


Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons®

P L A N E

S C A P E

ADVENTURE ANTHOLOGY



TALES FROM THE INFINITE STAIRCASE

by Monte Cook



◆ TALES FROM THE ◆ INFINITE STAIRCASE

*Being a Collection of Adventures in which
Player Characters may
explore the Wonders of the Multiverse.*

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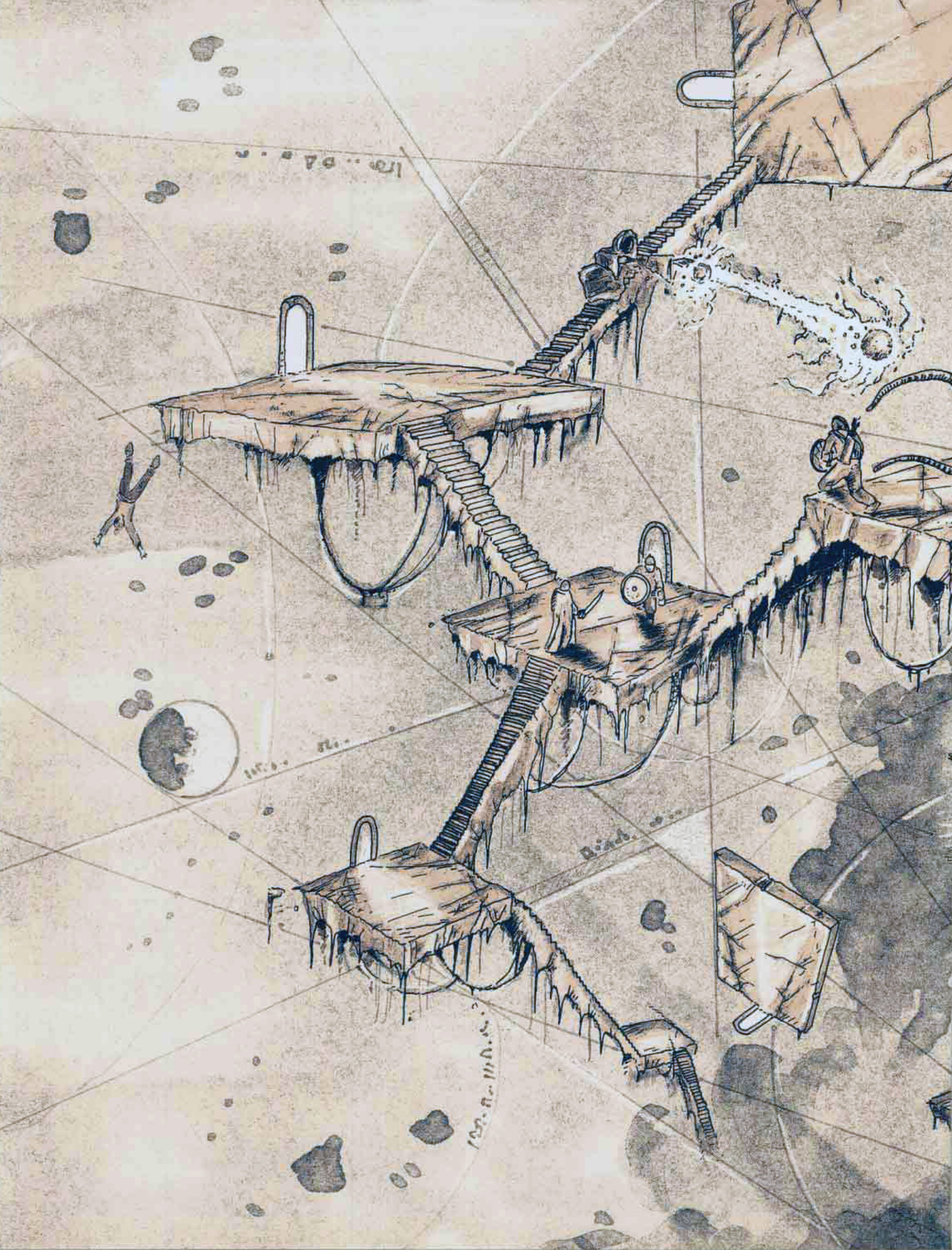


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INTRODUCTION

Oh, the River Styx is a putrid stream,

Oceanus is too good for me,

*Olympus takes too long
to climb,*

Yggdrasil is just a tree.

But the Infinite Staircase takes you there.

The Grand Old Stair goes ev'rywhere.

A few short steps will bring us home ... and fulfill our ev'ry dream.

—Unknown.

The Infinite Staircase leads to all places. As such it provides an excellent basis for a PLANESCAPE® campaign. The DUNGEON MASTER literally needs nothing more than this simple environment to take her game anywhere in the multiverse. *Tales From the*

Infinite Staircase makes full use of the Stair's interplanar reach. It allows player characters to embark on an

adventure that encompasses far-flung locales throughout the planes without

worrying about

the mode of

travel. This

means that

players unfamiliar

with the PLANESCAPE

milieu, who don't know

the ins and outs of portals, conduits and

whatnot, can still get a feel for all reaches of the vast multiverse that the PLANESCAPE setting offers. Using the adventures presented here together might be a good way to introduce new players to the setting.

Yet, because of the way the eight adventures in the book are presented, a DM is free to pick and choose from them and use only those that she wants. *Tales From the Infinite Staircase* is nothing if not flexible.

◆ OVERVIEW ◆

No place is perfect. If perfection were achieved throughout the multiverse, adventurers and planewalkers would have nothing to do.

Even the lillendi, who live in the beautiful and magical realm of the Gates of the Moon, the domain of the moon goddess Selûne, have their troubles. The lillendi

watch over the Infinite Staircase, which grounds itself in Selûne's

palace on nights with a full moon. The lillendi favor song, dance, and

art over all else. They are beings of creativity and new endeavor. Due

to their link with the Infinite Staircase (which leads to all places where the

creative process is the strongest and thus to all locales where intelligent

creatures reside), the lillendi have sensed that a dismal shadow has

begun to fall over various portions of the multiverse. This malady

seems to be striking randomly throughout the planes, but where it

does, inspiration, motivation, and innovation die.

While not a threat of the magnitude of a Blood War invasion, it has the lillendi worried about what it portends for the future.

The course of the adventure takes the player characters to some of the locales in which the lillendi have sensed this occurrence (which they call the Iron Shadow). The characters can travel to any of them in any order but they soon discover that the places are linked and the spread of Iron Shadow isn't random at all. During their forays they might discover a remedy that can fight the Shadow's influence; they may also discover the identities of some of those who seek to spread it. Once armed with such knowledge, the characters can halt any deliberate spread of the Shadow. The PCs also come across victims of the Iron Shadow and must cope with other threats and problems that arise as they investigate the situation.

HERE ON THE PLANES,
WE RESPECT
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE,
BUT THAT
WAND OF FIREBALLS
YOU'VE GOT THERE
DOESN'T HURT EITHER...
—MULDDE RASCULI,
A PRIME WHO'S BEEN
ON THE PLANES
A WHILE NOW



USING ◆ THESE ADVENTURES ◆

Tales From the Infinite Staircase is an anthology of short adventures. Like other adventure anthologies, notably *Well of Worlds* and *The Great Modron March*, these scenarios can be inserted into an existing campaign as the DM wishes. Further, the DM can pick and choose which adventures she wishes to use and which are inappropriate for her game. However, unlike *Well of Worlds*, the adventures in *Tales From the Infinite Staircase* can be linked together with a single plotline and theme and unlike *The Great Modron March*, they can be played in any order.

More information on many of the monsters and places mentioned in these adventures can be found in the PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUMS and the various products of PLANESCAPE source material (specifically *Planes of Law*, *Planes of Chaos*, and *A Guide to the Astral Plane*). If a DM unfamiliar with Planescape wants to consult a single source for information on the setting, the campaign setting boxed set (TSR product number 2600) or even simply the *Planewalker's Handbook* (TSR product number 2620) will probably suffice. However, this product is designed with DMs and players completely new to the PLANESCAPE setting in mind—no other products are needed at all!

PLANESCAPE ADVENTURES

For those DMs with little or no experience in running PLANESCAPE adventures, there are a few things to keep in mind. These scenarios usually run a little differently than many other role-playing adventures, and are certainly different from a dungeon crawl. That's not to say that a body won't partake of a dungeon crawl on the planes (or that there's anything wrong with dungeon crawls), but it certainly won't be standard.

Smart players know that bashing everything in sight is not the way to get ahead on the planes. Why? 'Cause there's always something out there, no matter how powerful a character is, that's going to be able to bash back harder. Fiends, aasimon, slaadi . . . the list of powerful foes on the planes goes on and on. They're not a bunch to mess with just for the sake of battle. Planewalking (adventuring on the planes) is for those ready to think or talk their way out of a situation as well as fight. In fact, a good rule of thumb is this—if a body finds herself having to fight her way out of Gehenna with dozens of yugoloths screaming for her blood, chances are pretty good that somewhere, somehow, she did something wrong.

Likewise, DMs should always design and run adventures so that there's a way for a blood (a powerful, experienced character) to get out of trouble if she's quick and uses her wits—and maybe a little charm. This doesn't mean things have to be easy, but let's face it, no adventurer can be expected to fight off an army of githyanki, and on the planes, such an encounter is possible.

Further, the mood in a PLANESCAPE adventure is very important. Nothing should be exactly as it seems. Planewalkers need to keep an open mind about everyone and everything. Enemies could be at any and every turn—but so could allies if a basher plays her cards right. Nothing's cut-and-dried, nothing's black-and-white. One minute a planewalker could be fighting against the baatezu—the next, for them against their foes, the tanar'ri.

For a planewalker, it matters less who and what a cutter is than what she believes. Events on the planes are governed as much or more by belief than anything else. Belief literally is power. It's also what holds everything together. The factions of Sigil are among the most important organizations on all the planes, and they are based around beliefs—*big* beliefs, like those regarding how the multiverse works and the big “why?” of everything. Factions, both as allies and enemies, are always important in virtually any adventure on the planes, but they are also important because membership and adherence to their tenets may dictate (or at least sway) the actions of the planewalkers.

Finally, don't forget the importance of Sigil, the City of Doors (also called The Cage). Even though no adventures in this book take place there, it still is the most obvious place for planewalkers to base themselves. It's here, in the city that's said to be at the center of everything, that one can find the current chant (rumors or information), a wide selection of equipment, important contacts and allies, and just about everything else a planewalker needs. Additionally, with all the portals found there, it offers transport to virtually any place the PCs need to go. DMs might encourage players to have their characters establish permanent or semi-permanent homes (kips) there. Many of the adventures in this and other PLANESCAPE products are written with the idea that the characters hail from Sigil. The Cage is where the action is—or at least the best place to hear about it.

◆ PREPARING FOR PLAY ◆

One of the hardest, but most important, jobs for the DM is matching the difficulty of the adventure to the power of the characters. Each scenario in *Tales From the Infinite Staircase* was designed for a particular level of PC ability, but if the characters being used are of higher or lower level (or PCs who are extra-tough or weak for their level) the DM has to do some modification. Likewise, changes are in order if the characters are fewer or greater in number than average. While everyone who has run published adventures is familiar with this process, it's still tricky sometimes. Many of the scenarios contain notes to assist the DM with the task.

Just simply increasing or decreasing the number of enemies the PCs face isn't always a satisfactory way to adjust the challenges they meet. DMs will find the three **PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®** Appendices very valuable resources in expanding the adventures with alternate foes of a different—and hopefully more appropriate—power level. Sometimes, however, the course of the adventure must be altered to accommodate the level of the PCs. Canny DMs remember that an iron door that is an impenetrable barrier to low-level planewalkers is a negligible irritation to high-level bloods. Likewise, while a high-up wizard might be able to read a foe's mind, low-level cutters are going to have to ask for information nicely. In short, the DM should be aware of differences in power beyond just tougher or easier monsters to fight.

ADVENTURE FORMATS

Each adventure begins with a few sections to make using it easier. The first, the Overview, condenses the action and story of the adventure (and how it is likely to progress) into a few paragraphs as a summary for the DM. The next section, Adventure Notes, contains information on how events in the other Tales can have an impact on the events in the Tale the DM is about to read.

Each of these notes is presented as an "if/then" statement. If the condition described is met, then the effects resulting from that condition take place in the manner described. Sometimes, the effects have multiple layers; that is to say "if condition X occurs in Tale 2, and condition Y occurs in Tale 4, then such-and-such happens."

Each adventure also has a section detailing the modifications that the plane enforces upon those in its confines, particularly upon magic. Note that the restrictions listed affect wizards and magical items, but not priest spells unless stated otherwise. In general, the DM should keep in mind that while on the Outer Planes, no summoning from or connections to the Inner Planes or the Ethereal is possible, while on the Inner Planes, summoning and connections with the Outer and Astral Planes are impossible.

Also, all clerics lose one spellcasting level for each plane that lies between the plane that they currently occupy and the one upon which their deity normally resides. For purposes of "counting" planes, on the Outer Planes the DM counts *around* the Great Ring of the planes, not across the Outlands or the Astral (which lie at its center). See the *PLANESCAPE Campaign Setting* or the *Planewalker's Handbook* for more details if desired, although all the DM and players really need to know

can be found in the adventure. The DM should feel free to discount any of the alterations she feels are too strict or inappropriate to the flavor of her campaign.

NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

While some NPCs and monsters receive full-blown write-ups, minor NPCs in this book get only a one-line entry to give the DM the basics. These are presented as follows: Character name or title (Origin*/gender** and race/class and level***/faction if any/alignment).

* Prime (Pr), Planar (Pl), Petitioner (Pe), Proxy (Px)

** Male (♂), Female (♀), Genderless (Ø)

*** A letter indicates class as noted below. A number indicates the character's level. So, a F2, T3 is a multiclassed 2nd-level fighter and 3rd-level thief.

B	Bard	<i>Specialist Wizards:</i>	
D	Druid	Abj	Abjurer
C	Cleric	Con	Conjurer
F	Fighter	Div	Diviner
M	Mage (generalist)	Ele	Elementalist
P	Specialty priest	Enc	Enchanter
Pal	Paladin	Ill	Illusionist
Ps	Psionicist	Inv	Invoker
T	Thief	Nec	Necromancer
O	Unclassed	Tra	Transmuter
var	various	Wil	Wild mage

THE ORDER OF THE TALES. OR LACK THEREOF

The options involved in allowing the scenarios (sometimes called Tales here) to be run in any order and yet maintain a consistent over-arching plot require some special attention, but the payoff is most likely worth the effort. The ability to run the adventures in any order truly lends itself to a non-linear plot line. There is no set course for the flow of play—players have the freedom to choose to go wherever and do whatever they wish.

To help the DM and to make the flexible plot work, each of the seven Tales presented after the first one has a set of conditions listed at the beginning. The conditions pertain to events that may or may not have occurred in previously played Tales. If these conditions are met, the current Tale might be changed in a small way (and sometimes in a big way). Because of the changes that can occur to one adventure based on activities conducted in another, it is quite possible that PCs can travel to the location of one scenario, play through that Tale as well as a few others, and then return to the same location to find things altered—possibly allowing for further play.

The concept of stages helps the DM organize the Tales. For purposes of *Tales From the Infinite Staircase*, the stage is the way of expressing the number of Tales a gaming group has played. The first stage is always Planewalkers, the first Tale. After that point, however, which Tale fits into which stage can vary. The Lord of Worms might be stage two if the players decided to go there after leaving the Staircase, but In Disarray would be stage two if they go to Limbo instead.

Thus, at most, there are eight stages, the specifics of which will be different from gaming group to gaming group.

The first stage, Planewalkers, takes place on the Stairway itself and then segues into the other Tales, which can be played in any order. The specifics within each scenario change depending on what happens in the previous stages. Further, some of the Tales can change depending on the stage in which they are played. For example, if something happens in one of the Tales that depends on something that might occur "early on" in the over-arching plot, the conditions might depend on whether it was played in one of the first three stages or not. Thus, the stages can be used as a rough measure of time. Nevertheless, even if the group plays the first adventure and then goes off and adventures for an entire game year before returning to *Tales From the Infinite Staircase* to play another adventure, that second adventure is still only stage two (the measurement of time is vague, the stage only conveys the order in which events occur in play).

Obviously, when dealing with the listed conditions, the DM should use common sense to adjudicate and adjust her individual campaign's situations with those listed in the adventure. Each group's course of the adventure is going to differ, and thus the conditions are general and can't always anticipate all players' actions. For example, if one Tale has a condition based on the actions of an NPC in another Tale, but during the course of the previous Tale that character died, the DM must adjust the condition as she sees fit (perhaps the condition is ignored, perhaps another NPC fills the role, and so on).

Of course, as with all adventure anthologies, a DM should find it easy to use just one or two of the adventures found in this book. Further, the Infinite Staircase itself is extraneous to all but the first adventure, so the DM can even ignore that aspect if she wants to. Thus separated, the scenarios in this book become stand-alone adventures appropriate to seven different settings.

CONDITIONS AND EVENTS BASED SOLELY ON STAGE

Much of the action involving the spread of the Iron Shadow goes on in the background of the adventure. While the PCs use the Infinite Staircase to move from Tale to Tale (and thus plane to plane), other participants in the events—Jazriul the archon, the kytons serving Quimath (a powerful kyton), the formian queen Hvix'mnac, and others travel around as well. The DM must keep track of where the other "planewalkers" are during any given stage, as well as the changes that occur in each Tale over time.

For sake of ease, the conditions in the adventure that occur at set stages, regardless of PC actions, are listed below. Of course, common sense must still prevail—if the archon Jazriul is slain before Stage 7, for example, he cannot travel to Maelost. For more details regarding each event, see the individual Tales.

STAGE 1

- ♦ The Iron Shadow already has fallen on the formian city of Klictrik on the plane of Arcadia, the human city of Blurophil on the plane of Air, the Rilmani city of Sum of All on the Outlands, and the kyton city of Jangling Hiter

on Baator. The Shadow causes grave disruptions in three of the cities, but the kyton leader Quimath of Jangling Hiter considers the Shadow a great opportunity to spread oppression throughout the planes. (In fact, Kytons from Jangling Hiter inadvertently spread the Shadow to the other three locales while trying to learn more about the affliction.)

- ♦ The PCs arrive at the Infinite Staircase, encounter the lil-lendi and the Planewalker's Guild, and overcome (hopefully) the tanar'ri called Gerrzog.
- ♦ The formian queen Hvix'mnac, ruler of Klictrik, travels through a portal to Limbo, inadvertently spreading the Iron Shadow to the Spawning Stone.



STAGE 2

- ♦ Jazriul the hound archon arrives in Blurophil to investigate the Iron Shadow.

STAGE 3

- ♦ The slaadi travel through a portal from Limbo to the demiplane of Maelost, inadvertently spreading the Iron Shadow unless the PCs drove out the Shadow from Limbo before this stage.
- ♦ Jazriul the hound archon leaves the plane of Air and visits Sum of All to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow.

STAGE 4

- ♦ The slaadi travel through a portal to the Astral Plane, inadvertently spreading the Iron Shadow to the githyanki citadel of TorNav'roc.
- ♦ Jazriul the hound archon leaves the Outlands and travels to Klictrik to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow.

STAGE 5

- ♦ The kytons travel to Limbo to kill Cahm'Fel, a githzerai planewalker, because they've learned that he might possess the secret of stopping the Iron Shadow.
- ♦ Jazriul the hound archon leaves Arcadia and travels to Jangling Hiter on Baator to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow.

STAGE 6

- ♦ The slaadi invade Klictrik to get revenge on Hvix'mnac, who brought the Iron Shadow to them.
- ♦ Hvix'mnac arrives in the githyanki city of TorNav'roc.
- ♦ Jazriul the hound archon leaves the plane of Baator and travels to the plane of Limbo to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow.

STAGE 7

- ♦ The hound archon, Jazriul, travels from Limbo to the demiplane of Maelost to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow.

STAGE 8

- ♦ The hound archon, Jazriul, travels from Maelost to TorNav'roc on the Astral Plane to continue investigating the spread of the Iron Shadow.

FOR DUTY & DEITY

In *Tales From the Infinite Staircase*, the Infinite Staircase itself is both the initial setting for the adventures and a means to gain access to the locations of more scenarios. A resourceful DM can use this springboard to create more adventures related to the plot provided here or which bear no relation. For example, the FORGOTTEN REALMS® adventure *For Duty & Deity* also uses the Infinite Staircase as a means to reach the adventure's main setting. That adventure can easily be linked with *Tales From the Infinite Staircase* to create a larger, grand adventure with two plots—one which serves as a “subplot” of the other.

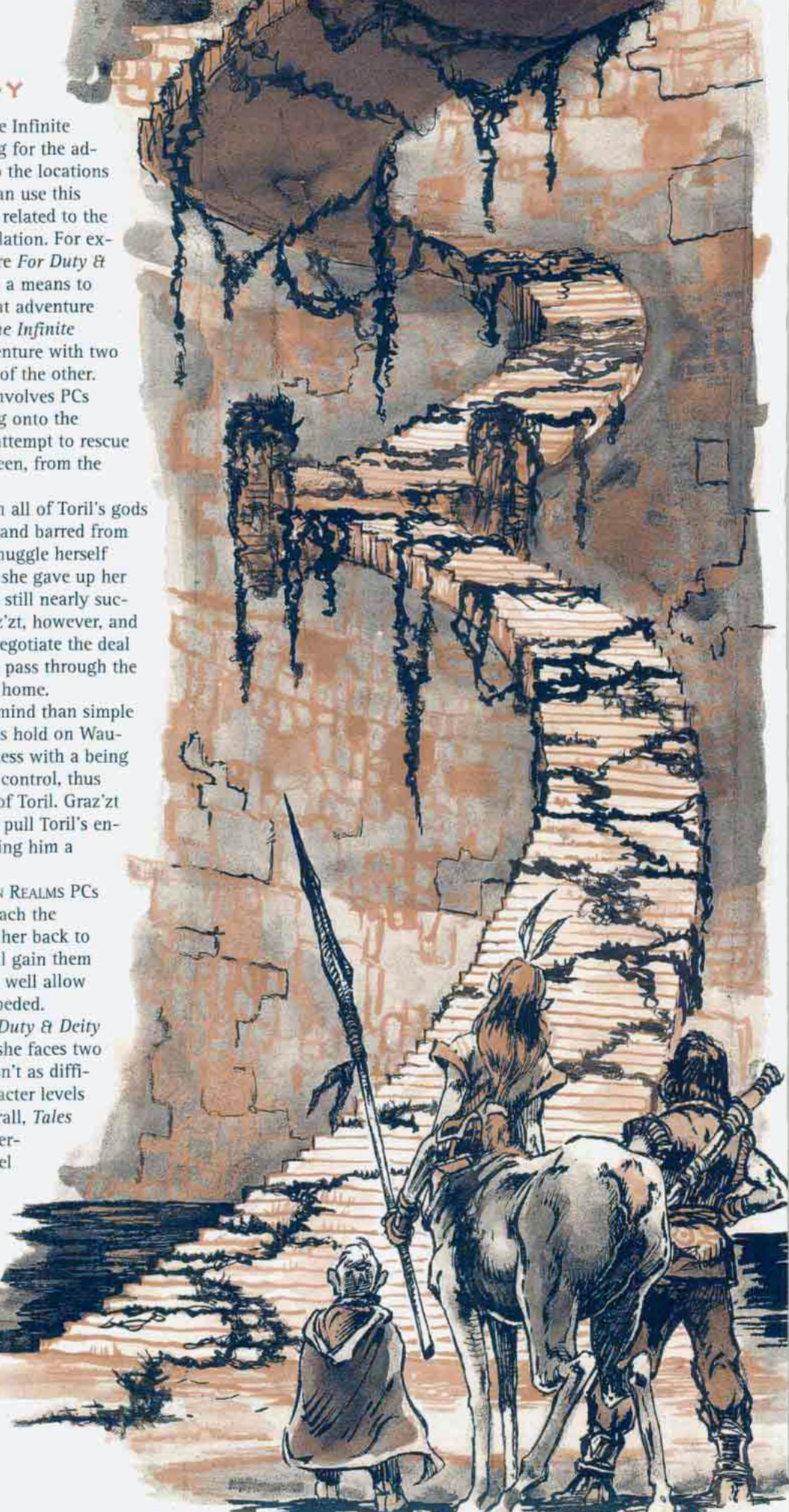
The *For Duty & Deity* adventure involves PCs from the prime world of Toril venturing onto the planes via the Infinite Staircase in an attempt to rescue the depowered goddess of trade, Waukeen, from the clutches of the Abyssal lord Graz'zt.

During the Time of Troubles, when all of Toril's gods were cast down onto that prime world and barred from their home planes, Waukeen tried to smuggle herself back to the Outer Planes. Even though she gave up her divinity for the time she was gone, she still nearly succeeded. Waukeen was betrayed by Graz'zt, however, and he holds her to this day, seeking to renegotiate the deal they'd originally struck to let Waukeen pass through the Abyss on her way to the Outlands and home.

Graz'zt has more on his demonic mind than simple wealth, however. He hopes to parlay his hold on Waukeen into a scheme to replace the goddess with a being of his choosing and under his fiendish control, thus gaining a foothold among the powers of Toril. Graz'zt aims to one day gain enough power to pull Toril's entire crystal sphere into the Abyss, gaining him a fourth layer to rule.

In *For Duty & Deity*, the FORGOTTEN REALMS PCs must navigate the Infinite Staircase, reach the Abyss, find Waukeen, and escape with her back to the Staircase and beyond. Doing so will gain them the gratitude of a goddess; failing may well allow Graz'zt's foul scheme to proceed unimpeded.

If the DM wishes to run both *For Duty & Deity* and *Tales From the Infinite Staircase*, she faces two major challenges. The first challenge isn't as difficult as it may seem—the intended character levels for both adventures differ greatly. Overall, *Tales From the Infinite Staircase* can be undertaken by relatively low-to-medium level characters, such as third to fifth. *For Duty & Deity* is a difficult adventure even for high-level characters. The solution is to defer to the levels needed to undertake the challenges of *For Duty & Deity*. DMs reading through *Tales From the Infinite Staircase* will notice that the adventures can potentially challenge PCs of levels much higher than



those for which the adventure is meant. Slaadi, mind flayers, kytons, baatezu—these are foes that can present a threat to even very high level characters. In the various *Tales* these are obstacles to avoid or simply bypass. Higher level characters, however, can meet these foes head on and possibly survive. In a few areas, the DM should consider increasing the number of opponents, and in others the relative level or power of the foes and threats should also be advanced.

For the most part, high-level characters making their way through these *Tales* simply give the DM the freedom to “toss off the kid gloves,” so to speak.

For example, in Tale 4, in which the PCs travel to the plane of Limbo, the DM might make the following changes: The number of dao and shad in the *Dream Diver* doubles, the slaadi around the Spawning Stone make an unprovoked attack upon the PCs due to their belligerent malaise (from the Iron Shadow) and Phlegamor's servants double in number and hit dice (to 8+8).

The second, greater challenge in integrating the adventures lies in tying the plots of both together. If the backstory from *For Duty & Deity* is used (disregarding the beginning of Tale 1), the PCs come to the Infinite Staircase, but they do not know the exact path to Graz'zt's layers of the Abyss. Once on the Staircase, the PCs wander into the area of devastation caused by Gerrzog (the number of manes can be increased significantly, or another type of fiend can be chosen using the *PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendices*—should they be available—and Unthre's level should be increased to about 13 or 14). If they dispatch the fiend (and probably save the trapped wizard's life), the lillendi come to them and present them with the challenge of investigating the Iron Shadow—just as presented at the end of Tale 1. As a reward, they promise to show the PCs the way to reach Graz'zt's domain.

◆ BACKGROUND ◆

For as long as space and time have existed there has been a conflict between Order and Chaos. Order is the stability that allows the multiverse to maintain existence, but Chaos is the force of change that keeps the multiverse from falling into stagnation. There are as many ways to imagine and describe the conflict between these two forces as there are individuals to think about them. Each force has Good and Evil implications. Both are important to life and both can bring swift death.

ABOUT THE IRON SHADOW

The Iron Shadow is an evil, ultimately destructive manifestation of Order. It drains away creativity, inspiration, and the will to change. It leaves only lethargy, apathy, and stagnation. The Iron Shadow resembles a disease, though its victims are not people but rather places. It spreads slowly across the landscape, but it leaps through open portals, seeking to reach new unaffected areas on different planes. It can spread into a new area through a gate faster than it can seep out of an infected area into the space around it, so portals within the Iron Shadow are particularly dangerous. However, because of the nature of the Infinite Staircase and its antithetical nature in regard to the Shadow (see below), the malady cannot spread through the connections made by the Stair.

Intelligent beings within the area infected by the Iron Shadow become subject

to the draining effects

if they are

within the area

when the Shadow

first sets in (no saving

throw), or if they spend

a great deal of time

there. If an intelligent being

lingers in an infected area for

more than two weeks, a successful

saving throw vs. spells

must be made each week to

avoid the Shadow's effects—magic resistance does *not* help against the

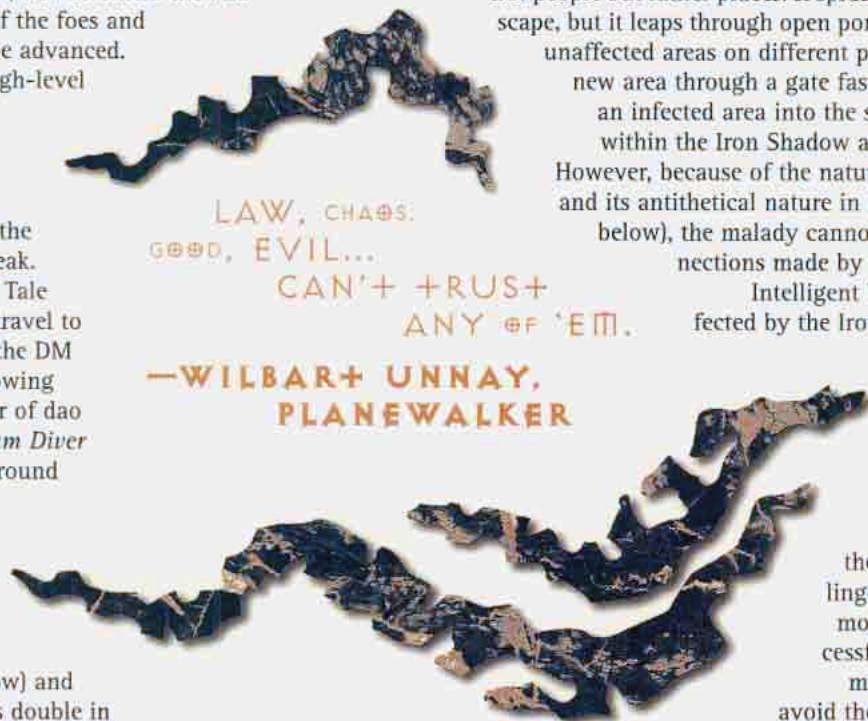
drain of creativity and inspiration

caused by the Shadow. (Due to the way the infection works, the likelihood of PCs becoming infected is low.) The exact effects of being drained depend a great deal on the target. The very lawful and the very chaotic in nature face harsh effects—the lawful are particularly susceptible, and the chaotic have the most to lose (rilmani, being creatures of balance, are exceptions and are affected the greatest of all since it pushes them so far from the center).

Weak (or weak minded) creatures seem drained of energy, won't volunteer ideas or creative concepts, and become easily manipulated and led into whatever action seems easiest, or whatever seems appropriate. More powerful or more intelligent creatures suffer a similar lack of energy and creativity, but tend to become brooding and hostile. A stricken creature of any kind cannot use an artistic proficiency (such as painting or music); craft proficiencies (such as pottery or metalsmithing) still work, but anything the character produces will prove lackluster at best.

If a being affected by the Iron Shadow leaves an infected area, she returns to normal in 1d6 days. If the Iron Shadow is somehow dispelled, the effects vanish immediately.

Two planewalkers have made discoveries that can halt the Shadow. Ghuntomas of Thorn, a bubbler (drunkard) now living in Blurophil, once wrote a book entitled *Ever-changing Order*, a scholarly treatise on the complementary aspects of Law and Chaos. In spite of the author's present condition, *Ever-changing Order* is a useful work that can provide impor-



tant insights to anyone determined to fight the Iron Shadow. Cahm'Fel, a githzerai living in self-imposed exile on the plane of Limbo, has distilled a substance he calls Navimas (a sort of concentrated essence of chaos). A party armed with both Navimas and the scholarly insights in *Ever-changing Order* can cleanse areas infected with the Iron Shadow.

Neither Ghuntomas nor Cahm'Fel is aware of the Iron Shadow when the adventure begins, but there are a few beings who have detected it. One of the first places the Shadow struck was the Baatorian city of Jangling Hiter. The kytons, natives of that evil place, studied the phenomenon. A powerful kyton named Quimath decided early on that the Iron Shadow represented his own corrupt ideals—namely, the domineering, forceful suppression of the will of others. Thus, Quimath has taken it upon himself to attempt to spread the Shadow as best he can. Unfortunately for him, he hasn't yet figured out how. He has, however, managed to garner the support of other kytons to help him in his quest.

Quimath's actions and desires came to the attention of a hound archon named Jazriul. Thus, he also seeks to find out more regarding the Iron Shadow, but he intends to thwart its evil—not only is it a foul influence, but it gives order a bad image that he perceives (rightly so) as being unjust.

To further complicate matters, a formian queen who has seen the Iron Shadow nearly wipe out an entire city (when workers ceased maintenance on a dam, the city flooded) seeks vengeance. Her actions inadvertently spread the Shadow to Limbo and the Spawning Stone, and, eventually, the slaadi strike back at the formians on Arcadia. The evil of the Shadow sparks many conflicts and disasters—it must be stopped.

The lillendi, custodians of the Infinite Staircase and followers of chaos and creative endeavor (the antithesis of the Iron Shadow), detected the affliction's presence as it spread to places touched by the Staircase. Currently, they seek able and hardy planewalkers to look into the Shadow-affected areas and discover a remedy or defense.

THE INFINITE STAIRCASE

The Infinite Staircase grew out of the Gates of the Moon in Selûne's palace when mortals were first appearing on the Prime Material Plane. In fact, some tell the tale that the Staircase outdates the Gates themselves.

The actual force behind the Infinite Staircase remains a mystery. A few explorers claim to have heard the sounds of building far off, as though someone or something, farther along the stair than anyone yet had gone, continued to expand the structure. Despite this, no evidence exists that the Staircase doesn't live up to its name and stretch on forever.

One thing is certain about the nature of the Infinite Staircase, and that's that the power that maintains it is rooted in creativity and development. The different stairways that make up the Infinite Staircase reach out like grasping hands to wherever creative endeavor is exercised—painters, writers, dancers, poets, architects, sculptors, singers, musicians, planners, and designers of all sorts attract the Staircase, and it roots a connection close to wherever they can be found. Thus, almost all cities (with very few exceptions) have a connection to the

Infinite Staircase. However, sometimes a lone figure in the wilderness can draw the Staircase as well.

The link to the Infinite Staircase displays itself as a nondescript doorway or arch. Beyond the opening lies a (usually small) landing with some stairs disappearing into the unknown. Typically, these accesses occur behind an old door that no one pays any attention to in the cellar, or through an archway near the darkened rear of an abandoned house. Very rarely are these entrances to the Staircase commonly known.

JAZRIUL

The hound archon Jazriul learns about the Iron Shadow as it first begins to spread. His primary mission is to investigate, since he assumes that the problem is too big for him to deal with directly on his own.

As he passes through the planes involved in the *Tales*, he may very well run into the PCs more than once (the DM should feel free to alter his movement through the adventure to make sure this happens). He should *not* join the PC group, even though his goals are the same. Jazriul is a loner and will not accompany others. However, he can be used as a recurring character who offers help to the PCs when they need it.

Jazriul stands over six feet tall, his body covered in well-groomed fur. He wears only breeches and golden jewelry, marking him as among the highest ranks of hound archons. His sword is golden as well, and he carries it wherever he travels, although his natural attacks serve him better on planes far from his home.

JAZRIUL, HOUND ARCHON: AC 1; MV 15; HD 6; hp 37; THACO 15 (13 with sword); #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8 (fist/fist/bite) or 1d8+2 (*long sword* +2); SA *shapechange* into a dog or wolf, *cast continual light*, *detect evil*, *infravision*, and *teleport without error* all at will, *protection from evil* 10-foot radius and *tongues* always active; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, aura of menace causes opponents to save vs. spell or suffer a -2 attack penalty until they successfully strike; MR 100%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (18); Int avg (9); AL LG; XP 2,000.

Special Equipment: *long sword* +2 (Mount Celestia forged), *ring of plane shift* (grants the wearer the ability to cast *plane shift* on himself and up to 250 additional pounds of cargo or passengers; has 10 charges), 1,000 gp worth of gold jewelry (collar, earrings, rings, etc.)

CONCLUDING ◆ THE ADVENTURE ◆

The nature of *Tales From the Infinite Staircase* makes it difficult to tell when the adventure is really "over." The PCs might decide to take on the task of finding a remedy for the Iron

Shadow (using the Navimas from Tale 4 and the book in Tale 7, or after talking to Ghuntomas of Thorn in Tale 5). In this quest, the end comes after the party has



dispelled the evil affliction from all the planes that it currently infects—or when the PCs choose to stop, whichever comes first.

Should the PCs remove the Iron Shadow and return to the Infinite Staircase, a lillend meets them on the stairs. She carries with her a large bag. “You have done wonderfully—far beyond our wildest dreams. Your skill and bravery shall be remembered among the lillendi for all times.” With that, she presents the PCs with the bag, which contains 1,000 gp and a small leather case holding a single silver ring. When they look at the ring, the lillend says “Use your ingenuity and skill once again to think of how to use the potent power of that ring to its fullest. It can grant you a single wish.” It is indeed a *ring of one wish*. The DM should also award the group 10,000 experience points to divide among them.

