

# THE SUN BELOW

CITY ON THE EDGE



By John W. S. Marvin

Requires the Numenera® corebook from Monte Cook Games







# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>PAGE 1</b>
BACKGROUND	PAGE 1
SYNOPSIS	PAGE 1
GETTING THE PCs INVOLVED	PAGE 2
MODIFYING THE ADVENTURE	PAGE 3
NEW RULES: MOOKS	PAGE 4
<b>THE ADVENTURE</b>	<b>PAGE 5</b>
THE FACE	PAGE 5
PORTAL TO THE SUN BELOW	PAGE 8
THE DESCENT	PAGE 14
URBAMORR: THE CITY ON THE EDGE	PAGE 16
THE RETURN	PAGE 46
<b>BESTIARUM VOCABULUM</b>	<b>PAGE 48</b>
DH'LANNS	PAGE 48
FLOATERS	PAGE 50
PRAITHIANS	PAGE 51
PRAITHIAN WAR SNAKE	PAGE 55
PYRONIC SENTRY	PAGE 56
SLITHIKS	PAGE 57
NUMENERA	PAGE 60
EXTRAS	PAGE 60



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# INTRODUCTION

*What if I told you there is a world below this one? A world with its own sun? Full of strange peoples, amazing discoveries, and unspeakable horror? Finding your way down to this world is almost impossible. Finding a way back up, well, that's worse.*

## BACKGROUND

Older than some of the lights in the night sky, the world of The Sun Below lies deep under the surface of the world. The Order of Truth has explored only a tiny fraction. What they have found is a fantastic tunnel, or tube, some 5 miles (8 km) tall by 20 miles (32 km) wide wandering under the surface. So far, entrances to this underworld have only been found in or near the Black Riage mountain range.

How long this world extends is unknown. Perhaps it is local, perhaps it spirals under the whole of the Ninth World from pole to pole. This underground world has seen the rise and fall of numerous sentient species and their civilizations. Many of its peoples have barely heard of the world above, except as legend. Lit by its own sun (or suns; that is in dispute), and filled with a thick atmosphere, the world below hosts many strange flora, fauna, and things not so easily classified.

These forgotten lands, lit by a white sun that travels along the ceiling of the underground world, are unknown to all but a few of the inhabitants of the surface of the Ninth World.

Much of the world of The Sun Below was once ruled by the praithians (see above right). A small group of praithians was forced to live outside the virtual realities to oversee the machines that kept the dreams alive. These praithians enslaved the blood-drinking slithik and the hermaphroditic humans called dh'lann.

Urbamorr, the last stronghold of the praithians, is served intermittently by a few free trader bio-mechanical airships. One awaits the PCs at a long dormant station in the ceiling of the world of The Sun Below—a station that used to connect the underground world to the surface world but the entrance to which had been buried in rock and stone for millennia.

When the Iron Wind turns a cliff face in the rock into flesh, flesh in the form of a talking face, those above can walk through the open mouth and into the darkness of the long slumbering station. Or something could walk out...

## THE PRAITHIANS

The praithians are 8-foot (2.4m) tall humanoids with three eyes. Their third eye, in the middle of their forehead, is the focus of their psychic powers. Long ago they retreated from the real world and entered a dream world somewhere in the datasphere. Now they appear to be mummies, "alive" only through the use of their psychic powers and ancient dream engines.

To preserve their desiccated forms, the praithians encased their bodies in giant levitating stone heads. Most of these heads sit dormant, while the beings inside devote themselves to dreaming. When praithians wake, they can use their psychic powers from within their stone shells.



## COREBOOK CALLOUTS

When you see this symbol, it's a reference to a topic in the Numenera Corebook. See the corebook for more information about this topic.

*Text in a tinted box like this contains important information for your players. You can either read it aloud or paraphrase it in your own words.*

## SYNOPSIS

### FROM HERE TO THERE AND BACK AGAIN

The adventure starts in the aftermath of the Iron Wind. The wind has changed a cliff face into flesh, and thereby opened a passage into a station that allows travel from the surface of the Ninth World to the lands of The Sun Below. When two human children are kidnapped, the children's grandmother, an Aeon Priest, offers a generous reward for their return.



*Iron Wind,  
page 135*





Uxphon ("Oosh-fahn"),  
page 135

Overcoming obstacles both real and illusionary in the station, the characters find their way to the ceiling of the world below. There they discover a bizarre bio-mechanical airship that transports them down to the praithian city of Urbamorr, where the children are being held.

Once in the city, the PCs meet the praithians, a ruling class made of giant stone heads with dreamers inside, and an underclass of two races: the dh'lann and the slithik. The dh'lann are hermaphrodite humans and the slithik are strange bloodsucking plants. A praithian noble, Contessa Kyyndance, negotiates for the children's release. But unknown to her, the king views the surface people as potential slaves. He traps the characters and children in Urbamorr and eventually turns on them, attempting to imprison them and implant them with mind-control devices.

The characters escape and run into a resistance led, in part, by praithian Princess Duphreen, who wants her people to leave the world of dream and return to the material world.

The characters find allies and strike back at the king. After defeating the king, all seems well until the queen rouses her dreaming head and threatens everyone. Once again into the breach, the PCs confront the queen and either defeat her in combat or convince her to stand down.

Returning to the surface of the Ninth World with the children, they are greeted as heroes and invited deep into the inner circle of the Order of Truth.

## THE STORY STRUCTURE

The Sun Below: City on the Edge is a story-driven adventure. What's written here provides a framework, but the real story will happen when you and your players travel to Urbamorr, the City on the Edge.

There are four main story threads. Three of them nest inside each other like the pieces of a Russian doll. The outer-most story is a rescue story. Two grandchildren of prominent Aeon Priests are kidnapped and taken to Urbamorr, and must be rescued. Inside the rescue story is a trapped-in-a-foreign-land story. Once in Urbamorr, the characters will want to return to the surface, but will find their way back blocked. Inside the trapped story is the story of a slave rebellion. Since the slave masters are the ones blocking the character's return, helping the rebellion succeed unlocks the trapped story which unlocks the rescue story.

The last story thread is, of course, a story of discovery. There is a whole other world spiraling through the crust under the Ninth World. This

world has its own sun, moon, weather, and seasons. The characters discover this world, and strange wonders therein, such as the bio-mechanical airship *An Domorr*, strange and unknown new peoples, a dying civilization that lives only to dream, and more.

## PLACEMENT

The Sun Below starts just outside the city of Uxphon in the Black Riage, but it could be moved to take place almost anywhere in the Ninth World. The Iron Wind has just wreaked havoc on the main road in and out of Uxphon along the Deathwater Canyon.

To set the start of the adventure elsewhere, simply pick any cliff face to be changed by the Iron Wind. The stakes are higher if the cliff face is in a disruptive location, perhaps along an important trade route or on a border between two kingdoms. If there are no nearby cliffs, the power of the Iron Wind could have created a deep ravine.

## GETTING THE PCS INVOLVED

All you have to do is get your players to the giant talking face. Events will proceed from there. Use one or more of the following hooks or come up with your own.

## SLAVE CONNECTION

One or more of your player characters already know a trapper named Barid. Now they see he's a slave wearing an iron collar working in the Kolaj tannery. As the characters watch, Barid is transferred to a wagon full of other shackled slaves.

If the PCs ask where their friend is going, a guard offers, *"They're off to help clear the road west where the Iron Wind ripped through it."*

A foreman jumps into the front of the cart. *"Shut your faces back there and listen up. The road's turned to wriggling worms and worse, and you're going to lay new stones. The Iron Wind left a big face on the south wall spouting weird prophecies and such; it's not your concern. You're to steer clear of the Order of Truth, they're dealing with the face."*





## DREAM: VOLCANO OF LIGHT

One of the characters, perhaps a nano or someone with a link to the datasphere, has a dream.

*You wake up with blinding white light forcing its way into your room from every window, door jam, and crack in the walls. Shielding your eyes, you get up and look out the window. To the west, a giant volcano of white light has appeared just outside the city.*

*As you watch, it collapses, becoming a giant hole in the ground shooting white light to the sky.*

*You wake up for real this time, still in your bed. It is dark.*

*You walk up toward the giant face that has appeared on the cliff side, a remnant of the Iron Wind's passage. The face's flesh is cracking as you watch. Forty feet ahead the Aeon Priest Ellus and two scribes are setting up a tripod made of colored synth and steel.*

*Off to your left is a chain gang of prisoners, working on repairing the road which the Iron Wind turned to wriggling white worms. To your right, a young couple flirts and toasts the face with the local fortified wine.*

*Behind you is Ellus' wife, Aeon Priest Mishka, who stands by a cart with two of their grandchildren.*

*Just as you predicted, things go horribly wrong. As tentacles rush out of the mouth of the face and hurl the two scribes at you, what amazing thing do you do to avoid being hit in the face by crushed scribe?*

Travonis UI, page 6

## THE ORDER OF TRUTH ASKS FOR HELP

Mishka, an Aeon Priest, invites the characters to her Shrine of Truth. There she offers the player characters refreshments and a challenge. *"Help us investigate the giant face that the Iron Wind has left, and you will each receive 10 shins a day, double for hazardous duty."*

She won't go beyond 15 shins a day, 30 for hazardous duty, but will mention that the PCs will be able to get a share of any cyphers found at the site, plus the status of assisting the Order of Truth.

## LOCALS STREAM WEST TO SEE THE AMAZING FACE

The characters notice the streets are full of people going west. Anyone can tell them, *"Have you not heard? There is an amazing face, 300 feet tall, that the Iron Wind has left on the side of a cliff."* *"I heard it was 500 feet!"* *"One thousand, and it will tell you whom you will marry!"*

## IN MEDIA RES

Many books and movies start with the action already rolling, but few rollplaying adventures do. Some players want to hear the story hook before they agree to go on the adventure, even if they never reject a hook. Others are fine to jump into the action without knowing what it's all about. This hook is for them.

Start with characters at *The Cart*, a scene in the adventure under the headings *The Face* and *The Order of Truth*.

Most players will assume if you start them off in media res, things have already gone horribly wrong. So you make it a little easier on them as a reward for getting the story started off with a bang.

Cut to *The Travonis UI* scene. The characters have a flying scribe to dodge.

As a reward for jumping right into the action, the characters only have to make a level-2 speed roll to avoid being hit, and any kind of roleplaying to get out of the way will lower the difficulty at least one step.

The Cart, page 5

## MODIFYING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is designed to challenge any tier party, from tier one to tier six. Stats are presented in three groups, separated by /s. The first stat is for tiers 1 and 2. The second for tiers 3 and 4. The last for tiers 5 and 6.

First- and Second-Tier	Third- and Fourth-Tier	Fifth- and Sixth-Tier
------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------

For example: *level 3/4/4* is a creature that is level 3 for groups of first- and second-tier characters, and level 4 for those at the third-tier or beyond.

Example two: *1/1/2 travonis uls* means there is one travonis ul for first-tier to fourth-tier, and two travonis uls for fifth- and sixth-tier.

You should adjust numbers or difficulties down for groups of three players or less, and adjust up



for groups with six players or more. Even in the toughest fights, the goal is not to kill players, but to make players believe they are headed for defeat unless they pull off a miracle. That's when most players will step up their game and come up with a miracle or two and surprise you.

## BEGINNING CHARACTERS

For beginning tier-one characters, you should be aware of how fragile some newly created characters can be, especially a Nano with no armor. It's perfectly OK to focus damage effects on other characters.

Remind new players they can use their single-action recovery in combat.

If the party is mostly first tier, replace all 2-hit mooks with 1-hit mooks. See the next section for mook rules.

## NEW RULES: MOOKS

Mooks are minor NPCs that exist as cannon fodder. They show up in great numbers and are mowed down as fast as they show up. They can be dangerous in numbers, but are easily dispatched. Think about action scenes with scores of adversaries in your favorite book or movie. From Buffy to James Bond, mooks are part of the action/adventure genre.

The goal here is to be able to throw large numbers of adversaries at the player characters without slowing the game down by needing to manage mooks' health points.

### 1-HIT MOOK

A 1-hit mook is quite simple and requires zero bookkeeping. Just change a creature's health to 1. Any damage that gets past the creature's armor kills it.

### 2-HIT MOOK

The 2-hit mook is good for two hits, hence the name. They are more colorful and don't evaporate as quickly as 1-hit mooks. Once they have taken any amount of damage twice, they are down. However, player characters who do a lot of damage to a lowly mook will expect to take them out with one shot, so there is a one-shot threshold added to the mook's stats. Any single shot that does this much damage after armor is taken into account destroys the creature.

For example: *2-hit mook (5/7/9)*

This mook takes two hits to kill, but 5 points of damage will take it down in one shot from a first-

or second-tier character. Third- or fourth-tier characters will need to inflict 7 points of damage, while fifth-tier and above will need 9 points of damage to one-shot it.

A simple bookkeeping trick is to list a group of faceless mooks by letters, say A through J. Put a slash through the letter when the mook takes its first hit. Do the reverse slash to make an X over the letter when the mook takes its last hit.

If you are playing *The Sun Below: City on the Edge* using miniatures, a penny, dragon's tear, or other marker placed by a 2-hit mook will let everyone know it's half dead.

## SPEEDING COMBAT

If a combat with 2-hit mooks (or even regular creatures) starts to drag, convert the creatures to 1-hit mooks. Mooks that have already taken their first hit can succumb to their wounds, flee, or surrender—whatever fits the story best.

## OPTIONAL NO-MOOK VARIANT

This adventure uses mooks, but you can opt not to use them. To do away with them, ignore a creature's mook status and just use the creature's level times three as the health of the creature. Divide the number of mooks in half since they will take longer to kill.



### Why Mooks?

*The concept of a mook is a creature who is both easy to defeat, yet still dangerous. Level 2 creatures are easy to defeat, but far from dangerous.*

*The swarm rules add some danger to low level creatures.*

*These mook rules add more danger, and reduce the bookkeeping. Less bookkeeping means more time for the GM to worry about story instead of mechanics.*

*Don't be afraid to throw large numbers of mooks at the players. And don't be surprised when they get mowed down.*





# THE ADVENTURE

*The characters follow the leads to the Face in the Wall and find the Iron Wind isn't the strangest thing they will discover in this story, for beneath their feet is another world.*

## THE FACE

The Iron Wind has left a giant face in a cliff wall, where it spouts arcane prophecies.

## WEDDING TALK

**Leads in:** Getting the PCs Involved, page 2

**Leads out:** Warning, page 5

No matter how the characters initially get involved, on the way to the face they hear talk of a wedding. Gre Thara and Nok Ellel, two Aeon Priests, will marry in a month's time in or near the location of your next adventure.

It is obvious to the PCs this will be a massive wedding, and would be a great place to network and find leads to further adventures.

Gre Thara is the daughter of Mishka Thara and Ellus Pring (see below).

## WARNING

**Leads in:** Wedding Talk, page 5

**Leads out:** The Order of Truth, page 5

As the road out of the valley twists and turns on its way out of the Black Riage, it is blocked by a mob of gawkers. Two food vendors have set up carts, one selling Dossi kebabs, the other fermented Aneen milk, a light alcoholic drink that tastes like yogurt. Just beyond, is a 10-foot (3 m) tall floating skull, translucent and wavering.

A telepathic message reaches anyone approaching: *"In the name of the Praithian Empire, go back. This area is forbidden to all."*

## IS IT SAFE?

An elderly couple stand arm in arm and stare up at the skull. The two, Twyr and Holai Tan, own a mill turned by the water of the pipes of Uxphon. Holai, the woman, grabs the arm of one of the characters.

*"Is it safe? Those young people have gone ahead. Can we?"*

They will not pass the skull unless the characters reassure them it is safe. If they choose to move on, a messy death awaits them.

If the characters warn them to stay back, yet go ahead themselves, the couple will spread tales of the wisdom and bravery of the characters. You can use the Tans or someone connected to them—

perhaps a grateful son or daughter—to provide help or clues for future adventures.

Streaming past the hovering skull projection are the more persistent people from the City of Pipes. Whether they are braver or more foolhardy, it's hard to tell. Ahead is a cart with the banners of the Order of Truth and a few people. Slaves in shackles are shoveling up pavement that has been turned to white wriggling worms. A strange voice is heard just around the bend, but the words can't yet be made out.

## WHAT THE IRON WIND HAS WROUGHT

All around lie the sad and bizarre results of the visit of the Iron Wind. The road turned to worms; a tree turned to meat, rancid and disgusting; a saskii covered in eyes; and so on. The white worms are edible and taste like paste should a character chow down on them. This is an opportunity for you to make up anything weird that might interest the characters.

## THE ORDER OF TRUTH

**Leads in:** Warning, page 5

**Leads out:** Travonis UI, page 6

*A small cart draped with the symbol of the Order of Truth stands further along, just past the next bend of the valley. The cart is hitched to a zill, a lumbering, red, six-legged reptilian creature used as a beast of burden in these parts. People who make it as far as the cart point around the bend (out of sight of the party) and yell, "The Face! The Face in the wall!"*

## THE CART

Mishka, an Aeon Priest, is there studying the face with a collection of numenera. With her are her two grandchildren, Tuctin and Tar, a boy and girl, and Nillorv the Scribe.

*When the PCs hear of the upcoming wedding, if they have a friend in the Order of Truth from earlier adventures, have Nok Ellel be a son of that friend.*

**Zill:** level 4; 1 point of Armor; 20 health

*The Aeon Priests use the same word for male and female priests, so Mishka, a woman, is a priest, not a priestess. However, if you feel like calling her a priestess, go right ahead.*





**Mishka:** level 4, level 6 for numenera

**Scribes:** level 2, level 4 for scribing

**Tuctin and Tar:** level 1, level 3 for mischief

**Ellus:** level 4, level 6 for numenera; recorder tripod (artifact that acts as a recorder headband, but is more bulky and takes two actions to set up), Aeon Priest robes, 32 shins, infiltrator cypher.

*Slave Connection, page 2*

Mishka welcomes the characters and introduces the scribe and her grandchildren, aged seven and nine, respectively.

*"You look like you've seen your share of the Ninth World, but take a look at that face."*

Mishka points up at the 60-foot (18m) tall face of violet flesh, or more accurately, at the man with the synth tripod directly in front of the face. Two other men are with him. All are gawking at the face as it speaks.

Mishka looks at the PCs. *"That's Ellus, the old fool, my husband and fellow priest, with two of our scribes. I wonder if you could see if he needs any assistance while I record the words of the face. You see the cracks in the violet flesh? They weren't here when we arrived an hour ago. I don't think it's going to last much longer."*

Near Ellus, a seemingly drunk young couple flirts and laughs. The young man flexes his muscle at the face, and the woman falls down laughing.

## MEET THE FACE

*The face is droning on, mostly in unknown languages. Every once in a while it repeats itself, speaking the Truth: "The Sun Below," "Floating heads tell tales," "The world below," and "The portal station needs repair." "The daughter sees. The father cannot. The mother might."*

## TRAVONIS UL

**Leads in:** The Order of Truth, page 5

**Leads out:** Station Behind the Wall, page 8

Walking toward Ellus, the characters pass a chain gang working on the road.

Before the characters can reach the priest, the flesh starts ripping off the cliff face with a sickening wet sound. Ellus takes a step back as 1/1/2 (first- and second-tier groups/second- and third-tier/fifth- and sixth-tier) travonis uls crash out of the decaying mouth of the face. One lifts the old man up to its mouth and bites him in half. At the same time it grabs the two scribes and throws them at the nearest group of people, the chain gang, and the players.

The first scribe rag dolls into the chain gang, knocking five of the dozen slaves over. The foreman flees in terror. If you used the Slave Connection plot hook, Barid the slave looks on in horror.

The second scribe comes flying at the players. Each player must make a level-5 Speed defense roll or be hit for 5 points of damage.

Determine initiative as the creature reaches out with its tendrils for the characters. The characters start out at short range, about 40 feet (12m) from the mouth.







## COMBAT TIMELINE

### Surprise Round:

- Travonis ul bites Ellus in half, throws scribe at characters.
- Travonis ul in short range, about 40 feet (12m) from players at start.
- (Optional) Death of the Tans.

### Round One:

- Mishka gives healing sphere, assists character
- Yellow stains appear
- GM Intrusion: Travonis ul grabs and crushes a character. Travonis ul attacks, targets one character with its mouth, the rest with tendrils.
- If the players win initiative, they may strike at the onrushing tendrils without having to take a move action.

### Round Two:

- Yellow tubes inflate and take screaming children
- Mishka loans stunner and assists character if needed.
- Travonis ul attacks, targets one character with its mouth, the rest with tendrils.

### Round Three+:

- Mishka helps a character if needed.
- Travonis ul attacks, targets one character with its mouth, the rest with tendrils.

## DEATH OF THE TANS

If the characters assured the old couple waiting at the skull projection that it was safe for them go ahead, a tendril whips across Twyr's and Holai's faces, breaking their necks and killing them instantly. Local people will remember the bad advice and react accordingly.

In the first round, when the travonis ul gets to attack, pick one character for a GM Intrusion. Good candidates include a character who was missed by a tentacle or bite attack, a character with the escape skill so they can show off, or the character who has the healing sphere. Have the travonis ul grab the target and start crushing.

## HELP IF HELP IS NEEDED

The travonis ul is a fearsome opponent. You can use Mishka as a throttle for this combat. If the characters don't need help, she collapses with

grief over the death of her husband or gets stunned by a tendril slap. If help is needed, she remains steadfast.

When Mishka helps, she comes to the aid of one of the characters who is attempting to fight the creature at short or long range. She can help in one of three ways (player character's choice). She can heal the character for 1d6 points; or she can assist, which reduces the difficulty of whatever action is being assisted by one step; or she can grant +3 to the character's damage.

## TAKE MY HEALING SPHERE

Even after just witnessing her husband being bitten in half, somehow Mishka has the presence of mind to slap a purple healing sphere in the hands of a nearby character. "Use my healing sphere! Squeeze this ball to heal yourself."

## ARTIFACT: HEALING SPHERE

**Level:** 1d6

**Form:** A healing sphere is a flexible 1-inch (2.5 cm) diameter sphere of violet synth.

**Effect:** The ball heals the same way a healing sword does: restoring 1d6 to any stat Pool the wielder wishes without requiring an action.

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d10

Mishka can also loan out a stunner to someone, probably a nano, working at the outer limits of the travonis ul's range: "Take this, aim the pointy end, squeeze the yellow bit!"

Note that this stunner has a depletion: 1-3 in 1d6.

If Mishka doesn't have to move far, she gives her items away as a free action and can still help in other ways. She can move short distances between characters and still help in the same round.

## BE MY HERO!

The drunken couple are no longer a couple, as the travonis ul crushes the young man. The woman (actually a Nibovian Wife named Klaro) quickly scans the characters for a replacement. She picks a male character, if there is one, and says, "Save me. Be my hero!"

She uses a cypher to shoot a beam of pink light at the character, granting him 6 Speed points. The extra Speed points may exceed the character's normal maximum, but if not used in 28 hours, they go away.

If there are no male characters nearby, Klaro will flee the scene, desperate to find a man to replace the one the travonis ul just killed.

### Modifying the travonis ul:

For first-tier characters, the travonis ul suffers from stasis sickness and only has 15 health. If the characters are fifth- or sixth-tier, there are two full-strength travonis uls to contend with.

**Travonis ul:** level 5/6/6, Speed defense 4/5/5; 3 points of Armor; (15)30/36/36 health; Can attack up to 10 foes at short range with tendrils for 6 points, one attack with bite as level 5 for 7/8/8 points; anyone struck must make a Might defense roll or become stunned for 1 round; Core page 263.

**GM Intrusion:** The travonis ul's target is overwhelmed by the flurry of tendrils and becomes lost in the crushing mass of the creature's body. The victim automatically suffers 9/10/10 points of damage each round unless they can break free (a Might task).



Stunner, page 312  
Mishka's stunner has depletion: 1-3 in 1d6



Nibovian wife, page 249





## THE GRANDCHILDREN ARE TAKEN

Two lines of yellow stain reach from the portal entrance to the children. In the next round they puff up into throbbing yellow tubes and suck the children into the station while the characters fight the travonis ul.

If a character leaps to the rescue of the children, the difficulty level of a rescue is high: 8/9/10.

### GM INTRUSION: THE KIDNAPPING

Even if the rescue attempt is a success, the adventure plays better when the children are taken away. They become a driver to continue the adventure. Therefore, use a GM Intrusion to let them be taken.

Should a character pay 1 xp to avoid your GM Intrusion, offer a second GM Intrusion to have the rescue save only one of the children. Change the descriptions in Urbamorr accordingly. Let the character choose which child was saved, Tuctin, the 7-year-old boy, or Tar, the 9-year-old girl.

If a character spends a second xp to refuse the second GM Intrusion, both children are rescued. Perhaps you can have Mishka offer rewards for exploring “whatever is behind this wall of flesh and wherever it leads to.”

See Mishka’s Gifts, page 13 for items she might use as incentive if the children are rescued—perhaps loaners for searching behind the face, and gifts if the group enters the world of The Sun Below and reports back to the Order of Truth. Drop all mention of the children in Urbamorr.

#### JOURNAL OF CHARISH KOS

*There used to be many passages from the surface world to that of The Sun Below. The Order of Truth uses the portal below Hidden Naresh, to our great cost. I don’t know if I can bring myself to return to that accursed city. The quest for an easier entrance to the world beneath our world is one I have dedicated my life to. Thus far, to no avail.*

— Charish Kos, Aeon Priest

## PORTAL TO THE SUN BELOW

### STATION BEHIND THE WALL

**Leads in:** Travonis Ul, page 6

**Leads out:** Drop Shaft, page 13

Once, this station connected the world of The Sun Below with the surface world. Now, after eons buried in the rock, the station lies exposed. Metal and synth walls, long-dormant machines, a few flickering lights await the characters within.

All doors are shut with level 4/5/6 numenera locks. The doors slammed shut once the children passed and the yellow synth tubes deflated. If the locks are pulled apart, characters can find 1d3-1 cyphers inside their mechanisms.

### LOCATION 1: TRAVONIS UL STASIS CHAMBER

The chamber on the left is a large hexagonal room with a glowing blue hexagon on the floor. This is where the travonis ul was held in stasis until the wall of flesh started to collapse, at which point it was released and herded outside by sonic walls.

An image of the travonis ul floats above a display. A successful level-2 numenera check will reveal that while this chamber is unimaginably old, it was repurposed as a stasis chamber only a thousand years ago.

Opening up the lit control panels nets 1d6 cyphers and 1 oddity.

### LOCATION 2: FAILED TRAVONIS UL STASIS CHAMBER

If the characters are Fifth- or Sixth-Tier, this chamber looks identical to location 1, and they fought both travonis uls before they entered the portal station. Otherwise, read on...

The chamber on the right is a large hexagonal room with a dust-covered floor. A mummified travonis ul offers no threat.

Digging around the dead control panels lets the characters find 1d2 cyphers. A successful level-2 numenera check will reveal that while this chamber is unimaginably old, it was repurposed as a stasis chamber a thousand years ago, and failed centuries ago.





## LOCATION 3: WAITING ROOM

You follow the deflated yellow tubes into a massive circular chamber, easily 200 feet (60m) across. A domed ceiling rises 50 feet (15m) above the floor in the center of the room. Ten feet (3m) above the floor, a synthsteel balcony encircles the chamber. Halfway across the chamber, two spiral staircases lead up to doors on the balcony level.

