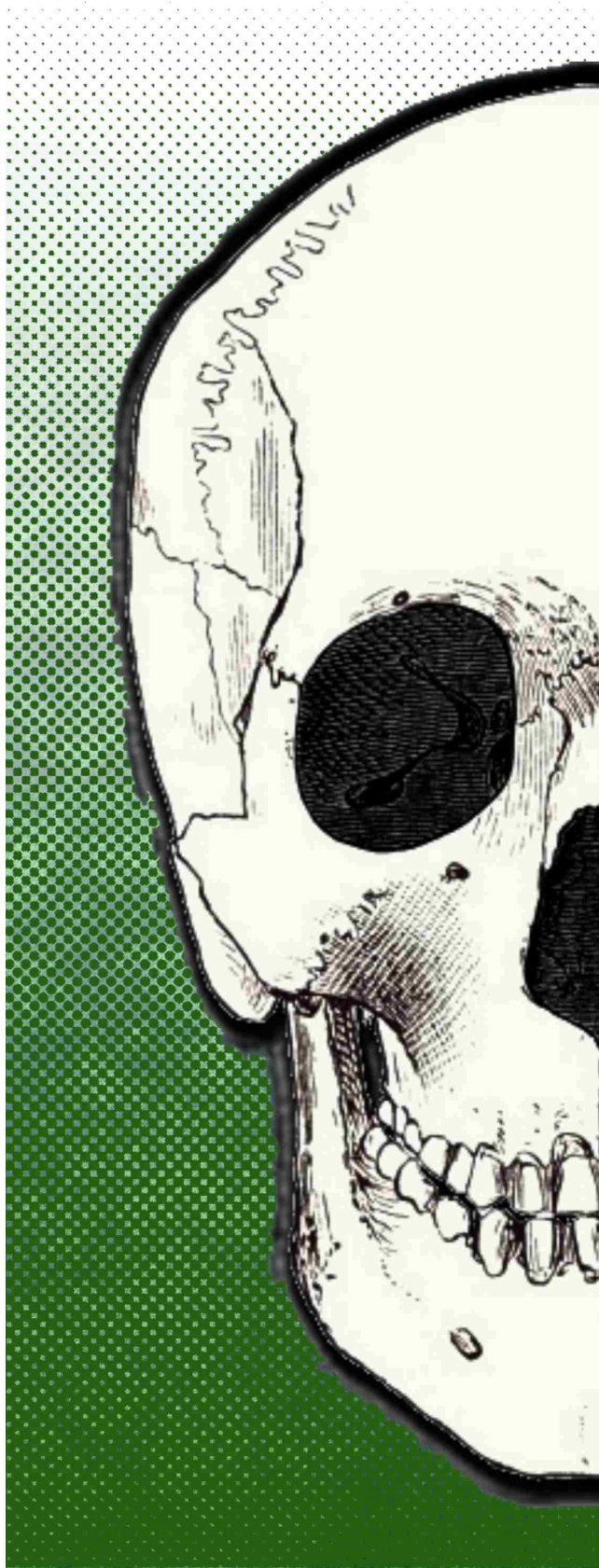
18/r indicates that characters may not choose the *Combat Style* option hierarchy.

18/cr indicates that neither of these choices is available at that particular level.



Cyrene at her most seductive

[Signature]



19. Special Ability 2 Options List 2:

Permits the character to choose **one** of the following special abilities:

a) Turn/Rebuke Undead (Su): As per a 1st level cleric, +1 effective level for each level of Servant of Cyrene thereafter.

b) Sneak Attack (Ex): +1d6.

c) Bonus Feat (Ex): As per fighter. Feat must be drawn from the fighter bonus feat list and all requirements must be met.

d) BAB (Ex): +1 additional BAB improvement for the next three levels. *For example, a character with a BAB of +6/+1 chooses this option when he gains 5th Level as an Eye of Cyrene. The normal improvement to his BAB at 5th, 6th, and 7th levels would be +1, +1 and +1, according to the table above. Because of this ability, the improvements are +2, +2 and +2 before reverting to the standard improvement progression.*

Without this choice, his attacks would be at:

- 5th level: old BAB +6/+1, + standard BAB improvement +1 = +7/+2
- 6th level: old BAB +7/+2, + standard BAB improvement +1 = +8/+3
- 7th level: old BAB +8/+3, + standard BAB improvement +1 = +9/+4

With it, he gets:

- 5th level: old BAB +6/+1, + standard BAB improvement +1, + bonus BAB +1 = +8/+3
- 6th level: old BAB +8/+3, + standard BAB improvement +1, + bonus BAB +1 = +10/+5
- 7th level: old BAB +10/+5, + standard BAB improvement +1, + bonus BAB +1 = +12/+7/+2

20. Special Ability Options List 3: Permits the character to choose **one** of the following special abilities:

a) Spontaneous Casting (S): As cleric.

b) Spontaneous Harm (Su): As Spontaneous Casting, but doing damage instead of healing. Note that the *Death Strike III* ability permits the use of *Spontaneous Harm* as a sneak attack, with all benefits and restrictions that go with a sneak attack (including additional dice of damage).

c) Sneak Attack (Ex): +1d6.

d) Bonus Feat (Ex): As per fighter. Feat must be drawn from the fighter bonus feat list and all requirements must be met.

e) Improved Save (Ex): +1 to a non-preferred saving throw for each of the next three levels. For example, a character with poor Reflex and Will saves (preferred save is Fort) of 12 and 10 respectively, takes this option at 10th level. Utilizing this option, at 10th level, the character receives +1 Reflex save; at 11th level, +1 Will Save; and at 12th level he receives another +1 Reflex Save.

The normal improvement progression is +1, +0 and +0, giving saves of:

- 10th level: Reflex: Old Save 12, +standard save improvement +1 =13
- 11th level: Reflex: Old Save 13, +standard save improvement +0 =13
- 12th level: Reflex: Old Save 13, +standard save improvement +0 =13

And:

- 10th level: Will: Old Save 10, +standard save improvement +1 =11

- 11th level: Will: Old Save 11, +standard save improvement +0 =11
- 12th level: Will: Old Save 11, +standard save improvement +0 =11

With these bonuses, the character gets:

- 10th level: Reflex: Old Save 12, +standard save improve +1, +1 bonus improvement =14
- 11th level: Reflex: Old Save 14, +standard save improve +0 =14
- 12th level: Reflex: Old Save 14, +standard save improve +0, +1 bonus improvement =15

And:

- 10th level: Will: Old Save 10, +standard save improve +1 =11
- 11th level: Will: Old Save 11, +standard save improve +0, +1 bonus improvement = 12
- 12th level: Will: Old Save 12, +standard save improve +0 = 12

21. Bonus Feat (Ex): As per fighter.

22. Bonus Feat 2 (Ex): As per monk.

23. Favored Enemy (Ex): As per ranger, but the choices are expanded to include a specific character class. Note that no matter how similar one class may be to another, that similarity is insufficient. Only if a character has at least half their levels in the specified class is the Favored Enemy bonus operative. Alternatively, the character may specify an occupation or activity, such as blacksmithing or washing clothes, in which case the favored enemy benefits would accrue against anyone engaged in that occupation or activity, regardless of class. Any benefits from Favored Enemy stack with the benefits of Favored Terrain.

24. Flurry of Blows (Ex): As per monk.

25. Unarmed Strike (Ex): As per monk.

26. Unarmed Damage (Ex): From normal to 1d6, or from 1d6 to 1d8, then to 1d10, 1d12, 2d6, 2d8, 2d10, 2d12, and so on.

27. Second Strike (Ex): Permits the character to make a second unarmed attack in a round using Flurry of Blows. May be used a number of times each day equal to the character's Cha bonus. When this number of uses is exhausted, the character may only make one unarmed attack per round using Flurry of Blows.

28. Third Strike (Ex): Permits the character to make a third unarmed attack in a round using Flurry of Blows. May be used a number of times each day equal to half the character's Cha bonus, rounded up. Using this ability does not count against the usage restriction of *Second Strike*.

29. Fourth Strike (Ex): Permits the character to make a fourth unarmed attack in a round using Flurry of Blows. May be used a number of times each day equal to one-quarter the character's Cha bonus, rounded up. Using this ability does not count against the usage restriction of *Second Strike* or *Third Strike*.

30. AC Bonus (Ex): Grants the character a +1 reflex bonus to AC, increasing by +1 each time this ability is taken. This AC bonus does not apply in any situation in which the character does not get his Dex bonus to AC.

31. Still Mind (Ex): As per monk.

32. [D&D 3.5] Ki Strike (Su) or [Pathfinder] Ki Pool (Su): As per monk.

33. Slow Fall 20ft. (Ex): As per monk.

34. Slow Fall 30ft. (Ex): As per monk.

35. Unarmored Speed Bonus (Ex): Character gains +10 ft. base movement when wearing no armor.

36. Light Speed Bonus (Ex): Character gains +10 ft. base movement when wearing light armor.

37. Medium Speed Bonus (Ex): Character gains +10 ft. base movement when wearing medium armor.

38. Heavy Armor Bonus (Ex): Character gains +10 ft. base movement when wearing heavy armor.

39. Purity of Body (Ex): As per monk.

40. Clerical Spell Use (Su): As per the option listed under 18 above.

41. Spellcraft (Ex): Permits the character to add Spellcraft to the list of class skills for a Cyrene-related class from this level onwards.

42. Track (Ex): A 1st level Grim Huntsman gains Track [D&D 3.5] or Survival [Pathfinder] as a bonus feat if he does not have it already, modified as follows: any Favored Terrain or Favored Enemy modifiers are applicable to the track check. In urban or built-up areas, the Huntsman has the option of moving at 1/4 normal speed and gaining a further +5 to his tracking roll. However, Huntsmen do not have the option of tracking at normal speed in wilderness regions, even with the -5 modifier that rangers normally apply.

Further, in urban areas, the Huntsman may attempt to reacquire a trail lost through a Gather Information [D&D 3.5] or Diplomacy [Pathfinder] (by asking questions of the locals or other means). This

check is made using the same modifiers as the failed Track check, plus any additional time modifier that may apply. The base DC should be determined from the general attitude of those being questioned:

Cooperative or Friendly	5
Uncooperative and Intimidated	10
Uncooperative	15
Hostile & Intimidated	15
Hostile	20

43. Target Empathy (Ex): A 1st level Grim Huntsman may replace his existing [D&D 3.5] Animal Empathy or [Pathfinder] Wild Empathy ability with this ability, which permits the Huntsman to put himself in the mindset of his target and predict which path he will follow, whether he will go to ground in a given specific location, and so on.



This ability requires a Sense Motive check. The base DC is determined by the GM according to how much the Huntsman knows about the target:

- Has had one or more lengthy conversations with the target, has stayed at least an hour in the victim's residence, has visited the victim's place of employment, and has spoken with his neighbors, family and colleagues: DC 5
- Each of the above that has not been done, for any reason: +5, cumulative
- Only name, description, physical characteristics, clothes worn and professional reputation known: DC 40
- Each of the above that are unknown: +5
- Maximum difficulty: nothing specific known: DC 75

44. [D&D 3.5] Animal Empathy (Ex) or [Pathfinder] Wild Empathy (Ex): As per the ranger ability. A Grim Huntsman who has traded in this ability at 1st level regains it upon reaching 10th level. If the Grim Huntsman already has Animal Empathy from a prior class level of ranger, he gains the Target Empathy ability above.

45. Additional Weapons Proficiency: Starting at 3rd level, and at every odd level thereafter, the character may add proficiency in a single martial weapon to their proficiencies list.



Guildmaster NPCs

The Hands of Cyrene use the term Guildmaster in two different ways.

1. As the title of the master of the local guild chapter, who is always the highest-level Acolyte of Cyrene resident within a specific local guild chapter.
2. To refer to the overall master of the guild.

In game use, the term also means any extension of one of the Prestige Classes or

the Core Class *Acolytes of Cyrene*. Refer to these characters as Guildmaster, with a subtype indicating the extending class. For example, Guildmaster (Eyes of Cyrene). Since all such extensions are inherently epic levels, this option may not apply in specific campaigns.

Note that Guildmaster is a title available to Acolytes of Cyrene who achieve a certain level, and is not a core or prestige class.

Vertti Setlak, Guildmaster of Cyrene (D&D 3.5)

Human Male Level 20 Acolyte of Cyrene; CR 20; Medium humanoid; HD 20; hp 122; Init +12; Spd 30 ft.; AC 34 (36 vs. selected target [Dodge], +4 vs. some AoO [Mobility]), touch AC 20 (22 vs. selected target [Dodge], +4 vs. some AoO [Mobility]), flat-footed AC 29; Base Atk +15/+10/+5; Grp +18; Atk +29/+29 melee (1d6+8/15-20, +5 Keen Rapier of Speed); Full Atk +29/+29/+24/+19 melee (1d6+8/15-20, +5 Keen Rapier of Speed) or +28 ranged (1d4+5, +5 Returning Dagger); AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +24, Will +22; Str 16, Dex 26, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 27, Cha 24.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +24, Diplomacy +24, Hide +41, Gather Information +24, Jump +33, Knowledge Religion +23, Knowledge Area Lore +23, Move Silently +41, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +17, Tumble +26; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse Rapier, Weapon Focus Rapier

Class Abilities: +2 Dodge bonus to AC, +2 Save vs. Enchantment and Immunity to Sleep 8/day, +10 ft. Move when wearing Medium Armor or less, Clerical Spell Use (Level 14), Death Strike - clerical spells and ranged, Disguise, Favored Enemy +2 (Nobility), Favored Terrain (the city of X), Poison Use, Slowfall 20ft., Sneak Attack +11d6, Spontaneous Casting (Cure), Wholeness of Body 20 HP/Day

Possessions: Boots of Leaping and Striding, Buckler +5 with Heavy Fortification and Spell Resistance 19, Circlet of Persuasion, Cloak of Charisma +6, 3 x Dagger +5 with Returning, Gloves of Dexterity +6, Studded Leather +5 with Greater Shadow, Greater Silent Moves and Etherealness, Periapt of Wisdom +6, Potions (Cure Serious Wounds x 3 and Flight x 3), Rapier +5 with Speed and Keen, Ring of Invisibility, Ring of Protection +5, Guildmaster's Amulet (see Chapter 5)

Notes: Dex bonus limited to +5 by armor. Replacing the +5 studded leather with a set of padded armor and the same enchantments would cost +2 armor bonus but permit the Dex bonus to increase by +3, for a net improvement of +1 to AC (+3

touch AC, -1 flat footed AC). This change would also improve attacks with the Rapier by +3 to hit. Vertti prefers the security of better protection when caught by surprise, even though he would be more effective in battle without it

Vertti Setlak, Guildmaster of Cyrene (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game) CR 20

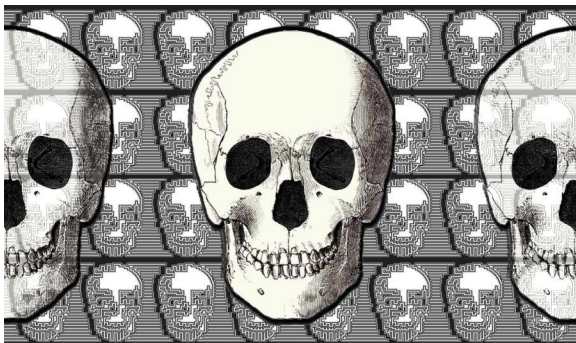
Male Human Acolyte of Cyrene 20
LE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +12; **Senses** Perception +28

Defense

AC 34 (36 vs. selected target [Dodge], +4 vs. some AoO [Mobility]), touch 20 (22 vs. selected target [Dodge], +4 vs. some AoO [Mobility]), flat-footed 29
HP 142 (20d8+60) (+40 Con +20 Favoured Class)
Fort +14, **Ref** +24, **Will** +22; +2 vs. enchantment, immunity to Sleep 8/day

Offense

Speed 30 ft.
Melee +5 Keen Rapier of Speed +29/+24/+19 (1d6+8/18-20 x2)
Ranged +5 Returning Dagger +28/+23/+18 (1d4+8/20 x2)
Special Attacks Death Attack (2 rounds of study), Sneak Attack +11d6, Favored Enemy +2 (Nobility)



Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 26, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 27, **Cha** 24
Base Atk +15/+10/+5; **CMB** +18; **CMD** +33
Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Stealthy, Weapon Focus Rapier, Weapon Finesse Rapier
Skills Acrobatics +26, Bluff +24, Diplomacy +24, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (area lore) +23, Knowledge (nobility) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Perception +28, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +41
Languages Common
SQ +10 ft. Move when wearing Medium Armor or less, +2 Dodge bonus to AC, Clerical Spell Use (level 14), Disguise, Favored Terrain (the city of X), Poison Use, Slowfall 20 ft., Sneak Attack +11d6, Spellcraft (added to skill list), Spontaneous Casting (Cure), Wholeness of Body 20 HP/Day

Gear Boots of Leaping and Striding, Buckler +5 Heavy Fortification and Spell Resistance 19, Circlet of Persuasion, Cloak of Charisma +6, Daggers (x3) +5 Returning, Gloves of Dexterity +6, Periapt of Wisdom +6, Potions of Cure Serious Wounds (3) and Flight (3), Rapier +5 of Speed and Keen, Ring of Invisibility, Ring of Protection +5, Studded Leather +5 Greater Shadow Greater Silent Moves and Etherealness, Guildmaster's Amulet (refer Chapter 5)

History and Description Of Vertti Setlak

Personality and history

See Vertti's information in the Hooks section (Hook #126).

Description

Setlak stands 5'10" tall and is very thin. He is approximately 40 years old, and has thin,

short-cropped black hair and beard. His eyes are dark brown and deep set beneath carefully-maintained thin eyebrows. He is known to dress all in black with golden buckles on his gloves, belts, and boots. The hilt of his rapier is basketwoven and gilded; it is kept in a black-leather scabbard at all times. Setlak's image is one calculated to appear sinister and threatening.



Leebuk Hagan, Deceased Guildmaster of Cyrene (D&D 3.5) CR 25

Male Half-Elven Ghost former Guildmaster of Cyrene; Medium humanoid; HD 20d12+40; hp 164; Init +12; Spd 50ft (Ethereal)., Fly 30ft. (Materialized, Perfect); AC 35, +4 vs. some AoO (Mobility), +1 vs. selected target (Dodge), touch 31, +4 vs. some AoO (Mobility), +1 vs. selected target (Dodge), flat-footed 24; Incorporeal, Manifestation (All corporeal attacks have 50% miss chance); Base Atk +15/+10/+5; Grp +21, +1 in favored terrain (Ethereal); Atk +30 melee (1d6+10/18-20; +5 Rapier; +1 attack, +1 damage in favored terrain; 50% chance no damage on corporeal targets) or +24 ranged (1d4+10; +5 Returning Dagger; +1 attack, +1 damage in favored terrain; 50% chance no damage on corporeal targets); Full Atk +30/+25/+20 melee (1d6+10/18-20; +5 Rapier; +1 attack, +1 damage in favored terrain; 50% chance no damage on corporeal targets) or +24/+19/+14 ranged (1d4+10; +5 Returning Dagger; +1 attack, +1 damage in favored terrain; 50% chance no damage on corporeal targets); SA See below; SD See below; SQ See below; AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +26, Will

+19; Str 16, Dex 26, Con -, Int 16, Wis 27, Cha 28.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +16, Concentration +24, Diplomacy +19, Disguise +12, Gather Information +19, Heal +9, Hide +28, Intimidate +22, Jump +17, Knowledge (Arcana) +4, Knowledge (History) +4, Knowledge (Local) +9, Knowledge (Religion) +13, Knowledge (The Planes) +4, Listen +24, Move Silently +20, Search +24, Sense Motive +17, Sleight Of Hand +8, Spellcraft +16, Spot +28, Tumble +12; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Mobility, Spring Attack, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse (Rapier, Daggers), Weapon Focus (Rapier)

Special Attacks: Corrupting Touch (Save DC 27): 1d6+3 vs. ethereal, 1d6+8 vs. material (Su); Draining Touch (save DC 27): reduce one stat by 1d4 and heal 5 points (Su); See also Class Abilities, below

Special Qualities: Manifestation (can be hit only by incorporeal, spells and magic weapons, 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source); Rejuvenation (reforms 2d4 days after being destroyed); Turn Resistance +4; Automatically makes Fort Saves (Undead) unless effect is harmless or also affects objects, Racial bonus +8 to Hide, Listen, Search, Spot; Darkvision 60'; Immune to all Mind-Affecting effects; Immune to poisons, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease and death effects; Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, physical ability drains and energy drain; Immune to fatigue and exhaustion effects; Concentration is Charisma based; Immune to Massive Damage effects; Destroyed on reaching 0 HP but note Rejuvenation above; Not affected by Raise Dead or Reincarnate abilities; Resurrection and True Resurrection can restore to life; Does not breathe, eat, or sleep; Spell Resistance 17 (Buckler)

Class Abilities: Preferred Save (Reflex); Sneak Attack +10d6; Poison Use; Quick Draw as per feat; Death Strike III (Clerical Spells), I (Ranged Attacks); Favored Terrain (City Of X +1 to all skill attack and damage rolls); Spell Immunities +2 Save vs. Enchantments and Immunity to Sleep 8/day*; Urban Blend (Hide even if there is no cover); Wholeness of Body 20 HP; NB: description on p108 refers only to Eye Of Cyrene Levels, should be any of the

Assassin Of Cyrene class levels; Spontaneous Casting - Cause Light Wounds; Favored Enemy (Nobles); +2 reflex bonus to AC except flat-footed; Slow Fall 20ft.; +10 ft Base Movement when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (Ethereal); Clerical Spell Use 9/6/5/5/2; Spellcraft added to class skill list; Weapon Proficiencies: All Simple Weapons, Natural Weapons, Rapier, Longsword, Axe (Throwing), Sword, Short, Pick, light, Pick, heavy, Flail, Scimitar, Hammer, light

* This class ability is redundant given that undead have immunity to these effects.

Ghost Abilities: Automatic success Move Silently (involuntary), Rejuvenation - if "Destroyed", Hagan will reform in 2d4 days

Possessions (Ghostly): Studded Leather +5 with Greater Shadow, Greater Silent Moves and Etherealness, Buckler +5 with Light Fortification and Spell Resistance 17, Rapier +5 with Speed and Keen, 2 x Dagger +5 Returning, Potions of Cure Serious Wounds x 3 and Flight x 3, Ring of Telekinesis, Ring of Invisibility, Gloves of Dexterity +6, Periapt of Wisdom +6, Cloak of Charisma +6, Belt Of Giant Strength +4, Circlet of Persuasion, Boots of Striding & Springing, Dust Of Appearance

Description & History: Refer Below



Leebuk Hagan, Deceased Guildmaster of Cyrene (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Male Half-Elven Ghost former Guildmaster of Cyrene 22

Neutral Medium undead (human ghost)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +32; Darkvision 60 feet

Defense

AC 26, touch 16, flat-footed 23 (+0 armor, +3 Dex, +13 Deflection), Incorporeal

HP 340 (20d8+260)

Fort +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +29; channel resistance +4

Offense

Speed 30 ft. fly

Melee -

Ranged -

Special Attacks Corrupting Gaze, Corrupting Touch, Draining Touch, Frightful Moan, Malevolence, Telekinesis; Death Attack (+2 Save DC, 1 Rounds of Study Required), Favored Enemy (Wizards), Favored Terrain (guild headquarters where Ghost is summoned), Poison Use, Sneak Attack +19d6

Description & History Of Leebuk Hagan

Leebuk Hagan was the Guildmaster of the Arms of Cyrene for almost 60 years, but that was 140 years ago. At the end of his reign as the head of the guild, he did something terrible, though no one in modern times knows what; all record of the specifics was expunged from guild records. What is known is the guild itself hunted him down and ended his life. As punishment for his transgression (whatever it was), Cyrene sentenced him to earn redemption in the afterlife by acting as a guardian for all guild headquarters until he is either permanently

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** -, **Int** 13, **Wis** 34, **Cha** 36

Base Atk +16/+11/+6; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 29

Feats Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell

Penetration, Heighten Spell, Improved

Counterspell, Improved Initiative,

Maximize Spell, Quick Draw, Quicken

Spell, Silent Spell, Spell Penetration

Skills Fly +34, Intimidate +43, Knowledge

Arcana +24, Knowledge Religion +24,

Spellcraft +24, Stealth +34

Languages Common

SQ +10ft movement with Med. Armor, AC

Bonus +2, Disguise, Slow fall 20ft.,

Rejuvenation, Spellcasting 20th, Wholeness

of Body 20 hp/day

Gear Cloak of Protection +5, Greater Rod of

Metamagic - Enlarge, Greater Staff of

Charming +5, Ring of Elemental Command

- Fire, Ring of Evasion, Robe +5 SR19

Greater Fire Resistance (ER Fire 30), Rod of

Metamagic - Extend

destroyed in the service of the guild or has completed 1000 years service, plus a day. You should determine the nature of Hagan's offense against the guild. It should be something serious, such as using a magic item he was supposed to see destroyed to extend the life of his child.

Hagan manifests as a short human male. He appears somewhat pudgy and overweight, almost corpulent. His complexion manages to be pasty and pale at the same time, and he sweats constantly. His manner is

controlled, and he never seems to blink. Clean-shaven, his hair is long and a washed-out brownish shade of blonde, normally tied back behind his head by a silver band. The hair covers the tips of his ears, so it is not immediately obvious he is a half-elf. A tattoo of a Green Dragon on his right hand matches closely the shade of his eyes. He behaves as someone who is ashamed but unrepentant. However, he will not betray the guild he serves in temporary undeath.

His dark green robe is stained with blood, and bears scorch marks. His reversible hooded cloak is a lighter green color on the outside and black on the inside. His belt buckle is pitted brass. He normally carries a rod in each hand, but specially designed *holsters* with leather clasps let him stow one

in a move action and retrieve it in a move action. Using Quick Draw enables him to draw or holster one of these rods as a free action.

His staff, which he conceals in a deep pocket, folds into short lengths. Its *snap and lock* design let him extend it with a simple flick of the wrist, however its reduced strength makes it useless as a weapon.

In his ghostly form, Hagan's prefers to Charm/Dominate the will of the most effective-looking fighter, as they are usually the most susceptible to this form of attack. His cats-paw will attack his companions by surprise, permitting Hagan to employ his touch attacks on those companions while they are distracted.



New Monster

Phantasmal Foe CR 10 (D&D 3.5)

Neutral, Medium Outsider (Positive Energy Construct)

Hit Dice: 10d10+45 (100 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 50 ft, Fly (good) 60ft.

AC: 19, Touch 17, Flatfooted 16 (+3 Dex, +4 Deflection, +2 Natural)

Attacks: 2 slams +7 each

Damage: 3d6 +4

Face/Reach: 10 ft by 10 ft / 10 ft

Special Attacks: Force Burst, Force Pulse, Healing Grapple, Weapon Simulation



Special Qualities: Construct traits, Outsider traits, Elemental Traits, DR 3/Magic, Immunity Magic, Sonic Resist 10, Regeneration 3, Reactive Capacity, Spell-like Abilities

Weakness: Force Vulnerability, Negative Energy Vulnerability

Saves: Fort -, Ref+10, Will+7

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 17, Con -, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14

Skills: Balance +8, Jump +11, Listen +2, Spot +3, Tumble +9

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot

Climate/Terrain: Positive Energy Plane

Organization: Solitary

Alignment: Neutral

Treasure: None

Advancement: +3-5 HD (Large), +6-12 HD (Huge)

Force Burst (Su): Once every three rounds a phantasmal foe can create a burst of force centered on itself, which pushes outwards to a maximum extent of 30 feet radius with Str 24. Creatures in the zone of effect take 1d6 damage and are pushed out to the edge of the effect unless they choose to resist. If a creature chooses to resist, he makes a Strength check at DC 24. If he succeeds, he takes 1d6 damage but remains in place. If he fails, he takes 2d6 damage and is pushed to the edge of the effect. All creatures within the zone of effect or pushed out from it must also make a Reflex save at DC 14 or be knocked prone.

Force Pulse (Sp): A phantasmal foe can target any corporeal opponent within 60' with a ranged touch attack. If the attack hits, both combatants make an opposed Strength check. If the phantasmal foe wins

the opposed check, the opponent is pushed 10' in the direction of the phantasmal foe's choice and knocked prone in the square it ends this movement in. This movement may invoke attacks of opportunity from other combatants against the target, but use of this ability does not invoke an attack of opportunity against the phantasmal foe.

A force pulse can only push an opponent in a straight line. If an intervening obstacle prevents the target being pushed 10', both target and obstacle take 1d6 damage and the target falls prone in the square it was in before striking the obstacle.

Any feat or special ability that confers a bonus to resist Bull Rush attempts may be applied to this opposed Strength check.

Healing Grapple (Su): If a phantasmal foe grapples with an opponent, it begins to flood the opponent with positive energy. This energy flow continues and grows for each round that the grapple continues unbroken, starting at 1d6 and increasing by 1d6 each round thereafter to a maximum of 1d6 per Hit Dice of the phantasmal foe. Initially, this energy will heal the opponent, but once the target reaches his full hit points, it begins burning out the tissues of the body (i.e. inflicting damage), eventually consuming the target. Maintaining this grapple and inflicting this damage counts as a free action by the phantasmal foe, which can attack other enemies at the same time as it is exercising this ability. Only one target can be subjected to a Healing Grapple at a time.

For example, a phantasmal foe grapples successfully with a foe who has taken 35 points of damage previously in the battle. In the first round, the Healing Grapple heals 1d6 damage; in the second, 2d6 damage; in the third, 3d6 damage; and in the fourth 4d6 damage. The target is now fully healed. In

the fifth round, the healing grapple inflicts 5d6 damage; in the sixth, 6d6; then 7d6, 8d6, 9d6; and if the target is still alive at this point, having sustained 35d6 damage, then from the tenth round onwards the Healing Grapple will inflict 10d6 damage per round.

If the grapple is broken and then reestablished, the flow resumes at 1d6. If the target is a creature vulnerable to positive energy, there is **no** healing effect, the Healing Grapple does nothing but damage. Victims describe the effect as “like having liquid fire crawling under your skin, everything burns without leaving a mark.”

Weapon Simulation (Sp): A phantasmal foe can reshape its arms/hands to create a perfect simulation of any melee weapon. If it does so, its attacks and damage alter to reflect the damage that would be inflicted by a creature of its abilities wielding such a weapon. The weapons are non-magical but count as magic for the purposes of overcoming DR.

Construct Traits: As per Core Rulebook III, except as noted.

Outsider Traits: As per Core Rulebook III, except as noted.

Elemental Traits: As per Core Rulebook III, except as noted.

DR 3/Magic (Su): All Force and Negative Energy attacks bypass this DR.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A phantasmal foe is immune to spells and spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance, unless it chooses otherwise. This immunity does not extend to Force or Negative Energy effects.

Sonic Resist 10 (Ex): Phantasmal foes take 10 points less damage from sonic attacks, as they are partially immaterial.

Regeneration 3 (Su): Unlike most constructs, phantasmal foes can regenerate damage, except as noted above, at the rate of 3 points per round.

Reactive Capacity (Su): A phantasmal foe adapts its internal structure to target vulnerabilities in its opponents. For every 2 HD the phantasmal foe possesses, it can apply +1 to Dex, to Str, or to AC (increased deflection bonus). In the first round of combat, the amount of bonus is +0, in the second, it is +1, in the third, +2, and so on, until the full bonus is allocated. All bonuses must be allocated to the same score, the phantasmal foe cannot mix-and-match. The phantasmal foe gains all the associated benefits of these increased characteristics.

If the target's Str is greater than or equal to the target's Dex and AC, the bonus will be conferred to the phantasmal foe's Dex.

If the target's Dex is greater than or equal to the target's Str and AC and the bonus has not already been allocated, it will be conferred to the phantasmal foe's AC.

If the target's AC is greater than or equal to the target's Str and Dex, and the bonus has not already been allocated, it will be conferred to the phantasmal foe's Str.

When confronted by multiple foes, the totals of the above characteristics of all foes faced will be used to determine the effect of the Reactive Capacity.

Spell-Like Abilities (Su): Three times per day, a Phantasmal Foe can employ each of the following spell-like abilities as though cast by a 10th level mage: Invisibility, Gaseous Form. These effects can be used in combination but must be activated separately.

Force Vulnerability (Ex): Force effects do +50% damage to a Phantasmal Foe.

Negative Energy Vulnerability (Ex):
Negative Energy effects do double damage

to a Phantasmal Foe. The additional damage cannot be regenerated and must be healed normally.

Phantasmal Foe CR 10 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

Neutral, Medium Outsider (Positive Energy Construct)

Hit Dice: 10d10+45 (100 hp)
Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 50 ft, Fly (good) 60 ft.
AC: 19, Touch 17, Flatfooted 16 (+3 Dex, +4 Deflection, +2 Natural)

Full Attacks: 2 slams at +10 each (3d6 +5)
Standard Attack: 1 slam +10 (2d6+5)
Face/Reach: 10 ft by 10 ft / 10 ft

Special Attacks: Force Burst, Force Pulse, Healing Grapple, Weapon Simulation
Special Qualities: Construct traits, Outsider traits, Elemental Traits, DR 5/Magic, Immunity Magic, Sonic Resist 10, Regeneration 3, Reactive Capacity, Spell-like Abilities
Weakness: Force Vulnerability, Negative Energy Vulnerability

Saves: Fort -, Ref+10, Will+7

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 17, Con -, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14

Skills: Acrobatics +9, Jump +11, Perception +3, Intimidate +7
Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot
Climate/Terrain: Positive Energy Plane

Organization: Solitary

Alignment: Neutral

Treasure: None
Advancement: +3-5 HD (Large), +6-12 HD (Huge)

Force Burst (Su): Once every three rounds, a phantasmal foe can create a burst of force centered on itself, which pushes outwards to a maximum extent of 30 feet radius with Str 24. Creatures in the zone of effect take 1d6 damage and are pushed out to the edge of the effect unless they choose to resist. If a creature chooses to resist, he makes a Strength check at DC 24. If he succeeds, he takes 1d6 damage but remains in place. If he fails, he takes 2d6 damage and is pushed to the edge of the effect. All creatures within the zone of effect or pushed out from it must also make a Reflex save at DC 14 or be knocked prone.

Force Pulse (Sp): A phantasmal foe can target any corporeal opponent within 60' with a ranged touch attack. If the attack hits, both combatants make an opposed Strength check. If the phantasmal foe wins the opposed check, the opponent is pushed 10' in the direction of the phantasmal foe's choice and knocked prone in the square it ends this movement in. This movement might invoke attacks of opportunity from other combatants against the target, but use of this ability does not invoke an attack of opportunity against the phantasmal foe.

A force pulse can only push an opponent in a straight line. If an intervening obstacle prevents the target being pushed 10', both target and obstacle take 1d6 damage and the target falls prone in the square it was in before striking the obstacle.

Any feat or special ability that confers a bonus to resist Bull Rush attempts may be applied to this opposed Strength check.

Healing Grapple (Su): If a phantasmal foe grapples with an opponent, it begins to flood the opponent with positive energy. This energy flow continues and grows for each round the grapple continues unbroken, starting at 1d6 and increasing by 1d6 each round thereafter, to a maximum of 1d6 per Hit Dice of the phantasmal foe. Initially, this energy will heal the opponent, but once the target reaches his full hit points, it begins burning out the tissues of the body (i.e. inflicting damage), eventually consuming the target. Maintaining this grapple and inflicting this damage counts as a free action by the phantasmal foe, which can attack other enemies at the same time as it is exercising this ability. Only one target can be subjected to a Healing Grapple at a time.

For example, a phantasmal foe grapples successfully with a foe who has taken 35 points of damage previously in the battle. In the first round, the Healing Grapple heals 1d6 damage; in the second, 2d6 damage; in the third, 3d6 damage; and in the fourth 4d6 damage. The target is now fully healed. In the fifth round, the healing grapple inflicts 5d6 damage; in the sixth, 6d6; then 7d6, 8d6, 9d6; and if the target is still alive at this point, having sustained 35d6 damage, then from the tenth round onwards the Healing Grapple will inflict 10d6 damage per round.

If the grapple is broken and then reestablished, the flow resumes at 1d6. If the target is a creature vulnerable to

positive energy, there is **no** healing effect, the Healing Grapple does nothing but damage. Victims describe the effect as "like having liquid fire crawling under your skin, everything burns without leaving a mark."

Weapon Simulation (Sp): A phantasmal foe can reshape its arms/hands to create a perfect simulation of any melee weapon. If it does so, its attacks and damage alter to reflect the damage that would be inflicted by a creature of its abilities wielding such a weapon. The weapons are non-magical but count as magic for the purposes of overcoming DR.

DR 5/Magic (Su): All Force and Negative Energy attacks bypass this DR.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A phantasmal foe is immune to spells and spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance, unless it chooses otherwise. This immunity does not extend to Force or Negative Energy effects.

Sonic Resist 10 (Ex): Phantasmal foes take 10 points less damage from sonic attacks as they are partially immaterial.

Regeneration 3 (Su): Unlike most constructs, phantasmal foes can regenerate damage, except as noted above, at the rate of 3 points per round.

Reactive Capacity (Su): A phantasmal foe adapts its internal structure to target vulnerabilities in its opponents. For every 2 HD the phantasmal foe possesses, it can apply +1 to Dex, to Str, or to AC (increased deflection bonus). In the first round of combat, the amount of bonus is +0, in the second, it is +1, in the third, +2, and so on, until the full bonus is allocated. All bonuses must be allocated to the same score, the phantasmal foe cannot mix-and-match. The phantasmal foe gains all the associated benefits of these increased characteristics.

If the target's Str is greater than or equal to the target's Dex and AC, the bonus will be conferred to the phantasmal foe's Dex.

If the target's Dex is greater than or equal to the target's Str and AC and the bonus has not already been allocated, it will be conferred to the phantasmal foe's AC.

If the target's AC is greater than or equal to the target's Str and Dex, and the bonus has not already been allocated, it will be conferred to the phantasmal foe's Str.

When confronted by multiple foes, the totals of the above characteristics of all foes faced will be used to determine the effect of the Reactive Capacity.

Spell-Like Abilities (Su): Three times per day, a phantasmal foe can employ each of the following spell-like abilities as though cast by a 10th level mage: Invisibility, Gaseous Form. These effects can be used in combination but must be activated separately.

Force Vulnerability (Ex): Force effects do +50% damage to a phantasmal foe.