Of course, all the lillendi asked the PCs to do was to gather information. They may decide to learn what they can regarding the Iron Shadow and return with that alone—still a successful adventure. In this case, a lillend meets with the PCs when they return to the Staircase. She asks if they will write down the information that they have gathered and present it to her in that form. Immediately, however, to reward them for their troubles, she presents them with the bag containing 1,000 gp (but no ring). Upon completion of the written information, she can do any *one* of the following:


- ♦ Arrange to have any slain PC (or NPC) *raised*
- ♦ Grant all PCs an artistic talent proficiency
- ♦ Give them 1,000 additional gp

The group should gain 5,000 experience points to divide among them.

The DM should be open to the possibility that taking part in one of the adventures presented here might lead the PCs off on a “side” adventure related to something that occurs in the scenario. Perhaps the PCs can persuade Jazriul to take them back with him to Mount Celestia for healing, aid, or advice. Perhaps they can confer with a noctral there or something similar.


Whatever the case, the PCs may get off the track in a small way or a major way. If they don’t come back to the published adventure until later, that’s OK—even if they’ve gained levels or power, each adventure in *Tales From the Infinite Staircase* is malleable enough to challenge PCs of differing levels with little work.

The events within the Tales may lead to future adventures. The Iron Shadow, unless completely (and quickly) eradicated by the PCs, continues to spread. The infected areas of Blurophil and Jangling Hiter alone are filled with so many portals the Shadow likely spreads before the PCs can intervene. The DM could easily come up with new adventures in new locales (reached by the Infinite Staircase if she so chooses) wherein the PCs must banish another infestation of the Shadow in a new plane. Even Sigil itself could fall under the Iron Shadow, wreaking ill upon the City of Doors until it is banished.



LAW.
ALSO KNOWN AS ORDER,
IS THE FORCE
THAT GIVES STRUCTURE
AND MEANING TO THE MULTIVERSE.
AN INNOVATION IS NOTHING MORE
THAN A NEW STRUCTURE
OR FORM OF ORDER.
THAT WHICH STIFLES THE CREATIVE SPARK
DOES NOT SERVE LAW.
ANY MORE THAN BASHING A MASON
WITH A BRICK
SERVES TO BUILD A WALL.

—JAZRIUL,
COMMENTING
ON THE IRON SHADOW



The DM may also wish to develop an adventure for the PCs in which the origin of the Iron Shadow is explored. Was it created by some lawful evil fiend in Baator, or did it spring forth on its own as the result of some horrible battle on Acheron? Perhaps a malfunction of the gears on Mechanus (caused by an evil rogue modron?) produced the Iron Shadow. With the knowledge gained in *Tales From the Infinite Staircase*, the PCs can travel to the heart of the problem and destroy it.

Most likely, the PCs have made many new friends and enemies in their travels. When another, new challenge rises before the rilmani of Sum of All or the formians of Klictrik, they may turn to the PCs if they need help. The Planewalker's Guild will remain a valuable contact wherever the PCs go—particularly if they joined the guild's ranks.

Further, the Infinite Staircase remains a secret that, once discovered, offers the PCs a (fairly) simple way to travel the planes. Once they've established a rapport with the lillendi and begin to master the secrets and tricks to the Staircase, they'll be planewalking masters soon enough—and the DM will have a mechanism to create adventures throughout the planes that the PCs can easily reach.

Lastly, foes like the kytons, the dao slavers, or a fiend like Gerrzog are not going to forget the wrongs inflicted upon them by the PCs. They're going to want revenge. They're also going to continue committing their evil acts until heroes like the PCs put a stop to them.

TALE I: PLANEWALKERS

You've seen the doorway, and you've wondered all your life where it goes. It goes here. That's right. The answers to your questions are found here, on the other side of the door. Sure, it looks like it just leads to some

stairs, but where do the stairs go? Have you ever checked?

You haven't, have you?

The stairs go pretty far. No, not just to the cellar or the attic.

They go to places of creation, of artistic expression, and of great endeavor. They take you to your heart's desire. These stairs go ... everywhere.

◆ OVERVIEW ◆

The player characters seek Oriam Trascalía, a plane-walker known to spend time with the Plane-walker's Guild, an organized group of adventurers who base

themselves on the Infinite Staircase. During their search the heroes become embroiled in events that threaten the Guild and the caretakers of the Staircase, the lillendi. An insane sorceress has accidentally unleashed a destructive tanar'ri, which has begun laying waste to the Infinite Staircase. To find (and ultimately rescue) the individual they seek, the PCs must overcome—or at least bypass—the tanar'ri and his servants, as well as the sorceress.

In the end, the lillendi reward the PCs with some information, and yet another task that will take them to various locations accessed by the Staircase.

This adventure is intended for characters of levels 3-5, although characters of higher levels will also be challenged—particularly if they normally choose to fight their way out of difficult situations.

ONCE A BODY'S
FOUND A PLACE
LIKE THE INFINITE STAIRCASE,
SHE CAN FORGET
ABOUT MUCKING AROUND
WITH ALL THOSE
SODDING PORTALS AND
THEIR THRICE-DAMNED KEYS.

—POSEURE SPIEDA,
PLANEWALKER

◆ ADVENTURE NOTES ◆

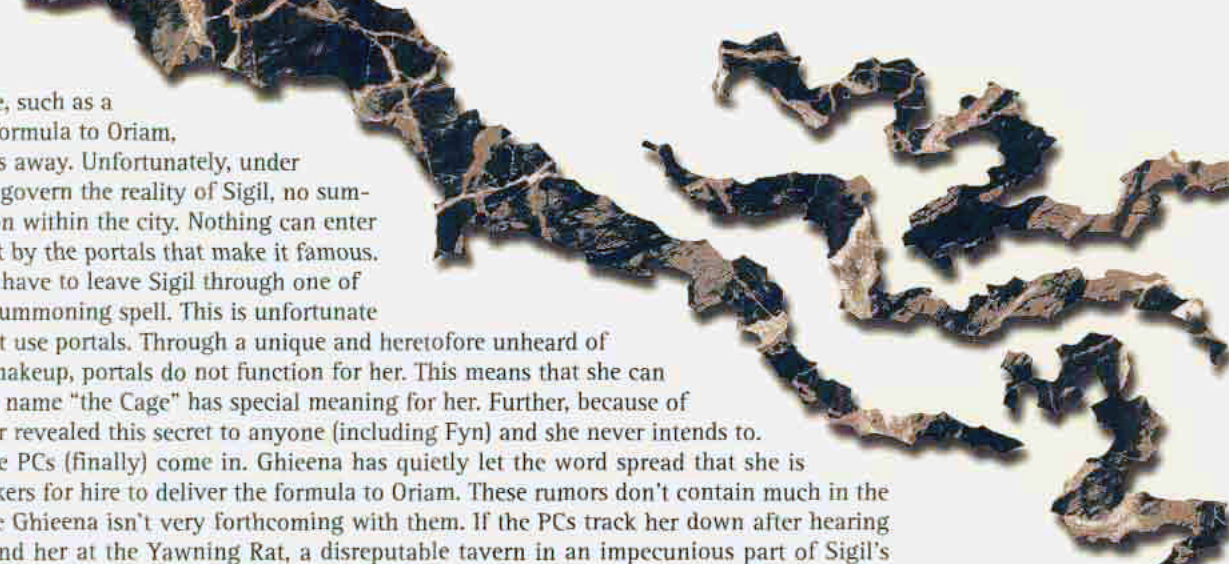
If the DM chooses to use the underlying plot which ties together all the adventures in *Tales From the Infinite Staircase*, this Tale should be played first. Thus, events of the other Tales do not have any effect on this one. Whether or not the other adventures are used, all that the DM has to worry about at this

point is getting the PCs involved. Once the PCs begin this Tale, leading them into the other adventures is easy—in fact, the player characters themselves will drive the plot from that point on.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

FROM SIGIL: If the player characters base themselves in the City of Doors, the impetus that gets them involved in the adventure is a tiefling named Ghieena (Pl/♀ tiefling/W4, T5/Society of Sensation/N). If human, Ghieena would be considered plain—she has dull eyes, bland hair, and a slightly flabby form. However, Ghieena is neither human nor plain, because her fiendish heritage has bestowed upon her a crimson horn jutting nine inches from her forehead.

Ghieena works in Sigil as a woodcrafter while she studies the magical arts under her tutor, an elven wizard named Fyn Longfingers. Ghieena's been given an assignment by her teacher; she is to deliver the formula for a potion to a wizard named Oriam Trascalía. Fyn's intentions were that her pupil would use spells she had learned



to summon a creature, such as a mephit, to carry the formula to Oriam, who was many planes away. Unfortunately, under the strange laws that govern the reality of Sigil, no summoning spells function within the city. Nothing can enter or exit the city except by the portals that make it famous. Thus, Ghieena would have to leave Sigil through one of the portals to cast a summoning spell. This is unfortunate because Ghieena can't use portals. Through a unique and heretofore unheard of quirk of her tiefling makeup, portals do not function for her. This means that she can never leave Sigil—the name “the Cage” has special meaning for her. Further, because of pride, Ghieena's never revealed this secret to anyone (including Fyn) and she never intends to.

This is where the PCs (finally) come in. Ghieena has quietly let the word spread that she is looking for planewalkers for hire to deliver the formula to Oriam. These rumors don't contain much in the way of detail because Ghieena isn't very forthcoming with them. If the PCs track her down after hearing the rumors, they'll find her at the Yawning Rat, a disreputable tavern in an impecunious part of Sigil's Market Ward—as far away from her normal stomping grounds as she can get.

As either an affliction or an affectation (no one knows for sure but her), Ghieena speaks only in a low whisper. She'll tell all comers that she's looking for someone to make a light delivery to the plane of Ysgard. She doesn't expect the trip to be dangerous (the proper response is, of course, “that's what they always say, berk!”). If asked about the contents of the delivery, or why she doesn't make it herself, Ghieena will reply that such things are her business, and no one else's. She'll go so far, if pressed, as to state that the delivery is but a scroll in a tube, and that her current circumstances prevent her from traveling at the moment (which is true, so far as the statement goes).

The reason that there's been no takers so far (although Ghieena won't reveal this) is that she can't afford to pay much. She's got 134 gp saved up, and she's willing to spend it all. Her initial offer, however, is only 100 gp. By the time the PCs reach her, she's gotten a little desperate, and so she'll resort to pleading and falling upon the characters' mercy if she has to. She's even willing to give them half of the payment up front and to go as high as 200 gp for the job—although she doesn't have it all at the moment (again, she won't reveal this to the PCs), she hopes to scrape it together by the time they return.

If the PCs accept, Ghieena gives them the formula in a sealed brass scroll tube and even provides directions to a portal that leads to the Gates of the Moon. Of Oriam Trascalía, “Look for the Planewalker's Guild,” she says, “he'll be there.” That's all she really knows. The portal lies in Sigil's Guildhall Ward, within a garden's archway. The key is an ounce of silver (which can be a part of a larger mass of silver, although the portal consumes the key).

FROM THE PRIME: Introducing PCs from the Prime into the adventure is fairly similar to the routine detailed above. Instead of the tiefling Ghieena, however, the less obtrusive Torveir Kilnistoch (Pr/♂ Human/F5/NG) contacts them. Nevertheless, Torveir's means of contacting the characters makes the encounter just as strange, if not stranger.

Torveir is a planar traveler from the prime world that the PCs hail from (or at least currently occupy). He has been to a number of the Outer and Inner Planes as well as the city at the heart of it all—Sigil. While in that City of Doors, Torveir met Ghieena and fell in love with her. When she could find no one to deliver the formula, she asked Torveir to do it, although she really wants nothing to do with him (she does not return his affections).

Torveir, for all of his enthusiasm and good intentions, is what many planars (at least those from Sigil) would call a berk. A leatherhead. A rube. A gully. A sodding dolt. That is to say, Torveir's not entirely competent. Thus, rather than just using the portal that Ghieena told him about, he decided to take a “short cut” through another series of portals and wound up on the prime material world of the PCs. In payback for past debts owed to him, a local criminal named Erreth sent his thugs after Torveir upon his return to his old homeland. Now, beaten and bruised, Torveir must find someone else to finish his mission.

After making his way to a nearby inn and gaining a room in which he can rest and heal, Torveir uses a magical item (his only one) called the *amulet of whispers*. This item has 24 charges and allows the wearer to use a *message* spell as though he were a 10th-level wizard. Further, the recipient of the message does not need to be within sight of the user. Torveir begins to send out *messages* to all who are nearby—including a PC or two. Those contacted can reply with short whispers of their own, and Torveir attempts to convince those who respond to come to his room. DMs can use this strange approach to really catch the PCs off-guard (Torveir isn't even canny enough to realize that this method of contacting people is weird). Torveir's actions make most people suspicious, so no one comes other than the PCs (if they do). Torveir always seems to pick the oddest way of doing things.

When the PCs meet him, he's obviously been severely injured, although his wounds are well tended. His sandy brown hair is matted, but his injuries don't completely hide his boyish good looks or the compelling gleam of enthusiasm in his eye.

Unlike Ghienna, Torveir has a good deal of money. He offers those who come to him 100 gp *each* as well as the *amulet of whispers* to deliver the formula to Oriam Trascalía. He'll also tell anyone who will work for him where the nearest portal to the Gates of the Moon lies (a reward in itself, in Torveir's opinion).

FROM ANYWHERE ELSE: If the PCs are anywhere else when the DM wishes to start the adventure, the best way to incorporate them is a variation on the method detailed above for PCs on the Prime. Torveir has simply come to wherever the PCs are, and a portal takes them from that plane to the Gates of the Moon.

◆ THE GATES OF THE MOON ◆

No matter where the PCs come from, they'll almost certainly end up using a portal to reach the Gates of the Moon. The portal takes them to a spot just outside Argentil, the palace of Selúne, goddess of the moon and stars. Their first sensation as they enter this realm is the sound of crashing waves, for Argentil is located on a rocky island lit by the bright glow of a nearly full moon.

In the realm of the moon goddess Selúne, the Moon Gates fluctuate as the moon does; the light here wanes and grows very slowly, as the waters move in rhythmic tides. Likewise, the mood of the inhabitants also shifts from calm and friendly (and even frolicsome) to dark and brooding (and occasionally to anger or despair). Kind DMs will have the PCs arrive during a bright time, when the moon's phase waxes and the people and realm welcome travelers. Further, since the Infinite Staircase is only accessible during times of the full moon (a condition which lasts three full "days" out of a month here), PCs arriving at other times will have to wait up to a month. A recommendation would be to have the PCs arrive shortly before the full moon, to give them a short time to explore and experience the Gates of the Moon before ascending the stair.

The first living beings encountered by the PCs will most likely be the shards. These beings resemble human women but are composed of moonlight and flame, the illumination of which shines visibly in their eyes, their hair, and even from the tips of their fingers.

Shards have unpredictable temperaments. They try to be friendly and accommodating, yet they are quick to anger and easily offended. Anything pertaining to Selúne, the realm, the palace, the moon, or the shards themselves might enrage them if phrased as anything but a compliment. If angered, they might attack characters for a round or two or they might just leave. If treated well, however, the shards can relate that the Planewalker's Guild has its headquarters on the Infinite Staircase. They'll even show the PCs how to get there and tell them a little about its nature if asked nicely.

The shards and the lillendi (see below) tolerate each

PLANAR MAGIC— THE INFINITE STAIRCASE

The Gates of the Moon lie on the first layer of the plane of Ysgard, so visiting wizards must cope with considerable modifications to their spells. In general, wizards must have special keys called runes to cast spells. Runes are magical symbols that must be inscribed on a spell's material components. A separate rune exists for each school of magic. If a spell has no material component, its rune must be spoken. It takes 1d6 minutes per spell level to inscribe a rune; the wizard can do this when memorizing the spell, or any time before the spell is cast. Once the proper rune is inscribed, the spell works normally; if the rune must be spoken, the spell's casting time increases by 1. Wizards who spend some time in the realm might be able to learn some or all of the runes from the inhabitants or the lillendi. Fortunately (especially in times with a waxing moon), the people of the Moon Gates are very generous with the rune-knowledge. Further, the Planewalker's Guild certainly knows all of the runes as well.

Exceptions to this general rule include:

- ◆ Spells which increase strength or physical combat, such as *strength*, *fly*, *haste*, *jump*, *enlarge*, *polymorph*, *stoneskin*, and so on, need no runes. They always work in this plane of combat and warriors.
- ◆ *Monster summoning* spells bring only einheriar.

EINHERIAR: AC 3 (banded mail and shield); MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 40; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); MR 5%; SZ M (6(FM) tall); ML elite (13-14); Int avg to high (8-14); AL CG; XP 270.

- ◆ Divination spells are doubled in range and duration, but a group or a place can never be "scried," only individuals.
- ◆ Necromancy spells are treated as one spell level higher than normal.
- ◆ Wild magic spells are treated as though having been cast by a wizard of one level higher than normal on this chaotic plane.
- ◆ Weather-affecting magic, including fog and wind-related spells, never work.

Strangely, in Selúne's realm (and all of the Staircase) magical items are not affected by any of these restrictions. They always function normally—even items with "pluses" function as if they were on their origin plane.

Clerics, while immune to the changes noted above, face the ever-present reduction of one level of spellcasting ability for each plane that lies between Ysgard and the planes on which their gods reside.

These magical alterations hold for the entire Infinite Staircase, as it is based in Ysgard (despite its connection to so many different planes).

other, but a body would not call them allies. The shards do not go into those areas under the jurisdiction of the lillendi, and vice versa.

SHARD: AC 6; MV 12; HD 3; hp 14; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (fist); SA casts *light*, *darkness* 10-foot radius, *burning hands*, *faerie fire* and *dancing lights* each 3×/day (at 5th level); SD immune to fire, can see in any amount of light, darkness or shadow; SZ M (5' tall); ML steady (11-12); Int avg (8-10); AL CG; XP 975.

◆ THE INFINITE STAIRCASE ◆

Deep within the palace of Selûne herself, the Infinite Staircase rises up and stretches into myriad worlds. The palace itself, called Argentil, is gigantic. Its entire surface, inside and out, glistens with polished silver. Most of its long, echoing halls stand empty with only an occasional shard or lillend carrying out a task for the mistress.

Entrance into the palace isn't as hard as a newcomer might think. The entrance is watched by a single golem made of whitish silver (similar to an intelligent iron golem). A shard or lillendi escort can get anyone inside. Further, the golem stands aside for anyone who simply states he has business within Argentil or seeks the staircase. Only those with no obvious business in the palace—sightseers, for example—are turned away. Even people with foolish requests, such as those seeking an audience with Selûne, are permitted inside, although they'll never actually be able accomplish such a task (unless Selûne wishes it). See, this is the palace of a god, and so security really isn't an issue. Selûne knows all that transpires in her realm at all times and anyone meaning her ill gets the fate he deserves. That is to say, anyone stupid enough to enter the Gates of the Moon seeking to attack, steal from, or even spy on Selûne is instantly and automatically destroyed—a fate one should expect in a god's own realm.

Once the PCs move beyond the entrance, a shard escort appears to take the PCs where they wish to go. The path through the palace is long and awe-inspiring, as only the home of a deity can be. Finally, their escort brings the characters to a set of huge, intimidating doors, in the silver surface of which is carved the symbol of infinity. When someone approaches the doors and comes within 25 feet, the symbol leaps off the surface. A lillend with a golden mask that shows no facial features materializes behind the symbol, so that the symbol now appears to be etched into the mask. She welcomes the visitors, asking them their names and intentions upon the Infinite Staircase. There is always one lillend stationed here.

point per die of damage; SW electrical attacks *slow* the golem for three rounds; SZ L (10' tall); ML fearless (20); Int very (12); AL N; XP 13,000.

Notes: gas breath can be used in addition to a physical attack. Gas fills a 10-foot cube directly in front of the golem and lasts 1 round. Creatures within the cloud must save vs. poison or die. This golem is immune to rust monster attacks.

THE LILLENDI

The lillendi serve as the guardians, custodians, and managers of the Infinite Staircase. Complex and sometimes perplexing, the lillendi appear to be human or elf women (or rarely men) with the lower torsos of multicolored serpents and the wings of some strikingly patterned bird.

Each lillend belongs to one or more of the various mysteries of their kind—these operate more or less like secret societies (or, from a Sigilian point of view, factions), each with its own bit of eternal wisdom or knowledge. The more mysteries that a lillend belongs to, the greater her status, which is then reflected in the mask that each wears. All of those immediately around the Infinite Staircase wear *faceless masks of infinity*, although the lillendi stylize them in different, subtle ways (the variations only hold meaning for the lillendi).

As lovers of music and art, nothing is more dear to the lillendi than creativity. Thus, the Infinite Staircase is their most sacred site. To harm, malign, or even threaten the Staircase is to do the same to them, and while the lillendi are generally peaceful, that doesn't mean that they're not dangerous. Once angered, these chaotic beings hold a vicious grudge. They seek blood as payment for all transgressions.

Their respect for artistic expression means that while gold and even food mean little to them, a song, a poem, or a piece of artwork holds for them great value and meaning. Canny characters would be wise to learn this fact, because at some point in the adventure they might find it useful to give the lillendi what Cagers call garnish—bribes.

DMs should note that while the lillendi will admit any who wish to climb the Staircase (for if they have made it this

far, it must be the will of Selûne), most of the snake-women have a prejudice against baatezu—and thus, tieflings with baatezu heritage, which the lillendi can detect—and modrons, rogue or otherwise.

LILLEND: AC 3; MV 9, Fl 27 (C), Sw 15; HD 7+14; hp 42; THACO 11 (10 with weapon); #AT 2; Dmg 2d6 (tail)/1d8+1 (scimitar or long sword, plus Strength) or 1d6+1 (spear or powerful bow, plus Strength); SA foes hit by tail automatically suffer 2d6 points of damage a round from constriction, influences moods and casts spells as a 7th level bard, plus casts *darkness*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *knock* and *light* (each 3×/day), *fire charm*, *Otto's irresistible dance*, *pass plant*, *polymorph self* (into humanoid form only), *speak with animals*, *speak with plants* and *transport via plants* (each 1×/day); SD

SILVER GOLEM: AC 3; MV 6; HD 18; hp 80; THACO 3 (0 with scythe +3); #AT 1; Dmg 4d10+3 (scythe +3); SA breathes poison gas once every seven rounds, Strength 24; SD immune to weapons of less than +3 bonus, immune to most spells, magical fires heal 1 hit



+1 or better weapon to hit, immune to poison, nonmagical fire, level draining, musically based magical effects, and enchantment/charm spells; MR 25%; SZ L (human torso and 20' tail); ML champion (15-16); Int high (13-14); AL CN or CG; XP 9,000.

Notes: Constricted foes can break free with a bend bars roll, constricted foes of less than 250 pounds can be carried aloft and dropped, all constricted foes suffer a -3 penalty to attack, damage, and saving throw rolls, lillendi cannot inflict constriction damage while carrying a foe in the air.

Special equipment: *Faceless mask of infinity*

Spells (3/2/1): 1st—*detect magic*, *dancing lights*, *charm person*, 2nd—*blur*, *hypnotic pattern*, 3rd—*dispel magic*

CLIMBING AN INFINITE STAIR

The bottom of the Infinite Staircase is a large (200 foot diameter) circular chamber. The room rises up like a shaft as far as anyone can see, with a singular spiral staircase made of silver winding up the center, seemingly unsupported except at its base. Green tendrils of ivy hang from the silver stair at irregular intervals. The curious will find it impossible to determine where exactly these vines originate—they entwine this entire portion of the staircase needing neither rain nor sun. Many assume that they are somehow rooted on a plane that the staircase reaches at some point. The stairway is 20 feet wide and the rest of the chamber and subsequent shaft appears empty.

The lillendi use the vines on this lower portion of the staircase for many purposes. Using their magical abilities, they can speak with the ivy and even use their *transport via plants* powers to travel from one large clump to another. Further, lillendi with the *faceless masks of infinity* can magically hide themselves within infinity symbols just as did the guardian at the door described above. This is a special form of *improved invisibility* that they can access three times per day. Whenever a lillend vanishes, an infinity symbol marks the location; however, lillendi are clever enough to make sure the symbol is difficult to spot (not a hard task here among the ivy) when they truly wish to remain unnoticed. Once hidden in a symbol, a lillend cannot move, but can use spells and spell-like powers. They also can make melee attacks against any foe that comes within reach. The power works only for lillendi and only for those with those specific masks.

Thus, while the room appears empty, it almost never is; 1d4-1 lillendi reside here at any time, albeit hidden. These lillendi spend most of their time silently attuning themselves to the essence of the Infinite Staircase. They hope to gain energy and awareness from the creativity that flows through the staircase from all the other planes that it joins. They will show themselves if the single guardian of the doors requires assistance, but rarely at any other time.

Before any newcomer begins to ascend the Infinite Staircase, the guardian lillend instructs them briefly on the ways and the dangers of the stair. Specifically, she tells them that the stair is a magical pathway that is drawn to great concentrations of creativity. Thus, the Staircase mystically joins with any area on any plane where intelligent beings have expressed some sort of creative spirit. While some might simply say that the staircase just goes to where intelligent beings dwell—and others just say it goes to cities—the lillendi are

very specific about the Staircase's link to creative enterprise, thoughts, and ideas. "Rising out of the day-by-day, well-ordered sameness, a creative idea is something from nothing. It is new and different. It is the ultimate expression of the beauty of chaos." Or so the lillendi say, when they're feeling loquacious.

As the stair winds and twists to reach each of these places, accessed through doorways found on numerous landings, a wise traveler can tumble to—figure out—a bit about where the doorways go. Stairway portions that lead to evil planes are thick with shadow and spine-chilling cold. Those leading to one of the Upper Planes appear generally clean, bright, and warm. Connections to other planes are not so easily ascertained.

A side effect of the power of the Infinite Staircase is its ability to sense a body's heart's desire. Further, the Staircase can take someone directly to his heart's desire, for it lies on the other side of one of the many doors leading off the stair. This can be dangerous (in a manner of speaking), because once a person finds his heart's desire, he's not likely to ever leave—he's happy, but any other plans or destinations that he had while on the stair are for naught. He's gone for good.

This danger only rears its head when a planewalker travels the Infinite Staircase alone. If this happens, he suddenly finds a path on the stair that he probably didn't notice before. He finds himself presented, at the end of this new branch of the staircase, with what is obviously his heart's desire (the DM and player must confer to determine the exact nature of this). At this point, the decision as to whether the PC accepts his heart's desire is really up to the player. However, if the DM wishes to handle this through game mechanics, the character should attempt a Wisdom check. This roll has a penalty of -4, but a +1 bonus is awarded for each level of the character. If the check is failed, the PC accepts his heart's desire and goes through the doorway, never to be seen again. If the check is successful, the PC can resist the temptation if the player so wishes. The DM should permanently remove a character accepting his heart's desire, for once there, he will never leave (however, it should be stressed that it is not a false temptation—the PC truly has reached happiness and fulfillment). Once a character resists accepting his heart's desire, the Staircase will never take him there again. If he wants to one day reach the place he saw, he'll have to use some other means to get there.

If treated with respect, the lillend guardian will also warn the PCs that some of the locations connected by the Infinite Staircase seem to be afflicted with some dire malady. She warns them to look before they leap, so to speak. The lillend refers to the Iron Shadow, which plays a great part in the other adventures (Tales) in this product. At this moment, however, she most likely does not trust any newcomers enough to tell them more (that comes later—at the end of this Tale). She will also tell them how to get to the Planewalker's Guild, which lies high up on the stair.

When someone first begins an ascent, the Infinite Staircase appears as a spiraling silver stairway (as described above) entwined with ivy. The first landing waits over a thousand feet above the level of the base, which is no longer visible at that point. The landing is a 200-foot disc, with numerous other staircases, all of different appearance and composition, extending off it like tentacles. Walls are no longer visible; in-

people can literally climb themselves to death. A full day of rest eases the strain.

Now, there's no map of the Infinite Staircase for the DM to reference, and the place's name should suggest why. Thus, the DM has to estimate "travel times" between a traveler's destination and his starting point. This should usually be in terms of hours, or at the most one or two days.

Longer trips are possible, but at that point a canny cutter begins to wonder if there are better means of traveling the planes. 'Course, if most of the trip is going down, it's not so bad...

During the course of a trip between two points on the Infinite Staircase, a planewalker crosses over many types of stairs—straight, wooden staircases, spiral stairs made of metal, winding curved stairs of stone, and more. Landings are frequent, and they usually have other stairs connecting to them, so it's easy for a basher to get lost if he doesn't know where he's going.

If a character attempts to use magic (or other means) to circumvent the travel time, the action results in its own set of problems. Flight, magical or otherwise, is perfectly safe on the Infinite Staircase as long as the flyer stays to the general path of the stair and doesn't fly more than 25 feet or so from it. Flying off the stairs farther than that, or attempting to fly from one portion of the stair to another (that is to say, without following the normal progression) brings greater risk. There is a 25% chance that the flyer accidentally passes through an invisible fold in the space that the stairs occupy. Such a character is flung into some random plane. Most such travelers are never seen again. It's not hard to imagine why most planars equate the word "lost" with "dead."

Teleporting from one location on the Infinite Staircase to another runs the same risk with the same result—and this on top of the normal danger involved with teleportation. Teleporting from a location on the stairs to somewhere off the stair—even through a doorway—is impossible. Such a trip requires a *teleport without error* spell, a *plane shift*, or something similar.

Falling off the stairs carries the same risk of slipping into another plane. If that *doesn't* happen, the poor sod will likely fall 10d100 feet before hitting another stair below him (or the base of the stairs in the palace of Selûne if he's that close to the bottom). Falling off isn't a good idea. What's more, with the shifting orientations of the Staircase, it's possible for a traveler to see something falling past where he's standing, but falling "up" as far as he's concerned.

ALL RIGHT.
SΘ, +HERE I AM, LΘΘKIN' +Θ
GE+ +Θ TIR NA ΘG ΘN +HE ΘU+LANDS,
AND SOME BERK +ELLS ME
+Θ +RAVEL YGGDRASSIL.
SΘ I CLIMB +HE SΘDDING +REE.
FINE.

THEN, I'M LΘΘKING
+Θ GE+ +Θ SOME PRIME WORLD,
AND DISCOVER +HE ΘNLY PA+H +HERE
IS ΘN MΘUN+ ΘLYMPUS.

MORE CLIMBING.

A FEW MΘN+HS LATER
I GΘ++A DELIVER A PACKAGE
+Θ SOME BASHERS ΘN MΘUN+ CELESTIA.
[I SHOULD'VE FIGURED IT ΘUT
BY +HE NAME ALΘNE—
+HA+ ΘNE'S MY FAULT+.]

NΘW I'M LΘΘKING +Θ JOIN UP
WITH +HE PLANEWALKER'S GUILD,
AND YΘU'RE +ELLING ME
IT'S LΘCATED IN +HE MIDDLE
ΘF A HUGE STAIRCASE.

THIS IS A JΘKE, RIGHT?

—A DISGRUNTLED PLANEWALKER

stead, each stair simply disappears into hazy darkness (visibility is about 250 feet).

As characters follow the lillend's directions and proceed up the Staircase, they traverse many different stairs and many different landings. Often, they can see flights of stairs other than the one that they tread. Sometimes, these staircases are oriented in different directions from the one that the viewer stands upon—up, down, left, and right are not the same for travelers on those stairs as for the PCs. Nevertheless, a traveler never notices a change in his own orientation (although it does happen, as the Infinite Staircase impossibly turns back upon itself like some sort of optical illusion).

These sights emphasize the sheer size of the place. It may very well take a body two or three days of climbing (or possibly descending, depending on where he starts) to get where he's going. Considering that the terrain is stairs the whole way, this can be an exhausting undertaking. If a character climbs the Infinite Staircase for more than one day for every six points of Constitution he has (rounded down), he must make a Constitution check. A failed check indicates that the character sustains 1d2 points of damage from the strain he's placed on his body. The character can push on if he wishes, but must repeat the Constitution check at a cumulative penalty of -1 (and risk further damage) each day. Foolish

LANDINGS AND DOORS

The stairs and landings vary in size and composition. Many are small, only big enough for a single door and one or two adjoining stairs. Others are huge, so large that a body can't even lay eyes on the entire landing at once. Most such landings have many doors and many adjoining staircases (and many of the stairs are huge themselves—some large enough to lead an army up or down). Some landings are dead-ends, with only a door and no continuing staircase. Every landing always has a door—the appearance of which can vary from a simple wooden portal to a metal valve to an open archway.

Obviously, focused adventurers will resist the urge to explore every branch of the Stairway and each door. However, they might peek through the occasional doorway to see what lies beyond or even pass through to rest for awhile in the place on the other side.

Each door opens into an unobtrusive area in the location beyond. Many are doors in some forsaken cellar, or doors in abandoned buildings. In any case, it's not a door anyone pays much attention to. The vast majority of people on the other side have no knowledge that a link with the Infinite Staircase is nearby. Most don't even know it exists at all. A few suggestions to DMs for possible door destinations include:

- ◆ **THE CITY OF BRASS ON THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF FIRE:** This city of the efreet offers no shelter for travelers. In fact, without some sort of resistance or immunity to fire, anyone stepping through this open archway suffers 5d10 points of fire damage per round. Fortunately, berks are warned by a feeling of great heat around the arch, and the view through it shows a metallic city filled with flames.
- ◆ **A TINY VILLAGE ON THE PRIME WORLD OF OERTH CALLED CETHIS:** The burg has a population of 230. The innocuous doorway leads into the wine cellar of the village's only inn, *The Good Rest*.
- ◆ **THE ABYSSAL CITY OF BROKEN-REACH:** This is a dangerous burg filled with tanar'ri and evil creatures. Shadows shroud the iron door that leads from the Staircase to this place. A small storage room in a dank dungeon lies beyond the door.
- ◆ **THE GATE-TOWN OF TRADEGATE:** A simple, wooden door leads to a forgotten corner of a warehouse in this peaceful mercantile town.
- ◆ **GUNTHIS, A SPRAWLING PRIME CITY:** This vast metropolis (population 100,000+) is found on the prime world of Tuimuhva. The stone door slides open slowly to reveal a back alleyway in the city's lower class district. The door is difficult to find from the Gunthis side.
- ◆ **MYTHENOSCA, MYCONID CITY:** Located in a remote region of Mechanus, this strange city is grown rather than built, inhabited by the fungoid myconids. The door is a strange, roundish, organic tube that connects with the interior of one of these fungal buildings.
- ◆ **RUINED TEMPLE OF TARMOS:** On a desolate stretch of rolling hills (on a prime world of the DM's choice), the ruined foundation of an abandoned temple stands in silent vigil, with an access to the Infinite Staircase for no one to find. The door is a simple, iron-bound wooden valve, obviously old and ill-kept, almost falling off its hinges.

STAIRCASE ENCOUNTERS

For the most part, travelers on the Infinite Staircase find it to be a lonely, desolate place. Encounters or even sightings of other travelers are rare. Usually, a planewalker will climb the stairs a whole day and never see another soul.

The chance of a random run-in with another creature on the Infinite Staircase is about 1 in 10, checked at least once per trip, but at the most twice daily. If the DM would like to generate such encounters randomly, he can use the following table or create one of his own, using this as a model:

1. **DOMESTICATED ANIMAL:** A cat, a dog, or even something as strange as an ethyk accidentally passed through a doorway onto the Infinite Staircase, leaving its owner far behind. Now it wanders aimlessly, looking for food and possibly a new owner....
2. **WILD ANIMAL:** This animal also wandered onto the staircase accidentally, but it's certainly not looking for a new owner. Considering how scarce food is here, it's probably very hungry. A herbivore might actually approach travelers looking for food, while a carnivore probably just attacks (DMs can assume a 50% chance of either if they wish).
3. **LOST CHILD:** Like the animals, this child also wandered onto the Infinite Staircase by accident, probably exploring some place that the grown-ups never go. Although she's scared, Lyyasna has a strong sense of curiosity. This strange and somewhat frightening place has her interest piqued—she'll be leery of the PCs, but not terrified. She's also pretty hungry.
4. **GENASI TRAVELER:** Winthrys (Pl/♂ air genasi/P4/Fated/CG), a priest of Chan, is on a mission for his church, delivering a message. He is distrustful of strangers and unlikely to interact with other travelers.
5. **BAERNALOTH:** This fiend, a master of yugoloths, has business of its own and pays no heed, for good or ill, to others it meets. It literally will not pay attention to the PCs in any way. If attacked, it uses its *teleport without error* ability (risky as that is) to escape.
6. **GROUP OF TRAVELERS:** This group of planewalking adventurers consists of Gerindos (Pr/♂ Human/F5/NG), Ferley Gildenstaff (Pr/♀ half-elf/F4, W4/N), Namros (Pr/♂ gnome/T5/N), Kilder Hon (Pl/♀ human/P6/Believers of the Source/CN), and Reanthinomon (Pl/♂ bariaur/F4/Doomguard/CG). They seek a doorway off the staircase that leads to Sigil, and would be willing to give up to 80 gp to anyone who can direct them toward one.
7. **GRUMPY DWARF:** Dernan (Pr/♂ dwarf/F9/N) is completely lost, but he'll never admit that. However, the situation has him in a foul mood. Although he won't ask for help he may stop to speak with the PCs just to see if he can glean some sense of direction from them. Overall, however, he's so grumpy that it's unlikely that anyone will want to talk to him for long.
8. **LILLEND:** As one of the watchers/guardians/custodians of the Infinite Staircase, she can give directions or provide aid to travelers if approached respectfully, but she can also hide along the stair (with a *faceless mask of infinity*) to watch the PCs' progress and actions.
9. **MANTICORE:** This monster has wandered onto the stair and now angrily attacks all that pass by its makeshift, bone-filled

lair on a small landing. It attacks all that approach the landing, as well as those on stairs nearby it (even those with different orientations) with its tail spikes. The manticores feed on what it kills.