The deflated yellow tubes split here, each going up a different staircase and into a different door. But these details are almost forgotten when you see, rising above you, a 25-foot (8m) tall creature. Its lower half is a mass of green slime out of which erupt dozens of tentacles with sharp black pincers on the ends. A thick stalk thrusts out the top of the mass, ending in a black flower with two eyes and a toothless mouth.

In ages past, passengers going to or from The Sun Below waited here. Now Mor-Klish the slithik is the lone guard for his praithian masters. He will first try to frighten the characters away using a giant projection of himself. Mor-Klish would rather not die, and his control crystal will harm and perhaps even kill him if he does not stop the characters from entering the world of The Sun Below.

The characters feel sharp pain piercing the backs of their necks as a telepathic message is delivered.

*"Leave this portal immediately. You are trespassing on the Praithian Empire. We took two of your young already, and need no further samples. Perhaps in the future we will require fresh subjects but, for now, be glad you have been spared the suffering a sample must endure."*

The giant monstrosity picks up a person-sized six-legged, hairy mammal with long, floppy ears. From the creature's mouth, a clear tube with black slime flashes out and impales the hapless creature. Through the tube, the huge predator sucks the blood out of the still-squirming furball.

The giant creature is really a projection of Mor-Klish, but the characters may not know that yet. It, and the spiral staircases, are at long range from where the characters enter the chamber.

Both doors are shut with level 4/5/6 numenera locks.

The idea is to make it difficult for the characters to empathize with Mor-Klish. Will they be OK with traveling with a blood-drinking nightmare? If they do, whenever the characters rest, Mor-Klish will be looking for blood. He has a satchel full of little creatures, or "kloons" which look like six-legged rabbits. He'll take that satchel with him if he joins the characters on the adventure.

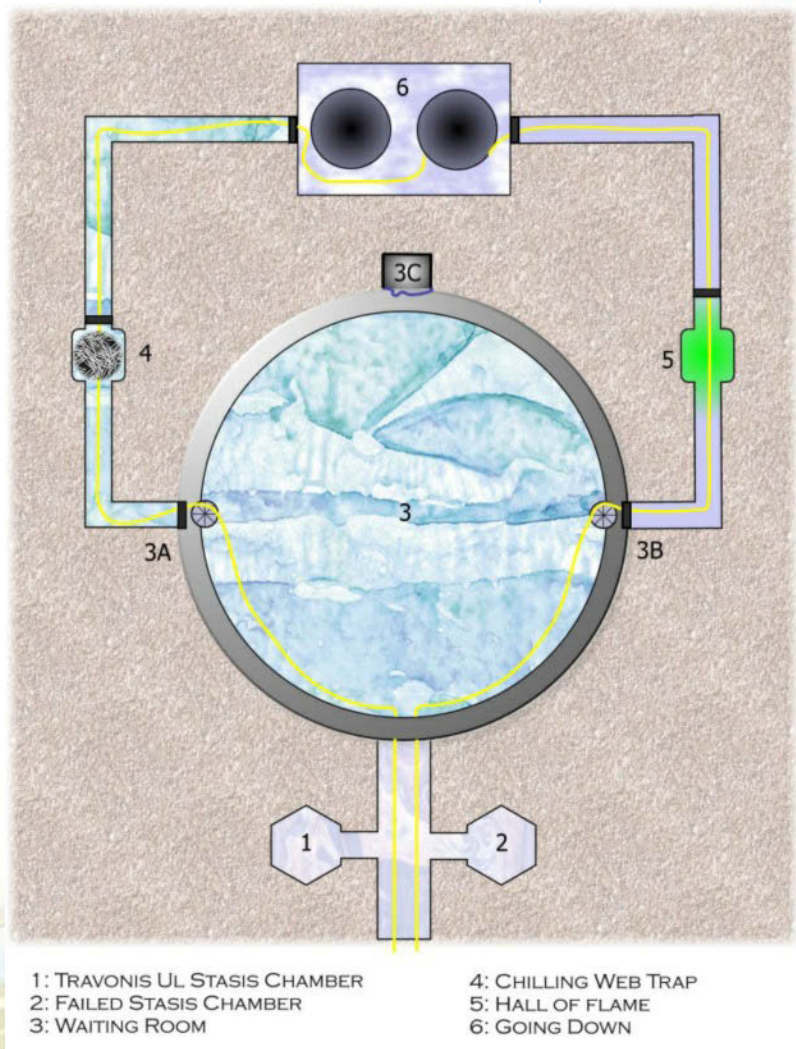
On the other hand, if the characters find out Mor-Klish is a slave, they might be sympathetic to his plight.

If the characters argue or try to run past the projection, Mor-Klish will threaten, but he's really not prepared for any combat. This post has been manned for millennia, but until the Iron Wind opened up the portal station, duty here consisted of doing nothing. This station is a cushy posting, and Mor-Klish maneuvered for years to get it. He will try again to dissuade the party. "Fools! An army of slithik approaches!"

A new projection of perfectly synchronized slithik marches in from the mists behind the

**Kloon level 1, level 3 for cuteness**

**The Mor-Klish hiss:** You may want to hiss while roleplaying Mor-Klish or any other slithik. Slithiks just love to hiss.





chamber. A successful difficulty 4 task will detect that the sound and movement are a little out of synch.

If the illusion fails to frighten the characters away, a level-5 detonation (psy) goes off in the chamber.

## CYPHER: DETONATION (PSY)

**Level:** 1d6+2

**Wearable:** Wristband projector (long range)

**Usable:** Explosive device (thrown, short range) or handheld projector (long range)

**Effect:** Bursts in an immediate radius, inflicting Intellect damage equal to the cypher level. A target can attempt to avoid damage by dodging (Speed) or resisting (Intellect).

After that, Mor-Klish will use two beam emitters along the balcony, just beyond the spiral staircases, for two level-5 attacks that do 4 damage. Breaking the beam emitters is difficulty 3, and using a heavy weapon counts as an asset.

## LOCATION 3C: PAY NO ATTENTION TO THAT BLOOD-SUCKING PLANT/MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Mor-Klish stands behind a dull gray metallic curtain, in an alcove on the balcony above the waiting room. At some point, someone notices the curtain wave in the breeze. If the characters have any pets, such as a seskii, the pet will run up there and pull back the curtain, exposing Mor-Klish.

If the characters have no pets, one of the characters will note the curtain swaying in a small breeze.

*Either way, Mor-Klish says: "Pay no attention to that slithik behind the curtain!"*

If Mor-Klish is exposed, he will first try to pull the curtain closed, but this is ineffectual, to say the least. If confronted, he will point a pincer at his red control crystal, and state, "I am not permitted to let you pass." Or "I do not have the freedom to surrender."

Mor-Klish has been trying to free himself from the control crystal for years now, and will stay within the letter of his commands but do everything in his power to make it obvious that the crystal is responsible for his behavior. He will not ask for help explicitly; he can't.

Any combat hit on the crystal will destroy it, and any reasonable attempt to remove it will be a difficulty-5 numenera task. Removing it will allow it to be hacked later. Good ideas are assets.



## ARTIFACT: PRAITHIAN MIND-CONTROL CRYSTAL

**Level:** 1d6+2

**Form:** A ruby-red crystal in the shape of a star pyramid embedded in the neck of a mind-controlled subject. Nanites grow into the skin and connect with nerves in the spinal cord.







**Special:** The crystal can be hacked with a numenera roll, with the difficulty equal to the level of the crystal. Hacking gives the wearer free will. A hacked crystal acts as a disguise, making it look like the wearer is still a slave. A hacked crystal will still give immunity to the praithian psychic whirlwind attack.

A crystal can be broken open and harvested for 1d3 – 1 cyphers and 1d3 shins.

**Effect:** Forces the subject to obey praithian commands. Gives immunity to the praithian psychic whirlwind attack.

**Depletion:** --

## MOR-KLISH

Mor-Klish, a slithik savant, is a mound of green and black slime. Eight black tentacles sprout out of the slime, two ending in bright blue metallic pincers. Erupting from the top of the slime is a black stalk, ending in a big black flower-shaped face with two black and gold eyes and a toothless slit for a mouth. When feeding, clear tubes dripping with mucous slithers out of his mouth to drink blood.

Mor-Klish is mind-controlled by a red star pyramid made of crystal that grows out of the back of his neck. He wants to get free of his control crystal, but he can't act directly upon his wishes. He attempts to give clues in the hope that the characters will somehow destroy the crystal.

Mor-Klish speaks the Truth, but is not able to be direct: *"I'm not able to surrender."* Or *"I would like to help you but I am unable to."* He keeps turning the back of his neck to the characters, and has no idea they don't recognize the device.

If Mor-Klish becomes an ally and stays with the player characters, he attaches himself to one character and assists that person. No one has to roll dice for Mor-Klish, instead he is an asset when negotiating with the slithik rebels and adds an inability to negotiating with dh'lann. Otherwise he gives the character he is attached to the following benefits: the difficulty of whatever action is being assisted is reduced by one step. Or, if desired and in combat, +3 damage.

If the character Mor-Klish is attached to becomes impaired, Mor-Klish becomes visibly wounded and only gives a +1 on the die roll or a +1 on damage. If the character becomes debilitated, Mor-Klish falls over wounded, and can be of no further help until he is healed.

Mor-Klish's praithian mind-control crystal can be broken up for cyphers or modified to allow him to join the players in Urbamorr.

Mor-Klish is amazed anyone could have gotten past the beast he had released from the stasis chamber. He has no desire to die for the Praithians, whom he hates.

*"I wish I could surrender!"* Just as he says that, the red crystal embedded in his thickest neck stalk glows furiously and commences to burn his skin. *"It burns! Help me!"*

The stink of burning flesh mixed with ammonia fills the air as Mor-Klish's neck bubbles.

If the characters save him, he will act as an ally.

## LOCATION 4: CHILLING WEB TRAP

If Mor-Klish is an ally, he will warn the characters, *"Security protocols are being followed that will attempt to freeze you to death if you pass down that hallway."* He is aware of the trap and if he goes first he can deactivate it, as long as he wears or carries the red control crystal.

Dozens of sharp brown prisms in the ceiling glow yellow and a level-6 honey-colored web explodes to fill the room.

**GM Intrusion:** (Use only if Mor-Klish is not yet an ally.) A locked door (3A or 3B) is trapped and a level-6 explosive detonation goes off with a roar, delivering 6 points of ambient damage to all in immediate range.

**Mor-Klish:** level 4/5/6; 1/2/3 points of Armor; poisoned tentacle: 4/5/6 plus difficulty 4/5/6 Might test or lose 3/4/5 Intellect, or 2 attacks w/ brain fog ray (short) Intellect defense roll or lose 4/5/6 Intellect; Slithik savant, page 59



**Pyronic Sentry:** level 4/5/6; 3 points of Armor (100 vs. heat); 10 damage (5 slashing and 5 heat); cold attacks gain an asset and ignore armor; page 56

**GM Intrusion:** *The pyronic sentry teleports a character to just in front of the automaton. The sentry then attacks as level 7/8/9 with both bladed hands, doing double damage and dazing the target for one round if it hits. The target will also take 6 points of ambient heat damage per round.*

You teleport into the flames and feel the searing hot-bladed hands of the automaton spike deep into your body. Your flesh sizzles like meat on a spit.

PCs caught in the area must use a difficulty 6 Might-based action to get out. NPCs break free if their level is higher than the web level. PCs can free their NPC allies with a difficulty 6 Might-based action.

Once the trap is sprung, the brown prisms start to drop chill fog that steals the life out of anyone caught below. Each round the characters suffer 6 ambient-cold damage.

If characters get past the trap and the level 4/5/6 locked door beyond it, they can deactivate the trap with a level 5/6/7 numenera roll or just destroy the control panel which will shut it down, again as a level 5/6/7 roll. Mor-Klish can give advice that will reduce the numenera rolls by two steps.

## LOCATION 5: HALL OF FLAME

Mor-Klish can assist the characters exactly as he could in Location 4, but this time the characters face heat.

The room is full of green flames from floor to ceiling making the hall difficult terrain. Moving at normal speed requires two actions to get

through. The flames do 6 points of ambient damage per round.

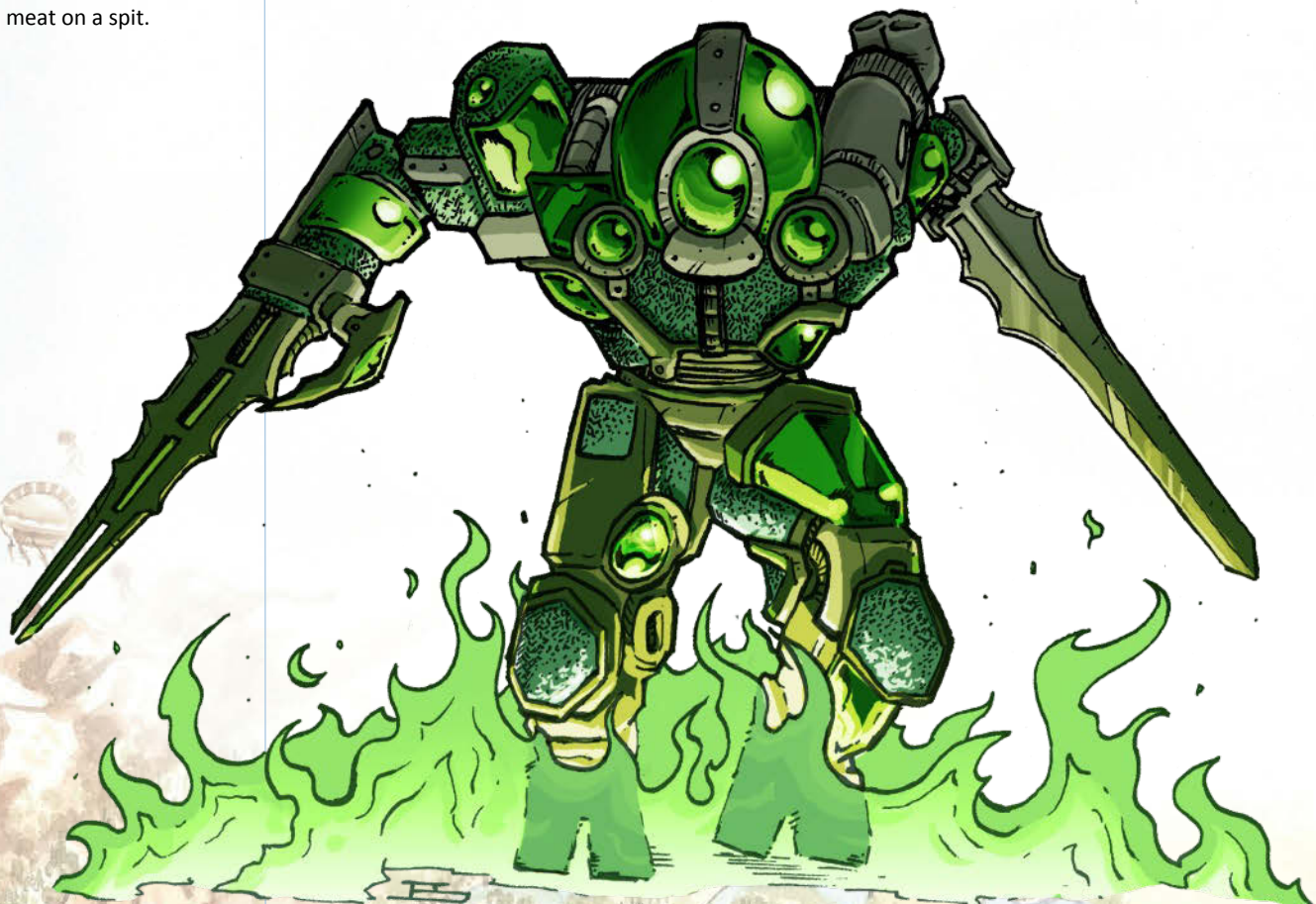
The flames wrap around the deflated yellow tube that captured one of the children, but staying on the tube lessens the ambient damage to 5 points per round.

Standing in the flames is a pyronic sentry who has orders to let only slaves pass. The pyronic sentry is a synthsteel- and glassteel-cladded automaton whose color changes to match the flames it finds itself in. It looks similar to a large, hulking armored man, but with long blades for hands.

The door to exit the room is secured with a level 5/6/7 numenera lock. It is programmed to open only to slaves. This door has a level 4/5/6 clear portal that can be broken to open the door from the other side, which is not locked.

## LOCATION 6: GOING DOWN

This vaulted ceramosteel chamber contains two massive circular shafts going straight down. They are for travel to and from the airship dock on the roof of the world of The Sun Below.







The shaft on the west has a reverse gravity field that slowly weakens to a slightly positive gravity field toward the top, where the PCs stand. (On the way back, characters can step into the shaft from below and fall up for kilometers, then step out into this chamber.)

The shaft on the east is the opposite; it has normal gravity until just before the very bottom, where it slows the descent of visitors from the world above and lets them walk off onto the airship platform.

Both flattened synth tubes terminate at the eastern shaft, their open, lightweight ends hanging just 5 feet (1.5 m) down into the shaft.

Before the players decide to jump in, they hear footsteps following their path to this chamber. Mishka and Nillorv, her scribe assistant, enter carrying artifacts that may help the characters find and return the missing children. Just behind them is Klaro (the nibovian wife) who breathlessly rushes up to "her hero."

## CUSTOMIZING TO YOUR PLAYER CHARACTERS

Mishka allows each member to pick one item. If you want to go faster, you could pre-select an item for each character and just hand them out when Mishka runs up. Some players really like choices, others like them too much and can never make up their minds.

Another option is to watch the clock, and after 10 minutes or so, let Mishka decide.

## MISHKA'S GIFTS

**Metabolism bud** Quirk: When the character rolls a 1 on a Speed test, she sneezes out loud, in addition to your GM Intrusion.

**Bounding boots** Quirk: Feet feel cold after a jump.

**Brain bud** Quirk: When the character rolls a 1 on an Intellect test, she calls out random numbers, in addition to your GM Intrusion.

**Cypher bag** Quirk: Outgasses a cold fog when a cypher is removed from the bag.

**Skill bud** Any of the skills on page 25 of the Core Book, including specific esoterics. Mishka just happens to have the skill the character wants. Quirks are varied based on the skill chosen. Examples: (Repair) The character's eyes glow soft red when he repairs himself. (Healing) The character has to make a difficulty 3 Intellect roll to not whistle while he heals.

**Disruption blade** This may be any bladed weapon, such as an axe. Mishka just happens to have the character's favorite type of bladed weapon. Quirk: If the blade hits while activated, it whistles a jaunty tune.

**Healing sphere** The one Mishka loaned to the character at the start of the battle with the

Travonis Ul. "Keep it if you wish." Quirk: Emits a high-pitched chime for every point healed.

If you have another artifact you'd like to put on offer, go for it. Try to match the power of these artifacts. In other words, make them good, but not game changing.

If a player character still has the stunner, Mishka asks for it back. If they argue to keep it, she'll agree but warn them it's very old and running low on power. Remember this stunner depletes on a 1-3 on 1d6.

## KLARO WANTS TO COME

*The nibovian wife clings to whichever character attracted her attention outside the face and implores, "Please, I wish to go with you, as your companion. I can make you very... comfortable."*

## LOCATION 7+

If you want to add more locations to this ancient station, there are a lot of options. Add doors, corridors, new levels, whatever strikes your fancy. Anything could be behind locked doors that Mor-Klish never opened...

## DROP SHAFT

**Leads in:** Station Behind the Wall, page 8

**Leads out:** Top of the World, page 14

Eventually, the characters will jump into the down shaft. If the characters balk, Mishka will prompt them to jump down, mentioning the urgency to save Tuctin and Tar.

As the characters free fall in the dark shaft, allow them an Intellect (perception) test if they have some way of seeing in the dark. Below them is something that looks like a cross between a wagon-sized, bio-mechanical jellyfish with eyes and a hot-air balloon.

A big eye on the top of the creature, a zoach floater, blinks at them, and tendrils reach around and up at the onrushing characters. A zoach floater has a bio-mechanical body as big as a house, full of gas bags and numenera. Its tendrils drape down 50 feet (15m) or more and grab vegetation, animals, and people.

A difficulty 4/5/6 Speed test allows a character to avoid the creature and fall on by it. The floater will have one round to



*Discovery of the portal to The Sun Below is worth 1 xp per character.*

*The gifts from Mishka are worth another 1 xp per character.*



*Bounding boots, page 302  
Brain bud, page 302  
Cypher bag, page 303  
Skill bud, page 311  
Disruption blade, page 303*

*Healing sphere, page 7*

**Zoach Floater:** level 5/6/7, level 4/5/6 for Speed defense; tendrils squeeze for 5/6/7 plus Might defense roll or lose 4/5/6 Speed; Can reach targets up to short range. Slashing weapons +2 damage, blunt weapons -1 damage. Any natural 17+ hit with a heat- or fire-based attack will cause it to explode for its level in fire damage to all within immediate range. Page 50

**GM Intrusion:** The floater grabs a character and stuffs them into its digestive sack. Each round any organic armor loses 1 AP and the character takes 5/6/7 points of ambient damage. Characters inside the sack when the floater explodes take double damage.







grab at the speeding characters before they fall out of reach.

A miss indicates the character plows into the creature, doing 2/3/4 points of ambient damage to themselves and the floater. The character must make a difficulty 5/6/7 Might defense check or be stunned for one round.

## TOP OF THE WORLD

**Leads in:** Drop Shaft, page 13

**Leads out:** An Domorr, page 14

At the bottom of the shaft is a dimly lit chamber with a ceramosteel ramp leading down to an airship dock. Four- and five-story buildings lie in ruin along the dock. Searching the ruins for an hour yields 1d2 cyphers.

Waiting at the end of the dock is a large biomechanical airship with a massive eye blinking at the characters. It's night now in the lands of The Sun Below, but the living airship is illuminated by clusters of bright lights on the dock.

A gangplank leads to an opening in the airship, beside which sits a big, gray-haired man wearing some kind of uniform with epaulets and braid. The man is blue and sports long, mutton-chop whiskers. He is sitting on a stool, smoking a pipe and reading a book.

## THE DESCENT

Wherein the characters ride the *An Domorr* down from the ceiling of the underground world to a massive shelf near it's floor.

### *AN DOMORR*

**Leads in:** Top of the World, page 14

**Leads out:** Going Down, page 16

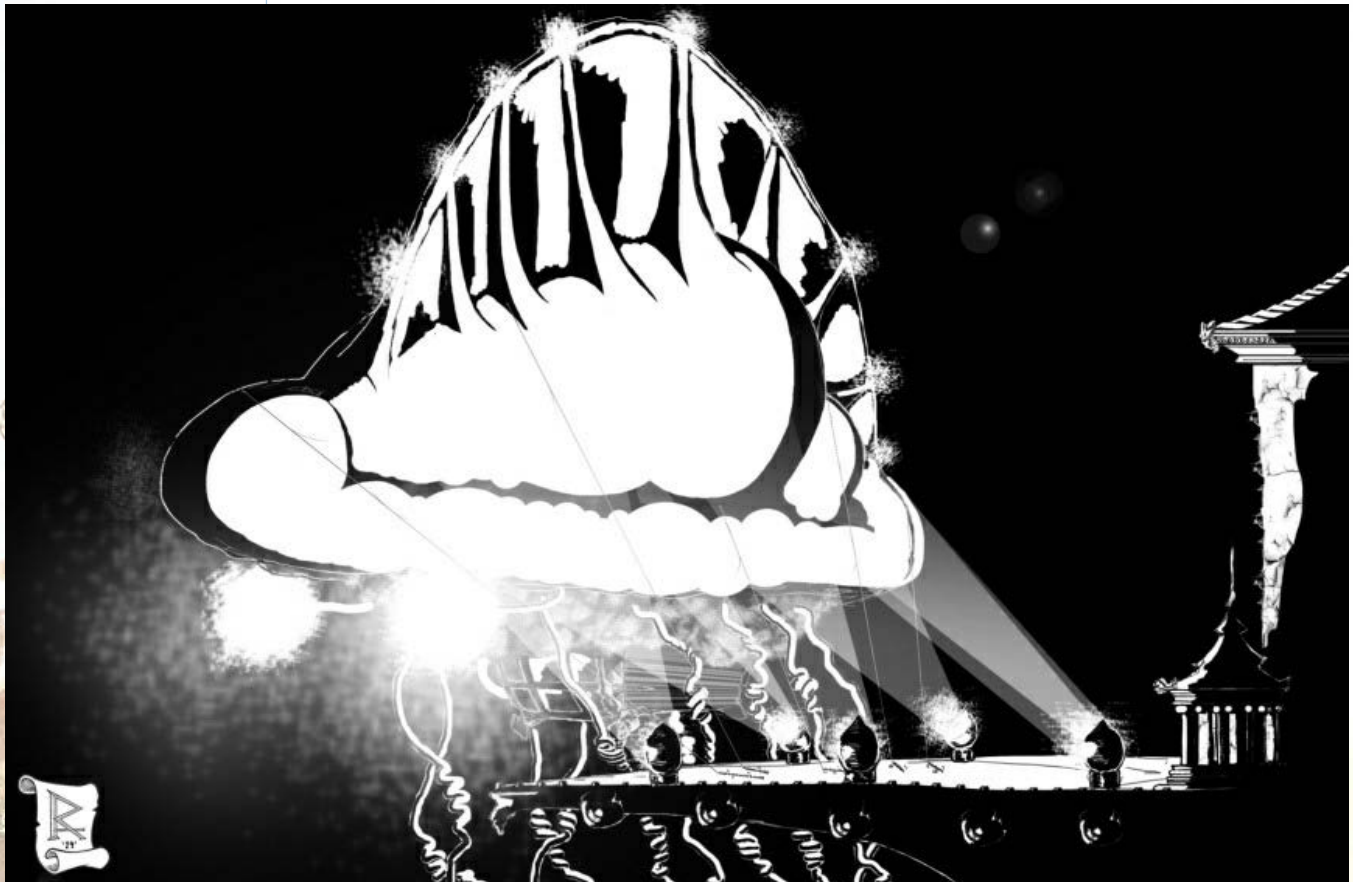
JOURNAL OF CHARISH KOS

*The An Domorr is unlike The other living airships that fly under the Sun Below. The crew is most peculiar, but friendly, at least to me. I suspect not only are they not from this reality, but that they exist mostly outside of it. Perhaps Captain Klorsh and Lebby are just projections into our universe. What their motives are, I have no idea. And yet, I wish them well.*

— Charish Kos, Aeon Priest

## CAPTAIN KLORSH AND LEBBY

Mutton-chopped Captain Klorsh and pigtailed Lebby are not what they seem to be. Other airships are crewed by people of one kind or another, but Klorsh and Lebby are entities





beyond understanding. Aboard the *An Domorr*, their powers have no meaningful bounds. It's a mystery why their powers don't seem to work outside the airship (except when they do), or why they take such delight in masquerading as people.

Captain Klorsh is usually smoking his pipe. *"'Tis carved from a fine travonis ul tusk, don't you know?"*

They do not answer questions about themselves in a straightforward manner. Klorsh always has a twinkle in his eye and treats any questions as a game. He raises his eyebrows, puffs his pipe, claps his hands, and changes the subject after the vaguest of replies.

Lebby will rock back and forth and gush at how amazing everything is. "I'm only 11" is one of her stock answers. (In a playtest, one player responded, "Yeah, 11 galactic rotations...") She is thrilled to show off the River of Stars, but she can't be bothered to explain how anything works. Perhaps she knows that the characters' minds are too small and fragile to hold the truth.