Negative Energy Vulnerability (Ex): Negative Energy effects do double damage to a phantasmal foe. The additional damage cannot be regenerated and must be healed normally.

Phantasmal Foe Description (D&D 3.5 and Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

A strong and powerful warrior of shimmering force, fading into insubstantiality away from its leading edge. There are those who claim that the phantasmal foe is a positive energy elemental, those who suggest it might be a construct of positive energy, and those who believe it is sentient positive energy given form and substance through the power of Illusion. Although they are not unintelligent, a phantasmal foe has limited independence of thought, existing only to obey the instructions of the summoner.

To *create* a phantasmal foe, a mage needs to locate and capture a phantasmal foe's true body on the positive energy plane, Summon it to the plane of existence where it is to serve, and Bind it in an Illusionary Body. This binding is in the form of an Illusion with Permanence cast into an object, which must remain within 100' of the phantasmal foe at all times. The Summoning and Binding must be completed by the same

mage in the same round — the mage must cast the three spells simultaneously.

Since phantasmal foes are not subject to the Summon Monster spells, the effect requires a Wish or Miracle casting, with all attendant costs and requirements met. At the moment of binding, the mage chooses to issue a command word or display a command object such as a magic item or rare gem. Anyone who knows the command word or is carrying the command item may instruct the foe.

A phantasmal foe is intelligent enough to understand sophisticated instructions, including conditional statements and compound statements. It can be treated as an obedient NPC, making it superior to ordinary golems in many respects.



The phantasmal foe held within the lair of the Hands of Cyrene has been issued the following instructions:

- If someone wearing an assassin's amulet enters a specified area, it is to attack in whatever manner it sees fit until either it has taken 50% damage, it has inflicted 50% damage on the target(s), or the target speaks the
- If a Guildmaster is present, the Guildmaster may instruct the phantasmal foe to act in a specified manner, such as to sit in a chair and permit itself to be taken by surprise. This enables the Guildmaster to design and implement a variety of training scenarios for his subordinates.
- If someone who is not wearing an assassin's amulet enters the specified area, the phantasmal foe is to grapple the target and sound the alarm. If the target breaks free of the grapple before it is destroyed, the phantasmal foe is to attack without mercy. It is to ignore the safe word unless it is issued by the Guildmaster, at which point it will cease its attack.



Assassin Personalities

Assassins come in a variety of flavors within the confines of Assassin's Amulet. Some might be faithful followers of Cyrene, others professional killers or psychotic maniacs who found it a *socially acceptable* outlet for their avocation. An assassin could be the plodding worker for whom this is just another job that needs doing, or he could be an evangelical zealot.

The possibilities are endless because the Hands of Cyrene believe what they do is blessed and morally correct, sanctioned and sanctified.

This moral ambiguity gives you a wide palette to draw upon when deciding how to integrate these NPCs into your game world. As a shorthand method for assigning personalities to the assassins, we have specified five personality traits, none of

them mutually exclusive. You can determine values at random with a d10 (except competence, where you add the character level of the assassin) or pick them yourself.

The five personality traits are:

1. Depth of faith
2. Passion for killing
3. Arrogance
4. Greed versus altruism
5. Competence

The following sections will look at each of these personality traits in more detail.

High Depth of Faith

This means something different to assassins in general compared to the Hands of Cyrene. The latter are a religious organization who kill either to further their theological dogma or (under contract) to maintain their training for such missions. *Ordinary* assassins do not have a religious motivation, so the depth of faith becomes characteristic of their behavior.

That in turn might raise questions about how the assassin reconciles the tenets of a socially-acceptable theology with his socially-unacceptable activities, which further individualizes his personality.

It is always possible for an assassin to have religious beliefs as socially unwelcome as their profession, in which case their primary motivation derives from their faith. They will kill in what is effectively a state of religious ecstasy, a condition that is not prone to producing clean kills. Members of a typical guild who have such motivations will either be protected from the consequences of their abnormal state of mind, or the assassins will be expendable

and not expected to return. This protection will be of the same type as that required for assassins with a high passion for killing, discussed below.

Low Depth of Faith

The Hands of Cyrene are singular with respect to the significance of this trait, because of their theological motivation. It follows that the weaker a member's faith is, the more their motivation must stem from some other factor. A low depth of faith practically mandates an extreme—high or low—in at least one other trait.

General assassins are a different story. Since most do not have motivations of this nature, anything other than a low depth of faith is noteworthy. However, a notably low piety might attract attention to the assassin in daily life—a clue that GMs should be prepared for PCs hunting the guild to exploit.

High Passion for Killing

How often might those with a predilection for murder join the military to gain the opportunity to practice their avocation without social penalty? A brotherhood of assassins offers the would-be serial killer a similar level of protection, providing an outlet for their urges and even paying them for the privilege. This applies to all assassin guilds, including the Hands of Cyrene.

As a personality trait, it tends to lead to obsession; this type of personality often becomes addicted to their chosen *recreation*, which places this trait in opposition to professionalism.

In place of efficiency, this type of assassin will substitute ritual; in place of secrecy, they will substitute a signature. They will prefer one type of target, either by race, physical characteristic, profession or gender. And they will often make mistakes, especially early in their careers. As they gain expertise, the ritual elements of their practices will become more polished, and fewer clues are left behind after an assignment.

If an assassins' guild regularly recruits such individuals, they will soon be exposed unless measures are put in place to prevent the passionate killer from drawing attention to the guild. This would most probably take the form of partnering a novice passionate killer with a more experienced and professional mentor. The apprentice/journeyman/master educational model lends itself to this type of safeguard.

Since no guild can be certain of how a new member will react to the experience of their first few assignments, the longer a particular organization has been in existence, the more probable it is they will have an arrangement of this sort (or some equivalent) in place.

Moderate Passion for Killing

Assassins who fall into the intermediate range make a useful profile foundation. These personalities are quite willing to resort to violence, but refrain from going beyond set limits (except in specific circumstances) – the typical thug or gang member. This gives two individual dynamics for you to customize: the reasons, reasoning and justification for the general self-restraint, and the circumstances and reasoning that push them beyond those limits in exceptional cases. While there are a

number of trivial solutions to both questions (self-preservation and keeping *respect*, for example) the potential also exists for more interesting solutions to both.

For example, an assassin might be violent by nature, but refrains from killing because every target is someone's son or daughter, and she does not wish to harm the mother, with whom she identifies. However, the assassin is also willing to kill anyone who can be held responsible for the death of someone else – something of a double standard. This profile would suit a semi-elderly grandmother, the matronly type or someone active in charities, who works as a nurse during the day.

Low Passion for Killing

This interesting personality trait for an assassin implies the character might not enjoy what he does for its own sake. Though he might take professional pride in a job well done, he might likewise be remorseful over what he is forced to do. Unlike the traits discussed above, this characteristic cannot be evaluated in isolation.

What can be said is that if an assassin does not kill out of passion, his approach will in general be more ruthless, efficient, cold-blooded and professional. This result can also be interpreted as an aversion to the act of murder the assassin overcomes for some reason or in some way, again producing an interesting personality for PCs to interact with in a social setting.

High Arrogance

Arrogance can be considered the extent to which the assassin believes they are right and any who disagree are wrong. The

higher the arrogance rating, the more likely the assassin will be to have some exotic and socially unacceptable motive for their actions. High arrogance gives a character license to express one of the other personality traits.

Another way to perceive arrogance, then, is a measure of the unwillingness to change their personal beliefs or behavior. This can be enough of a motivation for an assassin by itself: someone pushed by social forces (expectations, peer pressure, professional circumstances) to obey the rules and restrictions imposed by "lesser intellects" (or "less morally pure individuals" or "less pious people" or whatever) might have the psychological need to lash out from time to time. This creates a drive easily sublimated into a second career as a serial killer or, in this case, an assassin.

Low Arrogance

Another interesting trait for an assassin: the meek and mousy wimp. Characters with low arrogance are beyond just being humble. They have subsumed their sense of self-worth in favor of a philosophy or agenda laid out by someone else. They hand all responsibility for their actions to a leader they obey implicitly. Such devoted followers make the perfect assassins in many respects.

Yet, they are kind to puppies, speak in stutters or whispers, help their neighbors, never have a cross word to say about anyone, avoid confrontation, and never, *ever* put themselves forward. They are the *last* people you would suspect of being assassins.

A random act of kindness by a stranger to a PC is the perfect way to insinuate an assassin into the party's social circle. Avoid

tipping the players off by waiting at least two sessions between NPC introduction and the PCs learning one or more of them are a target for assassination.

High Greed

Murder can be profitable. In addition to lucrative fees the consummate professional can demand for such blatantly illegal activities, there is all manner of personal property they can liberate from the victim—some of which can be planted to throw suspicion elsewhere if necessary. As a result, greed provides an entirely valid assassin motivation.

High Altruism

This challenging motivation can often result in a more interesting personality. A character with high altruism believes society benefits from their acts of murder for pay. To make this motivation plausible, you need to identify a chain of logic that connects chosen targets with a social benefit the killer perceives by that chain, however flawed. Even strong and confrontational characters can result if the character can demonstrate their belief in the social benefits that result.

As with all beliefs that the end justifies the means, the flaw in the argument rests in the collateral damage, which is either never taken into account or is accepted as an inevitable and acceptable cost.

An example to illustrate the point: let us start with a character who realizes every villain in the world wears black. He decides wearing black should be a capital offence, but since it is not, it is up to him to save the world—and the younger they are, the less evil they will have the chance to perform

before he sanctions them. Therefore, children who wear black are this killer's primary target. To make matters worse, the national dress of his country involves wearing black pants, which partially explains where this lunatic's flawed logic originates.

The PCs go hunting for the serial killer targeting children. They encounter him a number of times without knowing he is who they search for, and hear him expound his flawed logic with great passion. At some later point, they catch the killer in the act of abducting a child; the lunatic is about to kill his victim when the PCs intervene. However, the child does not know that, and the demonic changeling that seemed to be an innocent child reveals his true nature. In addition, he boasts that wearing black makes it easier for he and his kind to find fresh victims, because they can only see the darkest tones from their plane of reality, which is why they created the national fashion trend in the first place.

The twisted logic of the killer becomes unexpectedly validated. Though still a maniac who must be stopped, he was not completely wrong. A somewhat loony villain has abruptly been transformed in the eyes of the players, and when he later escapes from the gallows and resumes his personal mission, it will be as a respected foe.

Competence

While possible that an assassin's motivations stem just from high competence if they happen to be naturally *gifted* in this area, more often this personality trait is irrelevant to motivation. Regardless, you can use competence as a guide to how much the character has prioritized his assassin's education over

other learning. Knowledge (Nature) offers infrequent benefits in such pursuits, for example, while Climbing or Spot are obviously beneficial.

When figuring out what skills fall under this umbrella of competence, consider the primary tasks an assassin may need to carry out:

- Penetrating the target's security
- Performing the assassination
- Disposing of the body
- Escaping the scene
- Maintaining a cover

If a skill is valuable, or potentially valuable, in one of these activities, the high competence assassin will invest more time, effort and skill points in that skill.

Representing the Personality

A character's identity is expressed in play as a compound of two components: the personality and the professional. The professional represents a common element imposed by the requirements of the profession, while the personality is the difference between one individual and the next within the profession.

The common element, in the case of an assassin, manifests in four ways:

- General lack of excitability — assassins always seem calm and composed
- Indifference toward death — some are even blasé
- Intensity many find uncomfortable
- Nervous energy

A frequent fifth manner of expression is a lack of empathy or difficulty in expressing feelings.

So how do you express these traits in play without compromising the display of the personality traits you previously determined, especially since some of them seem to be contradictory? How can you display both a lack of excitability *and* a nervous energy at the same time?

The answer is to use something other than the voice to express one of the two traits. Expressing one of these as a physical mannerism will do the job nicely. Since expressing physical calmness while employing an agitated tone of voice is just plain confusing, it is better to use a mannerism that expresses the nervous energy.

This could be a nervous twitch, or perhaps the perpetual stroking of a weapon (a pen or a letter opener makes an excellent prop for the purpose). Accompany this with an intense stare at whoever the assassin is talking to (don't blink until after you finish a sentence, then do it while turning your head to look behind you—even if that means looking at an empty wall).

That disposes of two of the required mannerisms with zero impact on your ability to communicate with your players. You can express lack of excitability by keeping an even diction—practice speaking in time with a drumbeat; try different styles of music until you find a rhythm that feels calm and unhurried.

You can express the remaining elements through what the assassin says, or rather, choosing not to pay any attention to the things that do not bother him. Commenting on the cleanliness of the streets (and otherwise ignoring the body busy bleeding all over it), for example.

All this leaves you free to focus attention on the things the assassin *does* care about, whether flower arrangements or the price of a contract.

You can sometimes enhance the effect by using a more forceful tone instead of inflexion to indicate emotion, by reducing the volume of your voice to indicate sadness, and by deliberately slowing your speaking tempo to indicate anger.



Suggestions for Epic Campaigns

There are just three approaches to integrating the Hands of Cyrene into an epic campaign, plus combinations these.

1. The Scope of the Hands

The full potential of the Hands of Cyrene becomes apparent when a campaign goes epic. It makes the organization a centerpiece of the campaign and a factor that must constantly be taken into account. Throughout the writing of this supplement,

I (Mike) have had the Nighthawks from various books by Raymond E. Feist in the back of my mind, and I cannot do better than to point you at those for ideas. The Tong in the "Empire" trilogy by Feist and Janny Wurtz is also worth referencing.

Like the Nighthawks, the theological support of the Hands is such that they may return from the dead to complete their missions. This paints the organization in slightly darker tones probably necessary to

their longevity as a plot device in such a campaign.

The alternative is to have unnatural life extension be more widespread amongst the wealthy and politically powerful, and for the Hands' crusade to result in a series of convoluted political games as both sides struggle for ascendancy, with ordinary citizens caught in the middle.

Although this supplement has hinted at the wider organization's structure, the potential for Guildmasters to achieve epic levels and for there to be a further hierarchy with regional, kingdom-wide or even multi-national levels is sufficient to make the Hands a worthy foe in an epic campaign.

2. The Scope of the Theology

While we have provided just enough theology to justify the Hands and their mission, and to examine the implications, sufficient foundation exists for an epic campaign to focus on the big questions raised by the beliefs of the Hands. This brings a somewhat Cthulhu-ish overtone to the campaign, especially at higher levels, as the Hands become frontline soldiers in the eternal struggle between gods, demons, and devils (especially the latter). This makes the issues raised in the Other Opposition section of this supplement vital for you to resolve, though there is no need to feed the answers to the PCs. Consider applying the fog of war effect to what the PCs know of the substance behind the Hands' theology and the reported beliefs of Cyrene.

3. The Scope of the Setting

We have been even hazier when it comes to the game setting. This was done on purpose to help you integrate this game material

into your own campaigns. One area we specifically have not examined is the impact of the theology in terms of the residents of the outer planes.

Many of the residents of these planes can be considered immortal, especially in an epic campaign. Take djinns and elementals, for example. From whence do these enhanced life spans derive? Enlarging the mission of the Hands to encompass these – and prompting appropriate retaliatory actions, both preemptive and reactive – brings the scope of the material presented here to epic proportions. The fate of the multi-planar universe may well be in play under such conditions.

Conclusions

The sequence we have presented these three options is no accident. Each in turn requires a greater amount of development work on your part. It is probably fair to say that each also calls for an extension of the campaign into ever-higher epic Levels.

Downsizing for the Non-Epic Campaign

Consider the potential these considerations have as background for a non-epic campaign. We have touched on some of these questions throughout the text, but it is possible to go much farther. The shape of the campaign in which the Hands reside is up to you, and rightfully so; this content is aimed purely at giving you the raw materials from which to extend your own creations.

Beyond 20th level in Pathfinder

While there currently is no Pathfinder Epic Handbook, and while still backwards compatible to 3.5 rules, the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game does include a brief guideline for going beyond 20th level.

Experience points

To gain a level beyond 20th and all subsequent levels just double the experience points requirement for the previous class (see Character Advancement and Level-Dependent Bonuses table 3-1 in Chapter 3 of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game).



Opposition

Introducing the Urban Ranger Gumshoe



Scaling powers

Hit dice, base attack bonuses and saving throws continue at the same rate beyond 20th as it pertains to a given class.

Multiclassing/Prestige classes

The simplest way to progress beyond 20th level is to multiclass or take levels in a prestige class, in which you gain all of the abilities of the new class level normally. This treats 20th level as a hard limit for class level, but not a limit to total character level. This method best fits a Guildmaster for the Assassin's Amulet



A city offers as many dangers as any wilderness. Civilization provides most people a veil of safety, but those in the know see a city for what it truly is—a home to deadly politics, with plots in every shadow and deadly predators in the dark alleys. The urban ranger is at home in these cities navigating the sprawling labyrinths, unwinding the tangled plots and hunting down their *civilized* prey.

Urban Ranger Gumshoe (D&D 3.5)

Adventures: An urban ranger fills many roles: spy, protector, man-hunter, detective, agent and many other roles. An urban ranger might adventure on behalf of a city's ruler, an organization whose goals require an operative with street savvy, or he might adventure for his own goals, whatever they may be.

Characteristics: An urban ranger uses mainly small concealable weapons and is quite competent in both melee and ranged combat. His skills allow him to gather information, spy, avoid detection and move about easily. He has great knowledge of cities and their people and develops such a tie that he eventually interacts with a city in a mystical way.

Alignment: An urban ranger can be of any alignment. People of many philosophies follow this life path for just as many reasons. Good aligned urban rangers tend to be protectors, tirelessly defending the cities and people they hold dear. Evil urban rangers use their abilities for personal gain and for power over the masses within the cities they tread. Lawful urban rangers tend to act on behalf of a city's rulers or an organization, often happy to maintain the status quo or ensure a city runs smooth. Chaotic urban rangers range from defending the rights of the individual citizens to spreading anarchy.

Religion: Like anyone else, an urban ranger can choose to worship a deity. Those who are devout lean towards deities of civilization or ones that reflect their personal goals or beliefs.

Background: Some urban rangers gain their training from mentors serving a city or kingdom, whilst others form a bond with urban environments over time and are self taught. They are often employed by sages seeking to extend their knowledge, who are counted amongst the many information

resources the urban ranger can bring to bear. However, the urban ranger's focus is on practical fieldwork and investigation, not on the abstruse and esoteric knowledge of the sage. Some describe themselves as "practical sages."

Races: A member of any race that dwells in an urban setting is capable of being an urban ranger. Humans, half-elves and Halflings tend to make up a large proportion of the urban ranger population, as they tend to be the most urban orientated of the races. Full-elven urban rangers stalk the treetops, seeing not so much an idyllic environment as a place that keeps its dirty linen under wraps, while dark elven urban rangers conduct witch hunts. Dwarven urban rangers are often found in Dwarvish communities and mining tunnels deep underground.

Other Classes: Urban rangers get along well with bards, rogues and fighters, as they tend to share the same cities and fighting styles. Rangers, druids and barbarians tend towards the opposite of what an urban ranger is and often find it difficult to appreciate their methods.

Role: The urban ranger's best role is that of an investigator and face of a party, but they are equally capable of going it alone for extended periods. The class' greatest strength is their ability to find information or a person within a city

.

The Urban Ranger

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+1	+0	+2	+2	1st Favored City, Man Hunt, Urban Empathy, Bonus Language
2	+2	+0	+3	+3	Combat Finesse, Improvised Weapon Usage
3	+3	+1	+3	+3	Blend with crowd
4	+4	+1	+4	+4	Disguise Self
5	+5	+1	+4	+4	2nd Favored City, Detective
6	+6/+1	+2	+5	+5	Greater Improvised Weapon Usage, Bonus Language
7	+7/+2	+2	+5	+5	Quick and Steady
8	+8/+3	+2	+6	+6	City Knowledge
9	+9/+4	+3	+6	+6	Spider Climb
10	+10/+5	+3	+7	+7	3rd Favored City
11	+11/+6/+1	+3	+7	+7	Superior Improvised Weapon Usage, Bonus Language
12	+12/+7/+2	+4	+8	+8	Operatives
13	+13/+8/+3	+4	+8	+8	
14	+14/+9/+4	+4	+9	+9	Pass Wall
15	+15/+10/+5	+5	+9	+9	4th Favored City, Super Sleuth
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+5	+10	+10	Improvised Weapon Mastery, Bonus Language
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	Expert cover usage
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+11	
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+11	Commune with City
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	5th Favored City, One with the city

Game Rule Information

Urban rangers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Dexterity is important for an urban ranger, as they tend to wear light armor as well as use it for both melee and ranged combat. The urban ranger uses many skills based on Wisdom and Charisma, making these two attributes important for the class.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Dice: d6.

Class Skills

The urban ranger's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge [Local] (Int), Knowledge [Nobility & Royalty] (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st level: $(8 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $8 + \text{Int Modifier}$.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the urban ranger. Note: all groups of urban dwellings are hereafter referred to as a city or cities.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: An urban ranger is proficient with all simple weapons, short sword, rapier, bolas, hand crossbows and all light armors.

Favored City (Ex): At 1st level, an urban ranger may select a city he has spent time

in. Due to his extensive knowledge of the place and its people, the urban ranger receives a +2 to skill and attack rolls within that city. At 5th level and every 5 levels thereafter (10th, 15th, 20th and so on), the urban ranger may select an additional favored city. In addition, at each such interval the bonus in each already chosen city increases by 2. For example, a 5th level urban ranger will have one city that grants +2 while the other will grant +4. At 10th level, he has three favored cities, and he gains an additional +2 bonus, giving him totals of +6, +4 and +2 respectively.

Man Hunt (Ex): As per the Track feat except this ability can only be used in an urban setting and the Gather Information skill is used instead of the Survival skill. The following DCs and modifiers are used:



Man Hunt DCs

DC	Community Size
DC 10	Small Village
DC 15	Large Village
DC 15	Small Town
DC 20	Large Town
DC 20	Small City
DC 25	Large City

Man Hunt DC Modifiers

DC Modifier	Description
+2 DC	Target has Int 16+
+7 DC	Target is deeply feared in the city
+5 DC	Target is well liked in the city
-4 DC	Target is not liked in the city
-2 DC	Urban ranger has 5+ ranks in Diplomacy skill
-1 DC	For every 20gp spent in bribes or rewards by the urban ranger
+1 DC	For every 25gp spent in bribes or protection by the target
+5 DC	No knowledge of target
-3 to -8 DC	DC knowledge of target
-2 DC	For every 3 targets

Urban Empathy (Ex): An urban ranger with Urban Empathy does not receive penalties in an urban setting to interpersonal skills due to race, class, gender or social standing. Appropriate Knowledge [Local] skills also act as synergy skills with interpersonal skills in the city to which the Knowledge [Local] skill relates.

Bonus Language (Ex): At 1st level and every 5 levels of urban ranger thereafter the character gains a bonus language.

These bonus languages must be extensively spoken in a favored city or large region of a favored city (a community or sub-

community). If there are no such languages the urban ranger does not know already, he forfeits this bonus.

Combat Finesse (Ex): Combat finesse allows an urban ranger to use Dexterity instead of Strength for melee attack and damage rolls made with weapons the urban ranger is initially proficient in using (**not** with any weapon proficiencies added subsequently) and with improvised weapons.

Improvised Weapon Usage (Ex): Improvised weapon usage allows a character to ignore the -4 penalty to attacks with improvised weapons.

Blend With Crowd (Ex): A character with this ability can hide in a crowd of people, gaining +3 to any Hide checks. Crowds do not reduce the character's movement.

Disguise Self (Sp): As per spell with a caster level equal to the character's class level. The duration can be split up into multiple uses over a day.

Detective (Ex): While in an urban setting, the character gains a +3 bonus to Search, Sense Motive and Gather Information skills.

Greater Improvised Weapon Usage (Ex): Greater improvised weapon usage grants a +2 to attack and damage rolls with improvised weapons. The character can forgo the bonus to attack and damage rolls to gain a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex saves.

Quick and Steady (Ex): At 7th level an urban ranger in an urban setting gains +10ft movement and a +2 bonus to balance and jump checks. The character always counts as having a running start when jumping.

City Knowledge (Ex): An urban ranger accumulates knowledge about his favorite cities and the people who inhabit them. He may make a special city knowledge check (1d20 + class level + charisma modifier) to gain information about a favored city and its citizens, and gains a +2 bonus on this check if the character has 5+ ranks in Gather Information.

The GM can determine what information is gained by using the following guideline:

- DC 10 - Common, known by at least a substantial minority of the population

- DC 20 - Uncommon but available, known only by a small number of people in the city
- DC 25 - Obscure, known by few, hard to come by
- DC30 - Extremely obscure, known by very few, possibly forgotten or hidden knowledge

An urban ranger may not take a 10 or 20 on this check.

If the character succeeds by less than 10 on such a check, he will have to purchase the information (though he will know of an informant who will sell it). In general, the price in gp will be d6+4 multiplied by the DC. This money is not necessarily for bribes and informants; it might cover anything from the price of copying documents through to buying rounds in a bar or tavern where the information may be found.

If the character succeeds by less than half the target DC, the information will also take time to gather, usually d6 days x the target DC x 1½, divided by the actual roll made by the character. This is not necessarily time needed to investigate the question; it might be waiting time while a message is couriered to a contact and the reply returned, or other investigations by operatives (refer below).

If the character fails, then not only does he not know the information, he does not know exactly where to get it and will need to investigate.

Spider Climb (Sp): As per spell with a caster level equal to the character's class level. The duration can be split up into multiple uses over a day. Only works in an urban setting.

Superior Improvised Weapon Usage (Ex): Superior improvised weapon usage grants a critical threat range of 18-20 when using improvised weapons. In addition, the character may now choose to forgo the +2 to damage gained from Greater Improvised Weapon Usage to gain an additional +2 to hit, or vice versa.

Operatives (Ex): On reaching 12th level, the character gains a number of followers as per the Leadership feat that act as the character's eyes and ears in the character's favored cities.

Passwall (Sp): As per spell with a caster level equal to the character's class level, usable 3 times per day. Only works in an urban setting.

Super Sleuth (Sp): The character can use Detect Lie and True Sight as per the spells with a caster level equal to the character's class level. The duration for each can be split up into multiple uses over a day. Only works in an urban setting.

Improvised Weapon Mastery (Ex): A character with improvised weapon mastery treats improvised weapons as if they were one size larger for the purposes of feats and damage. In addition, improvised weapons will not break whilst being used.

Expert Cover Usage (Ex): Whilst in an urban setting an urban ranger with this ability treats all cover and concealment as if it was one step higher.

Commune With City (Sp): As per the spell Commune, the character can ask the city itself questions about a favored city. This is usable once per week with a caster level equal to class level and does not cost xp.

One With the City (Sp): Whilst in a favored city an urban ranger gains a bonus to all

saving throws equal to the character's Charisma modifier. The character can also use Greater Teleport as per spell with a caster level equal to the character's class level 3 times a day within the boundaries of a favored city or to another favored city. The character can use Meld Into Stone as per the spell 3 times per day with a caster level equal to class level. This can only be used in a favored city. A character with this ability is treated as a local of good standing in all favored cities.

Urban Ranger Feats

Ear to the Ground

You keep yourself up to date with goings-on within your favored cities.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, urban ranger class

Benefit: You get a +3 bonus on all Gather Information and City Knowledge checks within your character's favored cities.

Urban Ghost

You glide through the city unheard and unseen; your prey will not know what hit them.

Benefit: You gain a +3 feat bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks in urban settings.

Conceal Object

"Of course you can search me, I have nothing to hide."

Prerequisites: Hide 5 ranks.

Benefit: The DC to find an object you have hidden on your person is increased by 5, and any search roll to find said item must be rolled twice, with the worst result used.

Social Specialization

You find your dealings with a particular social group or organization easier than usual.

Requirements: Cha 13

Benefit: Choose a social group or organization; you gain a +3 bonus to Cha related checks when dealing with this group.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take this feat, it applies to a different social group or organization.

Extra Favored City

Your extensive knowledge of a city makes it one of your favored cities.

Requirements: Favored city class feature.

Benefit: Your character gains one extra favored city. Does not increase the bonus of an existing favored city, it just adds another at minimum level (+2).

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time it is taken a new favored city is gained.

Improved Favored City

Choose one favored city. Your knowledge of this city and its people is increased.

Requirements: Favored city class feature.

Benefit: The bonus granted by the chosen favored city is increased by +1.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do stack.

Observant

You notice details less observant people would miss.

Requirements: Int 13, Search 5 ranks.

Benefit: You can reroll a search check roll before the result is announced, but the second roll must be used, even if it is worse than the original roll.

Example urban rangers

Below, we describe an example character, Yain Kherric, in various incarnations of experience: 3rd, 6th, 9th, 12th, 15th and 18th level.

You can:

- Use either the version closest to the character level of the party to have him take the part of an equal participant; or
- Use a lower level version to make him someone who needs help from the PCs after biting off more than he can chew; or
- Use a higher level version, permitting you to employ the assassins in strength, even with a mid-level party.

How to use the example character

At the end of each version of the character is a section of character biography that details what the character has done in order to earn those levels, and what the character's state of mind is at the time. These narratives are cumulative – the level-6 narrative will not make much sense unless the GM has read that part of the biography that is attached to the level-3 version of the character.

Repeated use is made of terms such as [Favorite City] to facilitate integration of the character background with your campaign. You just need to determine which city in your world is the closest fit to the city described in the narrative and insert the name.

Details of two organizations mentioned in the narrative, the Shields of [Favorite City] and the Whisper Guardians are left to you. We have supplied some information about them for inspiration, and to cover what the PCs might know of these secretive organizations. More to the point, the information provided is more than Yain Kherric is willing to tell the PCs!

Yain Kherric, Lawful Good Urban Ranger Level 3 (D&D 3.5)

Male Human; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3; hp 14; Init +8; Spd 30ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex); Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk +3 melee (1d6+5/18-20, rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+5/18-20, rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Languages: Common, Elven, Dwarven, Halfling, Gnome.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Climb +7, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +12, Sense Motive +9, Hide +11, Move Silently +11, Knowledge [Local] +10, Knowledge [Nobility & Royalty] +10, Search +12, Spot +9 and Listen +9; Improved Initiative, Investigator, Observant.

Class Abilities: Favored City #1: +2, Man Hunt, Bonus Language, Combat Finesse, Improvised Weapon Usage, Blend With Crowd.

Possessions: Rapier +1, dagger, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, bolas, Studded Leather Armor +1, Dust of Tracelessness. 121gp.

Background: Yain Kherric grew up in [Favored City #1], an orphan abandoned on the steps of the temple of [appropriate deity, GM's choice], who took him in. As soon as he was judged old enough he began performing odd jobs around the city for pocket change, which he donated back to the temple as compensation for his continued residence. He would also perform services on behalf of the temple. Although raised as a worshipper of [the chosen deity], he refused to consider becoming a member of the priesthood, being captivated by the city and its daily routines and activities and the multitudes who called it home. Clericism seemed too ethereal, even too superficial, for Yain's tastes; he liked being at "ground level in the real world," able to see the reality around him, warts and all. It was understood that, on his 15th birthday, he would see to his own accommodation needs.

Naturally gifted, and partially self-taught as an urban ranger, Yain was always going to be recruited by somebody. As chance would have it, the Shields of [Favored City #1] got to him first. This semi-official organization provided counter-espionage (and other ad-hoc services that could not be officially sanctioned) to the city government, while offering plausible deniability to the administrators. The initial challenge

presented to the Shields was to reign in the local thieves' guild—to locate and shut it down completely—because it had been getting out of hand of late. Murders were committed for trivial offences, diplomats who should have been off-limits were being robbed and assaulted, and crime was rife. This task fell to the Shields because it was widely known the thieves' guild had infiltrated and corrupted the regular watch.

The Shields completed Yain's training and turned him loose to stalk the guild hierarchy, failing to tell him they were using him as a stalking horse. He was skilled enough to find what he was looking for, and when the Thieves moved to eliminate him, the rest of the Shields would

step in to save him from his naïve blundering and end this particular shadow war. As a stratagem, this worked perfectly, but Yain was not happy at being hung out to dry. The Shields' recruiter—the only member of the organization who Yain had met—made some attempt to pass the events off as a rite of passage. Yain was unimpressed and immediately left the organization, sadder and a little wiser.

Still smarting from this abuse, Yain is now on the streets with no resources beyond his wit, his knowledge of the city, and the many contacts that he has befriended in his fifteen-and-a-half years, deciding what to do with himself and his new independence.

Yain Kherric, Lawful Good Urban Ranger Level 6 (D&D 3.5)

Male Human; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6; hp 26; Init +8; Spd 30ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex); Base Atk +6/+1; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+5/18-20, rapier) or +10 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+5/18-20, rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +8; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Languages: Common, Elven, Dwarven, Halfling, Gnome, Orc.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13, Climb +10, Diplomacy +13, Gather Information +18, Sense Motive +12, Hide +19, Move Silently +19, Knowledge [Local] +13, Knowledge [Nobility & Royalty] +13, Search +15, Spot +12 and Listen +12; Improved Initiative, Investigator, Observant, Skill Focus [Gather Information].

Class Abilities: Favored City #1 +4, Favored City #2 +2, Man Hunt, Bonus Language x2, Combat Finesse, Improvised Weapon Usage, Blend With Crowd, Disguise Self, caster level 6, Detective, Greater Improvised Weapon Usage.

Possessions: Rapier +1, dagger, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, bolas, Studded Leather Armor +1 with Shadow and Silent Moves, Cloak of Resistance +1, Potion of Cure Light Wounds. 250gp.

Background (continued from Level 3): Rebounding from the setback posed by the betrayal by the Shields, Yain realized he was incomparably better off than he had been prior to his dealings with the counter-espionage operation. He knew the city and its ins and outs perhaps better than any other living being. There was always a demand for those able to find lost people and lost property. Yain became a general investigator and adventurer-for-hire.

At first, potential customers were put off by the enemies Yain had made; not only were the thieves of the city resentful of what he had done, however much they may have deserved it, but the city watch were also suspicious. They did not know what part Yain had played in the imprisonment of several of their number on charges of oath breaking and corruption. However, they knew he had played *some* role, that he had been associating with what were officially *suspicious persons* (the Shields), and that he had also been involved with persons of interest (the thieves' guild). This suspicion led them to interrogate Yain whenever something out of the ordinary occurred in the city. It generally became rumored that Yain knew more about everything that took place than was helpful, but was both close-mouthed and honorable.

With a few satisfied customers under his belt, word of mouth began to spread, and Yain was able to maintain a comfortable living from his operation. A number of his cases began to take him on a regular basis to the nearest neighboring city, [Favored City #2], which had many trading relationships with his usual abode. It was not long before Yain set out to learn this city as well as he knew his own.

A growing reputation for results has brought security, but also more difficult cases and enemies on the lookout for any weakness. Yain relishes the challenge of the cases and ignores the enemies unless they get in his way. Two years since he established his new business, he is now a young man going places.

Yain Kherric, Lawful Good Urban Ranger Level 9 (D&D 3.5)

Male Human; CR 9; Medium humanoid; HD 9; hp 42; Init +8; Spd 40ft.; AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +4 Dex); Base Atk +9/+4; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d6+6/18-20, rapier) or +14 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d6+6/18-20, rapier) or +14 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +12, Will +10; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Languages: Common, Elven, Dwarven, Halfling, Gnome, Orc.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7 Bluff +20, Climb +13, Diplomacy +20, Gather Information +25, Jump +8, Sense Motive +15, Hide +20, Move Silently +20, Knowledge [Local] +15, Knowledge [Nobility & Royalty] +15, Search +18, Spot +15 and Listen +15;

Improved Initiative, Investigator, Observant, Skill Focus [Gather Information], Ear to the Ground.

Class Abilities: Favored City #1 +4, Favored City #2 +2, Man Hunt, Bonus Language x2, Combat Finesse, Improvised Weapon Usage, Blend With Crowd, Disguise Self caster level 9, Detective, Greater Improvised Weapon Usage, Quick and Steady, City Knowledge 1d20 + 18, Spider Climb caster level 9.

Possessions: Rapier +2, dagger, Hand Crossbow +1, 20 bolts, bolas, Studded Leather Armor +2 with Shadow and Silent Moves abilities, Cloak of Resistance +2, Circlet of Persuasion, Boots of Striding and Springing, Potion of Cure Light Wounds. 250pg

Background (continued from Level 6):

After three more years of mercenary adventuring, Yain is now entering the prime of his professional powers and reputation. Of late, he has been taking on even more difficult and higher-profile cases, which he has leavened with the occasional covert assignment. His most public success was the exposure of the demon-worshipping Blood Cult of Ralarghh [details left to the GM], and the rescue of Phaxisa, the daughter of the merchant trader Alentus, one of the wealthiest men in [Favored City #1], who had commissioned the mission.

Since the rescue, Yain has often enjoyed the company of Phaxisa, and it is only a matter of time before they become husband and wife in the eyes of many. Alentus is reportedly unhappy over this development, but cannot refuse his daughters' preference for her rescuer's company without irreparably harming his personal reputation. Making the best of a bad situation, he has begun steering cases Yain's way while privately considering the use of hired thugs or assassins to end the socially-poor romantic affiliation, permanently –if only he could be sure they would keep their mouths shut afterwards.

Yain has also finally won the respect of the city watch and put the affair of the Shields behind him. The city government has even offered the occasional odd job, which Yain has accepted – cases for which they do not have the manpower, or where political considerations prevent a more official investigation. He is well-known as the official adventurer-in-residence of [Favored City #1], and while he has no extraordinary authority at his disposal, being simply a private citizen like any other, he knows many of the right people to talk to if something needs to be done. People travel great distances to lay their problems at his feet.

A number of would-be imitators have attempted to make their mark in the last two years, but none has been sufficiently successful to earn a satisfactory wage; they have come and then gone at regular intervals. At first, Yain was concerned, but lately he has grown in confidence, and even steers the occasional (boring) assignment in the direction of these rivals, having reached the point in his career where he has more cases than he can pursue on his own. He keeps the most interesting, and (if necessary) one or two of the better-paying assignments, and farms out the rest.

Yain Kherric, Lawful Good Urban Ranger Level 12 (D&D 3.5)

Male Human; CR 12; Medium humanoid; HD 12; hp 59; Init +8; Spd 40ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +4 Dex); Base Atk +12/+7/+2; Grp +16; Atk +19 melee (1d6+7/16-20, rapier) or +18 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (1d6+7/16-20, rapier) or +18 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +14, Will +12; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Languages: Common, Elven, Dwarven, Halfling, Gnome, Orc, Draconic.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10 Bluff +20, Climb +13, Diplomacy +22, Gather Information +28, Jump +11, Sense Motive +25, Hide +25, Move Silently +25, Knowledge [Local] +15, Knowledge [Nobility & Royalty] +15, Search +21, Spot +18 and Listen +18;

Improved Initiative, Investigator, Observant, Skill Focus [Gather Information], Ear to the Ground, Negotiator.