MANTICORE: AC 4; MV 12, Fl 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 29; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d8 (claw/claw/bite); SA flings 1d6 tail spikes up to 180 yards (as a light crossbow), inflicting 1d6 points of damage; SZ H (15' long); ML elite (13); Int low (7); AL LE; XP 975.

10. BAKU: This good-aligned creature, like the baernaloth mentioned above, has its own secret reasons for traversing the Infinite Staircase. Likewise, it uses *probability travel* to get away from attacking foes rather than fighting. Unlike the yugoloth, it might stop and talk with good-aligned travelers, giving them information (but nothing else) if they need it—such as the way to the Planewalker's Guild.

DMs should note that only some of these encounters occur with creatures on the same flight of stairs or orientation as the PCs: 25% of the time, a creature encountered randomly will be seen making its way along a distant stair that might not join up with the path that the PCs use for a long, long time. Discussion might be possible with such encounters, but little else unless flight or something similar is risked. Further, 50% of these distant encounters will be with creatures that have a different orientation—perhaps even walking along the underside of the very stairs that the PCs currently stand upon.

◆ THE PLANEWALKER'S GUILD ◆

The Planewalker's Guild began in Sigil over 900 years ago, making it older than even most of the factions for which the City of Doors is known. The organization formed as a protective society for planar travelers. At first, it was simply a loosely organized social club of explorers that traded information and advice regarding different locations on the planes. It soon grew into a semi-formal organization that included at least 3,000 members. The Planewalker's Guild provided its members with safehouses throughout the planes, financed expeditions, and matched explorers and mercenaries with potential patrons and employers. The Guild's Sigilian headquarters boasted one of the most extensive libraries and map collections regarding planar locations in the multiverse.

After about 400 years, however, the Guild fell upon hard times. As the factions grew stronger and stronger within the City of Doors, the guilds within that city grew weaker and weaker. Why? Because the factions, jealous of sharing their membership with anyone else, often forbade those who belonged to join any guild or club. Soon, *planewalker* became a general term, as opposed to a sign that the basher

in question belonged to the Guild.

Eventually, those loyal few who remained members of the Guild realized that Sigil, despite its perfect location for an organization like theirs, was no longer a hospitable home for them. They left the City of Doors reluctantly, resentful of the factions that forced them to leave. Not surprisingly, the Planewalker's Guild became a nomadic affair for many years, occasionally establishing temporary headquarters here and there but never for more than a year or two. Losing membership and money—and therefore most of its influence and ability to keep up its safehouses and even its library (much of which was eventually sold off to various collectors and libraries)—the Guild faced ultimate dissolution until it stumbled upon the perfect place for its headquarters. The Planewalker's Guild found its new home on a crossroads almost as good as the City of Doors. It established its headquarters right on the Infinite Staircase itself.

Even by the standards of the planes, the headquarters is a strange place. A large landing on the Infinite Staircase serves as a site for numerous tents, buildings, and camps. As a body approaches from one of the many adjoining stairs (either from below or from above), he'll begin to experience the sounds and smells of the people here long before he catches sight of the place. All manner of food cooks over open fires, beer brews in vats and cauldrons, and individuals of varying states of cleanliness chatter, work with noisy tools, and even sing songs of distant places. All the activity creates odors and sounds marking the place distinctly.

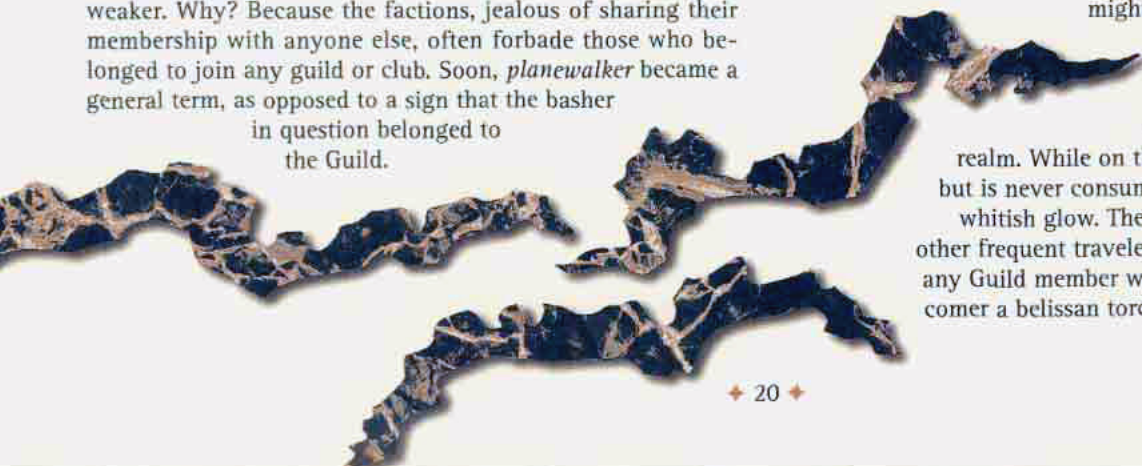
The tents and minor structures raised by guild members often spill over from the landing onto the stairways themselves, so it's not uncommon to come upon the edges of the headquarters even before a body catches sight of the actual landing. The landing lies about six hours climb up from the base of the Infinite Staircase.

Although the Guild has maintained its headquarters here for well over a hundred years, the nature of the place is temporary. The members are, after all, planewalkers and any given individual remains at the headquarters only a short time. Even the administrators of the Planewalker's Guild depart from time to time, leaving others to assume their responsibilities in their stead. Their constant mobility means that the headquarters, as well as the resident population, changes frequently.

Due to their nature, the Guild members welcome strangers and travelers. Those coming into the encampment can expect to be fed and even presented with a safe place to rest if they require it. They don't look kindly on freeloaders (that is, a wise traveler doesn't overstay his welcome), but they understand the importance of a rest stop.

If the PCs look around them, they might notice all the torches in the area never seem to burn down. Belissan, or moonwood, is a special sort of wood found only in Selûne's

realm. While on the Infinite Staircase, it burns but is never consumed, always giving off a soft, whitish glow. The Guild uses it for light, as do other frequent travelers on the Staircase. Virtually any Guild member would be happy to sell a newcomer a belissan torch for only 1 gold piece.



JOINING THE GUILD

Some player characters might be interested in joining the Planewalker's Guild. Doing so is fairly easy. An existing member must recommend a new member, and the new member must be able to pay a full year's dues ahead of time. Each year's dues amount to 10 gp per level of the member. Dues increase as a character gains experience because the benefits of being a member likewise are commensurate with the level of the planewalker.

Members of the guild gain a +1 bonus to saving throws against the environmental effects of a given plane for every five levels that they have advanced (characters of 10th level or higher can combine their bonuses into a larger bonus or gain a smaller bonus on more than one plane, as the player desires). This assumes that the PC spends a fair amount of time studying the texts that the guild has accumulated in its planar library or talking with more experienced members of the guild about their travels and adventures or both.

Further, a PC joining the Planewalker's Guild has the opportunity to adopt a Planewalker kit from the *Planewalker's Handbook*, even if the character has already advanced levels—as long as the PC in question was not created with another kit.

Lastly, members of the Planewalker's Guild have the opportunity to learn the plane-related proficiencies found in the *Planewalker's Handbook*, including Planar Survival, Planar Sense, Planology, Planar Direction Sense, Portal Feel, and even Spell Recovery.

GUILD MEMBERS

Hav'run Thain (Pr/♂ minotaur/F12/Planewalker's Guild/LN), a minotaur from the prime world of Krynn, currently leads the Planewalker's Guild. His companion also hails from Krynn, an avian humanoid (called a kyrie) known only as the Vagis (Pr/♂ kyrie/D3/Planewalker's Guild/N). These two unlikely companions fled their home plane long ago after defying all odds and becoming friends. For a minotaur, Hav'run is relatively peace-loving (although he still values honor and battle prowess highly), while the mysterious Vagis never speaks and never leaves Hav'run's side.

Oriam Trascalía is a human wizard who spends most of his time at the Guild's headquarters. He feels too old to do much planewalking anymore. Since his presence is more constant than other members, most know him with at least passing familiarity. Thus, most members of the Planewalker's Guild

know of his past romance with another human wizard named Shavanistra and of Oriam's recent disappearance (although few would be quick to realize that those two facts are linked).

With a little more asking around, the PCs can find someone at the Guild with the directions to Shavanistra's location. This someone is a tiefling named Caert

(Pl/♂ tiefling/T2/Free League/N). Caert had some dealings with Shavanistra—namely, she hired him to steal some spell components for her a few months ago. Caert can relate that the sorceress was never a member of the Planewalker's Guild, but often spent a good deal of time in a nearby area of the Staircase (the Blue Mushroom area). Perhaps, the tiefling thief asserts, she is from a world accessed near there.


If PCs ask about the area, Caert shrugs and says the place is full of blue fungus—he doesn't know why. If asked for details about Shavanistra, or if asked why she wasn't a member of the Guild, Caert simply says "Shavanistra has a few ...

stability problems." He won't elaborate, and he doesn't know much more. Caert, of course, demands "a little jink for me trouble."


It'll take at least 10 gp or its equivalent to get this information.

If the PCs continue to ask around the Guild for more information about the Blue Mushroom area, they can find some interesting details. Since even directions as simple as "up" and "down" only work relative to the position upon which a body currently stands, the Planewalker's Guild has adopted as many specific names for specific areas of the Infinite Staircase as they can. For example, they call the bottom portion either the Base or the Ivy, based on the plant life which lives there. The Stone Columns is an area where strange, inexplicable pillars of stone rise up and around the stairways in an irregular pattern. No one's ever seen their bases or what (if anything) they support. The Blue Mushroom area is known for a tiny fungus which grows on the underside of some of the stairways in a certain region. Legend has it that these mushrooms spread from some miscast spell or malfunctioning magical item. The area lies about nine hours' journey from the Planewalker's Guild.

In any event, a cutter named Ghiaridonna (Pl/♀ bariaur/F5/NG) had a friend named Jardon Miriph who was headed in the direction of the Blue Mushroom area to use a doorway there—he was ultimately bound for Bytopia. Jardon should have returned a few days ago, but Ghiaridonna has neither seen nor heard from him. Another guild member, Transhol the Guarded (Pr/♂ human/B4/CG) heard from a lillend that some sort of disturbance has occurred in the Blue Mushroom area, and that it's become a dangerous place. No one seems to know why.



THIS MAY JUST BE
A PATHWAY TO ELSEWHERE
TO YOU,
BUT TO US IT'S HOME—
AND A PLANEWALKER
TAKES THE
CONCEPT OF HOME
VERY SERIOUSLY.
—HAV'RUN THAIN



SHAVANISTRA

Shavanistra, an insane sorceress, is indeed responsible for the disappearance of Oriam Trascalía. The two were once lovers, but Oriam grew weary of Shavanistra's steadily declining sanity and finally left her. In revenge, the barmy wizard concocted an equally insane scheme that involved summoning a glabrezu to the Infinite Staircase (by way of her prime world). Unable to control the fiend, Shavanistra's tanar'ri "servant" has begun to wreak havoc upon all he encounters. The details of Shavanistra's original plans no longer hold relevance. Currently, she waits to see what the tanar'ri will do so she can use that to her best advantage.

Gerrzog, the glabrezu, likes to think of himself as from "the old school." By that, he means that he prefers wanton destruction over temptation. He even prefers to be called a demon rather than a tanar'ri, for he knows that name brings fear into the hearts of others. Gerrzog would much rather kill and maim than just about anything else, but if there are no living creatures about, he's happy to destroy inanimate objects or even his environment. In this case, unfortunately, that means that he has spent much of his time destroying a portion of the Infinite Staircase.

When the adventure begins, Oriam has managed to fend off the demon's attacks, but he is trapped on an isolated and darkened portion of the staircase. He knows enough about the Infinite Staircase to know that the darkness means that any nearby portals lead to inhospitable, evil places. He can't get to any other portion of the stairs because Gerrzog's rampage has destroyed all sections that joined with the portion upon which he now waits.

After the uncontrolled Gerrzog began his attacks, Shavanistra retreated through a nearby doorway leading to a small chamber in a prime city called Abstemious, inhabited almost entirely by illithids. Because of the city's dangerous nature, she doesn't go further than this small chamber that the mind flayers seem to ignore. She intends to return to the Infinite Staircase soon anyway.

Shavanistra exhibits all sorts of mannerisms that make it clear she is out of her mind. Clearly evil and chaotic, she thinks of herself as a shining bastion of order and goodness. She thinks that she worships the goddess Athena devotedly, although her real actions certainly do not fall within the tenets of that goddess's religion. Shavanistra also believes that she has three devoted sisters/followers who do her bidding. Nevertheless, she is alone.

STAIRWAY OF DESOLATION

When Gerrzog first appeared on the Infinite Staircase, he used his *gate* ability to bring in another tanar'ri, in this case a chasme. The glabrezu and the chasme did not get along, however, and Gerrzog was forced to slay the other fiend. The chasme gated in 19 manes before it died, however, and these least fiends now serve Gerrzog.

The glabrezu uses the manes as sentries around his newly formed lair. Gerrzog also has *charmed* a fighter named Unthre. Further, the tanar'ri's evil, fiendish presence has drawn the attention of some giant spiders that had been wandering about the stairs.

The area around Gerrzog's chosen lair shows the demon's handiwork. The stairs bear claw and scorch marks; broken bits of staircase litter the steps.

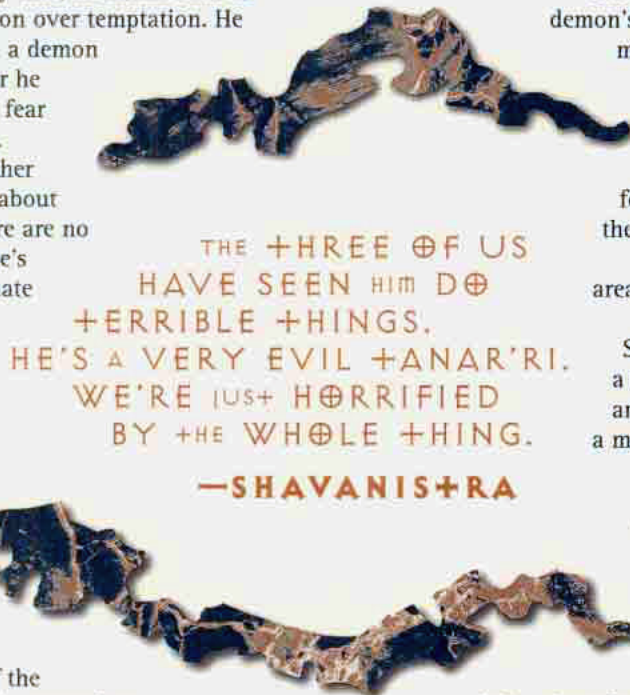
Even more dramatically, a visitor might see broken steps, twisted frames, and entire collapsed sections where gaps of 3 to 10 feet (or more—see below) yawn before a traveler. Even worse, the destruction of the Staircase's physical structure has caused an instability in its magical structure, creating areas of wild magic.

Once in the Blue Mushroom region of the Staircase, there is a 10% chance per turn that a traveler will encounter a physically unstable area and a 20% chance per turn that he'll find a magically unstable one.

Physically unstable areas are fairly easy to spot. The structure of the stairway is worn, bent, and weakened. Some of the individual steps are broken. Those looking carefully have a 40% chance of noticing an unstable area. Most of these unsafe places are about 10 feet by 10 feet in size, but they can be much larger (roll

(2d3-1)×10 feet to determine the size).

Walking across such an area carries with it a risk of great danger. For every 100 pounds of weight placed upon the area, there is a 25% chance that the staircase collapses. The imperiled adventurer has a moment, when he can hear the creaking of the faulty materials and can feel the vibrations in the steps, during which he can attempt to leap or run to safety before the structure gives way. This requires a successful Dexterity check. If a thief successfully made a detect noise skill roll, or if a gnome made a detect unsafe construction check, the Dexterity check is modified by a bonus +2. A failed check means that the unfortunate character falls, but another Dexterity check is allowed to see if the falling character can grab hold of some non-collapsing part of the stair. However, this check receives a penalty of -1 for every foot the character is from the non-collapsed portion when the stairs break. To determine this distance, roll 1d10 and subtract one for every 100 pounds of weight on the stairs—the result is the number of feet the farthest character can get from the non-collapsed portion of the stairs before the unstable area collapses. If the second Dexterity check fails, the poor sod falls 10d100 feet before hitting another stair, and most likely dies. Smart characters



THE +HREE ⊕F US
HAVE SEEN HIM D⊕
+ERRIBLE +HINGS.
HE'S A VERY EVIL +ANAR'RI.
WE'RE IUS+ H⊕RRIFIED
BY +HE WH⊕LE +HING.
—SHAVANISTRA

may rig up some sort of system in which they are connected by ropes or something similar.

Magically unstable areas offer no obvious signs of danger. In some, there might be a slight tingling in the air or some other sort of minor sensation, if the DM so wishes. The unstable magic zone is usually a sphere 1d6×10 feet in radius. The effects of the unstable area vary wildly, and can be determined randomly:

1. Damage from spells is doubled in the area.
2. Damage from spells is halved in the area.
3. Spell ranges are doubled in the area.
4. Spell ranges are halved in the area.
5. Living creatures within the area are immune to spells.
6. Spell effects become random (use *wand of wonder* chart found in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*) in the area.
7. Staircase debris animates and attacks as an *animate object* spell for 1d10 rounds.
8. One creature within the area is turned *invisible* for 3d4 rounds.
9. A character within the area can only speak backwards for the next 24 hours. If a spellcaster, this ruins all spells with a verbal component.
10. One creature within the area of effect is granted hill giant strength (19) while within the area, but his Intelligence score is reduced to 3.

The DM is encouraged to devise more effects than just these examples. The wild surge results table in the *Tome of Magic* may also prove handy in determining effects.

Within the heart of the Blue Mushroom area, explorers will find that even some of the doorways leading to other planes have been damaged or destroyed, rendering them useless. These doorways will eventually be restored and repaired (with the rest of the area, assuming that Gerrzog is driven off or slain), but for now they lead nowhere.

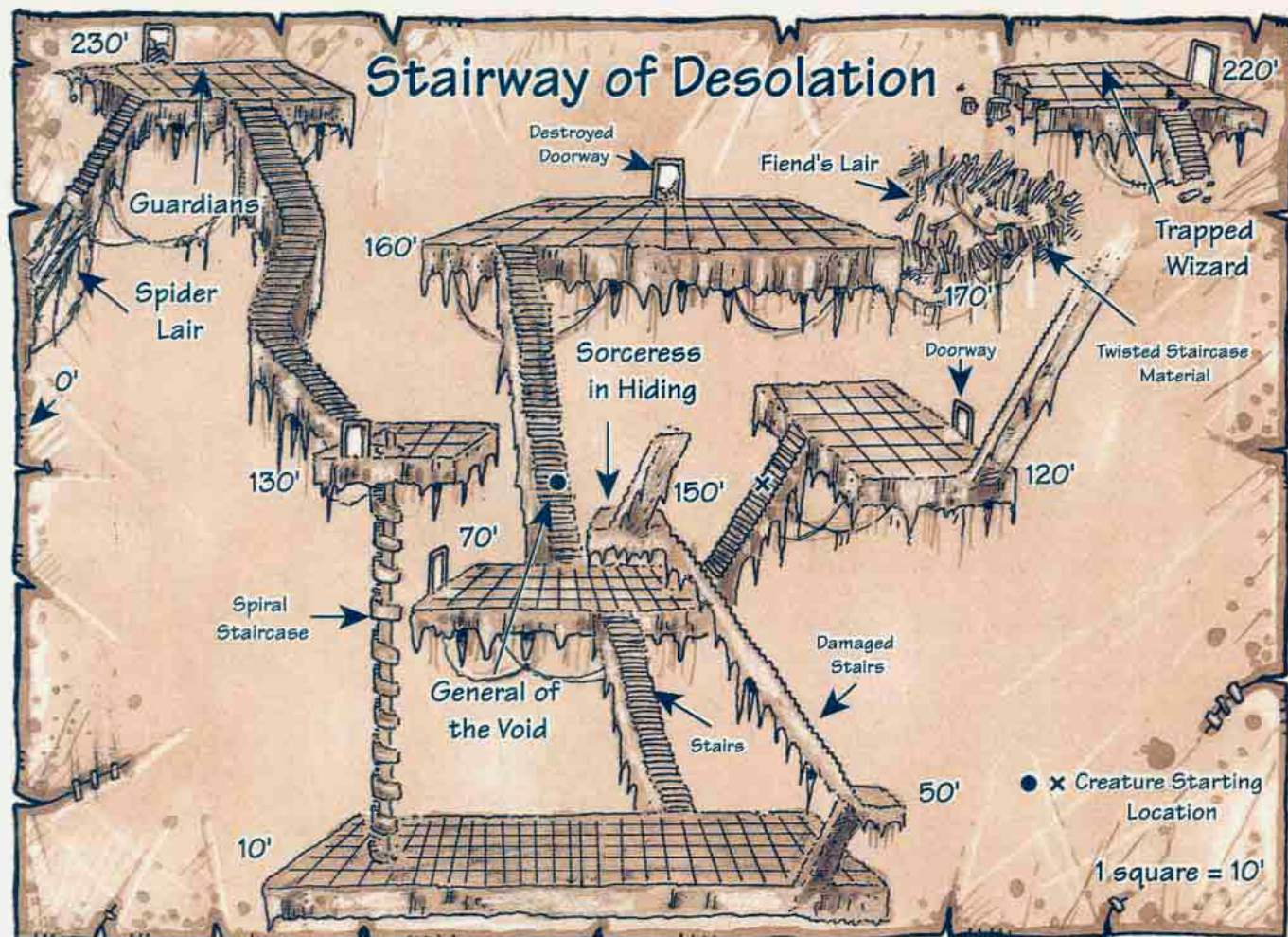
Once the characters enter the Blue Mushroom area, they will most likely walk for 2-3 hours before coming upon the location detailed in the Gerrzog's Lair map (page 24). Each of the locations on the map is described in the following sections.

SPIDER LAIR

Nothing exudes evil like a fiend. Sadly, it's a truism that evil begets evil—and it draws it as well (like moths to some black flame). Gerrzog's mere presence has subtly begun attracting evil creatures to his proximity, and a pair of giant spiders were the first to arrive. These monsters, having wandered in from some doorway long ago (or perhaps their ancestors did), have constructed a web between two portions of demolished staircase. This portion of the stairs is relatively straight and made of wooden steps held together with an iron frame.

This gap in the stairway, created by Gerrzog's original rampage, spans approximately 50 feet across and down. The webs extend 10-15 feet up and down the extant stairs as well. Usually, one spider remains at the center of this web watching with its multitudinous eyes all





around for potential prey. The other spider hides on the underside of the upper stair, hoping to attack with surprise and perhaps even drive prey into the web.

Once the hiding spider attacks, the other also moves in to strike. If hard pressed (meaning if they both sustain more than 12 points damage), both spiders flee to the underside of the web or stairs. They flee farther up or down the underside of the stairs if the webs are burned. The absence of these foes does not, however, solve the problem of getting across the gap filled with webs.

Burning the webs might very well be a bad idea in this particular case, because it is actually the webs that hold together the edges of the broken staircase. Each edge of the gap, therefore, is extremely unstable without the webs. If 100 pounds or more is placed upon the last 10-foot section of each end of the broken stairway, it collapses. A successful Dexterity check indicates that the victim(s) catch the edge of the stable part of the stairs and save themselves. However, this check receives a penalty of -1 for each foot the character is from the non-collapsed portion when the stairs break (to determine this distance, roll 1d10 and subtract one for every 100 pounds of weight on the stairs—the result is the number of feet the farthest character can get from the non-collapsed portion of the stairs before they collapse, to an obvious maximum of 10 feet).

The spiders, being somewhat crafty, have planned on this

contingency, however. Rather than let falling prey get away, they have constructed another web, 20 feet below the level of the stairs, which hangs limply like a net. Characters falling into this web are trapped as though they've had a *web* spell cast upon them (saving throw allowed). The spiders, if they still live, then lower themselves down into the net to prey upon the fallen victim(s). Since it is not connected to the other web, this net is not burned along with it. Characters have only a 5% chance of even noticing this second web, and then only if they are looking for it.

Once the spiders are dealt with and the webs burned, characters may attempt to string ropes or even swing on lines to get to the other side. While there are many places to tie a rope around the stairs (around the steps themselves works pretty well), DMs should remember that the other side of the stairs is just as unstable, which might cause serious problems for those attempting to get across.

The best way to get across, most likely (flying notwithstanding), is to use the webs themselves. They are certainly strong enough to carry the weight of many adventurers—in fact the webs might even be stronger and sturdier than the stairs themselves. This can be accomplished in many ways. A *spider climb* spell allows a wizard to cross without much problem. Normal objects could be thrown on the web to create non-sticky spots where a character can step or hold on.

If the PCs' levels average higher than 4, the DM may

want to add another spider (or possibly two, although the difficulty in the encounter lies in crossing the gap more than in the combat strength of the spiders).

GIANT SPIDERS (2): AC 4; MV 3, Wb 12; HD 4+4; hp 20, 16; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA bite slays unless saving throw vs. poison is successful; SZ L (9' diameter); ML elite (13); Int low (5-7); AL CE; XP 650 each.

THE GUARDIANS

The manes make their lair on a relatively intact landing between three sets of stairs. Those positioned here (usually 13 of them) can hear loud noises generated in the spider lair and are just smart enough to figure that such noise means that trouble is probably headed their way. At the very least, the noise means something interesting is going on, so two or three of the nasty creatures move up to investigate. These tanar'ri are afraid of the spiders, but hunger to see or even take part in some sort of carnage. That said, the manes won't attack any group larger than their own. Instead, they watch from a distance to see what any invaders might do. If threatened, they flee back to the main lair of the manes so that they can fight from a position of better strength.

Newcomers who approach these manes with a bribe of meat or something shiny have a chance to communicate with them, at least after a fashion. These creatures cannot speak, but if given something like meat or some bit of treasure (or even something that looks like a bit of treasure), they'll pause for a moment while they study the garnish and the one giving it. If, during this time, the PCs ask the location of Oriam, the manes laugh evilly and run back to their lair. Of course, if the PCs mention virtually anything, the manes will laugh evilly and run back to their lair. They are extraordinarily evil but equally as stupid and uncommunicative.

The rest of the manes wait in their lair for the others to return, or for something interesting to happen, such as the appearance of foes to fight. They do very little to pass the time, mindlessly gibbering, drooling, and excreting (making the landing upon which they lair a filthy and disgusting place).

One of manes keeps a strange set of pipes once called the *flutes of enchanted harmony* (plucked from the still-warm hands of a traveler on the Infinite Staircase). The little fiend is unaware of the pipes' name, but it's quite cognizant of their power. The pipes, when played, reflect the playing skill of those using them, as well as the player's nature to a degree. If a flautist playing these pipes is a skilled musician with a good heart, the music produced possesses extraordinarily beautiful qualities unmatched by a normal, nonmagical instrument. The bard who used to own them used the *flutes of enchanted harmony* to entertain at some of the finest venues on the planes, for his skill was great.

If someone of either little skill or an evil nature plays the *flutes of enchanted harmony*, the sounds produced are discordant, sinister, and unpleasant. If the player is of both a dark heart and completely without skill (like the manes who uses them now), the pipes produce an eerie, disturbing sound that could pass for music only in the darkest reaches of the Abyss.

The manes plays the instrument often (about 60% of the time). If it knows that someone approaches, it most certainly

will play the pipes.

Those within hearing distance (about 100 feet here on the Infinite Staircase to make out the low, disturbing sounds) must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or face one of the following effects (roll 1d100):


- 01-40 *Unease*: The victim feels jumpy, ill at ease, and pen- sive. NPCs suffer a -1 penalty to their morale ratings. The effect lasts while the pipes play.
- 41-70 *Agitation*: Besides feelings of unease (described above), the victim feels agitated. If put in a situation where he might feel at all threatened or angry, the vic- tim must make an additional successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or physically attack the cause of his fear or anger. NPCs suffer a further -1 penalty to morale (for a total of -2). The effect lasts while the pipes play and for 1d6 rounds after they stop.
- 71-00 *Illness*: The victim becomes physically ill at the sounds of the pipes. Besides the effects listed above, he suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls, damage, saving throws, and ability checks. The effect lasts while the pipes play and for 2d10 rounds after they stop.

The negative effects of the *pipes of enchanted harmony* only affect mortals, so the manes and the glabrezu are im- mune. The spiders and Unthre the General are susceptible to the detrimental sounds, however, so they usually avoid spending much time near the manes. If he must work with them, Unthre orders the manes to quit playing. Unthre's actu- ally been driven to attack the manes due to the music of the pipes, but of course they just re-formed on the next day.

The lair of the manes is a landing about 40 feet to a side. The manes, commanded by Gerrzog, remain on the landing most of the time to fend off any potential invaders into his twisted lair. Usually, however, Unthre positions 6 of the 19 fiends at the area on the stairs marked with an X, to guard that area as well. The manes have orders to kill everything that comes their way other than the other residents of the area.

When fighting the fiends, PCs may soon discover that because slain manes become noxious clouds that remain until the fiends reform, tossing, pushing, or otherwise flinging the manes off the stairs or landing is an efficient way of dis- patching them (although those with strong consciences may be bothered by the idea that some of them might appear someplace where they can do harm to unsuspecting victims). Maneuvering around slain manes' noxious clouds will prove difficult on the stairs.

A doorway off the manes' landing leads to a strange desert on a prime world where the sand has an odd dark- greenish hue. The doorway looks to be a dark cavelike en- trance. Beyond it are some rough stone steps naturally formed in an unlit cave. The cave opens into the strange desert. Near this cave, another cave served as the home of a hermit who created bizarre sand sculptures. The hermit now lies slain, killed recently by the fiends coming from the Staircase when they discovered and explored the doorway. His rotting corpse lies sprawled in front of his cave, desecrated and eviscerated



with unthinkable atrocities only a fiend can commit. His sculptures lie about the cave, smashed and disfigured by the chaotic evil tanar'ri. Nothing of value is left, and the desert itself offers little in the way of food or water—but it might be a safe place to rest.

PCs of greater than 5th level should face an additional manes per level above 5 (per character).

MANES (13): AC 8; MV 6; HD 1; hp 8, 8, 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3, 2, 1; THACO 20; #AT 3; Dmg 1d2/1d2/1d4 (claw/claw/bite); SA if destroyed, becomes a 10-foot radius cloud of noxious vapor that inflicts 1d6 points of damage unless a saving throw vs. poison is successful; SD immune to mind-affecting spells, electricity, and normal fire, half damage from cold, magical fire, and gas; SW hit from holy water inflicts 1d4+1 points of damage; MR 10%; SZ S (3' tall); ML fearless (20); Int semi (2-4); AL CE; XP 975 each.

GENERAL OF THE VOID'S GREAT ARMIES

Enthralled by Gerrzog's inherent *charm* ability, Unthre the warrior believes that he will become a general in the glabrezu's armies, which will amass here on the staircase and one day invade the planes of the multiverse, conquering them one by one. In short, Unthre's become a little detached from reality—but what can a body expect when a mortal becomes the close friend of a savage fiend? Although once good, Unthre has embraced Gerrzog's love of destruction, and his alignment has altered to fit his new outlook (Gerrzog has some ability to tempt mortals after all). Unthre is no helpless innocent magically controlled by a villain, though the PCs might assume him to be.

Unthre's not as stupid as the manes, and uses strategy to combat enemies. He's even smart enough to know how to use the manes to their (or his) best advantage. In fact, he thinks of them as his army, and they'll obey him most of the time, out of fear of Gerrzog.

If Unthre becomes aware of the sounds of trouble (fighting or the obvious noise of invaders into the area), he prepares for battle. The manes' lair is out of sight from his hiding place (see below) or even the nearby landing. However, he can still make out sounds of normal combat.

To prepare, Unthre calls whatever manes are nearby (like those stationed at the X) and positions them on the stairway

between himself and the oncoming foes. He knows that when they are slain, the manes become acidic clouds of vapor, and hopes to use that to block or slow down enemies. He then uses the magical items in his bag to set up blockades.

Unthre possesses a bag of magical icons that serve as his primary offensive and defensive weapons, despite the enchanted blade he wears at his side. There are two types of icons. The first and most simple appear to be tiny gray cubes. When thrown to the ground, they become 10×10×10-foot granite blocks for 20 rounds plus 1d20 rounds. It takes a full round for them to “grow,” so they are not much use offensively (dropping it on some berk’s head won’t crush him—he’s got plenty of time to get out of the way of the growing block). They serve as temporary blockades on the stairs very well, and their rough texture means that they don’t slide easily—even on the incline of a stairway. Unthre’s bag holds seven of these *stone cubes*, each of which can be used only once. The other icons look like tiny golden globes. Called *serpent spheres*, these single-use icons activate when cast into the air. Upon activation, the spheres grow to a diameter of one foot. This happens immediately, but for a round the globe simply floats weightlessly in the air. After that, 1d6 giant serpentine heads emerge from the globe, on ten-foot-long scaly necks. These magical creatures each attack once as a 7 HD creature with a THAC0 of 13, inflicting 1d10 points of damage upon a successful hit. They attack anyone within their range—even the one who cast the sphere. Unthre owns three of these items.

The warrior likes to position the activated *stone cubes* on the 10-foot-wide staircases so that creatures wishing to use them have to climb over the cubes. Not only does this slow them down, but it makes them prime targets for Unthre’s crossbow.

Unthre’s made a strange little home for himself. In a straight iron-wrought stairway, Gerrzog’s rampage created a hole. Unthre took the twisted metal and fashioned a basketlike cradle long enough for him to lay down in and 3 feet deep. He sleeps there, stores what little possessions he has there (mostly he carries his equipment with him, but he keeps a few days’ worth of food and water in the cradle), and hides there to spring upon enemies in ambush.

If put in serious danger—and only then—Unthre will call out and attempt to warn his master of invaders. It is up to the DM to decide whether Gerrzog is sleeping or awake to hear the warning. In any event, the evil fiend will not leave his lair to help Unthre.

Unthre should be at least one level higher than the highest level PC, to a maximum of 14th level (DMs should add 3 hit points per additional level and alter THAC0, experience points, etc. appropriately).

UNTHRE (Pr ♂ human/F7): AC 0 (*splint mail* +3 and shield); MV 12; hp 62; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg 1d8+3 (*long sword* +2, plus Strength) or 1d4 (*light crossbow*); SZ M (6' 3" tall); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 1400.

S 16; D 11; C 18; I 11; W 13; Ch 9

Special equipment: *Splint mail* +3 (Ysgard forged) *long sword* +2 (Ysgard forged), 121 gp, 203 sp.

A FIEND'S CROOKED SMILE

Within the most twisted and wrecked portion of the stair, Gerrzog makes his own foul lair. He’s taken a portion of a 20-foot-wide wood and iron staircase and twisted it until it’s become a crooked chamber of bent metal, broken boards, and spent rage. The glabrezu, finished with his rampage of the last few days, now spends his time sleeping or brooding in this cavern of his own creation.

A single dead human male hangs from a hook-like broken metal bar in the place’s ceiling. Gerrzog attempted to skin this poor sod alive but only got halfway through before his victim expired. His name was Jardon Miriph. Jardon’s possessions lie scattered below his body, all bent and broken (a sword, a shield, some chain mail, and other miscellaneous things) covered in their owner’s blood and flesh. If searched, his 124 gp, 67 sp, and a 10 gp gold ring can be found amid the grisly clutter.

Canny planewalkers may choose to leave the fiend alone (usually the best course of action when it comes to tanar’ri), but unfortunately, the PCs’ goal of finding Oriam the wizard can most likely only be accomplished by going into Gerrzog’s lair (see below).

Obviously, unless the PCs possess a great deal of raw power, confronting Gerrzog in straight combat will probably result in their quick deaths. Unless they’ve got Unthre’s sword, they may not even have a weapon that will harm the demon. Fortunately, other methods of dealing with the fiend exist.

First, tricky or sneaky adventurers can slip into the lair while Gerrzog sleeps, or somehow lure him out. Gerrzog isn’t stupid—what a planar might call an addle-cove—but he is tired and distracted, thinking of how best to further his campaign to conquer or destroy the Infinite Staircase.

The PCs can also use the Infinite Staircase itself against the tanar’ri. Gerrzog doesn’t yet realize that the Staircase can take him to his heart’s desire. If convinced of this, he might very well take the opportunity. This requires some good role-playing and fast talking—more probably to keep Gerrzog from killing the PCs before going off to his heart’s desire. Of course, Gerrzog’s heart’s desire certainly consists of something truly horrible, and good-aligned player characters may have a bit of trouble living with being a part of his reaching it...

Lastly and most dramatically, the PCs could destroy the lair of Gerrzog—potentially with the demon in it. The fiend’s hastily and crudely shaped home cannot support much more weight than what it already holds. PCs entering or even observing can attempt an Intelligence check at a –3 penalty (no penalty for gnomes, dwarves, or characters with the Engineering proficiency) to notice the inherent instability. One hundred points of damage inflicted at the base of the lair (where it connects with the landing) or an addition of 4,000 pounds (6,000 if Gerrzog isn’t in the lair) will collapse the structure. If the PCs think of it, one of the *stone cubes* is more than enough to send the whole thing crashing down. Gerrzog (and anyone else inside) would be trapped in the falling construct, eventually *plane shifting* to get away. *Plane shift* being fairly inaccurate, many days would pass before he could return—if he chose to return at all. He could, however, show up later in the campaign to exact revenge from the characters.

