

Poisoncraft - Venomous Villains

# The Syrallex

האם האתלטה מרבה עם המעבדות  
מדינות  
האם אלה הם המדינות המתקדמות  
אלהם המעבדות האתלטה את האתלטה  
האם המתקדמות הם המתקדמות

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From the Poison Pages of the Codex Venenorum



## WHAT IS POISONCRAFT?

Some years past, I penned an ode to the craft of poison. It should come as no surprise to the reader—as indeed it offered me none—that my words evoked a strong reaction. There were some who decried my efforts as dangerous or reckless. Others took an ... **unhealthy** interest in the lore. Some solicitations for assistance I received—regarding specific implementations—gave me pause, and I declined to answer. But there is one thing that convinces me my effort was worthwhile: No one called into question the thoroughness of my work or the accuracy of my results. I am **proud** of my work.

Knowledge is a path, not a destination. **Rules change.** In the intervening years, I have developed new theories and original applications. I have undertaken more extensive contemplation and obtained new insights into the process. Thus, without hesitation, I offer you the state of the art in poisoncraft. Use it in good judgment.

*Nylson Veld*  
Nylson Veld  
Chemist of Crimson Delve

**POISONCRAFT: THE DARK ART** was one of the best-reviewed third-party products of Third Edition. We hope you find this new edition of equal stature.

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BOILED**



**POISONCRAFT: VENOMOUS VILLAINS**

# *The Syllax*

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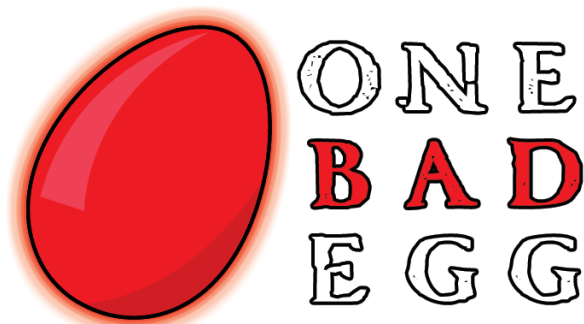
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POISONCRAFT: THE SYRALLAX

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# THE SYRALLAX

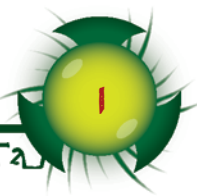
The **SYRALLAX** (SIH-ruh-lacks) rivals the dark elf and aboleth for domination of the subterranean realm. While syrallaces lack the sheer numbers of other races, they make up for it with the impressive stable of minions and thralls they keep and their ability to maximize those forces through superior strategy. Through intimidation and their poisonous gaze, they force others to serve them out of fear. Syrallaces crave power for its own sake. They consider themselves overlords, increasing their territory and holdings over other races. At the same time, they employ a strict, militaristic hierarchy that forecloses any infighting in their own ranks. They are master tacticians and yield the field of battle if it is strategically favorable in the long run.

A syrallax has a minotaur's height and build but with a more humanoid appearance and sinewy frame. It stands fully erect upon its deeply cloven hooves, with a regal bearing, commonly bedecked in black armor and adornments. A syrallax has vivid red skin and an elongated head much like a bodak's. A crowded row of short, brownish-yellow horns mark the center-line of its cranium. Its eyes are perfectly black and set wide apart, almost on the sides of its head.



KEY CROSSLEY

*Poisoncraft - The Syrallax*



**Syrallax Field Marshal Level 16 Controller (Leader)**

Large natural humanoid XP 1,400

**Initiative** +15 **Senses** Perception +17; blindsight 10

**HP** 156; **Bloodied** 78

**AC** 30; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 29

**Resist** 10 acid, 10 poison; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant (when the syrallax field marshal takes radiant damage, any creature dominated by its dominating gaze gets a saving throw to lose the dominated condition and become dazed [save ends])

**Speed** 8; see also *battlefield stride*

⊕ **Vertebral Flail** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 2d8+7 damage.

↓ **Tactical Strike** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Requires vertebral flail; the syrallax field marshal slides himself and one ally a total of 3 squares and makes a *vertebral flail* attack with a +2 bonus.

↖ **Dominating Gaze** (standard; recharge ☐☐☐) ♦ **Charm, Gaze, Poison**

**Close blast** 5; blind creatures are immune; +18 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends). *First Failed Save:* The target is dominated instead of dazed (save ends). The field marshal may only dominate one creature at a time. If a second creature would become dominated by this power, the field marshal decides which creature to dominate, and the other creature remains dazed (save ends).