Class Abilities: Favored City #1 +6, Favored City #2 +4, Favored City #3 +2, Man Hunt, Bonus Language x3, Combat Finesse, Improvised Weapon Usage, Blend With Crowd, Disguise Self caster level 12, Detective, Greater Improvised Weapon Usage, Quick and Steady, City Knowledge 1d20 + 21, Spider Climb caster level 12, Superior Improvised Weapon Usage, Operatives.

Possessions: Keen Rapier +3, Dagger +2, Hand Crossbow +1, 20 bolts, bolas, Studded Leather Armor +3 with Improved Shadow and Improved Silent Moves, Cloak of Resistance +3, Circlet of Persuasion, Boots of Striding and Springing, Potion of Cure Light Wounds x 4. 500gp.

Background (continued from Level 9):
Into every life, some rain must fall, and it has been bucketing down on Yain of late. His wife of eight months was caught in the crossfire and killed when one of his many enemies sought revenge, earning him not

only the enmity of her father (one the richest men in [Favorite City #1]), but ending the steady-but-profitable stream of income that Alentus had been steering to him. On top of that, his last two cases have gone sour as his widening reputation exposed him while he sought to investigate discretely. Fame is the enemy of the would-be incognito.

After all that, he decided it was time for a vacation from his usual haunts, and has spent the last six months investigating the byways of the largest city in the Kingdom, [favored City #3], far removed from his personal problems. While many in this new city had heard of him, he was still viewed as a big fish from a small pond on his arrival. Nevertheless, he has successfully managed to blend in, and has just enjoyed a big success in the first mission he has ever undertaken without a paying customer sponsoring his activities, exposing a conspiracy aimed at creating political instability in [Favorite City #1] and pinning the blame on agents of [Favorite City #2].

However, there were some disquieting pieces of the puzzle that did not yet fit. More investigation is called for...

Yain Kherric, Lawful Good Urban Ranger Level 15 (D&D 3.5)

Male Human; CR 15; Medium humanoid; HD 15; hp 79; Init +10; Spd 40ft.; AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +5 Dex); Base Atk +15/+10/+5; Grp +21; Atk +25 melee (1d6+10/16-20, rapier) or +23 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +25/+20/+15 melee (1d6+10/16-20, rapier) or +23 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); AL LG; SV Fort +10, Ref +18, Will +15; Str 11, Dex 22, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 18.



Languages: Common, Elven, Dwarven, Halfling, Gnome, Orc, Draconic.

Skills and Feats: Balance +13 Bluff +20, Climb +16, Diplomacy +22, Gather Information +31, Jump +14, Sense Motive +28, Hide +30, Move Silently +30, Knowledge [Local] +18, Knowledge [Nobility & Royalty] +15, Search +27, Spot +21 and Listen +21; Improved Initiative, Investigator, Observant, Skill Focus [Gather Information], Ear to the Ground, Negotiator, Skill Focus [Search].

Class Abilities: Favored City #1 +8, Favored City #2 +6, Favored City #3 +4, Favored City #4 +2, Man Hunt, Bonus Language x3, Combat Finesse, Improvised Weapon Usage, Blend With Crowd, Disguise Self caster level 15, Detective, Greater Improvised Weapon Usage, Quick and Steady, City Knowledge 1d20 + 24, Spider Climb caster level 15, Superior Improvised Weapon Usage, Operatives, Passwall 3/day caster level 15, Super Sleuth caster level 15.

Possessions: Keen Rapier +4, Dagger +4, Hand Crossbow +2, 20 bolts, bolas, Studded Leather Armor +4 with Greater Shadow and Greater Silent Moves, Cloak of Resistance +4, Circlet of Persuasion, Boots of Striding and Springing, Gloves of Dexterity +4, Potion of Cure Serious Wounds x 4. 1000gp.

Background (continued from Level 12): Following up those pieces of the puzzle that did not quite fit revealed that the plot against [Favorite City #1] was only the tip of a much larger operation, a diversion to the authorities. The real threat was a nest of doppelgangers whose powers, augmented through demonic influence, had set out to replace completely the royal family, advisors to the throne, and commanders of each branch of the public service.

A hidden revolution that would seize total control of the kingdom and convert it completely to the worship of demons!

This behavior was quite abnormal for doppelgangers, who do not normally coordinate their infiltrations of society and tend to be more solitary, spreading the risk by insinuating themselves at diverse locations and social strata. Yain was unable to find a coherent motive for the failed plot that involved several groups. Each group had been told only what they needed to hear to play their part in the operation. All were ignorant of the way those actions would coincide with those of the other participating groups to transform a minor disruption into total anarchy. The whole operation smacked of a coordinated plan. No such plan, Yain knew, could fail to leave a few loose ends leading to those responsible, and while his evidence was meager, Yain began immediately to pursue the leads.

Those clues had taken months to run down, ultimately leading him to [Favored City #4], Capital of the Kingdom. It took many more months to familiarize himself with its patterns, throughout which he could not escape the nagging feeling there was something just a little off about the behavior of the citizens. Even as he investigated, the crown passed laws forbidding the possession of incense, decreed the instigation of crippling taxes upon the temples and churches, and recruited a secret police that answered only to the throne. These policies were surprising to all, seemingly without reason or purpose. At the same time, the royal family and many of the senior advisers to the throne abruptly ceased almost entirely their social practices, isolating themselves from the population.

A delegation of clergymen had sought an audience with the crown, only to be rebuffed. Rumors circulated about a conspiracy that threatened the crown had been uncovered. Then public assemblage in groups larger than four was prohibited. The delegation of clergymen protested, seeking exemptions for religious services, but were refused. Martial law was declared.

Yain was unsure of himself, and less certain of whom he could trust. The behavior of the crown and its agents suggested they might have uncovered the same hints and clues as he had done, and were asking the same questions, and further, had some basis of suspicion against the temples. However, he had caught no whiff of religion in his investigation. That permitted only two explanations: either there was some vital clue he had missed, or the authorities were conducting a covert war against the temples for their own reasons and justifying their actions with the threat posed by the conspiracy. The first seemed improbable. Yain had a clear notion of his level of skill, and any evidence solid enough to convince the crown to undertake such harsh measures should have been blatantly obvious. It had not been; ergo, there was no justification; and ergo, these measures had some other purpose.

Yain also found it inexplicable that none of the royal advisors would protest such measures on such a pretext. At least one of them, if not more, would have been members of a parish in good standing, he was sure. He began investigating those advisors, watching for other aberrant behavior. It was while doing so that court pages posted notices on the doors of all city temples and churches that the King and his advisors would be happy to meet with the leader of each church individually. A number of clergy chose to do so, but some found the offer suspicious and refused.

After each such meeting, the clergyman emerged with an exemption for members of the faithful who prominently displayed the holy symbol of their god or goddess. The tenor of the sermons they preached began to change markedly; where they had been protests of abuse of power, they were suddenly about the obligation of the people to the throne. Those who changed perspectives urged their doubtful brethren to do as they had done, and meet with the crown, and all their questions would be answered, their confusion and doubts erased. However, there were also warnings that only a limited time remained before reticence would be viewed with suspicion, and suspicion met with investigation and mistrust.

One by one, those most victimized by the changes in public policy were becoming advocates of that policy. Even as Yain attempted to understand why that might be the case, stories began to emerge about the doctrines of the churches with permission to assemble—stories of alterations to traditional rites and prayers, changes in ceremonial content, and secret rituals open only to the inner circles of each church.

Yain began surreptitiously following the advisors, and soon learned they had developed the habitual practice of retreating to a cellar in the city, supposedly for private conference. This cellar, close to the palace, became the focus of Yain's scrutiny. After the next meeting, when Yain was sure everyone had left, he infiltrated the room using all his skill and wariness, bypassing a number of traps and security provisions.

Inside, he found evidence of forbidden rites and a secret entrance, which he was about to investigate when someone emerged from it. Following a violent confrontation, the intruder grew desperate and transformed into a duplicate of Yain, revealing its true

nature. It was not enough, and Yain soon defeated the creature. Only then did he have time to realize that he had killed the head of the secret police.

Now possessed of all the clues he needed to unravel the situation, Yain was able to stalk the doppelgangers, identifying and destroying them one after another. In the process, he became the most-wanted and hunted man in the kingdom; but finally he confronted the last of them, who had been disguised as the King himself. Only the fact that the kingdom had dissolved into anarchy as the doppelgangers fled had enabled Yain to conclude his hunt. He was astonished to discover, upon slaying the last of the conspirators, that it was not a Doppelganger, but a hybrid demon-illithid, using a Hat of Disguise and its own abilities to deceive even the doppelgangers. This answered the final mystery—why the doppelganger’s behavior had been so unlike their usual patterns. They had been manipulated as much as anyone else involved.

This was not the last of the surprises for Yain. As he searched the hidden lair to which he had tracked his final foe, he discovered, emaciated and weak, the other individuals who had been duplicated by the doppelgangers. Normally, a doppelganger kills those it replaces; but these doppelgangers had been controlled by the mind flayer, who had deceived them into thinking they had done so when they had not, leaving these high-order minds for the illithid to feast upon for months.

This was the culmination of almost three years of effort by Yain, of stealth and investigation, hiding and hunting, through almost every corner of the kingdom.

Although he had not set out to do so, he had rescued the royal family and the kingdom’s senior advisors. Order had been swiftly restored, and though the public would never learn of the truth of events, those in power were grateful.

The result for Yain was the achievement of a different kind of fame—even as his former life faded into legend, he became known to the rulers of his own kingdom and its neighbors as a man to be respected. He had been handsomely rewarded, but made a hasty departure when the newly-restored King began speculating that he would make a good match for his unwed daughter. Not only was Yain reminded constantly of killing those who appeared to be people whenever he beheld the royal family (including the Princess), but he was still mourning the loss of his own wife, and had no interest in marriage.

Instead, Yain has turned his attention to his next challenge. The threat to the kingdom he spent years tracking down has convinced him that perhaps The Shields* had the right idea after all, and he began building up a kingdom-wide private agency under his own authority to guard against such threats in the future. At least, that is the idea. It might take decades for the Whisper Guardians to be complete. At the same time, he has finally come to terms with his own mortality, and has begun the search for a successor; at best, he knows he has only one last major case within him.

** Refer to Character Level 3 background.*

Yain Kherric, Lawful Good Urban Ranger Level 18 (D&D 3.5)

Male Human; CR 18; Medium humanoid; HD 18; hp 92; Init +10; Spd 40ft.; AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +5 Dex); Base Atk +18/+13/+8/+3; Grp +24; Atk +29 melee (1d6+11/16-20, rapier) or +28 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +29/+24/+19/+14 melee (1d6+11/16-20, rapier) or +28 ranged (1d4/19-20, crossbow); AL LG; SV Fort +12, Ref +22, Will +18; Str 11, Dex 22, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Languages: Common, Elven, Dwarven, Halfling, Gnome, Orc, Draconic, Giant.

Skills and Feats: Balance +20 Bluff +20, Climb +20, Diplomacy +25, Gather Information +34, Jump +20, Sense Motive +31, Hide +30, Move Silently +30, Knowledge [Local] +20, Knowledge [Nobility & Royalty] +20, Search +30, Spot +24 and Listen +24; Improved Initiative, Investigator, Observant, Skill Focus [Gather Information], Ear to the Ground, Negotiator, Skill Focus [Search].

Class Abilities: Favored City #1 +8, Favored City #2 +6, Favored City #3 +4, Favored City #4 +2, Man Hunt, Bonus Language x4, Combat Finesse, Improvised Weapon Usage, Blend With Crowd, Disguise Self caster level 15, Detective, Greater Improvised Weapon Usage, Quick and Steady, City Knowledge 1d20 + 24, Spider Climb caster level 15, Superior Improvised Weapon Usage, Operatives, Passwall 3/day caster level 15, Super Sleuth caster level 15, Improvised Weapon Mastery, Expert Cover Usage.

Possessions: Keen Rapier +5, Dagger +5, Hand Crossbow +3, 20 +1 Bolts, bolas, Studded Leather Armor +4 with Greater Shadow and Greater Silent Moves, Cloak of Resistance +5, Circlet of Persuasion, Boots of Striding and Springing, Gloves of Dexterity +4, Potion of Cure Serious Wounds x 4. 1000gp.

Background (continued from Level 15): Unraveling the doppelganger plan, as he came to refer to it, proved to be the high point of Yain's career. Years of patient recruiting followed, as he turned his attention to the building of the Whisper Guardians organization. Although he became involved in a number of minor problems, these largely comprised domestic disputes that were exceptionally dull in comparison to the heady days of being a wanted outlaw hunting for those who would seize power of an entire kingdom.

Occasionally, over the ten years since, visitors from other kingdoms would come to consult on cases; even less frequently but more noteworthy were the rare occasions when a visitor from another plane sought his opinion. Yain had expected to be a close advisor to the throne after his smashing success in rescuing the royal family, but he had been disappointed. The King had tried, but after the crisis Yain had resolved, the populace tended to panic whenever anyone in authority went anywhere near the investigator, fearing that disaster was again at hand. Any denials were treated with skepticism.

As a result, Yain was famous throughout the kingdom and beyond as a problem solver, but matters would have to be truly desperate before he could be involved in anything more officially important, locally, than a lost voice.

Yain now sits at the centre of a widespread and growing web of informants and underlings. He knows the next major case to come his way will be his last. He has prepared the Whisper Guardians to take his place, and fights to maintain his readiness, a task that becomes harder every year. He only hopes it comes before he loses the battle of an expanding waistline.

Urban Ranger Gumshoe (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

The Pathfinder stats are so similar to the D&D 3.5 urban ranger blocks above, that you only need to make a few changes and you are good to run him as a Pathfinder NPC.

Add the following abilities into the class abilities table:

- **Level 4:** Character gains the Skill Focus feat.
- **Level 8:** Sure footed. Character movement not impeded by non-magical obstacles in an urban setting.

- **Level 13:** Character gains the Skill Focus feat.
- **Level 18:** Character gains Hide in Plain Sight in urban settings.

Use these values for CMB and CMD scores:

Yain's Level	CMB	CMD
Level 3	3	17
Level 6	6	20
Level 9	9	23
Level 12	12	26
Level 15	15	31
Level 18	18	34

Using the Gumshoe

There are a number of ways you can use the urban gumshoe with Assassin's Amulet. Combine these with the number of ways The Hands of Cyrene can play a part in a campaign, and you have many potential scenarios, a few of which are discussed below.

Assassin training missions

Members of the Hands of Cyrene are generally in training until they reach fifth level. In this time, they learn the fundamentals of their trade, how the organization works, the theological foundation of the guild, its philosophies and procedures and the like.

Also in this time, the trainees would have only a few possible exposures to the outside world, one of the essential being training missions.

The urban gumshoe can interact with these training missions in one of two ways: either he is already a resident where these training missions take place, or he is already searching for the guild and rumours of these activities alert him to the presence of the Hands of Cyrene.

Since assassins in this type of episode are low-level, backed up by a mid-level trainer or two, this suits low-level PCs. If accompanying the party, the gumshoe can either tackle the mid-level trainer, leaving a contest between the junior assassins and the PCs, or he can oppose the trainees, leaving the party to combine against the trainer. The first scenario calls for a roughly 9th level Gumshoe, the second, about 5th level.

If the urban gumshoe is not higher level than the PCs, consider him a source of specialized knowledge to them and a minor combatant. Having the guild target the gumshoe removes his expertise, leaving the party to fend for themselves.

Trainee messenger boys

A trainee assassin sent to deliver a message is detected by the gumshoe and followed. The PCs should be 1st or 2nd level, and the Gumshoe should be 5th. The assassin notices he is being followed and lays a trap for the gumshoe, which almost kills the urban ranger who is left for dead. The PCs then stumble across the gumshoe, who will beseech them to go after the assassin on his behalf. If the PCs wait too long to intercept the assassin, they may find themselves dealing with a much higher-level killer than

they can cope with; if they do not, they can succeed in taking down the 4th-5th level trainee after a difficult fight, but will earn the enmity of the Hands of Cyrene in the process. This sets the stage for the Hands to be a major presence in the ensuing campaign, perhaps even the central bad guys of the entire campaign.

This reduces the gumshoe to pure plot device. Alternatively, he can survive the attack through luck or PC intervention, but you should have the encounters be with a pair of trainees in this circumstance. Either way, his primary function is as the hook; thereafter, he is expendable.

In at the deep end

In this nasty option, the gumshoe tips the PCs off about the Hands' activities. The group then manages to track down the guild's lair by following a trainee who has problems disassociating himself from his former life, whatever it might be. This can quite easily pitch the PCs headfirst into a situation that is beyond them. You have three choices should this occur:

1. Let the chips fall where they may – harsh but realistic
2. Let the PCs escape until they are high enough level to take on the assassins – less realistic but not such a campaign-wrecker
3. Downgrade the assassins – weakening the guild is the least useful approach

Much depends on whether you have implemented just a single guild or whether the guild has many branches. The latter justifies a weakened guild (either it is a new

branch or they have diluted their power by establishing a new branch elsewhere, and the PCs were just lucky enough to find them in a moment of vulnerability).

This encounter works best for PCs of middle or higher levels. Low-level characters will be at too great a disadvantage against even an incomplete assassins' guild.

Option 1 permits the gumshoe to be higher level (9th), and to join forces with the PCs, showcasing the gumshoe far more extensively. Option 2 permits a medium-to-high level gumshoe to stage the rescue (9th or 12th). Option 3 should have the gumshoe at or below the party's level.

The hunt

Once we start tackling mid-level assassins, we discuss the PCs interacting with them in actual missions. The most basic of these is an extension of the messenger concept: a team of 2-4 assassins is on their way to complete a mission and the PCs get in the way. This offers a different scenario to actually encountering the assassins during an assassination attempt.

The gumshoe's role is that of guide once again. He supplies specialized information to the party. Once he leaves the urban environment, he is comparatively helpless, so you might also have him hiring the PCs to act as his bodyguards in the wilderness.

This approach permits you to use the gumshoe in a number of ways and at a number of different levels relative to the party:

- He could be of lower level than the PCs, and a source of information only.
- He could be roughly the same level as the PCs, in which case he will be a little weak outdoors, but once in an urban environment will be better-adapted than the typical PC, a nice dichotomy.
- He could be higher-level than the PCs and employing them to deal with lesser threats along the way so that he preserves his own resources for the battle with the assassins.

Each of these options also elevates the required level of the assassins, respectively.

The key to this type of encounter is the target and his location relative to where the PCs enter the scenario and where the guild headquarters are. The greater the separation between these locations, the more effective this encounter becomes.

A variation of the encounter could occur when the assassins are on their way home from a mission—successful or otherwise. This lets you use higher-level assassins who have been weakened by their mission, but it also means the assassins have a lot more leisure time to use in dealing with the PCs and their new ally.

The denouement

Consider a variant on the above where the PCs intercept the assassins in the course of the assassination attempt. The best approach to this encounter type is to have the PCs either be hired by the target as bodyguards or visiting the target at the time. The gumshoe should be capable

enough to get involved independently. This option works best when the PCs and gumshoe are mid-to-high level. The assassins should be higher level than everyone.

The victim turns

Another interesting variation is the three-way-fight, in which the victim is himself so evil that he turns on his would-be rescuers. The victim can attack either during or after the main fight, though he would be smart to wait until one side goes down or flees. Alternatively, it could happen prior to the main battle, and the PCs might find themselves allied with the assassins against the victim and the gumshoe (who opposes the assassins for his own reasons, regardless of the cost).

Conclusion

The gumshoe brings two unique qualities to the game: he implacably opposes the assassins, and he already hunts them. This makes him a source of information about them, a living library the PCs can utilize. You might use him as a combatant so the assassins can be higher level, but that is secondary to his function as a source of specific expertise.

Having a morally ambiguous force like the Hands of Cyrene forces all those who interact with them into ambiguous moral territory; the PCs could be the good guys or the bad guys, or could even switch sides; the gumshoe could be hero or villain. Try to exploit this gamut of possibility.



Other Opposition Suggestions

Assassin guilds are often opposed by two groups: those who enforce law and order, and those who protect the intended target (including the target themselves). A third form of opposition comes from independent third parties who pursue the assassins from a sense of justice – the urban gumshoe, for example.

That list should be just the beginning. This section of the game supplement offers suggestions for other forms of opposition also willing and able to cause trouble for the unique guild we offer in Assassin's Amulet.

Cyrene and her guild are a study in contradiction. To the majority of people, assassination is an evil act, but Cyrene is a good deity. Assassination also tends to create anarchy, even chaos, but Cyrene is a member of an inherently pro-order divine relationship, the Celestial Tribunal. Finally, Cyrene as a Goddess of Life offers as contradictory a figure to head an assassins' guild as is possible to find.

At the heart of those contradictions lies Cyrene's belief that the unnatural extension of life comes at the expense of the unborn. This key principle underlies and justifies all the contradictory positions Cyrene seems to occupy.

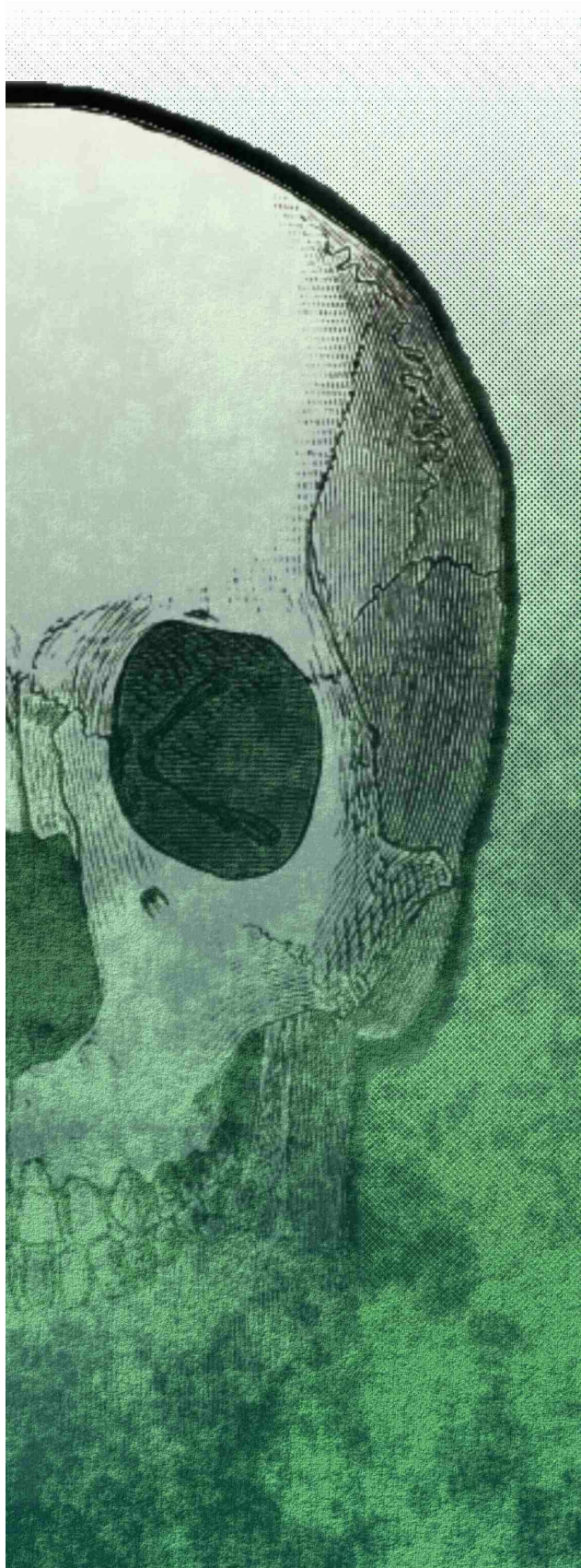
Opposition should arise because she is a Goddess of Life, her organization brings death, no side in the law versus chaos debate can fully trust her position, her organization commits evil acts and she is not evil. Just about anyone with a strong opinion about anything would find themselves at least somewhat opposed to the Hands of Cyrene. This does not just mean opposition to Cyrene and her cause; it means the followers of those who oppose her should also oppose her minions, the assassins.

To help get the ball rolling in terms of other opposition for the Hands of Cyrene, we have sprinkled parts of a unique pantheon here and there in this product. You are free to incorporate it into your games or strip out as much of it as you see fit. The essential core is an apparent Goddess of Life who goes by the name of Cyrene at least some of the time, and the motivational belief. Everything else, including the description of Cyrene and her place within the pantheon, we offer just so she does not stand in isolation.



You can glean several more suggestions from the assassin hooks section; Wizards, sages and druids can also have ideological

disagreements with Cyrene's beliefs and what those beliefs drive her subjects to do in her name.



To compile a definitive list of enemies, you should decide for yourself, which the rest of this section will cover. Enemies are presented in the form of six questions:

1. Is Cyrene real?
2. Is Cyrene right?
3. Is Cyrene wrong?
4. Is it all a plot by Cyrene?
5. Is Cyrene being corrupted by her cause? Has this already taken place?
6. Exactly what constitutes *unnatural extension of life*, anyway?

The answers should be different for every GM!

1. Is Cyrene Real?

One of the easiest ways to integrate Cyrene into an existing Pantheon is to decide she is actually a counterfeit, a false Goddess, an impersonation perpetrated by someone else. The list of candidates is high:

- A death god/goddess who seeks to protect his assassins' guild by cloaking them beneath a veneer of good works. This subverts the primary plot twist of Assassin's Amulet, and is the best way to go if you have any inkling the surprise has been revealed to the players, either by injudicious review or because you have used similar plot twists so often they are becoming expected.

- A life god/goddess who pursues goals that would not be permitted in their *day job* and seeks to deflect suspicion by using the subterfuge. This perpetuates the central twist. Alternatively, perhaps this is simply another incarnation of the deity, a separate face of the Deity of Life, in which case the worship of Cyrene is legitimate, but some of the cosmological workings behind the curtain are not known to the public.
- A demon or devil who seeks to present a veneer of respectability or who actually wants to reform. The contradictions inherent in that concept result in the contradictions within the Hands of Cyrene. The creature might be trying to do his best, but the taint of evil or corruption that clings to everything he does cannot be escaped.
- The Guildmaster: a suitable artifact or captured/allied being to provide the clerical magic, a line of patter and a lot of gumption, and you have yourself a new church that adds that same veneer of piousness, social protection and camouflage that comes with it. His heirs inherit the secret from him. Now fast-forward a few hundred years or so and you have established the Cult of Cyrene, with true believers serving as clerics in the temple above. This not only subverts the plot twist, it permits you to switch focus to the whole mechanism of cults and their presence within society, in the same way that TV shows like *Star Trek* could examine contentious issues by translating them out of the modern day setting and using the adventure as a parable.

To resolve a *no* answer to this question you must explain how the temple and the assassins can invoke clerical magic, and explain the motives behind the subterfuge of creating Cyrene as a figurehead.

It is also worth noting that, despite first reactions to a *no* answer, it does not automatically mean the answer to the next question is also automatically a *no*. The central tenet that justifies the existence and operation of the Hands of Cyrene can be valid even if Cyrene herself is not real.

- This brings us a fifth possible culprit: anyone who has had a stillborn child and blames those who have unnaturally extended their life (possibly because they need someone or something to blame) has the motive for creating this fraud. Cyrene would originally have been created for the social protection it brings – rulers tend to be wary of getting the temples offside. From there it just grew.

2. Is Cyrene Right?

Does the unnatural extension of life actually result in the death of an unborn child? (A tip of the hat at this point to "The Bastion of Broken Souls" by Bruce R. Cordell, whose creation, *The Casket of Unborn Souls*, provided the inspiration behind the concept).

If Cyrene is right, then that justifies the existence of the Hands of Cyrene, but their *training methods* (assassination for profit) are not, and represent the corruption of an inherently good organization, or perhaps a necessary compromise that comes from living in *the real world*.

Evil forces would oppose the Hands of Cyrene in this case, because their ultimate goal is one of good. The most ideologically fixated forces of good would also oppose the Hands because of the corruption of purpose involved. This also has the side benefit of connecting death with life, taking two polar opposite concepts and revealing a relationship between them, which adds some conceptual and philosophical color to a campaign.

If Cyrene is wrong, then the Hands of Cyrene are wholly evil, cloaking their misdeeds in a veneer of respectability. The forces of evil might oppose them out of jealousy, but would leave them alone so long as the Hands did not interfere. However, the forces of good would oppose the Hands without relent.

If no one knows for certain, then this motivation becomes cloaked in that uncertainty. While the most likely situation, it is also one of the most interesting. The consequences mean the Hands become a more fanatical organization, willing to take extreme measures because of unproven beliefs. You would also get scholars and philosophers debating the question, and sages investigating the question. There would be learned authors writing supporting works on both sides.

Opposition also becomes a question of fanaticism, of how much a group or individual is willing to stake on the possibility the Hands are wrong. Fanatics are, in general, willing to target by

association, and willing to go beyond what most people consider reasonable. Therefore, while opposition from the extremes of the good versus evil alignment debate would be muted, it would not be ended; the Hands would encounter opposition from both sides, and that opposition would have a tendency to go too far. In addition, they would also encounter opposition from some centrists because the Hands are fanatics.

As the above was being written, I (Mike) could not help but consider the whole situation analogous to the extremists of the Right To Life movement—the people who are willing to bomb abortion clinics and kill doctors who perform abortions, no matter what the circumstances of an individual case.

And, just as in that example, the fanaticism of the movement's extremists would weaken the general support for the issue. People who might support the Hands *in principle* will oppose the extremists because of what they do the rest of the time.



3. Is Cyrene Wrong?

While it might seem this question covers the same ground as the previous one, we have posed it on its own because there are other matters to ponder if the answer to this question is *yes*.

You have to ask the big theological questions of where souls come from, and how resurrection and the like in fact function at a conceptual level. Those answers, and the way they differ from what the Hands of Cyrene believe, and – most especially – how the actions of the Hands impact the real situation, can give a completely different set of enemies to oppose the Hands.

4. Is it All a Plot by Cyrene?

This question arises because of an alternative explanation for all those inherent contradictions that one of us dreamt up while preparing this section. The logic goes like this:

In any rational and bipartisan pantheon, during the evaluation of the functions of the Hands, Cyrene would handle the investigation aspect, and would then give responsibility for hunting down those who have transgressed against her domain to a God of Death, or of Hunting, or whatever. However, at least within the confines of the game material we have provided within this game supplement, she has taken responsibility for the Hands herself.

Perhaps she simply does not trust the God of Death. After all, that god has failed to do their job, failed to claim the spirit of whoever has prolonged their lives unnaturally. It seems more probable, though, that the natural antipathy you would expect to find between a Deity of Life and a Deity of Death is the central issue.

In creating the Hands, Cyrene in effect undermines the authority within the domain of death. Whether the justification for the existence of the Hands is true, and whether Cyrene believes it, this background element seems too fortunate to be entirely coincidental, and might be the sole reason for the creation of the Hands by Cyrene. The only certainty here is that divine politics has played a substantial part in assigning the different roles to the behind-the-scenes protagonists of this arrangement.

If we were Deities of Death, with our noses tweaked in public this way, we would not look upon the Hands of Cyrene with a warm, happy glow. We would probably seek to undermine and oppose them at every turn. We might not be able to trouble them directly, protected as they are by the Deity of Life, but our opposition would still be intense.

Hence, we are raising the subject here, in the section where we nominate other forms of opposition to the Hands of Cyrene and to their activities.



5. Is Cyrene being corrupted, or has she been already corrupted by her Cause?

As a good deity who does bad things in the name of a good cause, Cyrene stands on shaky moral ground. Are good intentions enough? Is this a good deity going bad?

The history of the assassins' guild follows a clear progression. First, they targeted just those who violated Cyrene's province. Then they began targeting those who attempted to stop them in their pursuit of the first group, or who intruded. Now, they target anyone who pays them.

At the same time, their politics have become extreme and preemptive. They are predisposed to target mages because they see them as potentially becoming violators in the future. They insinuate members into positions of authority to shelter their numbers from the exercising of that authority, corrupting the governments around them by blackmail, bribery and intimidation.

If you forget those *good reasons* for a moment, the description is of a subversive and mercenary terrorist operation, and as evil a group as you could find.

Had Cyrene founded an order of paladins, as she has done to hunt undead, there would be no problem—though they would lack the skills to be effective. Expedience led her to establish the Hands of Cyrene—and the expedient solution is seldom the best answer.

There is no question the Hands have fallen from the moral high ground into a cesspool of expedience and fanaticism; yet Cyrene

still supports them. All of which leads to a number of possible answers to this question:

- Yes, and the fall from grace continues. You cannot support such evil acts without the taint rubbing off on you.
- No, because Cyrene was never the goody-two-shoes she seemed. She always straddled the middle ground, willing to do what was necessary to achieve her ultimate ends
- Yes, because Cyrene is in truth an evil being trying to reform and redeem herself, but who has let *old habits* lead her astray from the path of good.

...and so on, through many other combinations. The road to hell, they say, is paved with good intentions; not even divine beings are immune to this truth.

This means that more idealistic and *morally pure* groups may start to hunt the Hands. More, it points to a possible schism in the gods, even a civil war amongst the divine, which gives rise to another form of opposition the Hands may have to overcome in the future, if they do not already face this complicating factor.

6. Exactly What Constitutes *the Unnatural Extension of Life* Anyway?

The answers to this question changed often while this book was in the conceptual stages, and even now, no clear consensus of

definition exists. What's more, we have chosen on purpose not to edit the different sections influenced by one answer or another, as the right answer—in mortal terms—is that "no one is quite sure."

This question goes to the heart of who are the Hands, whom do they target and who considers their price unacceptable. Some of the possible answers to consider:

- Undeath: we have excluded this and given the pursuit of vampires and liches and the like over to a specialized order of paladins in Cyrene's service.
- The resurrected, reincarnated, and those otherwise brought back from the dead: this was the working definition during most of this product's preparation.
- Those who have experienced deferred aging by means of magic, such as the Picture of Dorian Gray: always intended by us to be included amongst the targets of the Hands of Cyrene.
- Those whose existences are preserved by deals with devils and demons and the like: another category of opponent we always intended the Hands to target.
- Those kept alive beyond their mortal span by the sacrifice of others and other necromancy: present amongst the targets of the hands from the first, and left behind when we excluded undeath.
- Another off-hand and off-color idea that occurred to one of us in this context is that *any* race whose *natural* lifespan is more than human might

be considered a valid target – ie Dwarves and Elves and the like!

- Those healed of mortal wounds by clerics or magic items: this is where we started getting into contentious territory. If the only reason you can win a fight is that healing magicks prevent you from dying, does that mean your life has been unnaturally extended? At times we have thought yes, and at times we have thought no.

Yes requires the Hands to hunt many more targets, and at the same time makes them an even darker and more evil presence in the game.

No restricts the targets to more obvious evil types, and preserves a little more of the organization's moral purity. We could waffle back-and-forth on the question for ages, but feel it is better for you decide for yourself on a campaign-by-campaign basis—or even to have the answer change from one to the other in the course of the campaign!

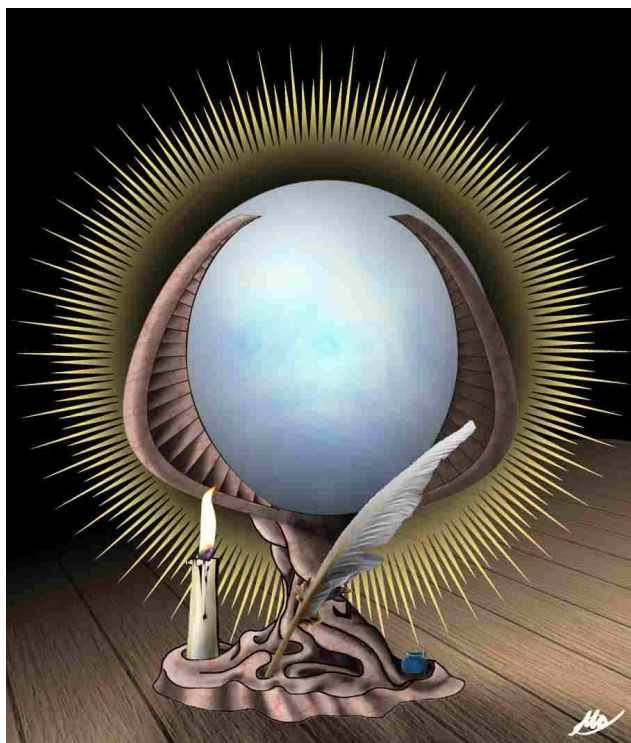
The last offers one of the most interesting possibilities, because it raises the question of where you draw the line. At one extreme, you have those saved from certain death by healing magicks. At the other, you have everyone who has ever imbibed a healing potion. Any point in between is going to be fuzzy and vague. This brings us to the final suggestion we have for other opposition:

**Kill 'em all and let
the gods sort it out!**

Chapter 5: New Equipment, Magic Items & Treasures



New Magic Items



Orb of Divine Sight

Minor Wondrous Item

Aura: faint divination

Slot: n/a; **Weight:** 120#; **Price:** 5,000gp

Description: Also known as a Scrying Ball, this appears at first glance to be nothing more than a crystal ball some 12" in diameter. Closer inspection will reveal a slight milkiness within the center that occasionally eddies and swirls as though it were smoke affected by a gentle breeze.

An Orb of Divine Sight can show any location within the bounds of the city or

town in which the guild lair is located at the time it is emplaced by scrying, using a ceremony claiming the town or city as subject to the Will Of Cyrene. This ceremony takes about an hour, but could be performed in 45 minutes if haste was essential. If the scrying ball is removed from its current location, it has a range of 90' (30 yards) per point of Wisdom of the wielder. If multiple people seek to use it at the same time, the lowest Wisdom score of those attempting to use it dictates the range. Note that no skills, feats or other special abilities are required to utilize a Scrying Ball.

However, if the user has a Knowledge Arcana skill of less than 25 and does not have five or more levels in an arcane spell-using class, the use of a Scrying Ball for more than 30 minutes is debilitating. Such use inflicts 1d6 points of non-lethal damage per 5 minutes thereafter, cumulative – 1d6, then 2d6, 3d6 and so on – until the target passes out. This damage heals at 1 point per minute once the character stops using the Scrying Ball. However, if they resume using it within 1 hour per die of damage dealt, the character will resume taking damage as though they had not stopped using it (so, if the last damage dealt was 10d6, the character cannot use the scrying ball for another 10 hours). This damage cannot be healed magically by any means.