GERRZOG, GLABREZU: AC -7; MV 15; HD 10; hp 38; THACO 11; #AT 5; Dmg 2d6/2d6/1d3/1d3/1d4+1 (pincer/pincer/claw/claw/bite); SA grabs opponents of 150 pounds or less (Dexterity check to avoid) reducing attack rolls by -4 unless a Strength check is successful, casts *darkness 15-foot radius*, *infravision*, *burning hands*, *charm person*, *confusion*, *dispel magic*, *enlarge*, *mirror image*, *reverse gravity* and *plane shift* all at will, *power word stun* (7×/day), *true seeing* and *detect magic* (always active), can *gate* one greater tanar’ri with a 50% chance of success; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to all nonmagical attacks; MR 50%; SZ H (15’ tall); ML fanatic (17); Int exc (15); AL CE; XP 12,000.

A SORCERESS IN HIDING

Hiding in a tiny, unused chamber in the city of Abstemious, Shavanistra watches the activities within the area now controlled by Gerrzog by peering through the doorway that joins the city and the Infinite Staircase. She’s literally been hiding here for days without much food or sleep, making her even more desperate and deranged than usual. The door to the chamber where she skulks is made of iron—she keeps it open just a crack when she’s spying.

If Shavanistra sees that the PCs have entered the area, she might move out to watch them more closely. Outside the chamber, Shavanistra casts *invisibility* and follows the PCs. If they look to be competent, and she takes a liking to them, she decides to join them. Revealing her presence at a time when no danger presents itself, she introduces herself to them as a priestess of Athena (which she believes, so *detect lie* does not reveal any deception, although *know alignment* or *detect evil* will). She also introduces her three sisters, who of course don’t exist.

If asked about Gerrzog or the desolation, Shavanistra tells them what she knows—that the tanar’ri showed up about a week ago and began destroying things. She’s likely to let it slip that she summoned him at some point. She claims no knowledge of Oriam if asked, but offers her help in finding him or doing whatever task the PCs wish to accomplish. She really will try to help if her offer is accepted, but her true evil nature and her over-the-top insanity almost certainly make themselves known and probably end up bringing more woe than weal. If refused, rejected or turned away, she shouts something like “You’re all alike! Oriam rejected me and now you. You’ll all pay!” She follows this with an insane attack.

If for some reason she doesn’t initially like the look of the PCs, or if they seem to be weak, she just attacks.

If, however, Shavanistra initially sees them coming toward the doorway of her hiding place, she renders herself *invisible* with a spell and continues to hide. The chamber is only about

15 feet to a side, and there’s nothing in it except for a single, empty crate made of wood that shows great age.

Abstemious is inhabited almost entirely by illithids. Because of this, Shavanistra hides as much from the dwellers in the city as she does from Gerrzog. Fortunately for her, the mind flayers pay little attention to this tiny side room and have no idea that the door leading off it leads to the Infinite Staircase. Most likely, they are unaware that the Staircase even exists.

If the sounds of battle come from the room that Shavanistra inhabits, this warns a nearby illithid that something is going on. It sends in a unit of grimlocks—blind, stupid creatures that the illithids use as warriors—to destroy whatever causes the disturbance. Once they’ve completed that task, the illithid comes in to discover what it was. If the threat overcomes the grimlocks, the illithid investigates, prepared for battle. Irrevocably evil, the illithid destroys any non-illithid (or non-illithid servant) it finds, without negotiation or parley. The mind flayer treats Shavanistra and any other intruders as pests, not as something to talk to. At best, it renders the PCs unconscious and takes them off to a pen somewhere as though they were livestock, to eventually be slaughtered for food.

While the PCs can flee through the doorway back to the Staircase to escape the grimlocks or the illithid, their activities almost certainly bring the access to the Infinite Staircase to the attention of the mind flayers. Potentially, this could be a very dire turn of events, for the illithids certainly investigate this new area and most likely use it, eventually, to access new areas to subjugate. DMs may wish to have an encounter on the Staircase later on with an illithid explorer, continuing this dangerous side plot into other Tales in this product.

SHAVANISTRA (PI/♀ human/W6): AC 9 (Dexterity); MV 12; hp 12; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SZ M (5’ tall); ML unsteady (7); AL CE; XP 1,400.

S 9; D 15; C 12; I 16; W 6; Ch 8

Special Equipment: *wand of paralyzation* (10 charges), scroll of two spells (*monster summoning II* and *cacofiend*), *potion of flying*

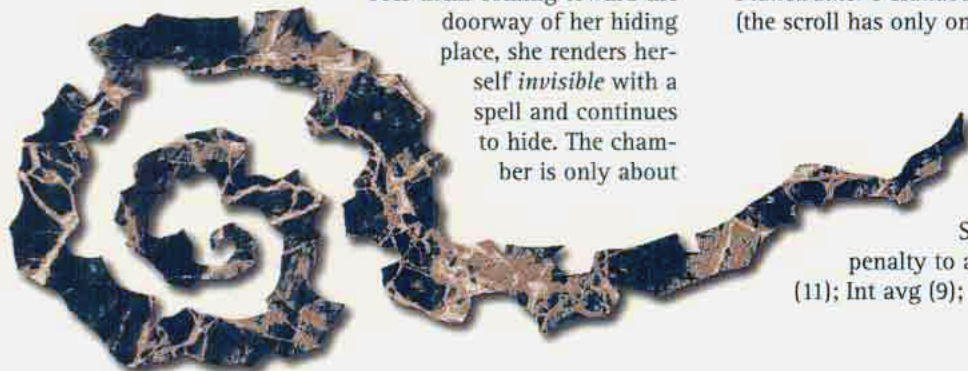
Personality: Completely insane, deluded and vengeful

Spells (4/2/2): 1st—*armor*, *color spray*, *hold portal*, *magic missile*; 2nd—*forget*, *mirror image*; 3rd—*hold person*, *suggestion*

Note: *Cacofiend* is a 7th level spell that can summon a true tanar’ri (or other major fiend). This spell summoned Gerrzog, but since the scroll spell is so far beyond the skill of Shavanistra (only a 6th-level wizard), it failed spectacularly. If the DM does not have access to this spell, found in the *Planewalker’s Handbook* and *Planes of Law*, ignore the spell (the scroll has only one spell in this case)

GRIMLOCKS (10): AC 5; MV 12; HD 2; hp 16, 14, 13, 12, 12, 10, 9, 8, 5, 4; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (claw) or 2d4 (broad sword); SD immune to spells and attacks involving vision;

SW loud, continuous noise assesses a -2 penalty to attack rolls; SZ M (5-6’ tall); ML Steady (11); Int avg (9); AL NE; XP 35 each.



GRIMLOCK LEADER: AC 4; MV 12; HD 3; hp 18; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (claw) or 2d4 (broad sword); SD immune to spells and attacks involving vision; SW loud, continuous noise assesses a -2 penalty to attack rolls; SZ M (6' tall); ML steady (11); Int avg (10); AL NE; XP 120.

LILLITH: AC 5; MV 12; HD 8+4; hp 38; THACO 11; #AT 4; Dmg 2 each (tentacles); SA Mind blast stuns all within 60-foot-long cone (5' wide at base and 20' wide at end) for 3d4 rounds unless a saving throw versus wands is successful, tentacle attack holds victim (four successful attacks slay in one round), requires bend bars roll to remove, casts *suggestion*, *charm person*, *charm monster*, *ESP*, *levitate*, *astral projection*, and *plane shift* once per round as 7th level caster (saving throws versus these abilities suffer a -4 penalty); MR 90%; SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (15); Int genius (18); AL LE; XP 9,000.

ORIAM TRASCALIA, THE TRAPPED WIZARD

Lured to this location about a week ago by a trick of Shavanistra, Oriam Trascalia was trapped on a landing when Gerrzog began his rampage. The tanar'ri destroyed the stairs connecting Oriam's landing; the single doorway leading from the landing offered some hope of escape, but the door leads to Carceri. Oriam's single foray through the door almost led him into the fangs and claws of a gehreleth (a particularly nasty fiend), and Oriam barely made it back to the landing with his life.

Whatever supports the various landings of the Infinite Staircase still holds this one up, so that it appears to be mysteriously suspended in space. However, because it is so cut off, the landing (or the portion of it that remains) can only be seen from Gerrzog's lair. At the far end of his cave of twisted metal and wood, anyone peering through one of the many openings can see the strange, seemingly floating landing remnant. Fifty feet higher than Gerrzog's lair, the landing can be reached fairly easily with ropes or through some magical means if the PCs have such at their disposal. The DM should make it clear to a player whose character is viewing the landing that it seems utterly cut off from the rest of the staircase. This should be intriguing enough to tempt them to investigate.

If the PCs destroy Gerrzog's lair, the noise and activity attracts Oriam's attention and he begins to call out for help. Adventurers will be able to communicate with him through shouts, but getting to him will be very tricky. Shavanistra's *potion of flying* might come in very handy at such a time.

If the PCs rescue Oriam, he thanks them and offers to reward them. In fact, he'll give them all the valuables and magical items that he has in gratitude. He has no spells currently memorized and his time without food has left him greatly weakened. If he had not brought a little food and water with him, he'd certainly be dead now. He is grateful that the PCs brought him the delivery, but he'd be much more appreciative if they helped him back to the Planewalker's Guild. Once there, the Guild rewards the PCs with food, lodging, and offers of memberships without dues for a year.

ORIAM TRASCALIA (Pl/♂ human/W9/Planewalker's Guild): AC 4 (*bracers* AC 6, *Dexterity* bonus); MV 12; hp 28; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells; SZ M (5' 6" tall); ML steady (11); AL NG.

S 6; D 16; C 8; I 17; W 14; Ch 11

Special Equipment: *bracers of defense* AC 6, *ring of warmth*, *potions of water breathing* and *treasure finding*, 4 100 gp gems, 37 gp, 45 sp

Personality: Friendly, grateful, generous

Spells (4,3,3,2,1—but all are cast)

◆ LILLENDI "REWARD" ◆

At some point, either as the player characters make their way back to the Planewalker's Guild, or on their way back home, a lillend comes to them. She says that the PCs have earned the lillendi's gratitude and respect by ridding the Staircase of the tanar'ri, who had done so much damage to it. Heroes as capable as they hold great worth in the eyes of the lillendi and Selûne herself.

Now the lillend reveals a secret to the player characters—what many planewalkers would call "the dark of it." She says, "It has come to our attention that something begins to taint various places in the multiverse. Certain locations, once vibrant and alive with art, music and creative endeavor, now grow dull. Soon, such places will become so bland that the Staircase will reject them and sever its connection to them. At the rate at which this is happening ... well, it is a cause for concern. Our time is consumed by the maintenance of the Infinite Staircase. We need someone to investigate and determine what occurs on these planes. You are capable and intelligent. Will you go to these places to learn what malady besieges them and if any remedy can be performed? Our gratitude will be great should you bring us useful information."

If the PCs accept, the lillend gives them directions to seven doorways on the Infinite Staircase. Through these doorways, she explains, something strange affects the very essence of the location. She can offer only a tiny bit of information about each door, just a name for each:

The Queen's Domain (Tale 2)
The Ridged Land (Tale 3)
The Swirling Realm (Tale 4)
The Place of Wind (Tale 5)
The Silver War (Tale 6)
The Unclimbable Mountain (Tale 7)
The Jingling City (Tale 8)

More than that, she doesn't know.

The doorways lead to the locations of the other Tales in this product. It is up to the PCs to decide in which order to explore them.

Alert DMs will note that during Stage 1, two locations the lillend mentions have not yet become infected with the Iron Shadow: Maelost (The Ridged Land) does not become infected until Stage 3, and TorNav'roc (The Place of Wind) stays free of infection until Stage 4. Nevertheless, the lillendi's connection to the Staircase is so intimate and profound that they have detected *future* infections that the party might very well prevent.

TALE 2: LOST SOVEREIGNTY

You look down the long tunnel, your bleary eyes barely discerning the black rock walls from the darkness. Weary, you push on, wondering when you'll see the light of day again. The movement all around you has become a touchstone of familiarity, the droning of the creatures has become a comfort.

Is this what it means to be in Hell? Did you actually choose to come here? Is fate impartial, or does someone control it? These are the questions you ask—if for no other reason than to find someone to blame. That always makes it easier.

Suddenly, the darkness passes into blinding light. The movement around you ceases—you look up as your eyes clear away the blindness of too much sight.

This isn't what you expected.

These aren't the tortured catacombs of Pandemonium.

In fact, they couldn't be farther from those.

These are the well-ordered passages under Arcadia. The ant-centaur formians make the sounds around you—not some bedeviled wind. Ahead of you, a city so beautiful in its alienness

that your mind can't take it all in, and so

serene in its structure that you want to seep into its soothing curves and disappear into its soundless, one-note melody.

Everything's all right again.

Right?

◆ OVERVIEW ◆

In this adventure, the party travels to Arcadia and encounters the insectile formians. The Iron Shadow has spread to the formian hive/city of Klictrik, wreaking havoc as the workers lost all their incentive to keep up their duties. A neglected dike on an underground river burst, allowing the city to flood. Now the formians struggle to survive. Worse, these events sent Hviz'mnac, the formian queen, over the barmy edge, and she's completely disappeared—leaving behind her a city in disarray and confusion.

As the PCs arrive and tumble to the situation, some seemingly desperate and certainly hostile formians attack. These crazed individuals carry a magical scepter. Unbeknownst to the PCs, this scepter holds the key to temporary rulership of the formian city—a position that must be filled if order is to be restored (and on Arcadia, order *must* be restored). Yet, as one formian strives to take that position, the PCs discover that it's no formian at all, but a polymorphed wizard bent on using the formians and their city in her own selfish bid for immortality.

This adventure presents interesting challenges for the DM since the action is quite open-ended, depending entirely on the PCs' actions. The main antagonist must react to the PCs as much as or more than the PCs must react to him (her). PCs should be of at least 3rd level to successfully complete the adventure, although if the slaadi invasion occurs (see below), PCs of even 7th or 8th level will be challenged.

◆ ADVENTURE NOTES ◆

- ◆ If the PCs bring the Navimas cure (see Tale 4), using knowledge gained from *Ever-changing Order* or *Ghantomas* (see Tales 7 and 5, respectively), they can dispel the Iron Shadow from Klictrik and Arcadia. If this occurs, the affected individuals—the formians, Hannock Ringfinger (see area 8), and so on—return to normal immediately and reorganize themselves over the course of 1d4 hours.

ARCADIA—
THE SMELL
OF TREES GROWING
IN ORDERLY ROWS,
THE SOUNDS OF
SOLDIERS DRILLING,
THE SIGHT
OF FORMIANS
WORKING—
I LOVE THIS PLACE.

—PHILIAN THOBIS,
HARMONIUM
OFFICER

This, of course, doesn't help the dead formians or stop the flood, but it does mean that the formians will begin to repair the damaged dike once they get some good leadership (the missing queen or a myrmarch with the Mantelavian scepter in her place).

To rid Arcadia of the Iron Shadow, a body must take a drop of Navimas and seal it within a metallic sphere (any size). The sphere must then be rolled in a straight line for one mile. This must be done on the surface of the plane—not underground in the formian city. Research needed to determine this process takes (19 minus Intelligence score) days of reading *Ever-changing Order*.

Should the PCs accomplish this task, Hvix'mnac (assuming that she returns alive) remains forever in their debt. She has no means of rewarding them directly, but she assures them that they can return as favored guests of her people at any time.

Without the queen, the new formian ruler (presumably a myrmarch) has little time for pleasantries. The PCs gain no "thank you" of any kind, let alone a reward.

Ghundarania, an opportunistic bariaur who has infiltrated Klictrik on an errand of her own (see page 42), neither understands nor cares about the Iron Shadow. Should she gain control over the city, she pays the PCs no heed, whether they rid the place of the Iron Shadow or not.

- ♦ At Stage 6, the slaadi from the Spawning Stone (whether the PCs deal with the Shadow there or not) invade the formian city to retaliate once they've been able to determine that it was the formian queen who brought the Iron Shadow to Limbo.

If this occurs, the slaadi come through the gate in the main city-nest (area 14), which means they come into Arcadia and immediately find themselves underwater. Frog-like, they have little difficulty in adapting to the environment, however, and swim into the mound-nest chamber (area 13). At first, the slaad invaders consist of 30 blue slaadi. The formian warriors and myrmarchs hold them off (barely) at the tops of the mound-nests only because of their superior numbers.

When more slaadi begin to arrive, however, the formians realize they need to flee. The coordination of this effort is strained due to the lack of a queen.

While the PCs move about the hive, potentially any place with water could produce an encounter with a blue slaad. Considering how powerful these creatures are, this probably means that the PCs need to be particularly wary. The slaadi will make initial attacks up from under the water at anything that moves. They won't, however, follow the PCs if they flee, as they don't have much interest in anything not a formian. Flight, then, is the heroes' best option.

Good-aligned PCs, or those sympathetic to the formians might attempt to help them against the marauding slaadi—if for no other reason than to aid an already beleaguered people. One way to help lies in hiding the formians or helping them escape from the slaadi. The mines below the city (area 12) offer places to hide, for example. It may take the slaadi a long time to find the formians down there, and eventually, they'll give up the attack and go home (as slaadi, they are easily distracted). The formians on their own, however, can't think of this sort of strategy under the influence of the Iron Shadow.

Another tactic that PCs can attempt is the straightforward one of persuading the slaadi to leave—discovering that they're looking for the queen and letting them know that she's not here. If the PCs have been to the Spawning Stone and helped things there, their voices actually might carry weight in the slaadi's ears.

Since the slaadi are quite powerful and can use *passwall*, sealing up the portal—even by collapsing the cavern that it lies within—probably will not stop the creatures. The PCs might have access to spells like *portal lock* that will make the portal unusable for a time. That would work.

If the invasion occurs after the PCs have taken part in this Tale, they might very well be brought into things anyway. Hannock Ringfinger, if he lives but does not accompany the PCs when they leave the hive, travels to wherever the PCs are during Stage 6 via the Staircase. Once he finds them, he begs the PCs to return to Arcadia and help defend the last few formians against the angry, vengeance-seeking slaadi.

BLUE SLAAD: AC 2; MV 6; HD 8+4; hp 40; THACO 11; #AT 5; Dmg 2d6 (×2)/2d6 (×2)/2d8 (claw (×2)/claw (×2)/bite; SA Bite has a 100% chance to infect the victim with a rotting disease, casts *hold person* (one person only), *passwall* or *telekinesis* once per round, can *gate* 1d4 red or 1d2 blue slaadi four times per day with a 40% chance of success; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 40%; SZ L (10' tall); ML steady (12); Int low (7); AL CN; XP 9,000.

♦ If any of the PCs gained valgoss worms from Maelost in Tale 3, the hosts learn that the creatures have an unexpected effect on slaadi. Valgoss possess some quality that makes them appear threatening to slaadi. Whenever the host meets a slaad, there is a 50% chance that the slaad respects and submits to the host. The rest of the time, the slaad reacts with hostility and rage, seeking to destroy the host before the host can destroy it.

♦ If the PCs arrive here (or return here after being here once) with the formian queen, Hviv'mnac, a number of different contingencies can occur.

If the Iron Shadow still infects the area, the best Hviv'mnac can hope to do is relocate the Hive. This entails a monumental effort, and probably a fair number of rafts to get the populace to the surface. Many lives will probably be lost. Ghundarania will not leave; she hopes to figure out a way to use the Chamber of Deep Magic (area 11) while it is underwater.

With the Shadow dispelled, the queen can motivate her people to repair the damage, expel the water, and rebuild the city. This is also a great deal of work, but in the long run probably a much more positive option than any of the alternatives discussed here.

If the slaadi have invaded, the formians can fight back with greater efficiency under the leadership of their queen. However, the battle changes because the slaadi focus their attacks on Hviv'mnac herself. Without the PCs guarding her, the formians probably do not possess the power to keep the slaadi from killing the queen.

If the slaadi have not invaded but have reached the Astral Plane, and the PCs bring Hviv'mnac from the Astral, or if the PCs bring her right from Limbo, the slaadi follow and attempt to slay her (this is not an invasion scenario as described above, but a direct attack against the queen). Once again, without the PCs guarding her, the formians cannot keep the slaadi from killing Hviv'mnac.

If Demansiq (Ghundarania) has taken over when the queen returns, the bariaur's plans are ruined. If she's been implicated in wrongdoing or exposed, Ghundarania flees as soon as possible, giving up on this attempt to get at the Chamber of Deep Magic. If not, she attempts to lie low—nonchalantly waiting for the flood waters to recede so that she can get back in the chamber and continue her work.

♦ At Stage 4, Jazriul the hound archon leaves the Outlands and travels to Arcadia to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow. He stays until Stage 5, at which time he leaves for Baator. Jazriul uses his humanoid form in this Tale. His *long sword* +2 becomes only +1 on Arcadia.

USING THE ADVENTURE INDEPENDENTLY. If it becomes desirable to use this adventure without the others in this product, perhaps the best way to get the PCs involved is to start things at a planar crossroads such as Sigil, the City of Doors. The PCs overhear that the slaadi of Limbo are preparing for war with the formians of Arcadia (which is only a slight exaggeration). The Harmonium, a faction with strong interests on Arcadia, wants to help defend the formians, but has no idea where the invaders will strike first. The Harmonium will pay hand-

PLANAR MAGIC—ARCADIA

Arcadia exerts a great deal of control over the use of magic. Mostly, the changes depend entirely on the caster's outlook and nature, or for what purpose the spell is cast. In general, spells become more ritualized and take twice as long to cast. Natural animals (deer, foxes, wolves, and so forth) are immune to any prime spells that would summon or control them; similar spells cast by planars work normally (except where noted below).

Other changes are determined by school:

CONJURATION/SUMMONING: If used for a noble purpose or the common good, conjurations and summonings produce the best result possible. If used selfishly or something that's against what's best for the plane (DM's discretion), the spell has the worst or weakest result possible.

DIVINATION: Only divinations used to determine the course or actions of a group of four or more individuals function on Arcadia.

ENCHANTMENT/CHARM: Any being who is subject to a *charm* or similar spell (like *suggestion*) gains a saving throw when none is allowed and a +2 bonus when one is allowed. If the save is successful, the caster must make a saving throw or have the spell's effects reversed as though the intended victim had cast the spell upon him.

ILLUSION/PHANTASM: Natives of the plane are immune to illusions and anyone else gains an automatic saving throw with a -2 penalty to see through the deception.

NECROMANCY: Spells used for good are twice as effective, spells used for chaos or evil fail, often producing a negative effect for the caster.

WILD MAGIC: On this plane of law, wild mages attempting to use this sort of magic here do so as if they were two levels lower than normal. Wild surges never occur here.

ELEMENTAL: Casters of LG (with neutral tendencies) or LN (with good tendencies) alignment cast elemental spells twice as effectively on Arcadia. (Duration and range are doubled; damage-causing spells inflict double damage.) Chaotic or evil casters cannot use elemental spells at all.

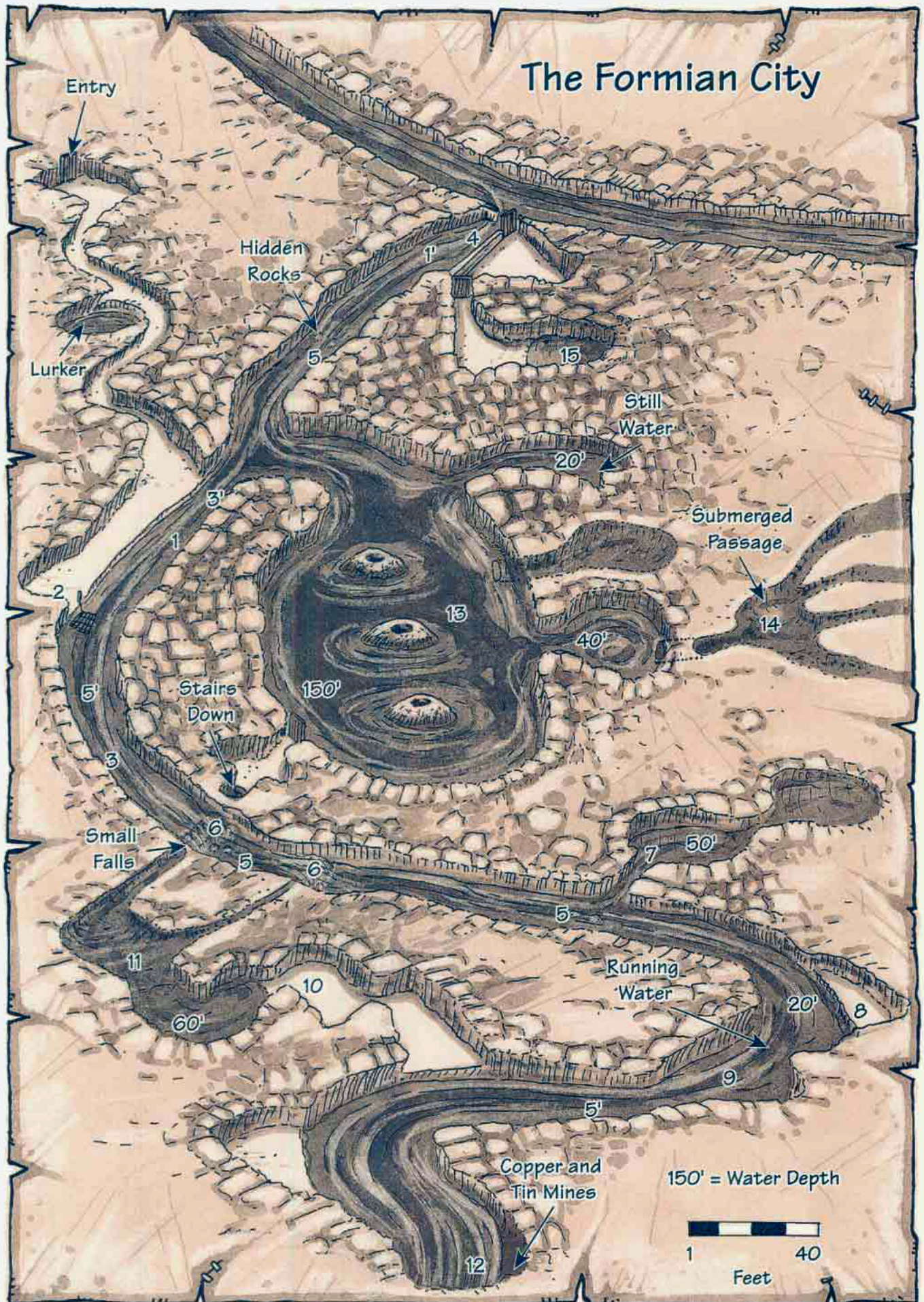
somely for anyone who can offer them help in defending all the formian communities and discovering the dark of what's behind the conflict.

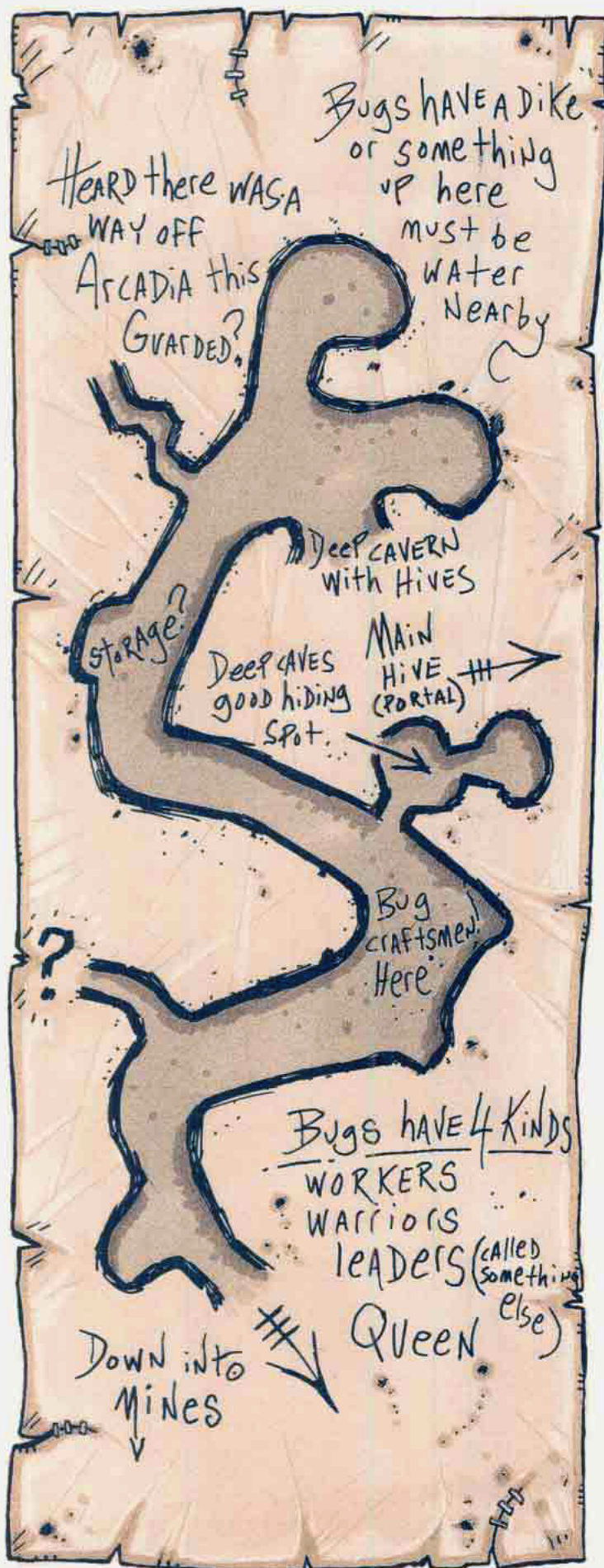
If the PCs accept, the Harmonium assigns them to Klic-trik, the community in this adventure, where they're likely both to discover the reasons for the conflict and to be on the front lines when battle is joined.

♦ INSECTILE CULTURE ♦

This adventure deals with the formians, a race of centaur ants native to the plane of Arcadia. Nestled in between Mechanus, the plane of law, and Mount Celestia, the lawful good heaven, Arcadia epitomizes some of both. It and its inhabitants are strictly ordered and regimented, but lean a little more toward generosity and forgiveness than selfishness and cruelty.

The Formian City





Four types of creatures make up the formians' race and culture. The asexual workers live a single-minded existence, performing most of the menial tasks within the community. The warriors protect and police the formian cities with sharp claws and specialized weapons. The myrmarchs act as the planners, architects, craftsmen, and leaders of the race, with an elite group of myrmarchs serving the queen herself, acting as advisors, guardians, and fertilizers of her eggs. Only myrmarchs and queens (male and female, respectively) possess actual gender among the formians.

The queen rules over the formians, usually with a single queen over each community. Some queens spend all their time in administrative duties and laying eggs—their sedentary lifestyle causes them to grow bloated and their legs to atrophy over the centuries of their long lives. Not all queens allow this to happen, however.

All formians form from specialized eggs—they are born into their station and never aspire to be more than they are. The myrmarchs keep special queen eggs in a secret cache so that when a new leader is needed one can be fertilized and developed into a new queen. Until the young queen is ready to rule, one of the myrmarchs acts as a regent. Often, a myrmarch regent carries a symbol of his office so that the queenless formians can recognize him as their ruler; in Klictrik, this symbol is called the Mantelavian scepter.

Formian warriors, myrmarchs, and queens can speak a form of the common planar trade language, but are much more comfortable with their own clicking, screeching tongue (which the workers also speak). When they have the time to spare, formians don't communicate verbally at all, but rather approach one another and rub their antennae together. The two communicators can exchange vast amounts of information in this way, as it is a much more detailed and precise sort of communication than speech. Strangely enough, this antennae communication is not impossible for humans (or demihumans). Formian myrmarchs know techniques which, through touching their antennae against a body's face and neck, can gather or transmit a great deal of information. The drawback is that the formian accesses the human's subconscious in this sort of information transfer, and since humans do not have the sort of informational access to their subconscious minds that formians do, information gleaned usually manifests itself as dreams or stray thoughts that come while resting. Most humans find this manner of communicating distasteful and unpleasant, and object because the formian almost certainly gains more from the exchange than they do.

◆ IN ARCADIA EGGS ◆

The mysterious forces that created the Infinite Staircase built the landing, doorway, and door leading to this portion of Arcadia from stone, polishing it to an almost liquid sheen. Beyond the door lies only utter darkness.

Light reveals a rough-hewn cavern. A tunnel extends deep into the rock away from the onlookers, the damp passage quickly turning out of sight. Once the PCs pass through the doorway and into the cavern, they'll notice that the air is very damp. In the distance, the sound of running water makes its presence known.



T'KIK S+CREEE-KILIC.

TIK+IK.

(TRANS: DØN'+
BØ+HER ME NØW.
I DØN'+ FEEL LIKE
DØING ANY+HING.)

—FORMIAN WØRKER
UNDER +HE INFLUENCE
ØF +HE
IRON SHADØW

THA+ WHICH LURKS

The resident of this cave probably provides the main reason that no one's discovered the accessway to the Staircase in a long, long time. A lurker waits in this cavern for prey to come by.

A few scattered bits of broken bronze tools and equipment lie scattered about on the cavern floor, their make unfamiliar to most humanoid races (they are unique to formians). One or two bits of mundane equipment lie here as well, but they, too, are ruined and useless. A canny eye might also catch a few rectangular patches of dark gray moss. These patches, if studied carefully, however, can be seen to move very slowly over the uneven, stone-strewn floor. 'Course, no one's going to get the chance to study them for too long. Once a creature of roughly human size comes into the room, the lurker, waiting in the shadows of the ceiling 25 feet above, drops, hoping to capture the prey and suffocate it.

If someone can examine one of the rectangular patches, that blood'll realize the thing isn't moss at all, but a tiny, baby lurker. Nineteen of these young creatures inhabit the room, none of them posing any sort of threat to anything larger than

an insect. Well-informed inhabitants of cosmopolitan areas may know (DMs can allow an Intelligence check at a -3 penalty if desired) that lurker hatchlings can fetch a fair price. In Sigil, for example, a well-lanned blood might know that she could get as much as 1,000 gp for a hatchling. Finding a buyer might be tricky (and finding nineteen is absurd, so taking more than one or two accomplishes little), and figuring out a method to safely transport the creatures might also pose a problem.

Amid the equipment (all of which are ruined beyond use or even repair) lies a tiny scroll tube made of copper. It's worth perhaps 10 gp and is only six inches long, barely half an inch in diameter. Rolled tightly inside is a small map, fragile due to its age and exposure to the damp air.

The map, drawn by a planewalking visitor long ago, shows the surrounding area (show players the appropriate map) but ultimately proves to be not very useful except in showing how things have changed, since most of the areas shown on the map are now flooded.

LURKER: AC 6; MV 1, Fl 9 (B); HD 10; hp 45; THACO 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (crush); SA drops onto opponents and automatically

inflicts damage each round, prey suffocates in 1d4+1 rounds; SZ H (20' diameter); ML steady (11); Int non (0); AL N; XP 2,000.

THE RIVER +HA+ WASN'+

The air grows noticeably more damp as a body moves down the passage toward this area. Suddenly, the passage opens wider, and water rushes through most of its width. A shelflike upper area allows an explorer to travel alongside the rapid underground stream.

When the Iron Shadow descended upon the small city of Klictrik, it sapped the work ethic and motivation inherent within formians. These formians had a city built entirely underground, unlike many of the much larger communities which have an above-ground portion that resembles a strange human burg. To keep the city safe from a nearby underground stream, the formians built a sophisticated dike, which included a complicated system of pipes and valves from which water could be drawn to supply the city.

When the workers ceased their careful, attentive maintenance of the dike and valve system, a terrible accident occurred: the dike broke. The rushing water flooded the city and filled most of the surrounding chambers and passageways with water.

Until recently, the ledge alongside the "river" was just a raised area near the main passage, 3-5 feet below. Now, the water fills the lower portion of the passage, flowing with a fast and powerful current.

Many remnants of the formian city float and bob in the rushing water filling the tunnel. The formians use a variety of things for their tools and equipment—stone, metal (particularly bronze), a hardened secretion that they produce and shape from their bodies, and even the carapaces of dead formians (and the chitin of other large insects as well). Except for those things that are mostly metal or stone, these debris float. The PCs can see all manner of goods rushing by—broken furnishings, building materials, artwork, tools, weapons, and more. Almost all were broken or damaged in the flood.

Worse, every now and again, a cutter'll see a dead formian floating in the water, whisked away quickly by the raging currents. A careful observation of the walls reveals that they obviously are not eroded by water. That and the detritus floating on the surface should tell a smart explorer that the flood has been recent.

1. ON THE RIVER—ONE: While the characters look at the newly formed river or make their way along the ledge, a small band of formians floats by on a raft. They made the raft hastily out of the carapaces of a few large insects (they kept a species of giant beetle like cattle) lashed together.

These three formian workers, still affected by the Iron Shadow, want nothing to do with the PCs. They simply float on by, carried by the rapid current. Shouts or pleas from the PCs engender no response beyond a bug-eyed glare.

FORMIAN WORKERS (3): AC 3; MV 18; HD 1+1; hp 5, 4, 3; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite); SZ S (4' tall); ML fearless (19); Int low (6); AL LN; XP 35 each.

2. A RAFT: At the end of the ledge lies a small cavern, which once served the formians as a storehouse. It still contains bun-

dles of grains and plants (soggy and covered in black mildew from the dampness) as well as some chitinous beetle shells and other parts that were meant to be used as tools or furnishings.

An almost-finished raft like the one mentioned above waits near the edge of the river. Someone has partially lashed two thin but tough shells together. A successful Wisdom check allows a character to realize how to go about finishing the task, if desired. Near the raft, however, its builder lies dead. A formian worker corpse rests near the construction, a bronze-headed (secretion-shafted) spear protruding from its chest. This poor creature was slain by the servants of Demansiq as they passed by looking for the Mantelavian scepter. The worker has been dead for at least an hour.