**Battlefield Stride** (move; at-will)

Using its advanced knowledge of the battlefield, the syrallax field marshal shifts 2 squares and gains a +2 bonus to its AC until the beginning of its next turn.

**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

**Skills** Diplomacy +19, Intimidate +19

**Str** 16 (+11) **Dex** 24 (+15) **Wis** 18 (+12)

**Con** 20 (+13) **Int** 25 (+15) **Cha** 22 (+14)

**Equipment** hide armor, vertebral flail

**SYRALLAX FIELD**

**MARSHAL TACTICS**

The field marshal uses its *tactical strike* and *battlefield stride* abilities to maintain a strategic advantage in combat. It prefers to slide expendable allies between itself and its target, using the flail's reach to attack from safety. It first uses its *dominating gaze* as soon as more than one target is within range (or immediately if it is facing only one enemy). Once a target is dominated, the field marshal uses its new ally to best serve its purposes, often to harry enemy wizards or draw attention from melee threats.

**Syrallax Overlord Level 20 Elite Controller (Leader)**

Large natural humanoid XP 5,600

**Initiative** +18 **Senses** Perception +20, blindsight 10

**Intimidating Mien** aura 5; enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to saving throws against the overlord's *enthraling gaze*

**HP** 424; **Bloodied** 212

**AC** 36; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 34

**Resist** 20 acid, 20 poison; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant (when the syrallax overlord takes radiant damage, any creature dominated by its enthraling gaze gets a saving throw to lose the dominated condition and become dazed [save ends])

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 8; see also *strategic stride*

**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Vertebral Whip** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 3; +25 vs. AC; 2d6+7 damage and the creature is immobilized until the start of the overlord's next turn or until the overlord makes another attack with the whip, whichever occurs first.

☉ **Metatarsal Dart** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison, Weapon**

**Ranged** 10/20; +25 vs. AC; 1 damage and the syrallax overlord makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +23 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage and is dazed (save ends both).

↖ **Enthraling Gaze** (standard; recharge ☐☐☐☐) ♦ **Charm, Gaze, Poison**

**Close blast** 10; blind creatures are immune; +22 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends). *First Failed Save:* The target is dominated instead of dazed (save ends). The overlord may only dominate up to two creatures at a time. If a third creature would become dominated by this power, the overlord decides which creatures to dominate, and the other creature remains dazed (save ends). A creature that is still dominated at the end of the encounter becomes the overlord's thrall, and only the death of the overlord can end this domination. A thrall does not count towards the overlord's limit of creatures it can dominate.

**Strategic Stride** (move; at-will)

Using its supreme knowledge of the battlefield, the syrallax overlord shifts 4 squares and gains a +2 bonus to its AC until the beginning of its next turn.

**Thwart Strategy** (minor; at-will)

The syrallax overlord may aid itself or any ally it can see by either removing the marked condition from that creature or negating combat advantage against that creature until the start of the syrallax overlord's next turn.

**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

**Skills** Diplomacy +23, Intimidate +23

**Str** 18 (+14) **Dex** 26 (+18) **Wis** 20 (+15)

**Con** 22 (+16) **Int** 27 (+18) **Cha** 26 (+18)

**Equipment** chainmail, metatarsal darts, vertebral whip



## SYRALLAX OVERLORD TACTICS

The syrallax overlord uses its *strategic stride* to avoid melee combat. It uses its various attacks to disrupt opponents from engaging it directly. It uses its *enthraling gaze* as soon as possible and then every time it recharges thereafter. By alternately dazing and dominating its enemies, it provides a strategic advantage to its allies.

## SYRALLAX LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

**DC 20:** Syrallaces combine both traditional martial and mind-bending gaze attacks, making them one of the most formidable creatures of the subterranean realm. They use intimidation and their dominating poisonous gaze to maintain a stable of minions. Despite their otherworldly appearance, the syrallax is a creature of the natural world.

**DC 25:** Though they prefer to avoid direct combat, syrallaces are highly capable combatants. They wield exotic weapons, fashioned from the bones of their fallen enemies, to great effect. These weapons are treated with special lacquers and glazes to make them as hard as their metal counterparts. Syrallax weapons fetch a hefty price in the right market. In combat, syrallaces try to interpose their thralls to allow them to attack their enemies while avoiding counterattacks.