These restrictions are summarized in the following table (extend as necessary)

:

Time (mins)	Damage	Cumulative	Rest Time	Time (mins)	Damage	Cumulative	Rest Time
0 - 30	0d6	0d6	none	66-70	8d6	36d6	1 day, 12 hrs
31-35	1d6	1d6	1 hr	71-75	9d6	45d6	1 day, 21hrs
36-40	2d6	3d6	3 hrs	76-80	10d6	55d6	2 days, 7 hrs
41-45	3d6	6d6	6 hrs	81-85	11d6	66d6	2 days, 18 hrs
46-50	4d6	10d6	10 hrs	86-90	12d6	78d6	3 days, 6 hrs
51-55	5d6	15d6	15 hrs	91-95	13d6	91d6	3 days, 19 hrs
56-60	6d6	21d6	21 hrs	96-100	14d6	105d6	4 days, 9 hrs
61-65	7d6	28d6	28 hrs	101-105	15d6	120d6	5 days

A character with either the required Knowledge Arcana skill or the arcane spell casting class levels may use the orb for double these time periods (1 hour without

damage, 10 minutes between damage increments) but the required rest time is also doubled:

Time (mins)	Damage	Cumulative	Rest Time	Time (mins)	Damage	Cumulative	Rest Time
0 - 60	0d6	0d6	none	131-140	8d6	36d6	3 days
61-70	1d6	1d6	2 hrs	141-150	9d6	45d6	3 days, 18hrs
71-80	2d6	3d6	6 hrs	151-160	10d6	55d6	4 days, 14 hrs
81-90	3d6	6d6	12 hrs	161-170	11d6	66d6	5 days, 12 hrs
91-100	4d6	10d6	20 hrs	171-180	12d6	78d6	6 days, 12 hrs
101-110	5d6	15d6	1 day 6 hrs	181-190	13d6	91d6	7 days, 14 hrs
111-120	6d6	21d6	1 day, 18 hrs	191-200	14d6	105d6	8 days, 18 hrs
121-130	7d6	28d6	2 days, 8 hrs	201-210	15d6	120d6	10 days

To attune an Amulet of Cyrene to a chosen destination, the assassin must first identify and examine the new location through an Orb of Divine Sight, then utter the command words "Acha sa" (the place). Thereafter, the amulet can be used to teleport from the guild lair to that location.

Cyrene gifts each Guildmaster with an orb for use by the entire guild membership for whom they are responsible. The orbs permit remote viewing of destinations for an Amulet of Cyrene (refer below) as well as general scouting and spying operations.

Construction: Orbs of Divine Sight cannot be crafted by mortals, as it is necessary to infuse into the crystal sufficient sentence to scry and the ability to do so without actually awakening the crystal as a sentient magic item. In theory, an Arcane Theurge might be able to construct one, but they have access to better methods of scrying and would not know of the existence of these items, and thus would not attempt to replicate them.



Amulet of Cyrene (aka Assassin's Amulet)

Minor Wondrous Item

Aura: faint conjuration; **Bard** 6 / **Sorcerer/Wizard** 6

Slot: neck; **Weight:** —; **Price:** 5,000gp

Description: This fist sized, jeweled amulet hangs from a gold chain around the neck. It

consists of thirteen stones arrayed in a diamond pattern. Four small square bloodstones surround a center octagonal cut ruby, with eight octagonal cut black diamonds circling those.

When the wearer encloses the amulet within his right hand and utters the command words "Cetava na Cyrene" (veil of Cyrene) he will Dimension Door himself to the lair to which the amulet is attuned, as if he cast the spell of the same name. The wearer can also bring one or more willing or unwilling creatures. See the Dimension Door spell description for weight allowance and creature number calculation. In addition, if one or more individuals grapple the wearer and the wearer can grasp the amulet and utter the command words, he can transport himself, but he also transports the unwilling persons.

From within the guild lair to which the amulet is attuned, the wearer can specify any location he can see through an Orb of Divine Sight and lock that location into the amulet; this procedure is described in Orb of Divine Sight, above. Thereafter, from anywhere within the Guild walls, the wearer may teleport to the location specified by uttering the command words "Acha sa" (the place). Note that this is the same phrase used to attune the amulet to the specified destination.

Amulet bearers pass through traps and alarms within each attuned lair without triggering them. Removing the amulet will trigger traps and alarms as described in the Assassins' Lair map description.

Each amulet is attuned to the specific Lair of the Hands of Cyrene located within the city. If an assassin travels to a different city, his amulet will not provide access to the lair in that city until it is re-attuned. The assassin must make contact with another member of

the guild who will escort him into the lair. The process of attuning an amulet to the lair is described under Guildmaster's Amulet, below.

The amulet must be removed from its wearer to cease functioning.

In Assassin's Amulet, if you opt to use the Language of the Gods, the following commands operate the amulets by trained wearers:

- Dimension Door function: the wearer encloses their right hand over the amulet and utters "Cetava na Cyrene" (Veil of Cyrene).
- End alarms and reset or disable traps: the wearer uses the "Kaas" (cease) command.
- Opening a portcullis: the wearer says "Unaah" (open).
- Teleport function: the amulet wearer utters the command words "Acha sa" (the place).

Construction Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, Dimension Door; **Cost:** 2,500gp

Guildmaster's Amulet (Amulet of the Guildmaster of Cyrene)

Medium Wondrous Item

Aura: moderate conjuration; **CL:** 12

Slot: neck; **Weight:** –; **Price:** 53,000gp

Description: A Guildmaster's Amulet is identical in appearance to any other Amulet of Cyrene, and has all the same abilities. It also has some additional powers.



The wearer must be attuned to both the amulet and a Temple of Cyrene located in a specific city. When the wearer encloses his right hand around the amulet and utters the command words "Cetava na Cyrene" (veil of Cyrene) it functions exactly as an assassin's amulet attuned to a specific lair.

The Guildmaster's Amulet forms a binding or connection between the central gem of a lair and all subordinate amulets. In certain metaphysical aspects, part of it actually is the central gem. These gems are initially tiny, only fractions of an inch across. After one has been polished, cut and faceted, the power of Cyrene infuses it in a profound ceremony, inflating it in size to a few inches in diameter, and expanding in size the splinters and portions cleaved from the original. The largest off-cut becomes part of the Guildmaster's Amulet, and in the process is bound to the Guildmaster during the part of the ceremony that confers that rank. Other off-cuts are used to craft assassin's amulets.

When the central gem is emplaced within a new lair (in another profound ceremony), Cyrene connects the gem to the city, imprinting upon its crystalline structure a perfect symbolic representation of the buildings within the current urban environs, again increasing the gem in size. Thereafter, this representation is fixed and cannot be changed. Any expansion of the city is inaccessible by means of this central gemstone. When a new assassin's amulet is conferred, the Guildmaster uses his amulet as the link connecting the assassin to the central gemstone by way of his amulet. This process is also known as "attuning" or "activating" the assassin's amulet.

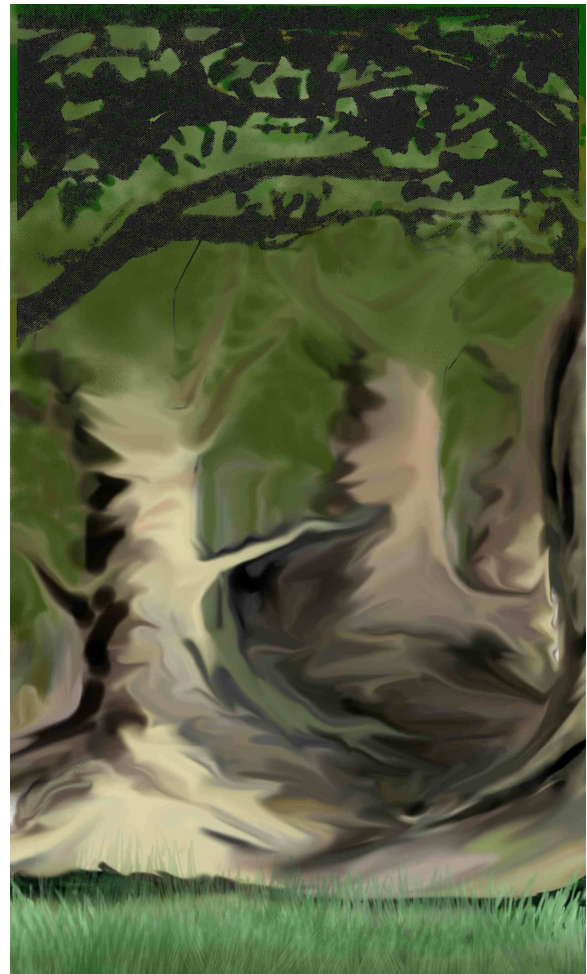
The command words, "Vatta na Cyrene" (revenge of Cyrene) causes all subordinate amulets attuned to the same lair and that are within 200' of the wearer to cast Summon Monster VI. It also primes these subordinate amulets to be receptive to a Cyrene's Lament instruction (see below). The creatures summoned are under the control of the wearers of the individual amulets. Repeating this phrase ends the summoning and returns all the creatures to their places of origin.

Uttering the command words, "Cyranae Elamtus" (Cyrene's Lament) causes all amulets affected by the first command to cast a Dimension Door to a specific common location within the city that is selected by the Guildmaster at the time of the invocation. This location may be an alley, an inn, a sewer, a bolthole or even another lair if one has been prepared. This Dimension Door will only remain open for three rounds.

These secondary functions serve as a defensive measure to rescue and defend the hierarchy of any lair under assault. All wearers of the lesser amulets are warned of this tactic and practice it regularly with

simulated spells. The standard tactics are to use the summoned monsters to delay any pursuers until after the Dimension Door has closed. Trained amulet bearers know they have only one or two rounds to issue instructions to the summoned creatures before escaping via the Dimension Door.

The instruction "Cetava na Cyrene" (veil of Cyrene) grants any Guildmaster access to a lair within the current city via Dimension Door. Unlike an ordinary assassin's amulet, the Guildmaster's Amulet does not have to be attuned to the lair first. Even if a lair is disabled by the removal of the central gem (refer Area 1 "Portal Chamber" of the Map Key, Chapter 2), the wearer of the Guildmaster's Amulet can still fully access it.



The Guildmaster's Amulet overrides all other assassin's amulets with respect to the opening of the portcullis or the ending of alarms and resetting of traps. The Guildmaster may also manually trigger an alarm or trap with the command phrase "Pravos na Arrhar" (Force of right) regardless of whether a target is present for the trap to affect. While this power is usually employed simply to test the traps, it may also be employed to activate traps that have been disabled.

In Assassin's Amulet, if you opt to use the Language of the Gods, the following commands operate the amulets by trained wearers:

- Dimension Door entrance to a guild lair: the wearer utters "Cetava na Cyrene" (veil of Cyrene).
- End alarms and reset or disable traps: the wearer uses the "Kaas" (cease) command.
- Opening a portcullis: the wearer says "Unaah" (open).
- Cause all nearby assassin's amulets to cast Summon Monster VI and make them receptive to Cyrene's Lament: the wearer uses the command "Vatta na Cyrene" (revenge of Cyrene).
- Create a short-term Dimension Door between each nearby Assassin's Amulet and a location chosen by the Guildmaster: the wearer uses the command "Cyranae Elemtus" (Cyrene's Lament).
- Trigger an alarm or trap within the guild lair: the wearer uses the command "Pravos na Arrhar" (Force of right).

Construction Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, Dimension Door, Summon Monster VI; **Cost:** 26,500gp



Pocket Orb of Scrying

Minor Wondrous Item

Aura: moderate divination; **CL:** 3

Slot: neck; **Weight:** — ; **Price:** 500gp

Scrying is a great tool for assassins. They can learn target's routines from a distance, learn whether the target is alone, spy out the protections and defenses that might interfere in the completion of the contract, and so on. However, orbs of scrying are expensive and rare, and assassins lack the magic training and ability to use one in any event.

This fact led to the creation of the pocket orb of scrying. Though a more limited magical device, it lets the wielder spy on an individual by means of a drop of blood, lock of hair or personal possession from the observed individual. The orb can also lock

onto one location at a time by means of touching an object or part of an object that is normally present at that location.

The orbs do not detect magic or provide any information that the assassin could not obtain visually if he were standing in the presence of the target. They do not confer or transmit darkvision or any other form of enhanced senses. They can only scry on a target if they are within 100 feet of the target, and the lock is broken by any form of arcane protection cast upon the target. Orbs function a maximum of 30 minutes per day, and exhibit a pearly glow when in use. They require no magical talents to activate or utilize.

Construction Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, Scry; **Cost:** 250gp



Ink of the Squid

Oil

Price: 120gp

Description: A variation on the mixture contained in the gloves of blinding, this oil costs more to create and generates a zephyr

of wind (magical effect) to spread the cloud out into a 30' radius. To thicken the cloud, a slightly different mixture is used, which also alters slightly the effects. The cloud persists for d4+1 rounds, and then congeals into thick black grease that covers everything within the cloud at the time. The grease requires 5 minutes scrubbing with soap and water to remove, and causes temporary blindness until the victim has their eyes cleansed with clean water. As soon as the stopper is removed from the oil, it reacts with the air. Ink of the squid should not be imbibed (if nothing else, it tastes foul, and who wants to wash their mouths out with soap and water?). Assassins and sometimes rogues use this oil to block pursuers, but because it tends to annoy those subjected to it (including any bystanders caught in the cloud), it usually brings about strident reprisals, so it is not often employed. Left to its own devices, the ink will break down in about 10 hours. It also stains clothes of any color a dirty gray.

Construction Requirements: Alchemical knowledge 14 ranks, 1 cup of squid ink, 50sp of other alchemic compounds, Craft Potion, ability to cast 0th level spells and craft magic items; **Cost:** 60gp

Barbed Talons

Price: 350gp

Description: Slightly curved and thin metal hooks with barbs, these small weapons can be inserted into any pair of leather gloves.

They function as daggers that cannot be dropped, but each time they are used to attack, there is a 4 in 20 chance they will bend or break and become useless, even if they are enchanted.



On a critical hit, they reveal their true power: they penetrate the chest and the hooks and barbs latch onto vital organs, which are slashed badly when the hooks and barbs tear free. In effect, this adds the target's strength to that of the assassin and automatically inflicts backstab bonuses. After a critical hit, the barbed talons are destroyed and must be replaced.

Construction: Requirements:

Metalworking 8 ranks or equivalent skill, Craft Wondrous Item. **Cost:** 175gp

New Non-Magical Items

Gloves of Blinding

Price: 75gp + alchemic mixture 20sp per use

These gloves appear to be unremarkable leather gloves. In a hollow reservoir in the back of the hand, the gloves contain a mixture certain exotic substances available

from any apothecary or alchemist for 20sp. When exposed to air, these substances react to atmospheric moisture to form a dark cloud 10' radius around the assassin, which functions as a Darkness spell for 1d3 rounds. This completely consumes the substances, but affords the assassin a brief period during which they cannot be observed by any means.

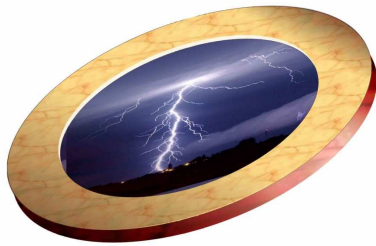
Construction Requirements: any leather craftsman capable of masterwork items. No magic required. Alchemic knowledge 14 ranks; **Cost:** 35gp (excludes cost of alchemical mixture)

Gloves Of Blinding
look
ordinary...



Legacy Items

One of the distinguishing features of the world of Assassin's Amulet is the existence of Legacy Items. These are powerful arcane and spiritual objects that occupy a middle ground between relics and artifacts on the one hand, and ordinary magic items on the other. Legacy Items begin as mundane pieces of equipment, and gradually rise in power as their owner grows in ability and prestige.



What is a Legacy Item?

Shared experiences leave a metaphysical fingerprint on the world. Some fingerprints are bound to the location of the events, and can be relived in dreams at those places. Others are bound to concepts, philosophies or personalities that resonate with those who experienced the events. This type manifests as paranormal experiences or extraordinary bonuses in support of, or more frequently in opposition of, others who represent those concepts or philosophies.

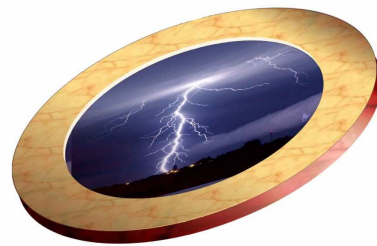
A few strong imprints can coalesce within an ideal object relevant to the source of the imprint. This transforms it into a connection that binds the Legacy of the experience to

the individual who wields the item. As the object manifests greater and greater power in the hands of the individual, it subtly shapes the personality and ambitions of the possessor until they come to embody and represent those who shared the original experience, becoming heir to their thoughts, dreams, aspirations greatness and, yes, their flaws.

When the heir passes on, the Legacy begins anew to bind itself to a new inheritor. Over time, the term Legacy applies to the original imprint and the current bearer of that imprint. Such a Legacy might embody any philosophy or emotional state.

The Legacy of a group dedicated to peace might become less willing to engage in battle until all other avenues have been exhausted. If the group whose Legacy this is were betrayed by orcs, there might be an exception made in their case, where the item possessor will come to instinctively distrust the race and all its representatives, and will encourage acts of aggression and violence against them.

A Legacy can be simple, such as death to trolls, or as complex as desired by the GM. However, it always represents the philosophy and ideology and traumas of some long-lost (and possibly forgotten) group whose beliefs were strong enough to survive the destruction or failure of that group, and which find themselves a new *home* in the Legacy Item.



How is a Legacy Item Created?

In technical terms, a Legacy Item is a masterwork item that, unbeknownst to the creator, serves as a symbolic representation of a past group or race. Expecting the item to become enchanted, both mage and craftsman are astonished when the enchantment fails to *take*.

The binding must be complete for the potential enchantment to be consumed and *bound*, making it appear as if the enchantment has failed. If the enchantment is initiated prior to the binding being complete, the capacity for the binding is consumed by the enchantment, and the item becomes an ordinary magic item. This means few opportunities for Legacy Item creation, and even then, they items are rarely recognized because this is not the only reason enchantments fail.

If the enchantment is not performed correctly; if there is a hidden flaw in the item being enchanted; if there is any sort of disruption in the arcane or spiritual energies being infused in the item; if any of a dozen things go wrong, the enchantment will fail.

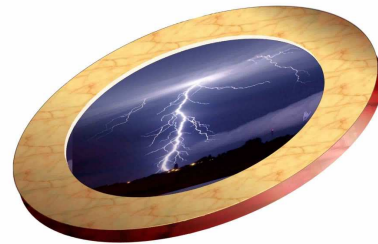
Sometimes, the process of the failed enchantment destroys the item. Other times the failure just mars it, leaving an ordinary and non-enchanted item. The enchantment might also become twisted and produce a cursed item. On rare occasions, the failure is the result of the intervention of an outside agency – producing a Legacy Item.

Most of the time, crafters and possessors discard Legacy Items as cursed or flawed. The items are never used long enough for others to recognize their true power and worth. And even when a Legacy Item's

powers and influence are known, they often become a closely held secret.

Legacy Items shape the user, making them the heir to everything that defined the particular group whose Legacy the item represents. Those who recognize this can use this shaping to their own benefit by inciting involuntarily reflex reactions from the Legacy and not from the wielder. As a result, wielders learn quickly to preserve the secret source of their enhanced abilities.

On rare occasions, a Legacy Item can be deliberately created by having such an idealized representation constructed at the exact location where a fingerprint resides, an echo of some great past evil or good. More frequently, though, happenstance and coincidence create them.



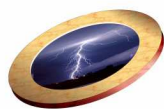
How Does a Character Acquire a Legacy Item?

Any non-enchanted masterwork item might actually be a Legacy Item. The only way to know is to use the item for a period, foregoing the advantages of using an enchanted item. If the wielder's personality, motives or objective harmonizes enough with the Legacy Item, it will begin to bind itself to him.

Without sufficient common ground in these areas for the item and the character to relate to one another, the item remains seemingly inert. In these cases, the item begins to influence the character subconsciously, raising doubts and creating confusion until the character opens up to new concepts, ideas and ideologies. The item then exploits this opening to mould the character into the being the Legacy needs him to be.

If this process proceeds too slowly, or if the character proves resistant, the item will attempt to influence those around the wielder in a subtle manner. While the wielder is subject to overt and cumulative effects, those around him find their reactions and inclinations become stronger or weaker, which puts the wielder into circumstances more appropriate for the Legacy Item's perspective. It is usually in the Legacy Item's best interests for the character to survive, so it will not go too far. It is also in the item's best interests to avoid having its nature discovered by the wielder before the binding is complete, so it will be as subtle as possible.

It is also worth noting that a Legacy Item is not intelligent, though it may become so as the power of the Legacy grows. These effects described above are more like instinctive prompts on the item's part, making the nature of the Legacy harder to discern.



In the hands of an unbound character

When initially wielding the item, a character gains no direct benefit. However, he will find that using the item feels right in some indefinable manner, that it imbues

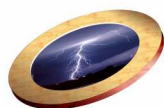
him with a sense of confidence and certainty he will be a significant individual in the future with power and influence. He will feel his destiny being shaped by circumstance into something greater.

This confidence can manifest occasionally as a minor benefit to the character: a +1 initiative, +1 on a bluff or diplomatic skill check, +1 on a Fear save, +1 to hit, +1 to damage, and so on. These benefits manifest just on occasion, perhaps one time in ten, when possible. Each such manifestation counts as one *aiding* of the character—a total you need to track for reasons explained in the next section. When an aiding occurs, the character feels the item has made the difference between success or failure, or at least, made success easier to achieve.

When confronted with an opportunity to act in accordance with the Legacy when he would normally not do so, the character should make a Will save at DC 10 to resist instinctively following the influence of the item. This is true even if the character is normally immune to or resistant to mind-altering effects.

If the character is actively opposed to the philosophy and objectives of the Legacy, the Legacy Item will begin subtly interfering in the judgment and reactions of those around the character. These effects are more subtle, as described above, but are also harder to resist as a result; surrounding characters are required to make Will saves at DC 15 to resist.

Note that at this point in their journey together, the item's influence is not strong enough to force the character into an alignment violation. However, it can imbue a desire to find a way to achieve a certain objective within the character's alignment restrictions.



Binding a character to the Legacy

Ultimately, the time will come when the character makes some form of positive declaration of ownership or destiny relating to the item or the innate Legacy objectives.

In game mechanics, this occurs involuntarily when the item has aided the character a number of times equal to the character's Wisdom score. The declaration signals that the process of binding the character to the Legacy that item contains, with the item serving as an intermediary, has commenced.

When the character sleeps, he will begin reliving key moments of the past represented by the Legacy in his dreams or when resting or meditating. When he awakens, he will have difficulty remembering specifics, no matter how much he tries.

Recollection is	Will save DC
Vague and general	10
An overall impression	12
Bereft of context	15
Fragmentary, incomplete	20
Random, irrelevant	22
Specific, relevant	25

Until the binding process is complete, the character can still give up the item and its Legacy, though he will usually resist doing so once the binding process has begun, perhaps to the point of violence.

At the same time, the influence of the Legacy over the character will continue to grow. This first manifests in areas about which the Legacy directly relates. For example, a revenge-obsessed Legacy of violence toward dark elves would only trigger in circumstances where a dark elf was directly involved, and the save DC to avoid the prompting of the Legacy rises from 15 to 20.

Legacy Items can influence either the possessor or those around him, but not both at the same time. The item is no longer capable of influencing those surrounding the wielder while it directs its energies towards achieving a binding between the character and the Legacy.

It will prompt the character to take a more active interest and involvement in the affairs of significance to the Legacy. Those who know the character well or observe him closely may realize he struggles with some inner battle; sometimes he wins, and sometimes he loses.

Over time, the Legacy will influence the character in situations where its motivations are only indirectly related. At this point, the character may even blame those against whom the Legacy is directed for what he is experiencing.

Eventually, the Binding will be complete. This is signaled when the character takes an action not previously within their personality, purely because of the influence of the Legacy Item. This action is in complete violation of his normal character, beliefs and alignment.

The speed with which this process proceeds depends (in game mechanics terms) on the power of the first significant ability granted by the Legacy Item, a subject I (Mike) will address in a subsequent section.

In the interim, while the process of binding the character to a legacy remains incomplete, he will gain the benefits of an initial minor power, known as the First Inheritance. This is simply one of the unreliable benefits described previously: +1 to initiative, +1 on bluff or diplomatic skill checks, +1 on fear saves, +1 to hit, +1 to damage. However, the character can now use this power whenever he uses the Legacy Item.

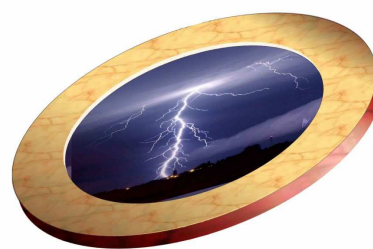


Binding the Legacy to the character

When the binding process is complete, the character becomes the guardian and last representative of the Legacy. While he remains in control of his actions and choices, he will be aware of the inclinations of the Legacy he represents and feel urgings to behave in accordance with the beliefs and attitudes he now embodies. He gains a substantial ability, referred to as the Second Inheritance.

From time to time thereafter, as he gains in character levels, he has the opportunity to unlock powers, known as Inheritances, within the Legacy Item. Should he succeed in doing so, the power is his to call upon thereafter; should he fail to do so, the power will not be available until the character next succeeds in unlocking a power within the Legacy Item. When he does so, he will not only acquire the ability he has just unlocked, he will also acquire the ability he failed to unlock previously. The greater the power, the more difficult the challenge of unlocking that power will be.

The following section, The Powers of a Legacy Item, describes how the GM allocates powers to an item. This is followed by Potential Powers of a Legacy Item, which describes the process of determining the resulting requirements before an unlocking attempt may be made to obtain a new power within the Legacy Item. The section that follows that discussion goes into the specifics of matching powers to an Unlocking Challenge.



The Powers of a Legacy Item

Legacy Items have multiple powers, from minor to major, that they grant to the wielder. Initially, the wielder will not even be certain the item is granting a power, so unreliable are the benefits while the character is unbound to the item. When the binding process begins, the character gains access to a more reliable ability, appropriate to the nature of the Legacy that the Legacy Item represents. This advantage is known as the **First Inheritance**.

As the wielder and Legacy Item bond together, the character levels gained mark the passage of time as the bonding experience proceeds. When sufficient time has passed, the bonding is complete and the character gains the benefits of a power referred to as The Second Inheritance. The power level of the Second Inheritance

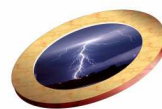
determines the number of levels to be gained before the bonding is complete.

At the GM's discretion, the character may experience *flashes* of the Second Inheritance in advance of its being reliably available to the character, under circumstances especially appropriate to the Legacy. When such circumstances are present, the GM should roll a dX, where X is the number of levels remaining before the bonding is complete; on a roll of '1' the power may be called upon, once, and immediately.

Once bound to a Legacy, the character gains the opportunity to unlock additional Inheritances as he gains additional levels, presumably while representing the Legacy. There may be many such Inheritances of a minor nature, or few of more substantial

power, or some combination of these two extremes.

Clearly, the first step is to define some non-arbitrary scale to measure the power of any given Inheritance.



Inheritance rankings

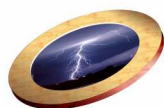
Inheritances are ranked on a scale of 2 to 6. Each increase in ranking indicates the Inheritance is more powerful – roughly doubling with each +1. The following table lists Rankings and the inheritances that correspond to that Ranking:



Inheritance Ranking:	Appropriate Inheritances
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +1 to a stat bonus • +1 to a saving roll vs. a specific effect • +1 skill bonus • 0 or 1st level spell usable 1x per day
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +2 to a stat bonus • +2 skill bonus • +N to another numeric value; e.g. +5' base movement • +1 to a saving roll • 0 or 1st level spell usable 3x per day • 2nd or 3rd level spell usable 1x per day
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +4 to a stat bonus • +4 skill bonus • +2N to another numeric value • Power equivalent to a feat • 0 or 1st level spell usable all the time or at will • 2nd or 3rd level spell usable 3x per day • 4th or 5th level spell usable 1x per day • +1 weapon or armor effect*
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abilities of a minor wondrous item • +2 weapon or armor effect (refer below) • A doubling of the number of uses per day of a lesser-ranked Inheritance Power** • At will use of a lesser-ranked Inheritance Power***
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abilities of a medium wondrous item • A +3 weapon effect (refer below) • Item Intelligence and a further ability with a ranking of 3
<p>Notes:</p> <p>* Weapon effects—consult your magic item pricing rules to determine options for effects. For example, the Bane property is equivalent to a +1 weapon effect, so it is usable as a 1st rank power.</p> <p>** The cost of doubling the frequency of availability of a Legacy Power is equal to 5 less the price already charged for the Legacy Power.</p> <p>*** The cost of making a power available at will is equal to 5 less the price already charged for the Legacy Power, plus you have to have already paid to double the frequency of availability.</p> <p>All benefits are cumulative.</p>	

The table offers usable examples but the list is not exhaustive. Powers and restrictions not listed are possible and acceptable, limited only to the GM's creativity.

Assess new options using the above scale as a guideline.



Inheritance ranking modifiers

Modify these rankings based on how much they express the unique nature of their Legacy:

+1 for powers not directly expressive of the uniqueness of the Legacy. This makes powers more *expensive*. For example, a Legacy of peace might make combat powers more expensive, so +1 to hit could be Rank 2.

-1 for powers that are directly expressive of the uniqueness of the Legacy. This makes powers less *expensive*. For example, a Legacy of peace might make social skill powers less expensive, so +2 Diplomacy could be Rank 1.

The GM should determine the ranking appropriate to each Inheritance after listing the powers he wishes the Legacy Item to confer.



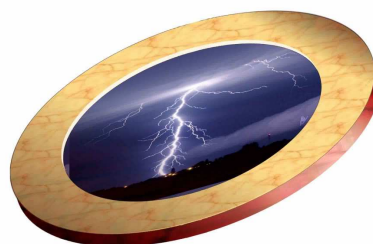
Total Legacy Ranking

Total the modified rankings, once known, to determine the Total Legacy Ranking. Most Legacy Items have a total of 16-20 total ranking; some, suitable only for an Epic Campaign, might have as many as 40 total ranks.

The greater the total, the more powerful the Legacy Item will become when the character has mastered the powers it offers. The table below shows the correct means of calculating the value of a Legacy Item.

Value Of A Legacy Item	Applicability
Value = 20,000gp x total ranking of revealed powers	Always
+50,000gp	if the total ranking of revealed powers is less than 16

A Legacy Item with 8 power ranks revealed has a value of 210,000gp – mostly for the abilities it is already known to confer, plus a lump sum reflecting the certainty that there are more to come.



Unlocking Powers

Until an Inheritance is unlocked, a power only exists as a potential – something the Legacy Item may grant in the future, but which it does not yet bestow. **The number of levels a character must gain to receive an opportunity to unlock the next Inheritance equals the modified power ranking of that Inheritance.**

For example, if the modified power ranking of an Inheritance is 3, the character must earn 3 levels before the character can attempt to unlock the Inheritance. The character must use the Legacy Item as the primary item of its kind throughout these levels. If the Legacy Item is a sword, for example, it must be the character's primary melee weapon.

Unlocking an Inheritance Power requires more than merely achieving the character levels specified. The possessor must also complete one or more tasks, skill checks or quests specified by the GM as the key to unlocking that power. These tests are known as an Unlocking Challenge. After the possessor succeeds at the Unlocking Challenge, the power becomes unlocked and readily available to the character. As soon as a character qualifies to attempt an Unlocking Challenge, the process of earning levels toward unlocking the next power begins.



Roleplaying requirements

Unlocking Challenges are required because they encourage characters to roleplay the effects of the Legacy. Legacy Items are

powerful, but the price of that power is an influence shaping the character's opinions, reactions and thoughts. This manifests in terms of game mechanics as a roleplaying requirement.

The Legacy carried by a Legacy Item is as much a part of the personality of the wielder as any other. It need not be dominant, but it must not be secondary.

The GM and the player should agree on the nature of the personality effects of the Legacy when reaching the point where character can no longer discard the Legacy Item. The GM should formulate background elements prior to this event to serve as the foundation for this influence, and use the binding period to give the player – and the character – fair warning *in-game* of what lies before them. One of the major reasons for the binding period (during which the character is not committed to the Legacy) from a metagame perspective is to facilitate a considered decision in this matter.

The GM defines the Legacy and the powers it grants. The player determines how that Legacy will shape the character. The GM must enforce these mutual decisions, and should review the actions and decisions of the character each time a character levels up to ensure the Legacy is being properly reflected in the character's behavior.

This does not grant the GM a veto over the choices of the player; however, it does require him to point out that failure to act appropriately will have consequences for the character. In this respect, the Legacy is not unlike an alignment restriction or the code of behavior to which a paladin should adhere.

Unlocking a new Inheritance Power is akin to an end-of-year exam in the subject of

"behavior appropriate to the Legacy." It is not enough to overcome whatever Unlocking Challenge the GM places before the character with a skill roll or a battle; the manner of the solution is as important as the answer.



Unlocking challenge difficulty

Exactly how difficult a challenge should the GM put before the character? Bear in mind (unless it is important to the specific Legacy) there is no requirement for the character to solve the problem or defeat the challenge unassisted by the other PCs.

The answer comes in two parts: number of steps or encounters, and significance of the challenge.

The first should equal the count of Inheritances the character has already received, plus one.

The second should equal the total Modified Inheritance Rating of powers already received by the character, plus the number of steps or encounters. This number becomes the DC of any skill roll required, or the EL of the opponents to defeat, to achieve success in a stage.

For example, a specific Legacy Item might have granted its wielder 4 Inheritances so far, with a total rating of 14. Now the character faces an Unlocking Challenge to receive his Fifth Inheritance from the Legacy. That challenge should consist of a mini-adventure or subplot of 5 stages (4 Inheritances received, plus 1), each of which requires a skill check of DC19 (14 total

rating plus 5) or a battle against a foe or group of foes of EL19.

Depending on the player and his inclination to contribute to the overall metaplot of the campaign, the GM may permit the player to assist in the design of this mini-adventure/side-quest/subplot, or may spring it on the character *blind*. It may form part of the ongoing plotlines within the campaign or it may be a side-quest completely divorced from those plotlines.

GMs should bear in mind it is not enough for the character and his companions (if any) to overcome these purely mechanical challenges; the roleplay component is just as essential, and the design of the Unlocking Challenge should provide an opportunity for that roleplay.



Impact on characters

When discussing these notions with playtesters, the question was posed whether these challenges should be real events, with substantial impact on the lives and history of the world and the affected characters, or whether they should take the form of dreams or illusions with no external effect.

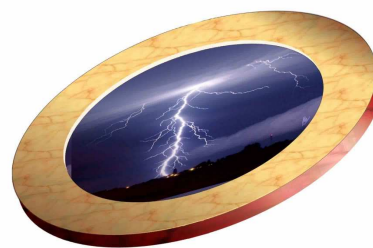
Opinion on this question was divided. Some argued the training during the bonding stage had established a precedent, while others took the position that, since the Legacy and its powers were real, if metaphysical, so should the challenge be, and that enforcing some impact on the outside world of the character coming to represent the Legacy was appropriate.

While each GM is free to rule on this matter as he or she sees fit, a consensus eventually emerged in the aforementioned debate:

- Whenever possible, the GM should undertake to make the challenges real, with real impact on the game world.
- Where this is not possible, the Legacy will twist the perceptions of the possessor (but not his companions) to make events seem relevant. For example, making the population of a town appear to be bugbears, trolls or other race appropriate to trigger Legacy-derived behavior.
- If this is also not possible, only then should the challenge take place entirely within the confines of the character's mind. In this case, the GM should enlist the assistance of the other players at the table.

I want to emphasize an important distinction between these options. With the first two alternatives, there are genuine risks, and hence there should be genuine rewards and consequences. In the third case there is no risk—a character who is killed simply wakes up from the dream—so there should be no rewards. That means the character should gain no experience points for success, just as he loses nothing in the event of failure; his sole reward is the activation of the next Inheritance, his sole punishment for failure the lack of activation of the same.

Furthermore, you can interpret the middle ground as imposing circumstances that make an encounter more difficult. If this is the case, you may offer additional rewards.



The Effects of a Legacy

Legacy Items are a high-fantasy plot device sufficiently manageable and flexible to operate even in a low-fantasy world. By virtue of the fingerprints significant actions impart onto the game world, they form a different type of connection between the campaign history and the contemporary gaming environment, a new set of plot threads you can weave into an existing tapestry.

GMs can use Legacy dreams as a conduit to additional game world background, revealing past events and campaign briefing material as it becomes relevant. This offers an advantage for roleplaying by sheltering players from the omniscient awareness of the past conferred from a more substantial historical overview.

Furthermore, the existence of Legacy Items implies a connection and cohesion to past events and primal conflicts that can serve as motivation and a source of plotlines, a metaphysical backdrop of which contemporary events are a modern consequence. They not only imply high-fantasy cosmic conflict, but they can place it at arm's length from the campaign, permitting the GM to enjoy the best of both worlds.

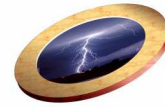
The effects and implications of a Legacy Item extend far beyond the immediate consequences upon the campaign. They can provide a vehicle for a wider narrative, enriching the campaign and making possible stories that would otherwise be beyond reach.

Contemplate a vast historical conflict between two ideologically opposed forces such as Good and Evil, Order and Chaos, even Centralized Authority versus Liberty and Independence. For convenience, we will abbreviate all such conflicts as Left versus Right. These two forces, Left and Right, fought a war-to-end-all-wars in the distant past, with no clear winner. The extreme adherents of both causes battled each other to the point of annihilation. However, the Legacies of these ideologies lives on, forming a central spark that drives the evolution of the societies that have arisen from the ashes. This shapes those cultures, drawing those more sympathetic to one side than the other into alliances and coalitions, until two factions once again emerge, one the embodiment of Left, and the other of Right, each wielding their respective Legacy Items. Then once again, the two sides will clash in the latest incarnation of their never-ending conflict, seeking to resolve the irresolvable, until both are again destroyed, and the cycle starts anew.

The clash between these two forces is high-fantasy. However, any other point in this cycle of never-ending conflict can serve as a background template for mid- or low-level campaigns possessing the scope of the high-fantasy concept without the baggage.