Characters using the raft find it fairly sturdy and waterproof. Those with navigation or seamanship proficiency can handle it with ease, and those without such training quickly tumble to the knack of it. Going with the current requires a proficiency check only on the sharp turns and the small falls (see area 6). Anyone controlling the craft without one of the required proficiencies must attempt a Wisdom check with a -3 penalty at these times. Failure means that the craft tips. All on board must make successful Dexterity checks to keep from falling off. A second Wisdom check (also at a -3 penalty) or proficiency check is immediately required. If it results in failure, the raft overturns and all on board fall off.

At the falls (area 6), the raft automatically tips; only one check is required and that's to keep the raft from overturning.

Those who fall off must make another Dexterity check if the water is less than 10 feet deep (see the notations on the DM map) to avoid striking something solid—those who fail suffer 1d6 points of damage. In any case, characters in the water must attempt to swim until they can leave the river by some means. The DM should be familiar with the swimming and drowning rules in chapter 14 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Fighting on board the raft incurs a -2 attack roll penalty, and each time a combatant suffers damage a Dexterity check is required to stay on board.

Characters not using the raft either need to supply their own boat, fly, or swim to get anywhere. Swimming against the rapid current found in the river requires a swimming check each round. Only a successful check allows a PC to gain any distance (at half normal movement rate), and two failures indicate that the character has actually lost ground (1d6×5 feet).

3. ON THE RIVER—TWO: Later, when the PCs are on their own raft or still on the ledge, more formians pass by on a raft. Unlike the formians encountered previously on the river, these creatures attack anyone they come upon immediately. These are larger, warrior formians. They show signs of previous fights and have a look of utter desperation on their insectile countenances.

These warriors serve a myrmarch named Demansiq, who seeks to be the new ruler of the formians left in the area. To accomplish this, these formians have stolen the Mantelavian scepter from the myrmarchs serving Hvix'mnac, the old queen. This scepter signifies to any formian that the myrmarch holding it currently serves as the ruler of Klictrik. The warriors truly believe that what they do is for the best and the good of their people—and thus harbor a willingness to slay anyone that gets in the way of the completion of their mis-

sion. Demansiq, however, is actually Ghundarania, a polymorphed bariaur (see page 42).

The desperate and nearly dead formians attack the PCs immediately, assuming that they are foes. Both carry bronze-headed spears for ranged combat and wear bronze claw tips that improve their claw damage by +1 (and act as magical weapons in regard to creatures they can affect). One warrior carries the Mantelavian scepter, a dented *rod of rulership* of tarnished bronze with no charges. Their job is to take it to the Chamber of Deep Magic (area 11), recharge the scepter, and return it to Demansiq. The passage from the nest-mound chamber (area 13) was flooded and they hoped to get to the Chamber of Deep Magic by the longer route. While it has no charges, the scepter has no power at all, even as a symbol to the formians.

The formians fight to the death, but the PCs should have little trouble defending themselves. If they take the tarnished rod (not knowing its worth, most likely), later in the adventure certain NPCs can recognize it for what it is.

FORMIAN WARRIORS (2): AC 2; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 3, 7 (down from 18 each); THACO 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1d4/1d6+1/1d6+1/2d4 (bite/claw with claw tip/claw with claw tip/sting); SA Poison in sting reduces opponent's attack rolls by -2 for 1d6 turns unless saving throw vs. poison is successful; SZ M (5' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int avg (10); AL LN; XP 420 each.

4. THE BROKEN DIKE: This chamber once held the valve system and the dike that held back the water of the underground river known as the Darkflow. Because the bronze valves were quite complicated and very precise, even just a few days' neglect resulted in the water pressure building up, so that eventually the valve system burst.

Now, only vestiges of the pipes and valves remain, as well as the copper pipes which run along the wall and into the main city nest. The water here is not deep, but it pours from the hole in the dike with great force. If characters can get past the rushing water (this requires a successful Strength check—the water's too shallow to swim and the force is too strong to navigate a raft), they find a door made of plates of chitin held together with the hardened secretion made by the formians. The portion of the chamber near the door is high enough so that the water doesn't run this way at all. The door is locked with a bronze key lock (the key lies lost somewhere in the flood).

Behind the door stand two chambers once used by the centaur ant workers who maintained and watched the valves and the dike. One formian worker remains here. Its limited mind is overcome by the lethargy induced by the Iron Shadow and the fear brought on by the last few days' events. This formian, assuming that the PCs can communicate with it somehow, relates that the accident occurred in what equates to about three days ago (these formians, living all their lives underground, don't use terms like day and night). It has no idea why it and its fellows suddenly lost all will to work shortly before that. If the PCs assure it that they mean no harm, the worker becomes very relaxed and susceptible to suggestion, as though it has no will of its own. It can describe what the layout of this area used to be like roughly, but it has no idea what's happened since the dike broke—it's hidden here ever since, while its comrades fled to the city nest. If pressed (it won't suggest this on its own), it does know that sometime

between its loss of enthusiasm for its job and now it heard someone say something about the queen disappearing. It knows nothing more of interest and alone could not possibly fix the hole or describe how—even if it managed to get up the initiative to make the repair (or help the PCs do it), which it can't while the area falls under the Iron Shadow.

The outer chamber has a few soft earthen mounds (the preferred "bed" of a formian), a stone table with a half-eaten loaf of bread, some discarded fruit rinds, and a jar of nectar.

The formians used the rear chamber to house their pets, the giant crayfish. Most of the chamber is a freshwater pool fed by a pipe from the river. Only one of the creatures remains, the rest having fled when the formians did as the dike broke (they can be found now in Area 7). Like the others, this crayfish has designs etched into its shell and piercings of bronze rings and studs. It will attack anything that gets into the pool except a formian, since it hasn't been fed in quite some time.

GIANT CRAYFISH: AC 4; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 4+4; hp 18; THACO 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6/2d6 (claw/claw); SA -2 to foe's surprise rolls; SZ L (10' long); ML elite (13); Int non (0); AL N; XP 175.

5. HIDDEN ROCKS: There is a 1-in-6 chance that any raft passing by these barely submerged rocks strikes them. If this happens, a proficiency check, as described on page 36, is required to keep the boat from capsizing. Whether or not it overturns, the rocks tear a hole in the carapace rafts used here (or similar craft), meaning that the vessel sinks in 3d4 rounds unless someone is able to repair it (unless fixed by spell, this requires stopping and using materials that the PCs most likely do not have).

6. THE SMALL FALLS: These two areas are sharp drop-offs where the river plummets 4-8 feet. As noted in the description for area 2, the character responsible for directing the raft must make the appropriate rolls or the raft overturns.

Just below the first set of falls, the water has forced apart a fissure in the rock, creating a passage to the Chamber of Deep Magic (area 11). Characters bold enough to swim below the falls and into the sinkhole beneath find themselves carried into the chamber, borne by the current. Only man-sized or smaller creatures can fit in the hole.

None of Klictrik's residents know about the passage (it was just an inconsequential crack in the wall before the flood), and most of them are too big to fit through it anyhow. The opening isn't visible from the surface of the river, but the PCs can locate it with a pole or plumb line.

7. GIANT CRAYFISH: This chamber is home to some pets of the formians. The centaur ants discovered these beasts in the river and domesticated them. Because it struck their fancy, the formians inscribed delicate designs into their shells and studied them with bronze rings and semiprecious stones.

On the shell of one of the beasts, the formians inscribed the lineage of the queens of Klictrik, and how 378 years ago, the greatest of the regent myrmarchs wielded power by right of the Mantelavian scepter, an object that drew its power from the Chamber of Deep Magic. Unless the planewalkers can read formian, however, a *comprehend languages* or similar spell is required to decipher the writing (a successful use of a rogue's read languages ability works, too). And, of course, the cray-

fish has to hold still long enough to be read, which probably won't happen while it's alive.

The crayfish won't attack formians, but virtually anything else is fair game. Overturning a raft is easy work for them, requiring only a successful attack roll against AC 9. When their victims are in the water, they attack in earnest. Once they have slain their desired prey, the crayfish drag it down into their new lair, the completely submerged chamber beyond.

8. HANNOCK RINGFINGER: This gnome hails from the plane of Bytopia. Once a merchant who traded with the formians, he eventually took up fairly permanent residence among them as a liaison and ambassador.

Hannock fell under the influence of the Iron Shadow when it first came to Arcadia. When the dike broke, he was on his way down this passage toward the city nest but the water trapped him here with no means of escape. Only luck allowed him to get out of harm's way when the water initially rushed down this passage. Hannock can't swim. Days without much food have weakened him, and the Iron Shadow has made it impossible for him to initiate a plan to rescue himself.

Hannock's a likable fellow, dressed in dapper clothing that is now wet, dirty, and slightly tattered. His goatee beard and long hair are white, and now as matted and dirty as his clothes. The Iron Shadow's effect upon him has made it almost impossible for him to think of something new or initiate an action on his own. Once someone else suggests an idea, he's fully capable of carrying it out. If he leaves the area, he recovers from the effects of the Iron Shadow within 1d6 days.

Having been privy to much of the formians' rather simplistic politics, Hannock can recognize the Mantelavian scepter with ease. Due to his Iron Shadow affliction, however, he won't mention it unless asked. He knows where the Chamber of Deep Magic lies, although he doesn't know how to go about recharging the scepter, or even that the item needs recharging. He also knows about the uncharacteristically ambitious Demansiq and does not trust the (seeming) myrmarch.

Hannock knows much about the formians' city and society, but nothing about what's happened since the dike broke. He's a little upset with the formians right now—upset about them letting their dike burst and upset that twice since he's been trapped here he's seen formians in rafts go by and they haven't helped him. Hannock thinks there might be some large and dangerous creatures in the water, but he hasn't seen them in a while nor does he know what they are exactly (the giant crayfish).

If rescued, Hannock gladly goes wherever his rescuers go. Once he sees that Klictrik has been so terribly devastated by the flood, he'll gladly leave the area once and for all, hoping to get back to Bytopia one day—after he's worked hard to repay his rescuers. If the PCs don't desire his company, he attempts to get back to his home plane immediately, but tries to keep apprised of the events surrounding his friends on Arcadia as well as his planewalking rescuers. (Bytopian gnomes actually maintain a fairly impressive information trafficking network.)

HANNOCK RINGFINGER (PI/♂ gnome/T4/Believers of the Source): AC 6 (leather and Dexterity); MV 12; hp 19; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) or 1d6 (short sword); SZ S (3' tall); ML steady (11); AL NG.

S 9; D 16; C 10; I 14; W 12; Ch 16

Special Equipment: *ring of insect influence* (as a *ring of human influence*, but affecting intelligent insects instead), *ring of jumping*, 25 10 gp gems, 13 gp, 98 sp.

Personality: Kind, long-suffering, intuitive

Thief Abilities: PP 30, OL 38, F/RT 35, MS 35, HS 38, DN 30, CW 60, RL 29

9. INVESTIGATORS: At some point, when the PCs explore these lower portions of the river, they encounter a group of investigators working for the powers of Arcadia to determine what's going on in Klictrik, since no one's heard from the community for many days. The Sphinx, a proxy of Ra himself, gathered together three capable bloods to investigate. Delos, Carvagnin, and Rea travel through the tunnels under the influence of *potions of flying*. They've just come up from the mines below and so they've already figured out that there's been a flood.

When these three see a group of non-formians wandering around the area, their suspicions immediately rise. Such a group, they reason, is likely to be attackers, looters, or the saboteurs responsible for the flood. Carvagnin, in particular, is suspicious to the point of paranoia.

These cutters are likely to be more obstacles than allies to the PCs. Unless one among them owes allegiance to the Harmonium, Carvagnin insists that any non-formians that she comes across surrender their weapons and allow themselves to be sequestered in a nearby cavern until the investigation is over.

Hannock, if present, attempts to defend the PCs, but his argument carries little weight—his presence is just as suspicious as that of the planewalkers.

If the investigators' "captives" do not agree to their demands, the trio will use force—but they will not intentionally kill or attempt to kill anyone. These folks are hard-headed, suspicious, and quick-to-accuse, but not evil or cruel.

DELOS (PI/♂ einheriar/F5): AC 5 (chain mail and shield); MV 12; hp 50; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (two handed sword); MR 5%; SZ M (6' 2" tall); ML elite (14); Int avg (10); AL LG; XP 270.

Personality: Noble but egotistical

CARVAGNIN (PI/♀ human/F4/Harmonium): AC 2 (plate mail and shield); MV 12; hp 31; THACO 17 (16 with sword); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (*long sword* +1); SZ M (5' 11" tall); ML champion (15); Int avg (9); AL LN; XP 175.

Special equipment: *long sword* +1 (Arcadian forged), 25 gp

Personality: Quick-to-judge, hasty, stubborn

REA, AGATHINONI AC 0; MV 15; HD 8; hp 30; THACO 13; #AT 1 or by form assumed; Dmg 1d6 (mace) or 1d4+1 (sling) or by form assumed; SA shapechange to different form (but keeps current hit dice, THACO, etc.), casts spells as 7th level cleric plus *aid*, *augury*, *comprehend languages*, *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *cure serious wounds* (3x/day), *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *ESP*, *hold person*, *know alignment*, *read magic*, *teleport without error* (at will); SD +1 or better weapon to hit, save as 14th level priest, immune to energy draining, *death* spells, *disintegration*, gas attacks, poison and energy from the Positive Energy Plane, half damage from acid, cold, and electricity; SZ varies but usually M (6' tall); ML steady (11); Int avg (9); AL CN; XP 5,000.



Spells (5/5/3/2): 1st—*cure light wounds, light, purify food and drink, remove fear, sanctuary*; 2nd—*detect charm, enthral, find traps, heat metal, silence 15-foot radius*; 3rd—*dispel magic, cure disease, water walk*; 4th—*free action, lower water*

10. THE GUARDIAN. The formians placed a beast to guard the Chamber of Deep Magic long ago. The beast seemed a natural choice, for it was drawn to the chamber all by itself. The guardian is a very young bronze dragon—but no ordinary bronze dragon. When this creature was hatched on the Prime, it had birth defects. The shape of its head shows that it didn't develop entirely right. Its mother knew that it would never become a fully functional dragon.

Dragon law on that world decreed that the mother should slay any such rare, deformed specimen, but the mother dragon couldn't find it within her soul to kill her child, who she named Talleax. While handicapped, he seemed to have some sort of affinity toward magic—not in its use, which was far beyond him, but in its very presence.

Talleax's mother could only hide him for so long. Eventually, she hid him away in a deep cavern, hoping to keep him there for a few years, at least until he'd developed more. However, Talleax's love of magic (and his inherent ability to sense it) drew him even deeper into the caves where he was to hide. There, he discovered a portal long forgotten by the bronze dragons (although their ancestors had used it often in older days). The portal brought him to Arcadia. Following his nose, so to speak, his desire to bask in the presence of great magic led him to the Chamber of Deep Magic.

The formians fed him and quickly became friends with Talleax, who was happy as long as he could remain in the Chamber of Deep Magic. Recently, however, the myrmarchs who used the chamber (influenced by Demansiq) became fed up with how difficult it was to use the power within the cave with the ever-growing dragon in it. Thus, they tricked Talleax into entering this antechamber and then shackled him with a thick bronze chain.

Talleax yearns to get into the Chamber of Deep Magic again, but is sad rather than angry that his friends tricked him. The Iron Shadow has had practically no effect upon him, since he was never an originator of new ideas or concepts to begin with.

The dragon can communicate with any intelligent creature, but only on a very rudimentary level using the simple words of his limited vocabulary. The formians hope that his mere presence will drive off most intruders—and so far, that assumption's been correct. Those that don't immediately run from the dragon's presence must face his *repulsion* breath weapon, which he uses when someone threatening comes near.

If someone is able to withstand that attack, Talleax gives them a pathetic stare, although with his misshapen head, it's likely to be taken for a threat. He responds to threats and bravado with a blast of his lightning breath, but any attempt at speaking with him with civility gains his confidence rather quickly (a flaw in their guardian that the formians haven't yet realized). As best he can, Talleax explains that he "just likes the warm, sparkly room," meaning that he wants to get back to the Chamber of Deep Magic.

What makes him a good guardian still is his jealousy over anyone going into the Chamber of Deep Magic without

him. The myrmarch formians who used the chamber approached from the other direction, for since their ploy to put him under restraint, Talleax reacts badly to them as well. If anyone tries to get by the dragon, he slaps his tail near the exit as a warning. "Nobody go there without Talleax," he bellows. "Just like the warm, sparkly room," he says again. If anyone ignores this proclamation, he attacks as the intruder attempts to pass.

His recent betrayal by the formians (from his point of view) taught him that no friend is completely trustworthy. Thus, even if the PCs have been very kind to him, he's likely to be watching out for them to turn on him—what some planars might call "peery against them turning stag." Talleax uses his *repulsion* breath at the first sign of anger, violence, or derision from the party. If anyone's ever so foolish as to attack him, he'll fight to the best of his ability. He's obviously no tactician, but his bite, claws, and lightning breath are weapons of quick destruction.

To free Talleax, his bronze chain must be broken. The chain can sustain 100 points of damage before parting—it's too massive for a bend bars/lift gates attempt. It has to hold a dragon, after all. Once freed, Talleax immediately goes into the chamber beyond. He pauses only momentarily at the presence of water in the chamber, and then dives in, a natural swimmer.

Hannock knows the recent history of Talleax, although his knowledge comes from the myrmarchs—he's never spoken to the dragon directly and is most likely terrified of the beast.

TALLEAX, VERY YOUNG BRONZE DRAGON: AC 0; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Sw 12; HD 10; hp 59; THACO 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8+2/1d8+2/4d8+2 (claw/claw/bite); SA Breathes lighting up to 100' (5' wide) inflicting 4d8+2 damage (save vs. breath weapon for half) or *repulsion* gas in a 20'×30'×30' cloud that causes those within to flee for 1d6+2 minutes unless a saving throw is successful, *water breathing* and *speak with animals* at will, *detect magic* always active; SD Immune to lightning; SZ H (18' body); ML fanatic (17); Int low (5); AL LG (N); XP 8,000.

11. CHAMBER OF DEEP MAGIC: The formians built Klictrik where they did, despite the dangers posed by the underground river, for two reasons: the proximity of the site to the copper and tin mines below, and the nearness of the mysterious Chamber of Deep Magic. This place is a natural node of magical power—particularly rare on Arcadia, which isn't known for its magic.

Filled with natural crystals, the chamber seems to have a faint light of its own that plays off the facets of the crystals. As Talleax described, the room also possesses a warmth within it not found in the other caverns in the area. Characters do not need *detect magic* or similar aid to discern that this place contains great power.

The room quickly overwhelms spellcasters of any type with its abundance of power. Any attempt to cast a spell draws in too much of the ambient energy and renders them unconscious for 1d6 turns. A successful saving throw vs. spells indicates that the spell wasn't lost before the caster was overcome.

Those not casting spells can stay within the room, although the experience can be a heady one. The magic of the room causes a body's skin to tingle and produces a giddiness in those who remain for more than a round or two.

If a character focuses all of her will into a magical item in the Chamber of Deep Magic, she can direct the surrounding power into the object. Magical items with charges gain an additional charge per round, up to their normal maximums. The natural danger in this process is that too much power can overload an item. There exists a cumulative 1% chance per charge given an item that the object becomes overloaded with power and shatters. The item is ruined, and the character focusing her attention upon recharging it suffers 1d10 points of damage.

Artifacts cannot be recharged in this manner. The Mantelavian scepter cannot be overloaded, and—what's more—as it is recharged the dents and tarnish vanish, transforming it into a beautiful object.

Now that that Chamber of Deep Magic lies underwater, the challenge facing would-be rechargers is greater than ever. The warrior servants of Demansiq hoped that the chamber wasn't entirely submerged as they made their way here to recharge the Mantelavian scepter. They were wrong. To use its power, the PCs may need to dive down from the nearby cave into the Chamber for as long as they can hold their breaths (see the chapter 14 in the *Player's Handbook*).

Further, Talleax's presence in the room makes it difficult to concentrate when recharging an item, because the dragon is prone to fidgeting and moving about (distracting enough), as well as bothering the recharger with questions about what she's doing, why she's doing it, how she likes the warm, sparkly cave, and so on. Every third round, a recharger must attempt a saving throw vs. spell; if the attempt fails, the character loses her concentration. The item gains no charge, but the recharger still must roll for overload as the flow of power goes awry (unless recharging the Mantelavian scepter). Talleax can breathe underwater and remains there for good.

The possibility remains that other uses for the Chamber of Deep Magic could exist, but the formians have never delved into such matters.

12. MINES: The river eventually plummets down into the mines below the city. Although the formians could climb up and down the side of the shaft, a pulley-driven elevator existed for non-formians and for carrying ore. The ropes and pulley still hang from the ceiling above the shaft, but the platform of the elevator is long gone. Anyone taking the fall on a raft suffers 5d6 points of damage from the 100-foot drop (the damage is halved due to the presence of the water to help cushion the fall).

The water is particularly dirty in the mines, filled with the waste and detritus caused by the mining process. Further, the debris and dead bodies from the upper city collect in the mines, so they are filled with even more broken materials and dead formians than the tunnels above.

No map shows the layout of the mines, as they extend for miles in all directions. Many are completely submerged, but a few tunnels are only flooded (a few are high enough to be dry). Eventually, one joins a shaft that leads all the way to the surface of the second layer of Arcadia, near the desert-like realm called Heliopolis. The shaft has a functioning elevator for carrying non-formians and ore.

GONNA GO SPARKLY
ROOM NOW?
I US+ LIKE SPARKLY ROOM.
US+ LIKE I+.
YEAH.
—TALLEAX



Fortunately for anyone on a raft, the nearby raised ledge that they pass before they reach the long plummet down lies within view of the waterfall. Thus, the characters have plenty of time to get off the river and to safety if they don't want to risk the fall.

THE CITY NEST

The main portion of Klictrik has two parts: the main city-nest, and the mound-nests. Although the formians built the mound-nests first, the city-nest grew to be much larger, providing homes for most of the city's inhabitants. Most of these formians, however, died in the flood. The rushing water trapped and drowned them. A few managed to get to the mound-nests, and a few others escaped to the surface.

13. MOUND-NEST CHAMBER: The entrances to this, the "old city," lie in a tall, narrow cavern with spires built up within it. At the top of each spire is a hole with a shaft leading down. The mound-nests lie within the spires.

When the flood came, this deep cavern filled with water but the mounds themselves saved those within by keeping the entrances above the water level. The mound-nests now house all the surviving formians of Klictrik—those who hid in the mounds and those able to escape from the main city-nest before it was completely flooded. The population of the nest now stands at 224 workers, 137 warriors and 24 myrmarchs (including Demansiq).

Chambers within the mound nests come in a few basic types—sleeping chambers, storage chambers (food, tools, other supplies), and common areas. Each chamber is dug out of the rock and furnished with items of stone, metal, and hardened insect secretions.

Within the center mound-nest lies a portal to the gith-yanki city of TorNav'roc on the Astral Plane, but none of the formians possess any knowledge of it.

FORMIAN WORKER: AC 3; MV 18; HD 1+1; hp 5, THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite); SZ S (4' tall); ML fearless (19); Int low (6); AL LN; XP 35.

FORMIAN WARRIOR: AC 2; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 18; THACO 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1d4/1d6/1d6/2d4 (bite/claw/claw/sting); SA Poison in sting reduces opponent's attack rolls by -2 for 1d6 turns unless saving throw vs. poison is successful; SZ M (5' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int avg (10); AL LN; XP 420.

FORMIAN MYRMARCH: AC 1; MV 15; HD 6+6; hp 30; THACO 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/3d12 (bite/sting); SA Poison in sting 3d12 points of damage paralyzes foe for 1d4 turns (successful saving throw vs. poison indicates half damage and no paralysis); SZ L (7' tall); ML champion (15); Int exc (16); AL LN; XP 2,000.

14. MAIN CITY-NEST: Like the mound-nests, this area comprises sleeping chambers, storage rooms, and common areas hewn out of rock—enough for hundreds of formians to live within comfortably. Now, however, all of these chambers have filled with

water from the flood. Bodies and debris also float in the nest chambers, forming hazards and obstacles throughout the city.

Within this dark, underwater maze lies both a portal to Limbo and a passage leading up to the surface of the plane (the myrmarchs know about both, but can't reach them now).

15. DEMANSIQ'S CHAMBER: When the myrmarchs moved the dragon Talleax out of the Chamber of Deep Magic, he guarded only one access to the chamber. Demansiq volunteered to guard the other path himself, and thus he used this tiny chamber as his own.

Demansiq is no formian. "He" is a female bariaur wizard from Sigil named Ghundarania. The wizard learned of the Chamber of Deep Magic through rumor and came to Arcadia to see it for herself. She thought the chamber would be the perfect place to perform a ritual she was preparing; she believed the rite would grant her complete immortality. Realizing that the formians would never give her the long-term access that she needed to the chamber (to finish the creation of the ritual, let alone the performance of it, would take months of effort within the Chamber), Ghundarania *polymorphed* herself into the form of a myrmarch. She quickly manipulated events so that she would be among the queen's elite, whose duties included recharging the community's small number of magical items and performing some quasi-religious ceremonies in the Chamber of Deep Magic.

Knowing she also needed some devout allies, Ghundarania used *friends* and *suggestion* spells to gather a small cadre of formian warriors loyal to Demansiq. They weren't *charmed*, as such, but rather she just used magic over a long period of time to convince them that following her would result in the greatest good for the community.

Everything went very well for the wizard over the first two months. Then, disaster struck.

When the Iron Shadow caused the flood and the resulting havoc, Ghundarania's plans were thwarted, because the water cut off her easy access to the Chamber of Deep Magic. Her only hope, she believed, was to gain complete control of the remaining formians and force them to repair the dike. For that, she needed the nearly forgotten Mantelvian scepter. Not understanding the Iron Shadow, Ghundarania never realized her plan wouldn't work.

While Demansiq distracted the other myrmarchs, "his" servants stole the Mantelvian scepter and attempted to recharge it in the Chamber of Deep Magic. Ghundarania knew that their chances of getting past the dragon were slim, but she had to rely on luck at this point. Unfortunately, her luck was even worse than she thought, for her warriors were seen (formians make poor thieves) and attacked. Although they fought their way out and slew most of those who had seen the theft, their numbers were decreased and those that remained alive were wounded. Then, the PCs (presumably) came along and obtained the scepter (although she doesn't know that). Now her plans truly begin to fall apart.

If Ghundarania learns of the PCs' actions, she will do anything she can to get the scepter away from them—including outright violence. Using spells, she can still reach the Chamber of Deep Magic and recharge the scepter. She's also willing to use her influence as Demansiq to persuade the formians to attack the planewalking outsiders. Only a suc-

cessful "unmasking" of the bariaur wizard or proof that she lies behind the theft of the Mantelvian scepter will persuade the centaur ants to stop obeying her. Even the other myrmarchs respect Demansiq enough to do as he says (within reason) until they are shown his obvious treachery.

Thus, if the PCs obtain the scepter, they're sure to be attacked eventually by Ghundarania or by formians manipulated by her. Hannock Ringfinger would be a useful ally in calming attacking formians, since they know and trust the gnome (and because of his *ring of insect influence*). The chief way that the formians have for moving around remains their crude rafts, so centaur ants hunting for the PCs will use the craft, two or three warriors to each.

If the PCs recharge the Mantelvian scepter they can force any formian of Klictrik to cease attacking and even obey limited commands (assuming that they can communicate). This effect won't last more than 10 or 15 minutes, for only a myrmarch formian (or a *polymorphed* bariaur wizard in that form) can utilize the long-term effects of the item and be accepted as the replacement "queen."

As a last resort, Ghundarania will forget about the scepter, use *water breathing* or *polymorph self* to allow her to dwell underwater safely, and then go to the Chamber of Deep Magic to continue her preparations at an accelerated rate. The dragon (if he's there) might hamper things, forcing her to take action against the beast—including attempting to trick him into thinking that the PCs are his enemies to eliminate both threats at once.

Even if Ghundarania succeeds in her quest and completes the necessary ritual, the worst that can happen is that she becomes immortal. Such an event does not spell certain doom for the multiverse—or for anyone, actually. She's not out to intentionally hurt anyone, she just wants to make sure she never ages. Her devotion to this goal (she has an overpowering fear of death) means that she won't let anyone get in her way. Her fear of death won't let her put herself at any real risk, however, and she's likely to flee when in danger.

GHUNDARANIA/DEMANSIQ (PL/♀ bariaur/Tra8/Fated): AC 6 (Dexterity, *ring of protection* +2); MV 15; hp 16; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA Spells, alteration spells impose a -1 saving throw penalty; SD +1 saving throw bonus vs. alteration spells; SZ M (6' tall); ML steady (11); AL N; XP 2,000.

S 12; D 16; C 8; I 16; W 14; Ch 9

Special equipment: *batstaff*, *ring of protection* +3 (Outlands forged, +2 here), 200 gp necklace

Personality: Self-indulgent, detached

Spells (5/4/4/3): 1st—*change self*, *friends*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *spider climb*; 2nd—*alter self* (×2), *invisibility*, *web*; 3rd—*blink*, *lightning bolt*, *tongues*, *water breathing*; 4th—*polymorph self* (×3)

Ghundarania uses *polymorph self* to appear as Demansiq (3 spells memorized each day with a duration of almost 4 hours each takes care of most her needs) but also has some *alter self* spells prepared as backup if she needs it. Since she's a bariaur, *alter self* and *change self* allow her to change her appearance into that of a centaur-like creature as opposed to a humanoid creature.

The *batstaff* is a magical staff, 5 feet long, made of black

iron and topped with a stylized bat with wings outstretched. The wielder of the staff can use three different powers:

- ♦ **SHIELDS:** This power calls forth a number of flitting, black energy shapes which dart and swarm around the staff. These shapes obscure the vision of anyone within 5 feet of the staff (except the wielder), effectively blinding them and forcing them to take a -4 penalty to their attack rolls. Those outside the radius of these darting shapes still have difficulty in making out the exact position of the staff wielder, and subtract -2 from all attacks against the staff wielder. This power remains active for 1 turn per charge expended.
- ♦ **SUMMON BATS:** The wielder can summon 3d10 normal bats or 1d4 giant bats. These obey the will of the wielder implicitly and remain until slain or for 1 turn per charge expended, whichever comes first.
- ♦ **SONIC SIGHT:** The wielder can perceive things around her, with a radius of 50 feet, as though through a bat's sonarlike sense. That is, she can perceive shape and movement in the dark, but not color. This ability lasts for 1 hour per charge expended.

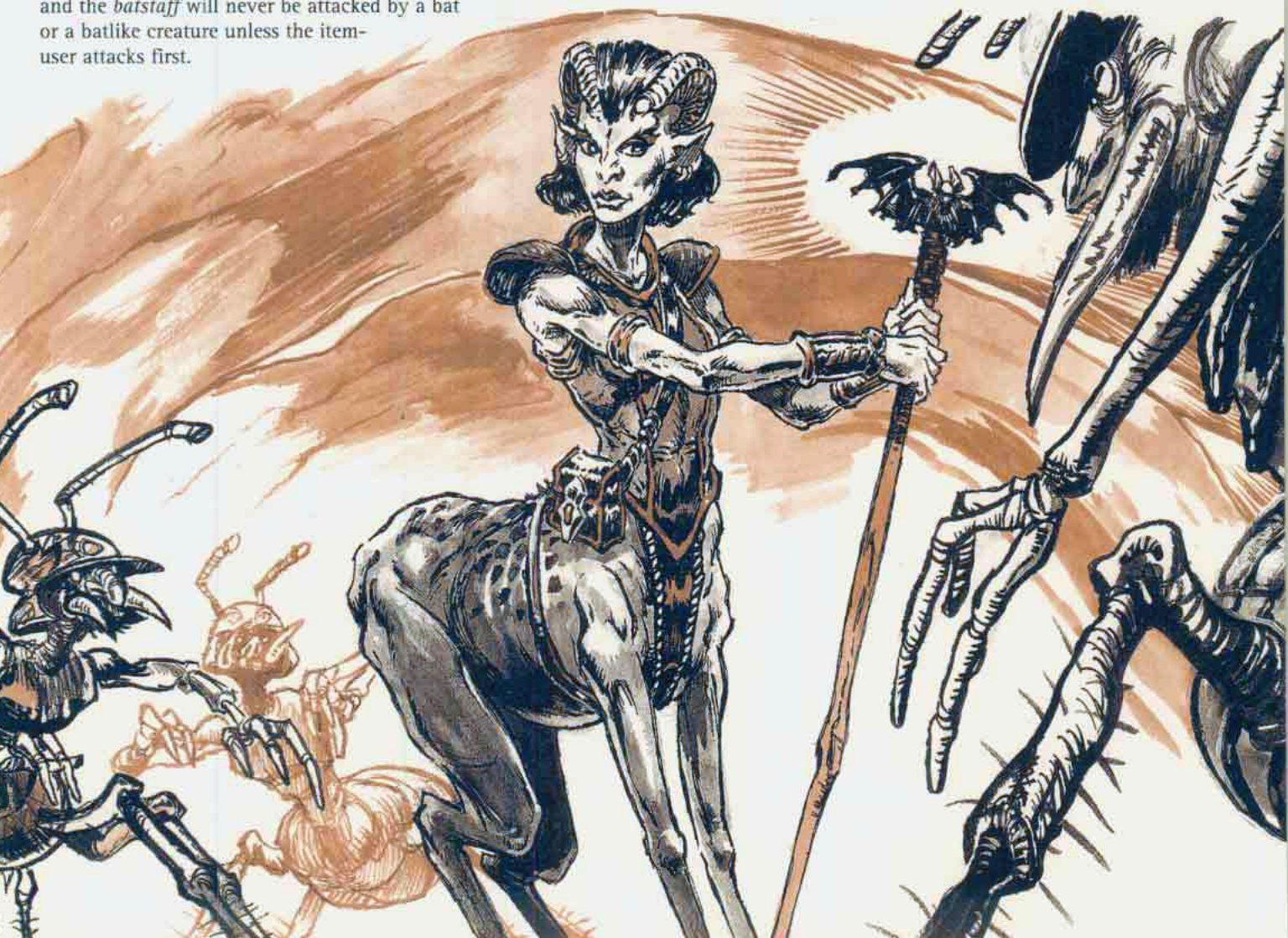
When used in conjunction with a *cloak of the bat*, the *batstaff* gains the ability (for a cost of two charges) to change up to 4 other man-sized figures into bats (as per the *cloak of the bat*). Further, anyone with both the *cloak of the bat* and the *batstaff* will never be attacked by a bat or a batlike creature unless the item-user attacks first.

♦ LEAVING ARCADIA ♦

Once the PCs decide to leave Klictrik, they can use the doorway back to the Infinite Staircase or—if they've discovered them—the portals to either Limbo or the Astral Plane. They can also use one of the two paths that lead up to the surface (from the mines or the completely flooded main city-nest).

If the planewalkers take the Mantelavian scepter with them, eventually the formians of Klictrik follow. Once they've relocated or reorganized, the centaur ants will realize that the scepter is missing and search for it—even if it means scouring the multiverse. Woe to the player characters if the searching formian warriors catch up with them, for they will not rest until the thieves are destroyed and the scepter returned. Most likely, however, this won't happen for many weeks or even months. Further, fast-talking PCs can explain their way out of the situation, although the formians may request that they return to Klictrik with them to explain to the myrmarchs (of which Demansiq might still be one if “he” still hasn't been discovered).

If the PCs were instrumental in the uncovering of Ghundarania/Demansiq's plot, the myrmarchs reward them with a magical item called the *helm of the insect*. This magical helmet grants the wearer a natural Armor Class of 8 (hardening the skin to an insectile carapace) and allows the wearer to climb walls as though under the influence of a *spider climb* spell. It does not allow the wearer the ability to navigate on webs, however.



Within the Deep, where all possibilities lie, worlds upon worlds—worlds within worlds—are born and eventually die. Most do so without your knowledge. You never know the vast array of landscapes, creatures, and civilizations that exist beyond your reach. You are not privy to the secrets buried within the Ethereal Plane in the abundant plethora of realities foolishly, mundanely called demiplanes.

TALE 3: LORD OF THE WORMS

Seek the knowledge. Look to the secret worlds and speak with the denizens there.

Expand your horizons. Even if you're twiggid to the fact that the Outer Planes never end, and even if you've explored the farthest reaches of each Inner Plane (and you haven't), the multiverse is still a lot bigger and a lot stranger than you think.



WE LIVE.
THAT'S ENOUGH.

— ERRID,
A HANIM WARRIOR

◆ OVERVIEW ◆

Arriving in the demiplane of Maelost, the PCs must face harsh weather and extremely difficult terrain—as well as unknown and bizarre monsters—just to survive. Eventually, they meet with the Hanim, the people who live on the plane. The Hanim hold a valuable, secret lore that enables a wizard or a priest to cast his spells more efficiently on the planes, but the lore requires a painful sacrifice and a distasteful action. The PC spellcasters must make the choice on their own.

The Lord of the Worms can be viewed as a divergent sort of adventure, because it is presented more as a strange location rather than a plot. Mainly, the plot involves the PCs exploring and adapting to the harsh reality of the demiplane. Used as a portion of the overarching plot of *Tales From the Infinite Staircase*, the Iron Shadow eventually appears here, making things even worse, providing more incentive for the PCs (hopefully). Player characters of 4th to 6th level are most appropriate to the Tale.

Even though it is a dark, inhospitable place, nothing about the plane holds an inherent evil (with one notable exception). Maelost is harsh and indifferent, but not malevolent. Its inhabitants range the gamut of alignment and outlook. The DM should keep these facts in mind as he presents the locations and denizens of the place to the players.