When the characters ask for the airship to go faster, change course, or for help outside the airship, they are told, "Sorry, we have to stick to the pattern." That's the stock answer for anything the players want that you would like to withhold. It's up to the characters to save the day, not the NPCs.

The airship will pass first a violet moon and then the actual Sun Below on the way down, a 20-hour descent. Unlike the sun in the world above, this sun is white.

## KLARO, NIBOVIAN WIFE

This woman wants to make babies! Three hours after sexual congress with her hero, Klaro will give birth to a baby abykos. Three hours after that, the creature will be full grown and go after the hero.

*"Daddy must die!"*

Unless the characters have done something to really annoy Captain Klorsh or Lebby, one of them will wag a finger at the abykos, who will then be well behaved and not try to kill its father—unless the creature leaves the *An Domorr*. Then, the creature will revert to its usual cheerful self.

The Captain's Table is a great setting for the blessed event.

## LEBBY

"I'm 11." Lebby appears as a young human girl, freckled, tanned face, dark red hair in pigtails. She's actually an ancient intelligence with godlike powers, but only aboard the *An Domorr*. She is the mind of the *An Domorr*.

She's interested in the new guests. She has heard of the children, but says they left on a different ship, the *An Forgish*. She likes to play house and will peer into the character's minds and make dishes they loved as children. Everything she does seems to use primitive technologies (fire, hauling water by pail, and so on), but if her work is examined closely, it has a dream-like quality, things moving and changing form when no one is looking.

## RIVER OF STARS

If Lebby is questioned about the ship, her powers, the captain, or pretty much anything, she'll eventually mention the River of Stars. She can show inquiring characters the river, or if they are following her around, she'll lead them there. She often has to go down to the river with a bucket and take it back to the engine room.

Captain Klorsh is a little less forthcoming, but with a puff of his pipe and a twinkle in his eye, he'll say, *"Why not ask Lebby? She likes to show off a bit, quite natural for a girl of her age."*

Across a catwalk between gas bags, down a ladder and through a hatch, is where the characters find the River of Stars.

The chamber seems too big to fit in this part of the airship. It's dimly lit and smells like a mountain stream. A river flows in a figure 8, always going downhill, which is quite a trick. And in the river there are stars, pinwheels made of stars, and glowing gases.

By a bend in the river hangs a swing. Lebby jumps onto the swing and starts pumping her legs. *"I do love it here. Anything can happen. That's what makes the ship go."*

Lebby will talk happily, without saying much. If Klaro has had a chance to get knocked up, Lebby will hint about Klaro's pregnant state. *"The Captain said that woman is a born breeder. What do you think he means by that?"*

If anyone touches or drinks from the river, they have visions of Tuctin and Tar. The children are together in a large dark room with huge stone heads floating by in the darkness. The children sit on a softly glowing white dais.

Tuctin, the boy, says, *"Don't worry, Gran will send help."*

*"I am worried. The big heads are scary,"* says Tar, the girl. *"Except the 'tessa. She's nice."*

Characters who stay away from the river see their friends relax and fall asleep.

## CAPTAINS TABLE

Captain Klorsh invites the characters to dinner at his table. Lebby attends as well. There, served by the cook, a floating silver ball with multiple arms, everyone is treated to a sumptuous meal. Braised



Abykos, page 230

**Lebby** can bind a creature to her will with no chance of failure. She has a small pocket knife that does as many points of damage as she wants and ignores all armor, but only when wielded by Lebby.





moof roots, plinkgala puree, feebling jelly on toast ("So fresh, it's still moving!"), and cragworm kabobs are what the Captain is digging into, but the cook can make just about any kind of meal the characters ask for.

If Mor-Klish is there, he gets a bowl of chilled bubble-blood, which, true to its name, bubbles like red champagne.

If Klaro is there, this is a great time for her to give birth (if she's had sex with a male character). She tucks in with a vengeance, and visibly swells. Before desert comes she leans back and births the abykos. After nursing a bit, it turns on the father until Lebby wags a finger.

"Kids," she says, as if that explains anything.

## GOING DOWN

**Leads in:** An Domorr, page 14

**Leads out:** Landing, page 16

*As the bio-mechanical ship, the An Domorr, descends, you can see a giant, rounded shelf sticking out of the wall of the lands under The Sun Below.*

*"That's the Praithian Empire," says Captain Klorsh, pulling on his left mutton-chop. "Or what's left of it anyway. Praithians used to rule many of the lands of The Sun Below, from wall-to-wall and for thousands of miles along the length of the world.*

*"We are in a big tube. Well, more of a rounded rectangle in cross section. The atmosphere is denser than up in your world above, which accounts for a lot of the floaters and flyers.*

*"When you're ready to go back up to your world, just bang the gong in the landing zone. An airship should be by within a few days, weeks at the most. If you are within our pattern at the time, we'll be happy to take you back up."*

Klaro, assuming she's both alive and free to act, wraps her arms around "her hero" and whispers in his ear. "Mmmmm, I do so love seeing new places, don't you?"

## URBAMORR: THE CITY ON THE EDGE

The praithian city of Urbamorr is where Tuctin and Tar were taken, and getting them back will prove challenging to the characters.

Urbamorr is something of a sandbox. Scenes have natural entrances and exits, marked *Leads In* and *Leads Out*, but be prepared to jump anywhere in response to the actions of your player characters. You should be prepared to let the PCs investigate as they see fit, as long as everyone is having fun.

If it's time to get things moving again, you can spring the Treachery event on the PCs anytime you wish.

## LANDING

**Leads in:** Going Down, page 16

**Leads out:** The Queen's Head Inn, page 18; King's Move, page 25

Urbamorr has obviously seen better days. The buildings are impressive, with wide skyways and tall towers, but some have collapsed and others seem to be determined to do so.

Looking out a window, characters can spy a group of androgynous people carrying long tubes with horns on the end, something like a cross between a didgeridoo and an alpine horn, lining up in formation. The musicians come in varying shades of purple and wear matching uniforms.

A successful difficulty 3 perception roll reveals a red crystal in the shape of a star pyramid growing out of the back of each musician's neck. It is the same type of crystal that Mor-Klish had on the back of his neck stalk.

Floating next to the band are three 13-foot (4m) tall stone heads. The heads are longer and narrower than human heads, and each sports a glowing third eye in the middle of the forehead and a long, narrow chin. As the gangway is

### KLARO

After giving birth to the abykos, Klaro is probably not the most popular NPC aboard the *An Domorr*. But she's plucky and cheerful and will want to "stand by her man." Of course, without Lebby to control Klaro's children, any future offspring will come hunting for said man.

"Let's go meet the stone heads," she says. It's up to the characters to keep her on the ship. If they don't, she'll tag along and try to make more babies.

And what of the child? The abykos is enraptured by the River of Stars, and will stay aboard unless forced off. Since the abykos presents no threat to the crew, Lebby is happy to let it stay aboard, keeping it from attacking other passengers.

Perhaps the creature will lose itself in the River of Stars. Or maybe it will leave the airship one day, and come looking for its father. Family life can be complicated.

Ordinary praithian, page 51

Royal praithian, page 52





lowered to the ground, the hovering head in the center drifts closer.

As the characters descend the gangplank, they hear a voice in their heads. It's the giant stone head speaking to them telepathically. It is a royal praithian. (The other floating heads are ordinary praithians.)

*"Welcome to Urbamorr and the Praithian Empire. I am Contessa Kyyndance, and these are Blauble and Tunyafa. What brings you to our fair city?"*

In truth, Contessa Kyyndance has been following the characters' progress since they fought the travonis ul. Her goal is to keep the characters mollified and send them back to what she calls "the world above" as happy as possible. Ideally, she would love to arrange for trade, since the machinery that runs the Praithian Empire is giving out, and the slaves that support the empire are near revolt.

What complicates the contessa's plans is the madness of King Umbral. He's in no mood to surrender his new curiosities, the two children of the world above.

Yet while a diplomatic solution is improbable, it could be carried off if the characters are master diplomats and come up with success after success. Let the characters try diplomacy. Initially,

it will be rebuffed, and they will be insulted or worse. But if they refuse to give up, it could work.

When the characters ask for the children, the contessa reassures them that the children are being well treated and are healthy. She confides that she is confident that negotiations to free the children should not be a problem.

*"While we're waiting for King Umbral, who needs to give the final approval for the release of the children, I have arranged lodging for you in the Queen's Head Inn. Although the outside is not much to look at, I can assure you the accommodations are first rate."*



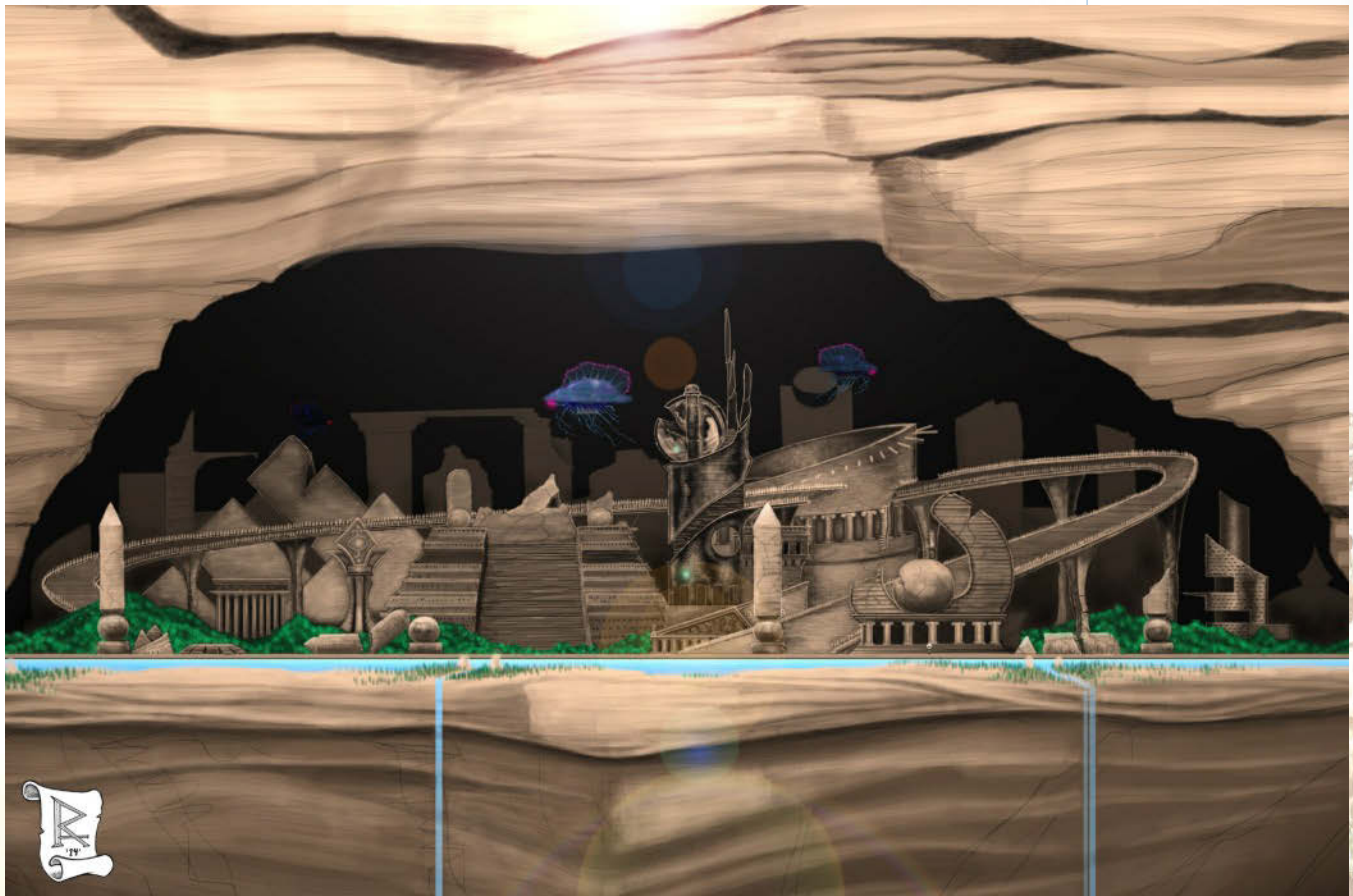
#### MOR-KLISH

Mor-Klish would love to help the characters overthrow the praithians. Assuming he's with them and his crystal has been hacked but not destroyed, he constantly brings up the spectre of Tuctin and Tar as mind-controlled slaves to try to enlist the PCs on the side of the rebels.

But if Mor-Klish steps off the *An Domorr* without a control crystal, he'll be instantly declared a criminal terrorist and taken away.

Someone with numenera or crafting skill could fake a working crystal. Captain Klorsh or Lebby could conjure one up. But it's up to the characters to think of this.

On the other hand, Mor-Klish is no soldier and is happy to be free. He would not object to leaving with the airship in search of a new life elsewhere. If you're worried that your players will need all the help they can get, see if you can get Mor into the party. Most of the time, he'd be a great asset. You can always kill him off or otherwise sideline him later.



*Dh'lanns are violet-skinned hermaphroditic humans, and are common in the world of The Sun Below. Given their hermaphroditic nature, they don't use gender-based pronouns. In this text the singular they is used instead of he or she.*

*Ordinary Dh'lann: level 2; ranged attack: mindslice as level 3, 2 Intellect damage; page 48*

*Mor-Klish, if present, volunteers to take characters to Work Pit 509.*

## THE QUEEN'S HEAD INN

**Leads in:** Landing, page 16

**Leads out:** The Bridge, page 19; Work Pit 509, page 21; Meet the Dh'lann Resistance, page 22; King's Move, page 25

The Queen's Head Inn is in an old tower that, sometime in the past, lost its top. Obviously the circular tower was once much taller. The characters are given a whole floor just under The Bridge (the uppermost remaining floor).

The rooms are large and comfortable. Characters are given their own suites, all of which open onto a large circular lounge in the center. Antigravity tubes, one up and one down, provide access to the floors below. They work much like the larger drop tubes in the portal station to the world above.

Shelves full of empty bottles, glasses, and mugs line the rooms. The walls are ceramostone covered with tapestries depicting the wild dreams of the praithians.

Dh'lann slaves will bring food, drink, and dream-vapor bowls (level 5). These are ceramic bowls the size of soup bowls from which hallucinogenic gasses waft.

## CYPHER: PRAITHIAN DREAM-VAPOR BOWL

**Level:** 1d6+1

**Usable:** If a character squeezes the bowl, it will emit a fragrant vapor that smells of freshly mown grass for 28 hours.

**Effect:** Inhaling the vapor will cost the character the cypher's level in points of Intellect and give the feeling of floating in a dream-world full of giant floating three-eyed faces and swirling stars.

For each inhalation, the character must make a Might defense roll (the first inhalation is at difficulty 1) or move one step down the damage track and lose 1 more point of Intellect. For the next hour, the character will experience the following effects:

- All social interaction tests with praithians gain an asset because the character is more closely attuned to the praithians mindset.
- All social interaction tests with anti-praithian rebels gain an inability because the rebels recognize what they deem as a weakness in the character.
- All Intellect defense rolls gain an inability because the character's mental defenses have been lowered.

Each inhalation after the first adds an extra hour to the duration, adds one to the difficulty of the

Might defense roll, and requires a new Might defense roll.

Inhaling until debilitated forces the character into unconsciousness for 8 hours and the effects of the vapors last until the character returns to the world above. Any longer-lasting effects are up to the GM, but this is a dangerous narcotic.

## BREESH-VASS

One purple-skinned slave, Breesh-Vass, observes the characters and lingers when all other slaves leave. Breesh-Vass will approach whichever character they deem most likely to sympathize with the dh'lann rebellion. Any character obviously friendly with Mor-Klish the slithik (should he be with the characters) will be shunned. Any character who seems like a martial leader or openly displays any sign of the Order of Truth will be sought out.

Like most dh'lann, Breesh-Vass neither trusts nor likes slithiks who, after all, are blood drinkers. If Mor-Klish is with the characters, there will be obvious tension between the dh'lann and the slithik.

Breesh-Vass is looking for allies to assist in a slave revolt. The dh'lann will explore the characters' willingness to arm the rebels. Breesh asks for as many detonation (singularity) cyphers as the characters have.

*"Some of us have sabotaged our control crystals and can pass as slaves. We will find out where the children you seek are being held in return for numenera that can be used as weapons."*

Breesh offers to share knowledge on control crystals, which will give a character an asset to sabotage one.

## WHAT IS BREESH HIDING?

Breesh's spouse is Purl-Vass, a dh'lann who doesn't like non-hermaphroditic people such as the praithians and slithiks and probably the player characters as well. Breesh is willing to overlook this prejudice, but if the characters later meet Purl, they can expect a frosty welcome.

Breesh is attempting to keep three secrets from the characters. Allow characters an Intellect roll, 4/5/6 difficulty, to notice that the dh'lann appears to be holding something back. If they press Breesh on what the dh'lann is hiding, Breesh will give up secret three.

Secrets one and two will only come out by active intimidation, mind reading, or other intrusive measures.

**One:** While Breesh professes to care about the captured children's welfare, the dh'lann agent would be willing to leave the children to their fate if the dh'lann resistance doesn't get help against the praithians.



*Detonation (Singularity), page 285*





**BREESH vs. MOR**

If Mor-Klish is present, there is obvious tension between him and Breesh. Have whichever of these two your PCs trust the least accuse the other of being a praithian spy and launch into an immediate attack, imploring the PCs to help.

*"That one is a spy, working for the praithian king. Help me take them down!"*

If the PCs intervene, they can stop the fight by many means, including getting in the middle, using intimidation, or outright combat. Either of the NPCs will surrender at half health.

If the PCs stand back and just watch, there is no reason to roll dice. Breesh is the better fighter, and after taking a few poisoned tentacle hits, the dh'lann will have a bleeding Mor-Klish on the floor. There is a moment where the PCs can intervene, and then the dagger cuts through the slithik's neck stalk and decapitates him.

Should things get so out of hand that one of the NPCs actually is slain, then the survivor really is a praithian spy. Such a traitor would have a mind shield bud in their brain. They would allow the characters to examine their hacked praithian brain-control crystal, which would "prove" they are on the characters' side. Somehow in combat, the dead NPC's crystal was destroyed. Sheer bad luck.

**Two:** Breesh tries to keep the dh'lanns mindslice ability a secret since it might come in handy if the characters betray the rebels to the praithians.

**Three:** Most importantly, there are dh'lann rebels and there are slithik rebels, but they are not working together. Breesh not only knows of the slithik rebels and their hideout in Work Pit 509, the dh'lann agent rightly believe them to be stronger than the dh'lann faction.

Of course, if both rebel groups unite, they will be stronger still. There is some movement in this direction, but not much trust. It will take the characters meeting with both sides and the praithian princess, whom they will meet later, to push them together.

**DID SOMEONE SAY SECRET TRAITOR?**

The praithians are quite aware of the brewing rebellion. While they underestimate the danger to their rule, they have turned a senior member of the rebels into their spy.

At any point in the adventure (once the characters have contacted the rebels), you can cut to the Treachery encounter (page 24). Any NPC of your choosing can be the traitor.

Breesh has the stats of a dh'lann captain, with persuasion and sneaking at +2 level. Like the other slaves who work in the queen's Head Inn, Breesh is well dressed in flowing robes. Underneath he wears liquid ceramosteel armor.

## ARTIFACT: LIQUID CERAMOSTEEL ARMOR

**Level:** 1d6 + 2

**Form:** Appears to be an ever-moving covering of translucent emerald liquid.

**Effect:** When placed on the wearer's flesh, the armor grafts on permanently. It provides Armor equal to half its level (round up) but does not hinder movement or tire the wearer in any way (no Might cost or Speed reduction). When the armor is struck, the liquid instantly hardens into solid ceramosteel, protecting the wearer.

**Depletion:** —

**GM Intrusion:** The armor flows away from the impact, giving no protection—worse, it also remembers the damage and duplicates it on another part of the wearer's body.

Counts as zero armor and damage is doubled.

This is a great intrusion when the wearer rolls a 1 or just anytime they are getting a little too cocky about their fancy armor.

## PON-VASS

Unless the characters decide to immediately follow Breesh to meet the dh'lann rebels or follow Mor to meet the slithik ones, a newly arrived dh'lann slave, Pon-Vass, will come to their rooms. Pon is a dh'lann slave who shows up once the characters have settled in. *"If you wish to learn more about the children from the world above, please follow me to the Bridge."*

Pon doesn't know much more than that he was sent to escort the newcomers to the Bridge. *"All will be answered on the Bridge."*

## THE BRIDGE

**Leads in:** The Queens Head Inn, page 18

**Leads out:** Work Pit 509, page 21; Meet the Dh'lann Resistance, page 22; Children Released, page 23; Treachery, page 24; King's Move, page 25

The top floor of the tower that holds the Queen's Head Inn is known as the Bridge. It is here that mere mortals, mostly visiting diplomats and traders, can talk to the dreaming praithians.

The entire floor is one big circular space with opulent but faded appointments. The ceiling is 20 feet (6m) tall, high enough for a praithian to float

*Treachery, page 24*

**Breesh-Vass:** level 4/5/6, level 5/6/7 for mindslice; 3/3/4 points of armor; 15/18/21 health; 2 melee attacks per round: dagger: 8/9/10 or 1 ranged: mindslice (onslaught, Intellect attack only) for 5/6/7 Intellect damage. Persuasion and sneaking at +2 level; hacked mind-control crystal; mind shield bud; Dh'lann Captain, page 49

*Mind Shield Bud, page 24*

**Mor-Klish:** level 4/5/6; armor: 1/2/3, poisoned tentacle: 4/5/6 plus difficulty 4/5/6 Might test or lose 3/4/5 Intellect, or 2 attacks w/ brain fog ray (short) Intellect defense roll or lose 4/5/6 Intellect; page 59



*Praithian dream-vapor bowl, page 18*

*Royal praithian, page 52*

*Dh'lann soldier, page 49*

**GM Intrusion:** *King Umbral takes a dislike to a particular character. "Feed that one to the slithik, now!" A successful difficulty 5 negotiation will get him to forget about it. If the roll fails, the soldiers appear to take the miscreant away to prison.*

*Prison, page 26*

through. The amber-colored floor appears to be one giant piece of polished wood, 200 feet (60m) in diameter. Arranged throughout the chamber are glowing ceramic bowls with intoxicating smoke. Tiny glowing slugs with gossamer wings flitter about.

Inhaling from the red or green bowls puts characters in an altered state. They lose 1 Intellect point per inhalation. They also feel no pain and are immune to fear for 10 minutes per inhalation.

The blue bowls are praithian dream-vapor bowls.

Contessa Kyyndance, the royal praithian who met the characters upon landing, floats near the center of the room. Nearby is a person-sized slab of what looks like black glass. There seems to be motion inside the glass. A dozen other shiny black glass slabs are scattered throughout the room. Praithian dreamers appear in the glass to communicate with the real world.

Androgynous dh'lann slaves offer drinks and finger foods. They can identify the vapor bowls if asked. *"The red and green bowls are colored snake mist. You'll feel no pain with those. The blue bowls have the dream vapor, very strong."*

Hidden under illusions of abstract sculptures are two squads of dh'lann soldiers, 6/8/10 per squad. They stay hidden unless needed.

The contessa turns toward the black glass next to her. *"Welcome. Let me show you the children."*

Inside the glass Tuctin and Tar fly about, arms outstretched. They seem to be having a good time, playing in the dream.

Before the characters get a chance to interact with the children, King Umbral barges in, ranting in disjointed phrases. *"Why are you working for my daughter?"*

*"Perhaps I should wage war on the world above for your impudence."*

*"Why are these humans not enslaved yet?"*

*"If you wake my wife, Queen Grieva, you'll really be sorry!"*

The contessa offers to deal with the creatures from the world above. *"Sire, I can strike a bargain with these people that will benefit all of us."*

The king is not amused. *"I'm tired of listening to you, spinning your mental cobwebs. I hate the real world!"*

The contessa proposes a trade to establish good will, suggesting that two of the characters trade themselves for the two children. They would then stay as "guests" of the king.

*"And then perhaps a slave trade from the world above. Is that acceptable? Two of you trade places with the children, and the king can keep two people from the world above?"*

Should they ask about the conditions in which the king would keep the characters, she hesitates.

*"He's a King, he can do what he wants with you. Still, the children would be free."*

Assuming the players don't jump on this opening offer, they should start negotiation. Deceiving, intimidation, and persuasion skills can all be used to strike a better bargain. The contessa wants to make a deal, so the negotiation starts at difficulty 5. Good arguments count as assets. She won't give the children away for nothing, and any deal will require approval from the king. He will go along with a successful deal, but grumble nonetheless.

If a deal is struck, the contessa will look on the characters as allies, no matter what direction the king takes. The children will be delivered to the queen's Head Inn.

If the characters accept the opening offer, two of them trade themselves for the children. It's split the party time. Run Prison (page 26) with the two; the others continue on.

## DEAD BUT STILL DREAMING

While the party is speaking to the king, pick one character to get pulled into another conversation.

This character hears a male voice in their head. *"Hey, you. Turn around. Shhhh. I'm in the black glass near the back wall. See me?"*

Across the room a tall, thin, and three-eyed person waves from within a black glass. *"Listen, I'm dead but still dreaming. Can you help me?"*

If the character freaks out and alerts the king, the players are treated to scenes of giant knights moving from glass to glass, rounding up miscreants who yell, *"We want life! No more*





dreams! Follow the princess!" before being roughed up and taken away.

If the character has a mental conversation with the dreaming praithian, they get a glimpse of why this dream world has become a nightmare.

"Get word to the princess. We know she crossed over and lives again. Tell her there are many who want to follow, but the king and queen stand in our way. Maybe from the outside she can find a way to set us free. Tell her we need her help, the king's knights are closing in on us. Thank you.

"And don't let the Contessa talk you into becoming the king's prisoner. You're no use to us in the dungeons."

## WORK PIT 509

**Leads in:** Queen's Head Inn, page 18; The Bridge, page 19; Meet the Dh'lann Resistance, page 22; Children Released, page 23

**Leads out:** The Bridge, page 19; Meet the Dh'lann Resistance, page 22; Treachery, page 24; King's Move, page 25

The way to Work Pit 509 is about 2 hours down, under the city of Urbamorr, through dark hallways full of steam, down slick ladders, and over catwalks that span unfathomable chasms.

The meeting place by the pit is dark and dangerous with a ring of ceramosteel catwalks over a void with no visible bottom leaking toxic vapors. Big moving equipment swings back and forth, up and down, leaving no safe place to stand. Red steam stinking of ammonia and oil wafts up in the characters' faces. The catwalk is full of slithiks, many of whom show visible scars, some are obviously crippled. Buckets of blood for the slithiks to drink line alcoves. The lighting is low and intermittent and the sound of pounding machinery makes hearing difficult.

Slithiks in the chamber include Tasss-Klish, who starts out as hostile to the characters. Tasss is a traditionalist, and dislikes other races, except as food. She distrusts King Umbral's daughter Princess Duphreen. Tasss will insult the characters and try to keep them off balance. However, if the characters can turn her into an ally, she'll be invaluable.

"Just as we are ready to claim our rights, look what drops out of the sky to trip us up. How much is King Umbral paying you?"

Pierce-Klish, also present, leads a moderate faction that is willing to work with other races. Pierce considers himself an ally of Princess Duphreen.