**DC 30:** Killing a syrallax overlord frees its thralls from domination. The syrallax is a distant cousin of the medusa, evolved from the male of the species into a version that reproduces asexually. They despise female medusas and kill them on sight, abandoning their otherwise rigid strategies in a ferocious blood-lust. They are immune to the medusa's gaze.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Syrallaces are invariably found with a collection of minions to serve as labor and protection. The composition of a syrallax's attack group is carefully selected to maximize its strategic advantages. Syrallaces prefer subterranean races they can reliably subjugate and that possess competent melee skills.

### Level 12 Encounter (XP 3,875)

- ◆ 2 dragonborn gladiators (level 10 soldier)
- ◆ 5 troglodyte warriors (level 12 minion)
- ◆ 2 troglodyte impalers (level 7 artillery)
- ◆ 1 syrallax field marshal (level 16 controller)

### Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,200)

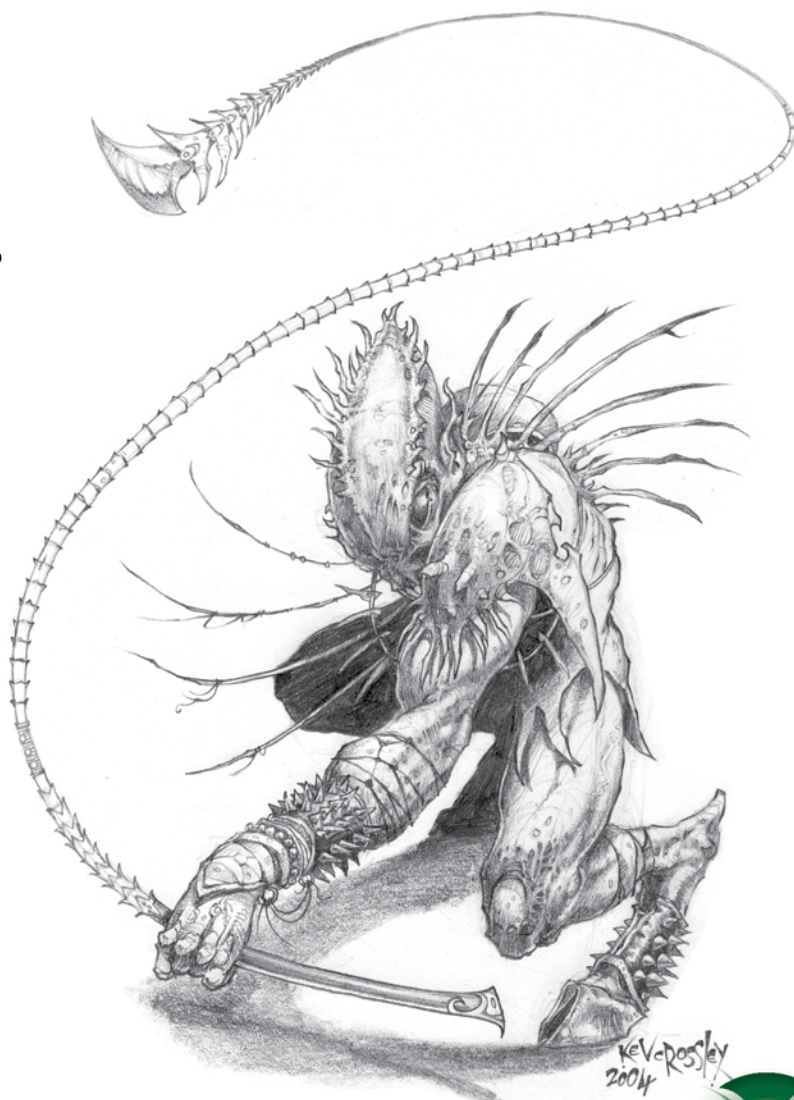
- ◆ 2 hill giants (level 13 brute)
- ◆ 4 dragonborn raiders (level 13 skirmisher)
- ◆ 1 syrallax field marshal (level 16 controller)

### Level 18 Encounter (XP 10,000)

- ◆ 4 azer warriors (level 17 minion)
- ◆ 4 shadow snakes (level 16 skirmisher)
- ◆ 1 syrallax overlord (level 20 controller)

### Level 21 Encounter (XP 16,800)

- ◆ 4 cyclops hewers (level 16 soldier)
- ◆ 4 savage minotaurs (level 16 brute)
- ◆ 1 syrallax overlord (level 20 controller)



Poisoncraft - The Syrallax

# ENCOUNTER: THE POISONWORKS

Encounter Level 22 (22,600 XP)

## SETUP

This encounter takes place in an underground poison refinery run by the syrallax overlord and its thralls.