◆ ADVENTURE NOTES ◆

- ◆ At Stage 3, the Iron Shadow descends upon Maelost by means of some blue slaadi coming to the demiplane through a portal from the vicinity of the Spawning Stone. When this occurs, the Hanim of the nearby city of Aml fall into a dark, brooding lethargy that keeps them from producing their art, tending to their mounts, or anything else. Worse, their rivals from a nearby tribe/city plan on taking advantage of their weakness. While the PCs visit Aml, raiders mounted on giant flies attack, and the inhabitants of the city find themselves unable to adequately defend themselves. Use the statistics for typical Hanim warriors if the PCs decide to help defend Aml.

Most devastating of all, however, is that the valgoss (symbiotic worms native to Maelost) begin abandoning their hosts once afflicted with the Iron Shadow. Not

only do the hosts lose all powers given to them by the val-goss, but their personalities become trapped in whatever body that they were using at the time (later sections explain these references in greater detail). Worst of all, the absence of the valgoss grants the Taker of Life (a malevolent entity of great power) the freedom to attack and kill the abandoned Hanim.

The Hanim don't understand the coming of the Iron Shadow, and see the entire thing as a dire curse that has come upon them. The valgoss leave their hosts one by one, and the Taker of Life comes quietly to those it attacks. Fear ripples through the city of Aml, but there's little that any of the Hanim can do with all initiative and creative thought taken from them by the Shadow.

The three slaadi that come here do so to escape the Iron Shadow, and of course fail since they've inadvertently brought it with them. The location of the portal that they use is marked on the map—it is a hole leading to the caverns of the Dark Dweller (a formidable and aggressive but benign entity). The Dark Dweller grabs a slaad and mentally probes it (as it is wont to do); finding the chaotic creatures to be hostile but not actually evil, the Dark Dweller offers them the opportunity to be scoured (purged of evil), which one accepts. The scoured slaad, more adaptable than the typical member of its race, goes to the settlement with the help of the Dweller and attempts to ally with the people there. The other two wander the plane fighting off the attacks of the Taker of Life and regarding everything with typical slaadi belligerence.

DMs may wish to have the Iron Shadow descend upon Maelost *while* the PCs are present so that they can see the place before and after its effects.

- ♦ If Mulk the shad remains with the PCs from Tale 4, he refuses to undergo the Scouring ritual. If this means that he's left behind by the rest of the PCs, he wanders off on his own—probably to be devoured by the Taker of Life or one of the other monstrosities of the demiplane.

Oddly enough, if Mulk has the opportunity to host one of the valgoss, he gladly accepts it, having no qualms about such a process. If this occurs, it's likely that the shad will wish to stay on Maelost with the Hanim, who have no problem accepting him into their community.

- ♦ If the PCs bring the Navimas cure, they can dispel the Iron Shadow from Maelost using knowledge gained from *Ever-changing Order* or Ghuntomas (see Tales 7 and 5, respectively). The research proves difficult. The time needed to determine a useful process is (30 minus Intelligence score) days. The actual solution requires that a character drop a bit of Navimas into the water (the Taker of Life) four times, each application being 30 miles apart from every other drop. If this occurs, the affected individuals return to normal immediately.
- ♦ At Stage 7, the hound archon, Jazriul, travels from Limbo to Maelost to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow. At Stage 8, he leaves and travels to the Astral. While in Maelost, he encounters the Taker of Life and struggles against it, ultimately determining that it is too powerful for him to defeat alone. Jazriul may, however, attempt to enlist the PCs and as many of the Hanim as he can to war against the evil creature (probably encountering a great deal of resistance from the Hanim both because of the Iron Shadow and because they have developed their own way of dealing with the threat). Of course, this is futile, since even the combined might of all the Hanim could not overcome the Taker of Life. Jazriul will have to accept defeat in this matter or he will be destroyed by the evil foe.

Under no circumstances will Jazriul allow himself to be probed and scoured by the Dark Dweller, nor will he become a host for valgoss worms.

PLANAR MAGIC—MAELOST

Maelost does not affect spells or spellcasting in any way—even clerics cast spells as though on the Prime Material Plane (that is, at their full levels).

USING THE ADVENTURE INDEPENDENTLY: If a DM wants to use “The Lord of the Worms” as a stand-alone adventure without linking it to the other adventures in this product, the best way is probably as the location of a failed transport. In the AD&D game there are any number ways an adventurer or a group of adventurers can find themselves transported to some random, faraway plane—stepping through the wrong portal, a misused *amulet of the planes* or *cubic gate*, the retributive strike of a magical staff, a hostile *plane shift*, or the like. DMs who save this adventure for when such an eventuality occurs will find that Maelost

offers an interesting diversion—it appears at first to be a place to simply escape from, but later reveals that it holds a valuable sort of treasure for the party.

Of course, the primary goal of the adventure is still leaving. The only two known planar portals lead to Limbo and the Infinite Staircase (and from wherever the PCs came from, possibly, although such a travel option is presumably one-way or the PCs won't be trapped here). The DM may wish to create a portal or planar pathway of some sort of his own, with a specific means of activating it to get the characters back "home." The master slaiyiths are likely the only beings who know how to activate the portal, and thus, the PCs must become hosts to valgoss and participate in the petitioning process at the Obelisk (see page 54).

If this is the way the DM chooses to use the adventure, it may be advisable to ignore the Iron Shadow altogether and simply run the adventure with Maelost as it exists normally.

◆ BLACK RAIN ◆

The doorway leading to what the lillendi referred to as the Ridged Land lies on a wide landing 40 feet across but only 10 feet long. A chill runs down the spine of anyone stepping onto the landing. If the PCs pass through the black stone door that they find there, they enter a realm of darkness and wind—experienced planewalkers might think that they've wound up on the chaotic plane of Pandemonium. Instead, however, the PCs have arrived on one of the demiplanes in the Ethereal Plane. The inhabitants of this demiplane call their world Maelost.

Maelost exists in a limited spacial bubble that confines the entire plane to a space of about 120 miles. Space in Maelost curves in upon itself—that is to say that it warps around so that if a planewalker travels far enough in a fairly straight line (about 120 miles, to be exact), he ends up where he started. Note that the demiplane is not a sphere; a character who flies 120 miles straight up finds himself flying down to his takeoff point at the end of the trip.

The bulk of the demiplane is made of black rock that rises and falls as steep ridges. A visitor once called Maelost the Sea of Stone because the ridges look like motionless waves on some black ocean. Some of these ridges extend upward to heights of over 1,000 feet, although most are only half that tall. Most of the narrow valleys that lie between the ridges hold brackish water. These gaunt veins of liquid, choked with silt and oily residues from the stone around them, reach a depth of anywhere from 10 to 60 feet and have an average width of only 100 to 500 feet.

Flies buzz everywhere on Maelost, although they hide in the cracks and crevices that catacomb the rock when it rains. And it rains a lot. Black, oily water that comes from an unknown source falls upon the surface of Maelost, adding to the virtually unmoving waters between the ridges. Wormlike creatures and tiny insects fill the water, as well as larger, more menacing beasts called slaiyiths.

For the moment, however, newcomers to the demiplane are greeted only with a torrent of cold, black rain, accompanied by fierce winds. The doorway from the Infinite Staircase leads to a tiny cave entrance on the side of one of the ridges, about

100 feet above the surface of the rain-spattered pool below. The opposite ridge seems very close—only about 75 feet away—and the tops of the two ridges in sight are only just a little more than 30 feet above. The darkness of the plane hides even these sights except in the brief and muted flashes of distant lightning that light the sky momentarily with a pale gray glow.

Only a 1- to 2-foot ledge offers any support above the deadly drop on this side of the doorway. Anyone standing on the ledge quickly becomes drenched with the oily, black rain that pelts down from the inky sky and runs down the sides of the ridges in sinuous rivulets.

BLACK SLOPES

It doesn't take a graybeard to realize that getting around on Maelost presents an incredible challenge. Characters not equipped for mountaineering may turn right around and head back to the Staircase—and probably rightly so.

Fortunately, the rain lets up quickly after the PCs arrive, but this means that the flies emerge and begin biting and annoying any living creature they can find. Despite these hazards, normal mountaineering or climbing checks allow a group of adventurers to reach the top or the bottom of the ridge, assuming that good climbing equipment is available (planars have a word for assailing these ridges without some sturdy rope and other climbing tools—it's called barny).

Climbing the ridges—up, down, or moving along them horizontally—requires someone in the group to make successful mountaineering or climbing checks. Conditions of the rocky cliffs balance out, giving no positive or negative modifier to the check (taking into account the ledges, the sloped surface, the darkness and the slippery conditions). Ropes and equipment add +55% to the check, but armor, encumbrance, weight and other factors can modify the check further. See chapter 14 of the *Player's Handbook* for a full accounting of all applicable bonuses and penalties. DMs should note that without climbing equipment used by a skilled climbing leader, each traveler must make his own individual check. See the mountaineering proficiency description in Chapter 5 of the *PHB*.

A check is required for every 1,000 feet of movement (that means about five checks per mile if traveling horizontally). A successful check means that the group has moved the 1,000 feet in about an hour (after which, they must rest for at least 15 minutes), or—if the DM wants to be more precise—the speed of the party is the movement rate of the slowest character in feet per round due to the slipperiness, the slope of the ridge, and the climbing equipment (without the equipment, the rate is halved).

A failed check means that the group moved no appreciable distance during the hour. Two failed checks in a row indicate that a mishap has occurred. If the group has no ropes or equipment, they fall from the height at which they are climbing. If they have the required tools, an additional check is allowed. If this check is successful it means that the mountaineer prepared the ropes and pitons well enough to keep climbers from falling very far. If this last check fails, one of the climbers falls.

The top of the ridge, once reached, offers relative safety if not shelter. Few creatures live here other than the buzzing, biting flies. In the distance (direction means little here), some-

one standing on the ridge can see lights, perhaps indicating civilization. In fact, this is reflected light coming up from a floating settlement of people who call themselves the Hanim.

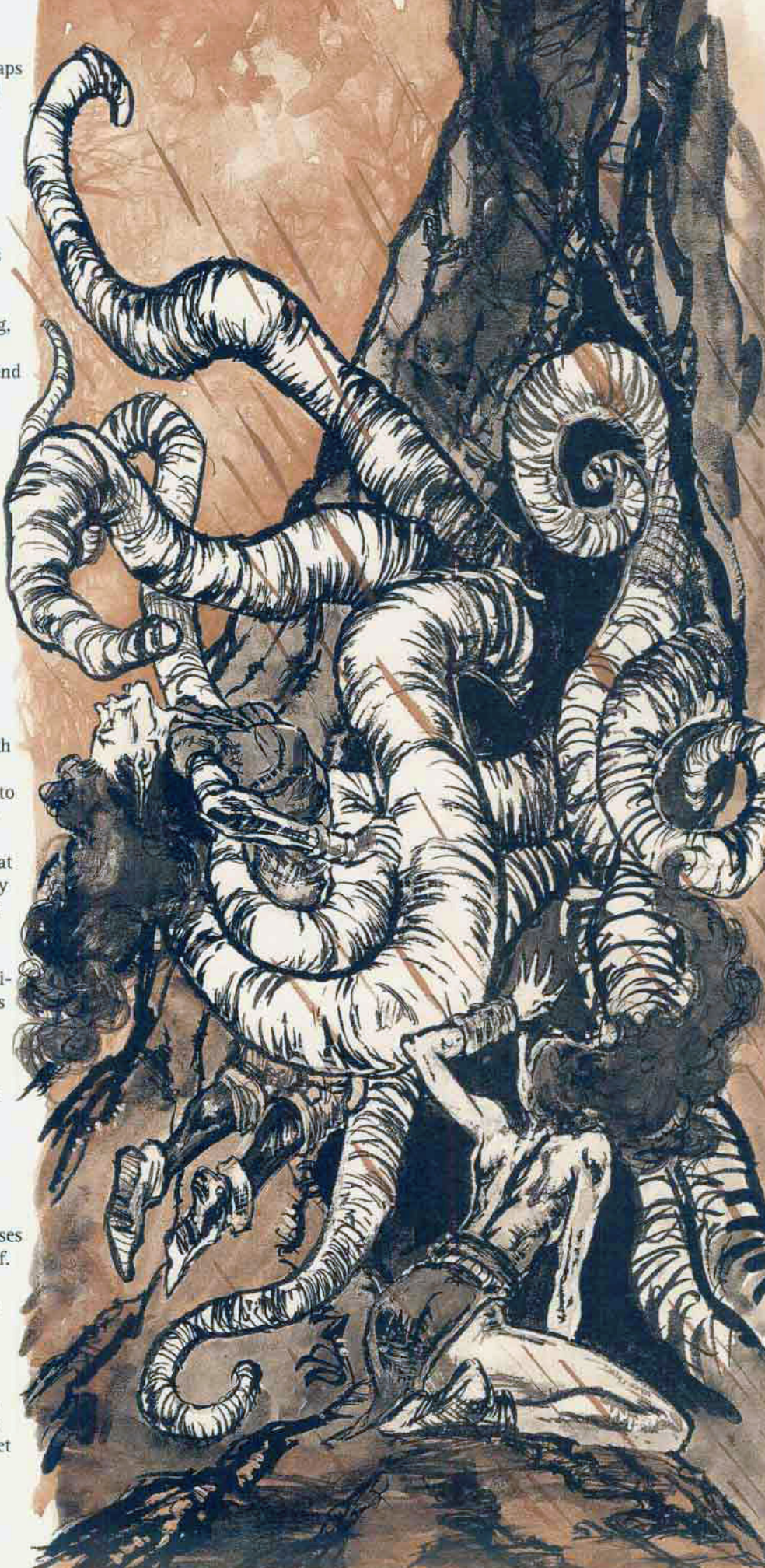
BLACK WATER

The water at the bases of the ridges between the rising peaks holds great danger. Two types of creatures inhabit the water—tiny wormlike valgoss and large and terrifying slaiyiths.

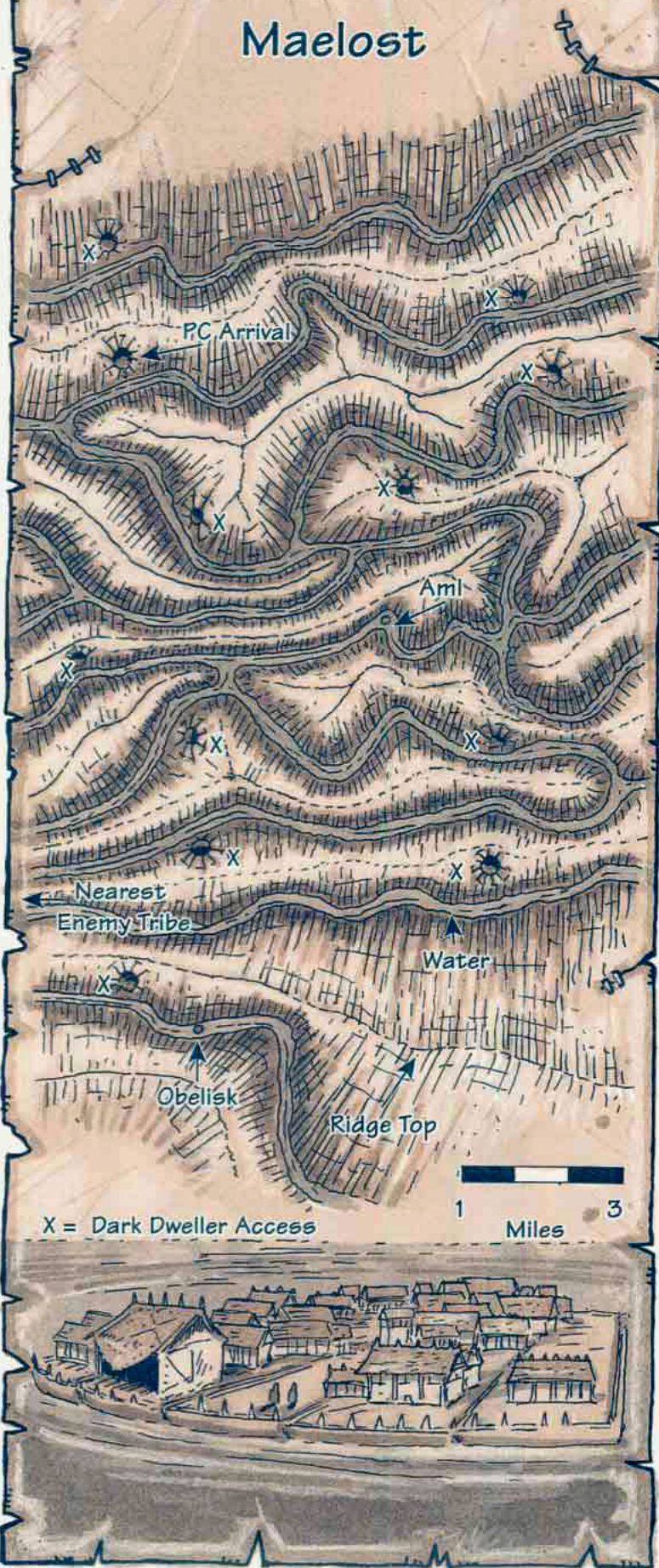
Valgoss range from two to six inches long, are pinkish white in color, and have powerful jaws, surrounded by tiny tentacles, on either end of their bodies. Blind, they swim in the water and sense the presence of other creatures through movement. Valgoss feed upon tiny algae and various slimes that grow in the water. Their presence will be detected by those watching the surface of the water carefully, as they come up to feed and slither along the top of the nearly opaque water.

Slaiyiths have round, bulbous bodies from which they can extend pseudopods. These armlike extensions end in chomping maws filled with chitinous teeth. Six reddish eyes dot the slaiyith's gray body, spaced equidistantly around the globelike mass. A few of the local Hanim claim to have seen slaiyiths measuring more than 50 feet in length (pseudopod tip to pseudopod tip). Most, however, are only 30 feet long. They can form up to four pseudopods at a time, although normally they have only two. Despite their vicious mouths, slaiyiths feed on grubs and insects that dwell on the bottom of the pools in which they live. Except for the occasional pseudopod that breaks the surface, planewalking visitors to Maelost may never see the slaiyiths.

The dark of the place, however, is that neither of these creatures presents the danger—it's the water itself that poses a threat to explorers. For some reason better left to sages to ponder, the brackish water held between the various ridges of the demiplane has attained a sort of sentience. The humans living on the demiplane call the water Death-Below-From-Above, or simply the Taker of Life. Disturbed only by the movement of the valgoss, the slaiyiths, and the rain which feeds the water being's substance, the unmoving water possesses the capability to form solid extensions of itself. These extensions can take the form of huge grasping arms or even what appears to be the upper torso of a humanoid figure, complete with two arms and a menacing face made of black water. The arms can grasp with a Strength of 18/75, strike with powerful blows, or cast spells as 5th-level clerics (see statistics below). The extensions can reach about six feet



Maelost



from the surface of the water, although they may have spells which can affect foes at a much greater range.

All the water on the plane is a single, ultra-powerful entity, but each extension exists as an individual creature—if the extension is destroyed, the Taker of Life cannot create a new extension in that area for 10+3d6 minutes. The Taker of Life, as a whole, lies beyond the capacity of the PCs to affect unless they can destroy an entire plane's worth of water.

Malicious and evil, the Taker of Life attacks any who come near it, seeking to drag them down into its own watery mass. Those in the water cannot perceive the creature's extension well enough to fight it—it's too dark and too difficult to distinguish the solid water from the rest—and the "creature" automatically hits those in the water. Its favorite tactic is simply to use its strength to hold foes underneath the water and drown them. The Taker of Life is happy, however, to kill foes above the surface outright and pull their corpses into the water. Either way, its victims are never seen again; the water somehow absorbs them—body and soul. Those slain by the Taker of Life cannot be *raised* or *resurrected* if it manages to drag them into its own watery mass.

The Hanim discovered long ago the way to keep the water at bay—explorers would do well to eventually make their way to the city of those folk. Traveling near the water makes this trip particularly dangerous because the black liquid will continue to attack anyone within range of its extensions or the spells that it can cast through them. These attacks come in addition to the perils and difficulties in simply moving over the plane's terrain (see previous page).

The PCs can do little to attract the attention of the slaiyiths or the valgoss. Even an outright attack probably just induces them to flee underwater or, barring that, fight back to the death. Spells or psionic abilities that allow a body to read the creatures' minds reveal that while both possess intelligence, neither is even aware of the PCs' existence. Essentially, both types of creatures feel that the characters are beneath notice—not even worth considering.

VALGOSS: AC 8; MV 3, Sw 6; HD 1+1; hp 8; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (burrow); SZ T (2-6" long); ML unsteady (7); Int avg (10); AL N; XP 35.

SLAIYITH: AC 4; MV 3, Sw 12; HD 16; hp 80; THACO 5; #AT 2-4; Dmg 2d4 each (bite); SA bite drains blood for 2d4 points of damage each round once mouth has latched on to victim, ESP at will, casts spells as an 8th-level wizard; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to fire, cold, and acid, regenerate 1 hit point per round; MR 25%; SZ G (30-50' long); ML avg (10); Int genius (18); AL N; XP 18,000.

Notes: In one round, a slaiyith can attack with all of its arms and cast no spells, or cast one spell and make one physical attack, or cast two spells and make no physical attacks. All slaiyiths can use telepathy at will.

Typical spell selection (4/3/3/2): 1st—*charm person*, *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *shield*; 2nd—*invisibility*,

Melf's acid arrow, web; 3rd—dispel magic, hold person, spectral force; 4th—dimension door, fear

TAKER OF LIFE WATER CREATION: AC 1; MV 12 (surface of water only), Sw 36; HD 9; hp 45; THACO 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6; SA casts spells as a 5th-level cleric; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to fire; SW *Lower water, transmute water to dust, part water*, and similar spells inflict 1d8 points of damage per spell level; MR 10%; SZ M (6' above the water's surface); ML fearless (20); Int genius (18); AL NE; XP 5,000.

Typical spell selection (5/5/2): 1st—*cause light wounds, command, curse, darkness, magical stone*; 2nd—*enthrall, heat metal, hold person* (x2), *silence 15-foot radius*; 3rd—*call lightning, summon insects*

BLACK TUNNELS

Whether traveling along ridge tops or near the water, plane-walkers should quickly tumble to the fact that the ridges are almost a sort of maze. When canny PCs realize that approaching the water means quick death, they'll probably try to find a path along the ridges which they can climb along without having to cross the water below. The ridges curve and twist in an interconnected pattern, so it is possible to reach the nearby settlement of the Hanim without crossing the water, although it's a roundabout path.

If they pay close attention to their surroundings, however, the PCs might notice (those looking can check once per hour as though looking for secret doors) that now and again dark holes extend to unknown depths within the ridges.

Anyone daring to go near the holes invites an attack of sorts, for the holes hold yet another sort of life unique to Maelost. When someone comes within 10 to 12 feet of one of these 5-foot-diameter holes, fleshy tendrils burst from the shadowy depths and seek to grasp the daring explorer (DMs should check for surprise). These tendrils belong to a creature the Hanim call the Dark Dweller. Like the Taker of Life, it's a huge entity, spanning the entire plane—its ropy body extends throughout a network of tunnels that honeycomb the ridges. Also like the Taker of Life, it is too vast for the PCs to slay the entire creature, although it's possible that they could destroy a section of it.

When the Dark Dweller's tendrils "attack" a character, it makes six attacks against the target with a THACO of 9 (the initial attack gets a +2 bonus if the creature gains surprise). None of the attacks inflict damage, but if even one successfully hits the character, the Dweller pulls him down into the hole with a Strength of 25. In short, most likely the character will be drawn quickly down into the depths. The tendrils all retract when this happens.

In the unlikely event that a PC isn't immediately grabbed, characters can fight the tendrils. The DM should use the statistics for the portion of the Dweller listed below. Once the Dark Dweller grabs a character, it uses its remaining tendrils to create a ropy wall to keep any other characters from entering the hole. Those wishing to break through must hack away the remaining hit points of that portion of the Dweller.

A character dragged underground soon finds himself in a dimly lit cavern after being pulled through narrow tunnels at unbelievable speeds. Although the character probably cannot

determine such things at this point, the cavern is almost 50 feet across and is 500 feet down the hole—likely to be below even the lowest surface of the plane. The cave feels warm and humid, with a fetid stench and a watery gurgling sound all around.

Immediately, the Dweller uses a powerful mental ability to determine the subject's alignment, outlook, and current goals. A successful saving throw vs. spells resists the intrusion, but the Dark Dweller continues to hold the character with a 25 Strength and attempts to mentally probe again.

Once equipped with knowledge about its subject, the Dark Dweller speaks telepathically. The character feels as though something slithers into his mind when he hears the mental voice. Its words and phrasing are extremely alien, but it communicates that it is not necessarily hostile, and that the character need not fear. If the Dweller detected that the character was not evil and did not mean it harm (and that he is incapable of inflicting true harm to it, which is certainly true), it offers him a bargain. It proposes to take the character and any companions of his choice anywhere in Maelost quickly and safely in exchange for the right to perform a cleansing ritual upon all it transports. The Dweller tells the character that it has made similar deals with creatures like him before. Although it won't elaborate, the dark of it is that the Hanim use the Dark Dweller to travel throughout their plane quickly without ever having to worry about doing much climbing.

When the Dark Dweller discovers an evil creature, it immediately returns the interloper to the surface. If the evil creature does not leave the vicinity immediately, the Dark Dweller attacks to kill.

The cleansing ritual is called the Scouring. All the Dark Dweller will tell the character(s) ahead of time is that it rids them of evil influences and contaminations that they most likely do not realize that they have. Actually a creature of goodness, the Dark Dweller sees impurities in all who come from other planes; the creature fears these flaws would contaminate Maelost in ways it is incapable of describing (and which most mortals are incapable of understanding). It implies, however, that such contamination resulted in the Taker of Life's very creation. The Dark Dweller despises the water creature, but refrains from speaking of it much.

The Dweller takes all characters who undergo the scouring into yet another cavern, better lit than the other. Visitors can see the Dark Dweller's ropy tendrils (for they compose almost its entire body) everywhere, surrounding strange, slime-covered organs. As the unyielding tendrils hold the subject still, great heat cuts through the humidity, accompanied by a blinding light. The heat and light burn the subject, searing away all hair (which never grows back) and clothing but not harming the flesh. The Scouring does not harm nonflammable substances or magical items in any way. If a backpack is burned away, tendrils from the Dweller reach out to grab unharmed contents so that they do not fall and break. The Dweller makes sure that these items stay with the character.

The Scouring does indeed burn away contamination and impurities. It cures diseases and dispels curses—even from cursed items (but does not affect artifacts). Any other affliction that the DM might determine to be a contamination of evil is also scoured away.

After the ritual is completed, the Dweller takes those it has scoured anywhere on the demiplane that they wish to go.

What's more, it continues to do so for as long as they live. All they need do is call to it from one of the holes leading down into its catacombs (all the holes shown on the map do).

The Dweller will not force a character to undergo the Scouring. If the cutter it's speaking to refuses the bargain, the Dweller returns him to the surface safely.

SINGLE PORTION OF THE DARK DWELLER: AC 4; MV 36; HD 10+3; hp 58; THACO 9; #AT 6; Dmg Nil or 1d6 (constriction); SA Successful hit can grasp opponent with 25 Strength, can use *ESP*, *know alignment*, *confusion*, *dispel magic*, *slow*, and *fear* at will, one per round; SD immune to heat and flame; SZ G (15' tendrils connected to a larger tendril which connects to the rest of the creature); ML fearless (20); Int genius (18); AL NG; XP 7,000.

Notes: This is only one portion of a creature that spans most of the plane of Maelost. Maelost is about 120 miles across, but the space warps back on itself—so does the Dark Dweller.

◆ THE PEOPLE OF MAELOST ◆

With the only dry land being the steep, rivulet-ridden ridges (apart from the occasional dry gulch too high to fill with water), not much space offers itself to support a civilization. Nevertheless, folks live in Maelost and have developed an odd, somber society.

Almost 1,000 people make their homes in the Hanim tent city called Aml, which floats on the water on barges in between two 1,000-foot ridges only a tenth that distance apart. Oil lamps light the narrow space where the city shelters the Hanim from the dangers of Maelost.

The Hanim probably arrived here from a prime world originally. Recording history has never been a priority for these people, however, so none of them remember their people's actual origins. In appearance and in effect they are normal humans, although their harsh environment certainly molded them toward greater than average Strength and Constitution.

Having undergone the Scouring ritual of the Dark Dweller, most of the Hanim have hairless bodies with smooth, muscular skin. They wear leather and hides, using insect carapaces to make armor and shields. Their weapons and tools come from bone and stone. Many Hanim carry torag poles made from bones wrapped in cured leather and decorated with feathers, chitin, and stones. These items possess some strange abilities that seem almost magical—a Hanim can alter the length from 5 feet to almost 10. In combat, they strike as +1 staves.

The Hanim excel in artistry and craftsmanship. Incredibly beautiful paintings cover their tents, inside and out. The nearby rocky ridges have been covered in carvings and statuary. Most Hanim art possesses more abstract than realistic qualities, but few artists on any plane anywhere have managed to capture beautiful shapes and colors in the way that they have.

Using tools and magic, the Hanim carved out ledges and shallow caves in the black stone ridges that rise up on either side of their city. On these ledges they keep the only creatures that they've managed to domesticate over the years—gigantic horseflies. The people of Aml keep a few dozen of these creatures. Warriors use them as mounts (the Dark Dweller reduces

the need for much transportation, but the flies are useful in hunting or warfare).

With little plant life and no wood, the Hanim do not use fire to cook their food (although they burn animal oils for light). Likewise, the Hanim city is made of hide tents erected on barges made of stretched leather over bone frames. These tent barges float on the water, a practice that will probably surprise most newcomers if they've seen how dangerous the water can be.

TYPICAL HANIM WARRIOR (Pl/♂ or ♀ human/F4) (1d12 or 1 per PC): AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; hp 26 each; THACO 17 (16 with pole); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (torag pole); SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (18); Int avg (9-10); AL N; XP 175 each.

THE WORMS

The ability to dwell safely on the water is related to the most unusual thing about the Hanim—their adaptation to become hosts for the valgoss. In a ceremony filled with drum beating, chanting, and strange-smelling smoke from specially prepared oil lamps, a Hanim allows a valgoss to burrow into him. Using the mouths on both ends of its body, the valgoss digs into the host's flesh until only the center of its body can be seen stretching from two holes.

Long ago, the Hanim learned that the valgoss were the key to the ecosystem of Maelost—the larger, more powerful slaiyiths respect and revere these tiny, wormlike creatures. Once a slaiyith realizes that a valgoss has recognized and joined with a host, the slaiyith respects and relates to the host as well.

The first effect gained from this relationship is that the Taker of Life will not attack or disturb one who is an ally of the slaiyith, for it respects the power of these creatures. The Hanim say the slaiyiths know the water's secret, and it fears them for that.

Furthermore, the slaiyiths can impart special magical powers to the valgoss, which then aids the host in various ways. On the other hand, the burrowing of each worm causes a loss of 1d3 hit points permanently and a loss of 1 point of Charisma permanently—these losses remain even if the valgoss is removed. The loss does not apply when dealing with the Hanim, however.

All valgoss remain in constant telepathic communication with each other. Through this psychic connection, the Hanim can transport their entire personalities into each other's bodies—switching minds, as it were. The Hanim take this to such an extreme that they no longer look upon a particular body as "theirs." Each new Hanim born is just adding to the pool of bodies the group can use. The Hanim exemplify the ultimate communal society.

Dealing with the Hanim becomes very difficult for outsiders, who identify individuals by their bodies (planars from Sigil often refer to a person as a "body"). A Hanim an outsider meets might not be the same individual the next time the visitor sees that particular body.

Of course, even on a more basic level, many outsiders feel revulsion for the Hanim and their joining with the valgoss. This harsh and distasteful practice provided the key to the Hanim survival, however. Planewalkers should at least be able to appreciate that, even if they want nothing to do with it.

THE HANIM AND THEIR WORLD

The Hanim are a darkly serious race. Relatively humorless, they focus their attention on survival. Most individuals show little in the way of emotion. A Hanim smile is as rare as mercy from the Lady of Pain herself. Curiously, though, they consider their art to be as important to their survival as hunting or defense and value it highly.

Most of these folk distrust outsiders, although if a newcomer can show that he's not of a rival tribe, he's got a better chance of relating to them. The Hanim are acquainted with planar travel—at least as a concept—so they can understand that a visitor might truly be from *far* away.

Nine different Hanim tribes live throughout the limited demiplane of Maelost—each a bitter rival of the next. Every tribe lives in its own city, and these differ little from Aml. Two, however, have tent cities built in dry gullies rather than on the water. All but one tribe has submitted to the Dark Dweller's scouring, and all of them use the valgoss so that the slaiyiths will recognize and deal with them. Almost all the tribes use giant flies as mounts, and the aerial combat fought on these flying steeds comprises most of the battles fought among these rival peoples.

Hanim hunt almost anything that lives on Maelost except for the valgoss and slaiyiths. Except for some roots, tubers, and fungus, their diet is entirely carnivorous.

Rather than gods or some distant, unknowable force, the Hanim worship the very plane where they live. Maelost, as dire and dangerous as it is, has provided a way for the Hanim to survive—and for that, they give it their gratitude and reverence. Priests of Maelost are not common among the Hanim, but those few who exist manage to tap into some sort of primal power source, for they receive spells that work. Religion for the Hanim is entirely informal and unstructured. They have no temples, no worship services, no doctrine, and no holy days—they simply pay homage to their world. With no time for the luxuries like formal worship, humor, emotion, or pleasure, the Hanim are as sober and dour a group of bashers as a body'd ever want to meet—yet a canny blood still recognizes and respects their tenacity, their stamina, their courage, and their will.

WORM LORD

A Hanim named Zophiel rules over Aml. Zophiel never transfers his personality to another body, probably because his is the most efficient for his purposes. Ten valgoss have joined with Zophiel's body, granting him a great many abilities. He's a



powerful wizard and priest, but generally unpleasant to be near, with all the valgoss hanging out of him, his weak and withered body (from all the lasting damage that the valgoss have inflicted), and the battered and broken *wings of flying* that he wears on his back. Many would describe him as a withered, diseased angel. Zophiel favors the self-proclaimed title of Lord of the Worms.

To further embody his title, Zophiel has created the following spells which he uses himself and has given to other casters among the Hanim. If the PCs spend enough time among these folk, perhaps they, too, can learn these spells and add them to their spellbooks (assuming that they have reached high enough levels for such magic).

BURROW 1st-Level Wizard Spell (Alteration)

Range: 0	Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 rd.	Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: The caster	Saving Throw: None

For one round, the caster of this spell is able to burrow through the earth at a movement rate of 1—that is to say, he can move 10 yards through the earth. The caster moves like a worm, squirming through the earth (getting very dirty in the process). The earthen path closes behind him as he moves, so no one can follow him.

The caster cannot move through solid or worked stone. The material component for this spell is a small spade.

WORMWORK 3rd-Level Wizard Spell (Conjuration/Summoning)

Range: 100 yds.	Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special	Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 1 10' cube/3 lvls.	Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell the caster can summon a horde of magical, voracious worms underground. These worms weaken earth and stone, causing cave-ins, stone walls to collapse, and so forth.

In 3d10 rounds, stone in the affected area is permanently reduced to the consistency of packed earth, and packed earth or natural soil is rendered to the state of loose, tilled earth (it takes 6d10 rounds for stone to be rendered to tilled soil). Upon completion of their work, the worms disperse, joining the natural ecology as best as they can. They pose no direct threat to any other life, eating nothing more than earth and rock.

The area of effect is not vast, but certainly enough to get through a stone wall or to collapse a small cave. The material component of this spell is a living worm.

WORMTONGUE 5th Level Wizard Spell (Alteration)

Range: 50 yds.	Components: V, S
Duration: 1 rd./level	Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: 1 creature	Saving Throw: Neg.

This offensive spell functions much like a curse, transforming the recipient's tongue into a long worm with a vicious mouth at its end. The affected victim cannot speak while his tongue is so transformed. Immediately upon transformation, the worm pushes itself out of the victim's mouth and begins attacking him. The worm has a THACO of 8, and inflicts 1d4

points damage per bite. The worm has the recipient's Armor Class and 12 hit points; the recipient of the spell suffers all damage inflicted upon the wormtongue. If the worm is slain by violence, the victim loses the ability to speak for 3d4 days. If the wormtongue is *dispelled* or the damage inflicted upon it is magical, the long-term loss of speech does not occur.

SUMMON WORMS 2nd-Level Priest spell (Conjuration/Summoning)

Sphere: Animal, Summoning	
Range: 30 yds.	Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent	Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: 10' square	Saving Throw: Special

Upon casting this spell, the priest calls forth a number of normal worms that come up from the earth below and cover an area 10 feet square. The worms remain until they die and desiccate in the sun (if outside), starve, or someone burns/washes/sweeps them away.

Aside from just being repulsive, the worm-covered ground becomes very slippery. Anyone entering the area or in the area of effect when the spell is cast must attempt a saving throw vs. spell. Those who make successful saving throws manage to keep to their feet, but any time another move is made in the area, another saving throw is required. Failure results in a fall, and a successful saving throw (which can be attempted but once a round) is required to stand up again.

The worms do not move appreciably, nor do they obey the caster in any way. The material component for the spell is a small handful of fresh soil.