This is but one of many ways Legacy Items can connect past with present to enrich a campaign. Any philosophy, ideology or

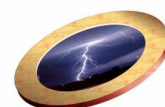
point of collective identification, if held strongly enough, can perpetuate itself beyond its history into a contemporary game era by using a Legacy Item as a vehicle.



On a character

Legacy Items provide a method for character development in-game beyond encounters. The impact of the Legacy on the character – from a bias to an abiding influence that must be constantly battled to a complete consumption of the original personality – offers a choice to the player, in consultation with the GM. No matter how limited the change, however, every character possessing a Legacy Item should be marked in some way by the burden. He will see that which no living eyes have apprehended, hear sounds from an age long past, experience events from long before his time. These might have little relevance to the contemporary era or be directly relevant. They might reinforce character flaws or teach wisdom, or both. At best, a Legacy Item should be a mixed blessing.

Ensure this is the case by creating some downside, some price to pay, for possession of such a powerful object. The character should be the focus for incomprehensible and implacable forces from a different time who sees the world in absolute terms; the character should feel the impact of these circumstances.



On game balance

It has often been suggested amongst my (Mike's) players that wizards trade low-level effectiveness for greater power at higher levels, while other character classes either gain most of the power early, or at the least, progress in a more orderly fashion. It follows that since Legacy Items act to reduce the short-term advantage of magic items to a character in exchange for more power in the longer term, they shift game balance a little closer to the progression of the wizard.

The greater the total number of Inheritance Levels of potential powers within the Legacy Item, the longer the period of deferral and the more substantial the eventual benefit.

It follows that GMs should be wary of Legacy Items in the hands of wizards, who might be so compromised at lower levels that they cannot survive to come into their full power, and who may overwhelm the campaign if they do so. Careful selection of Inheritances can mitigate this risk, and might even counter it by providing wizards additional security in the areas of greatest weakness at lower levels.



Underestimated inheritance value

The procedure outlined in previous sections provides a broad basis for the selection of Inheritances and valuing the power they provide relative to each other. The procedure is not infallible, so GMs should use their own judgment in advance (and in consideration of the encounters players are likely to encounter in the future) and in hindsight to reassess the value of each inheritance power. If a power has been undervalued, the GM can easily compensate by deliberately over-valuing the next Inheritance Power. While the initial description of the Legacy Item provides a road map, it should not be taken as gospel (and should not be revealed to the player). Rather, the planned powers conferred by the Legacy Item should be an evolution of intent throughout the campaign.



Legacy Item: A powerful arcane or spiritual object that occupies a middle ground between artifact and ordinary magic item.

Legacy: A metamagical imprint embedded in an item that comes to dominate possessors over time to recreate the events or circumstances of the imprint. This process might be an end in itself or might be a means to continue striving for a particular goal. History then repeats itself, adding another chapter to the Legacy for its next wielder.

Binding: A permanent magical attachment between possessor and Legacy Item that begins when the item has aided the character a number of times equal to the character's Wisdom score. (Also referred to as bound, bond and bonded.)

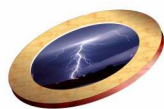
Binding Period: The time between the moment a Legacy Item begins to exert influence over the possessor, though he has not yet committed to an item's Legacy, and the unlocking of the first Legacy Power, when that commitment takes place.

GM and player use the binding period to discuss ramifications to character and campaign before a player agrees to attempt to unlock the item's First Inheritance through an Unlocking Challenge.

Too many legacies

Beware overpopulating the campaign with Legacy Items. These should be rare items. One, or at worst one matched set, in an adventuring party is sufficient; more can unbalance the campaign. If players without Legacy Items become dissatisfied, it is a sure sign the GM has not highlighted the penalties and downsides of having such an item.

The ideal balance makes the choice of accepting a Legacy Item difficult due to its good and bad elements.

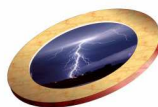


Legacy sets

One notion sure to occur to you is the potential of Legacy Sets — matched items intended to join or work together to create a whole greater than the sum of their parts. For example, a suit of mail, shield, helm and sword, all of which embody a portion of a Legacy.

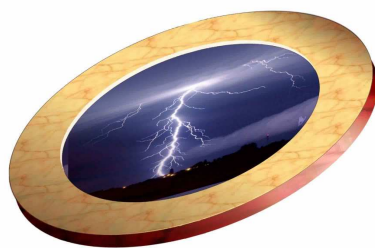
In theory, there is nothing wrong with this, since the process of designing a Legacy Item balances disadvantage with advantage. A character coming into possession of such a set sacrifices even more early advantage for even more eventual power.

Yet game balance can be precarious. Too much of a good thing can easily overwhelm a campaign. It follows that unless you are sure of where you are going with the construction of such sets, it is better to embrace the rule of thumb offered in *Too many legacies*, above.



Not everyone leaves a legacy

It follows from the rarity of Legacy Items that most groups do not leave a Legacy. No one knows the exact combination of obsession and circumstance that create one. Some have even speculated that an epic magic of unprecedented ability has propagated through time from the distant future (since there is no evidence such a spell has been cast in the past). Perhaps he tried to ensure the survival of a specific Legacy, and was indirectly responsible for the creation of all the others as a side effect.



Unlocking Challenge:

One or more skill checks, tasks or quests attempted to gain permanent access to a Legacy Item's inheritance. An Unlocking Challenge is required for each Inheritance of an item. The difficulty of an Unlocking Challenge is determined using the Inheritance Ranking and the Inheritance Number.

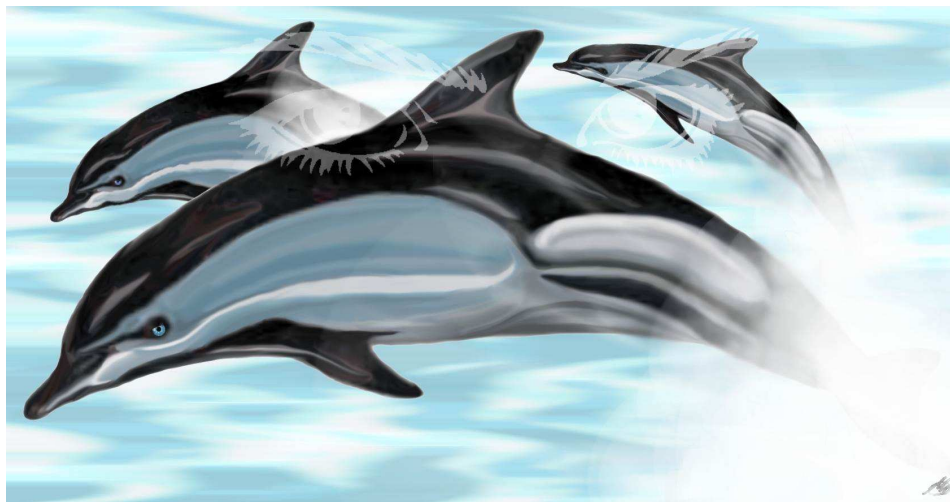
Inheritance: *General term for a single ability or power, or a group of such abilities, conferred at one point in time, by a Legacy Item. This term may also be used to refer to the psychological, intellectual, social or physical effect that accompanies such abilities.*

Total Legacy Ranking:

The total of all an item's Modified Inheritance Rankings, used to determine campaign impact, campaign balance and overall strength of a Legacy Item.

First Inheritance: *The first power or ability a wielder can unlock in a Legacy Item. Followed by Second Inheritance, Third Inheritance, and so on. Each inheritance requires passing an Unlocking Challenge. The numeric form of these terms (1st, 2nd, etc.) is also known as the Inheritance Number.*

Inheritance Ranking: *A measure of how powerful a particular Legacy Item Inheritance is.*



Base Inheritance

Ranking: The initial power ranking of an Inheritance before any modifiers are applied; varies from 2 to 6.

Modified Inheritance

Ranking: The final figure used in calculating an Inheritance's power after factoring in all applicable modifiers. Used when calculating a Legacy Item's Total Legacy Ranking. Varies from 0 to 6.

Severing a Bonding

Severing a bond is not normally possible; at the time of the Second Inheritance, the character accepts the burden of the bonding of his own free will, after ample warning. Nevertheless, it might become possible under special circumstances.

Should a character wish to be unbound, each Inheritance from most recently Unlocked to First Inheritance must be removed using either a Wish or Miracle spell. Stat or XP losses associated with these spells *cannot be borne by the bonded character*. The bond itself can then be broken with a Remove Curse or Remove Blessing. Should the character not wish the bonding to be unbound, he will gain the full benefits of saving throws, spell resistance, etc, in overcoming any attempt to unbind him forcibly. Further, his Wis bonus adds to his benefit on any such roll (or as a penalty to those attempting to overcome any resistance).



Consequences Of Severing A Bonding

The character can never again wield the item without risking the Reinstatement of the bond and Inheritances, as described below. Severing a bonding will not reverse any physical or psychological effects on the character. If he had lost the ability to see green, he is forever colorblind; if he suffered the delusion he was a gifted singer, he will still break into song at the drop of a hat. Nor can the character ever bond with a different Legacy Item unless it is part of a matched set of such items, which would trigger reinstatement of the original bond.

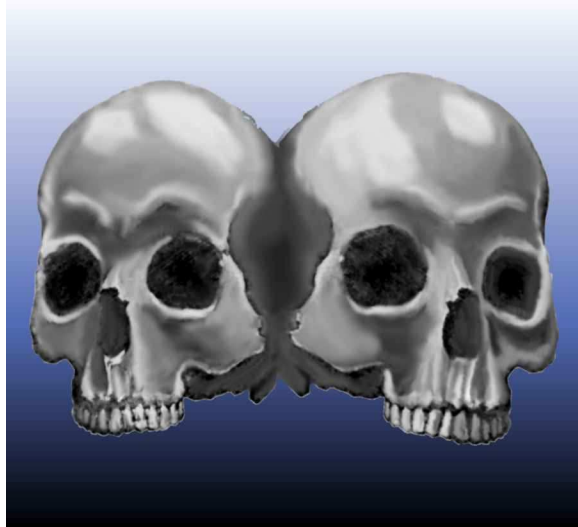
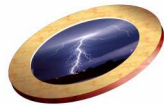


Reinstatement of a severed Bond

The moment a character begins severing their bonding, divide his total XP by 100 (round up) and record the total on the character sheet. If the character ever wields the item again, convert the experience he earns while doing into a percentage of the result. He must make a d% roll against this

total. If he rolls the amount or lower, the bonding and Inheritance are restored exactly as they were, though any character levels gained in between do not count toward the next Inheritance.

For example, a 12th level character with 69,272xp bonds to a Legacy Item. His party members stage an intervention, each sacrificing 5,000xp to have three Inheritances removed and the bond broken. $69272 / 100 = 692$ xp. If the character earns 220 xp wielding the Legacy Item, he has a $220/692 = 31\%$ chance of the bond being restored. (If the character earns more than 692 xp, this chance is 100%.)



Reshaping a bonding

It may be possible to reshape a bond, removing some undesirable side effects and replacing them with a less-severe version. I recommend this require an epic spell if the campaign has such; if not, the precise mechanism for doing so is left to you.

There are a number of restrictions to any such reshaping:

- The side effect must not yet have been inflicted upon the character
- The caster must know exactly what the undesirable side-effect will be (this may require considerable arcane research, scrying, and the like)
- The subject must be willing or ignorant of the process
- The caster must expend a minimum xp of $1000 \times$ the total rating of Inheritances received to achieve each shaping. This expenditure may be in a lump sum or in smaller amounts spread over time at your discretion.

For example, if a character has received four Inheritances with a total rating of 11 between them, each shaping costs 11,000 xp and can only blunt **one** future effect of the Legacy.

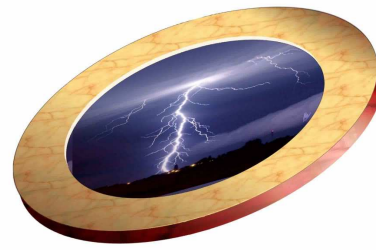


Analyzing, encountering and destroying a legacy

Legacy Items are artifacts for the purposes of Mordenkainen's Disjunction and similar spells. They are magic items with reference to Detect Magic and similar spells. Only powers that have been Unlocked, plus the next Inheritance to be unlocked, can be analyzed using Identify and similar spells.

That makes them difficult to destroy. Only unbound Legacy Items can be destroyed and an epic task akin to the destruction of the One Ring. The safer course is to lock the item up somewhere, place guardians and traps around them (self-sustaining ones if possible) and then try to eliminate all knowledge of where it is hidden – to create a dungeon, in other words. One could even create more such depositaries with no exceptional treasures and scatter them around, just to make it harder for anyone searching for the Legacy Item to pick out the right one.

Nevertheless, the majority of Legacy Items encountered in a game should be encountered in the hands of an NPC. **Never** permit a PC a Legacy Item during character creation without careful thought by the referee.

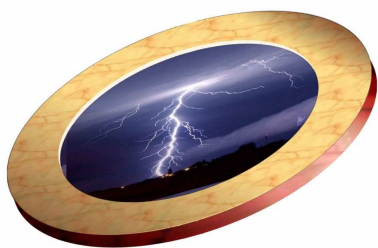


Naming Legacy Items

Legacy Items generally take the format "The XXXX of NNNN." In general, Legacy Items are named for one of six sources:

- The craftsman responsible
- The first, most famous or most infamous wielder
- The name given to the item by the first wielder
- The source of the Legacy, if that can be identified
- The location in which the Legacy was discovered or recovered
- The location in which the Legacy was first instrumental in dramatically changing the course of events

I encourage you to retain the general format of the names given to Legacy Items because it conveys a Legacy Item's uniqueness. Variations on the source of "NNNN" also work, and the choice made should reflect the history of the item. Every Legacy Item should have a backstory.



Literary References

Many references inspire the framework for Legacy Items, notably:

- The One Ring in *Lord Of The Rings*
- The Orb Of Aldur in *The Belgariad*
- The principles of different aspects of magic in *Master Of The Five Magics*
- The armor of Ashen-Shugar in *Magician*

Legacy Items in Assassin's Amulet

The concept of Legacy Items has evolved considerably since we started working on this game supplement. The Amulets of Cyrene and Guildmaster's Amulet derive from a much earlier version of the concept.

This left us in a quandary. Should we completely revise the central concept of the amulets and everything that goes with them, including the details of the Assassin's Lair, to bring them into line? Should we declare those as more *ordinary* magic items, and leave a cornerstone concept of the entire supplement only indirectly connected to the rest of the content?

By now, you know we have adopted the latter approach. As a result, you do not need the concept of Legacy Items to use Assassin's Amulet, although you are free to do so. Subsequent sections of the supplement will offer several items for your consideration for integration into the plotline as you see fit.



Eight Example Legacy Items

Below are eight example Legacy Items you can introduce into your campaigns and which illustrate the procedures involved in creating new items. Some are suitable for PCs, others have such deleterious side effects that players would be most unhappy at their being inflicted upon the party.

Disclaimer: we cannot predict what level a character might be when they first encounter a Legacy Item, or when the *clock* begins on Unlocking Challenges. In description sections, we offer suggestions for possible Activation Challenges, but because of the uncertainty of character power levels, we leave these suggestions somewhat generic.

The Shield of Madrassias



The Holy Order of Sham-lah (named for the founder) made many friends and an equally great number of enemies before their destruction. The clerics of Sham-lah believed healing should be freely bestowed upon all, to the limits of their abilities; the more gravely wounded, the higher the priority. Many times, they intervened in a battle to bring about a cease-fire while they healed both sides. There were times, after the cooling of passions, when this turned into a peaceful settlement of the dispute in question.

However, if denied their offer of healing, they considered this an affront to their deity, a now-forgotten aspect of Cyrene, and they would immediately bring their full arsenal of clerical abilities and political connections to bear in opposition to the commander who denied them.

A number of times, when a besieging army had barely sufficient forces to achieve a victory, the intervention of the Order of Sham-lah tipped the balance of the encounter. Any fortification naturally amplified the benefits of healing the defenders. An attacker needed three, five, even ten times the number of able-bodied men to match each able-bodied defender, but bringing such a force to bear seldom produced a proportionate number of injured, just a disproportionate number of dead. Thus, intervention by the Order of Sham-lah had the effect of increasing the ability to defend far more than it did the ability to attack. The alternative was to open a second battlefront with a new enemy; one backed by the gods no less.

This made conquest more difficult, and brought about an era of relative peace, seen by many as divine approval of the work of the Sham-lah.

When the warlord Namastes embarked on his foolish quest to conquer the known world, he knew his armies would sometimes be overmatched once defensive protections were taken into account, and that his success would therefore be greatly hindered by the Order of Sham-lah. To ensure his victory, he needed to neutralize the Priests, so he began his campaign by seeking out and eliminating the Order, root and branch, having persuaded them to gather for the dedication of a cathedral in Cyrene's honor.

With the gathered clerics all within, he locked and barred the doors, rained flammable oils down upon the entire interior of the structure and all present by means of hidden piping, and burnt the cathedral – and clerics within – to the ground. Cyrene was so outraged that she transformed the warlord's celebratory wine into Prussic Acid even as he toasted his victory and forthcoming conquest. She then instigated the invasion and assimilation of the warlords' kingdom by its neighbors, before erecting a monument to the fallen clerics at the site of the ruined cathedral.

In time, all but Cyrene scholars and high priests forgot Namastes. Rumors spread that praying at the shrine erected by Cyrene could impart miraculous cures, and a small community sprang up on the site. The ruins of the Cathedral were torn down and removed. It so happened that a blacksmith's shop was eventually located over part of the former Cathedral site, and the master smith named Madrassias who resided there was one day commissioned to create an

enchanted shield for the nobleman who had come to rule the region.

Pronunciation guide

Madrassias: Mah-drass-ee-us
Sham-lah: Sham-lar
Cyrene: Sigh-reen
Namastes: Namm-ast-ez

Description

In appearance, the shield is a richly-decorated steel roundshield, with an etched relief depicting the Shrine and the event the shrine commemorates. Its special qualities were not initially appreciated, because the shield is the rarest of Legacy Items: its First Inheritance exactly matches the magical effect that was to be incorporated into it according to the commission.

In play

As the bond between wielder and shield deepens, the wielder will adopt the principles of the Sham-lah Order:

- Healing for all, freely given
- Impartiality
- Neutrality
- Anger at those who refuse
- Protective of defenders
- Peace-loving
- Reverencing Cyrene above all other gods

Inheritance Powers

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	4	3	+2 AC
Second	3	2	Cure Light Wounds as a cleric of equivalent level 3/day
Third	5-3=2	1	Cure Light Wounds as a cleric of equivalent level 6/day
Fourth	5-3=2	1	Cure Light Wounds as a cleric of equivalent level 12/day
Fifth	3	2	+2 Con
Sixth	4	3	Righteous Might as a cleric of equivalent level 1/day
Seventh	4	3	Fortification, Light
Eighth	5	4	Flame Strike 3x/day
Total: 19			

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Healing a stranger
- Negotiating peaceful settlement of a minor dispute or disagreement
- A votive offering to Cyrene

Mid level:

- Healing an enemy
- Negotiating a peaceful settlement of a significant dispute
- Negotiating a temporary armistice between opposing military forces

High level:

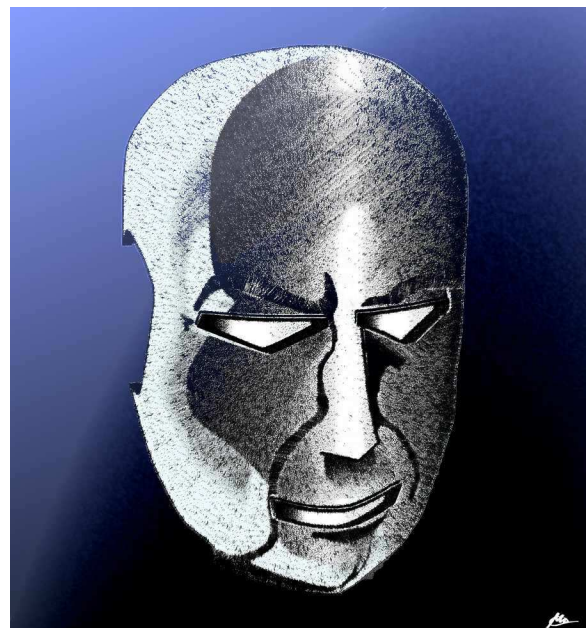
- Healing both sides in a conflict
- Punishing the refusal of an armistice
- Defeating an aggressor
- Negotiating a mutual defense treaty between hostile forces

Designer's notes: The Shield of Madrassias

This is a typical Legacy Item. It offers an example of the doubling of the number of

uses per day of an inheritance power. The Fourth inheritance could have been Cure Light Wounds at will for one additional power ranking, but I deemed this potentially game unbalancing.

The Mask of Serephides



The Mask is the Legacy of The Cloisters of Shahd'rah, a minor order of monks who eschewed all passion and emotion, believing these were temptations to stray from the path of purity. How the monks met their end is a matter of speculation amongst the historians who care about such details, but no one has ever confirmed them. All we know is a demon that often goes by the name Ny'tarreth was involved, and the final days of the monks' order involved murder and betrayal. (See also The Shortsword of the Shahd'rah, below).

A minor noble commissioned the artisan Serephides to create the mask for a costumed banquet, a popular event amongst the nobility a century and a half ago.

Pronunciation guide

Serephides: Ser-eff-id-ees
Shahd'rah: Sh-ah-de-rah
Ny'tarreth: Nikt-ar-eth

Description

At first glance, the mask reflects an expressionless face of silver embossed with curlicues. When not being worn or prior to the Unlocking of the Second Inheritance, subsequent viewings of the mask suggest subtle emotions, according to the emotional state of the viewer (not the wearer). Reflected light on curlicue in one corner of the mouth might hint at a smirk, or at one corner of an eye might suggest a tear; a shadow across the brow might imply a frown; and so on.

Following the Unlocking of the Second Inheritance, the mask when worn displays the emotions of the wearer perfectly, and even seems to transform itself to be more suggestive of the face of the possessor. Those wearing the mask are instantly recognizable and yet anonymous, for they can never be identified with complete certainty.

In play

The mask is especially tempting to rogues, assassins and fighters, but any class can use it. Bonding to it is comparatively easy. At lower levels, it shelters the wearer from the experience of strong emotions, starting with fear. It brings a sense of calm and clarity greatly prized in desperate situations, but over time, it exacts a terrible price from the wearer. As Inheritances are Unlocked, one after another, the mask leeches the capacity to feel emotion from the wielder until he becomes a dispassionate shell, capable of the most extreme ruthlessness imaginable without regret or empathy. In order, the emotions lost are fear and excitability; anger and rage; hatred; sorrow, regret and outrage; joy and pleasure; friendship and companionship; and finally, love and loyalty.

Even when suppressing an emotional state, the mask will suggest that the wearer is experiencing the emotion at appropriate times, as though it is feeling the emotion on behalf of the wearer, so that they are not distracted by the sensation.

Inheritance Powers

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	2	1	Fear and excitability: mask must be worn at least 1 hr/day; +1 to saves vs. Fear, +1 to hit, longsword added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Second	3	2	Anger and rage: mask must be worn at least 3 hrs/day; +1 to any command/leadership check, +1 to critical threat range, +2 Str, battleaxe added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Third	4	3	Hatred: mask must be worn at least 6 hrs/day; Weapons Proficiency: Martial Weapons conferred if not already possessed; if wielder already has this class ability/feat, character receives a bonus feat in addition to any other feats received
Fourth	4	3	Sorrow, regret and outrage: mask must be worn at least 9 hours/day; any staff becomes Rod of Lordly Might when held 1/day per level gained thereafter
Fifth	3	3	Joy and pleasure: mask can be removed for no more than 3 hrs/day and while sleeping; +2 Str, +2 Int
Sixth	3	3	Friendship and companionship: mask can be removed for no more than 1 hr/day and while sleeping; +2 Con, +2 Wis
Seventh	6	3	Love and loyalty: mask can no longer be removed; +4 Cha; confers Leadership feat (stacks with existing Leadership feat if any); character becomes completely ruthless in pursuit of any remaining goal.
Total: 19			

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Ignore the feelings of a friend
- Remain calm when you should be angry
- Treat an enemy as a friend

Mid level:

- Attend a funeral and feel no sympathy for anyone present
- Commit an act against your nature
- Destroy an artistic masterpiece

High level:

- Betray an alliance
- Humiliate a friend
- Betray an oath taken sincerely

Designer's notes: The Mask of Seriphedes

At early levels, this is a typical Legacy Item, though it has illustrative features. It is unusual insofar as each Inheritance has a specific title and personality effect. Players would normally decide personality alterations, and the use of specific titles and effects at regular intervals always seems to emphasize the mechanics of the process, which are good reasons not to do it this way.

From the fifth Inheritance onward, the requirement to wear the mask most of the time is a sufficiently onerous penalty that I applied an additional -1 power ranking. The seventh Inheritance comes with an extreme personality restriction that might be sufficient to render a character an NPC, so I awarded it an additional -1 ranking.

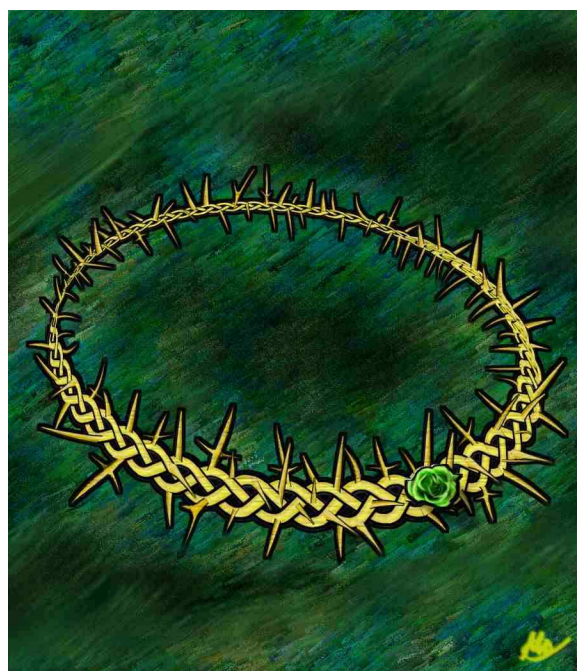
This illustrates how additional penalties or restrictions imposed on the wielder by the nature of the Legacy should affect the overall power of the Legacy Item.

The Crown of Thorns

The lizardmen of Gruman'sh Swamp were as disagreeable a bunch as anyone was ever likely to find. They were primitive sun-worshippers who believed that each morning the sun [Fithak] hatched anew from an egg [Grob], only to grow old and enfeebled in the course of the day until it died. From time to time, they saw what they believed to be the Egg of the Sun shining brightly in the night sky, and occasionally the old egg was partially visible during the day. Every now and then, someone would

slay the sun only to take its place—their explanation for eclipses. And none of it would happen without the ritual sacrifice of a sentient life.

The lizardmen believed other groups who shared their beliefs sacrificed to restore the powers of the Fithak each night, explaining how they could miss a sacrifice and the sun would still come up. However, to be sure Fithak would rise tomorrow they carried out a daily sacrifice at every opportunity, just in case no one else did.



The quick Gruman'sh ritual requires a round of prayer dedicating the sacrifice so the sun god may rise again. Then a non-lethal slash down the torso of the victim from chest to groin, a horizontal slash across the belly releasing the intestines, two angled slashes from left shoulder to right hip and right shoulder to left hip, and a thrust through the heart before the victim bleeds to death. Assuming the victim is restrained, this takes only seconds to complete—three rounds, to be precise. If the victim resists, it may take longer. The cuts may be inflicted in battle.

For these sacrifices, they first drew upon those captured trespassing on their domain. Then they drew upon those residing within the surrounding communities. If desperate, they used their own elderly and infirm. Travelers soon learned to avoid the swamps, and their neighbors erected defenses against the raids and mounted punitive expeditions. The lizardmen had to abandon their beloved swampland and take up a life of exile. Wherever they went, though, they maintained their practice of sacrificing every day.

Eventually, enemies hunted them into extinction and destroyed most of their tribal relics. Only one relic was claimed as a memento of the occasion, the crown of twisted and dried rose bush branches worn by the chief of the lizardmen.

The lizardmen believed leadership was a burden and a hardship, requiring the chief to act in the best interests of his people regardless of his personal desires and interests. The crown was constructed to inflict mild discomfort to continually remind the chief of his obligation, and he was required to wear it every waking hour. In recompense for his burden, he was permitted a hedonism his followers were not, and was gifted with abilities by the sun that protected and nurtured him. These luxuries and comforts also served to prevent the chief being tempted to act in a manner other than that required of his role.

Servants discovered the power of the Crown of Thorns when cleaning the prize. They played a cruel joke, placing the barbed nest of woven branches on the head of one of their fellows. He took exception to this, and killed all but one of his co-workers, who he ritually sacrificed in the manner of the Gruman'sh Lizardmen before returning to his senses and fleeing the scene.

Pronunciation guide

Gruman'sh: Groo-man-ash

Fithak: Fifth-ack

Grob: Gurr-ob

Description

Three rose bush branches with thorns regularly spaced have been twisted together and woven into a Celtic knot in the shape of a circular crown, then dried to the consistence of hardwood. The ends of each branch somehow fuse into themselves; you can never find an end when following any individual branch. The mahogany brown crown always has a non-shiny surface, no matter how it is oiled or painted. At the start of each season, a single miniature rose, half an inch or less in diameter, will bud then bloom, a different color each time according to the season, and always located on the part of the crown over the forehead:

Winter: White with a red heart

Spring: Green with a darker green heart and yellow spots

Summer: Yellow-gold with a reddish-brown heart

Autumn: Purplish-Blue with a black heart

The buds are visible for a week prior to the change of seasons, and the flowers bloom on the day of season change. They remain in bloom for three days, then wither overnight and crumble to dust on the morning of the fourth day.

In play

The bonding process begins innocuously. The wearer might dedicate a kill to Fithak, he might refer to the moon as an Egg. Unless the wearer is already predisposed to ritual sacrifice, he will not begin stalking prey to sacrifice in the name of the sun until receiving the final Inheritance.

More conspicuous are the physical changes undergone by the wearer:

- Loss of body hair
- Swelling of the jaw and projection forward of the chin into more of a snout
- Development of a more lizardlike behavior pattern (for example, tasting the air with the tongue instead of sniffing it with the nose)
- Growth of a second set of eyelids and resulting change of shape of the pupil into a more diamond-shaped form
- A scaly quality to the skin

By the time of the final Inheritance, the character will appear to be half serpent man.

These changes are progressive and never reverse themselves even if the Legacy Item is removed from the wearer's possession. No healing or transformation will permanently erase it. Should the wearer be Reincarnated into a different body, it will slowly transform to display whatever characteristics had been acquired prior to the severing of the Bonding.

Inheritance Powers

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Second	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Str
Third	3	2	+2 AC
Fourth	4	3	Freedom of Movement 3/day
Fifth	5-3=2	1	Freedom of Movement 6/day
Sixth	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Swim, -2 Int
Seventh	4	3	+2 Jump*, +2 Balance*
Eighth	5	4	Natural Weapons: Claws x2, Bite (as per Lizardfolk); Multiattack feat
Ninth	5-3=2	1	Freedom of Movement at will
Total: 20			

* Use +2 Athletics for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Greet the dawn every day for a week
- Visit a swamp and defeat a creature of CR equal to the character's level Refer to the moon as an Egg and be morbid at sundown for a week

Mid level:

- Dedicate the victory over a fallen enemy of equal or better CR to tomorrow's dawn
- Defeat a creature symbolic of the night of equal or better CR
- Practice the ritual sacrifice on the body of a defeated enemy

High level:

- Swim for a full day
- Make a personal sacrifice in the interests of those led
- Begin performing the ritual sacrifice daily

Designer's notes: The Crown of Thorns

A typical Legacy Item that offers many benefits to the possessor, but the non-mechanical aspects of the Legacy make it equally undesirable. This provides an excellent character dilemma and makes the roleplaying elements vital for the GM to convey to a prospective wielder.

The Spiked Gauntlet of B'rrastis



Luvin B'rrastis was a gladiator, and a good one. It was fortunate he found something at least marginally productive to do with his life, because he was also a brutal thug who enjoyed fighting and killing. B'rrastis was renowned for his stamina, his ability to keep fighting long after he should be down on the sand, bleeding to death, and for his

trademark spiked glove or cestus. His most socially redeeming quality was absolute contempt for those who sought to defeat him—or anyone else—by cheating.

That did not stop his rivals from trying, who attempted everything from drugged water supplies to tainted food to illegal holds and hidden weapons. In the end, one succeeded by soaking the interior of his cestus with scorpion venom, which leached into his body during a battle. B'rrastis won the bout, of course, but he was dead on his feet even as he acknowledged the cheers of the crowd.

The arena owner had the famous cestus mounted on a wall plaque and hung in his private quarters in commemoration of the legendary gladiator, but it seemed to bring him nothing but misfortune, culminating in a thieves' guild targeting him over gambling debts. One night, someone stole everything of value from his home, including the cestus, and set the building alight to cover their tracks and distract the watch.

The spiked glove next turned up in the possession of a rich nobleman known for his collection of famous weapons. How it came to join his collection is unknown, but once again, it seemed to carry bad luck to its new owner. A group of bandits began raiding his wagons, lightning struck his personal temple and burnt it to the ground, unseasonal rains flooded his fields and destroyed the summer crops three years running, and finally, he choked on a prune.

His son was a wastrel who dissipated the family fortune in risky gambles, then began selling off his father's collection one item at a time. The historical record shows the son lost wagers consistently until he sold the glove, at which point he suddenly began to win some bets again.

The purchaser was a travelling silversmith, but he fared little better than previous owners, being torn apart by wild dogs only days after obtaining the glove. By now, the legend of B'rrastis was fading except amongst the gladiatorial aficionados, and the glove had become known better for the ill fortune it seemed to carry.

Twelve years after the death of the silversmith, the remains of the presentation display were discovered, caught amongst the reeds at the base of a willow tree, seriously decayed and rotted. The glove, which had partially broken free from the mounting, appeared pristine. The discoverer, Jalin, was a young shepherd fleeing a pack of giant wolves. He hoped the river would mask his scent. As he later told the tale, he stumbled over the tree roots and fell into the river, the glove right at his nose. With a snarl, one of the pursuing wolves was upon him. With no other weapon save a skinning knife, even though it was many sizes too large for his young hands, he pulled on the glove. Immediately, he twisted to one side with grace and skill far beyond his years and expertise, and landed a crippling blow upon the wolf's snout almost instinctively. The wolf, who happened to be the pack leader, recoiled in shock, giving the youth time to land a second blow. This was too much for the wolf, which fled, followed by the pack.

To describe this tale as barely credible does not do justice to the disbelief it initially received when the boy returned to his village. However, an experienced hunter examined the scene, and from his reading of the tracks, corroborated the account. The local sheriff attempted to examine the cestus, but the boy would not relinquish it. In fact, he never took it off for the remainder of his life.

As the years passed, the villagers began to notice changes in Jalin. Prior to recovering the cestus, he had often been the object of bullying by the town boys, being rather small. The first time afterwards that one tried to intimidate him, Jalin half-killed his tormenter despite facing three-to-one odds. In ensuing months, he experienced a growth spurt and came to fill out the glove despite still being of tender years. His temper became hair-trigger. And then, one day, he was just gone. The village burgher sent messages to the surrounding communities, but none reported seeing the young man, and truth be told, his neighbors were not anxious to have him back. And so, Jalin disappeared into the mists of history, and the cestus was once again lost. Where will it turn up next?

Pronunciation guide

B'rrastis: Bu-rast-iss

Luvín: Loo-vín

Jalin: Jar-lín

Description

The Gauntlet of B'rrastis appears to be rust-brown masterwork leather. Close examination, however, reveals silk and steel threads of incredible fineness woven into strips that resemble leather. These, in turn, weave into a gauntlet using a crisscross pattern. A second layer of this pseudo-leather reinforces the knuckle area; soft calfskin leather lines the interior.

Spikes of varying size adorn the knuckles of each finger. The first knuckles' lengths are the same as each finger's distance from first to second knuckle. The second knuckles are half-inch spikes somewhat squatter, flatter and less nail-like. The third knuckles are about 3/4 of an inch long and somewhat wedge-shaped, running along the finger line.

The significance of these shapes becomes apparent when wearing the gauntlet. The nail-like spikes over the first knuckles are equivalent to four razor-sharp daggers. When making a fist, the flatter spikes over the second knuckles lock to form the equivalent of a small hammer, ideal for punching. The longer wedge-shaped nails over the last knuckles rotate halfway with the fingers to form a thick barrier that

protects the palm of the hand, and locks the fingers in curled up position to make it impossible to accidentally drop anything held in the fist, such as a weapon hilt.

In play

Refer to item history and specific effects noted with each Inheritance Power.

Inheritance Powers

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	5	0	+1 AC, +2 to hit, +2 damage, unwillingness to remove Cestus ¹ , -2 on all attack rolls, skill checks, and saves and cursed with bad luck if Cestus not worn (applies to both wielder and all others in vicinity) ²
Second	4	1	+4 Str, +2" height, +40# weight (additional muscle) over next month, will not refuse personal combat ¹
Third	4	1	+4 Con, +40# weight (additional muscle) over next month, annoyed by cheating directed at wielder ¹ , quick tempered ¹
Fourth	3	1	+4 Dex, +4" shoulder width, +60# weight (additional muscle) over next month, angered by cheating directed at wielder ¹
Fifth	4	1	DR 2/Magic, infuriated by cheating directed at wielder ¹ , light scarring appears on body ¹
Sixth	4	1	+2 Critical Threat Range, angered by cheating in general ¹ , -1 Cha (light scarring on face) ¹
Seventh	4	1	+2 critical hit damage multiplier, infuriated by cheating in general ¹ , -1 Cha (heavy scarring on hands) ¹
Eighth	4	1	+2d6 non-lethal damage on a successful hit, cannot refuse personal combat ¹ -1 Cha (heavy scarring on face) ¹
Ninth	4	1	Critical hit inflicts Large Scorpion Venom on target (3.5 DMG p297), gladiatorial ethics ¹ , extreme ego ¹
Total: 8			

Cestus: As Spiked Gauntlet

- 1: Assessed as -1 Ranking each due to undesirability of trait
- 2: Assessed as -4 Ranking due to undesirability of traits

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Challenge an opponent of equal or greater level to a duel to first blood
- Win a fair fight
- Enter a wrestling match

Mid level:

- Defend a stranger without knowing why the attack occurred
- Challenge a fighter of equal or greater level to a duel to first blood
- Expose a cheat

High level:

- Attack a cheat who is socially untouchable, such as a nobleman or priest
- Accept a challenge from a fighter of at least two levels higher
- Win a gladiatorial contest (not just one round, the whole contest)

Designer's notes: The Spiked Gauntlet of B'rrastis

This is an unusually powerful Legacy Item because negative side effects extensively counterbalance its power, as detailed in the description. Its construction places it at the outer limit of acceptable power levels for a Legacy. While in many respects suitable for a PC wielder, the tight regulation of personality alterations make it undesirable. However, what makes it completely unsuitable for PCs is the absence of any real warning period before the character is forever bound to the gauntlet; binding is almost instant.