Creatures not found in this product are from the

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 4E MONSTER MANUAL.**

- 1 syrallax overlord (O)
- 1 rakshasa assassin (A)
- 1 rakshasa predator (P)
- 2 fire giants (G)
- 1 fire giant forgercaller (F)
- 3 poison barrels (B)
- Refinery catastrophic failure hazard

## NEW POISON: EVERSHROUD

Following is a partial entry of a new poison found in this encounter. Evershroud and scores of other poisons can be found in our upcoming release, **CODEX VENENORUM, ED. IV**, including complete rules for creating your own poison protocols.

### EVERSHROUD

*(Refined Native Shroudmist - No Family)*

Many thought the Shroud was the ultimate threat to the world, but it surprised few when the syrallaces found a way to make it even more lethal. Impossibly, this inhalation poison is processed from the Shroud itself, making it difficult to craft, dangerous to handle, and valuable to the right buyer.

### Evershroud

Level 22 Poison

*This poison retains the unnerving greenish tint of the Shroud from which it is made.*

**Poison** 62,500 gp

**Attack:** +25 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 10 poison damage and -2 penalty to all saving throws (save ends).

**Aftereffect:** Ongoing 10 poison damage and -2 penalty to all saving throws (save ends).

**Special:** This poison only works when it is inhaled in mist form. A character killed by the poison and subsequently returned to life becomes a half-dead (see **RACES OF THE SHROUD: THE HALF-DEAD**).

The adventurers follow the trail to a wide tunnel that terminates in a set of large, wooden double-doors.

The rakshasa assassin and predator appear as humans until they enter battle or until their illusory veil is obviously uncovered at which time they revert to their true appearance.

### When the adventurers open the doors, read:

*The doors open to a large well-worked cavern. The walls and floor are smooth. Only the ceiling is unworked, confirming the space's natural origins.*

*Dominating the northern half of the room is a large contraption of metal and wood. It emits goutts of green-hued steam and high-pitched whistles at random intervals.*

*Two giants with flame-red hair tend to the large levers at one end, while a well-dressed but haggard old man works a panel of small dials and buttons at the center. Another giant stands in the far corner scanning the scene with its crimson eyes.*

*Overseeing the tableau is an imposing creature with unsettling alien features; a young human, bedecked in the finery of a noble, stands to his side. A single door on the southern wall is the only obvious means of egress.*