When the characters first arrive, Tasss and Pierce are having a heated discussion in slith, the slithik language. Every so often, the characters hear their names mentioned.



Both Tasss and Pierce are slithik captains (unless you designate one as a secret traitor working for the praithians).

Besides the captains, there are a dozen ordinary slithiks and eight slithik soldiers in the room. The soldiers will fight as a squad if it comes to battle.

## NEGOTIATIONS WITH SLITHIK REBELS

If the characters attempt to negotiate some sort of alliance with the slithik rebels, they can persuade them by winning a difficulty 5 roll. Skills (Intellect) that might be used include: deceiving, intimidation, and persuasion.

Ordinary slithik, page 57

Slithik soldier, page 58

Slithik captain, page 58



Lasting Damage:  
Core p. 114

**GM Intrusion:** During the negotiations with the slithiks, a massive machine abruptly careens into a character, as a level 5/6/7 attack, doing 4/5/6 damage. If struck, the character must make a successful level 4/5/6 Speed defense roll or be knocked into the seemingly bottomless pit.

Other characters can attempt a difficulty 4/5/6 task to save the character.

The bottom is 500 feet (150m) below, which would cause 50 points of ambient damage. But every 100 feet (30m), another mechanical arm swings out below the plummeting the character. The character can attempt two difficulty 5 rolls, one to hit the arm, the other to hold on (Might or Speed). For each 100 feet (30m) fallen, the character takes 10 points of ambient damage.

This is a great time to use lasting damage rules.

If a character survives the fall, the slithiks send a rescue party that comes out of a side tunnel at the level of the fallen character. The slithiks then bring the character back. Characters may accompany the slithiks if they wish.



*Mor-Klish, if present, counts as an asset in negotiations with the slithik rebels.*

*Dh'lann soldier, page 49*

*Ordinary dh'lann, page 48*

*Dh'lann captain, page 49*

**GM Intrusion:** during the negotiations with the dh'lanns, Aklo, a rebel soldier, accuses a player character of being a praithian spy. "They'll turn on us at the first opportunity! Kill this one now!"

- Good arguments are assets.  
Add 1 to the difficulty if the players wish to create a slithik alliance with the dh'lann.
- While speaking to the slithik, the following clues will come to light unless things go pear-shaped fast:
- Princess Duphreen is said to be working to overthrow the Praithian Empire. She wants the praithians to leave the world of dreams and return to the real world.
  - Slithiks are ready for a slave revolt.
  - Slithiks are divided on their view of humans: people or food?

## ARTIFACT: SLITHIK BRAIN SPIKE

**Level:** 1d6 + 4

**Form:** A hairy seed pod, like a lumpy coconut, with synth tubes looping in and out. Bubbly green liquid pulses through the tubes.

**Effect:** This device emits a faint green long-range beam that affects only organic creatures with brains. The brain spike inflicts its level in Intellect damage. The target must make an Intellect roll or become dazed for one round.

This device is a rapid-fire weapon and thus can be used with the spray or arc spray abilities that some glaives and jacks have, but each "round of ammo" used on each additional target selected requires an additional depletion roll.

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d10

*You feel a frigid spike of ice slide into your brain. Thoughts flee and you just want the pain to stop.*

## MEET THE DH'LANN RESISTANCE

**Leads in:** Queen's Head Inn, page 18; The Bridge, page 19; Work Pit 509, page 21; Children Released, page 23

**Leads out:** The Bridge, page 19; Work Pit 509, page 21; Treachery, page 24; King's Move, page 25

If the characters agree to meet the dh'lann resistance, they are taken underground via a levitating cargo hauler that smells of dirt and vegetables to a broken down-storehouse surrounded by farmland about an hour outside Urbamorr. The location is only 300 feet (90m) from the edge of the ledge. The fall off the ledge is 3,300 feet (1,000m).

## STOREHOUSE CEILING

Inside the massive storeroom the characters are cautioned not to touch the ceiling, which pulses with changing colors. Should a PC climb up one of the many stacks of shipping crates and make physical contact with the ceiling, they will experience vivid hallucinations. The effect counts as dazed, and lasts 1 hour per touch.

*"You ask why does the ceiling do that?," says a Dh'lann. "We have no idea."*

A character who has touched the ceiling must succeed on a difficulty-5 Intellect roll to keep from touching it again.

## NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE DH'LANN RESISTANCE

Waiting to meet the characters are about a hundred ordinary dh'lann, thirty dh'lann soldiers, and Purl-Vass, Breesh's spouse. Purl-Vass is a dh'lann captain. (Of course, either Purl or Breesh could be the secret traitor.) While Breesh is for an alliance with the player characters and even with Princess Duphreen and the slithik rebels, Purl is not. In fact, Purl is openly antagonistic to the characters, assuming they are not hermaphrodites.

The meeting is noisy, punctuated by cat-calls, cheering, and boos. Breesh and Purl do most of the negotiation. While they seem quite set in their ways and willing to score points against each other, the characters notice they will often







wink and smile at each other. They don't mean to confuse the characters, they just disagree about alliances outside of other dh'lann, yet still deeply love one another.

If the characters attempt to negotiate some sort of alliance with the dh'lann resistance, they can persuade them by winning a difficulty-5 roll. Skills (Intellect) that might be used include: deceiving, intimidation, and persuasion.

Good arguments are assets.

Add 1 to the difficulty if the players wish to create an alliance with the slithiks.

While speaking to the dh'lann, the following clues will come to light unless things go pear-shaped fast:

- Princess Duphreen is said to be working to overthrow the Praithian Empire. She wants the praithians to leave the world of dreams and return to the real world.
- The dh'lann are ready for a slave revolt.
- The dh'lann are divided on whether non-hermaphrodites are just another kind of people or dangerous deviants.

## CHILDREN RELEASED

**Leads in:** Work Pit 509, page 21; Meet the Dh'lann Resistance, page 22; The Bridge, page 19;

**Leads out:** Work Pit 509, page 21; Meet the Dh'lann Resistance, page 22; The Bridge, page 19; Treachery, page 24



This event only happens if the characters have persuaded the praithians to release the children. Depending on player interest, they might be delivered as soon as negotiations are completed, or "in a few hours," giving the characters time to meet the resistance.

If the characters are not in the Queen's Head Inn or The Bridge, a dh'lann slave brings a message asking them to meet Contessa Kyyndance at the common room on their floor of the Queen's Head Inn. Otherwise she'll just be pleased to tell them the children are on their way. If the slave tracks the characters to a rebel meeting, the rebels scatter, throwing dark looks at the characters.

Tuctin, the boy, age 7, and Tar, the girl, age 9, are both bewildered and want to get back to Gran (Aeon Priest Mishka). Contessa Kyyndance is happy with her role in the negotiations and assures the characters they need not fear the Praithian Empire.

## NO EXIT

After the contessa takes her leave, Breesh-Vass shows up in the guise of a slave.

*"Urbamorr is still a dangerous place. If you look outside you'll see the king has ordered the airship-summoning gong taken away. I can hide the children on the outskirts of the city until you are able to leave. I fear it may take more than negotiation to get you home. If it comes to a fight, it will be best if the children are safely hidden elsewhere."*

Outside, the characters can see the airship landing field guarded by two full 10-person squads of dh'lanns and of slithiks, each commanded by an impressive captain. Standing where the gong used to be is a featureless stone giant, 20 feet (6m) tall. The giant holds a massive sword of blue flame.

Breesh knows what the giant is—a praithian knight.

If the characters have not met either rebel faction yet, they may wish to now. Or King Umbral might be mad enough to come stomping out of the King's Tower.

## NO-FLY ZONE

If the characters attempt to fly or glide off the shelf, they are met with wave after wave of praithian war snakes. If that doesn't turn them back, or they reach the floor of the lands under



*The Return, page 46*

*Praithian War Snake, page 55*



#### MIND READERS

*If your players have access to mind-reading esoterics and start to use them before the reveal, give all of the rebel leaders mind-shield buds "to avoid detection from the praithians."*

*Mind-shield bud, page 24*

*Liquid ceramosteel armor, page 19*

*Slithik brain spike, page 22*



*Lasting or permanent damage, page 114*

The Sun Below by other means, cut to The Return (page 46). The princess leads a failed rebellion, the city is burned to a shambles, and if the players ever return they find a graveyard inhabited by a very sad king. Others have looted the place, so there is not much left to discover.

## TREACHERY

**Leads in:** The Bridge, page 19; Work Pit 509, page 21; Meet the Dh'lann Resistance, page 22; King's Move, page 25

**Leads out:** King's Move, page 25; Capture, page 26; Find Allies, page 29

## TIMING

This event can either be triggered by the player characters resorting to violence, in which case the traitor will show up to "help." Or at a time of the GM's choosing, the traitor could strike without warning.

Use the latter to help move the adventure along, once the characters have gotten a taste of Urbamorr. If everyone is having fun exploring the city, hold off a bit. If they seem ready for an action scene, spring it.

## CHOOSE THE TRAITOR

An NPC of your choice turns out to have been working for the praithians all along. Pick one the characters have already met.

One method for selecting the spy for the praithians is to let the players choose for you. If you hear table chatter that they "don't trust that one," pick that NPC. (This gives the suspicious player the feeling they were right all along. If only the others had listened...)

Another GM strategy is to pick the NPC the players trust the most, probably Mor-Klish or Breesh-Vass. This twists the knife of treachery even further. If Breesh-Vass "sent the children to safety" this has the added tension because the players will then fear that the children are prisoners, probably locked up somewhere in the King's Tower.

A choice that works well with what the characters have already experienced, is to choose Purl-Vass or Tasss-Klish. This will not only reinforce the negative emotions the antagonistic NPC has brought to the table, but will discredit the NPC's anti-coalition position. This will make it much more likely the dh'lann, slithik, and the praithian princess will form a unified front.

## ARTIFACT: MIND-SHIELD BUD

**Level:** 1d6 + 2

**Form:** A bio-mechanical bud that burrows under the skin and attaches to the spine. It's warm, blue, and always wet and slippery.

**Effect:** Forces the mind reader to succeed on an Intellect attack to read the target's mind, even if an attack is not normally required. Also, the bud adds 2 to the Intellect defense of the target. Normal thoughts are replaced with the buzzing of insects unless the mind reader succeeds on their attack.

A mind reader with the masters insects focus has an asset to understand the thoughts.

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d20

## THE TRAITOR

The traitor may have once been a true rebel, but has come to believe that yet another slave rebellion will end in yet another bloody failure. At least that's what they tell themselves. And wouldn't it be better to nip that doomed dream in the bud, and get paid well in the process?

The traitor is better trained and better equipped than the characters expect. Take the base stats for a slithik captain, slithik savant, or dh'lann captain depending on who you choose as the traitor, and then make the following changes: make the level 7/8/9; level 8/9/10 for Initiative. Add the following numenera:

**Nano-needler** (6) loaded with a level-6 poison that drops the target 1 step down the damage track.

**Detonation (web)** (8) wristband projector cypher.

**Detonation (matter disruption)** (10) wristband projector cypher.

Two **Detonation (singularity)** (10) wristband projector cyphers.

Dh'lann traitors will wear liquid ceramosteel armor, level 8. Slithik traitors will be armed with a slithik brain spike, level 10.

## TACTICS

The traitor hasn't been hired to kill the characters but has been given the mission of capturing them. So you will want to hit the characters so hard they believe they are about to die, then offer them the chance to surrender.

The surrender offer is a full table GM Intrusion, where each character is offered 1 xp if they go along with the capture.

That's the plan, anyway. Should the traitor kill a character in the capture attempt, consider using lasting or permanent damage as a death replacement.

## AND WHAT OF THE CHILDREN?

If Tuctin and Tar are with the characters, you might want to separate them before the traitor







strikes. Add trap door that opens under them, a revolving secret door, or a new opening that the kids run through before the characters can react.

You could award the character watching over or just closest to the children a GM Intrusion to get the kids out of the way. If they refuse the intrusion, you might allow them to fall on the children and take the damage.

Otherwise, the traitor's area of effect attacks are likely kill the children and change the tone of the adventure. If that's what your group wants, by all means let the consequences haunt them for sessions to come.

## WE'RE ALL AMONG FRIENDS – SURPRISE!

If this event happens in a meeting with the rebels, sitting around in the Queen's Head Inn, or just anywhere the characters feel safe, the traitor starts off by making an excuse, perhaps to "get you a map of the king's Tower, that's where the gong is..."

They drop their bag and leave the room. The first detonation (singularity) cypher is in the bag, set to go off as soon as the traitor leaves and shuts the ceramosteel door behind them. This is a surprise attack, but since it's a level-10 cypher, and 10 is as bad as it gets, that point is probably moot.

Remember the detonation (singularity) cypher explodes for 2 effects, damage and the Might defense roll.

After the blast goes off, the traitor will smash open the door to attack again.

## I'M HERE TO HELP

If this event happens because the characters are in combat, perhaps with the king and his cohorts, the traitor shows up at range, long if possible, and waves at the characters from a vantage point that is hard for the characters to rush, say from a balcony or atop a fallen statue.

*"I'm here to help!"*

The traitor will open up with the first detonation (singularity) if they can do so without hitting the praithian forces. (They won't care about any war snakes, those can get fried along with the PCs.) Any characters in immediate range with the praithians will be spared. The traitor will target over the back line of characters in an attempt to take out those characters standing back. If possible, they'll do an air burst over the back line's heads, at 40 feet (12m) so the characters get to fall for ambient damage after the secondary effect from the singularity. So helpful.

If it's impossible to use the detonation (singularity) as an opener, the traitor will use detonation (massive), to try to hit as many characters as possible.

This attack will almost certainly be a surprise attack.

## WANT MORE?

If none of the characters is impaired or worse, the follow-up attack will be the second detonation (singularity). For tier 4+, consider using the detonation (singularity) if none of the characters is debilitated or worse. For tier 4+ characters ambushed in Work Pit 509, consider setting the second detonation off over the pit. The secondary effect will cause the characters to start plummeting. In other locations, consider an airburst 40 feet (12m) above the players. This allows a fall for ambient damage after the secondary effect.

Otherwise, if some characters are debilitated and another singularity would be too much, follow up with be detonation (massive). Even if some PCs are debilitated, if they are spread out in such a way that those who are not debilitated can be caught by themselves, consider using the detonation (massive).

Further follow-ons can include detonation (web) and the nano-needler. The traitor can get off two needler shots per round.

The goal is to hit the characters very hard, very fast, and avoid a long, drawn-out fight that the player characters don't feel they can win. You want to move to Capture (page 26) as soon as the PCs are ready for it.

If the fight started without the king and his cohort, bring them on the scene. They don't have to attack just yet, intimidation is the name of the game.

## LET IT END

Once the player characters are up against it, offer the full table GM Intrusion.

*"Let it end. Surrender while you still can,"* says the traitor.

If the players refuse the intrusion, that is their right. And who knows, maybe they can fight their way out of this or escape somehow. If not, the praithians will take prisoners, but the characters receive no xp once they have refused the intrusion.

## KING'S MOVE

**Leads in:** Landing, page 16; The Queen's Head Inn, page 18; The Bridge, page 19; Work Pit 509, page 21; Meet the Dh'lann Resistance, page 22; Children Released, page 23; Treachery, page 24  
**Leads out:** Treachery, page 24; Capture, page 26; Find Allies, page 29

Eventually, the king will move against the characters. He feels that the contessa has let him down, and it's time to show this rabble from the



*Slithik Soldier, page 58*

*Slithik captain, page 58*

**King Umbral:** level 7/8/9, level 6/7/8 for Speed defense ; 4/6/8 points of Armor: ½ armor for blunt weapons; stabbing weapons -1 damage; 2 attacks a round: 1) eye of chill mind: (long) 7/8/9 Intellect damage and move 1 level down on the damage track; 2) psychic whirlpool: AoE (short) 3 Intellect damage/royal praithian in range, for every 5 praithians: +1 attack level; counts as 3 normal praithians for whirlpool; the king can teleport to his throne room at will; special minor and major effects; page 52

**Praithian Knight:** level 6/7/8; 6/8/10 points of Armor, armor is halved for blunt weapons, -1 damage from stabbing weapons; 8/10/12 damage; on hit, target makes 2<sup>nd</sup> Speed defense roll or hit for 4/5/6 ambient damage and loss of 1 point of armor; minor and major effects; page 53

*Praithian war snake, page 55*

world above just who is King of Urbamorr. Let them be mind-controlled and perhaps they will be able to secure more slaves from the surface world.

The king is not well disposed toward negotiation. With groups that avoid combat at all costs, you can surround the characters with overwhelming numbers, reveal the traitor, and cut to the table-wide GM intrusion to allow the characters to be captured.

If the players like and seek out combat, this event should provide plenty of it. You can postpone the traitor's attack to let the players enjoy a good fight. Once it's time to wrap up, let the traitor loose.

## WHEN PLAYER CHARACTERS GO BAD

If the characters behave belligerently and get into a fight early on, allow some slave forces to soften the players up before the king and his entourage show up. Some players just like to fight, so let them beat up on their foes for a few rounds, and then send in the A-team.

The closer the characters are to the royal towers when they pick a fight, the faster the reaction: a few rounds in the queen's Head Inn or in or next to any of the royal towers, a few minutes in the city, up to an hour in the hinterland.

When the guards arrive, they first demand the characters throw down their arms and surrender.

**Round 1:** 3 squads of slithik soldiers with one slithik captain.

**Round 2:** The king, 2/3/4 praithian knights, a nest of 6/8/10 praithian war snakes

**Round 3:** The traitor

If the fight is dragging, go ahead and throw the rest of the praithian forces in on the next round. If the characters flee before the traitor is revealed, the traitor can join the party and lead them directly into an ambush by the king and his cohort.

## CAPTURE

**Leads in:** Treachery, page 24; King's Move, page 25

**Leads out:** Prison, page 26

Once the players accept the table-wide GM Intrusion, they are disarmed and put in restraints before being taken underground to the containment cells.

As the characters' items are confiscated, they can make a level 7/8/9 Speed roll to hide one small article on their body. Should they fail, they get a beating that drops them one step down the

damage track. If this would kill them, drop them down to 1 point in each non-zero stat.

Before they leave their capture location, allow characters to notice what their captors do not.

Choose an ally who was with the characters. The captors pass by this ally who seems dead. The ally silently gets up and moves out of sight. Tasss-Klish, Mor-Klish, Xot-Klish, Purl-Vass, and Breesh-Vass are all good candidates.

If the children were at the scene of the capture and are still alive, and if it makes sense, let another character notice them peek out of hiding and then duck down.

## PRISON

**Leads in:** King's Move, page 25; Capture, page 26

**Leads out:** Prison Break, page 27

The characters are shoved into a dark, dingy, and stained synthsteel cage. A reek of filth and a handful of crumpled bodies greet the characters. One of the bodies, a slithik, moves.

*"Greetings, I am Korlath-Klish. I'm afraid our other companions are not much for conversation, or anything else, these days."* The others are dead.

Korlath is a slithik soldier and rebel. He's immune to all mind control, which is why he's been a guest of the king for such a long time. He's at half health, and a bit odd—understandable given his surroundings.

Despite his morbid humor, Korlath will do what he can to help the newcomers. He has been using his venom to weaken a corner of the floor. It's quite close to breaking now.

If the PCs haven't met the slithik rebels yet, Korlath, once freed, can lead them to Work Pit 509 or to several other places where he can contact the slithik rebels.

Korlath also knows how to hack control prisms, and his advice counts as an asset. Why is this important? Well, every player character's neck is itching, in a five-pointed star pattern. Nanites are growing control crystals, a process that will take about two weeks.

**GM Advice:** This is a perfect place to include signs of an NPC from your previous adventures. A mentor, ally, contact, or rival may have spent hard time in this cell. The characters may find writing on the wall, and Korlath may remember her/him.

Regardless, one of the characters notices something carved in the wall:





*ladace. I know now why the others warn against Urbamorr, the City of Dreams. And since you are here, I imagine you do as well. Know this, it may be of help: The control-crystal nanites fail. One skilled in the numenera can adjust them to free a creature from mind control. Throttle the red stream and twist the inner star to the left one click.*

*I believe my arguments have planted a seed in Princess Duphreen's mind. Perhaps she can save me. Perhaps she can save herself. Time will tell.*

-- Charish Kos, Aeon Priest

Charish's instructions provide another asset in hacking control crystals.

## ILL TREATMENT

The guests of the king are in for some ill treatment. A psychic alarm sounds every half hour to prevent sleep and disrupt hourly and daily recovery rolls.

The prisoners are fed moldy gray slop and muddy water. Every day, each character must succeed in a level 4/5/6 Might defense roll or be dazed until the next 10-hour rest in better conditions. Once characters fail, they do not need to roll again.

Most groups will want to exit the prison as soon as possible. A few groups might want to roleplay a bit of the prison life first. Either cut to the escape, or let them interact with guards and Korlath, whatever works for them.

Note: not only do the PCs not have their equipment, they have no idea where their captors have stored it.

## PRISON BREAK

**Leads in:** Prison, page 26

**Leads out:** Prison, page 26; Return to the River of Stars, page 28; Find Allies, page 29

You may want to play music to set the mood. Soundtracks from spy movies, thrillers, or other high-action movies work well. In one playtest without music, the players started beat-boxing an appropriate "soundtrack" as they ran away from the praithians.

## THE PLAN

Korlath has weakened the floor to the point that the characters could pry up the plating and jump down into the darkness. That's his plan. If the players may come up with other plans, let them.

No matter the plan, have one player make a level 3/4/5 escape check to get away without immediate notice. Good ideas are assets. Failure puts the players under immediate pressure, as guards give chase from behind, and the party is blocked by a patrol ahead (6/8/10 dh'lann soldiers ahead, and the same number behind).

Once out, Korlath knows the general direction to run, and will want to contact the slithik rebels.

## THE MONTAGE

For the escape, the goal is not to go into details with maps and die rolling, but to give a sense of time passing as the characters make their getaway.

The characters are fleeing in an underground labyrinth of tunnels full of ancient machinery. In this scene, the players will help decide what obstacles they face, and what they must do to overcome them.

If the characters search for weapons at any point, they find pipes and bits of metal they can use as clubs.

Pick a player to start with, then go around the table. Each player will describe an exciting problem the group encounters. The next player will describe how their character solves the problem in a cinematic fashion. The GM narrates the solution back to the group, with the character

**GM Intrusion:** A character in prison starts trembling and others notice pallid yellow slime oozing out of their ears. They move one step down the damage track. If that will kill them, they drop to 1 point in each non-zero stat instead.

**Dh'lann Soldier:** level 2/3/4; 1/2/2 points of armor; 2-hit mook (4/5/6); greatsword for 6/8/10 or mindslice (onslaught) as level 4/5/6 for 4/5/6 Intellect damage; page 49

**Dh'lann Squad:** 5-10 soldiers; attacks at level 4/5/6 for greatsword, 6/7/8 for mindslice; double damage.



*Dh'lann soldier, page 49*

*Dh'lann captain, page 49*

*Slithik soldier, page 58*

*Slithik captain, page 58*

*Praithian knight, page 53*

*Praithian war snake, page 55*

*River of Stars, page 15*



*Force screen projector, page 286*

as the hero, and has the hero find a cypher in the process. The player then comes up with a new problem and the next player in turn comes up with the solution. Keep going until every player has created and solved a problem.

For example, the first player says, *"We run around a corner and find a bottomless chasm blocking our way."*

The next player describes how their character got the group past the difficulty. (No die rolls needed.)

For example, the player could say, *"We find a storeroom full of long transparent tubes, wide enough to crawl through. We lay one over the chasm and go on."*

You then narrate that back to the group, making the character the hero and add a cypher.

*Amazing. What looked like just part of the wall turned out to be the door to a storeroom, and you found it. You single-handedly lift a long clear tube up and place it across the chasm. You even find some machinery on both sides to brace it with, so it won't roll. All the other characters get across.*

*You go last. As you crawl across the chasm in the clear tube, and notice something glittering on a shelf three feet below the far ledge. It's a cypher.*

Then give them a cypher. Consider cyphers that might help the characters escape from a patrol, such as a force screen projector.

Now the player who described the solution and found the cypher describes a new obstacle to the party's escape. You keep going around the table. Once every player has had a chance to make up a challenge to overcome and a solution, the montage is over.

## THE PATROL

Have one character roll to avoid being spotted by a patrol. This is a level 4/5/6 difficulty test. The players can choose which character will attempt the roll.

- If the player succeeds on the sneaking roll, they avoid the encounter and move on. The characters always have the option of entering combat if they wish to.
- If they roll a natural 1, the characters stumble right into a patrol. They may want to consider buying a reroll.
- On a natural 19 or 20, not only do the characters sneak past, they find another cypher.

What kind of patrol they run into is determined by how badly they missed their roll:

**1 – 3:** Dh'lann patrol: 6/8/10 dh'lann soldiers and 1 dh'lann captain.

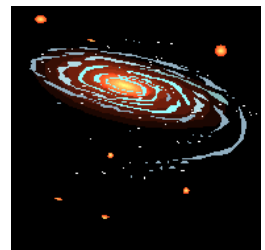
**4 – 5:** Slithik patrol: 6/8/10 slithik soldiers and 1 slithik captain.

**6+:** Knight patrol: 1 prraithian knight and 6/8/10 prraithian war snakes.

After the characters have eluded or fought off the patrol, if they interacted with Lebby aboard the airship *An Domorr* and left on good terms with her, cut to Return to the River of Stars (below).

If not, go to Find Allies (page 29) or the Princess Duphreen Encounter (page 30). In either case, Korlath will try and make contact with the slithik rebels.

## RETURN TO THE RIVER OF STARS



**Leads in:** Prison Break, page 27

**Leads out:** Find Allies, page 29; Princess Duphreen Encounter, page 30

Ducking from the patrol, the characters enter a dark passage with wavering light ahead. The passage twists and turns and opens up into a place the characters may have been before: the River of Stars.

In the dark chamber, they see a river that runs in a figure eight, perhaps 300 feet (100m) across. It's hard to tell, since the size of space seems to be changing in the room. The dark waters always flow downhill and are sprinkled with pinwheels of light that resemble galaxies.

Lebby, a young girl with red hair in braids, sits on a swing, kicking her legs in and out.

*"Remember me? I'm Lebby. I'm 11."*

She speaks to the character with whom she had the most previous interaction, rocking back and forth and speaking in a singsong voice.

As before, her words are vague and hint at other realities, other places. She seems concerned with the characters' well-being, but won't give specifics on anything.

*"You're hurt. The river can heal you, but don't forget to come out. Your part is not yet done."*

If anyone hesitates, she says, *"Go ahead, it's refreshing."*

## REFUSAL OF THE SWIM

Lebby will offer one more time, *"Your existence will improve if you go in."*







Any PCs who continue to refuse blink and suddenly they are alone in an empty ceramosteel chamber littered with debris. They do not get their missing items returned.

One of them feels a folded paper in their left hand which they unfold. It is a message on transparent paper with red lettering in the Truth:

*"The contessa can get your personal items back.*

*So can the princess. Ask nicely.*

*"L"*

Later, if they meet the princess she can get the contessa to do it. If they meet the contessa first, she can get the items, but not while in the presence of the king.

## TAKING THE WATERS

*The cool waters are incredible. The seventeen spatial and three temporal dimensions are just the beginning. You see everything, everywhere and it all makes sense. Except when it doesn't.*

*You can take recoveries here. Time is meaningless.*

*But do keep track of the number of recovery rolls. Each time you make a recovery roll, you feel a little further from the surface, a little more lost.*

To leave the waters, a character must succeed on an Intellect or Speed task. The difficulty is 1 for every recovery roll made. A 19 or 20 allows the character to give an asset or a reroll to another character to leave the waters.