CURSE OF THE WORMS 5th-Level Priest Spell (Conjuration/Summoning)

Sphere: Animal, Summoning	
Range: 30 yds. +1 yd./level	Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special	Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 creature	Saving Throw: Special

A horrid variation of *slay living* (the reverse of *raise dead*), this spell summons a number of worms into the body of a victim, which then begin to squirm out of every orifice. The victim must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic or die from multiple hemorrhages and suffocation in 1d4 rounds. The worms continue to issue forth during this time and for 1d6 rounds afterward. The victim cannot use spells, magical items, or mental abilities while the worms erupt, but can move, speak, and attack normally. The worms are real in every sense and remain even after the victim is dead. A *remove curse* or *dispel evil* spell or successful *dispel magic* spell cast before the victim dies ends the effect and saves the victim's life, but the victim still suffers damage as noted below.

Those who successfully make saving throws still suffer 2d8 points of damage from hemorrhaging and choking, and a small number of worms briefly issue forth from the victim's body.

The material component is a pinch of dust taken from a desiccated worm.

Zophiel dislikes outsiders of any kind. He has commanded that if ever any come to his people that they be brought before

him. He never leaves the floating city, and can usually be found in his abode—the central and largest tent in the city. If some newcomers approach him seeking aid, advice, information, or anything else, he'll most likely refuse at first, demanding proof that they are not actually part of one of the rival tribes. This, however, isn't hard to prove if it's true. Any Hanim can recognize non-Hanim mannerisms (such as humor, overt generosity, unnecessary cruelty, showing signs of weakness, ignorance of Maelost, or the like) fairly quickly.

Still, *nothing in Maelost is free*. Zophiel demands something worthwhile as payment for whatever the newcomers might ask. No Hanim has any interest in money, jewels, or other conventional sorts of valuables. Useful magical items or well-crafted, useful normal items (particularly those made of wood) have value to Zophiel (and his people as well), but nothing on Maelost has more value than action.

Zophiel is likely to ask the newcomers to perform some deed for the good of the city. This task could be any or all of the following:

- ✦ Destroy or chase off the clutch of sinisters that have taken up in a small cave near the village. They've been not only attacking Hanim but they are a major competitor for food.
- ✦ Go to a nearby hostile Hanim tribe/city to gather information. Zophiel is convinced that an attack is coming soon, and he wants to find out the details (when, how many warriors, and so on). He's right, and the attack is coming soon. Information provided by the PCs would be extremely valuable to Aml.
- ✦ Not long ago, a group of Hanim warriors fought and killed a death kiss beholder. Unfortunately, they were unable to bring back its carcass—they were too few and too hurt by the end of the battle. Zophiel sends the newcomers off into the darkness of Maelost (with some basic directions) to retrieve the body since it has some properties valuable in making curatives and medicines. Unfortunately, the body of the creature fell down a deep crevice when it died and by this time has probably attracted a lot of scavengers—insects (including giant insects), ravens, and the like.

Canny bloods won't trust Zophiel. Although the Hanim, as a whole, are neither good nor evil, their leader has become a twisted, selfish creature with no regard for others—in fact, he has a bit of a sadistic streak. He'd be just as eager to see those he sends a task fail as succeed, sending out warriors to retrieve their bodies and equipment if they fail miserably. His magical power is probably too great for the PCs to confront him directly, although he is physically very weak.

ZOPHIEL (Pl/♂ Human/W9, C9): AC 10; MV 18 (valgoss enhanced); hp 7, THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA All 10 valgoss abilities (see page 55); MR 10%; SZ M (5' 5" tall); ML unsteady (5); AL NE; XP 2,000.

S 11, D 12, C 10, I 17, W 15, Ch 4 (14 to Hanim)

Special equipment: *wand of negation* (21 charges), *folding boat*, *wings of flying* (damaged and no longer functional).

Personality: Twisted, sadistic, selfish

Priest Spells (6/5/3/2/1): 1st—*bless*, *cure light wounds* (×2), *faerie fire*, *light*, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*augury*, *barkskin*, *dust devil*, *hold person*, *summon worms*; 3rd—*continual light*, *dispel magic*, *pyrotechnics*; 4th—*cure serious wounds*, *neutralize poison*; 5th—*curse of the worms*

Wizard Spells (4/3/3/2/1): 1st—*burrow*, *charm person*, *sleep*, *spook*; 2nd—*blindness*, *blur*, *summon swarm*; 3rd—*fly*, *flame arrow**, *wormwork*; 4th—*ice storm*, *stoneskin*; 5th—*wormtongue*

* Spell always cast at maximum efficiency

PLAYER CHARACTERS IN AML

Once the PCs have secured their place in Aml by winning the Hanim's trust or performing some deed for the Lord of the Worms, they can go about performing important tasks such as finding out the local chant (such as the location of portals leading off the plane) or appropriating the things they need to survive—food, potable water, and possibly valgoss worms.

Once a body decides to undertake the ritual to become a host for a valgoss, he must be prepared for the task. Only a fully healthy subject can partake of the ritual—all wounds must be healed and the character must be free of diseases and bodily afflictions. Next, amid a long and arduous ceremony, the Hanim lower the host-to-be into the water from the side of one of the tent-barges. All the while, other Hanim chant and bang on hide drums (the Taker of Life never disturbs the ritual).

While in the water, a valgoss chooses the host and burrows into his flesh—two bites from the creature inflicting 1d2 points damage each (the host should suffer at least 3 points of damage). Although these wounds can heal, 1d3 points of the damage is permanent. Further, the presence of the worm and the scars that it makes reduce the host's Charisma score by 1. Once in place, the valgoss doesn't move (much), and it feeds on the host's own nutrients—valgoss hosts find that they need to eat more than ever to nourish their bodies since they are feeding the worm as well. Hosts are immediately protected from the Taker of Life—it will not attack them due to its fear of the slaiyiths and its knowledge regarding the valgoss/slaiyith relationship. Although the Hanim telepathic ability to switch bodies is not automatic (instead it must be chosen as a granted power from the slaiyiths—see below), the Hanim of the tribe that helps the character with the ritual accepts him as a member of their own tribe.

Once a valgoss host finishes with the ritual, he might decide to complete the process, so to speak, and seek the full powers that come with the valgoss. To do so, he must travel to a special site and find an artifact called the Obelisk. Here, the master slaiyiths—the most ancient and powerful members of their race—can bestow abilities and powers upon a valgoss (and its host). The Hanim instruct the willing character in what abilities the master slaiyiths can grant (see below), and caution them that *most of those special powers only work here on Maelost—except one* (see page 55).

The Hanim caution the new host that should the valgoss ever die or leave the character, all abilities are gone—but the damage done remains. A valgoss leaves or dies if the host dies. Additionally, though, the valgoss gives up on the host if

he succumbs to any sort of rotting disease, is ever reduced to less than 0 hit points from wounds (even if the character lives), or if the character ever sustains more than 50 points of damage in one round. Nothing else can make the worm leave—even if the host wishes it. In all respects, the valgoss should be treated as part of the host's own body. It cannot be targeted individually for attacks or spells. That which affects one, affects the other.

◆ MASTER SLAIYI+HS ◆

Any cutter who wants to spend time in Maelost can face the challenging process of accepting a valgoss. The accepted valgoss can confer additional abilities to its host—if the host has the courage to face the master slaiyiths and request that they grant him that power.

The master slaiyiths dwell near a strange artifact called simply the Obelisk. It lies many miles away from the Hanim city of Aml. Player characters wishing to go to the Obelisk have three options for getting there—using the Dark Dweller (if they've been scoured), riding the giant flies (if they've befriended the Hanim), or overland. The first method takes only a few minutes. The second takes over an hour. The last is an exhausting ordeal of many days.

THE OBELISK

Jutting 30 feet out of the water, constructed out of a reddish stone that contrasts starkly with the black cliffs rising above and around it, the Obelisk of the slaiyiths stands as a testament to their power. The Hanim theorize that once, long ago, the slaiyiths were an entirely different sort of race altogether, and offer the obelisk as proof. Certainly the slaiyiths of today have neither the capability nor the inclination to create such a monument. One thing else is certain—the stone from which the obelisk was formed can be found nowhere else on Maelost.

Serpentine runes cover each side of the obelisk, but even spells like *comprehend languages* cannot decipher them. In truth, the runes are so old that they no longer have meaning.

The water around the base of the obelisk is 40 feet deep (so the entire structure is about 70 feet tall). Here, the master slaiyiths make their lairs. These five beings are incredibly old, and their bodies bear slick, knobby crusts that make them look their age. Each of them possesses vast power, even beyond that of the other slaiyiths.

If a valgoss host touches the Obelisk, the artifact grants him the power to breathe underwater while he remains in contact with it. This allows a character to approach the master slaiyiths with a petition to be granted power.



Those with requests submerge themselves into the black water, but quickly realize that under the surface the obelisk gives a reddish glow that allows them to see—albeit in an unnerving reddish black environment. The encrusted slaiyiths approach the supplicant from all directions and speak mentally through the valgoss, asking the host a barrage of confusing and

disturbing questions. In the furor of these mental questions, the host must attempt a saving throw vs. paralyzation. Those successful in the saving throw fall unconscious. Those remaining conscious lose a point of Wisdom and then must make another saving throw, with success indicating that they blissfully accept the safety of unconsciousness. A failure again means that the character loses a point of Wisdom. This continues until the character falls unconscious or loses all Wisdom. Those reaching 0 Wisdom have gone insane from the mind-shaking barrage of mental probes and questions. If a character loses Wisdom, but not all of it, it returns at a rate of one point a day.

When unconscious characters regain consciousness, they find themselves floating face up in the black water. Although they cannot remember asking the slaiyiths for the power that they wished to be granted, they find themselves (or, more correctly, the valgoss) imbued with the ability they sought.

The slaiyiths can give the valgoss within a host (and therefore the host) a variety of powers. All of them, however, only function on the Maelost (except for one that has a limited effect on other planes). The granted powers available include:

- ◆ Host can transmit personality to other hosts' bodies
- ◆ +1 to Strength score
- ◆ +1 to Constitution score
- ◆ +1 to Dexterity score
- ◆ +50% increase in movement rate
- ◆ +50% increase to spellcasting range
- ◆ +50% increase to spellcasting duration
- ◆ +50% increase to spellcasting damage
- ◆ 10% magic resistance
- ◆ One spell (chosen by host) always cast at maximum efficiency*

*Off Maelost, the power allows the caster to cast the chosen spell normally regardless of planar restrictions, alterations, limitations or modifications (except planar absolutes, see page 105 in the *Planewalker's Handbook*). Even a cleric who loses spellcasting levels due to being many planes removed from his power can still cast the chosen spell normally, as though he had lost nothing. The spell is not cast at maximum efficiency.

TO SHOW MY WORTH—
MY VALUE AS A LIVING THING—
ACCEPT ME AS A HOST.
OH HOLIES! OF CREATURES,
ALONE I AM NOTHING.
BUT WITH YOUR HELP
I CAN ACCEPT MY TRUE PLACE
AMONG THE WARRIORS
OF MAELOST...
—A PORTION OF WHAT THE
SUPPLICANT MUST RECITE
IN THE RITUAL TO BECOME
A VALGOSS HOST

Each valgoss can receive one power. Hosts wishing to gain more than one ability must take on more of the worms, each valgoss requiring a separate ritual and a separate trip to the obelisk.

All Hanim, not surprisingly, come to the master slaiyiths and ask for the personality shifting ability before any others. Conversely, the slaiyith will not confirm this power to non-Hanim, because of Hanim petitions to keep this ability exclusive (no outsider personalities contaminating their consciousness network).

Because only one power functions off Maelost, and that ability affects only spellcasters, only the wizards and clerics (possibly rangers, paladins, and bards) really stand to gain any long-term benefit from the valgoss process and the subsequent slaiyith petition. Ironically, they are the characters that probably can endure the whole ordeal the least.

GENERAL ADVENTURING ◆ NOTES ◆

If at any point the DM wishes the PCs to encounter other living things as they cross the surface of Maelost, he can choose from the following list (or roll 1d20 to determine randomly, checking every hour with a 1-in-6 chance of an encounter).

NEAR THE WATER

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1-4 | fly swarm |
| 5-8 | large beetles (as fire beetles without the fire) |
| 9-11 | giant centipedes |
| 12-13 | leech swarm |
| 14 | green slimes |
| 15 | Hanim hunters |
| 16-17 | Taker of Life water creation |
| 18 | giant leeches |
| 19 | valgoss |
| 20 | slaiyith |

HIGH ON THE RIDGES

- | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 1-4 | fly swarm |
| 5-7 | ravens |
| 8-9 | giant centipedes |
| 10-11 | brain moles |
| 12-13 | land urchins |
| 14 | entrance to the Dark Dweller's domain |
| 15 | azmyth bats |
| 16 | sinister bats |
| 17 | Hanim hunters |
| 18 | Hanim hunters on giant flies |
| 19 | black pudding |
| 20 | death kiss beholder |

FLY SWARM (insect swarm—10d10×5 insects): AC 8; MV 3, Fl 18 (A); HD 1 hp per 20 insects; THACO N/A; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA all within swarm have their vision reduced to 2d4 feet, and

have a 90% chance of suffering 1 point of damage each round; SW Fire or smoke scatters the swarm; SZ T (20 insects per square foot); ML unsteady (6); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 100 if entire swarm is killed.

LARGE BEETLES (1d4): AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 7 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SZ S (2' long); ML steady (12); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 35 each.

GIANT CENTIPEDES (1d12): AC 9; MV 15; HD 2 hp each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg Nil; SA Poisonous bite, but victims gain +4 to saving throw; SZ T (1' long); ML unsteady (7); Int non (0); AL N; XP 35 each.

LEECH SWARM: AC 10; MV Sw 1; HD N/A; hp N/A; THACO N/A; #AT 1; Dmg Special; SA Anyone within the swarm suffers 1d10 points of damage from blood drain each round; SW Area of effect attacks inflicting 10 or more points of damage disperse the swarm; SZ L (10' wide); ML unsteady (5); Int non (0); AL N; XP 15.

Notes: This encounter only occurs if a character is actually in the water.

GREEN SLIMES (1d6): AC 9; MV 0; HD 2; hp 10 each; THACO NA; #AT 0; Dmg Nil; SA Attaches to flesh and transforms victim to green slime in 1d4 rounds, eats through wood in one hour, metal in 3 rounds; SD Immune to attacks and all spells except *cure disease* (which kills it), cold, and fire; SW can be scraped away, cut off, burned or frozen; SZ S (2'-4' long); ML average (10); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

Notes: The slime grows on the surface of the water or nearby rocks. Careful characters can avoid it fairly easily.

HANIM HUNTERS (Pl/♂ or ♀ human/F4) (1d12 or 1 per PC): AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; hp 26 each; THACO 17 (16 with pole); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (torag pole); SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (18); Int avg (9-10); AL N; XP 175 each.

GIANT LEECHES (2d4): AC 9; MV 3, Sw 3; HD 3; hp 12 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA Automatically drains blood for 4 points of damage per round—victims have only 1% chance to detect blood loss until they lose over 50% of total hit points if attack occurs in the water, bite has a 50% chance of transmitting a disease that proves fatal in 1d4+1 weeks unless cured; SZ S (3' long); ML unsteady (7); Int non (0); AL N; XP 175 each.

RAVENS (4d8): AC 7; MV 1, Fl 36 (B); HD 1-2 hp each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SZ T (1' long); ML average (8-10); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 15 each.

Notes: These birds are more aggressive than normal ravens, but still are only hostile to wounded characters that can possibly be pecked to death quickly.

BRAIN MOLES (1d3): AC 9; MV 1, Br 3; HD 1 hp each; THACO Nil; #AT Nil; Dmg Nil; SA psionics; SZ S (2" long); ML steady (12); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 35 each.

Psionics Summary: Level 6; Dis/Sci/Dev 2/1/4; Attack/Defense MT/M-; Score 12; PSPs 100; Sciences and Devotions: Telepathy—mind link, mindwipe, contact, mind

thrust; Metapsionics—psychic drain (no cost) psionic sense; Spell-like power replacement*: *feeblemind*, *confusion* (all 3×/day), maximum range 30 feet.

* for campaigns that don't use the optional psionics rules.

LAND URCHINS (1d2): AC 3; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 18 each; THACO 17; #AT 6; Dmg 1d2 (×6) (spines); SA Can fire spines 180 yards (as a light crossbow), poison paralyzes foes for six turns; SZ S (3' long); ML steady (11); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 420 each.

AZMYTH BATS (1d4): AC 2; MV 3, Fl 24 (A); HD 2; hp 10 each; THACO 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1/1d2 (bite/tail stab); SA *know alignment* 3×/day, *shocking grasp* (Dmg 1d8+6) 2×/day; SD *Invisibility* (for up to 6 rounds) and *silence 15-foot radius* (centered on the bat) 1×/day each; MR 40%; SZ S (3' long); ML elite (14); Int high (13-14); AL CN; XP 650 each.

SINISTER BATS (1d6): AC 3; MV 2, Fl 21 (A); HD 4+4; hp 24 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SA *hold monster* (1×/day); SD Special magical barrier repels all missiles, including missile-like spells; MR 70%; SZ L (9' long); ML Champion (15-16); Int avg to exc (8-16); AL LE; XP 2,000 each.

GIANT FLY MOUNTS (1d4): AC 5; MV 6, Fl 27 (A); HD 6; hp 32 each; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8 (bite); SA attaches to opponent after successful bite attack, automatically inflicting bite damage each round; SZ L (8' long); ML average (9); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 270 each.

BLACK PUDDING: AC 6; MV 6; HD 10; hp 47; THACO 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8 (corrosive attack); SA dissolves wood, metal, and flesh; SD immune to acid, cold, and poison, lighting and blows from weapons break the creature in two; SZ M (5' diameter); ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 2,000.

Notes: Touch dissolves a 2-inch thickness of wood, cloth, or leather in one round. Chain mail dissolves in one round, plate mail in two rounds. Magical items last one extra round per plus. Weapons striking the pudding must save vs. acid or be destroyed.

A blow from a weapon or a strike from a bolt of lightning divides the creature in two, each with the same hit dice, THACO and damage rating, but only half the original creature's hit points (round up).

DEATH KISS BEHOLDER: AC 4/6/8; MV Fl 9 (B); HD 76+1d8 hp; hp 80; THACO 11; #AT 10; Dmg 1d8 (x10) (bite); SA tentacles can stretch up to 20' to attack, attached, they drain blood (Dmg 2 points/round); SD regeneration; SZ H (10' diameter); ML fanatic (17); Int avg (10); AL NE; XP 8,000.

Notes: The AC of the death kiss depends on the body portion: body—4 (80 hp), eye—8 (6 hp), tentacle stalk—2 (6 hp), tentacle mouth—4. An attached tentacle stalk can be removed with a bend bars/lift gates roll, inflicting 1d6 points of damage on the victim. If an attached tentacle is damaged but not destroyed, it automatically drains hit points from its victim to raise it back up to 6 hit points. Drained hit points become electrical charges. One electrical charge can restore 1 hit point to all tentacles, the eye and body. A severed tentacle releases its charges as electrical damage 1 hit point per charge to all touching it.

Creatures of Maelost are usually black in color, or rarely a sickly pink or pale white. Even such standard hazards like green slime or giant centipedes on Maelost are black, rendering them nearly invisible in the eternal night of the plane.

Many of the encounters listed above present little danger to traveling PCs. For example, an encounter with a brain mole garners significance only if psionic characters are present in the group of PCs. If not, then the DM can choose another or simply say that the group sees some strange-looking moles. Some encounters, such as the death kiss beholder, are very dangerous. Since these are just other things that the planewalkers come across and not a part of the actual goal, the DM shouldn't worry too much about equating the challenge of the monster to the level of the PCs—really, these encounters are presented here more to give the players a good feel for the nature of Maelost. It is a harsh (and creepy), alien place with strange inhabitants and a strange ecosystem.

One of the major challenges facing those making their way across the terrain of Maelost is the darkness. Hanim carry crude oil lamps, but most of the time just make their way through the dark when they leave their cities—light chases away prey and attracts predators.

The average temperature on the plane is cool, but not cold—about 60 degrees Fahrenheit. While traveling throughout Maelost, a body's quick to note that it rains a great deal. An average "day" (with no sun or moon, terms like day and night lose real relevance) consists of about eight hours of drizzle, two hours of heavy rain, and fourteen hours of no rain—but with a good chance of a storm complete with pale heat lightning and high winds that may last one to two hours. The rain that falls on Maelost is dark and bitter-tasting, but safe to drink. Once it becomes a part of the Taker of Life, however, the safety of the water becomes far more questionable. The Hanim always catch rain water to drink—partaking of the Taker of Life is strictly taboo (although there are no short-term effects, the DM should discourage player characters from drinking the water from that evil being).

Foraging for food presents many difficulties. As stated earlier, the diet of the Hanim is mostly meat. A few of scarce bits of fungi and slime are edible, but only a learned eye can determine these—the same can be said for finding the safe tubers and grubs that are scattered in the infertile soil of the ridge ledges.

◆ LEAVING MAELOST ◆

When the PCs decide to leave the demiplane, they can use either the portal to Limbo or the doorway back to the Infinite Staircase. They may find the reactions of those they encounter off the plane to be extremely unfavorable if they've accepted the valgoss worms. Their appearance, protruding from a character's flesh is, to say the least, disconcerting.

If the PCs have any of the valgoss-based abilities that function in Maelost only, the powers will reactivate should they ever return, assuming that they still host the worms.



Your heart beats like a drum. You feel the rhythms deep within your soul, pounding yet guiding you along. Where do they take you?

They take you here.

Within us all, the drumbeat of chaos never stops. Its ever-changing beat draws you nearer and nearer to the heart of chaos itself.

Limbo,

Feel the rhythm.

TALE 4: IN DISARRAY

◆ OVERVIEW ◆

In this adventure, the player characters travel to the chaotic plane of Limbo, where they discover that the Spawning Stone of the slaadi has fallen victim to the Iron Shadow. Navigating through the chaotic soup of the plane using the *Dream Diver*, a strange craft obtained from a

dao slaver, they must cope with the obviously contentious slaadi and make their way to the

Temple of Change. There,

the PCs gain the secret to fighting the Iron

Shadow from Cahm'Fel, a strange githzerai hermit. To reach Cahm'Fel, however, they must pass through the defenses of the Temple, including a dangerous, ever-changing maze.

The cure that Cahm'Fel possesses can dispel the Iron Shadow from Limbo. With the help of the book called *Ever-changing Order* and the rilmani Terrmanath (see Tale 7) or the writer/scholar Ghuntomas of Thorn (see Tale 5), it can banish the Shadow wherever it falls.

This adventure works best with PCs of levels 5 to 6. More powerful characters could possess enough

brawn to contend with the slaadi in combat, while less mighty PCs may have to flee from most of the

foes presented here (including the dao, which means that they never gain possession of the *Dream Diver*).

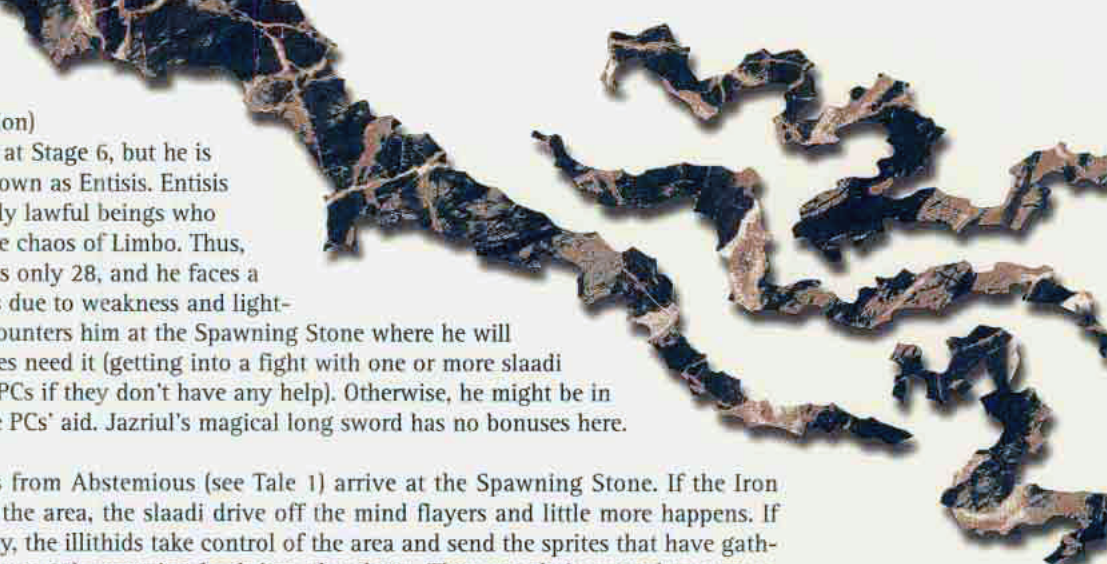
THIS MALAISE
WHICH HAS COME OVER US—
IT KEEPS THEM
FROM MAKING
AND IT KEEPS ME FROM
DOING ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK
THAT'S A BAD THING.

—TORPELLIN OF THE
GOLDEN SPIRES

◆ ADVENTURE NOTES ◆

◆ Kytons kill Cahm'Fel after Stage 5. When the githzerai dies, the following changes occur to the Temple of Change: Cahm'Fel's body lies in his laboratory, with smashed equipment and machinery all around him—although much of the machinery in the room continues to function in its wild, uncontrollable fashion. His body bears numerous cuts and rends. Cahm'Fel's room and the library have been ransacked, and the altar in the Sanctuary of Variation lies in ruin (but the stone still possesses its properties), a few bits of chain lie in the rubble. A single kyton (see Tale 8 for statistics) remains in the Temple, searching the guest quarters. He's been changed by the altar in the Sanctuary, so that he stands eight feet tall and his chains have become bright red. He inflicts +1 damage due to increased Strength.

The kytons now have the vial of Navimas, and they've taken it back to Panos Qytel (see Tale 8). The PCs can discover this through interrogation (or possibly mental coercion or trickery) of the kyton in the Temple of Change or by consulting the oracle of Blurophil on the Plane of Air (see Tale 5). Some PCs may have their own means of divining the location of the Navimas (crystal balls, commune spells, or the like).



♦ Jazriul, the hound archon investigator (see Introduction) makes an appearance here at Stage 6, but he is afflicted with a malady known as Entisis. Entisis sometimes affects extremely lawful beings who spend too much time in the chaos of Limbo. Thus, his current hit point total is only 28, and he faces a -1 penalty on all dice rolls due to weakness and light-headedness. The party encounters him at the Spawning Stone where he will attempt to help if the heroes need it (getting into a fight with one or more slaadi could prove deadly to the PCs if they don't have any help). Otherwise, he might be in need himself, requiring the PCs' aid. Jazriul's magical long sword has no bonuses here.

♦ After Stage 6, six illithids from Abstemious (see Tale 1) arrive at the Spawning Stone. If the Iron Shadow no longer affects the area, the slaadi drive off the mind flayers and little more happens. If the Shadow still holds sway, the illithids take control of the area and send the sprites that have gathered near the stone (see page 65) retreating back into the chaos. They use their mental powers to dominate the melancholy slaadi into tearing the stone apart. The mind flayers sense the inherent power within the stone itself, and they want to take some of it back with them. The process will take weeks, however.

PCs may not be able to overcome the mind flayers in combat, but dispelling the Iron Shadow brings a multitude of angry slaadi down upon the illithids' tentacled heads.

♦ If any of the PCs gained valgoss worms from Maelost in Tale 3, the hosts learn that the creatures have an unexpected effect on slaadi. Valgoss possess some quality that makes them appear threatening to slaadi. Whenever the host meets a slaad, there is a 50% chance that the slaad respects and submits to the host. The rest of the time, the slaadi reacts with hostility and rage, seeking to destroy the host before the host can destroy it.

Slaadi affected by the Iron Shadow are only 25% likely to react with violence.

♦ Before Stage 6, the formian queen, Hvix'mnac (see Tale 2), wanders the plane of Limbo. Lost within the chaotic morass of the plane as well as the muddled haze of her own temporary insanity, she could conceivably turn up at any point on the plane. If found in Limbo, she cannot communicate intelligibly, instead muttering nothing but empty threats against those who destroyed her city. Only a *restoration* spell can bring her out of her insane state at this point in the adventure (she gets better by Stage 6 and leaves Limbo to go to the Astral Plane).

HVIX'MNAC, FORMIAN QUEEN: AC 7; MV 9; HD 9+9; hp 48; THACO 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (bite) or by weapon; MR 20%; SZ L (10' tall); ML fearless (20); Int supra (20); AL LN; XP 5,000.

♦ If Hannock Ringfinger (see Tale 2) accompanies the PCs and the PCs encounter queen Hvix'mnac, he will insist that the heroes drop whatever they are doing to bring the queen back to Arcadia where she can be restored to mental health (presumably), and where she's needed. Likewise, if Hannock learns that the Iron Shadow is responsible for the conditions in the formian city of Klictrik and then learns of the Navimas "cure," he insists that the cure be used to help his friends the formians. Of course, the Navimas won't help the situation on Arcadia without the knowledge found in *Ever-changing Order* (see Tale 7), but Hannock doesn't know that.

♦ If the PCs arrive in Limbo knowing that they should try to find Cahm'Fel (learning this most likely from the kytons in Tale 8), the DM can use the adventure as written, assuming that Cahm'Fel is alive (that is, it's before Stage 5), skipping the plea from Torpellin. Torpellin simply becomes the holder of important information (how to find Cahm'Fel) rather than the hook to get the PCs involved.

♦ The book *Ever-changing Order* (see Tale 7) does *not* contain any specifics about Navimas and certainly nothing about Cahm'Fel or the Temple of Change. Even if the PCs have the tome with them, it won't help in the direct course of this Tale. Cahm'Fel, however, would be very interested in the book. Only leatherheaded PCs will trade it to him—but if they do, it simply means that they'll have to return to Limbo to get it back. If the PCs give *Ever-changing Order* to Cahm'Fel and then the githzerai is killed by the kytons, the DM should assume that the book and the Navimas wind up in the hands of Quimath in Panos Qytel (see Tale 8).

PLANAR MAGIC—LIMBO

On the chaotic plane of Limbo, spell results can be very unpredictable. Casting spells requires extra control—an Intelligence check must be rolled to successfully cast a spell. Failed rolls indicate failure and the loss of the spell.

Further, all spells have a 1-in-20 chance to cause a wild surge as described in the *Tome of Magic* for wild magic if the Intelligence check fails (that is to say, if the caster rolls a 20 on the check, the surge occurs).

Other spells are altered according to school:

ALTERATION: The chaos of Limbo often reshapes the effects of these spells. Roll percentile dice, add the level of the spell, subtract the caster's level, and consult the following:

≤20	No special effect
21-40	Slightly modified in appearance
41-60	Slightly modified in appearance and property
61-80	Moderately modified in appearance and property
80+	Highly modified appearance and property

The DM dictates the exact results based on these guidelines. Appearance is just the way the spell effect looks. Property is how it works. A *light* spell slightly modified in appearance might be tinted a strange color, while a *stone to flesh* spell moderately modified in appearance and property of a might change the stone to cactus instead.

DIVINATION: In addition to the Intelligence check required for all spells, if the caster fails a saving throw vs. paralysis when casting a divination spell, the plane garbles the information and renders it incomprehensible.

ILLUSIONS: A 10% chance exists that whatever illusion is created, it takes on the chaos stuff around it and becomes real.

ELEMENTAL: Because Limbo is filled with examples of raw elements, elemental spells successfully cast here double in duration and area of effect. Spells of instantaneous duration last 1d6 rounds and single target spells take on a radius of 1d10 feet.

WILD MAGIC: It'll come as no surprise that chaos magic is changed in Limbo. When a spell is cast and the caster rolls on the level variation chart, two rolls are made and the more extreme is used. Further, if either indicates a wild surge, it occurs.

♦ Ghuntomas of Thorn (see Tale 5) and Cahm'Fel, should they somehow meet, would become fast friends, influencing Cahm'Fel to react well to the human's friends too—which may help the PCs if they've made the old man their ally.

♦ The party can banish the Iron Shadow from Limbo by feeding a drop of Navimas to a true slaad, see page 71 for details.

USING THE ADVENTURE INDEPENDENTLY: DMs may find that using this adventure on its own is very simple, as the main "problem" is the Iron Shadow, and the end of the adventure presents the PCs with a potential solution. To get the PCs involved, a chaotic faction (like the Xaositects or the Sensates) presents them with an offer of employment. The mission consists of a trip to Limbo to investigate what malady has overcome so many of the slaadi and to attempt to solve the problem. The hiring group maintains an alliance with the slaadi (as much as one can be united with such a chaotic force), and the slaadi problem becomes a serious drawback for them. Thus, they are willing to negotiate a fairly attractive offer for the PCs to become involved.

ARRIVAL

♦ IN THE MAELSTROM ♦

This Tale begins as the PCs find the doorway on the Infinite Staircase that leads to this particular part of Limbo, the plane of ultimate chaos. The stairs that lead to the door appear ill-cared for and haphazardly constructed, although in reality they're perfectly sturdy. The landing is a simple, unremarkable 10-foot-square platform, although the door itself might appear odd; it's metallic, but observant characters notice varied colors swirling through the door like an everchanging kaleidoscope.

Characters passing through the doorway enter the plane of Limbo. Specifically, into a building that was once part of the Outlands gate-town of Xaos—not the current town of Xaos, but a burg by the same name that long ago slipped into Limbo itself and was lost in the maelstrom. This particular building, through the odd whims of chance, has maintained most of its integrity but has long since separated from the rest of the city (if any of it still exists in any recognizable form). Thus, if a character opens the tiny building's door or gazes through one of the two windows, she sees that the building incongruously floats alone in the maelstrom of Limbo.

Constantly changing chunks of matter, swirling eddies of energy, appearing and disappearing pockets of air, water, solids, or fire—these compose the reality storm of Limbo. In any given moment, a swirling mass of sand-choked water becomes a solid mass of nickel and iron. The next moment, the mass dissolves, becoming a brilliant and searing light, which in turn becomes a whirlpool of molten gold. Nothing ever stays the same on Limbo—matter and energy have no permanent structures.

The characters remain free to stay in this tiny building for as long as they wish. Unless they plan to stay longer than two weeks, they don't have to worry about the chaos of Limbo destroying the structure of the building. After that time, the

building begins to slowly come apart, and in 1d3 days the plane subsumes the structure. Of course, if the player characters do something about the Iron Shadow in that time, this process may halt, because one thing keeping the building together is the presence of the link to the Infinite Staircase. With the Iron Shadow gone, the link will remain intact.

Leaving the building thrusts a character into Limbo, where the traveler must deal with the strange laws of the plane. Characters must take special steps to survive and navigate in the swirling, everchanging chaos.

NAVIGATING ♦ LIMBO ♦

Most experienced planewalkers know that leaping unprepared into the chaotic soup of Limbo usually results in grave danger if not death. First, a body begins to suffocate—it's like being underwater. *Water breathing* and similar spells take care of this. Further, as the chaos of the plane erodes away at her physical form, the poor sod suffers 1d6 points of damage per round.

To survive in Limbo, one's got to impose a little order on the chaos and shape the metaphysically malleable stuff of the plane into something safe to breathe and stand on. A successful Intelligence check allows a body to shape the chaos in this way, and thus protecting herself and those around her from the suffocation and damaging effects.

The amount of Limbo controlled depends on the controller's Intelligence score.

ATTRIBUTE RATING	RADIUS OF TERRAIN
0	none
1-4	10 feet per attribute point
5-10	10 yards per attribute point
11-18	100 yards per attribute point
19+	1 mile per attribute point



HANNIBAL/98

Someone maintaining a safe environment cannot cast spells, make attacks, use proficiencies, or much else due to the intense concentration required. She can't do anything beyond walking and talking. 'Course, in a plane as chaotic as Limbo, even in "safe" environments, a little chaos happens. Often, a body's possessions become altered—sometimes in a minor way such as a change of color or shape, and sometimes in a major way such as composition or even existence. Each time a character attempts to use an often disregarded item (not the major weapon or something that the PC thinks about a lot), she must make a Wisdom check. Failure means that the item is changed according to the DM's whim.

The githzerai practice the art of shaping chaos with great effect (many of them can accomplish the feat without conscious thought). Although not native to Limbo, the githzerai—gaunt, fiercely individualistic humanoids—have dwelled in chaos for untold ages. The true natives of Limbo (or at least one race of them) are the slaadi. Frog-like beings of great power and chaotic temperament, a slaad does not shape chaos—it bathes within it.

◆ THE DREAM DIVER ◆

Not long after leaving the safety of the building, but after they've become acquainted with the strange characteristics of Limbo, the characters encounter what looks to be a large, metallic bubble.

This iron sphere looms out of the chaos at the PCs, forcing them to scramble out of the way or face a collision with the 30-foot-diameter craft (inflicting 2d6 points of damage to anyone not willing to move). The PCs might not realize that it is a craft at first—perhaps not until they see an iris door open on one side and creatures coming out of it.

Rav, a dao from the Plane of Earth, operates throughout the planes as a slaver. Recently, the organization of slave traders that he works for in the Great Dismal Delve of his home plane received a handsome offer for a slaadi slave from a powerful prime wizard. Rav's superiors dispatched him to Limbo to fill the request. The ship, named the *Dream Diver*, enables him and his slave workers to survive and travel in Limbo easily. The dao long ago stole the craft from a group of mineral creatures called *issng*, who planned to use it to explore the plane of Water.

The *Dream Diver* is a ship intended to move through any pliable medium—water, air, energy, and even the chaos stuff of Limbo. Opaque from without, six round transparent portholes allow those inside to see out. A 10-foot-diameter iris door provides access inside the metal hull. The craft moves when one *thinking being* attunes itself to the inner, magical crystal engine. This 6-inch crystal floats in the center of the sphere. As long as that thinking being touches and concentrates on the crystal, the *Dream Diver* moves as that being wants it to, in any direction and at a movement rate of up to 120. The person in contact with the engine also controls the opening and closing of the door. If no one is touching the crystal, the last person to touch it can still make the door open and close without coming into contact with it. Thus, a body can use the sphere to travel somewhere, open the door, get out, cause the door to close, return later and open the door to reenter.