### Insight Check

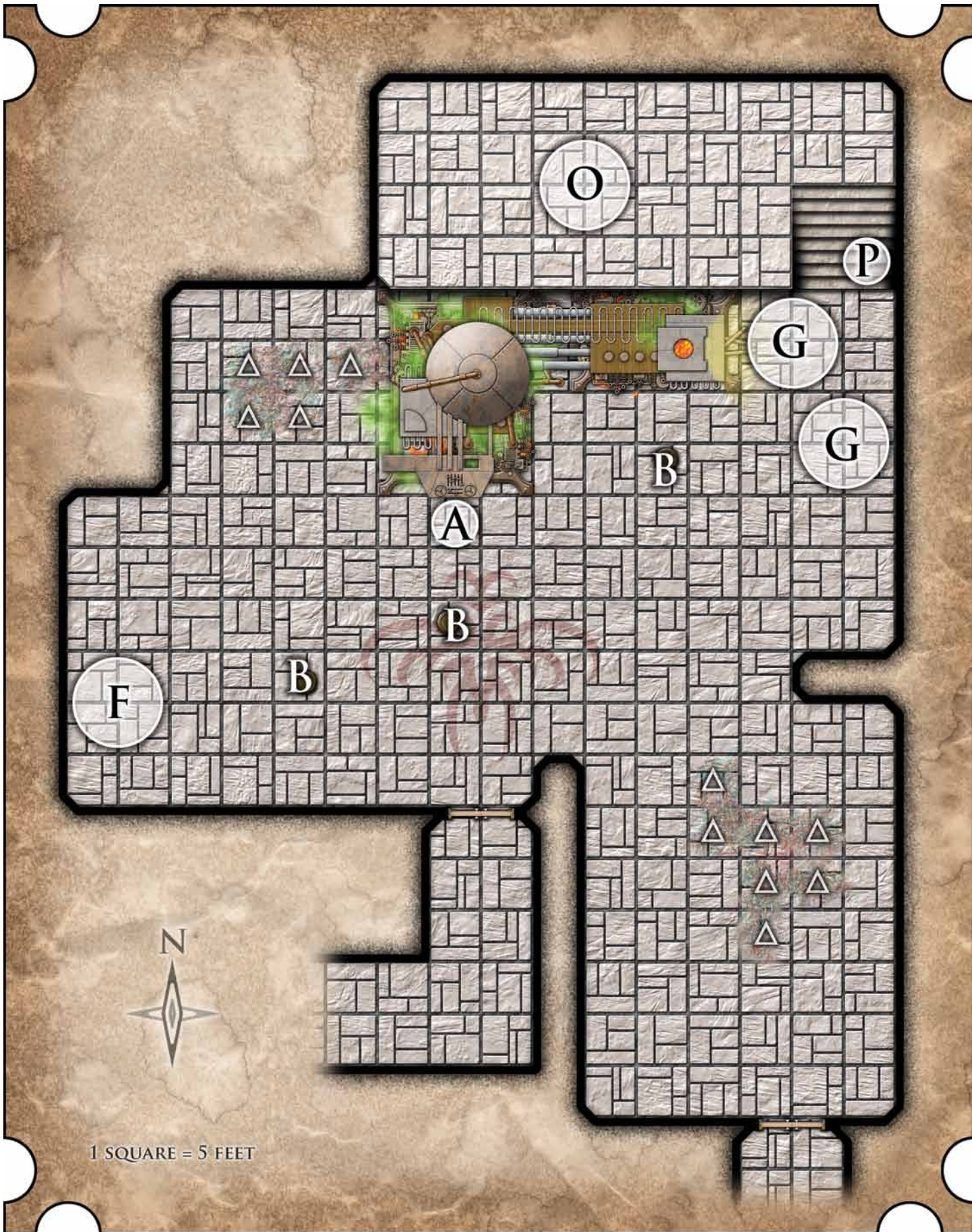
**DC 28** *The old man is in fact an agile-looking feline creature with black fur and gleaming golden eyes.*

**DC 31** *The young noble is in fact a feline creature with spotted fur and sparkling jade eyes.*



TYLER WALPOLE





ED BOURELLE



<b>Rakshasa Predator (P)</b>	<b>Level 18 Lurker</b>	
Medium natural humanoid	XP 2,000	
<b>Initiative</b> +19	<b>Senses</b> Perception +19; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 134; <b>Bloodied</b> 67		
<b>AC</b> 32; <b>Fortitude</b> 32, <b>Reflex</b> 30, <b>Will</b> 30		
<b>Speed</b> 7; see also <i>predatory pounce</i>		
⊕ <b>Twin Short Swords</b> (standard; at-will) ⊕ <b>Weapon</b>		
+23 vs. AC; 1d6+7 damage. The rakshasa predator makes two attack rolls as a single attack, dealing damage for each attack that hits.		
⊕ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)		
+23 vs. AC; 1d8+7 damage.		
↓ <b>Predatory Pounce</b> (standard; recharges after using <i>predatory eye</i> ) ⊕ <b>Weapon</b>		
Requires short swords; the rakshasa predator makes a charge attack: +24 vs. AC; 2d6+7 and the target is grabbed (until escape).		
↓ <b>Twin Sword Rake</b> (standard; at-will) ⊕ <b>Weapon</b>		
Grabbed target only; requires short swords; +23 vs. AC; 4d12+7 and the target is no longer grabbed.		
<b>Deceptive Veil</b> (minor; at-will) ⊕ <b>Illusion</b>		
The rakshasa predator can disguise itself to appear as any Medium humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by the rakshasa's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.		
<b>Predatory Eye</b> (standard; sustain standard; at-will)		
If no enemy is within 2 squares of the rakshasa predator and it does not move on its turn, it gains concealment until the start of its next turn and gains a +1 bonus to its attack roll if it uses <i>predatory pounce</i> during its next turn. If the rakshasa predator sustains the ability, it gains total concealment until the start of its next turn and the bonus increases to +2.		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common	
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +20, Athletics +21, Bluff +20, Stealth +20		
<b>Str</b> 24 (+16)	<b>Dex</b> 22 (+15)	<b>Wis</b> 20 (+14)
<b>Con</b> 20 (+14)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+10)	<b>Cha</b> 22 (+15)
<b>Equipment</b> scale armor, 2 short swords		