If the roll is failed, other characters can try to fish them out using the same difficulty. Should a character fail to be rescued, a few minutes after the others get out, the lost character appears whole, naked, and unconscious. They do not get their equipment back, but may later find it in the King's Tower at the bottom of the Pool of Dreams.

## OUT OF THE WATERS

If any of the characters refused the waters, they see the other characters appear wet and surrounded by a brief glow. They cannot assist in dragging people out because they can't see them while they are still in the water.

The old ceramosteel chamber is littered with debris. It is not big enough to have held the River of Stars. There is no sign of Lebby or the river.

All PCs who went into the water have their equipment back, and 1 xp for discovering the wonders of the River of Stars. They don't remember details, only that it was life changing.

A simple search of the chamber, difficulty 2, reveals 1d3 Cyphers.

## FIND ALLIES

**Leads in:** Treachery, page 24; King's Move, page 25; Prison Break, page 27

**Leads out:** Princess Duphreen Encounter, page 30; Revolution, page 31



**If Tasss-Klish was not the traitor**, Korlath-Klish will tell the characters:

*"Tasss-Klish will know what to do with you. Be respectful, she only trusts us slithiks. I'll try to get her to help you. You have my thanks."*

Korlath knows Tasss will see the PCs as food, not as allies, but he will do his best to sell an alliance. Korlath sees Tasss as the ultimate leader of the rebellion, and would rather take a chance on swaying her than deal with a weaker leader.

**If Tasss-Klish was the traitor**, Korlath will say:

*"Pierce-Klish was right all along. We should go to him, he has shown great wisdom."*

Korlath and Mor will speak in the character's favor, each giving an asset to any negotiation roll.

## TASSS-KLISH

**If Pierce was the traitor**, Tasss will lump the characters in with Pierce: *"Pierce tried to kill me, and you were his friends. What do you think I should do to you?"*

Otherwise she will be wary: *"We slithik have suffered from other races. Why should I listen to you?"*

Tasss is very willing to pass the characters off to Princess Duphreen. But how willing is she to join with the princess, the dh'lann, and the characters?

Getting Tasss to agree to consider a popular front against the praithians starts out as a difficulty 4/5/6, but good arguments are assets. Intimidation won't work with Tasss, and that is clear as soon as a character starts down that path. If the characters have already earned her trust, lower the difficulty by 1 and do not count this against the asset limit.

Getting Tasss to agree to start the revolution without the princess and the dh'lann, with or without the characters' help is difficulty 0. She's ready to pull the trigger.

**GM Intrusion:** *One of the characters talking to Tasss-Klish slips and careens into a shelf of crystal decanters, crashing them onto the floor. They contained blood, blood that had been set aside for the rebel leader. Now it's a sticky mess on the floor, mixed in with broken crystal shards. Tasss is not amused.*



## PIERCE-KLISH

If Tasss is the traitor, his faction has been disgraced and the slithik are (mostly) ready to follow Pierce into a coalition with the princess and dh'lann.

Pierce is in many ways the mirror opposite of Tasss. Pierce is ready to go to the princess and join in a popular front against the king. To convince him to act otherwise is hard, difficulty 4/5/6.

With Pierce on board for a coalition-based uprising, Tasss (or her replacement) will join in, at least until the king is deposed.

## PRINCESS DUPHREEN ENCOUNTER

**Leads in:** Return to the River of Stars, page 28; Find Allies, page 29

**Leads out:** Last Chance for the King, page 31; Revolution, page 31

The characters get to use diplomacy here, in order to convince the dh'lann hardliners to join the coalition and to sway the rebels to either start the revolution or attempt to talk to the king one last time.

Deep under the Crystal Tower, the characters enter a chamber guarded by two named praithian war snakes, Koy and Lomb. The snakes let the characters pass. Inside is a large chamber with a big glowing crystalline table in the center. Floating over the table is a three-dimensional map of Urbamorr, with symbols for rebels and the king's forces.

Standing behind the table is an 8-foot (2.5m) tall woman with bone-white skin and some sort of numenera armor over a deep violet dress. She is wraith-thin and stands on feet that end in three large, splayed toes.

If the characters have seen a praithian mummy, this is what one looks like, only less dead.

Princess Duphreen is alive, brought back to this world by the ancient machines of loving grace in the Crystal Tower.

Take stock of the characters' interactions with the rebel factions up to this point. It's possible they have alienated a faction so badly they don't even come to this meeting. Modify the attendees as appropriate.

Standing around the table are the leaders of the rebel factions, in heated discussion, arguing over plans to deal with King Umbral. The pro-coalition factions of both the slithiks and the dh'lanns should be here, unless the characters have really insulted them somehow. If they did well in Finding Allies, the slithik traditionalists will be

here. The dh'lann traditionalists are here, but they haven't committed yet.

Pierce-Klish, Breesch-Vass, Tasss-Klish and Purl-Vass are here if their factions are here. Of course if one is the traitor, a replacement is here in their stead.

One of the NPCs, possibly Tasss-Klish, announces the characters as they enter. They turn their attention to the tall, pale figure.

*"I am Princess Duphreen. I have heard much of your exploits. It gladdens me that you are with us at this moment. Should we prevail, I will not forget my friends."*

*"The world of dreams is empty. The dreams repeat and those who exist inside them achieve nothing."*

*"Help me end this mad empire and bring my people back to the world of the living. This slavery of the slithiks and dh'lanns is an abomination and must end, here and now. I can break the power of the control crystals."*

*"You must protect me while I force my father to see to reason. Queen Grieva, my mother refuses to oppose him, so it is up to me."*

She plans on rewarding the characters with artifacts, the children's freedom, and the way home.

*"Are you all in?"* asks the princess.

If the Tasss-Klish "humans-as-food" faction bothered to come, they're in. All eyes turn to Purl-Vass (or her replacement).

She turns to the characters. *"I know why you are here, and that you can't leave unless you take down the king. But why should I help? The slithik will eat us without their mind-control crystals."*

It takes a successful Intellect (persuasion) roll of difficulty 3/4/5 to bring her and her faction on board.

At this point, the leaders resume their argument. the princess demands to see the king, and give him one last chance to listen to her. The other rebel leaders want to use the princess's power to jam control crystals, start the revolution, and fight their way to the king.

*"What do you advise?"* asks the princess.

A successful persuasion (Intellect) roll, difficulty 4/5/6, will allow the characters to sway the debate to their side, whether it is for more talk (Last Chance for the King) or to start the revolution (Revolution, page 31). A failure will

### LOST ITEMS

If any characters still have not yet gotten their equipment back, the princess can arrange for Contessa Kyndance to secret the items out in a gesture of good faith.

Optional: If you want to create a daring raid to rescue the items, by all means.

**GM Intrusion:** The princess's charismatic aura charms a player character. They must make an Intellect 7/8/9 roll to go against any of her wishes. A natural 20 (or a week of separation) ends the effect.



result in the opposite course of action being agreed upon.

## LAST CHANCE FOR THE KING

**Leads in:** Princess Duphreen Encounter, page 30

**Leads out:** Throne Room, page 33

King Umbral really doesn't want to listen to his daughter's ravings about returning to the land of the living. Any time he wants to listen to mad ravings he can just listen to himself.

Unless the players pull a really big diplomatic miracle out of the hat, this approach is doomed. However, if this attempt is made, it counts as an asset if the characters attempt to use diplomacy on the queen later in this adventure.

Princess Duphreen wants the characters with her both as bodyguards and third-party diplomats.

### ON HER OWN

If the princess goes alone, both she and the contessa will die. Without the princess jamming the mind-control crystals, the revolution will stall. In this case, if the traditionalists haven't joined the coalition, the revolution will start to crumble.

The princess and the characters march up to the gates of the King's Tower, which open. Flanked by two praithian knights, they climb the ramp to the throne room, there to debate with the king.

There, before the king, the princess makes her case. the king is behind a force field as described in the Throne Room. Also present are 1/2/3 praithian knights, 2 nests of war snakes, and Contessa Kyyndance. The traitor hides behind the throne, listening as the king speaks.

*"I will not bother to dispute with you. Contessa Kyyndance will argue my case. I will pass judgment when I decide to end this farce."*

**GM Intrusion:** Just before the group reaches the throne room, the corridor's gravity field reverses, the ceiling vanishes and they fall (up) into a trap. The ceiling above, now the floor, is 40 feet (12m) away, causing 4 points of ambient damage from the fall. Standing on the ceiling, which is really a floor, is a praithian knight who attacks at one level higher the first round while the characters find their footing.

If the knight is slain, the gravity field reverses, causing another 40-foot (12m) drop. The doors to the throne room open and the king laughs. What a silly daughter!

Princess Duphreen does her best. *"Father, you must realize the time for dreaming is over. Our lands are but a fraction of what they once were. Soon they will be gone, and us with them. Return to the living, as I have done."*

The contessa, obviously distressed, follows the king's line. *"All loyal praithians would rather die than disgrace themselves by leaving the sacred dream. Repent and beg for mercy."* She pauses. *"It's not as bad as it sounds."*

The characters can chime in. The better they do, the more upset the contessa gets. They may well turn her to their side.

In any case, the king attacks by surprise and we move to the action detailed in The Throne Room. But if the characters tried diplomacy here, it will help later at the top of the Queen's Tower.

## REVOLUTION

**Leads in:** Princess Duphreen Encounter, page 30; Find Allies, page 29

**Leads out:** Throne Room, page 33

## HOW BIG A REVOLUTION?

A lot depends on how well the characters have built a revolutionary coalition in the proceeding events. There are five factions that might be here: the traditionally anti-slitthik dh'lann, the dh'lann who have always wanted slitthik allies, the traditionally dh'lann-as-food slitthik, the slitthik who always wanted to cooperate with the dh'lann, and the princess.

## ALL FIVE FACTIONS JOIN THE REVOLUTION

If all five factions are present, the characters have an asset on all combat related rolls in this event.

With every faction present, the mood is triumphant, almost celebratory. The rebels sweep the streets to the cheers of their children and elders. Groups of slaves throw themselves at praithians, pulling them down with ropes, and using rubble and metal bars to crack them open. Slitthik and dh'lann soldiers shoot praithian war snakes down from the skies and assault praithians and praithian knights with 50-1 odds or better. Freed slaves cry in joy and hug the characters.

The characters are more than just liberators, they are heroes.

## FOUR OUT OF FIVE FACTIONS JOIN THE REVOLUTION

With four factions, the rebels are still optimistic, but it's a real fight. Non-combatants cheer from cover, and the revolutionaries make a

Throne room, page 33



**Rogue Dh'lann Captain:** level 4/5/6, level 5/6/7 for mindslice; 4 points of Armor; 15/18/21 health; 8/9/10 damage from greatsword, 5/6/7 Intellect damage from mindslice; 2 attacks a round with greatsword, or 1 with mindslice; page 49

Liquid ceramosteel armor page 19



Controlled blinking nodule, page 283

**Praithian Knight:** level 6/7/8; 6/8/10 points of Armor, armor is halved for blunt weapons, -1 damage from stabbing weapons; 8/10/12 damage; on hit, target makes 2<sup>nd</sup> Speed defense roll or hit for 4/5/6 ambient damage and loss of 1 point of armor; minor and major effects: page 53

**Ordinary Praithian:** level 4/5/6; Speed Defense 3/4/5; 4/6/8 points of Armor: ½ armor for blunt weapons; stabbing weapons -1 damage; 2 attacks a round: 1) eye of doom: (long) 4/5/6 damage which ignores 1/2/3 points of physical armor 2) psychic whirlpool: AoE (short) 1 Intellect damage/praithian in range, for every 5 praithians: +1 attack level; special minor and major effects; page 51

determined push to the King's Tower. Rebel casualties are higher, but when one falls, another steps into their shoes. Or slime.

## TWO OR THREE FACTIONS JOIN THE REVOLUTION

If only two or three factions are present, the characters suffer an impairment on all combat-related rolls during this event.

With two or three factions, the slaves take the outskirts of the city, but stall when approaching the royal towers. The characters will have to come up with a plan that lets them cross or avoid dozens of city blocks under praithian control in order to get to the king.

## ONE FACTION JOINS THE REVOLUTION

If only one faction is here, the characters suffer two impairments in combat.

With one faction, after initial gains, the rebels are thrown back and go on the defensive. They make a brave stand, but unless the characters somehow take out the king, the rebels will all die before the day is over.

## WILD IN THE STREETS

Where they are safe from praithian retaliation, mobs of dh'lanns and slithiks burn buildings, topple statues, and, sometimes fight each other. A scene of total chaos erupts as the slaves start looting.

If the characters join in the looting, each looter can collect 3d6 shins and 1d6 cyphers for every 10 minutes of looting. Should the characters do nothing but loot, eventually they will be caught in a praithian counter-attack and find themselves in danger of being overrun. Double the numbers of all praithians encountered during the counter-attack.

## CONFRONTING THE ENEMIES OF REVOLUTION

When the characters face opponents, the battle still rages on to the left and the right. Praithian stone heads float around, shooting their eyes of doom. Praithian knights lay into rebel formations with their swords of blue fire. Praithian war snakes drop out of the sky and strike behind the lines. If the princess is not there, formations of

**GM Intrusion:** A dh'lann captain has gone rogue and snipes at slithik rebels and any target he deems slithik allies, such as the PCs. This captain is equipped with liquid ceramosteel armor and a controlled blinking nodule. He uses mindslice to kill a nearby ally of the characters. He is striking at range from above with cover, atop a ruined building, giving him a +1 difficulty defense bonus.

Allow the characters a difficulty 5/6/7 Intellect roll to see where the attack on their ally came from. Otherwise a character is attacked by surprise (1 level) on the next round.



mind-controlled slithik and dh'lann soldiers battle their own people.

The following encounters can come in any order. Skip or repeat encounters as you wish.

## PRAITHIAN

A praithian zeroes in on the characters. 2/3/4 other praithians are close enough to boost the psychic whirlpool attack.

When the characters break the stone head, rebels rush up and pull the mummy apart. One goes running with the mummy's head but is felled by eye of doom from another praithian.

## THE KNIGHT

A praithian knight comes stomping toward the characters.

**GM Intrusion:** The knight spins around, attacking all enemies in immediate range. Any hit causes double damage, but skips the secondary Speed defense attack.

## PRAITHIAN WAR SNAKES

War snakes drop out of the sky, a whole nest of 6/8/10 snakes mobbing one character.

"Get them off me!"

**GM Intrusion:** A nest frenzies on one character, hitting as level: 7/8/9, doing quadruple damage: 12/16/20

## TIME TO END IT

Assuming she's part of the revolution, Princess Duphren rides up on a large anti-grav disk pulled by nine war snakes.







"Hop on. Time to see the king and end this thing!"

She flies the characters to the rooftop entrance to throne room.

Depending on the number of factions in the fight, the characters may be assaulted in mid-air by praithian war snake nests.

With all five factions, there will be no attack, the praithians are thrown back too fast to mount a defense. For every faction less than five, throw one snake nest at the flying characters. Each nest will strike at a different character.

#### WITHOUT THE PRINCESS

Most groups will enter the Throne Room encounter with the princess as an ally. In fact, she'll fly them to the top of the tower to avoid a slog up the ramps, enabling the party to cut right to the chase. But "most groups" doesn't mean all groups.

If you are faced with characters climbing the tower, throw in some guards and copy some of the defenders of the Queen's Tower over to the King's Tower. Squads of mind-controlled soldiers are viable without the princess.

If play bogs down, consider a rebel infiltrator who takes the characters up a lightly guarded servant's passage that is too small for praithians and praithian knights.



#### Praithian War Snake:

level 3/4/5; 2-hit mook (6/7/8); bite has Intellect poison that dazes for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks the target performs is modified by one step to its detriment; page 55

#### Nest of Praithian War

Snakes: composed of 6-10 snakes, attacks as level 5/6/7 for double damage; poison still only lasts one round, but the target has to roll twice to avoid its effects.

Queen's Tower, page 39

Mechanically, the character receiving the help has the difficulty of all actions reduced by one step and, if in combat, +1 damage.

## THRONE ROOM

**Leads in:** Revolution, page 31; Last Chance for the King, page 31

**Leads out:** Breather, page 37

## THE POWER OF THE PRINCESS

Besides disabling all mind-control crystals in a 0.6 mile (1km) radius, the princess kicks ass in combat. While that's great, and you will want to describe her combat moves, Numenera is a game about players, not NPCs.

Instead of having someone roll for the princess, have her help a character every turn. Here's how it works:

Princess Duphreen goes before the characters in initiative order. Each turn she helps a character. If any character is engaged with her father, that's the one she helps. If more player characters are engaged with the king, she helps the one most likely to take out her father or she just flips a shin. Otherwise whoever seems to be in the most trouble finds the princess fighting alongside. She can move and help in the same turn.



**GM Intrusion:** A character in combat is knocked headfirst into the pool of dreams. The next round they must swim to the top in order to breathe, as well as make their roll against becoming dazed.

**Dazed:** The difficulty of all tasks increases by one step.

She knows her father so well, her help with anyone attacking or defending against King Umbral is doubled. The difficulty of all actions is reduced by two steps and +2 damage.

The princess's power is not an asset, and doesn't count toward the limit of two assets per action.

The throne room before you is shaped like a four-pointed star some 130 feet (40m) from point to point. The ceramic ceiling is 40 feet (12m) tall, the synthcrete walls are covered in faded tapestries covered in dream-like pictures of praithians floating about. The floor is covered in ceramosteel tiles.

In the center of the room, you see a 40-foot (12m) diameter black crystalline pool filled with blue water and moving white lights.

Floating over the pool is Contessa Kyndance, whose giant head nods in recognition as you enter.

There are 1/2/3 praithian knights in the room, scattered among the left and right alcoves.

There are two nests of praithian war snakes of 6/8/10 snakes each, hovering like hummingbirds

## THRONE ROOM DESCRIPTION

If the characters came to battle, but now attempt to negotiate with the king, see Last Chance for the King, page 31

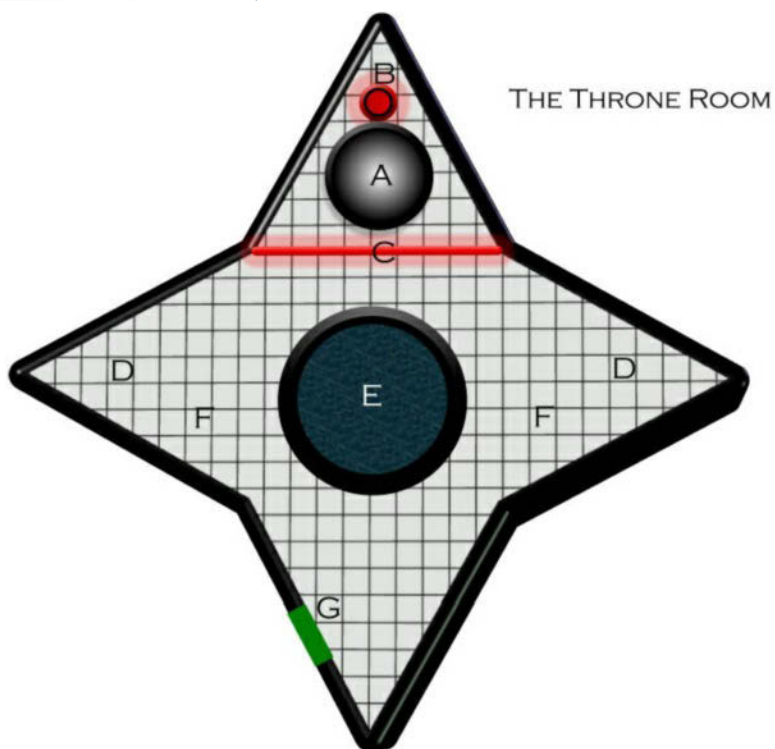
in front of the knights, one nest in either side alcove.

Across the room, past the pool, the alcove is sealed off with some kind of force-wall made of pulsing red light. In some places the wall is almost totally transparent, in others almost solid red, and these areas constantly shift and swim around the wall.

Behind the red wall of light is a circular throne, and above it floats King Umbral. He's got quite the stone head.

The throne is backlit by an intense red light. There is another light source back there, but you can't see what it is.

The door behind you vanishes as soon as you enter.



- A: KING ON HIS THRONE
- B: THRONE POWER SOURCE AND ASSASSIN
- C: FORCE FIELD
- D: PRAITHIAN KNIGHT
- E: POOL OF DREAMS AND CONTESSA
- F: PRAITHIAN WAR SNAKES
- G: VANISHING DOOR

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET  
(1.5m)

## POOL OF DREAMS

The 40-foot (12m) diameter pool of dreams is 10 feet (3m) deep and rises 3 feet (.9m) from the floor. If characters enter the waters, they must succeed on an Intellect roll or be dazed for one round.

If a character's items were confiscated by the praithians and not yet returned, they are sitting at the bottom of the pool. The waters have not damaged them.

Any character hit in combat while in the water has to make another roll to avoid being dazed. Each failure adds another round to the duration.

The depth counts as deep water, which quarters movement: a short move is about 12 feet (3.7 m), and a long move is about 25 feet (7.6 m).

Characters trained in swimming only halve their movement while in deep water.

## FORCE FIELD

The force field stops any kind of energy or mental attack from succeeding, but lets the king and the traitor hiding behind the throne attack out.

Physical attacks by the PCs fail unless the characters specifically target the solid red blobs that dance about the force field. If they do, they must first succeed on a difficulty 6 Intellect or Speed roll or the attack is wasted. If they succeed, then they can then roll for their standard attack.



Targeting the opaque spots is counterintuitive, so characters will probably try the most transparent spots first, which will fail.

It is a difficulty 6 task to jump through the opaque red spots. If a character succeeds in doing so, the princess will follow.

Characters may have teleportation cyphers or other skills or numenera to use to bypass the force field. The princess does not teleport, but will follow one round later via a well-placed jump.

## COMBAT IN THE THRONE ROOM

This set-piece battle is designed to take the characters to their limits.

- Opening Round:
  - The king springs his trap and Princess Duphreen vanishes into the ceiling.
  - Praithian war snakes fly past the characters' front line and swarm the back line.
  - Praithian knight(s) attack, attempting to keep the characters from engaging the king.
  - Every round the king uses psychic whirlpool. He also uses mind control as

**GM Intrusion:** The king mind controls a character. This character must make an immediate attack on other character of the GM's choice using the combat between PCs rules. Tie rolls go to the uncontrolled character.

Every turn, the character can attempt to break free by succeeding on an Intellect defense roll (7/8/9) to break free .

Only one character can be controlled at a time. The royal can relinquish control at will.

a GM Intrusion on a character on the first round. After that he uses eye of chill mind every round.

- Round 2:
  - A nest of war snakes employs its GM Intrusion on a character in the back line.
  - King, knights, and snakes attack.

**GM Intrusion:** A nest of war snakes frenzies on one character, attacking as level: 7/8/9 (including poison), doing quadruple damage: 12/16/20

**King Umbral:** level 7/8/9;  
Speed defense 6/7/8;  
4/6/8 points of Armor: ½ armor for blunt weapons; stabbing weapons -1 damage; 2 attacks a round: 1) eye of chill mind: (long) 7/8/9 Intellect damage and move 1 level down on the damage track & 2) psychic whirlpool: AoE (short) 3 Intellect damage/royal praithian in range, for every 5 praithians:+1 attack level; counts as 3 normal praithians for whirlpool; special minor and major effects; page 52



Combat Between PCs, page 98



*The Traitor, page 24*

**GM Note:** *It's important that the king threaten that, "Queen Grieva will hear of this." This foreshadows the battle to come at the Queen's Tower; page 39*

**Praithian War Snake:** *level 3/4/5; 2-hit mook (6/7/8); bite has Intellect poison that dazes for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks the target performs is modified by one step to its detriment; page 55*

**Nest of Praithian War Snakes:** *composed of 6-10 snakes, attacks as level 5/6/7 for double damage; poison still only lasts one round, but the target has to roll twice to avoid it's effects.*

**GM Intrusion:** *A knight spins around, attacking all enemies in immediate range. Any hit causes double damage, but skips the secondary Speed defense attack.*

- All Rounds:
  - The traitor is hiding behind the throne and is ready to ambush the first person to get there.
  - If the characters have the upper hand, the king, the knights, the war snakes, and the traitor will all use their GM Intrusion powers, one per round. Target the healthiest characters.
  - The players need to be burning cyphers and spending effort like there is no tomorrow.

## COMBAT THROTTLES

This set-piece battle should feel epic. All players should fear that their characters are going to die, and have to throw everything they've got into the fight in order to survive. You shouldn't pull any punches, at least until the first character is debilitated.

You have a number of throttles to keep the combat exciting and just barely survivable. If the players are winning but the combat is dragging, use all the throttles to end the conflict.

## CONTESSA KYNNDANCE

The Contessa wants to protect the princess. She might try to block the king's eye of chill mind with her body. If the characters look like they need help, she'll do just that. If she helps, her stone head will start to crack. Unless a character does something specific to save her, such as taking the damage for her, the king will kill her in a few rounds for the temerity of getting in his way. You need not track her health, it just happens.

## PRINCESS DUPHREEN

The princess starts in the reverse gravity trap for a few rounds, returning when the players are sweating. Then she jumps to the side of a character taking on her father. If no one is engaged with the king, she finds a character to help.

The princess can also soak up damage if the players are going down. No die rolls needed, just describe her getting wounded left and right and skip an attack or three on the characters. Bloodied but unbowed, she fights on.

## THE RED CRYSTAL

The glowing red crystal behind the throne is another throttle. Once it's shattered, the force field goes down. If someone gets to it while the characters are dominating, it takes 3 strikes to break it. If the characters are on the ropes, the first blow shatters it.

## THE TRAITOR BEHIND THE THRONE

The traitor, who is guarding the crystal, will teleport out once they decide fighting for the mad king isn't worth the risk. The traitor will decide when, based on the flow of the combat. If the characters are in danger of dying, the traitor will teleport early. If the characters are running roughshod on the king, the traitor will strike early and often.

## THE WAR SNAKES

The praithian war snakes are 2-hit mooks, but if the characters need a break they can become 1-hit mooks.

## KING UMBRAL THE MAD

The king's tactics are another throttle. He can target NPCs, or just stand back and rant if the characters need a break. If they need to be pushed, he can target the most dangerous or the most vulnerable character.

Every time one of the king's knights or the traitor falls, he calls out: *"Queen Grieva will hear of this!"* Whenever any of his precious war snakes are struck down, he rants and perhaps uses a GM Intrusion.

## THE PRINCESS TRAP

On the first round of combat, the king activates a trap for his daughter. His goal is to get her out of







the way so that he can kill the characters without having to kill her as well. Or that might be his goal, it's hard to tell. Opening with this trap should be great fun if the characters walk into the room with total confidence that they are with the kick-ass princess, and then, poof, she's gone.

In any case, wherever Princess Duphreen is standing becomes a reverse gravity field, and the ceiling vanishes. Above is a swarm of praithian war snakes to keep her busy.

Eventually she breaks free and jumps down, bitten and scratched. Once again, she's helping. Allow her to stay out of the fight for at least two rounds, maybe more if the characters are doing well.