The Cup of Dewarr

There have been so many instances of star-crossed love through history that the tale has become almost mythological.

Numerous bards and poets have claimed the theme as their own, and in these skeptical times, none remember the tale of Dewarr and Pythas, whose tragic romance provided the foundations for the numerous myths and legends.

The young Dewarr Estonier was betrothed to Shurast Limanquist to end a history of feud between the neighboring baronies at the order of the Prince of Harustes, who tired of the bloodshed and perpetual social disruption. This was a match made for political reasons, and one in which none of the parties willingly accepted their role. Nevertheless, a great feast was ordered to celebrate the reconciliation.

Attending this feast were many friends and distant relatives of both families, including the youthful Pythas Lanquise, still mourning the failure of the daughter of Princess Guerre, younger sister to the Prince, to return his affections. At the feast, Pythas met Dewarr for the first time, and the pair was hopelessly smitten with each other.



Even though Shurast was an unwilling fiancé, he was nevertheless an honorable man who had given his word to marry Dewarr. He took offence, therefore, at the obvious chemistry between the young couple and persuaded the Prince to order Pythas into exile. Before his exile could begin, Pythas scaled the walls of the Estonier estate and snuck his way to Dewarr's bedchamber, where the two swore eternal love to each other. Pythas then crept out of the city and began his exile.

Baron Estonier was not blind to Dewarr's continued affections for the exiled Pythas, and was concerned the young man might be equally foolish. The Prince had warned that the head of whichever household broke the peace accords would be hanged and the estates confiscated; the danger was too great to take any chances. He commissioned the assassination of Pythas so it would appear to be an unfortunate accident and then waited anxiously. At last, word came the contract had been completed, and the Baron broke the news as gently as he could to his daughter, carefully omitting any reference to his own involvement, and watched the life drain from her eyes.

The young are resilient, and after two weeks of abject mourning, Dewarr began to recover by degrees. While still listless and despondent, the color returned to her cheeks and she was soon back to something approximating her old self. What Baron Estonier did not know was, through personal friends, Dewarr had received a letter from Pythas revealing the assassins had bungled, striking down one of Pythas' cousins, and worse still, been unprofessional enough to discuss the contract and its commissioning amongst themselves where he was able to overhear it. Dewarr knew her father had commissioned the murder of the love of her life, but she had already been hostile toward

him because of the forced marriage, so she had been able to conceal her knowledge.

Pythas argued, and Dewarr agreed, this heinous and callous act of betrayal cancelled any fidelity she owed to her father or the marriage he had arranged for her. Pythas promised to come for her, but was uncertain how long it would take to reach the Estonier manor house since he had to take care to remain anonymous and unrecognized. She had to do whatever she could to delay the nuptials until he reached her side; then the two would elope.

Dewarr conceived a desperate plan. Under the pretext of seeking spiritual advice for the impending nuptials, she visited a learned apothecary while ostensibly visiting a temple. There she commissioned a potion that would enable her to feign death for 48 hours – sufficient time to be laid to rest in the family vaults, from which her sister Satrine would release her. She could then go into hiding until Pythas arrived to take her away from her intolerable family. She would wait until an hour before the ceremony; to everyone else, it would look as though she had committed suicide rather than being forced into a loveless marriage.

Alas, Satrine was her father's daughter, and found the notion of being related, however distantly, to the Limanquist family intolerable. If Dewarr's plan succeeded, Satrine knew she would have to take her sister's place, something she found repugnant. So, she contrived, by the forging of a letter from Sharust Limanquist, to make the deadly potion appear to be a wedding gift from the groom, while removing Dewarr's false suicide note. Instead of an apparent suicide, it now appeared as if Sharust had murdered his presumptive bride to escape the marriage.

Satrine's plan succeeded, however the Estonier family interpreted this as a breach of the peace between the two families and sent word to the Prince while launching an immediate siege against their neighbors.

As it happened, Pythas reached the region while the assault was underway. Satrine, had told no one that Dewarr's death was not genuine, and made no attempt to free her from her crypt. Pythas' friend, who had carried his letter to Dewarr, broke the news of her death to the distraught young man.

Pythas could not accept the news and insisted upon seeing Dewarr's body for himself. With the majority of the Estonier guards and soldiers engaged in the siege against the Limanquist estate, he was able to creep onto the estate and force open the crypt, where he beheld the body of his beloved lying in state. Overwhelmed by grief, and unwilling to live on without her, Pythas drew his sword and ran himself through.

Such was the scene when Dewarr awoke just a few minutes later. Certain that Pythas had been discovered by her family coming to rescue her, she took up Pythas' belt dagger and slit her own wrists. The next morning, the tragic scene was revealed, and the Estonier estate plunged into mourning anew.

A full investigation by the crown ensued, with assistance from the temples. Satrine's role quickly came to light when the shade of Dewarr was interrogated, and the judgment was that the Estoniers had broken the accord through the actions of a rogue member of the family. She was beheaded and the precarious peace restored. Shamed by the events, both sides avoided the subject thereafter, but the events were too dramatic and lurid to be suppressed, and entered into the folklore of first the

Kingdom of Harustes, and then spread throughout the known world and even beyond. Bereft of heirs, the Estonier estate returned to the crown with the passing of the Baron, who did not long survive the tragic events.

In time, the Barony was granted to another family as reward for services to the crown, and prospered. To celebrate, the new owners commissioned the creation of a set of jeweled cups imbued with the power to Bless those who drank from them. Of the eight-piece set, six were perfect, but the seventh and eighth were somehow marred. This was not surprising as the enchantment of items, even by the temples, always carries a risk of failure. The seventh did not survive the enchantment, but the eighth was outwardly perfect, and so was set aside in storage for use as a spare when celebrating with guests.

And so, the eighth cup vanished into the mists of time....

Pronunciation guide

Dewarr: Deh-wah
Estonier: Es-tone-ee-er
Pythas: Pie-thas
Lanquise: Lan-kwiss
Shurast: Shoo-rasst
Limanquist: Limm-ank-wist
Harustes: Hah-rust-ez
Guerre: Gweh-rr
Satrine: Sah-treen

Description

The cup has a height of about eight inches, a flared base approximately three inches in diameter and four inches in length. The base of fine gold strands, individually shaped and melted slightly to weld them together in a pattern, suggests a fine lace over a pewter base. Cast gold leaves are

attached here and there, and round-cut and polished gemstones are set in a manner suggestive of fruit on a vine. The bowl of the cup is slightly fluted and about 2 inches in diameter. Gold inlaid over the finest cut crystal and a layer of black ceramic inlays depict sheaves of barley beneath an oak tree, stars, grapes on the vine, and other symbols of prosperity. Where the base has a spiral pattern of gems at intervals all over it, the cup has a single ring of polished round-cut gems halfway up, located just above the point where the hand would reach when the cup is held in hand. A close examination reveal a layer of lightly frosted glass within the crystal, etched to bear the words to a common prayer for blessings and good fortune and the favor of the gods.

In play

Shortly after coming into possession of the cup, a character will begin catching the eye of members of the opposite gender, the more socially or politically inappropriate, the more attractive they will find the bearer. This effect exists for about 24 hours after drinking from the cup. At the same time, those who might have otherwise been neutral or even allied to the wielder will begin to find fault in the presentation and manners of the bearer and the inappropriateness of the developing match between wielder and the inappropriate pairing. A full-blown romance between the two should then develop over time. Should they part, letters and gifts may be exchanged, at great expense if necessary, and the possessor will make all necessary preparations in advance for the sending and receiving of these.

If either party is married, this will only have the effect of making the romantic affiliation an illicit affair with diminishing regard to keeping it a secret. The subject may be of any age at which marriage is socially

acceptable; if a father can marry his daughter at 13, 15, or whatever, then that is the minimum age of the subject. If the possessor is not of appropriate age for a romantic affiliation, then the cup has no effect on him or her.

As the romantic entanglement progresses, the two will become star-crossed lovers, with every type of barrier the GM can think of getting in their way. For each such barrier, there will be at least one enemy aroused who will do everything in their power to drive the two apart (even to the point of criminal actions, lies and deceit) and one ally will be recruited who will facilitate temporary and brief encounters in spite of the difficulties. Someone who serves as an ally at one point for one specific difficulty may become an enemy later with regard to a different difficulty, and vice-versa. The character's romantic life will become a soap opera.

The GM should discuss the situation privately with each player other than the owner of the wielding character to solicit their participation, as either allies or opposition. To encourage this, the GM should rate the difficulty of each challenge in the ongoing romance as though it were a combat challenge and award xp to the participants accordingly.

When the final Inheritance looms, the GM should begin steering the romantic affiliation to a tragic climax of some sort or another. This does not have to involve the deaths of both participants (though it may do so, and the player of the wielder should be prepared for that possibility by the GM), but it must spell the end of the romance one way or another.

If the wielder survives, a suitable period of mourning will ensue, and then the process will begin all over again.

Inheritance Powers

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	2	1	+8 Cha for interactions with the most socially-inappropriate person of the opposite gender, -4 Cha for dealing with that person's relatives, +2 Cha for interactions with anyone else.
Second	4	3	Kiss has the effect of Elixir of Love affecting both wielder and kiss recipient; free Perform skill (4 ranks) for love poetry or love songs
Third	3	1	+4 Cha, Cursed with bad luck in domestic relations and romance
Fourth	3	2	+4 Persuasion*
Fifth	3	2	Charm Person 3/day
Sixth	3	2	Hypnotism 3/day
Seventh	4	3	Enthrall 1/day
Total: 14			

* Use +4 Diplomacy for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Social interaction with a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender
- Offend the family of a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender who is attracted to the possessor
- Compose and publicly perform an artistic work lauding the virtues of a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender who is attracted to the possessor



Mid level:

- Offer a romantic gift worth at least 500gp to a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender who is attracted to the possessor, or make a public show of affection towards a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender who is attracted to the possessor
- Fight a duel over a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender who is attracted to the possessor
- Betray a friendship or alliance important to the character to continue a romance with a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender who is attracted to the possessor

High level:

- Accept a major personal inconvenience resulting from a romance with a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender who is attracted to the possessor
- Make and implement plans to consummate a romantic liaison with a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender who is attracted to the possessor despite any and all opposition or consequences
- Make and implement plans to elope with a romantic liaison with a politically or socially inappropriate member of the opposite gender who is attracted to the possessor despite any and all opposition or consequences

Designer's notes: The Cup of Dewarr

While this is a minor example of a Legacy Item, it is one that can have a profound effect on a campaign and any character that happens to come into possession of the item. The GM should take careful account of this and ensure the player is comfortable with the direction this will take his character in, and the player has the skill to play a star-crossed romance.

And yes, those who are well-schooled may recognize the tale of Dewarr & Pythas to bear a remarkable similarity to that of Romeo & Juliet....

The Armor of Atrisses

Atrisses was a despot who ruled with an iron hand. As he grew older, he became senile and began to lose his grip over the population. To prove he was still the most powerful man in his domain, he had a suit

of plate mail made to the highest possible standards by the finest craftsmen and artisans. Constructed and decorated to his exact specifications, the result was so gaudy to be gauche; over 100,000gp worth of gems encrusted it, for example, magically fused to the metal in a process now lost. When the armor was complete, he killed the artisans and mages who had constructed it so there could never be another like it. To ensure his presence was still intimidating to the commons, he chose one in every ten to be summarily executed in celebration of its completion.

This had the opposite effect to that which Atrisses intended; rather than intimidating his fractious subjects, it angered them to such an extent they were willing to risk death to overthrow the tyrant. They rose up in rebellion, which Atrisses ruthlessly suppressed, that then resurrected itself from seemingly nowhere. In time, they overthrew the aging tyrant. Without heirs (he had put them to death when they became old enough to threaten his rule) his dynasty was, in historical terms, short-lived.



The leader of the successful rebellion attempted to destroy the armor as a symbol of the overthrow of the tyrant, but no fire could be made hot enough. He then decided to wear it, as a symbol of victory over the tyrant, and was promptly drawn into one quest against all the odds after another for the rest of his life. In the end, one of these hopeless causes killed him. The same thing happened to the half-elf who inherited the armor from him, and to the woman who inherited it from the half-elf, and on and on. It is still unclear whether the armor draws the wearer to hopeless causes or draws the causes to the wearer....

Pronunciation guide

Atrisses: rhymes with "Ulysses"

Description

Words are incapable of painting a true picture of what the eye beholds when apprehending the Armor of Atrisses. Polished to the point of gleaming; inlays of silver, gold, platinum, rubies, amethyst and emerald; with angel and dragon wings; spaulders and spikes; stars and the moon; a cape of purple, red and green stripes overlaid with a white eagle in flight.

In play

The wearer should become involved in hopeless causes, the more hopeless the better. Should any be resolved, something even more hopeless will replace it. With the First Inheritance, this involvement may be peripheral; thereafter, if the character does not commit to such a cause, the cause will go out of its way to involve the character.

From the First Inheritance, the character becomes incapable of losing hope for success and will pursue the quest regardless of the odds. From the Second Inheritance, even if the character sees no hope for victory, he will work to achieve success anyway, and seek to alter the circumstances that make a contest seem unwinnable. At the same time, the wearer gains the capabilities to attract others to his cause, whatever it might be.

You should ensure you can always think of a route to achieve victory, no matter how improbable or difficult. If you cannot, use a random or coincidental event to change the situational dynamics to open up such an avenue.

The Leadership ability that is the First Inheritance should be a slight variation on the standard one insofar as the membership of the followers can vary a lot more than usual. 1/3 should be there because they believe in the cause; 1/3 believe in the wearer; and the remaining third should be allies of convenience who come and go, intelligence sources nominally on the side of the wearer, and so on. To phrase it another way, 1/3 will betray the leader for the cause, and 1/3 cannot be trusted at all. Just 1/3 are loyal to the character. Even then, the character must do nothing to alienate them, remaining their idealized leader, or they will desert him. While they will always act in what they perceive to be the way the wearer would want them to act, they are fully capable of error and self-deception. Meanwhile, the wearer knows, if he must due to betrayal, he can always start again; such are the followers who he deems trustworthy.

Inheritance Powers

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	4	3	Leadership, character becomes incapable of losing hope
Second	4	3	Fortification, Light
Third	4	5	+2 Initiative, +2 Cha
Fourth	6-2=4	3	Fortification, Medium
Fifth	3	4	+2 AC
Sixth	4	5	+2 Str, +2 Dex
Seventh	3	4	Endure Elements 3/day
Eighth	5	4	+2 Con, +2 AC, +2 Fort Save, +2 Will Save
Ninth	6	5	As Breastplate of Command
Total: 36			

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Privately express support for a hopeless cause
- Give money in support of a hopeless cause (500gp per character level)
- Negotiate bipartisan agreement between two opposed parties for a cause they both agree.

Mid level:

- Publicly support a hopeless cause in such a way the character is associated with the stance by senior public officials
- Give money in support of a hopeless cause (2,000gp per character level)
- Defend a hopeless cause from attack by overwhelming political or social opposition

High level:

- Take and defend a position on a matter of social, economic or political policy or doctrine in a place where the character's position will be unpopular
- Give money in support of a hopeless cause (5,000gp per character level)

- Achieve a lasting and substantial victory for a cause of national significance that was hopeless before the character became part of the cause

Designer's notes: The Armor of Atrisses

This is the most powerful of the Legacy Items offered here as examples. Unless the campaign extends into epic Levels, no character will get close to the Seventh, Eighth or Ninth Inheritances.

Note that the Leadership ability conferred by the item is a variation on the usual description, as outlined in a roleplaying requirements section following the table of abilities.

While named for the first wearer, it is not his Legacy the item contains; rather, it is the Legacy of those slaughtered by him following the grassroots rebellion. Alternatively, perhaps they were merely the first to feel the effects of the Legacy of someone else's hopeless cause, given the way it kept resurging.

The Lantern of Tevariers

Tevariers was a mage who never troubled the writers of history. If any of them had been inclined to document his contributions, however, they would have written that he was insecure to the point of paranoia, and hence became a master of Divination magic.

To aid in his use of scrying tools to discern plots and threats around him, Tevariers created his lantern, a device to illuminate all movement, literal or metaphorical, in the shadows, by bathing them in shadow light. Moreover, into this device he poured all his suspicion and insecurity.

Gossip soon began to tell the tale of the diviner who could penetrate any secret. Soon rumour outstripped reality. The very existence of Tevariers' Lantern changed his nightmares into a self-fulfilling prophecy. It made him a consideration plotters had to take into account, a hazard that needed neutralizing, before any plot or conspiracy, no matter how minor, could succeed.

This just fueled Tevariers' paranoia, and he became convinced every whispered word or clandestine meeting was a plot aimed in his direction. No romantic dalliance or illicit affair was safe and secret while Tevariers had his lantern, and everyone for leagues and in neighboring kingdoms knew it, and Tevariers knew that they knew it. He became ever more insular and hermit-like. He purchased dogs to use as food testers, but then worried druids or mages might control the dogs, or others might subvert the animals with training, so he got rid of them and relied on his divination powers. Unseen servants prepared all his meals, at great expense, and his tower accumulated a collection of labor-saving arcane devices, to the point where it became a target of

thieves. Tevariers would scry upon the preparation of every meal, seal every spice jar after use, purify all water by magic before drinking it or cooking with it.

It was perhaps fortunate that Tevariers was not a man of action, or given to telling others of what he learned, else his enemies would have multiplied beyond his ability to track them. Even with his insular nature, those who would conspire with each other had to wonder whether this was the plot that would impinge upon the mage's personal interests enough to drive him to intervene. The presence of the lantern was sufficient cause for all those in the vicinity to begin exhibiting a milder form of the same paranoia that had driven Tevariers to create his instrument of illumination.



Their paranoia and defensiveness in turn affected their neighbors, who were forced to take the attitude into account, together with the propensity to overreact in response to perceived plots aimed at them, and so were forced to acquire an even milder form of the same condition. Like ripples on a pond, an edgy wariness spread outward from The Lantern of Tevariers.

The best early warning system in existence cannot protect you from the things you did not think of, and when the end came for Tevariers, it was not through any of the things his paranoid watchfulness was looking for, but through accident. Tevariers was gathering mushrooms (because he did not trust the town merchants to not include toadstools) when a group of militia chasing a killer from the nearby city mistook the deep-cowled mage for their target. Arrows filled the air before Tevariers could identify himself.

So began a series of conflicts over ownership of the lantern. None of the local nobility could abide the concept of the lantern being in the possession of a rival. Certainly, attempts were made to conceal possession of it, but the first hint of ability to divine the future—even that conferred by mages and clerics without unusual ability—was sufficient to create a temporary alliance of convenience by the surrounding nobles, even if they had been at war just days or weeks earlier. Thus, paranoia descended into war, and war into anarchy, and the arcane device that caused it all became lost.

Pronunciation guide

Tevariers: Tév-ar-ee-erz

Description

The lantern is highly polished metal with hinged covers of onyx. A black candle lies within it. The basic shape of the lantern is round, with circular disks on top and bottom. The lantern's metal defies casual analysis. From a distance, it appears to be brass, but closer inspection reveals material of something else entirely; no one knows exactly what. Some describe the lantern as being heavier than expected if made of brass, and by others as being lighter than expected.

In play

The description of the events that befell Tevariers should provide a template for the character effects, suitably reinforced by the powers of the lantern. Equally important is the impact on outside society once awareness of lantern becomes known. I encourage you to base your campaign effects on the pattern established above.

Some powers of the lantern require the ability to scry. They operate by shining the shadow light from the lantern into the crystal ball while scrying through it. The light illuminates things not normally observable by scrying.



Inheritance Powers

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking††	Description
First	3	-	+2 Spot, &
	0	-	Permit wielder to scry through a non-magical crystal ball (1,000gp minimum value) as a focus, &
	5-1-1=3	3	Target's saves vs. scrying are at -8 if the target is plotting against someone or to do something†
Second	3	-	+2 Listen, &
	4	-	Wielder receives +4 to saves vs. scrying (i.e. it is harder to scry on them), &
	4-1=3	4	Option to switch failed save effect from 'See but not hear' to 'Hear but not see'†
Third	3	-	+2 Sense Motive, &
	4	-	+4 Gather Information ¹ , &
	4-1=3	4	Double duration of scrying†
Fourth	5	-	+8 to save vs. scrying on you, &
	5-1=4	-	+2 to Gather Information, Spot, Listen, Sense Motive checks ² made while scrying†, &
	4-1=3	-	Ability to scry nearest secret or plot not known to the caster†, &
	4-1=3	5	Ability to switch targets within a single scrying session†
Fifth	5-1=4	-	Halve scrying save modifiers (after all other adjustments)†, &
	4-1=3	-	The <i>inability to scry</i> penalty after a failed scrying attempt is reduced to 12 hours†, &
	5-1-1=3	4	A -8 modifier to scrying save bonuses when attempting to scry on developments in a known secret or plot†
Sixth	4	-	Know when someone is attempting to scry on you, &
	5-1=4	4	Base casting time for scrying reduced to 15 minutes†
Seventh	5-1=4	-	Ability to scry on someone who is attempting to scry on you (-8 penalty to save roll)†, &
	5-1=4	4	Ability to trade scrying casting time (+ 1 min) for increased difficulty of save (-1) or vice versa†
Eighth	6-1-1=4	3	Ability to scry past events at a specific time and location, or a specific time and subject. Requires a Spellcraft check at DC 20, +1 per day, +20 if the attempt is to view a scene or event previously subject to a scrying failure. A new Scrying check must still be made†.
Total: 31			

Table notes: The Lantern of Tevariers

Inheritances apply to Greater Scrying as well as Scrying (where appropriate).

† Only if/when using crystal ball and Lantern of Tevariers as scrying tools. -1 ranking modifier applied for this limitation.

†† Please see *Designer's notes* below for explanation on how Base Rankings combine to give listed totals.

1: Use Diplomacy for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

2: Use Diplomacy and Perception for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Obtain a crystal ball valued at least 1,000gp
- Reveal a secret that someone would kill to keep hidden
- Use a secret to the character's personal benefit

Mid level:

- Expose and eliminate a plot aimed at a third party
- Identify someone spying on the possessor of the lantern
- Fight off an attack aimed at stealing the lantern

High level:

- Identify and neutralize someone trying to spy on the possessor of the lantern
- Expose and eliminate a plot aimed at the possessor of the lantern
- Use scrying to undermine an enemy's power, wealth or authority

Designer's notes: The Lantern of Tevariers

This Legacy Item offers a key example in three ways. It illustrates how to combine multiple powers or benefits into a single Inheritance. It illustrates how to construct safe Legacy Items for mages, avoiding the potential problems listed under Game Balance, above. It also demonstrates how to blur the lines between a regular but exotic magic item and a Legacy Item.

Combining multiple powers into a single Inheritance—here are the calculations for several of the Inheritance Powers:

First Inheritance: Three powers, one rated as a 3, one rated as a 5 but modified to a 3 by restrictions, and one rated as 0 ranks because it just adds another option to the Material Focus list for two spells included as a free benefit. Two powers at a 3 rating are equivalent to one power at a 4 rating, less 1 for being appropriate to the item concept, giving a total rating for the Inheritance of 3.

Second Inheritance: One power rated 3, one power rated 4, and one power rated 4 but modified by restrictions to a rating of 3. Two 3 ratings combine to give one rating of 4; two ratings of 4 combine to give a rating of 5. So the overall inheritance is ranked as a 5, less 1 for being appropriate to the item concept, giving a total rating for the Inheritance of 4.

Fourth Inheritance: One power rated 5, one rated 5 but modified to a 4, and two powers rated 4 but modified to 3s. The two 3 ratings make one 4, which then combines with the second 4 to give a 5, which then combines with the 5 to give an overall total of 6, less 1 for being appropriate to the item concept, giving a total rating for the inheritance of 5.

Note that several powers had to be adjusted to give a rating that enabled them to be combined; for example, the *-8 to saves vs. scrying of the target is plotting against someone or to do something* was determined by working backwards to match the 3 base rating of the Spot bonus.

This example also illustrates how to create safe Legacy Items for mages, which can impose special problems as discussed in the section on Game Balance in the Legacy Item rules. The lantern is *safe* because it is specific in its effects, does nothing to enhance or diminish a wizard's combat abilities, and is tightly restricted in connecting Inheritance Powers to the original concept.

In theory, the lantern falls into a middle ground between a standard Legacy Item and a typical Wondrous Item. It is unique, but with deliberate manufacture. It follows the operational rules of a Legacy Item even though the origin does not fit the standard template. It is less powerful and more restricted than an Artifact. By demonstrating this blurring of definitions, by extension it opens up a whole new avenue for you to create unique magical treasures for your campaigns.

The Short Sword of the Shahd'rah

The monks of the Cloister of Shahd'rah* had a profound impact on other religious thinking of their era, specifically addressing the question of whether emotion and passion are good or evil by nature. Some came to believe passions were the gift of the gods, and darker emotions were a perversion or corruption of this gift; they became hedonistic (to the greater glory of the gods, of course). Others avowed that passions were a curse of the devils and demons that warred with the gods for power over the populace at large, and the influence of the

gods twisted the curse to create the positive emotions; they preached abstinence. At the heart of the philosophical debate was the question of the isolated savage who remained untouched by the machinations of either side: would his natural inclinations be those of the beast, or of an angel? Did man begin life as a pure spirit and become corrupted by outside machinations, or was life a struggle to elevate oneself above baser instincts?



Neither side was ever in a position to establish theological dominance over the other. In time, a position of moderation became the norm, as other points of debate became more strident. However, before this balance was achieved, various groups adopted extreme positions on the issue, and both positions were manipulated and turned to their own advantage by the forces of darkness.

The Assassins of Shahd'rah were one group that grew out of this manipulation. They named themselves after the monkish Order, and were nihilists who believed passion was a curse and inseparable from life, and that it must be burned off the mortal world one life at a time. Eliminating the most passionate and emotional removed more than the average concentration of evil from the world, leaving the balance that much closer to perfection.

Much of the history of the assassins remains clouded in mystery, confused all the more because few record keepers maintained any distinction between the assassins and the monkish order for which they named themselves and drew inspiration. Their origin is unclear, and so is their destiny. Only one document from the past addresses the assassins specifically, and it describes their nature and philosophy, nothing more. It can be speculated the assassins were formed around an extremist splinter of the monks, perhaps a lay brother or unfrocked monk.

The historical record does make clear the assassins did all in their power to be as one dead, as ruthless and unfeeling and emotionless as the arrow that slays a man. They eschewed all emotion, using drugs and magic to numb their perception of sensation. They nicknamed themselves "the waking dead" and did all within their powers to make this a literal description. They

willingly sought out the powers of undeath and necromancy, for life itself was but fuel for the cause, and had no special value. Over time, they learned to use the power of death to energize abilities within themselves, becoming formidable enemies.

Some say every extreme perspective creates its own antithesis, pushing uncommitted moderates further in the opposite direction until a breakaway of extremists forms holding the opposite position to that of the originating group. This has always been the case, and so it was with the Assassins of Shahd'rah. An order of paladins who affirmed the value of life above all formed in the name of the goddess Cyrene to oppose the evil of "the waking dead." The Knights of the Nine Points, whose symbol was a Stag Rampant with nine points on its antlers, began a series of skirmishes and confrontations. The knights proved to be just as obsessive, violent and uncompromising in pursuit of their agenda.

When and where the final confrontation between these two forces took place is not known. The confrontation involved one side being revealed as a puppet of the demon Ny'tarreth. Neither side survived, and during the conflict the monks of the Cloister of Shahd'rah were themselves wiped out.

Yet, in a sense, the assassins lived on. The master swordsmith Ruyn of Camlyth, some 200 years past, set to creating a short sword that was as swift as the wind and as sharp as a line, to be enchanted as a coronation gift from the Guild of Smithcrafters to the next King to ascend the throne. It was a difficult time in the Kingdom of Karystos, with many claimants to the throne and a doddering King who refused to name a successor. Civil war loomed and an alliance with either side would be politically disastrous should the enemy faction ascend the throne. The Smithcrafters hoped they could shelter

themselves from making the wrong choice by declaring their loyalty to the institution instead of a specific claimant.

All went well in the forging and crafting, but for reasons then unknown, the enchantment of Speed and Sharpness would not *take*. Ruyn examined the finished product most minutely, but could find no overt flaw, though perhaps the unique design was sufficient to make the weapon non-enchantable. This information was duly recorded in the guild archives with the instruction that the technique was forbidden henceforth (not that this mattered greatly, as Ruyn was the only craftsman of sufficient skill and genius to employ it successfully, then or in all the years since).

This made the short sword unique, and the name and legend of its crafter – it was hoped – sufficient to make the gift politically successful. The sword was superior to a normal blade, the beneficiary of Ruyn's legendary genius. When Ophisteres overcame his rivals through an adept combination of military force, diplomacy, personal charm, state marriage and familial bonds, he was delighted when presented with the weapon. It fit his hand perfectly, the only weapon to ever do so. Thereafter, it was an extension of his arm. He used it as a pointer, for salutes, for any reason the young ruler could think of.

Claiming the victory does not put an end to the anarchy and chaos of a fiercely disputed succession. Ophisteres believed in leading from the front. His weapon drew blood often in the coming years and slew many who were dissatisfied with the outcome of the War of Succession. In battle, he became unsurpassed save when confronted with an enchanted blade of considerable power. Indeed, after his first kill in a battle, he seemed refreshed and even able to summon reserves of power and skill with the blade

that were barred to him previously. Many felt his claim of the throne was premature, even impetuous. However, a series of winning campaigns left him successful, as one after another, his rivals fell.

Each victory seemed to drain Ophisteres of something vital, though. His moods became dark; prone to brooding, he came fully to life only in battle. He became cruel and domineering, callous and unfeeling. His decisions were cold and without compassion. With each descent into heartlessness, his hold on the throne became weaker, as allies were spurned and trusts betrayed. Rebellions and conflicts with neighboring kingdoms became common.

As the years passed, age seemed to avoid him, and the curse of Ophisteres seemed destined to last forever. Word of his infamy spread until it reached the ears of Dirathsinus, a knight of the Order of The Martlet (a martlet is a footless swallow that symbolizes one who must subsist on virtue and merit). That worthy went with haste to horse to abate this menace to justice and honor. He gathered an army of the angered and disaffected as he journeyed from his distant homeland. Thousands died in the ensuing battle, and Ophisteres seemed to degenerate beyond all reckoning. As the final confrontation between he and Dirathsinus loomed, he became as a frenzied beast, slaughtering even his own soldiery to get closer to the knight's banner. As the banner grew closer, those around him marveled to observe that he grew younger with each act of slaughter.

The battle was epic, but Dirathsinus prevailed and King Ophisteres I was slain. He was laid to rest in his family crypts, and the triumphant knight began the long journey home. A distant cousin emerged from hiding and claimed the throne of Karystos, but so weakened was the kingdom

by nigh-on a century of mismanagement, terror and war that the kingdom was easy prey for a more aggressive neighbor seeking revenge for the slights inflicted by the slain King. However, when the victor forced his way into the royal burial crypt to behold the remains of the villainous Ophisteres and claim the sword as a trophy for his walls, he discovered that brigands had forced their way into the vault. The sword, and many other objects of value placed therein as remembrances, was gone....

* Refer also to the Mask of Serephides, above.

Pronunciation guide

Shahd'rah: Sh-ah-de-rah
Ny'tarreth: Nikt-ar-eth
Ruyn: Roo-in
Karystos: Kah-riss-toss
Ophisteres: Oh-fist-air-ez
Dirathsinus: Dear-ath-sinn-uss

Description

The weapon crafted by the mastersmith Ruyn is unique. The Smithcrafter's Guild outlawed the technique used to create it, which mattered little because Ruyn was the only master adept enough to utilize it, and he never made another like it. The blade of this short sword is, in at least one sense, three parts blended together into a single piece of metal. The upper part of the blade is adamantine for strength and weight; the bottom part is mithral; and the area from which the fuller has been carved is silver-coated steel. The result is a weapon of

unsurpassed natural speed and strength, able to penetrate many defenses. The overall shape gently curves on the leading edge. The fuller does too, which is unusual.

The guard is another piece of controversial design. It features a traditional knuckle-guard on one side, and a hooked knuckle-guard on the other designed to leave space for the wielder to stretch and rest his thumb during combat.

In play

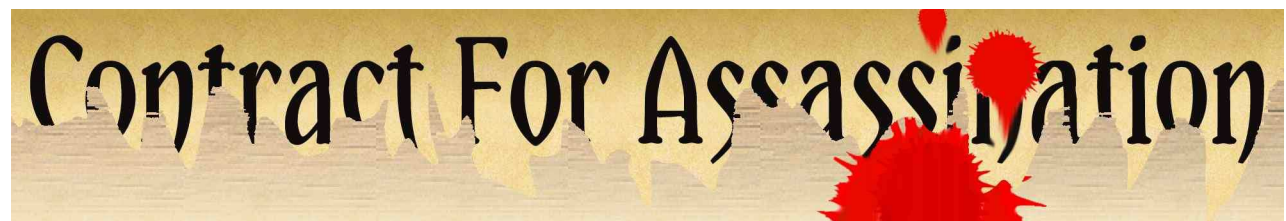
The tale of Ophisteres makes clear the price of wielding this terrible weapon. The Legacy of the Assassins of Shahd'rah manifests as:

- Initially, a *glass half full* attitude; then,
- A tendency to brood; followed by,
- Inability to empathize with others;
- A total lack of trust; and finally,
- The loss of any sense of honor or virtue.

This contrasts with a growing exuberance and energy during battle.

Inheritance Powers

The Short Sword of The Shahd'rah is an eater of death. Many of its Inheritance Powers are fueled by death, 1 Hit Dice providing power for one round of usefulness of one of its Inheritance Powers. Once they have been Unlocked, any Power may be energized this way. Multiple powers can be energized simultaneously, each one draining one hit dice of killed creatures each round.



Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	6-2-2=2	-	Weapon functions as a Sword of Speed unless in combat with such a weapon or a weapon of +4 or better ¹ , and
	3	-	+1 to hit, +1 damage, and
	2	3	Weapon counts as Adamantine and Magic for purposes of overcoming DR
Second	5-1=4	-	Lesser Bane ² (+2 to hit, +2d6 bonus damage, vs. Bane creatures only) ¹ , and
	4-1=3	-	Grants wielder the Power Attack feat ¹ , and
	4-1=3	4	Grants wielder the Cleave feat ¹
Third	4-1=3	-	Weapon functions as a Keen blade unless in combat with such a weapon or a weapon of +4 or better ¹ , and
	4-1=3	3	Weapon functions as Mighty Cleaving blade unless in combat with such a weapon or a weapon of +4 or better ¹
Fourth	3-1=2	1	+2 to hit vs. Bane creatures ² only
Fifth	3	2	+1 to hit, +1 damage
Sixth	4-2=2	1	+4 to skill checks targeting, opposing, or relating to, bane creatures ^a
Seventh	4-2=2	1	+2d6 bonus damage vs. bane creatures ² only
Eighth	3	-	+1 to hit, +1 damage, and
	4-1=3	3	Regenerative Killer ¹ (refer below)
Ninth	6-2=4	3	Rejuvenative Killer (refer below)
Total: 21			

1: Power must be activated before each use by killing creatures of total hit dice 1 greater than the current character level of the wielder. Once activated, the benefits persist for a number of rounds equal to the hit dice of the kill. Note: this is not Unlocking a power, it is fuelling or charging a power that has already been Unlocked.

2: For use with this weapon only, the wielder may nominate a character class as his *bane creature* instead of one of the creatures listed under Bane, e.g. Bane of Clerics, Bane of Mages.

Regenerative Killer:

Each hit dice of creatures killed after this power is activated heals 1 HP of damage suffered by the wielder if the creatures killed are all of fewer hit dice than the wielder.

Every two hit dice of creatures killed after this power is activated heals 1d6 of damage suffered by the wielder if the creatures killed are all of equal or greater Hit Dice than the wielder.

Rejuvenative Killer:

Each time the wielder kills creatures (including characters), provided these kills are not utilized to fuel another Legacy Power, the wielder is rejuvenated by 1 day of aging per cumulative hit dice of creatures killed. The wielder can stockpile kills for this purpose if desired, but such stockpiled kills may not be utilized to activate any other power.

Each time the number of kills required exceeds the character level of the character, the number of kills required for the next day of rejuvenation resets to 1.

For example, an 18th level character unlocks the Ninth Inheritance of the Short Sword of The Shahd'rah. Ignoring those creatures killed in battle thereafter if the kills are used to activate other Inheritance Powers, he kills a 1 HD creature, a 3 HD creature, four 2 HD creatures, a 1 HD creature, a 6 HD creature, a 9 HD creature, a 10 HD creature, a 16 HD creature and a 1 HD creature. Using this power:

1 @ 1 HD =	1 HD = -1 day
1 @ 3 HD =	3 HD = -1 day (2 HD used, 1 remaining)
1 @ 2 HD + 1 stockpiled =	3 HD = -1 day (3 used)
2 @ 2 HD =	4 HD = -1 day (4 used)
1 @ 2 HD + 1 @ 1 HD + 1 @ 6 HD =	9 HD = -1 day (5 used, 4 remaining)
1 @ 9 HD + 4 stockpiled =	13 HD = -2 days with 0 remaining (6+7 used)
1 @ 10 HD =	-1 day (8 used, 2 remaining)
1 @ 16 HD + 2 stockpiled =	-1 day (9 used, 9 remaining)
1 @ 1 HD + 9 stockpiled =	-1 day (10 used)

Thus, the character is rejuvenated, becoming 10 days younger. The character will continue incrementing the number of hit dice of kills consumed until it reaches the limit of 18 HD (because he is currently 18th level), at which point the count restarts at 1. It follows that the wielder of this blade can end a war significantly younger than he started it, but the number of kills required to achieve substantial rejuvenation is high – thousands per year.