<b>Refinery Catastrophic Failure</b>	<b>Level 21 Lurker</b>
Hazard	XP 3,200
<i>The poison refinery spits out gouts of green steam before exploding in a massive blast of fire and toxic fumes.</i>	
<b>Hazard:</b> The refinery takes up 20 contiguous squares. When triggered, it explodes, causing fire damage and releasing a deadly poisonous gas.	
<b>Perception</b>	
♦ No check is necessary to notice the refinery.	
<b>Initiative</b> +15	
<b>Trigger</b>	
When the refinery takes at least 25 points of damage, either from an area attack or a direct attack (all of the refinery's defenses are 10), the refinery suffers a catastrophic failure. Alternatively, a creature with knowledge of the machine can induce a catastrophic failure, as a standard action, while adjacent to the control panel. When triggered, the refinery rolls initiative. Between the trigger and the refinery's attack, characters in the area know that a failure has occurred.	
<b>Attack</b>	
<b>Standard Action</b>	<b>Close burst</b> 5
<b>Target:</b> All creatures in burst	
<b>Attack:</b> +24 vs. Reflex	
<b>Hit:</b> 4d10+7 fire damage and secondary attack.	
<b>Miss:</b> Half damage and no secondary attack.	
<b>Secondary Attack:</b> +24 vs. Fortitude	
<b>Hit:</b> Ongoing 10 poison damage and -2 penalty to all saving throws (save ends both). <b>Aftereffect:</b> Ongoing 10 poison damage and -2 penalty to all saving throws (save ends both).	
<b>Effect:</b> All of the squares occupied by the refinery become difficult terrain.	
<b>Countermeasures</b>	
♦ A character adjacent to the control panel can shut down the refinery, as a standard action, with a DC 33 Thievery check.	
♦ A character adjacent to the control panel can stop a catastrophic failure after it has been triggered, as a standard action, with a DC 37 Thievery check.	



### 3 Poison Barrels (B)

Level 16 Obstacle

Hazard

XP 1,400 each

A barrel of compressed poisonous gas bursts in an ominous green cloud.

**Hazard:** A barrel is in the square (the barrel provides cover to anyone in the square). When triggered, it breaks, exposing nearby creatures to the poison gas within.

#### Perception

- ◆ No check is necessary to notice the barrel.

#### Trigger

When a barrel is thrown or takes at least 5 points of damage, either from an area attack or a direct attack (all of the barrel's defenses are 10), the barrel breaks, releasing pressurized poison gas. A character in the initial burst or that begins its turn in the poison cloud is attacked by the poison.

#### Attack

**Immediate Reaction** Close burst 1

**Target:** All creatures in burst

**Attack:** +19 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** Ongoing 10 poison damage and -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends both). **Aftereffect:** Ongoing 10 poison damage and -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends both).

**Effect:** The poison cloud persists until the end of the encounter or for 5 minutes. Once a barrel explodes it is destroyed and cannot attack again.

#### Countermeasures

- ◆ A barrel can be turned on its side and rolled with a DC 12 Strength check, or lifted and thrown up to 2 squares with a DC 20 Strength check, which breaks the barrel.

## TACTICS

The overlord directs the fire giants to form a line of defense in front of itself. Thereafter, the overlord tries to gain control of the situation by using its *enthraling gaze* whenever it is available. It tries to protect the poisonworks operation at first; however, if the battle turns, it will induce a catastrophic failure in the machine either directly or by ordering the forecaller to attack it with a *fire pillar*.

The rakshasa assassin maintains his disguise until he can maneuver to a strategic position and use his *phantom distraction* to gain combat advantage. He follows this with a *double attack*.