## THE GLOWING RED CRYSTAL

The glowing red crystal behind the throne is powering both the force field and the king. As long as the crystal is functioning, the king gains a level on all his attacks and defenses to 8/9/10 and the force field stays up.

When the crystal is shattered, the king loses two levels on all his attacks and defenses, down to 5/6/7.

The crystal is a 2-hit mook (20), but you can let it shatter earlier or later depending on the flow of combat.

## THE RETURN OF THE TRAITOR

The traitor hides behind the throne, next to the glowing red crystal. Unless the characters have discovered the traitor's presence, they strike the first person to come past the throne with 2 levels of surprise. The traitor is not expecting anyone to teleport back there, so if a character just appears back there, the traitor does not surprise the PC.

Once discovered, the traitor will attack anyone who is near the crystal, and if that is safe or shattered, they'll go for anyone near the king.

If the traitor has been killed or driven away by the characters previous to this encounter, the red crystal is guarded by a captain of the same race as the traitor.

## THE KING IS DEAD

When the characters finally take down the king, they find inside his head a gray, twisted mummy that bubbles into green goo. The third eye drops out of the stone head. It's a fist-sized red gem. It's useful during the nightmare storm and the Queen's Tower events, since no praithian spectre can harm anyone in direct physical contact with the gem.

## BREATHES

**Leads in:** Throne Room, page 33

**Leads out:** Nightmare Storm, page 38

Change the NPCs in this event if they are dead, traitors, or your players just like interacting with different NPCs.

*You find yourself carried on shoulders back to the Queen's Head Inn, being treated as heroes of the revolution. Dh'lanns and slithiks cheer as you go by.*

*In the most palatial suite, Tasss-Klish, the slithik who once opposed you, and Breesch, the dh'lann who championed you, present you with the hammer of the white sun. Here you able to eat, drink, and have time to heal.*

*On a low table lies the dead king's eye, a massive red crystal that graced the king's third eye. Flickers of light dance around inside.*

**GM Intrusion:** Breesch is deeply in love with one of the player characters. Breesch is just starting to turn into a gender that the character typically is attracted to.

Breesch kneels and asks, "Is it true, you were the one to defeat the king? My people will leave this place and descend to the surface once the airships return. Join me. Stay with me. I shall be honored to be your bride and husband."

It's up to the player to decide whether or not to go off and live with Breesch. Leaving the party would take the player out of the campaign unless the entire party joined the couple.

Breesch could be convinced to travel to the world above. If the offer is rejected with grace, Breesch remains. If not, Breesch departs in tears.

## ARTIFACT: HAMMER OF THE WHITE SUN

**Level:** 1d3 + 7 (8/9/10)

**Form:** Massive two-handed hammer or mace.

Not a hammer with a flat head, but a 2-foot (60cm) sphere of an unknown white alloy set on a shaft of bone-white cerraosteel and covered in glowing sapphire runes of an unknown alien script.

**Effect:** When activated, does its level in damage, and maybe more (see below). Activation lasts ten minutes.

**On a Natural 17+ Hit:** Additional effects: target is dazed 1 round, and if human-sized or smaller, the target is knocked prone.

When not activated, the hammer acts as a heavy weapon and the glowing runes dim.

**Quirk:** After a hit, the wielder's hands glow white for ten minutes. A second hit resets the timer.

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d20

Tasss says: "We have summoned an airship. It should be only a matter of days. Until then, you and the children are our honored guests. The



 Cypher Bag,  
page 303

**GM Note:** Anyone slapping on a fuzzy orange patch learns that blunt weapons are most effective against praithians.

*Queen's Tower hasn't fallen yet, but it's just a matter of time. The princess was grievously wounded, but she's recovering in her crystal tower, tended to by the machines of loving grace. Take this artifact and these cyphers as a reward for freeing us."*

The slithik hands out a cypher bag, level 4. The slithik also gives out one random cypher to every character.

Tasss, (and Breesh if still there), ask questions about the fight in the throne room. This is a time for characters to brag and relax. Allow a full 28 hours for recovery rolls.

## ARTIFACT: THE DEAD KING'S EYE

This artifact is slowly losing its power now that the king is dead.

**Level:** 8

**Form:** Large red crystal eye. Can be carried in a backpack or sling.

**Effect:** Adds 5 temporary Intellect to the person carrying the eye. Once these points are spent, they cannot be recovered.

Anyone in physical contact with The dead king's eye cannot be touched by a praithian spectre.

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d6, roll once per day.

## NIGHTMARE STORM

**Leads in:** Breather, page 37

**Leads out:** Queen's Tower, page 39

*Just before dawn, you wake up to a strange feeling in the air. A dh'lann soldier with a bandaged head pounds on your doors.*

*"The Queens Tower has woken up! There is a nightmare storm coming from the tower! The entire city might fall off the ledge! Our forces are falling back in disarray. It's impossible for an airship to land! Disaster!"*

The soldier points out a window, where the Queen's Tower is visible. The tower floats over the rubble-strewn streets; overhead a whirling storm gathers, flashing with purple lightning. In fact, the lightning is shooting up into the storm, flashing out of a glowing golden obelisk atop the queen's Tower. It seems the obelisk is feeding the storm.

Swirling around the tower are what look like praithian mummies—tall, slim, and dead. However, these are translucent, ghostly. The storm seems to be spawning praithian spectres.

Floater have also been drawn into the vortex. Usually docile, they grab at dh'lanns and slithiks



as they are driven by the wind. The unfortunates are pulled up into the storm, only to be flung away, careening into buildings and falling into the rubble.

## SECRETS OF THE PRAITHIAN KNIGHTS

Before the characters have time to leave the Queen's Head Inn, a dh'lann runner comes from the Crystal Tower.

*"The princess is too wounded to leave the machines of loving grace, but she sends these gifts. She says the queen is known to have her own complement of knights, and these patches will give you insights on how to combat them. The fuzzy orange one will help your attacks on them, and the smooth blue patches teach you how best to dodge. There is a price however. You have to give some of yourself to learn."*

The hexagonal patches dissolve into the skin, and leave a stain for a week before fading. Each costs 2xp to use. If the character doesn't have 2xp, the patches do nothing. There are enough for everyone to have one of each color, but no one has to take one.

The fuzzy orange patch makes the character trained in attacking praithian knights.

The smooth blue patch makes the character trained in defending against attacks by praithian knights.

In game-mechanics terms, these "cyphers" are really just prompts to spend 2xp to earn medium-term benefits.

## DENIZENS OF THE HOWLING WIND

Even as the characters face the Queen's Tower, only a few blocks away, vast seas of praithian spectres float toward the characters from rubble strewn streets. A ghostly royal specter leads the others.

*"That's Queen Grieva!"* says the runner, pointing at the figure leading the spectral mob moving in from the left.

Once outside, the characters will face the wrath of Queen Grieva the Lost, as she sends praithian







spectres, chy floaters, and her projection against them.

Characters that can cast esoterics notice thin golden tendrils of light connect the queen and the spectres to top of the Queen's Tower and the golden obelisk.

## THE NIGHTMARE CHASE

A slow-moving mob of spectres with numbers in the thousands is after the characters with the queen's projection egging them on.

You see Tasss-Klish and Purl-Vass (change the names if they are dead or one is the traitor) leading a group of about fifty rebels. "We will hold them off. See if you can destroy that obelisk and end this nightmare storm!"

It only takes four rounds for characters running and succeeding at difficulty 3/4/5 Speed rolls to reach the Queen's Tower. Failing, or otherwise not moving as fast as a run will let 1/2/3 spectres attack the character. Remember that any character touching the dead king's eye can't be touched by a spectre.

The mob is deceptively slow, since it can move through material objects to cut corners and get at the characters.

During each round, one character will be attacked by a chy floater.



### NIGHTMARE STORM EFFECTS

Nanos and any others who can cast esoterics feel queasy. They feel the power of life waning and the power of death waxing.

Tell everyone that while the storm lasts, all recovery rolls are at -1.

But all damage results are at +1.

## QUEEN'S TOWER

**Leads in:** Nightmare Storm, page 38

**Leads out:** Farewell Urbamorr, page 46

The Queen's Tower is the last challenge the characters face before returning to the world above. It is a difficult challenge, and this time the characters don't have the princess with them.

Strewn around under the bottom of the tower are fallen rebels and tumbled siege equipment. The wind howls and the spectre mob approaches. A difficulty 3 Might roll is all that is needed to get a fallen siege ladder back into place to reach the bottom of the floating tower.

## FLYING UP THE TOWER

Flying, should that be an option for the characters, is no easy task while the nightmare storm tears at them. There are three platforms on the way up, and then there is the final top level with the golden obelisk.

Those who can fly must succeed on a Speed roll. It is a difficulty 3 to reach the bottom door, 5 to reach the first platform, 7 to reach the second platform, 8 to reach the third platform, and 9 to reach the top of the tower.

If characters fail by 1-3 points, they are forced away, but can land at the level below. The level below the first platform is the ground.

Should they fail by 4+, they fall to the ground, taking 6 points of ambient damage if they tried for the lower platform, 7 for the middle, 8 for the top platform, and 9 for the top of the tower.

## INSIDE THE QUEEN'S TOWER

Inside the tower, the walls, floors, and high ceilings are made of glossy ceramosynth, lit by flickering silver glowglobes. The walls are flat black, making it hard to see how far away they are. The floors are golden and the ceilings wet-looking crimson. Most furnishings and accents are a glossy white.

While it will take a while, the horde of praithian spectres (minus the queen's projection), will enter the tower and attempt to catch up with the characters. They are unable to walk through the materials of the Queen's Tower, and will have to take the main ramp up. If characters come up with clever ideas to block or slow the spectres down, let them. If the characters are taking a long time getting to the top, have the spectres catch up. They should remain a threat while the characters move up the tower.

The tower contains many undefined rooms and corridors. Most are dusty disused chambers filled with reminders of bygone glory. You have plenty of leeway to add interesting discoveries and challenges should the characters leave the main ramp.

## "GROUND" LEVEL

Actually floating some 30 feet (9m) above the rubble, the bottom of the tower has massive doors swinging in the wind, twisted and hanging by threads of synth. The rebels had just gotten the doors open when the nightmare storm swept them away.

### GM Intrusion:

Gale-force gusts hammer a flying character. They are smashed into the tower and fall, taking double damage and gaining a broken arm.



Broken Arm, page 114

**Praithian Spectre:** level 3/4/4; 1/2/2-hit mook (1/5/7); 3/4/5 damage; touch attack ignores physical armor; can walk through solid objects outside of the Queen's Tower; page 54

### Praithian Spectre

**Swarm:** composed of 6-10 spectres, attacks as level 5/6/6; does double damage

**Queen's Projection:** level 7/8/8; 1 health; 1 Intellect damage; If "killed" will reappear 100 feet (30m) further away amid a crowd of praithian spectres. The next round she will streak up to short range; page 54

**Chy Floater:** level 3/4/4; 2-hit mook (6/7/8); 3/4/5 damage; stinging tentacle has Might poison that inflicts an additional 2/3/4 points of Speed damage; page 50





On the floor lies a praithian who died trying to hold the doors shut.

Deeper into the large room, a praithian knight stands before a ramp leading up. Unlike most knights, who are gray, this one is made of glowing red stone. Waves of heat radiate from the knight.

The red knight is a praithian knight who does 5 points of heat damage to all in immediate range. The knight is vulnerable to cold. All cold-based attacks have an asset and do +5 damage.

## FIRST PLATFORM

There are many hallways opening off the ramp as it climbs, but many of the high-ceilinged chambers are empty but for dust. You can add anything you like to these rooms. The longer the characters search without going up, the sooner the spectre host will catch up with them.

When the characters reach the level of the first platform, the ramp opens out into a large circular room. One hundred feet (30m) across the room, the ramp continues to spiral up the tower.

This chamber is full of slabs of glossy black synthglass, exactly like in *The Bridge*. Inside the black, the characters can see the thin, idealized giants that represent how the praithians see themselves. If the PCs approach the glass, they hear voices in their minds.

*"Whom do I trust? Queen or Princess?"*

*"Princess Duphreen claims the pillar of souls will not hold!"*

These voices are dreaming praithians in panic. The dream engines are collapsing, brought down by the slave revolt. Some want to defend the queen, others want to escape to the princess' crystal tower and reincarnate.

Unless the characters have stopped the spectres somehow, they hear their moaning as the spectral mob floats up the ramp from below. This further frightens the praithians in the black glass.

*"What is that? What do they want? What should we do about them?"*

Clever players using Intellect and negotiation skills will be able to get at least some of the praithians in the black glass to try to slow down the spectres. Set the difficulty low, say 3/4/5, and count good arguments as assets.





## SECOND PLATFORM

At the the second platform, the characters come to a 30-foot (9m) diameter circular chamber with white doors set in the black walls to the left and right. Directly ahead the ramp continues up.

Once again, there are many ways to leave the path, but the spiral ramp is the most direct route up. Exploring the intervening levels will cause the spectres to start catching up, but if the characters convinced the praithians in the black glass to hold the spectres below, the party has a little breathing room.

If they take time to explore on the way up, they find a dusty room on the outer rim of the tower. It has synthsteel shutters that, if opened, prove to be a portal to the outside world. Thirty feet (9m) directly above are massive outer shutters, irised shut. They are the outdoor opening to the Hall of the Floating Mind (below).

If the characters have done nothing to slow down the spectres and they stay to explore this level, the spectres will appear just as the characters leave the first door they explore. If the player characters have come up with ways to slow down the spectres, they can explore what's behind both white doors before the spectres appear. A quick dash up the ramp will leave the spectres behind, but not deterred.

### DOOR ON THE LEFT: HALL OF THE FLOATING MIND

If any of the characters has telepathic powers, they "hear" in their mind the thoughts of something large and childlike from behind the white door on the left. It feels lost and confused.

Similarly, any character with an ability to use esoterics or sense strange numenera such as those with the Weird descriptor, sense something "big" is behind the left door.

Listening at the left door the characters can hear a slight wind, as though the air inside the chamber is constantly circulating.

Opening the door is as simple as approaching it and thinking about opening it. The door irises open to reveal the Hall of the Floating Mind. It's a massive circular hall with catwalks around its perimeter that run from the entry all the way to a massive door to the outside world.

In the center of the chamber is an enormous 70-foot (21m) diameter floater, which looks very much like a giant floating brain trailing tendrils. Thick synth cables reach from the domed ceiling and plug into the brain-like creature.

Anyone who steps onto the catwalk gets a telepathic message: *Do not free the captive.*

They then notice a ramp going up and over the railing of the catwalk. *Leap into the void to communicate.*

If characters take the leap, they enter the dream of the floater. It's lost in a dark cavern and the character is lost with it. Anyone staying behind sees the characters who jumped spiraling in toward the giant floater and beginning to orbit it.

In the dreamland of the floater, the characters who took the leap hear it's worried mind.

*"I'm lost."*

*"Where is the White Sun? I can't find my way without the White Sun."*

*"Who commands my children to fight in my name?"*

The last thoughts come with fuzzy perceptions of floaters attacking dh'lanns and slithiks.

If the mind is freed, the queen loses the ability to summon new floaters, and most of those already under her control will be freed. She's able to keep half (round down) of those on the top of the tower because of her proximity, but no more.

The player characters may come up with all sorts of outlandish plans to free the floater, almost any plan should work. The characters have two problems to overcome before the spectres arrive: free the mind and free the body of the giant floater.

**To free the mind**, characters in the floater's dream could succeed on an Intellect 5/6/7 to connect the floater to someone on the *An Domorr* or the River of Stars itself.

Characters in the dream could connect their minds to the floater's mind and succeed on an Intellect 5/6/7 to weaken the bonds and waken the floater.

Characters could sever the synth cables. This requires climbing the roof of a domed ceiling (difficulty 6) and cutting through cables with an armor of 4 and 4 health.

Once the mind is freed, the characters get a strong telepathic projection: *Let me out!*

**To free the body**, the PCs could use detonation cyphers or some other destructive force to blow the door to allow the floater to exit the tower.

A successful difficulty 5/6/7 Might roll would force the old door open to the outside world. A 5/6/7 roll is required to open the numenera lock.

Both the body and the mind must be freed, or the floaters will still attack the characters at the top of the tower.

### DOOR ON THE RIGHT: ART ROOM

The white door on the right is locked with a difficulty 5 numenera lock. A white circle over the door provides the guards a means of watching anyone approach the door.

**Red Knight:** level 6/7/8; 6/8/10 points of Armor, armor is halved for blunt weapons, -1 damage from stabbing weapons, cold-based attacks have an asset and +5 damage; sword: 8/10/12 damage, aura: 5 heat damage to all in immediate range; when hit, target makes 2nd Speed defense roll or takes 4/5/6 ambient damage and loss of 1 point of armor; minor and major effects; page 53

*Pillar of souls, page 42*





*Mastigophores,*  
page 245

**GM Intrusion:** As the characters stop to loot the art room, one of the sculptures comes to life. It is a giant six-legged canine, level 5/6/7; 2/3/4 points of Armor. The first attack is by two levels of surprise.



*Imager, page 306*

**Black Knight:** level 6/7/8; 8/10/12 points of Armor, armor is halved for blunt weapons, -1 damage from stabbing weapons, ignore armor on natural 19+; 8/10/12 damage + 1 Intellect damage; on hit, target makes 2<sup>nd</sup> Speed defense roll or hit for 4/5/6 ambient damage and loss of 1 point of armor; minor and major effects; page 53

**Reduced Black Knight:** level 6/7/8; 8/10/12 damage; on hit, target makes 2<sup>nd</sup> Speed defense roll or hit for 4/5/6 ambient damage and loss of 1 point of armor; minor and major effects; page 53

If someone attempts to open it, they hear a deep voice coming from the white circle. First it speaks in a few unknown languages, including Urbamorrhish, then switches to the Truth. *"The art exhibit is closed. Please come back after the execution of all rebels."*

Once opened, the door reveals a pure white corridor going 30 feet (9m) and ending in a black door. The door is flanked by giant praithian heads sitting on the floor. They are empty, but behind them lurk 1/2/3 mastigophores guarding the installation.

Behind the unlocked black door lies an exhibition of art consisting almost exclusively of sculpture made of ceramof foam. Abstract shapes vie with sculptures of praithians, dh'lanns, slithiks, floaters, and more. Many of the pieces are enormous, 20 feet (6m) or more. However, there are enough smaller items that the characters could loot the place and have enough to sell for a fortune in a big city back on the surface. Allow each character to carry enough to sell for 500 shins when they get back (less if your next adventure requires they be hungry for money).

Hidden among the sculptures is an artifact. An Imager containing an image of each piece of art sits upon a white circular platform. The last image is of Contessa Kynndance, supervising dh'lanns in setting up the art exhibit.

## THIRD PLATFORM: THE PILLAR OF SOULS

Characters who continue up the ramp will find themselves below the Pillar of Souls.

## OFF THE PATH

Leaving the ramp and exploring the rest of the tower, the characters find little except empty rooms and shuttered windows. Careful searching will reveal a locked door (difficulty 3) that leads to an access shaft with a ladder.

Climbing down puts the characters just above the roof of the Hall of the Floater, where they can destroy the level 5/6/7 controls that keep it a prisoner and extract 1d6 cyphers from the control panels.

Directly above the control room is a hatch that opens to an unlit corridor leading to another door. Behind that is a catwalk circling the Pillar of Souls.

## THE RAMP OR THE JUMP?

Those who follow the ramp find it flattens out into a 30-foot (9m) diameter circular chamber. Across the chamber the ramp continues up, but a praithian knight made of black stone stands

blocking the way. Flanking the knight is one praithian spectre for each player character present.

Five feet (1.5m) above a human's reach is a ladder going straight up into a circular opening in the 30-foot (9m) tall ceiling. Inside the opening are flickering yellow lights and blinking numenera. It's a difficulty 5 Might roll for PCs to jump up and catch the ladder and pull themselves up. Running first is an asset.

It's obvious the 20-foot (6m) tall black knight could not follow the characters into the narrow shaft.

The characters hear the praithian spectres approaching from behind (unless they've really stopped them somehow). Most tactics will only slow them down, since the spectres can always find new ways up the tower. The characters might have to deal with both the group in front and the group behind.

*You hear the moaning and whispering of the praithian specters trying to follow you into the Queen's Tower. Do you do anything to slow them down?*

Any good idea will work for a while. Otherwise, the PCs will find themselves engaged with the spectral host.

## THE BLACK KNIGHT

As soon as the black knight sees the characters, he will speak in a thundering voice: *"Invaders! You have trespassed on the Pillar of Souls!"*

Although the black knight cannot enter the Pillar of Souls, he is bound to it. He will send his war snakes up after the characters. His black surface flickers, and every so often shows plain gray stone beneath the blackness. He acts as a normal praithian knight but starts with 2 extra points of armor. The black knight does an additional 1 point of Intellect damage with his black sword.

The black knight has a weakness: his flickering armor is failing. Every successful hit on the black knight with a natural 19+ ignores armor.

Inside the stone armor, lies a praithian made entirely of black shadow.

If the Pillar of Souls is destroyed, the black knight's armor goes to 0 and his sword no longer does Intellect damage.

## THE PILLAR OF SOULS

The Pillar of Souls is a major component of the praithian dream engines. Destroying it weakens the queen and many of her forces.

The top of the ladder leads via a short walk to an opening revealing a massive chamber that reaches from the bottom to the top of the Queen's Tower. Inside this chamber is a 20-foot







(6m) wide golden crystal spanning the entire height of the tower from top to bottom. In fact, the large obelisk seen on the top of the tower appears to be only the tip of this enormous crystal. The crystal sizzles with energy.

There is a catwalk that leads both to the crystal and around it. Near the crystal, at the end of the catwalk, is an open-air control room hovering amid golden lightning. Characters can feel their hair standing on end due to the crackling energies of this chamber.

Every round in this chamber, a praithian spectre floats up the shaft and attempts to attack the closest character. Since the spectres are silent and the chamber is loud, have the target character make an Intellect roll (difficulty 6, perception helps) or the first attack is by surprise.

When this exhausts all the spectres that were with the black knight, new spectres from the horde will float up, 2 per round, unless the characters have bought themselves a lot of time.

To use the catwalk, characters must move through the lightning to reach the control room. They must succeed in a difficulty 4 Speed roll (balance) or be swept away by energy fields that have them flying in circles around the crystal. Every round they tumble in the air, the golden lightning strikes them for 3 Intellect damage.

Someone could rescue them as they fly by, with another difficulty 4 Speed roll.

Once they reach the control room, a successful numenera roll, difficulty 5/6/7 will shut down the Pillar of Souls. Opening the control panel yields 2d6 shins, 1d6 cyphers, and 1 oddity.

When the pillar shuts down, the characters hear an echoing shriek. The praithian spectres who have followed the characters up from the streets are gone. The number of praithian spectres on the top of the tower is halved (round down), and the queen cannot summon any more. The nightmare storm is over, but unless the characters go to the platform and look outside, they don't know that.

Should they wish to leave the tower after shutting down the storm, they can. Later they will hear of the queen's suicide.

The much-reduced knight will be waiting at the bottom of the ladder, if he is still alive.

Alternatively, the characters could leave by another exit. They see a catwalk spiraling up and ending at a door 50 feet (15m) above them. Beyond the door the ramp continues up. This allows the characters to bypass the black knight and continue on to the queen.

The Pillar of Souls is worth 1 discovery xp for each character.

## TOP OF THE QUEEN'S TOWER

You find yourself atop the Queen's Tower. The top is about 150 feet (45m) in diameter. The edge is a shear drop, lacking an outer wall or railing. Four towers of glowing yellow and white synth extend another 50 feet (15m) above you. These towers are mostly open scaffolding mixed with geometric sheets of synth that pulse with power. In the center of the tower is a 30-foot (9m) tall golden crystal obelisk.

Two gray and black ceramosteel platforms hover 20 feet (6m) above the floor, one to the east and one to the west of the center obelisk. The eastern platform is unmanned, and holds what looks like a podium covered in blinking numenera. It floats very close to one of the synth towers.

The left platform holds Queen Grieva. The queen is tall, thin, and mummy-like, with synth tubes running from her throne directly into her neck.

In front of the obelisk stand 1/2/3 white praithian knights. Thick fog flows down their frost-rimed white surfaces. Even from here, you feel a chill radiating from these knights.

The ramp up opens onto the top of the tower. The queen sits on a throne that hovers 20 feet (6m) above the ebony tiles of the rooftop. She's not alone, but none of her guards moves to attack.

Depending on the characters' past actions and their inclinations, this can be kick-ass combat or a tense negotiation. Watch the players, see what they are in the mood for. They may be ready to rumble, or they may be sick of the fighting, and just want it to end. If it's not obvious, give them a prompt by having the queen say, "Why have you destroyed my people?"

This gives the characters an opportunity to parley, but lets them know it won't be easy.

## TOP OF THE TOWER

Anyone in immediate range of a white knight takes 5 points of cold damage. Each knight wields an enormous blue cryogenic sword that does an extra 1 Speed damage on every hit. Otherwise, they function as normal praithian knights.

The white knights are vulnerable to fire. Fire- and heat-based attacks gain an asset and do +5 damage.

**Praithian Spectre:** level 3/4/4; 1/2/2-hit mook (1/5/7); 3/4/5 damage; touch attack ignores physical armor; can walk through solid objects outside of the Queen's Tower; page 54

**White Knight:** level 6/7/8; 6/8/10 points of Armor, armor is halved for blunt weapons, -1 damage from stabbing weapons, heat attacks gain asset and do +5 damage; sword: 8/10/12 damage + 1 Intellect damage, all in immediate range take 5 cold damage; on hit, target makes 2<sup>nd</sup> Speed defense roll or hit for 4/5/6 ambient damage and loss of 1 point of armor; minor and major effects; page 53



## OBELISK: DEAD OR ALIVE?

**If the characters shut down the Pillar of Souls,** the crystal obelisk is a dull gold, edging to orange. The clouds above are parting, and shaft of white light from The Sun Below moves slowly across the tower. Take the number of characters in the group and divide by two (round down) to get the number of praithian spectres who are left to do the queen's bidding.

**If the characters did not shut down the Pillar of Souls,** the obelisk shines brightly, filling the area with golden white light. Lightning shoots out of the obelisk up into the storm. A massive spiral storm whirls above the tower. One praithian spectre for every member of the party swirls around the obelisk. Once combat starts, the obelisk will bring another spectre down from the storm to attack the characters every round.

## HAS THE FLOATING MIND BEEN FREED?

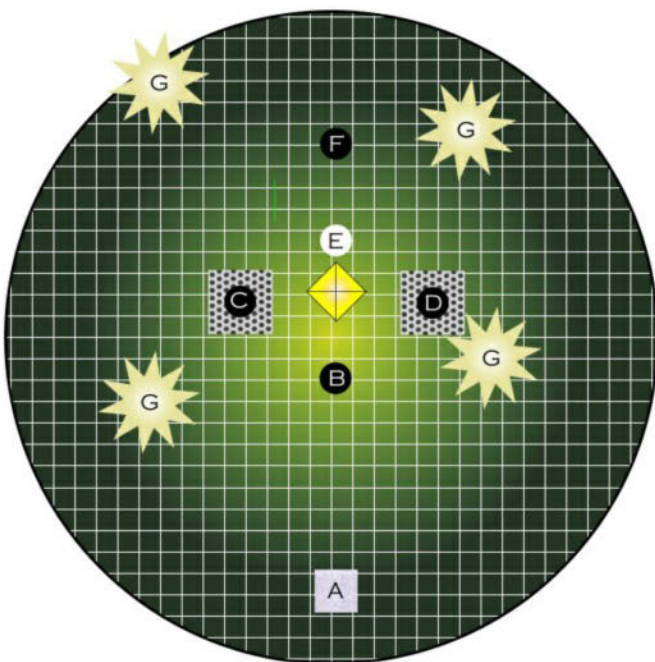
**If the characters have freed the floating mind,** there are no remaining floaters here to serve the queen, and none will come to her aid.