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Defeat a single enemy of the same class and equal or greater level
- Defeat sufficient Bane Creatures in one battle to total a CR equal to that of the character, single-handed
- Defeat an enemy armed with a Speed weapon of +3 or better

Mid level:

- Defeat a single enemy of a different class and equal or greater level
- Defeat sufficient Bane Creatures in one battle to total a CR two greater than that of the character, single-handed
- Defeat 3-to-1 odds facing enemies each of which has a CR equal to the character's level

High level:

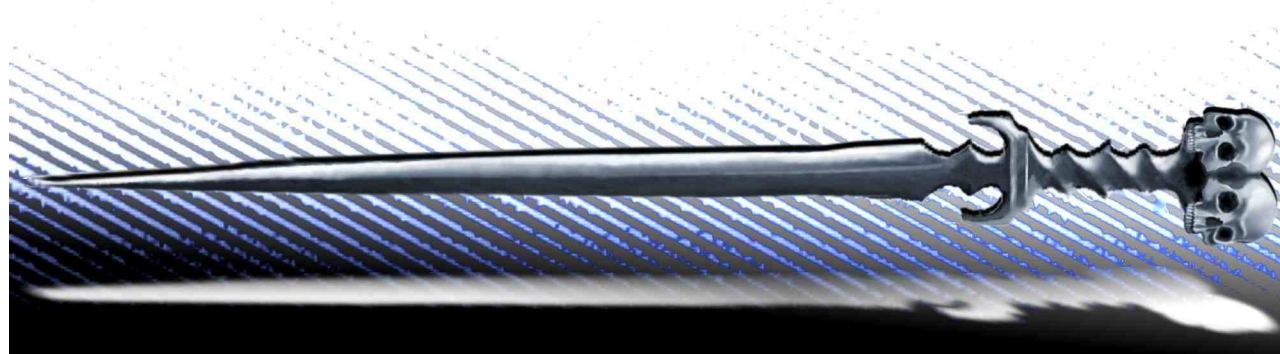
- Defeat an enemy at least two levels greater than the character
- Defeat sufficient Bane Creatures in one battle to total a CR four greater than that of the character, single-handed
- Defeat a fighter, a cleric, and a mage all of equal level to that of the character, all allied against the character, without assistance

Designer's notes: The Short Sword of Shahd'rah

If the amulets for which Assassin's Amulet is named are the prototypes, this is the original *factory* product. Although substantially reworked and updated several times, it remains the foundation behind the Legacy Item game mechanics we have provided. Many of the concepts illustrated by preceding examples were first suggested during discussion and development of the Short Sword of Shahd'rah.

As such, some of the ideas presented in this exact example have been the subject of further tweaking in the game mechanics, and the short sword does not quite fit the standard template for a Legacy Item. During the final round of editing, there has been an attempt to update the mechanics to something closer to the standard, but there has also been an attempt to maintain the flavor of the previous version (which predated the game mechanics). As a result, there has been some inevitable compromise between these two objectives.

The result is an ideal Legacy Item with which to equip an assassin, and one that PCs might be able to use. One of the primary reasons why this would be acceptable to a player is that while their character might lose various emotional attributes, there is nothing to actually prevent the character from pretending to those attributes through enlightened self-interest. Beyond that, many of the effects on the character, like distrust verging on paranoia, come naturally to players anyway. At the same time, while the weapon is powerful, it is not so powerful as to be unbalancing, due to the incorporated restrictions



Chapter 6: Assassin's Amulet In Your Campaign



Replacing Cyrene

With a Deity of Life

While we have incorporated the seeds of an original pantheon for use with Assassin's Amulet, you have the option of replacing Cyrene with any divine being dedicated to the cause of life, without any impact on the bulk of the material.

Further, if the divine beings within a game are tolerant of variations on their theology, caring only about the cause, or that they are worshipped at all, the deity in question does not even have to subscribe to the theological beliefs of the Hands. They believe that what they do is a legitimate activity in the name of their deity, and that alone may be sufficient for the deity to reward them with divine magic.

However, this is one of those profound questions with wide-reaching effects on a campaign, so do not make this decision lightly. As a rule, what is true of one deity will be true of most (if not all) of them. It is therefore a relatively straightforward operation to replace Cyrene with any other pro-Life deity and preserve the bulk of the material. You do not even have to change a word of the book, if Cyrene is a cover identity under which a supposedly good deity does their dirty work!

With a Deity of Death

You can also preserve most of the material if you replace Cyrene by a somewhat misunderstood deity of death. A central

pillar of our book concerns the dichotomy of a Deity of Life who maintains an assassins' guild, but you can replace this with a lawful good death deity (who might have an undeserved bad reputation because mortals do not understand the cosmic balance that underpins the beliefs of the Hands. This simply replaces one interesting contrast with another.

Unfortunately, the surprise factor drops with this substitution. Removing such a central conceptual twist from the concepts provided and replacing it with something more obvious makes the material shallow. Assassin's Amulet is at its best when the central deity is both lawful good and a proponent of life.

With a Deity of Balance

You could also substitute Cyrene with some cosmic balance deity. In many ways, this choice suits the theology we have provided, as any deity with such a vague portfolio needs one or more concrete examples of their role within the cosmos, or no one – not players, GM or characters – will be able to grasp what they champion.

A Deity of Balance is (virtually by definition) a neutral god, and that weakens the moral contradiction at the heart of our concept. However, you can also argue that the concepts of life as a good cause and death as an evil cause incorporate a mortality-based prejudice. In a realistic pantheon free of such prejudice, both Life and Death should be neutral. Is not Death also known as "The Great Leveler, who visits all in their time?"

With a Deity of Justice

An alternative concept deriving from the preceding chain of thought is for death to be a necessity. When the cosmic balance tilts too far in the direction of life, it becomes easier for *bad things to happen*. (My personal preference is for the dead to start rising from the grave because there is too much life energy around, but you could go the other way and have healing become harder.) It is only a short step from that position to making someone's death inevitable, and those who preserve their life unnaturally do so at the expense of another person dying, one whose time was not yet up. This sort of unfair activity should get the hackles of any half-decent God of Justice rising and their blood boiling.

However, this has been done before. The concept of a Deity of Justice running a bunch of fanatical followers has been around in RPGs from virtually word one. It is a chestnut—an oldie (but still a goodie), so do not let that stop you.

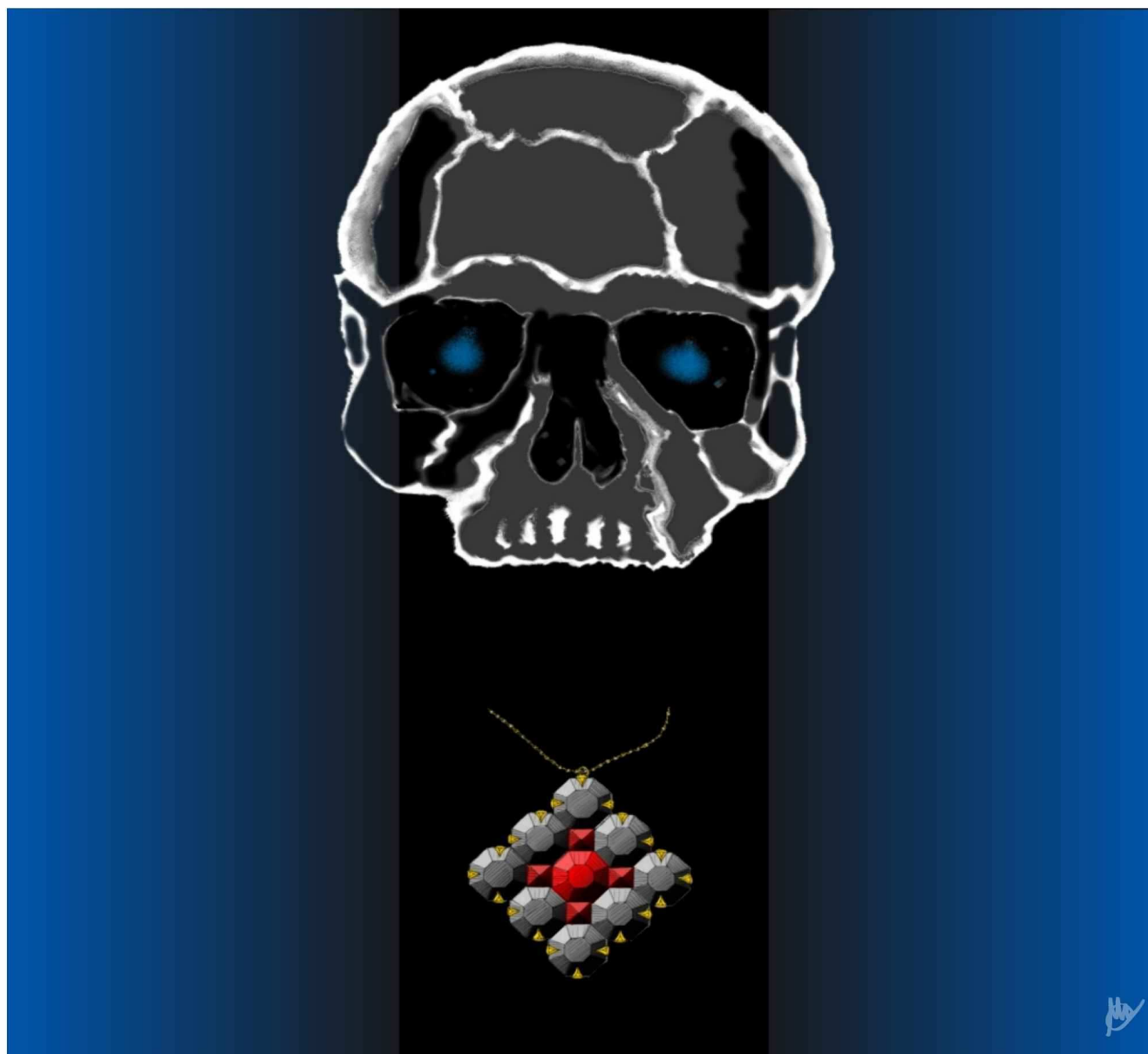
With a Deity of Death Posing as a Deity of Life

Our final suggestions for incorporating Assassin's Amulet into a pre-established pantheon within your campaign is to take something that was touched on a few paragraphs ago and turn it on its head. We suggested Cyrene be a cover identity used by a Deity of Life to conceal their more unsavory pursuits, thereby maintaining a pristine public image. However, a Deity of Death might well pose as a Deity of Life to recruit followers from amongst the ranks of their foes and rivals. An evil thing to do, it works for campaigns whose theology is taken **from a more human perspective**. A demon prince might do this, for example.

Since the logical outcome of this would be an eventual confrontation with the agency responsible, we are indeed talking about making Assassin's Amulet the centerpiece of an entire campaign here—and a fairly high-level one, at that.



Afterword



It started as such a simple idea. An assassins' guild, ready to drop into any campaign, with a selection of plot hooks and relevant GM advice to make the whole package effortless and seamless, wherever it was used.

One by one, bigger possibilities were unveiled. Grander schemes, broader settings, more sweeping and original concepts emerged.

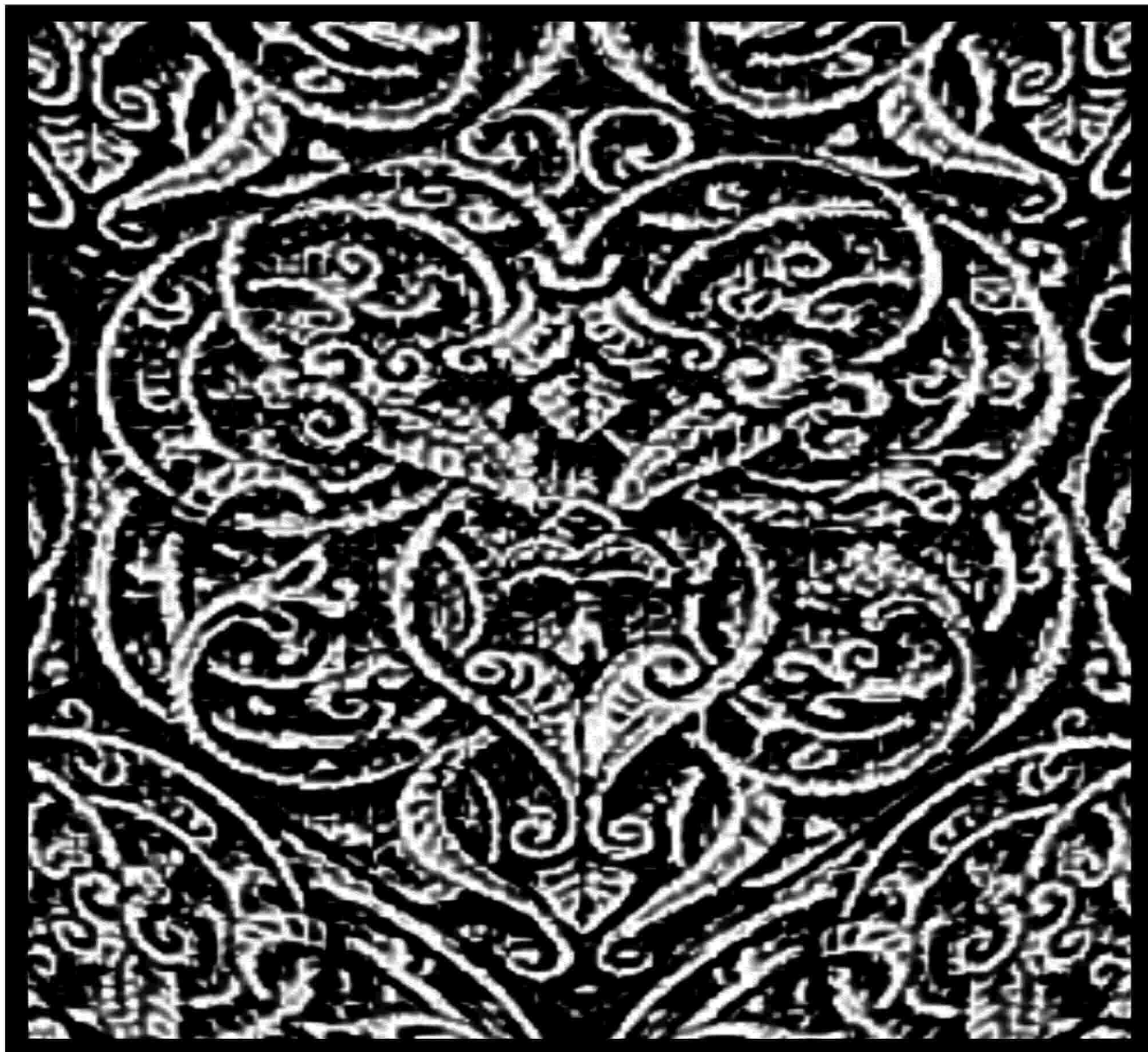
Let us be clear about this: we designed Assassin's Amulet as a modular entity. You can use everything we have provided, or ignore everything except the bits that fit your campaign. As much as possible, we have spelt out the implications of integrating the ideas within Assassin's Amulet into a campaign. There is literally and intentionally, something here for everyone.

We hope the material we have provided here will be inspiring, helpful and – most of all – fun. Without that, what is the point?

We raise our mugs in toast to you (after our food testers have checked, of course) oh great GM. Have more fun at every game!



Appendix: Legal



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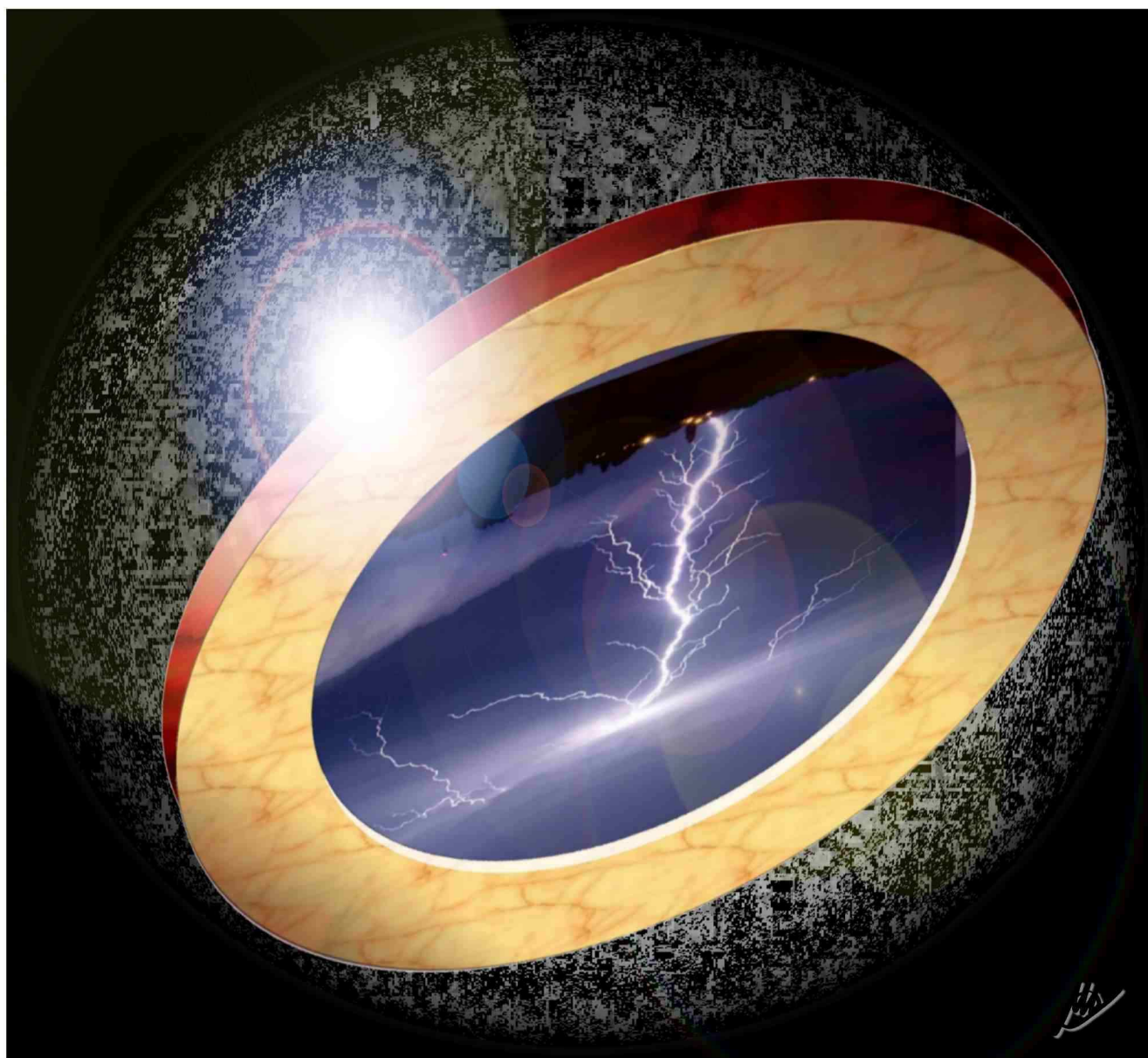
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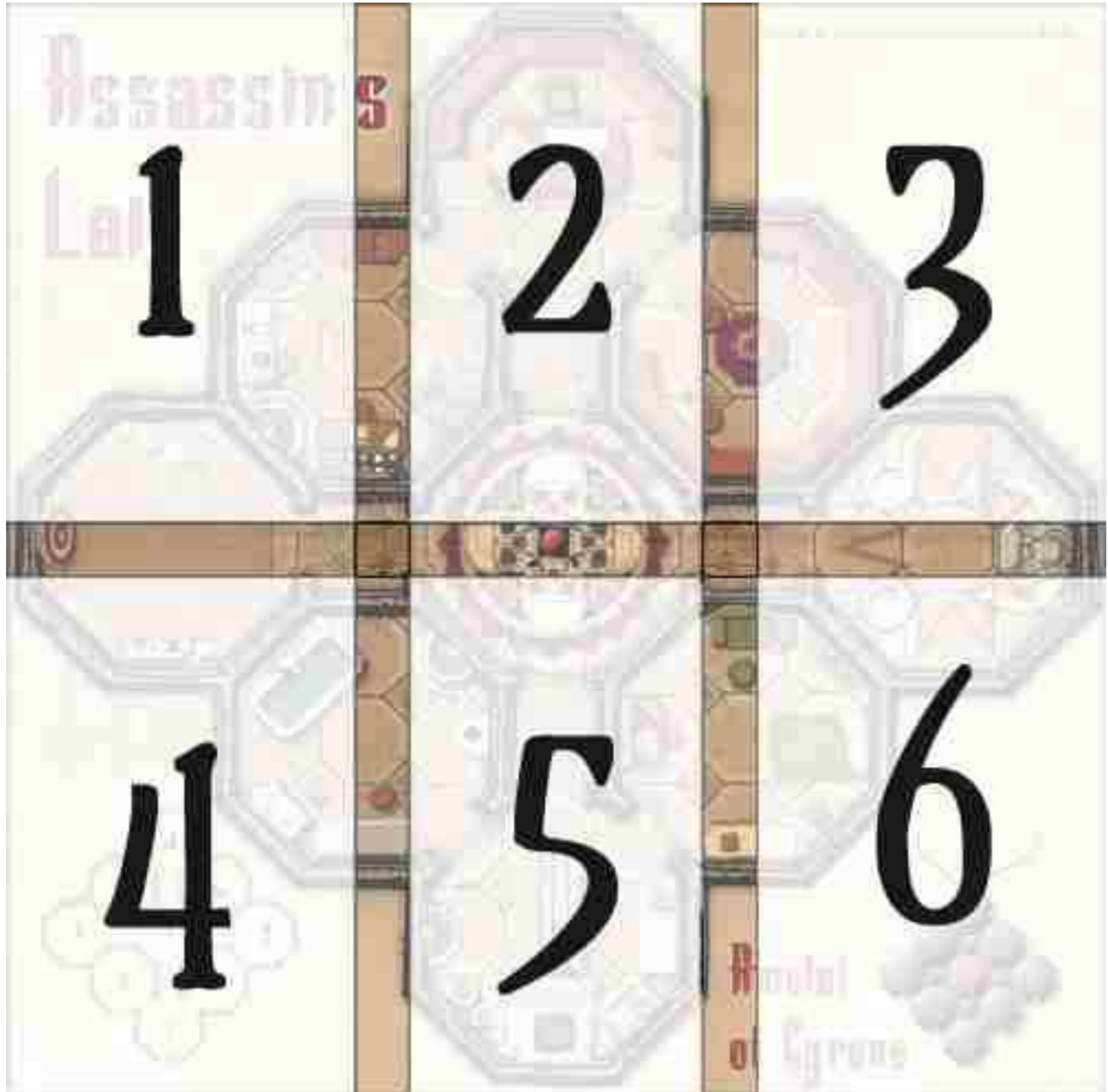
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Appendix: High Resolution Maps & Props



In the following pages, we present two sets of high-resolution maps for use with Assassin's Amulet. The first set is the full map of the Assassin's Lair at 5' scale. The second is a re-working of the map which hides all but the central chambour, for use if-and-when your PCs manage to break in – if they choose to adopt an adversarial relationship with the Hands Of Cyrene.

The diagram below shows how the maps should be assembled:



As can be seen, a limited amount of overlap has been introduced deliberately to enable seamless construction of the finished map.

Assassin's

Lair



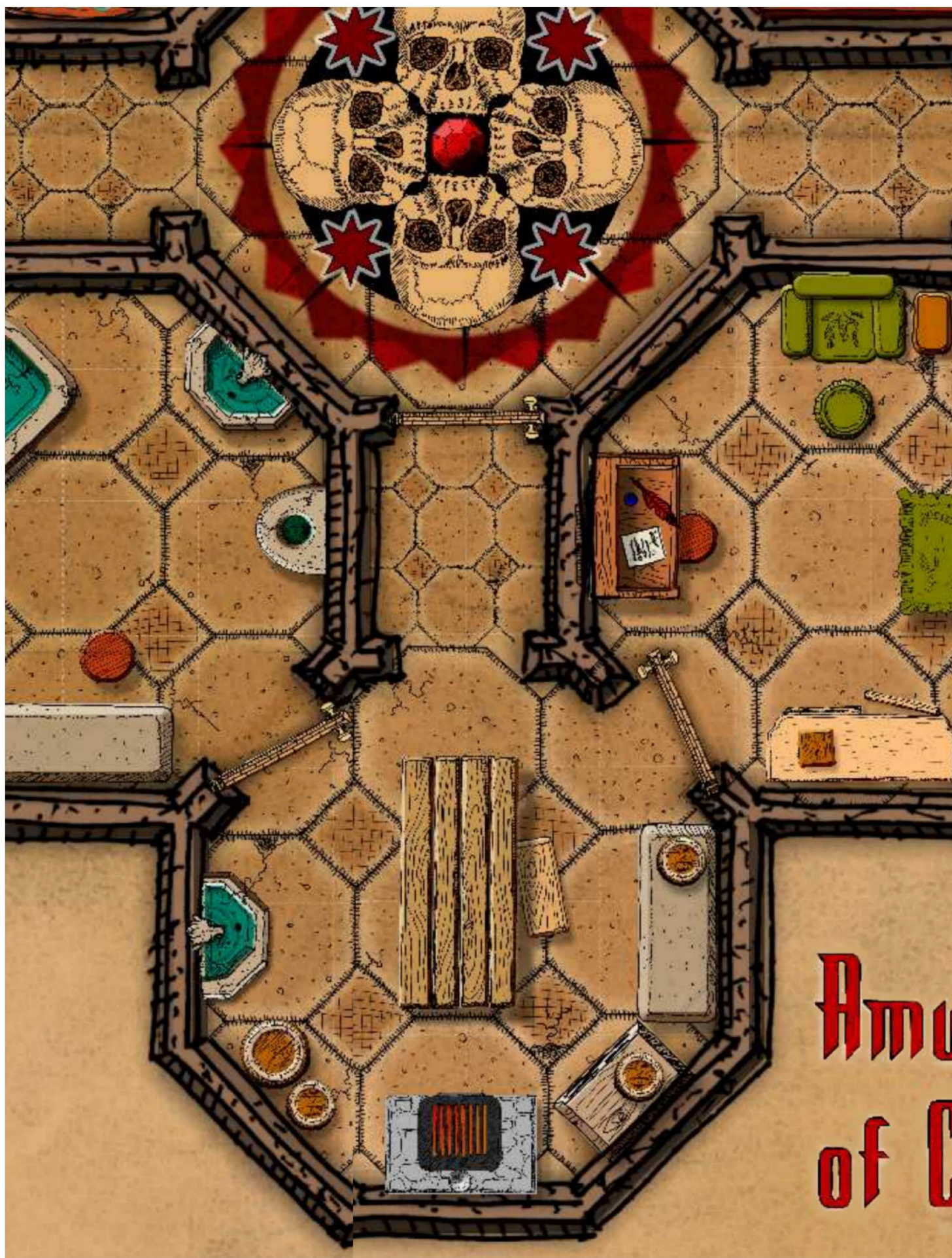
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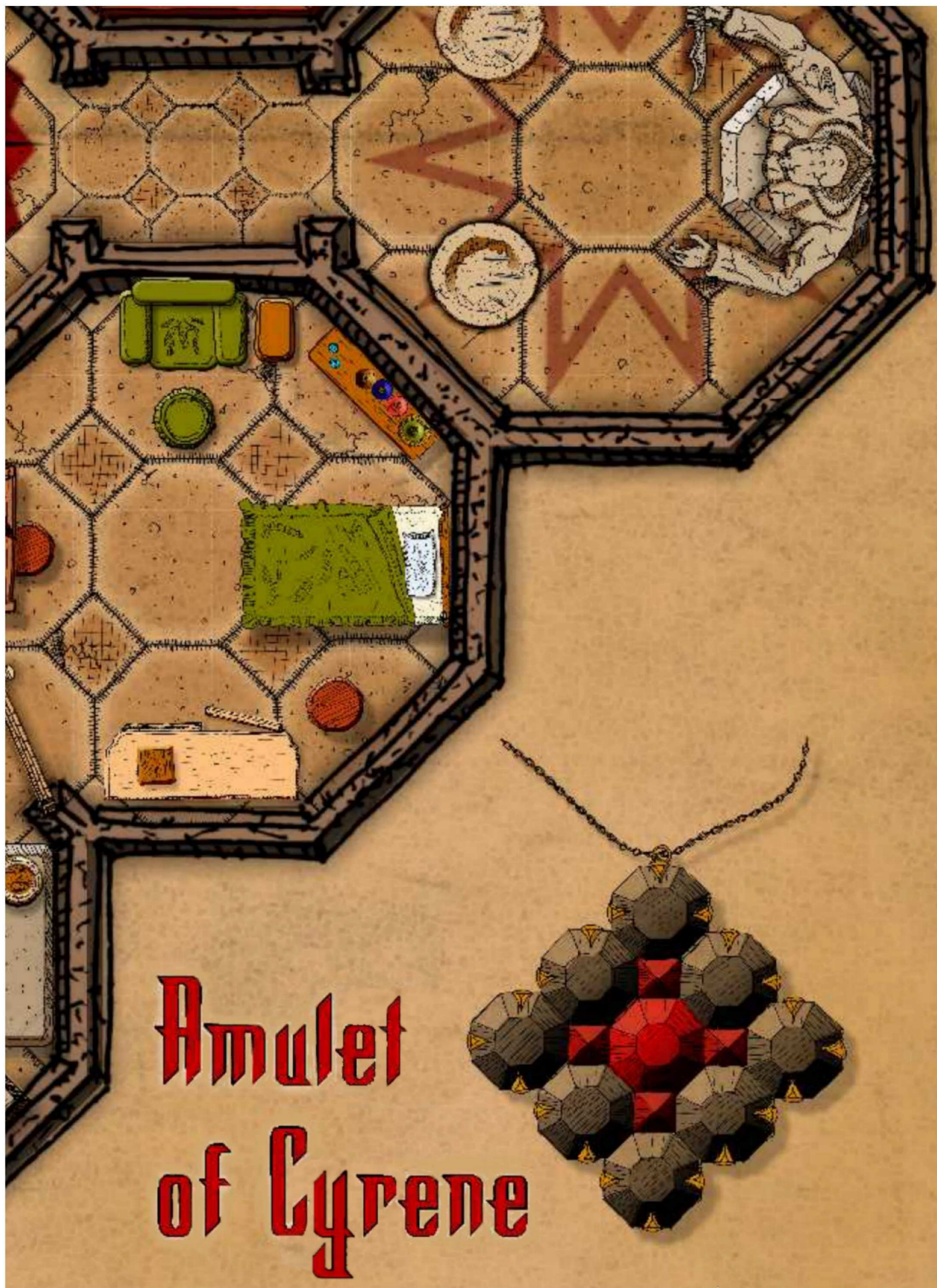


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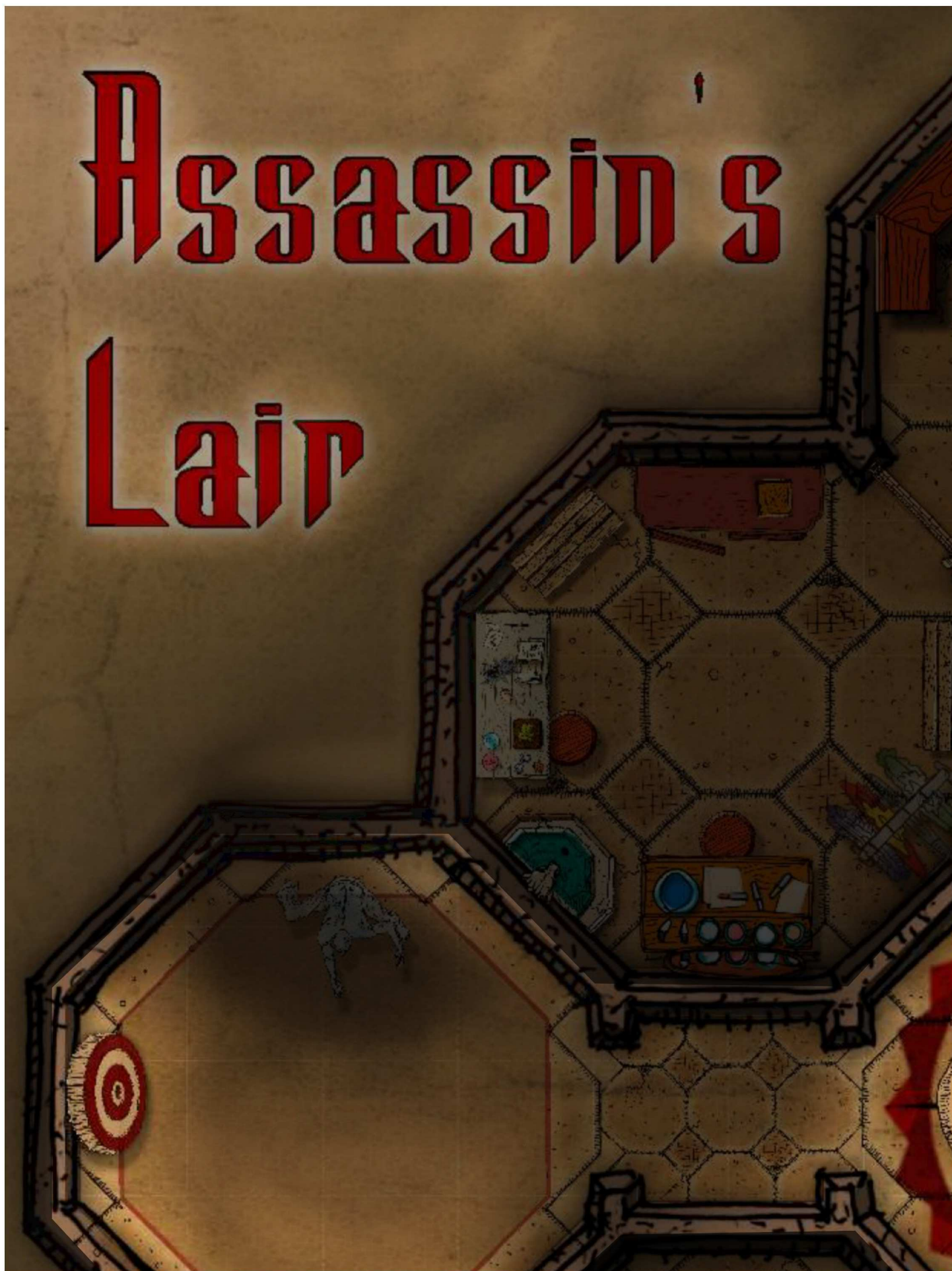