Unless immediately confronted, the rakshasa predator starts by using its *predatory eye* ability, charging anyone who threatens the overlord or else the least armored target within range of its charge. The following turn, it uses its *twin sword rake* if possible. After executing the rake, it retreats to a position of relative safety to use its *predatory eye* ability and start the deadly strategy anew. After grabbing an opponent,

it often uses its *deceptive veil* ability to disguise itself as that creature and sow further confusion on the battlefield.

The forecaller calls down its *fire pillar* on any enemy that approaches the overlord. It targets any barrel that will expose more than one enemy to the poison gas and saves its *flame burst* for when it can get at least two enemies in the area of effect—preferably with a poison barrel in for good measure.

The rakshasas and giants are dominated thralls of the overlord. If the overlord is killed, they regain their senses and immediately revert to any strategy that best serves their own well-being, whether it is to attack, parlay, or flee.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

- ◆ **Illumination:** The refinery glows with dancing flames inside its casing, casting bright light throughout the room.
- ◆ **Ceiling:** The ceiling in the room is 25 feet high.
- ◆ **Refinery:** During normal operation, the poison refinery routinely emits puffs of superheated poisonous gas. Any creature that starts its turn within 1 square of the machine, other than the square directly adjacent to the control panel, takes 5 points of poison damage and 5 points of fire damage.
- ◆ **Barrels:** Three barrels of raw evershroud (see sidebar) are scattered about the room. Each barrel is roughly 2 feet wide and 4 feet high, allowing a character to occupy the same square and gain the benefit of cover. The inhalation poison is newly refined and requires curing under special conditions. Unless this process is commenced within the next hour, the poison becomes inert and worthless.
- ◆ **Difficult Terrain:** Several areas of the room contain piles of spent poison fillers and reagents.
- ◆ **Treasure:** The rakshasas and giants all wear *amulets of health +1*. Remember that this provides them with resist 5 poison.



# ADVENTURE IDEAS

## CARAVAN OF VENGEANCE

A noble in a faraway village is assassinated by a dose of poison slipped into his evening meal. The noble's sister, Ayrthrain, is a cleric of the Torchbearer (see **GODS OF THE SHROUD**). She is certain she knows the identity of the assassin, Sylliss, a powerful wizard specializing in alchemy and toxic spells. Sylliss stays well-guarded in his tower, protected by magical wards and undead minions, but Ayrthrain will not brook this misdeed. She asks the party to retrieve her brother's body and intends to perform a ritual that will bring vengeance upon the evil mage.

The party must venture to the village to gather the body and return within six days—quickly enough to give Ayrthrain time to perform the ritual. Unbeknownst to her, Sylliss is under the mental control of Kenkai, a syrallax overlord, who wishes to destabilize the region and find fresh souls to enslave. One of Kenkai's other thralls is undercover in Ayrthrain's court. The spy warns Kenkai of the noble's plan, who in turn directs Sylliss to send out an undead strike squad to harry the party and thwart the plan.

Depending on the level of the party, confronting Sylliss or Kenkai directly might be out of the question. Whether the party succeeds or fails, however, they are sure to have a future run-in with the evil mage and the syrallax overlord. If Sylliss survives Ayrthrain's ritual, he will certainly seek revenge on those who conspired against him. If Sylliss succeeds in foiling the plot against him, Ayrthrain and possibly the party themselves might later seek a more direct method of dealing with the mage.

## THE EYES OF A CHILD

Master Poisoncrafter Weldon Yairns has been retained by the king to create a unique poison. Once brewed, it will be used to slay the champion of a rival kingdom. To complete his work, he requires one last component: the eyes of an immature syrallax. Royal scouts have identified a cavern network lorded over by a syrallax and teeming with dark elf thralls. The party must infiltrate the syrallax's domain and track down one of its young. A dark elf grandam pleads with the adventurers to spare the child, claiming it can be reared to avoid its evil bloodline. Will they kill an infant creature to serve their own ends?

## WHERE THERE'S SHROUD...

Without warning, the Shroud billows forth from the ground and encroaches upon a modest trading village. The town elder beseeches the heroes to find the cause of the new threat and squelch it. The Shroud originates from a manufactured vent that can be traced to a network of underground passages. As the party explores further, they come across a disturbing operation: A syrallax uses a font of the Shroud to power a Poisonworks, refining the mysterious fog-like substance into a potent toxin. The party must defeat the syrallax, disable the Poisonworks, and find some way to stem the flow of the Shroud to save the town.