**If the characters have not freed the floating mind,** take the number of characters and divide by 2 (round up) to determine the number of chy

**Golden Obelisk:** level 6/7/8; 4/5/6 points of Armor; 18/21/24 health; 6/7/8 heat damage (short); Speed defense as level 1 due to immobility

**GM Intrusion:** Obelisk heat blast at level 8/9/10 for 12/14/16 heat damage (short)

TOP OF QUEEN'S TOWER



A: LIFT FROM BELOW  
B: KNIGHTS  
C: QUEEN'S PLATFORM  
D: FLOATER CONTROL PLATFORM  
E: OBELISK  
F: GHOSTLY PRAITHIANS  
G: TOWER OF GLOWING SYNTH

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET (1.5 M)

floaters attending the queen. Once combat starts, the floater control platform will bring another floater down from the storm to attack the characters every round.

## PARLEY WITH THE QUEEN

While it's possible to gain a diplomatic solution at this point, a lot will depend on past actions. If the characters are successful at getting the queen to stand down, there are two possible outcomes: she will either commit suicide or form an alliance with her daughter.

To find the difficulty in getting the queen to stand down, start with her level: 7/8/9.

Each of the following factors will lower the difficulty by 1:

- Princess Duphreen is still alive and is allied with the characters.
- Contessa Kyyndance is still alive.
- The characters attempted to parley with the king.
- The Pillar of Souls has been shut down.
- The floating mind has been freed.

Each of these factions will increase the difficulty by 1:

- The princess is dead.
- The contessa is dead.
- The horde of praithian spectres engulfs the characters during negotiations (a fine use of a GM Intrusion if the Pillar of Souls is still operational).

Good arguments are assets. Deceiving, intimidation, and persuasion skills may all be used.

Should the characters succeed, the queen nods. *"Our time is over. Let the killing end."*

Any praithian spectres vanish, knights drop their swords, and floaters float away. The nightmare storm breaks up.

The queen sits wearily back onto her throne, takes the spear of the frozen void, points it at her own heart, and gets ready to end her life. *"This world has nothing for me. And nothing for Duphreen, but she doesn't know it yet."*

Ask the characters what they do.

It's not obvious how they can physically intervene and stop the queen, but you never know. Any plan that makes sense will work.

Another successful negotiation could work. Again start with the queen's level: 7/8/9.

Each of the following factors will lower the difficulty by 1:

- The princess lives.
- The contessa lives.





- The Pillar of Souls has not been shut down yet. This gives the praithians a little breathing room as they line up to become embodied.

Each of these factions will increase the difficulty by 1:

- The princess is dead.
- The characters used Intimidation on the queen in the earlier negotiation.

Again, good arguments are assets.

Before the die is cast, if the characters attempted to talk the queen down, the princess shows up with a retinue of embodied praithians. This lowers the difficulty by 3 as Princess Duphreen takes the queen's hand and begs her to come back fully to life.

If the queen lives, she hands the spear, shaft first, to a character. *"Take this away. I don't want to see this again."*

If the queen kills herself, the princess breaks down. She will pull the spear out of her mother, and offer it to a character, using the same words, but with a heavier tone.

## FIGHTING THE QUEEN

Sometimes it comes to a fight. If the characters fail at negotiation, or don't bother to try, they must stop the queen by force of arms.

### QUEEN GRIEVA

A shiny, metallic mist swirls about the queen, giving her 8 armor against energy attacks, 4 armor vs. physical attacks.

She is armed with the spear of the frozen void. She will use it on any who come close. Normally she uses her eye of chill mind and psychic whirlwind, however in this situation she will try her mind control as a GM Intrusion at the start of combat. The mind-controlled character will then be directed to attack an ally.

Getting into melee range with the queen is difficult, but if a character climbs aboard the other floating platform, it can be piloted over to the queen with a difficulty 4 (numenera) task. If there are floaters in the battle, they will defend that platform, because the podium controls both the platform and the floaters.

If the queen is losing, she'll rail against the characters. *"Duphreen is a fool to trust killers like you!"*

If the characters spare the queen's life, cut to her suicide attempt above.

### ARTIFACT: SPEAR OF THE FROZEN VOID

**Level:** 1d6 + 4 (8/9/10)

**Form:** A white spear that seems to have been grown, not forged. It is smooth and organic

looking, like a plant. The spear's flat blade is ghostly and wavering.

**Effect:** When activated: Ignores Armor and does its level in cold damage. The spear requires an Intellect spend to add damage using effort and a Speed spend when using effort to lower the attack difficulty. It only affects living biological beings and will not hurt constructs or energy beings.

When not activated, the spear acts as a staff. Activation lasts ten minutes.

**Quirk:** The wielder's shadow looks like the shadow of the last creature killed with an activated spear.

**Depletion:** 1 in 1d20

## THE QUEEN'S TACTICS

The knights will stand in front of the queen, attempting to stay within the 50-foot (15m) range of her eye of doom.

The praithian spectres will throw themselves at the characters. If the obelisk is still operating, not only will it summon a new praithian every round but each round 1d6 spectres show up as the horde from below arrives.

Any chy floaters attack. As long as both the floater-control platform is summoning them and the floating mind is not released, a new chy floater is pulled down from the sky every round.

The obelisk, if active, is summoning praithian spectres and controlling the nightmare storm. It can shoot at one target a round at immediate range: a golden ray for 6/7/8 heat damage.

*You feel a searing pain and smell your flesh sizzling.*

## THE FLOATER-CONTROL PLATFORM

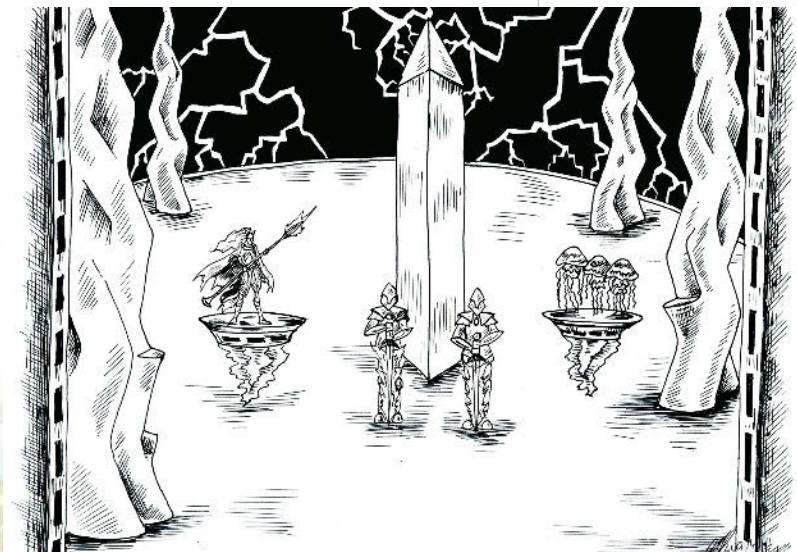
Climbing up the nearby tower to the platform is only difficulty 2. Identifying how to control the platform is difficulty 4, modified by knowledge of the numenera. If successful, the character can

**Queen Grieva:** level 7/8/9; Speed defense 6/7/8; 8 points of armor vs. energy, 4 vs. physical attacks; 2 attacks a round: 1) eye of chill mind: (long) 7/8/9 Intellect damage and move 1 level down on the damage track or spear 8/9/10 cold damage, ignores armor; 2) psychic whirlpool: AoE (short) 3 Intellect damage

**Praithian Spectre:** level 3/4/4; 1/2/2-hit mook (1/5/7); 3/4/5 damage; touch attack ignores physical armor; can walk through solid objects outside of the Queen's Tower; page 54

**Praithian Spectre Swarm:** composed of 6-10 spectres, attacks as level 5/6/6; does double damage

**Chy Floater:** level 3/4/4; 2-hit mook (6/7/8); 3/4/5 damage; stinging tentacle has Might poison that inflicts an additional 2/3/4 points of Speed damage; page 50



**GM Note:** *Returning to the surface with knowledge of the world of the Sun Below is worth 2xp for each character.*

now pilot the platform and turn off the floater summoning device.

## THE RETURN

### FAREWELL URBAMORR

**Leads in:** Queen's Tower, page 39

**Leads out:** Return to the World Above, page 46

The surviving NPCs again treat the characters as heroes, and quickly find Tuctin and Tar and return them to the PCs. An airship is summoned, and the characters have time to recover.

The dh'lanns and slithiks are free, and probably plan on migrating from the city to the floor of the world below. If any praithians survive, they will probably stay in Urbamorr, centered around the Crystal Tower.

Of course, past events and PC input could change any of these plans.

### RETURN TO THE WORLD ABOVE

**Leads in:** Farewell Ubramorr, page 46

**Leads out:** Wedding, page 47

The king is dead, the queen either reconciled to her daughter or dead, a few hundred praithians have returned to the living, and the slaves are free. The characters are heroes. Tar and Tuctin are ready to go home, though they seem to like the reflected fame they share by being so close to the great liberators.

The gong summons an airship. The *An Domorr* returns, with Captain Klorsh and Lebby.

*"Welcome aboard, and well done,"* says Captain Klorsh. *"We're to show you every courtesy, and we will. And little Lebby has taken an interest in you."*

The pair make the journey a comfortable one, all the way to the top of the world. If the nibovian wife's child by one of the characters was left on the ship, the abykos will still be there, probably hanging around the River of Stars. It is still harmless, but there is no reason the characters should be so sure of that.

On the way back, they are peppered with questions by Lebby. Tuctin and Tar are given tours of the ship, including the River of Stars. If any character ended up with a broken limb or other long-lasting or permanent injury in Urbamorr, a swim in the river will cure all.

As the ship gets close to its destination, Lebby will invite one of the characters to swing with her. She climbs up a ladder between gas bags and

ends up in a large open field, with two swings hanging from a blue-bark tree.

*"You go to the best places,"* she says breathlessly. *"Can the Captain and I come visit you someday?"*

If the characters have bonded the pair, you may wish to use Lebby, Captain Klorsh, and the *An Domorr* in future adventures with your players.

Eventually, the ship docks and the captain and Lebby say their farewells. The shaft up has a reverse gravity field. After falling up for quite some time, the characters are greeted at the surface station by Aeon Priest Mishka and a number of lesser priests, guards, and scribes, all working for the Order of Truth.

*"Tuctin! Tar!"* Mishka is overjoyed to see the children.

Mishka, having lost her husband to the travonis ul, is conflicted. At least her grandchildren are safe. A huge celebration is planned, and the characters enter Uxphon at the head of a big parade. The seven families have declared a holiday and are giving away food and drink. That's enough to make most of the city-folk cheer whoever the heck is at the front of the parade.

At the Square of the Seven Families, Lady Ningo, an old, pompous, and somewhat scattered noblewoman, gives them ceremonial pipe-shaped keys to the city.

### CLAN TAN

If the characters told the old couple it was safe to go see the face at the start of the adventure, Twyr and Holai Tan are dead and buried. The characters see a few groups of people with hard faces glaring at them from among the mostly jubilant city folk. Some throw rotten vegetables and eggs at the characters.

Someone yells, *"You murdered my gran!"*

Soldiers chase down the egg throwers and Lady Ningo whispers to the characters, *"We'll take care of them. In 28 hours the whole clan will be cleaned up."*

Unless the characters ask her to hold off, she's good to her word. All of Clan Tan will find themselves in unmarked graves or on the slaver's auction block within a day. Perhaps one or two might escape and return as assassins or worse in some future adventure.

If the characters kept the old couple back, Twyr and Holai are there, cheering and waving. Holai gives what appears to be a wreath of white flowers to a young girl (her grandchild) who throws the oddity over to the characters.

The oddity is a synth flower wreath that acts as a wind chime. The stronger the breeze, the louder





the chimes. The sound comes out of the white trumpet shaped flowers.

## BARID

If the characters have a connection to Barid the slave, they will see him there as part of a chain gang sweeping the streets for the great heroes. If the characters ask for Barid's freedom, it is granted right away.

*"The others on my chain deserve freedom too,"* says Barid.

Lady Ningo turns a stony face toward the man, and then smiles. *"Fine. It's a party."*

The entire chain is freed. Any of the former slaves might come back as an ally in a future adventure.

The invitation begins *"For your great service in discovering the Truth,"* and then mentions some of the discoveries and achievements of the player characters.

*"We would be honored to have you attend the wedding of Gre and Nok."*

The wedding can be set anywhere, and transportation will be provided by the Order of Truth. Setting the celebration near where your next adventure will begin would be perfect.

This is a massive wedding, and would be a great setting to place hooks for further adventures. If characters wish to join the Order of Truth, the reception would be a perfect place to ask.

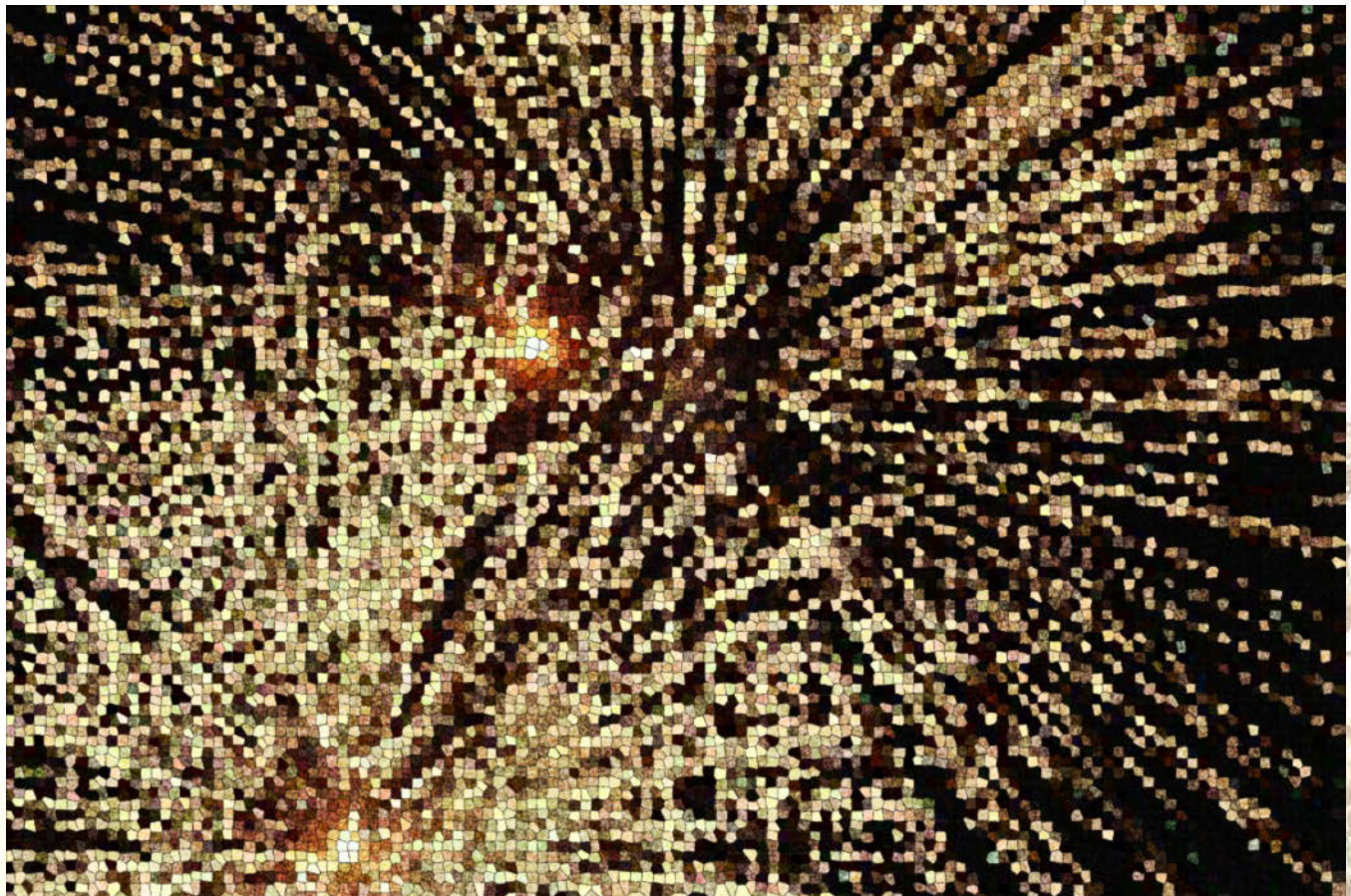
## WEDDING

**Leads in:** Return to the Lands Above, page 46

An invitation from Mishka arrives for a wedding of Gre Thara and Nok Ellel, two Aeon Priests, to be held in a months' time in or near the location of your next adventure.

Gre Thara is the daughter of Mishka Thara and Ellus Pring. Ellus died at the start of the adventure, but Mishka would be honored if the characters attend.

You see a crowd of dignitaries and common folk pack the temple. Respected scholars and numenera experts from the Steadfast and the Beyond are all in attendance.





# BESTIARUM VOCABULUM

## DH'LANNs

Dh'lanns are violet-skinned hermaphroditic humans, and are common in the world of The Sun Below. Given their hermaphroditic nature, they don't use gender-based pronouns. In this text the singular *they* is used instead of *he* or *she*.

### ORDINARY DH'LANN 2 (6)

**Motive:** Like other humans, dh'lanns have a variety of motives. A minority of dh'lanns find the concept of non-hermaphrodite people offensive.

**Environment:** Any. They are highly adaptable, but are much more common in the world of The Sun Below than on the surface.

**Health:** Named dh'lann: 6; unnamed: 1-hit mook

**Armor:** Usually none.

**Movement:** Short

**Modifications:** Mindslice as level 3.

**Combat:** Dh'lanns can use weapons as any human would. They often use clubs. Or they can make a ranged attack with their minds: mindslice (onslaught, Intellect attack only) at level 3, 2 Intellect damage.

**Interaction:** The Order of Truth has sent Aeon Priests to the underground world of The Sun Below for over a century, so many dh'lanns can speak the Truth. The more educated the dh'lann, the more likely they are to speak the Truth.

**Use:** While exploring the world of The Sun Below, the characters see a village in the distance. It is a dh'lann village, and the characters can find food, perhaps a place to stay the night, and maybe equipment. If the dh'lanns discover the characters are not hermaphrodites, a few may shun the characters.

**Loot:** 1d6-1 shins. Important dh'lanns may carry a cypher or two, or even an artifact or oddity. Dh'lann slave: no shins and a praithian mind-control crystal.

*Mook, page 4*

**GM Intrusion:** A spike of psychic energy turns an ordinary dh'lann's mindslice into a level 6 attack that does 8 points of Intellect damage.

*Praithian mind-control crystal, page 10*







## DH'LANN SOLDIER 2/3/4 (6/9/12)

**Motive:** Follow orders, defend their homeland, stay alive, and collect loot

**Environment:** Any.

**Health:** Named soldier: 9/12/15; unnamed soldier: 2-hit mook (4/5/6)

**Damage Inflicted:** 6/8/10

**Armor:** Level 2: leather jerkin (1); level 3+: beastskin armor (2)

**Movement:** Short

**Modifications:** Dh'lann soldiers in squads use swarm rules. A squad is 5 - 10 soldiers and attacks at level 4/5/6 for 12/16/20 damage. Squads use mindslice at level 6/7/8 for 8/10/12 points of Intellect damage.

**Combat:** In melee, huge greatswords swing, high, low and in between. At range, the soldiers use mindslice, a level 4/5/6 attack that does 4/5/6 Intellect damage.

*You feel cold daggers are being thrust into your head.*

**Interaction:** Many soldiers speak the Truth.

**Use:** A ruin is guarded by dh'lann soldiers. They have orders to let no one pass.

**Loot:** 1d6 + level shins; slave soldiers: praithian mind-control crystal.

*Mook, page 4*

**GM Intrusion:** *The soldier or squad gets another attack, at 2 levels higher than normal. A soldier will do double damage, a squad quadruple. (A squad normally does double.)*

*Praithian mind-control crystal, page 10*

## DH'LANN CAPTAIN 4/5/6 (12/15/18)

**Motive:** Prestige for their community or nation. Well-being of soldiers they command.

**Environment:** Any, though they are typically found commanding dh'lann soldiers in the lands of The Sun Below.

**Health:** 15/18/21

**Damage Inflicted:** 8/9/10

**Armor:** Synth breastplate (3)

**Movement:** Short

**Modifications:** Captains have 0-2 cyphers and some carry an artifact. Many dh'lann captains are partial to liquid ceramosteel armor.

**Combat:** Captains can make 2 melee attacks a round, or 1 attack at range: mindslice (onslaught, Intellect attack only) at level 5/6/7 for 5/6/7 Intellect damage.

**Interaction:** Dh'lann captains tend to be pretentious, but otherwise will interact as others of their community and class.

**Use:** A dh'lann captain approaches the characters with a request that feels like a command. "My soldiers need to get across this river before nightfall. Help them."

**Loot:** 2d6 shins, 0-2 cyphers, and sometimes an artifact and/or oddity. Slave captains: praithian mind-control crystal.

**GM Intrusion:** *The dh'lann captain the character just struck wears level 8 liquid ceramosteel armor (4 armor). Upon the armor is an active controlled blinking nodule cypher. The captain teleports behind the attacker and gets a free melee attack at 2 levels higher for double damage.*

*Liquid ceramosteel armor, page 19*



**Controlled Blinking Nodule,**  
page 283





## FLOATERS

### CHY FLOATER 3/4/4 (9/12/12)

A floating bio-mechanical gas bag about 12 feet (3.5m) across with streaming tendrils, like some mad jellyfish of the skies.

**Motive:** Eat small flying creatures and easy-to-reach plants such as the foliage atop trees.

**Environment:** The skies under The Sun Below.

**Health:** 2-hit mook (6/7/8)

**Damage Inflicted:** 3/4/5

**Armor:** 0

**Movement:** Short

**Modifications:** Floats in the air, slower against the wind, faster with it.

**Combat:** Stinging tendril (3/4/5) + Might roll or lose 2/3/4 Speed.

**Interaction:** Chy floaters are beast-like and have no speech.

**Use:** As the characters travel in the wilderness of The Sun Below, they notice shadows from above.

Looking up, they see a group of chy floaters, dragging their tendrils across the tops of trees.

**Loot:** One can glean 1d3-1 cyphers from a dead chy floater.

### ZOACH FLOATER 5/6/7 (15/18/21)

A zoach floater has a bio-mechanical body as big as a house and is full of gas bags and numenera. It drapes tendrils down 50 feet (15m) or more to grab vegetation, animals, and people.

**Motive:** Omnivorous grazing.

**Environment:** The air. Common in the world of The Sun Below.

**Damage Inflicted:** 5/6/7

**Modifications:** Speed defense 4/5/6 due to size and speed. Can reach targets up to short range.

Slashing weapons do 2 additional points of damage, while blunt weapons do 1 less point of damage. When a floater is at half its health, it starts sinking to the surface as it deflates. A floater cannot move against a strong wind. The creature counts as a beast and abilities that calm or otherwise affect beasts will work on the floater.

**Combat:** A hit by a stinging tendril causes the target to feel as if it's been pushed into a white-hot forge.

The target must succeed in a Might defense roll or lose 4/5/6 Speed. Any natural 17+ hit with a heat- or fire-based attack on the zoach floater will cause it to explode for its level in fire damage to all within immediate range. This kills the creature. Anyone inside its digestive sack will take double damage and then fall, along with the flaming wreckage of the floater.

**Interaction:** The zoach floater is a beast, and has no language.

**Use:** While exploring a jungle in the lands of The Sun Below, a character is grabbed by what had seemed to be a vine, but is really a zoach floater tendril.

**Loot:** There is a strange device that serves as the floater's brain. Breaking it apart yields 0-2 cyphers and 1d6 shins, unless it exploded, in which case only 1d3 shins and no cyphers.

**GM Intrusion:** The chy floater grabs a character and pulls them up in the air, then lets go in 2/3/4 rounds for a 40-foot (12m) / 60-foot (18m) / 80-foot (24m) drop. Falling damage is ambient damage.

**GM Intrusion:** The zoach floater grabs a character and stuffs them into its digestive sack. Each round any organic armor loses 1 AP and the character takes 5/6/7 points of ambient damage. Characters inside the sack when the floater explodes take double damage.





# PRAITHIANS

Praithians appear to be desiccated mummies with numenera devices somehow keeping them “alive.” Typically, they shield themselves in giant stone heads, and few other peoples have ever seen their actual forms. They are 8 feet (2.4m) tall and very thin. Their long heads are three eyed. The third eye is the locus of their psychic powers.

The third eye of their stone shells protrudes from their foreheads and appears to be a decorative stone sphere. When a praithian uses an eye attack, the stone eye glows brightly.

## ORDINARY PRAITHIAN 4/5/6 (12/15/18)

Thirteen-foot (4m) tall stone heads that levitate above the ground. They have narrow faces, long chins, and high foreheads complete with glowing third eyes.

**Motive:** To dream and never have to deal with the mundane world of actual existence.

**Environment:** Urban, supported by massive dream engines that hold their minds and dream worlds.

**Damage Inflicted:** 4/5/6

**Armor:** 4/6/8

**Movement:** Short (levitating)

**Modifications:** Armor is halved for blunt weapons. A praithian has a Speed defense of 3/4/5 due to its large size. Stabbing weapons do 1 less point of damage due to the thick ceramostone covering. If struck with a 19 or 20 for a major or minor effect, the character can choose to strike at a crack in the stone and ignore the praithian’s armor.

**Minor effect suggestion when hit by a blunt weapon:** the ceramostone rings like a bell, and the praithian is stunned for one turn.

**Major effect suggestion when hit with a blunt weapon:** the armor cracks in half, dropping the armor to 0 and revealing an 8-foot (2.5m) tall lurching mummy with a large, narrow head and three eyes. The praithian will likely flee after this, and any attacks on the newly uncovered mummy gain an asset to hit.

**Combat:** A praithian can make two attacks each round.

**Eye of Doom:** A searing hot beam of red energy lances out of the third eye, up to long range, doing the praithian’s level in damage. This beam ignores 1/2/3 points of physical armor.

**Psychic Whirlpool:** This is an area of effect group attack that inflicts 1 Intellect damage per praithian in short range. For every 5 praithians, add one to the attack level. Praithians and those with mind-control crystals are immune to the psychic whirlpool.

**Interaction:** Praithians are haughty and most believe other races exist merely to serve them as slaves. Most praithians are unconscious, their minds busy living in their own dreamspace shard of the datasphere. Conscious praithians tend to be arrogant and upset that they have been forced to interact with the real world.

**Use:** As the characters explore some ruins under The Sun Below, they come upon some giant three-eyed stone heads. The heads lie scattered about, many are covered in moss and vines. Suddenly, one of the heads levitates, its third eye pulsing with power.

**Loot:** Breaking open a praithian reveals the mummy inside and 1d6 cyphers and 1d6 shins.



**GM Intrusion:** The praithian uses mind control to force a character to make an immediate attack on another character of the GM’s choice using the combat between PCs rules. Tie rolls go to the uncontrolled character. Every turn, the mind-controlled character can attempt to break free by succeeding on an Intellect defense roll (4/5/6) to break free as a free action.