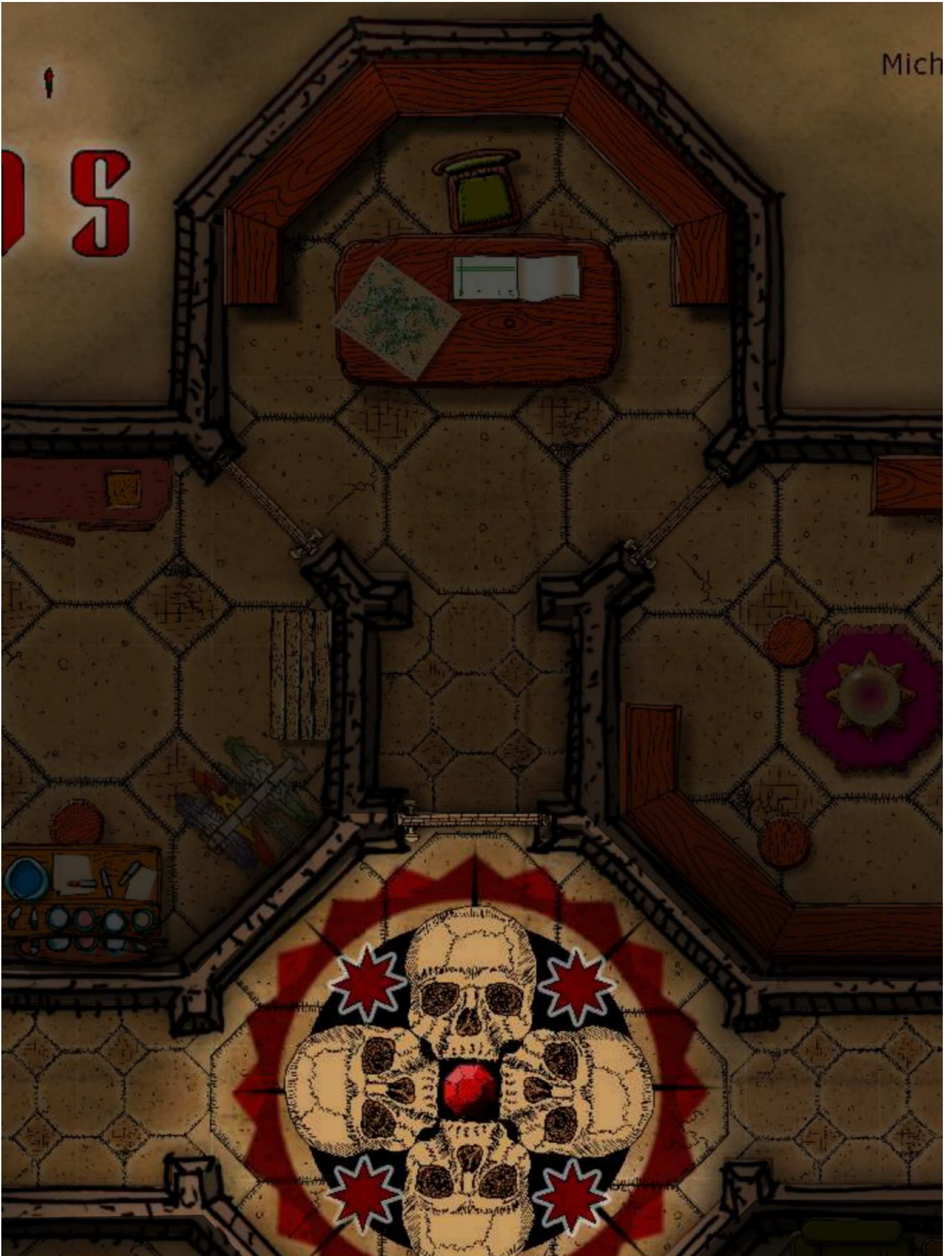


Amulet of Cyrene

Assassin's

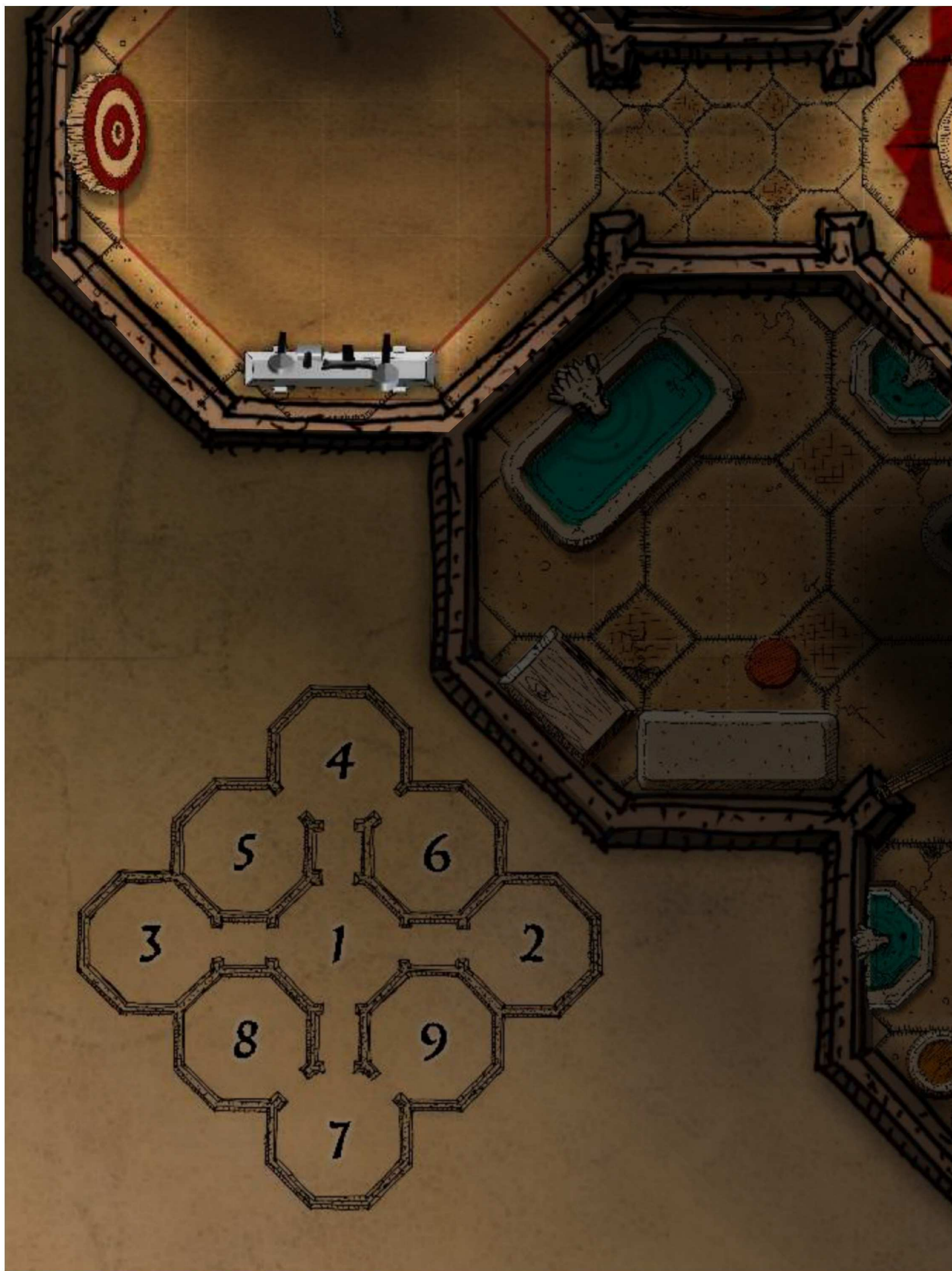
Lair

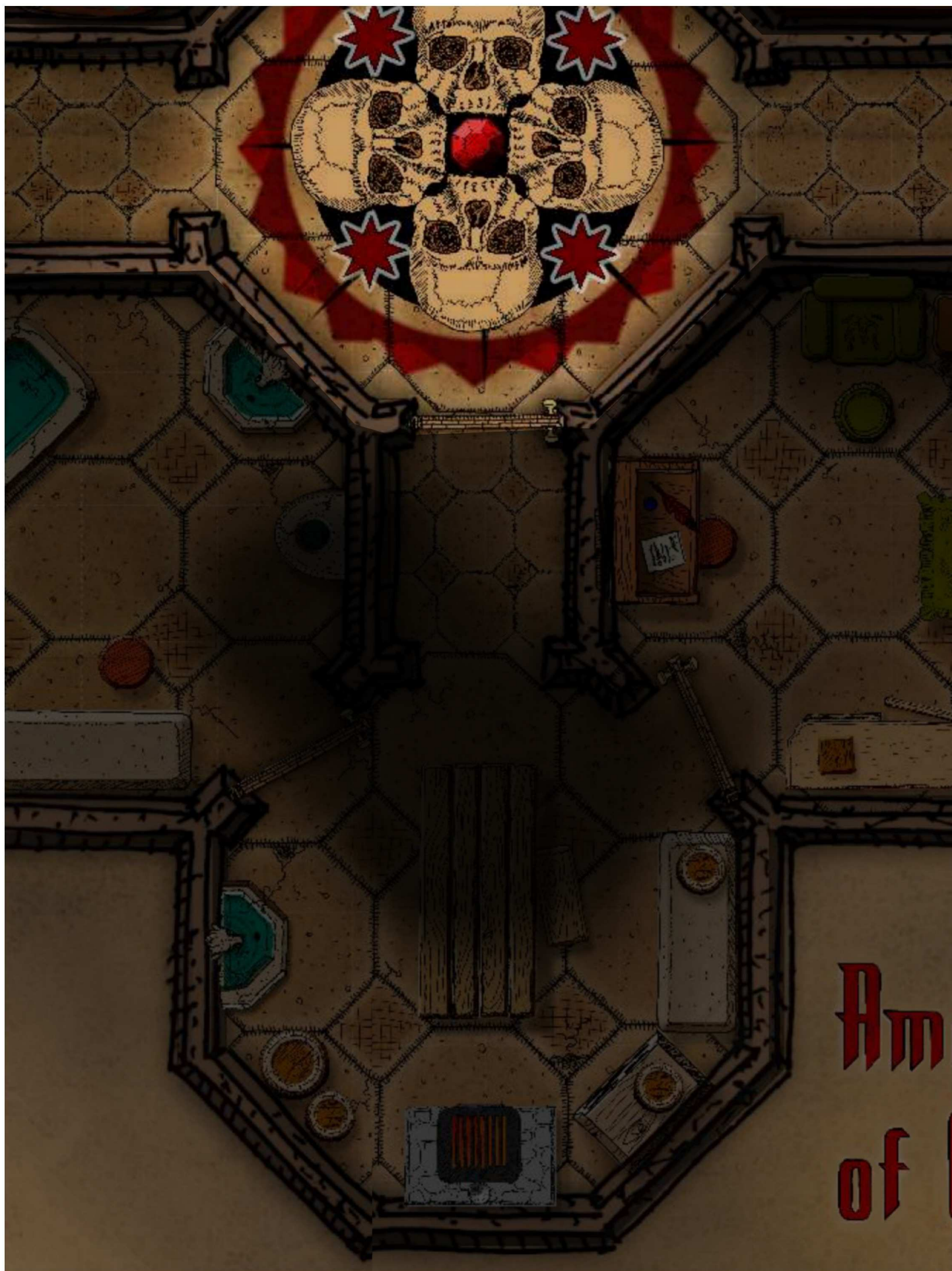




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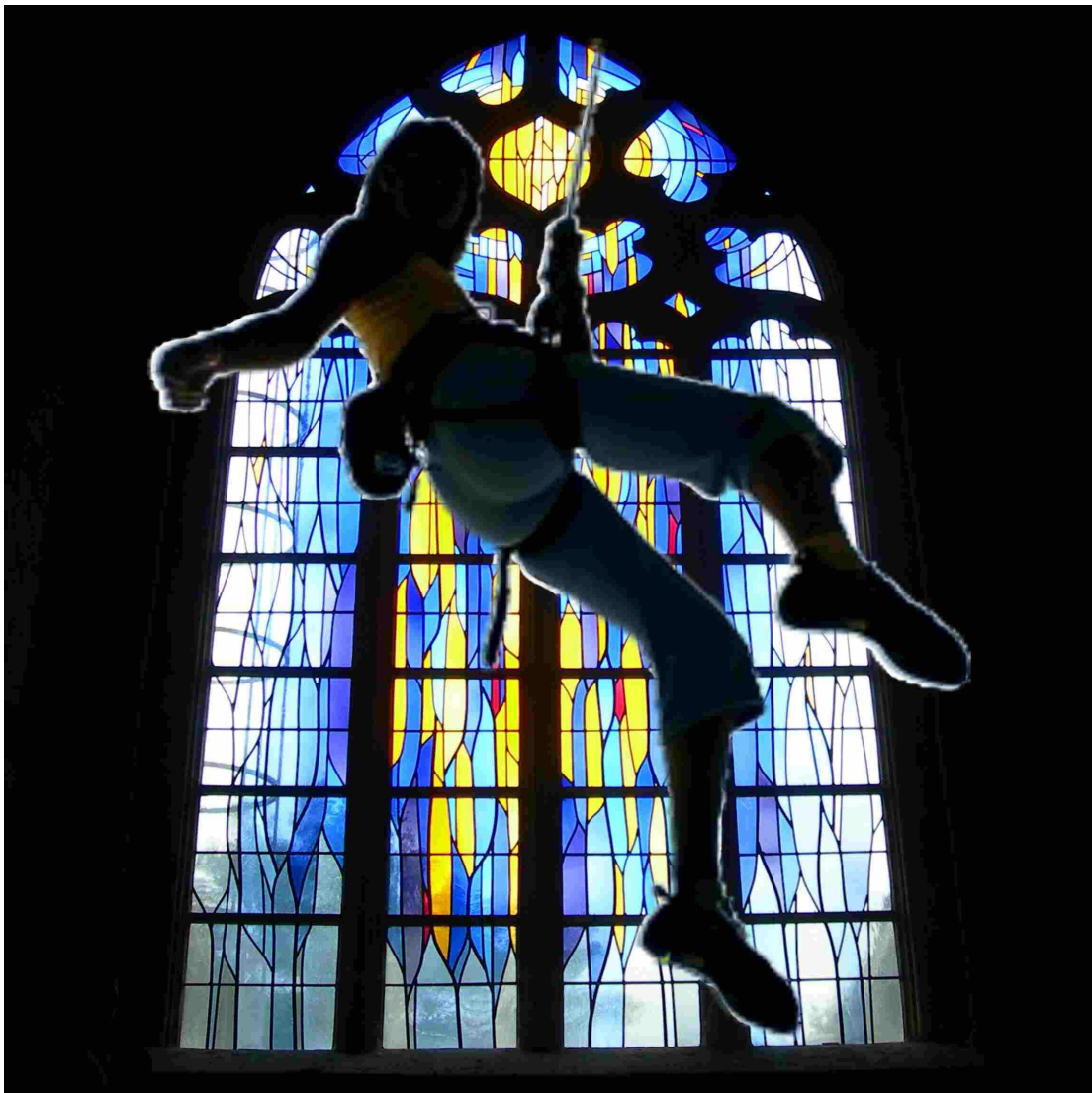
Additional Props

In these final pages, we have reproduced the artwork illustrating the various new magic items and equipment described in chapter 5 in a larger size to permit them to be printed and handed out as game props. Text has been removed where necessary.

These are followed by larger images of the important NPCs and new monsters from the text – both versions of Cyrene, the Phantasmal Foe, and the Urban Gumshoe.

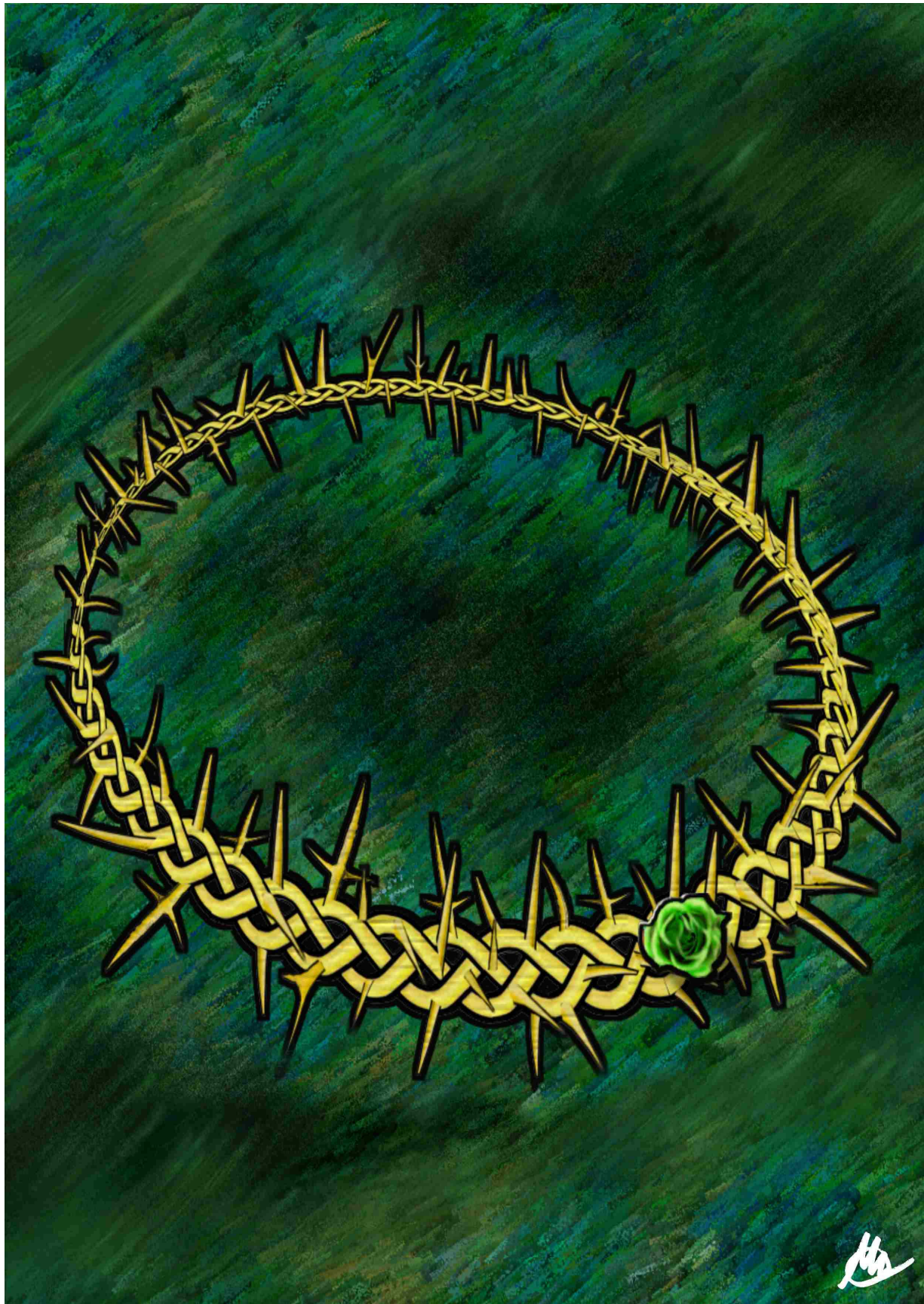
We conclude the section with an alternate version of the Pool Of Reflection, ideal for illustrating this location to your players.

Oh, and there are a couple of pieces of artwork that never made it into the rest of the book to fill out some of the spaces.



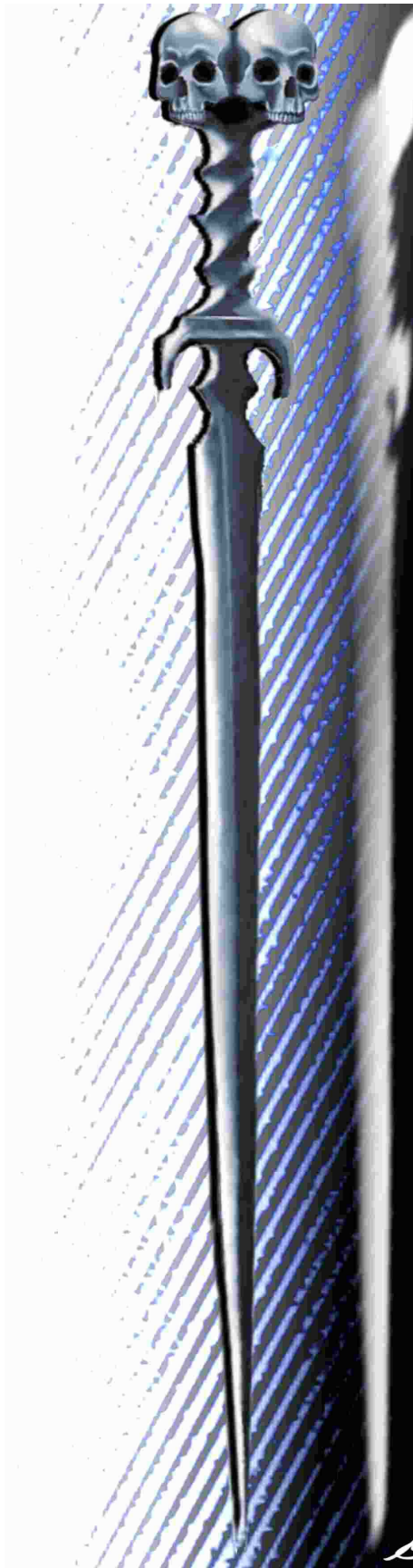




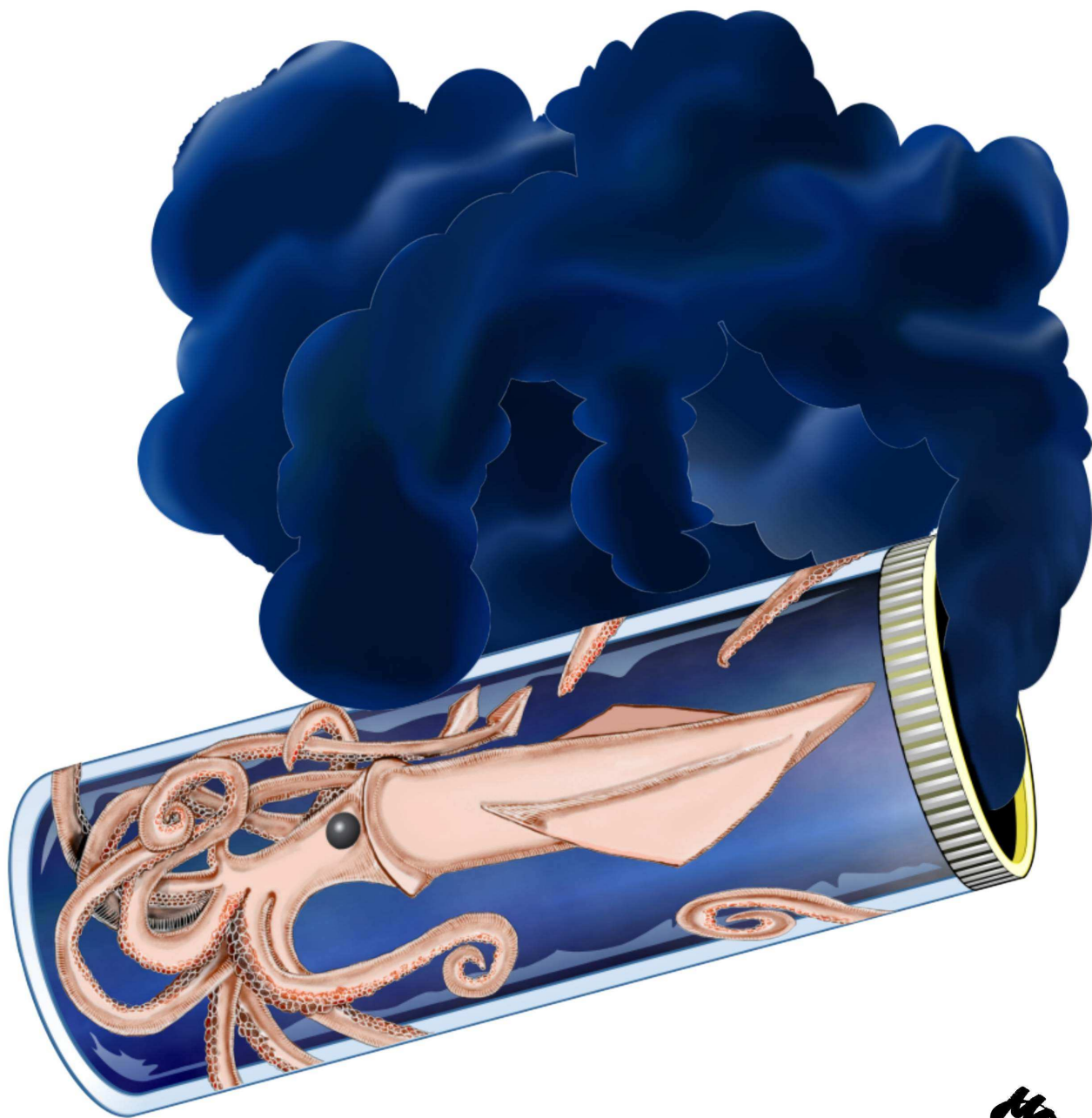






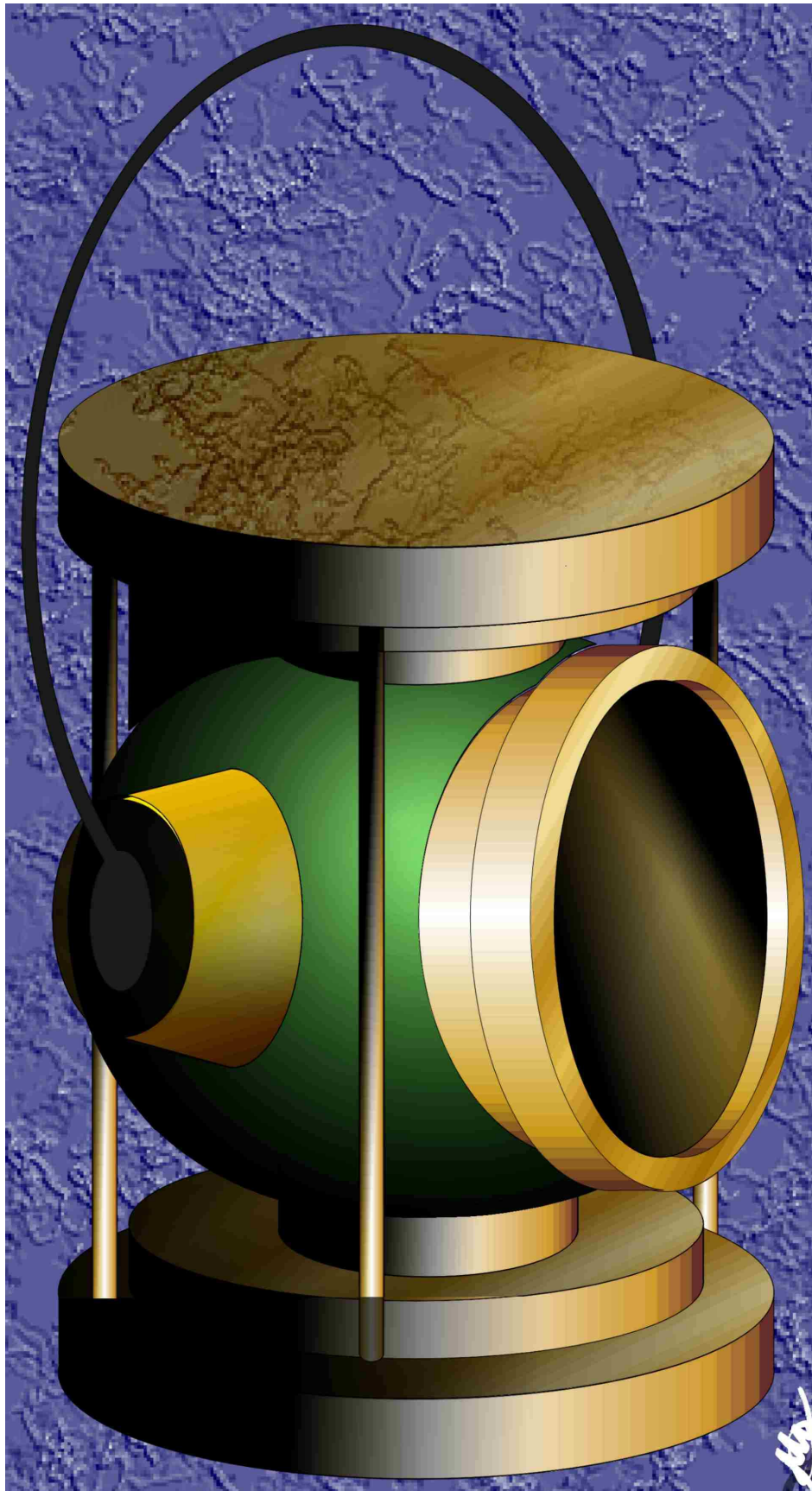


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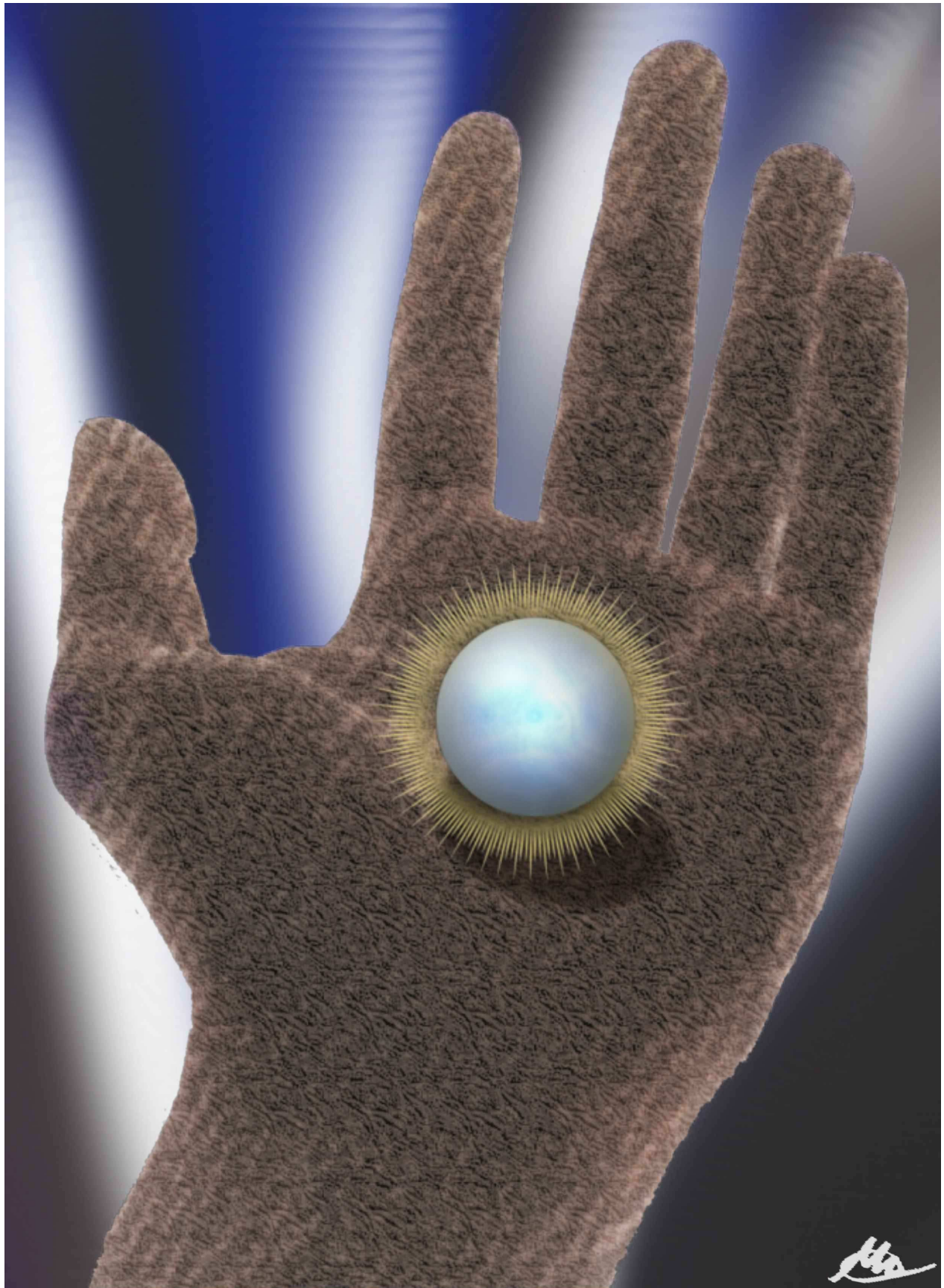


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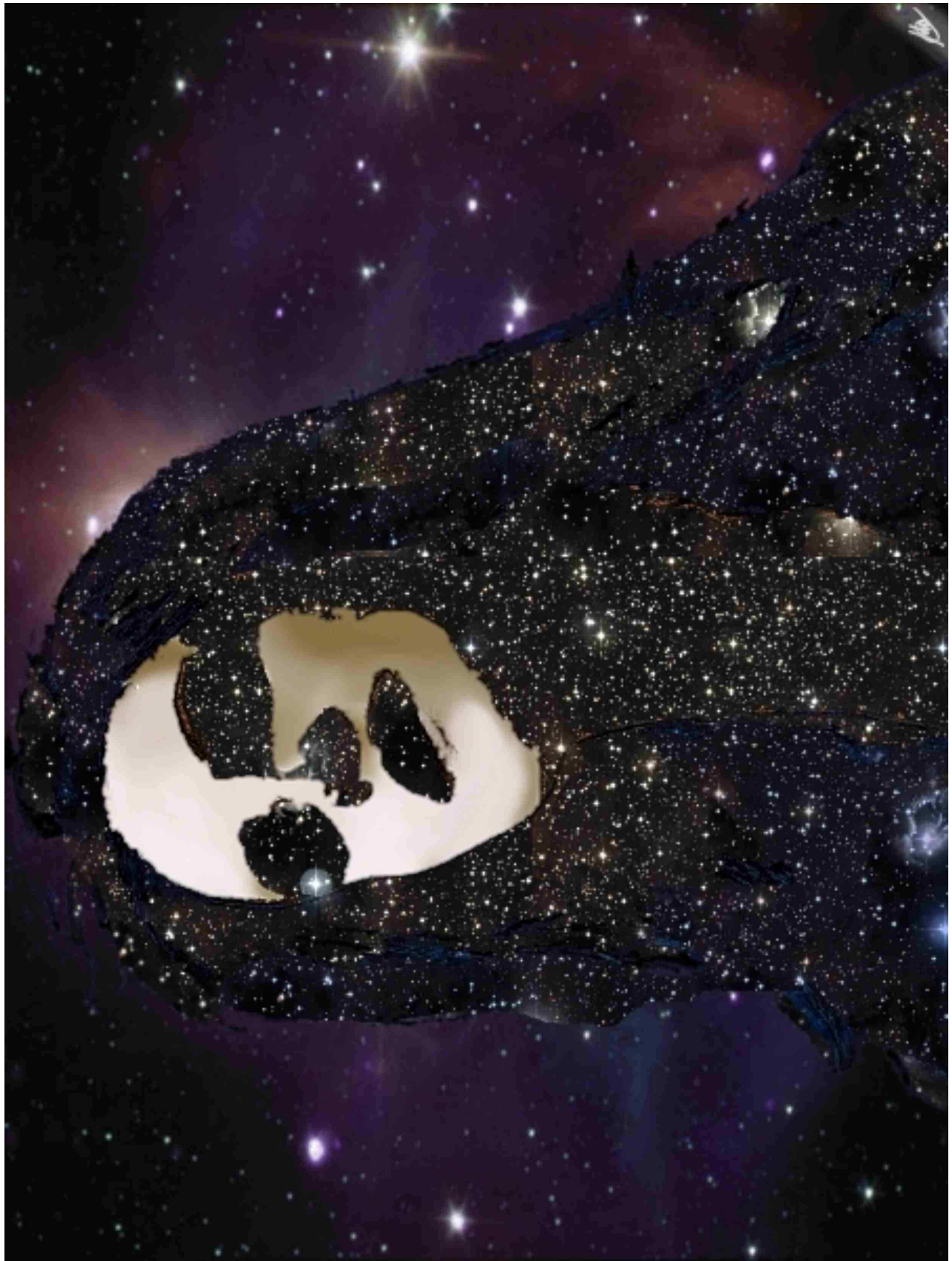














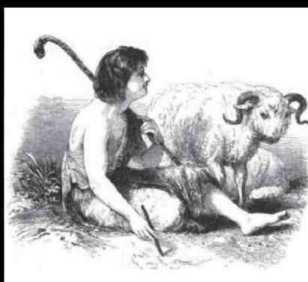




Anyone can be a
hidden Guild member...



Bakers



Shepherds



Smiths



Tax Collectors



Beggars



Alchemists

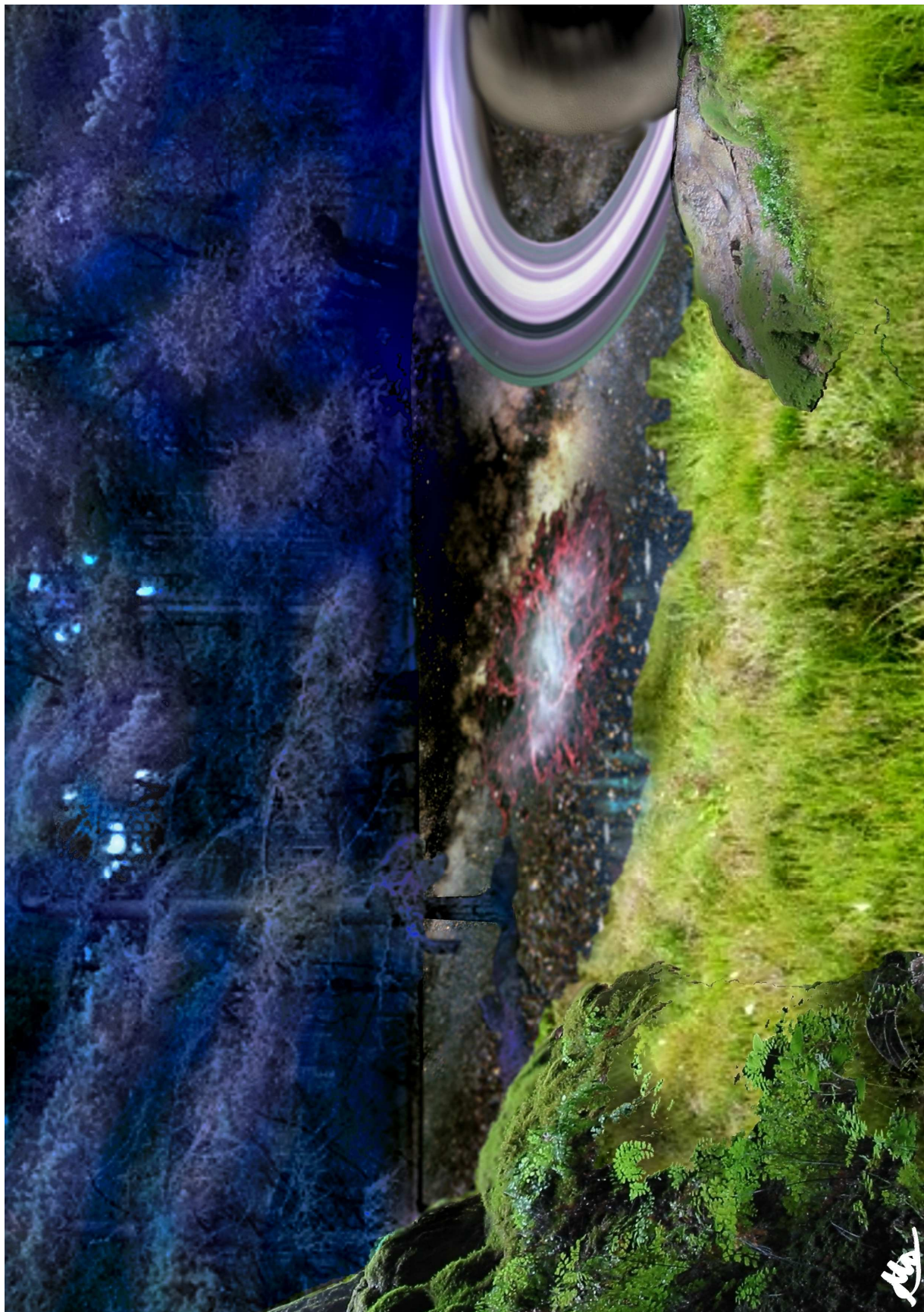


Cobblers



Nobles





Final Word



Assassin's Amulet has been a labor of love for those involved. By turns, it has been fascinating, frustrating, distressing, disastrous, demanding, depressing, and a source of profound elation. But it doesn't end with the publication of this manuscript. We have plans for supplemental products which will be available free to anyone who has purchased a copy. To start with, we have the full-map images in 300dpi and 600dpi resolutions. And an A4 version of the maps in a separate PDF.

These will be followed by a print-friendly version of the E-book with all the images rendered in grayscale. After that, our plans are a little more nebulous; we're talking about supplementary PDFs, we're talking about gaming aids, we're talking about all sorts of things.

We also want to track reviews and supplementary materials by third party authors - to encourage the production of which, we have made the content of AA *completely* Open Game License. We *Want* bloggers to tell us how they use AA, what they like and what they don't, what works and what doesn't. We *Want* third-party authors to create Legacy Items and weave them into their plotlines, to involve the Gods of our pantheon and the faiths they represent in their campaigns, and so on. And we want them to tell us about it!

To act as a hub through which all this content can be accessed, we have created a website for Legacies Products (<http://legaciescampaignsetting.com/>) and a page for customers to download additional files and resources <http://legaciescampaignsetting.com/amuletexttras>. You will need the login AmuletBearer and the password CetavaNaCyrene in order to access the extras.

Assassin's Amulet comes with lifetime updates. You can register for this service by sending an email to updates@legaciescampaignsetting.com. You will receive a confirmation link in your email shortly afterwards. Be sure to click that link to finish registering your purchase of this product.

Once again, thank you for purchasing our product. We hope that reading it and using the content it contains in your campaign is a wonderful experience!



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