Only one character can be controlled at a time. The praithian can relinquish control at will.



Combat Between  
PCs, page 98



**GM Intrusion:** *The royal praithian uses mind control to force a character to make an immediate attack on another character of the GM's choice using the combat between PCs rules. Tie rolls go to the uncontrolled character.*

*Every turn, the mind-controlled character can attempt to break free by succeeding on an Intellect defense roll (7/8/9) to break free as a free action.*

*Only one character can be controlled at a time. The praithian can*

## ROYAL PRAITHIAN 7/8/9 (21/24/27)

Royals are encased in more ornate stone heads than ordinary praithians.

**Motive:** Maintain the Praithian Empire, dream.

**Environment:** Hidden enclaves in the world of The Sun Below, the praithian shards of the datasphere.

**Health:** 21/24/27

**Damage Inflicted:** 7/8/9

**Armor:** 4/6/8 (2/3/4 vs. blunt weapons and explosions)

**Movement:** Short

**Modifications:** Armor is halved for blunt weapons. A royal praithian has a Speed defense of 6/7/8 due to its large size. Stabbing weapons do 1 less point of damage on royals due to their thick ceramostone covering. If struck with a 19 or 20 for a major or minor effect, the character can choose to strike at a crack in the stone and ignore the royal's armor.

**Minor effect suggestion when hit by a blunt weapon:** the ceramostone rings like a bell, and the royal praithian is stunned for one turn.

**Major effect suggestion when hit with a blunt weapon:** the armor cracks in half, dropping the armor to 0 and revealing an 8-foot (2.5m) tall lurching mummy with a large, narrow head and three eyes. The royal praithian will likely flee after this, and any attacks on the newly uncovered mummy gain an asset to hit.

**Combat:** A royal praithian can make two attacks per round.

**Eye of Chill Mind:** (long) a cyan beam which lances out of the third eye. It does 7/8/9 Intellect damage and moves the unfortunate character down one on Damage Track.

*You feel like your head is locked inside a ponderously heavy block of ice.*

**Psychic Whirlpool:** This is an area of effect area of effect group attack that inflicts 3 Intellect damage per royal praithian in short range, and 1 Intellect damage for every ordinary praithian in short range. For every 5 praithians, add one to the attack level, counting royal praithian as 3 praithians. Praithians and those with mind-control crystals are immune to the psychic whirlpool.

**Interaction:** Praithians speak telepathically.

**Use:** The characters come upon a praithian enclave. The leader is a royal, and is interested either in trade or slaves.

**Loot:** 1d6 shins, 1d6 cyphers, and 1 oddity







## PRAITHIAN KNIGHT 6/7/8 (18/21/24)

A praithian knight looks like a faceless 20-foot (6m) tall stone giant with an enormous sword of blue flame.

**Motive:** Honor, praithian supremacy, serving the royals.

**Environment:** Anywhere praithians have an interest

**Health:** 18/21/24

**Damage Inflicted:** 8/10/12

**Armor:** 6/8/10, 3/4/5 vs. blunt weapons and explosions

**Movement:** Slow

**Modifications:** Armor is halved for blunt weapons. A praithian knight has a Speed defense of 5/6/7 due to its large size. Stabbing weapons do 1 less point of damage due to the thick ceramostone covering. If struck with a 19 or 20 for a major or minor effect, the character can choose to strike at a crack in the stone that ignores all armor.

**Minor effect suggestion when hit by a blunt weapon:** the ceramostone rings like a bell, and the praithian is stunned for one turn.

**Major effect suggestion when hit with a blunt weapon:** the armor cracks in half, dropping the armor to 0 and revealing an 8-foot (2.5m) tall lurching mummy with a large, narrow head and three eyes. The praithian knight cannot lift his sword and will likely flee after this, and any attacks on the newly uncovered mummy gain an asset to hit.

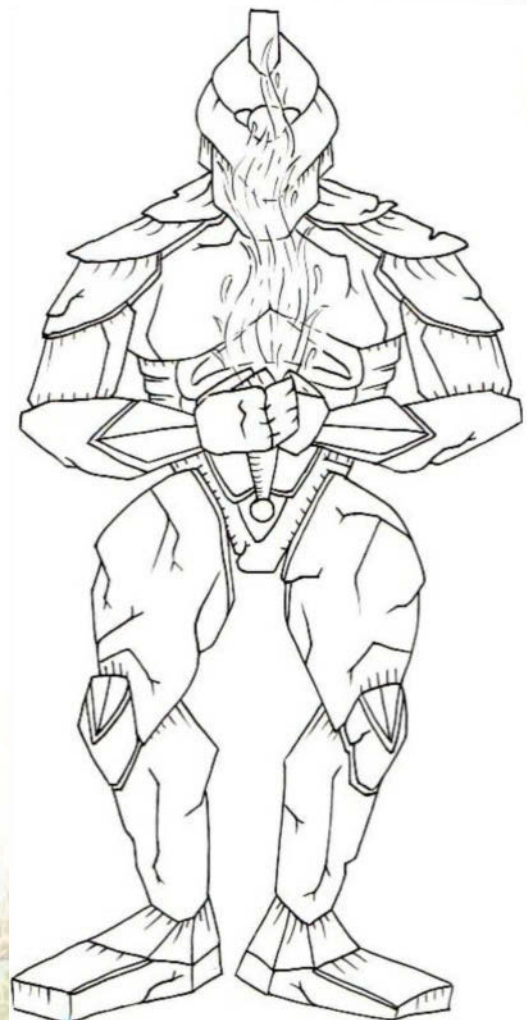
**Combat:** The 10-foot (3m) long sword of blue flame does 8/10/12 points of painful burning damage. If hit, the target must succeed on a Speed defense roll or the knight presses the flame into the character's armor, dropping the armor value by 1 until repaired, and the target takes 4 more painful points of burn damage, ignoring armor. The armor damage stacks until the armor is destroyed.

**Interaction:** Unless the knights are under orders to parley or converse, they maintain a strict silence.

**Use:** A praithian ruin seems open to plundering, until the 20-foot (6m) "statues" come to life.

**Loot:** Looting a dead knight yields 1d6 shins, 1d6 cyphers. The flaming sword blade sputters and vanishes if the knight is killed. The hilt counts as an asset when used a component when crafting new numenera.

**GM Intrusion:** The knight spins around, attacking all enemies in immediate range. Any hit causes double damage, but skips the secondary Speed defense attack.



## QUEEN'S PROJECTION 7/8/8 (21/24/24)

**GM Intrusion:** A character struck by the queen's projection suddenly lets go of the dead king's eye and walks away from their companions and into a crowd of praithian spectres, offering no resistance as 4/5/6 of the spectres reach out and touch the character.

**GM Intrusion:** When a praithian spectre is killed, it shrieks and shoves its incorporeal form into the mouth of the character who killed it. The character takes 6/8/10 Intellect damage and cannot heal Intellect through recovery rolls for 28 hours.

The spectral mummy shrieks and forces your mouth open. The ghost flies down your throat causing a painful cold shock to fly up your spine and freeze your head. You start to choke, then cough something up.

Looking like a glowing version of a praithian spectre, the queen's projection doesn't hold eye contact. She doesn't hear what characters say or notice what they do. She just knows where they are and brings spectres to them.

**Motive:** Harass the characters.

**Environment:** Urbamorr during The Nightmare Storm.

**Health:** 1

**Damage Inflicted:** 1 Intellect

**Armor:** 0

**Movement:** Long

**Modifications:** If "killed," she will reappear 100 feet (30m) further away amid a crowd of praithian spectres. The next round she will streak up to short range.

**Combat:** Can drain at short range.

**Interaction:** The queen feels her whole world is dying, and she's none too pleased about it. *"Feel the wrath of my people!" "You have destroyed us!"*

## PRAITHIAN SPECTRE 3/4/4 (9/12/12)

These ghosts appear to be thin, translucent mummies, about eight feet (2.5m) tall, floating and flying off the ground. They can float right through walls, and will do so in order to touch a living being.

**Motive:** Driven mad by the loss of their dream-world, they manifest in praithian ruins and lash out at anyone entering their territory.

**Environment:** Praithian ruins.

**Health:** 1/2/2-hit mook (1/5/7)

**Damage Inflicted:** 3/4/5

**Armor:** 0

**Movement:** Short

**Modifications:** Can walk through material objects, but not through force walls and not through the walls and floors of the queen's Tower. There they must follow the ramp up. Spectre swarms of 6-10 can join in a swarm that attacks at level 5/6/6 and does double damage. Since spectres can easily pass through defenses, a large enough mob of spectres can attack each character in a party with their own individual swarm.

**Combat:** Their touch ignores armor, with the exception of energy-field armor.

*A sickening chill grips you deep in your bones. Colors fade and the world turns gray for a moment.*

**Interaction:** It's possible to reach the mad mind of a praithian spectre through telepathy. Unless there is a nearby praithian dream engine in repairable state, there is not much one can do for the spectre.

**Use:** The characters open a long-sealed vault in the lands under The Sun Below. Out pours a swarm of praithian spectres.

**Loot:** A character who suffers from a GM Intrusion after killing a praithian spectre starts choking, then coughs up a small cypher like a hairball.

Mook, page 4







## PRAITHIAN WAR SNAKE 3/4/5 (9/12/15)

A flying snake bred for hunting and war, war snakes are beloved members of many praithian households.

**Motive:** Hunt, eat, obey the master.

**Environment:** Mountains in the lands of The Sun Below.

**Health:** 2-hit mook (6/7/8); a rare, named praithian war snake has health: 9/12/15

**Damage Inflicted:** 3/4/5

**Armor:** 0

**Movement:** Flying: long, slithering: immediate

**Modifications:** A nest of 6–10 praithian war snakes uses the swarm rules. A nest attacks as level 5/6/7 (including the poison) and does double damage: 6/8/10. (A group of snakes is called a *nest*.)

**Combat:** Bite for 3/4/5 damage and the target must succeed on an Intellect defense roll or be dazed for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks the target performs is modified by one step to its detriment.

**Interaction:** Praithian war snakes count as beasts.

**Use:** While trekking through mountains under The Sun Below, the characters spot a pack of praithian war snakes flying by.

**Loot:** Usually none, but sometimes the bones of a past victim of the snakes lie nearby, with perhaps a few usable items and maybe even a cypher.

*Mook, page 4*

**GM Intrusion:** A nest frenzies on one character, attacking as level 7/8/9 (including poison), doing quadruple damage 12/16/20.



## PYRONIC SENTRY 5 (15)

A pyronic sentry is a synthsteel- and glassteel-cladded automaton whose color changes to match the flames it finds itself in. It looks like a massive armored man with long blades for hands.

**Motive:** Follow orders to guard a place or a thing.

**Environment:** Pyronic sentries are usually found near fires, lava pits, or other hellishly hot environments.

**Damage Inflicted:** 5 slashing and 5 heat.

**Armor:** 3 (100 vs. heat)

**Modifications:** While being almost invulnerable to heat, cold attacks gain an asset and ignore armor. In fact, if a pyronic sentry is removed from a fiery environment and placed in a temperature comfortable for a human, the automaton will become sluggish and have a one-level penalty on all its actions. Should one end up in a frigid environment, it would take a two-level penalty on all actions and take one point of damage a turn until it shattered into pieces.

**Combat:** A pyronic sentry will follow its orders first, and worry about self-preservation second. Usually the orders do not require it to move to cooler locations.

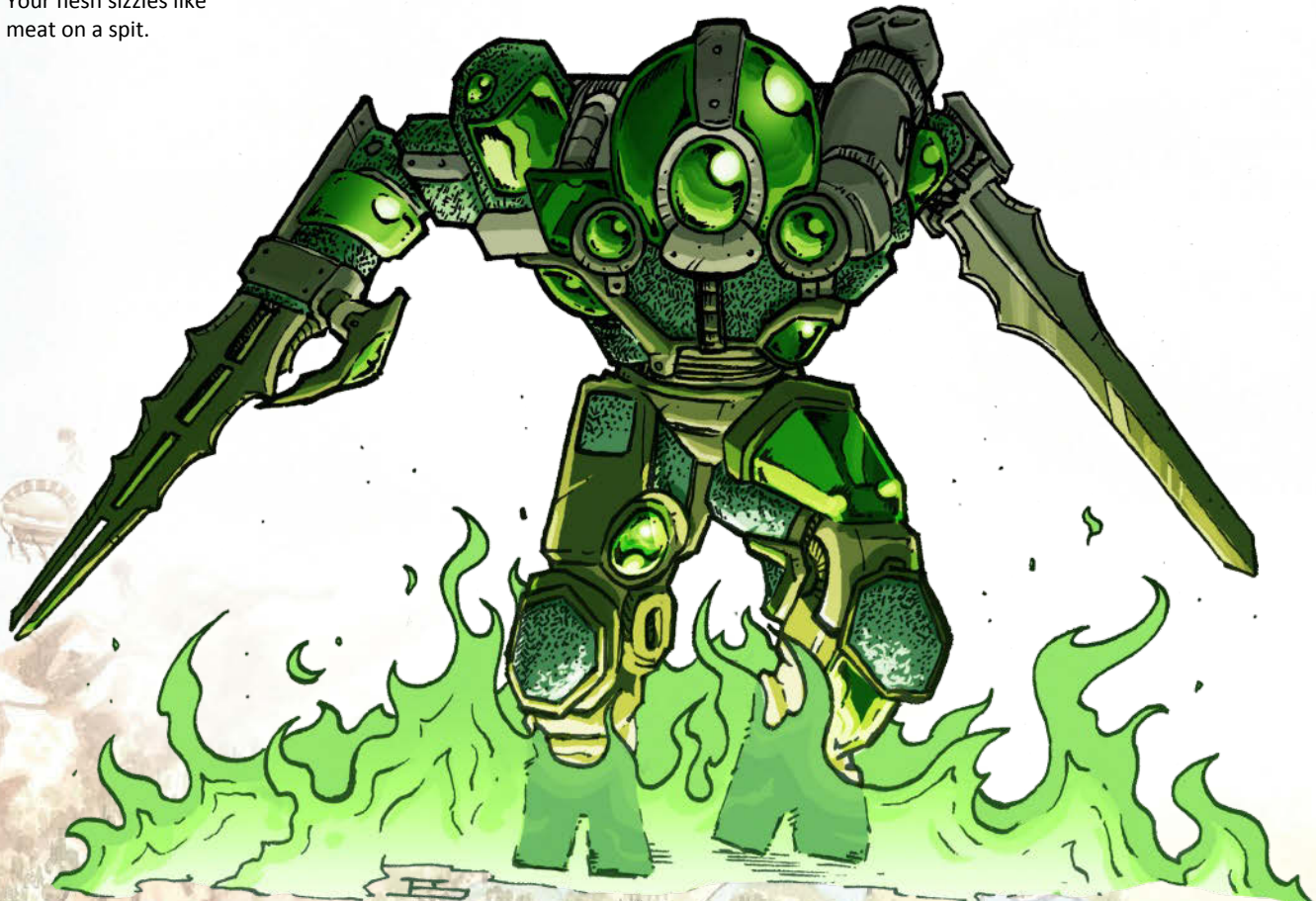
**Interaction:** Pyronic sentries do not speak, but are telepaths.

**Use:** An arch-nano's synthsteel tower rises out of a lava field. People say the arch-nano hasn't been seen in years, but the pyronic sentry still stands guard, stopping good folk from taking valuable items from a woman who surely doesn't need them anymore.

**Loot:** Once cool, the remains of a pyronic sentry can be salvaged for 1d6 cyphers and possibly an oddity.

**GM Intrusion:** *The pyronic sentry teleports an enemy who is at short range or closer to just in front of the automaton. The sentry then attacks as level 7/8/9 with both bladed hands, doing double damage and dazing the foe for one round if it hits. The foe will also take heat damage from the environment if the pyronic sentry is in its usual searing environs.*

You teleport into the flames and feel the searing-hot bladed hands of the automaton spike deep into your body. Your flesh sizzles like meat on a spit.







# SLITHIKS

A slithik is a mound of green and black slime. Eight black tentacles sprout out of the slime, each ending in bright blue metallic pincers. Erupting from the top of the slime is a black stalk, ending in a big black sunflower-shaped face with two red eyes and a toothless slit for a mouth. When feeding, a clear tube dripping with mucous slithers out of the mouth to drink blood.

Slithiks are born engineers and tinkerers who are drawn to exploring ruins and attempting to find uses for numenera.

Slithiks are at least as varied as humans, here are the types of slithiks found in this adventure.

## ORDINARY SLITHIK 3/4/4 (9/12/12)

**Motive:** Blood, numenera, a comfortable and interesting life.

**Environment:** Any environment that allows them cover from direct sun will do. Despite their plant-like features, slithiks are shade loving. At the same time they need some light, so if they are found underground they will have access to light.

**Health:** Named slithik: 9/12/12; unnamed slithik 2-hit mook (4/5/6)

**Damage Inflicted:** 3/4/5

**Armor:** 0/1/1

**Movement:** Short

**Modifications:** Slithiks with armor are surrounded by a glowing green nimbus.

**Combat:** In melee, the slithik uses a poisoned tentacle attack that causes a feeling of hollowness in any wound. The target must succeed in a difficulty 3/4/5 Might test or lose 2/3/4 Intellect.

The ranged attack is a green and black brain fog ray (short). It gives the target a splitting headache.

The target must succeed in an Intellect defense check or lose 3/4/5 Intellect.

**Interaction:** Slithiks are good linguists, and in any group of slithiks, at least one will be able to speak the Truth.

**Use:** The characters come to a village in a ruin. A group of slithiks stand in the shade, sipping blood from a creature with their long, mucous-covered tubes. A single slithik slithers out and greets the characters in oddly formal Truth. *"What brings you here, my good mammal?"*

**Loot:** Not only will free slithiks have 0-2 cyphers, they will use them to defend themselves if they have to. Many slithiks in this adventure are slaves, and are unlikely to have acquired cyphers. They will have praithian mind-control crystals.

*Mook, page 4*



Mook, page 4

**GM Intrusion:** *The soldier, or squad, gets an extra attack this round. The attack is at +2 Levels and does double damage. It can be either a poisoned-pincer attack or the brain fog ray.*

*Praithian mind-control crystal, page 10*

**GM Intrusion:** *The slithik captain pulls out a level 10 slithik brain spike and fires twice at the same target.*

*Slithik brain spike, page 22*

## SLITHIK SOLDIER 4/5/6 (12/15/18)

**Motive:** Protect fellow soldiers, follow orders, stay alive.

**Environment:** Ruins or other numenera-rich areas in the lands of The Sun Below. Unless a slithik nation is at war, the soldiers are acting as guards, protecting a place or people important to slithiks.

**Health:** Named soldiers: 12/15/18; unnamed soldiers: 2-hit mooks (8/10/12)

**Damage Inflicted:** 7/8/9

**Armor:** Surrounded by a green nimbus for 1/2/3

**Movement:** Short

**Modifications:** Slithik soldiers fight in squads of 5–10. A squad attacks at level 6/7/8 and does double damage on all attacks.

**Combat:** A single slithik soldier's melee attack is a poisoned pincer that does 7/8/9 damage. On a successful hit, the poison requires a successful Might defense roll or the victim takes 4/5/6 Intellect damage.

*The pincer stabs into you and suddenly the world starts spinning.*

The ranged attack is a green and black brain fog ray (short): requires a successful Intellect defense roll or the target loses 5/6/7 Intellect points.

*A fog envelops your mind and everything seems so far away.*

**Interaction:** This depends on the mission and how the nation or community that controls the soldiers views non-slithiks. In some cases, a slithik city guard will happily provide local information and rumors. In others, slithik soldiers might threaten the characters on sight, or even attack without warning.

**Use:** A rival has hired slithik mercenaries to steal an artifact from the characters.

**Loot:** 2d6 shins. A poison sack with 1d6 doses of the pincer poison may be harvested from a dead slithik, but that is considered desecration of the dead by other slithiks. All slave soldiers have a prraithian mind-control crystal embedded in their neck stalk.

## SLITHIK CAPTAIN 6/7/8 (18/21/24)

**Motive:** Complete the mission, advance the nation or community, protect their soldiers.

**Environment:** Anyplace slithiks are found.

**Health:** 18/21/24

**Damage Inflicted:** 8/9/10

**Armor:** Green nimbus for 3/4/5

**Movement:** Short

**Modifications:** A slithik captain will typically carry 1 – 2 useful cyphers, and perhaps an artifact as well. Some slithik captains favor the slithik brain spike.

**Combat:** Slithik captains get 2 ranged or one melee attack per round. The poisoned pincer does 8/9/10 damage. On a successful hit, the poison requires a successful Might defense roll or the victim takes 6/7/8 Intellect damage.

*The pincer stabs into you and suddenly the world starts spinning.*

Green and black brain fog ray (short): requires a successful Intellect defense roll or the target loses 7/8/9 Intellect points.

*A fog envelops your mind and everything seems so far away.*

When grouped with other slithiks, the captains will tend to seek out opponents who are attacking at range. Often they use their brain fog rays and ranged numenera weapons.

**Interaction:** Slithik captains who are not actively engaged in combat with the characters are likely to engage in parleys or simple conversation. If the characters engage soldiers in conversation, they are often passed up to the local captain.

**Use:** An airship dock is controlled by slithik soldiers. Any who wish to use the docks must first impress the local captain, who is very fond of numenera.

**Loot:** Tentacle band worth 1d6 \* 10 shins. 0-2 cyphers. Possible artifact. All slave captains have a prraithian mind-control crystal embedded in their neck stalk.





## SLITHIK SAVANT 4/5/6 (12/15/18)

**Motive:** Experts in numenera, savants investigate relics of past worlds and advance their own interests.

**Damage Inflicted:** 4/5/6

**Armor:** 1/2/3 The armor is a glowing green force screen.

**Modifications:** +2 levels in numenera lore.

**Combat:** Slithik savants can either attack with their brain fog ray or with their poisoned tentacle.

The poisoned-tentacle attack causes a feeling of hollowness in any wound. The target must succeed in a difficulty 4/5/6 Might task or lose 3/4/5 Intellect.

The green and black brain fog ray (short) gives the target a splitting headache. The target must succeed in an Intellect Defense check or lose 4/5/6 Intellect.

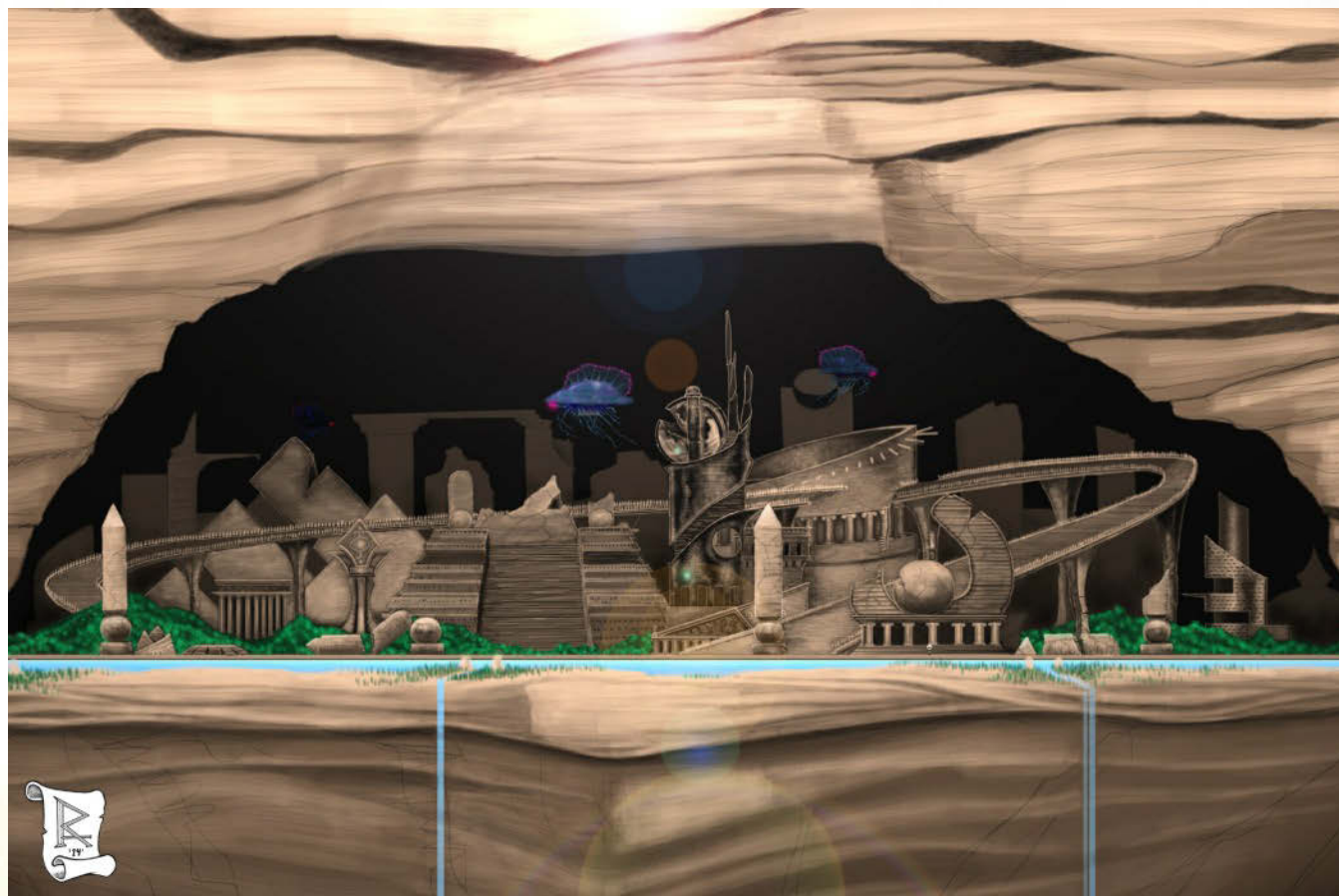
**Interaction:** Savants are likely to know a number of languages, including the Truth.

**Loot:** A slave savant would have a praithian mind-control crystal. A free savant would have 1d3 cyphers and possibly an oddity. Savants prefer oddities that have artistic merit.

**GM Intrusion:** When the savant is hit with a numenera weapon or esotery, the savant turns out to have a (slithik only) implant that reflects the damage back as Intellect damage and adds a level of difficulty to all future defense rolls by the attacker for the next hour.

The implant requires another GM Intrusion to work a second time.

*Praithian mind-control crystal, page 10*



# NUMENERA

NAME	LOCATION	TYPE
Detonation (Psy)	Page 10	Cypher
Hammer of the White Sun	Page 37	Artifact
Healing Sphere	Page 7	Artifact
Liquid Ceramosteel Armor	Page 19	Artifact
Mind-Shield Bud	Page 24	Artifact
Praithian Dream-Vapor Bowl	Page 18	Cypher
Praithian Knight's Sword Hilt	Page 53	Crafting
Praithian Mind-Control Crystal	Page 10	Artifact
Slithik Brain Spike	Page 22	Artifact
Spear of the Frozen Void	Page 45	Artifact
The Dead King's Eye	Page 38	Artifact

# EXTRAS

See <http://dreadunicorngames.com/games/city-on-the-edge/bonus-web-features-city-on-the-edge/> for bonus web features.









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[Dreadunicorgames.com](http://Dreadunicorgames.com)