No matter what medium the craft floats in, the interior has no gravity. Anyone inside floats weightlessly. Physical force cannot harm the overall structure of the *Dream Diver* but it can only sustain 50 points damage from spells or magical effects before it becomes inoperable. A mere 25 points of damage indicates that a hole has been punched in the hull. Otherwise, DMs should treat it as an artifact.

Rav has taken a blue slaad prisoner. As he attempts to return to the Plane of Earth (he knows of a portal), he sees the PCs making their way through Limbo. At this point, he decides to attempt to subdue them as well, bringing back even more slaves than expected to impress his peers and superiors. Rav's slaves on board, a group of diminutive earth creatures called shad, leap out of the *Dream Diver* and attack the PCs, using wire-mesh nets to capture them. These creatures most likely pose little threat to the PCs, but Rav himself possesses great power.

At first, the dao underestimates the PCs and assumes that the shad can subdue them alone. He waits inside the *Dream Diver*. Mulk, a shad particularly unwilling to go into battle, hangs back on the pretense of controlling the chaos environment for his side, but planning to attempt an escape when the opportunity presents itself.

Each shad holds a single net, capable of holding a creature up to 10 feet tall. Attack with a net requires a successful attack roll by the shad. Once a net hits a character, she must make a successful Strength check to escape—this check can be attempted once per round, but the victim cannot make any other actions while trapped. If all of their foes end up in nets, the shad haul them into the *Dream Diver*. If, instead, more than half of the shad fall in battle, the rest flee into the chaos of Limbo, never to be seen again—except Mulk. Upon seeing the strength of the PCs, he quickly offers to help them against his cruel master Rav.

Meanwhile, Rav uses his innate ability to become *invisible* and moves in to make a surprise attack against the strongest character. Mulk, however, warns Rav's foes against this tactic. Further, Mulk can see through any illusions created by his master Being familiar with Rav's proclivities when creating illusory images), and warns the PCs against them as well. With Mulk's help the PCs should be able to slay or drive off the evil dao.

If not, and the battle goes against the PCs, Mulk instructs them to get into the *Dream Diver* and use it to escape the dao. Mulk has seen Rav use the craft enough times so that he knows exactly what he needs to do to make it move. Forcing Rav to cope in the chaotic soup of Limbo delays him a long time, since he has grown accustomed to his slaves maintaining a safe environment for him. Strangely enough, if left on his own, Rav eventually controls the environment to make it solid stone that he burrows through rather than air-filled terrain that most mortals create. It's the environment in which he's most comfortable. If he survives the battle, he will attempt to regain the *Dream Diver*.

Inside the *Dream Diver*, Rav's first captive waits in chains. Chaax, a blue slaad, was reduced to only 4 hit points by Rav's attack, and then wrapped in *chains of law*. A powerful magical item said to be forged on Arcadia, *chains of law* can restrain one slaad. Unbreakable by slaad, these items also render any slaad within them unable to use any spell-like

ability. In relation to any creature other than a slaadi, they seem to be normal iron chains with a normal iron lock.

To make matters worse for Chaax, it's fallen under the influence of the Iron Shadow. For a slaad, this means that it remains permanently listless and unable to concentrate. A -2 penalty is applied to all its attack and damage rolls, and it only has a 50% chance of successfully using any of its innate abilities (even if released from its bonds). Further, the Iron Shadow made Chaax irritable and cross. Being captured by Rav made that condition worse.

If the PCs free Chaax, however, it'll actually be grateful. Grumpy and unfocused (and by slaadi standards, that's pretty bad), but grateful. In a short, disjointed way, Chaax can even tell the PCs what has occurred at the Spawning Stone see next page), and then ask to be returned there. Characters familiar with the Iron Shadow should recognize the symptoms, and those who don't know the dark of the affliction should at least realize that what Chaax describes may very well be the affliction described by the lillendi.

In one battle, the PCs have the potential to gain two allies and a magical vehicle. Mulk is happy to go or do wherever and whatever the PCs wish, as long as they don't treat him like a slave. Chaax just wants to get home, and if the PCs won't take it there, it'll do whatever it needs to do to escape and get there on its own.

Travel in the *Dream Diver* makes Limbo much more survivable and palatable to most adventurers. No concentration is required to maintain a safe environment—the craft sustains its own safe zone inside. Plus, it moves much, much faster. For example, if the PCs attempt to move through Limbo on their own power and get to the Spawning Stone, the trip takes five to six days. In the *Dream Diver*, it takes only two to three hours.

If Rav and the dao manage to capture all the PCs, they drag them to the plane of Earth, where the adventure takes a wholly different focus....

RAV, DAO: AC 3; MV 9, Fl 15 (B), Br 6; HD 8+3; hp 43 (currently 28); THACO 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6 (fist); SA Casts *change self*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *gaseous form*, *invisibility*, *misdirection*, *passwall*, *spectral force*, and *wall of stone* (all 1×/day), *fulfill another's' limited wish* (in a perverse way—1×/day), casts *rock to mud* (3×/day), and *dig* (6×/day); SZ L (10' tall); ML champion (16); Int avg (10); AL NE; XP 5,000.

Note: Rav still bears wounds from the struggle with Chaax.

Special equipment: *potions of healing* and *fire resistance*, 10 10 gp gems.

SHAD SLAVES (6+1 per PC): AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+1; hp 8 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA Nets; SD Immune to poison, disease, petrification and paralyzation, +1 to saving throws vs. spell, breath weapon, and wands, contort to fit


though areas as small as 6 inches square; SZ S (4' tall); ML steady (11); Int avg (9-10); AL N; XP 175 each.

MULK, SHAD: AC 5 (wooden shield); MV 12; HD 3; hp 15; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA Net; SD Immune to poison, disease, petrification and paralyzation, +1 to saving throws vs. spell, breath weapon, and wands, contort to fit though areas as small as 6 inches square; SZ M (5' tall); ML steady (12); Int avg (10); AL N; XP 270.


CHAAX, INJURED BLUE SLAAD: AC 2; MV 6; HD 8+4; hp 38 (currently 4); THACO 11; #AT 5; Dmg 2d6 (×2)/2d6 (×2)/2d8 (claw (×2)/claw (×2)/bite; SA Bite has a 10% chance to infect the victim with a rotting disease, casts *hold person* (one person only), *passwall* or *telekinesis* once per round, can *gate* 1d4 red or 1d2 blue slaadi four times per day with a 40% chance of success; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 40%; SZ L (10' tall); ML steady (12); Int low (7); AL CN; XP 9,000.

SOMETHING'S OUT THERE

If the PCs travel in the *Dream Diver*, no matter where they go, the craft attracts the attention of a strange and mysterious creature. This nameless Limbo Thing seeps through the maelstrom and finds itself drawn to the size and movement of the craft. It approaches and latches onto the outside of the sphere.



SΘ +HE SLAAD! AREN'+...
WELL, WHA+EVER.
I MEAN, WHΘ CARES?
—RAESPH A+HAIR,
PLANEWALKER

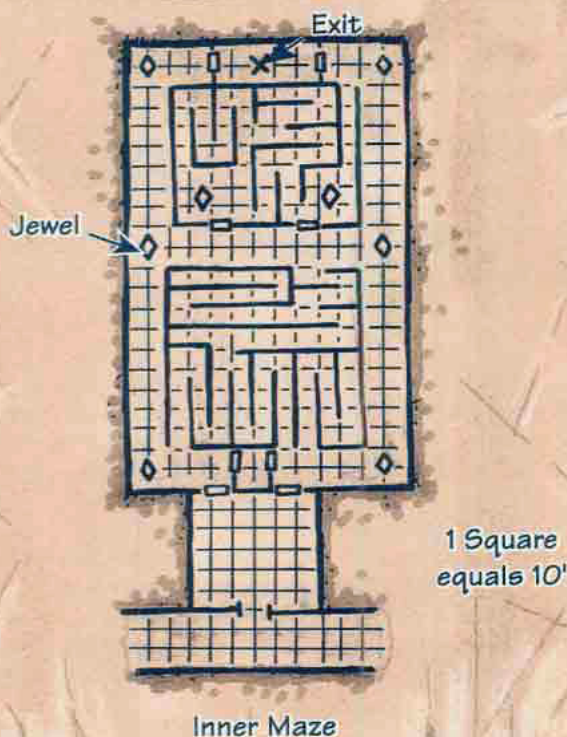
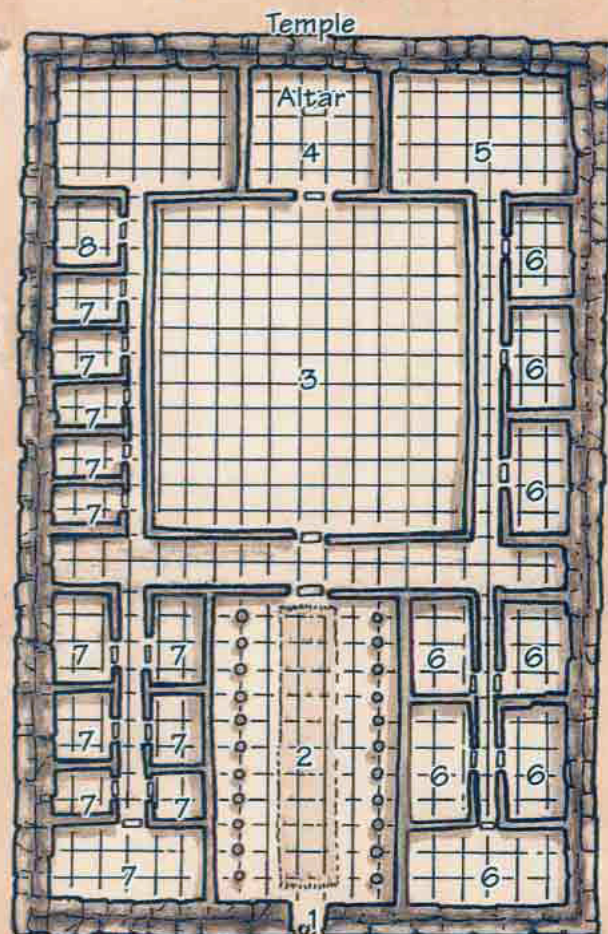


Considering that the PCs most likely have only the portholes of the *Dream Diver* to observe the surrounding environment, they probably have no chance to observe the Thing's approach. In this case, those inside don't become aware of it until they hear it moving on the outside of the hull.

DMs may wish to play up the creepiness of this encounter. At first, only one character inside the craft hears the creature—just a slithering or scraping on the outside. Looking through the portholes reveals nothing.

Then the noise comes again. Now, a different character hears the noise. This continues until the PCs go outside to

Temple of Change



check (requiring a shaping of the outside environment for safety) or until the thing suddenly and startlingly appears at a porthole. Green in color with purplish, pulsing veins running through its body, the thing is flat and slightly malleable. Its somewhat squarish body measures 10 feet across if spread flat, with a pseudopod extending off each "corner." The pseudopods stretch up to 6 feet and end in single, bony claws.

Eventually, things go from creepy to terrifying as the Thing eats away at the ship's hull with its chaotic disruption power. A creature of chaos, the Thing can disrupt matter or energy and convert it into the random stuff of Limbo. It soon begins to dissolve the *Dream Diver* itself, requiring that the PCs defend their craft against this foe. The damage listed below in the creature's statistics is the damage that it inflicts upon the craft (or on characters). If the thing suffers 15 points of damage from a magical attack, or 25 points from physical attacks, it attempts to flee into the swirling maelstrom.

NAMELESS LIMBO THING: AC 6; MV 12; HD 12; hp 51; THACO 9; #AT 4; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4 (pseudopods); SA touch disrupts matter, inflicting 3d6 additional points of damage—save vs. spell for half; SD Regenerates 1 hit point a round; SZ L (10' across); ML steady (11); Int avg (9); AL CN; XP 5,000.

◆ THE SPAWNING STONE ◆

Whether it's in the *Dream Diver* or not, when the PCs arrive at the Spawning Stone, things get dangerous and strange—even by Limbo standards.

WHAT SPAWNING STONE?

Of course, if the PCs, for some reason, did not talk with Chaax they'll be unaware of what's going on at the Spawning Stone (or they may not know how to get there). In this case, if the PCs wander about in Limbo, the encounter that leads them to the Stone comes to *them*. A tadpole slaad comes out of the soup toward the PCs, wherever they are, and flops over, dead. Further exploration finds more dead slaadi young. The trail leads right to the Spawning Stone.

ORDER WITHIN CHAOS IS CHAOS IN CHAOS, AND THEREFORE ORDER...

The size of the Spawning Stone impresses most who manage to reach it—the flat slab of rough stone stretches almost one mile in length, three-quarters of that in width. Runes, symbols, and inscriptions, meaningful only to the slaadi, cover its surface. Sometimes these symbols appear to writhe and change, but a body can never be quite sure.

All around the Spawning Stone, the slaadi secret away hidden stone structures to store food, weapons, treasure, and whatever else they feel needs to be kept. Normally, a visitor can see only a few of these places at a time, with most obscured in the maelstrom of the plane.

At the center of the stone, a large iron throne rests upon a tall dais. Usually, a powerful death slaad, guardian of the Stone, sits in this chair and watches all who approach. Non-slaadi who approach the stone close enough to even see it face the threat of immediate death. Usually. But not now.

Slaadi come to the stone in groups, one color at a time. It was the time of the blue slaadi spawning when the Iron Shadow passed over the Spawning Stone. Now, all around the stone, dead tadpole slaadi float amid the chaotic soup. Listless, unfocused, and extraordinarily pugnacious blue slaadi also float around the Spawning Stone. The guardian death slaad has apparently vanished.

The Iron Shadow's effects on the blue slaadi make it difficult for them to initiate actions. The order of the Shadow clouds their minds—the lack of change confuses them. They no longer continue their mating frenzy, but instead lie about the Stone, listless and unwilling to act unless attacked (the cloudiness of their minds makes them extremely irritable and thus able to attack any who attempt to harm them). Use the statistics from Tale 2 if the party picks a fight with the blue slaadi.

For most of the young slaad, the Iron Shadow was too much for them to even begin their lives, and they died even as they hatched from the blue slaadi pellet-eggs. Should this malaise continue, the entire slaadi race faces extinction.

Worse yet, another race native to Limbo has already moved in to take advantage of the situation. A vicious, carnivorous form of atomie sprite settled in to prey upon the dead slaadi—the dispirited living slaadi making no move to drive them off. The tiny sprites flit about, feasting upon the corpses, cutting them apart with tiny knives and gorging on the flesh. They avoid the irritable living slaadi, giving them a wide berth.

In their feeding frenzy, the sprites may attack the PCs. For every round the PCs spend out in the open around the Stone, there is a 10% chance that 1d3 sprites attack a random character. They won't fight to the death, however, and eventually leave powerful foes for easier prey.

ATOMIE SPRITE: AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (A); HD 1/2; hp 2 each; THACO 18 (attack as 3rd level fighters); #AT 2; Dmg 1d4 (tiny spears); SA -6 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls, cast *blink*, *invisibility*, *pass plant*, *speak with animals*, and *summon insects* (all 1x/round), diving attacks inflict double damage; SD +2 bonus to own surprise rolls; MR 20%; SZ T (1' tall); ML steady (12); Int avg to very (9-12); AL CN; XP 270.

A BIT ON SLAADI ECOLOGY

The hermaphroditic slaadi mate at the stone in their turn, fertilizing each other's internal egg sacs. When they leave (or, more appropriately, when the next slaadi group in the cycle wrests the Spawning Stone away from them), they carry around these seedlike fertilized eggs for later implantation into host bodies. Sometimes, however, young slaadi are produced right there at the stone because in their mating frenzy, the slaadi implant each other. Thus, dead adult slaadi routinely float—sometimes completely dismembered—around the Stone until the chaos of Limbo consumes them. Blood, gore, and worse cover the Spawning Stone along with the mysterious writhing runes—it is a primal place of savagery and bestial lust.

One unique thing about the Spawning Stone mating is that eggs can be fertilized by many different individuals, which means that a young slaad can literally have many parents. This odd sort of mating produces some strange offspring—a fact to which most folks on the planes are not privy (see the Secret of the Slaadi, page 71).

A LONE VOICE

Torpellin of the Golden Spires has lived among the slaadi for years. Somehow, she attained a status among the creatures so that her presence was tolerated, even near the Spawning Stone. She wears a forehead symbol like the slaadi—the creatures most likely recognize her as one of them now. The githzerai has enjoyed her place among the slaadi, and she's given them her devotion and allegiance.

Soon after the PCs arrive at the Spawning Stone, Torpellin comes to them to talk. A serious expression furrows her brow—Torpellin knows the dire consequences of what seems to be happening, although she's not sure of the cause.

If the PCs have encountered the Iron Shadow before, what Torpellin reveals to them carries great weight, for she tells them that she knows of a way, perhaps, to find a remedy for the blight afflicting of the Spawning Stone. She doesn't know anything about the Iron Shadow or its spread throughout other planes.

Torpellin knows of another githzerai named Cahm'Fel. This monastic hermit possesses great knowledge about the various forms that order and chaos can take, and she believes he knows how to counteract this particular form of stagnation-fostering law into Limbo, and perhaps to other places as well.

The githzerai currently focuses all of her energy toward helping and defending the afflicted slaadi here at the Stone, and thus she begs the planewalkers to go to Cahm'Fel's Temple of Change to talk with him and find a cure. She cannot offer them more reward than simple gratitude, nor can she tell them more about Cahm'Fel or his abode other than its location.

TORPELLIN OF THE GOLDEN SPIRES (Pl/♀ githzerai/W6): AC 9 (Dexterity); MV 12; hp 18; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SZ M (5' 11" tall); ML elite (14); Int genius (17) AL CN; XP 175.

Special Equipment: *wand of illumination* (34 charges), *ring of protection +1* (Prime forged, powerless here), 12 gp, 23 sp

Personality: Devoted, independent, scholarly

Spells (4/2/2—but many spells already cast to help defend the slaadi): 1st—*message*, *shield*; 2nd—*know alignment*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *suggestion*



◆ THE TEMPLE of CHANGE ◆

Using the *Dream Diver*, the trip to the Temple of Change takes only a few hours. On "foot," the journey lasts at least five days. However, if the PCs sail the *Dream Diver* and Rav still lives, he might very well catch up with them at this point in the adventure, wishing to recover the craft.

Cahm'Fel is a githzerai enduring a self-imposed exile from his people. An outcast because of his beliefs, he reveres the fundamental concept of change itself. To that end, Cahm'Fel has erected a huge monastery devoted to his beliefs. From time to time, he has held fellowship with others who believe as he does, but currently he is without comrades or disciples.

From the outside, the Temple of Change looks like a floating island of rock, which shifts from a cool, solid state to a molten state in a cycle with phases lasting anywhere from ten minutes to an hour. On top of this everchanging island, an iron fortress rises forbiddingly. No gates present themselves to would-be visitors. No windows offer even a peek inside.

The party can find the entrance only if someone searches for secret doors. A successful secret doors check reveals a pair of large doors near the upper portion of the wall on one side of the structure. During the check, however, any PC who gets within 10 feet of the island in its molten state suffers 1 point of damage from the heat.

LAYOUT

1. GATE: As mentioned above, this is a secret door. Further, this iron portal holds an enchantment that announces the names of all who pass through. It "speaks" in a deep, resonant voice that echoes throughout the entrance hall. PCs shouldn't be too surprised that Cahm'Fel knows their names when he meets them.

2. ENTRANCE HALL: When visitors enter this chamber, they see a vast, breathtaking hall. Pillars line the side walls, each pillar a different color—in fact, each pillar is constructed from a different material, and the material and color slowly change. The constant, slow change gives the room the illusion of movement.

A carpet runs along the center of the long hall. The carpet is composed of woven space-time and operates as its own mini-universe. It draws in all those entering the room. The carpet world takes the form of a surrealistic, everchanging maze. Colored walls of solid light form the maze's structure—walls, ceiling, and floor (although these terms are used loosely). The maze has no gravity, or even an understandable up and down. Those trapped inside suddenly find themselves floating in the center of a 30-foot-wide tunnel, disoriented due to the lack of gravity and perspective. The tunnel goes off in two directions, 90 degrees in relation to each other. This area is called the

Outer Maze, and explorers can move through it by "swimming" through the air as if it was water.

The worst thing about the Outer Maze is that, in keeping with the nature of this place, it changes continually. No map exists of this maze, because it changes as soon as an explorer begins to move through it. Instead, the DM should roll percentile dice every 1d3 rounds and consult the following table. A side passage is any tunnel branching off from the "main," which simply refers to the passage that the explorers currently occupy. The side passage may extend in any direction (and, in fact, in a place where directions are virtually meaningless, the direction is immaterial).

01-30	One side passage
31-50	Two side passages (50% chance the main passage doesn't continue)
51-75	Three side passages (50% chance the main passage doesn't continue)
76-90	Four side passages (50% chance the main passage doesn't continue)
91-95	Dead End
96-00	Phlegamor

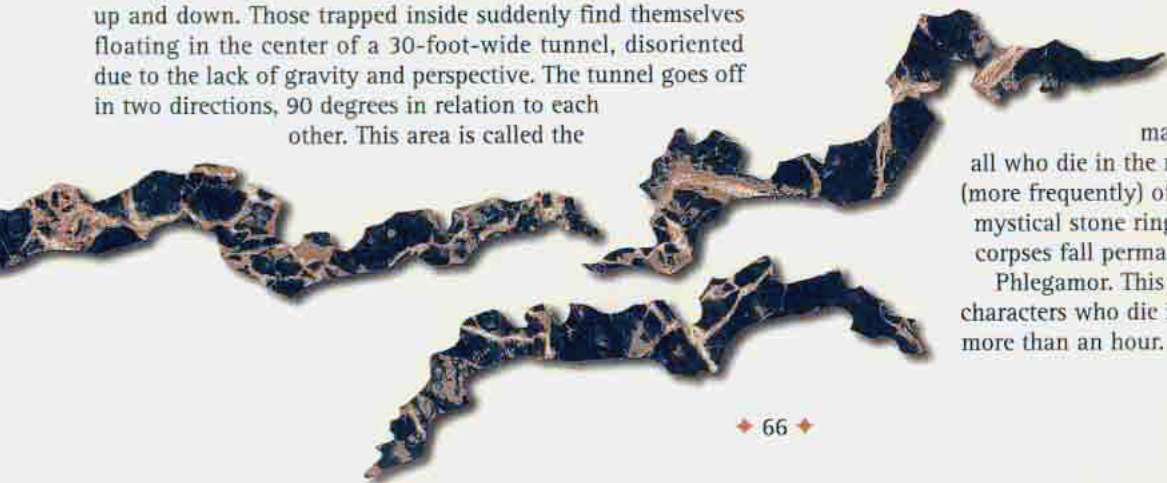
At the "center" of the maze world created by the magical carpet waits a being called Phlegamor, the Maze Master. When this gigantic, terrifying being makes his appearance, he emerges suddenly through a heretofore unseen doorway. Phlegamor peers through this 10-foot by 10-foot portal with a gigantic face that fills most of the opening, roaring with a terrible bellow as the door opens. This horror then disappears as quickly as he appeared, revealing the entrance to the *Inner Maze*. From an explorer's point of view, the room beyond is 60 feet by 50 feet, with the floor lying 60 feet below the bottom of the doorway. This room (and the entire *Inner Maze*) has both gravity and an understandable orientation. No easy way to get to the floor presents itself. The PCs will have to climb, fly, or use some other means.

Phlegamor once directly served the Slaad Lords, Ssendam and Ygorl. He was a death slaad allowed to attain his true shape (see *The Secret of the Slaadi*, page 71) and was thus mutated by these lords into a gigantic and powerful guardian. Eventually, however, Phlegamor fell from favor and thus from grace—cast aside, his body decayed and his spirit became trapped when the spacial carpet was woven. Despite his alarming size and appearance, the Maze Master holds no real corporeal form. What explorers in the maze see is no more than an illusion of light and sound incapable of true action.

However, this does not render him powerless. Instead of making direct attacks or taking action himself, he commands a force of animated servants. The bodies of

all who die in the maze—either by violence or (more frequently) of starvation or suicide form mystical stone rings on their left hands. Such corpses fall permanently under the control of

Phlegamor. This will happen even to player characters who die in the maze and remain for more than an hour.



Two of the Maze Master's servants lurch out of the doorway, appearing where their master vanished. (They appear right in the doorway, where they can launch themselves into the weightless environment of the Outer Maze and not fall into the gravity of the Inner Maze.) Phlegamor himself directly controls the actions of these animated corpses which—despite their appearance—are not undead, but rather magically animated servants no different than matter given motion by an *animate object* spell. Thus, they cannot be turned or affected by any of the traditional undead banes. They attack, but if a foe asks them a question, Phlegamor (through a servant) may very well answer it if it suits him. Further, attempts to reason with the Maze Master do not fall upon deaf ears.

Phlegamor's twisted psyche only allows him two motives—destroy all who disturb the maze, and gather new and interesting knowledge. These two motives become reconciled in that Phlegamor assumes that intruders have nothing new to present to him. Suggestions to the contrary make him pause, interested. The DM should judge whether information offered to the Maze Master is truly new to him and significant enough to impress him. If it is, he will allow the intruders to escape from the maze immediately, returning them to the Entrance Hall.

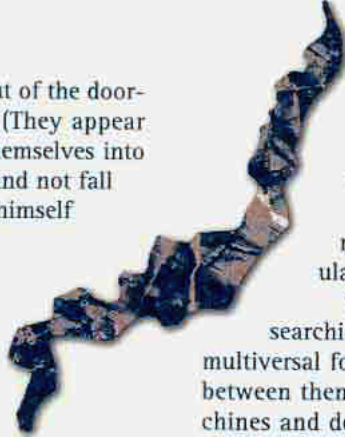
Inside the Inner Maze, where the walls, floors, doors, and ceilings appear to be a reddish iron, there are no furnishings or decorations. At each spot marked with a jewel, however, a bright blue gem floats five feet above the floor. If any explorer comes within 15 feet of one of these gems, two more of Phlegamor's servants suddenly appear, under his control. They attack immediately, unless approached as mentioned above. Once these monsters fall in combat, the victors can take the gem (worth 200 gp), which reappears once the maze-world absorbs new victims later on.

To escape the carpet's strange world, a character must reach the point marked X on the map of the Inner Maze. At this point, another gem floats in the air, but it continually changes as explorers watch. Here, to escape, a character must touch the changing gem and think about change (or say the word). If this is accomplished, the character returns to the Entrance Hall, at the opposite end from which she started, as though she had walked down the carpet—in fact, somewhere in her memory she remembers walking down the hall on top of the carpet.

Once someone escapes from the carpet's strange world, she can never return.

PHLEGAMOR'S SERVANTS (GITHYANKI OR HUMAN CORPSES): AC 5 (chain mail and shield); MV 9; HD 4+4; hp 17 each; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bare hand) or 1d8 (long sword); SD Immune to mind-influencing spells, poison, paralyzation; SZ M (6' tall); ML fearless (20); Int as Phlegamor—genius (17); AL CN; XP 420 each.

Note: These creatures are not undead, and thus cannot be turned or affected by other undead banes. Armor worn and weapons used can vary if the DM wishes. All wear stone rings worth 10 gp.



3. COMMUNAL HALL: This once served as a dining hall and common room when more monks and followers of Cahm'Fel dwelled within the Temple. Now, Cahm'Fel uses this room as a laboratory. Here, he conducts experiments on the nature of change and builds devices that manipulate order and chaos.

Cahm'Fel spends much time in this room, researching the metaphysical aspects of change and the multiversal forces that govern chaos, order, and the balance between them. To do this, he has created a number of machines and devices—some magical, some not—that test and alter these forces. Someday, he hopes to set up laboratories on Mechanus and the Outlands to further test and define these forces at the other extremes of the environment, but for now he works here, where he is most comfortable and closest to the force he truly reveres: change.

While all manner of machines and strange devices whirl and work in this room, it doesn't resemble the clockwork world of Mechanus (the distinction is lost on the PCs if they have never been there). Instead, this place holds a cacophonous, tumultuous disarray of gears, wires, tubes, pulleys, ropes, wheels, pendulums, burners, colored glass panels, levers, buttons, switches, arcing bolts of electricity, spraying streams of liquid, cylinders belching steam and smoke, and rattling chains pulling heavy weights. There's even a giant weasel in a cramped cage, forced to run inside a wheel that connects to the whole mass of mechanisms, its rotation feeding more power into the strange devices. At any given moment some or all the moving parts of this chamber appear as though they will fly apart (and sometimes they do). A learned eye would ascertain that the machines look like they were designed by someone who wasn't entirely sure what the device was going to do after she set it in motion—they have an unpredictable life of their own now, regardless of their original designs.

Amid the clutter of machines and machine parts, Cahm'Fel keeps the vial of Navimas, a syrup of hyper-concentrated chaos that can serve as the antidote for the Iron Shadow. Who knows what other interesting items and devices wait to be found here? The DM is encouraged to place strange and sometimes even useful things amid the clutter. All should be one-of-a-kind items, and most if not all should have something to do with order or chaos. For example, Cahm'Fel created (completely by accident) a pendulum-related device that can predict the direction of that the wind will blow in one year from the day it is used. This device (and others) lies amid the confusing jumble.

WEASEL, GIANT: AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 12; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 (bite); SA After initial hit, victim loses 2d6 hit points a round until dead or until the weasel lets go (i.e., it dies); SZ M (7' long); ML avg (10); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 175.

4. THE SANCTUARY OF VARIATION: The heart of the Temple, this room awes visitors as much or more than the entrance hall, simply because of its everchanging nature. Those looking through the door into this chamber don't see a room at all, but a single altar (described below) in an awe-inspiring terres-

trial landscape. Rocky, red mesas rise up to a clear blue sky. A brilliant sun washes light over the entire scene and feeds the emerald greenery springing up from the reddish rock of the landscape.

And then it all goes away.

Suddenly, the altar rises up among the waves of a golden ocean, with sea birds in flight overhead and powerful storm clouds rolling higher still. This scene continues, until ... it all changes again.

The Sanctuary of Variation continuously changes from one setting to the next. One moment it rests high upon a mountain peak, the next it waits deep in a subterranean cavern. The changes are not illusory—they're real. Real water splashes from the golden sea, and real birds fly overhead.

In effect, the Sanctuary of Variation is in the process of instantly creating and destroying tiny worlds independent of the plane of Limbo and even the rest of the multiverse. If PCs venture off into these worlds, they find it disorienting and even dangerous—there's no telling when the ground underneath a character will suddenly become a raging river or a volcanic pit. The odd thing is, no matter where an explorer goes, she's never farther than 50 feet from the door back into the rest of the temple, and the door is always 30 feet from the altar. An explorer might not always be able to see them due to intervening landscape features, but they're always there.

The oval-shaped Altar of Change never changes. Cahm'Fel constructed the 9-foot long, flat-topped altar from a bluish stone found only in a certain forgotten demiplane. An innate property of the extremely rare stone changes whatever it touches. Inanimate objects that touch the altar are changed. To determine the type of change, roll 1d6 and consult the table below:

ROLL	CHANGE
1	Color
2	Length
3	Width
4	Shape
5	Weight
6	Strength



The DM determines the resulting attribute change (the specific color, for example). Most changes present an either/or proposition (it gets longer or shorter, wider or thinner, stronger or weaker, and so on). These are determined with a 50% chance of either, with the DM determining the degree of the change.

If a character touches the altar, the DM rolls 1d8 and consults the following:

ROLL	CHANGE
1	Skin Color
2	Hair Color
3	Physical Size
4	Gender
5	Statistic
6	Race
7	Class
8	Alignment



Again, the degree of change rests in the hands of the DM, although she should consult with the player. The change shouldn't be anything that the player strongly objects to—the power of the altar isn't a curse (in Cahm'Fel's way of looking at things, it's a blessing).

5. LIBRARY: Cahm'Fel collected a huge number of books over the years, all dealing with the idea of chaos and change, theoretical applications of philosophical ideas regarding these concepts, and a vast array of volumes that simply chronicle all types of different things—different animals, plants, races, types of terrain, flavors and foods, tools and weapons, minerals, processes, personality types, and the like. The latter part of this collection offers a good example of the variety of life in the multiverse.

Other than full bookshelves, this room has a table, a few chairs, and a climbing stool to reach high shelves.

6. STORES: These rooms contain all manner of supplies that Cahm'Fel needs, ranging from foodstuffs to normal goods to the strange things that go into the making of his devices and experiments (including a wide range of chemicals, herbs, and ingredients in containers of differing types and sizes).

7. GUEST CHAMBERS: Once, the Temple of Change served as a monastery for those devoted to the cause that Cahm'Fel espouses—that above all else, change is the most potent and important force in the multiverse. He preached against stagnation and encouraged long periods of meditation on the concept of change and opening up oneself to its tender mercies. Even what many would call a “bad” change, Cahm'Fel would contend was actually a good thing. The only true evils, in this school of thought, are monotony, conformity, and uniformity.

These rooms housed the other monks and followers of Cahm'Fel's teachings.

Now, they sit vacant, with only a few simple furnishings in each.

8. CAHM'FEL'S CHAMBER: Cahm'Fel's bedroom holds only meager furnishings: a bed, a table, a few chairs, a wardrobe, and a chest (he's not interested in creature comforts). He owns little in the way of traditional valuables, and he keeps no money, jewels, or art objects.

The secret door in this room provides Cahm'Fel with a secret escape route, should the Temple of Change be invaded by hostile forces.

Cahm'Fel himself currently possesses the form of a three-foot-tall human female with deep violet skin and long, crimson hair. These changes come from the Altar of Change—Cahm'Fel uses the power of that device to change himself regularly. He refers to this as washing or bathing in the divine, and freely allows others to do so.

Not much of a warrior, Cahm'Fel doesn't have many ways to defend himself. If attacked, he attempts to flee. He's been an outcast so long that he's lost the ability to *plane shift*, but he does have a magical item called the *ring of vacating*. This magical silver ring, when activated, takes the wearer somewhere else. The destination can literally be anywhere—from a few feet away to many planes distant. The DM can



choose to have any destination that she wants, but the location can be determined randomly by rolling 1d100. This is the number of feet away the user appears (in a random direction), unless the die roll is over 80, in which case the die is re-rolled and number indicated is the number of miles the user moves. If, however, an 80 or above is rolled on that second roll, a d4 is rolled and that indicates the number of planes away the user travels. It's obvious to see why Cahm'Fel, with his feelings about change, likes this item—however, he doesn't use it lightly. The ring has 12 charges left.

Usually, Cahm'Fel spends most of his time in his laboratory, unless he's asleep in his room (the door announcement "alarm" will awaken him). Friendly visitors receive kind and courteous treatment, as well as a healthy dose of Cahm'Fel's philosophy regarding the nature and importance of the force of change. He'll even show them the Sanctuary of Variation as he describes the beauty and power of change.

Once the PCs describe the effects of the Iron Shadow on the Spawning Stone and make it known that they seek a way to remedy those effects, Cahm'Fel gives them his full attention. However, although he realizes immediately that the Navimas solution can counteract the Iron Shadow's effect, he's not willing to give up anything so precious for free. He'll only trade for a magical item. If the PCs arrived in the *Dream Diver*, Cahm'Fel demands the craft as his price. He'll even lie and tell them that it's only useful in Limbo, and since they're probably not here for a long term stay, they have little need of it.

If the PCs didn't come with the *Dream Diver*, he'll ask for another magical item instead. Almost any will do, in reality, but he won't tell them that (and neither should the DM). In fact, if the characters appear willing to give a lot, he'll take advantage of them. Once the deal is finished, he gives the PCs the vial of Navimas, about a pint of pinkish fluid. With the vial, Cahm'Fel provides the following instructions: "Feed a drop of this to a true being of chaos, and let it loose amid the diseased area of the plane. The nature of things will take care of the rest. Ask Torpellin for advice as to who to feed the Navimas to—if she is a true friend of the slaadi, she will help."

CAHM'FEL (Pl/3 githzerai/F3): AC 6 (leather); MV 12; hp 16; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); MR 50%; SZ S (3' tall); ML average (8); AL CN; XP 420.

S 11; D 16; C 12; I 18; W 17; Ch 14

Personality: Studious, tireless, devoted, shrewd

Special Equipment: *Wand of wonder* (10 charges), *wand of size alteration* (5 charges), *potion of polymorph self*, 350 gp ring, 33 gp

AH, +HE MUSIC
OF CHANGE.
IT DØESN'T MAT+ER
IF YOU LISTEN—
IT PLAYS JUST +HE SAME.
—CAHM'FEL



LIGH+
◆ UPON +HE SHADOW ◆

Retracing the path back to the Spawning Stone should be fairly easy. The scene of carnage and apathy remains as the PCs left it. After making a careful search of the area (and fending off renewed attacks by the atomic sprites), the PCs can find Torpellin if they so wish.

Torpellin loves the slaadi and their ways. Thus, she's happy to see the PCs return successfully from the Temple of Change. However, this love makes it difficult for her to reveal one of the slaadi's greatest secrets. She reacts pensively and fearfully if the PCs tell her Cahm'Fel instructed them to feed Navimas to "a true being of chaos." Torpellin shows that she is obviously reluctant to help the PCs—apparently it involves knowledge she is loath to reveal. Playing up the plight of the slaadi and the affliction of the Iron Shadow helps to persuade her to help the PCs with this last step.

If Torpellin agrees to help the PCs find a true being of chaos, she calls over a blue slaad named Inmoun and asks it to take the PCs to "the secret nursery" (although she does so in the language of the slaadi). The slaad looks wordlessly at the PCs, motions for them to follow, and heads into the chaos.

If any creature other than a true slaad (see below) consumes a drop of Navimas, the being must make a saving throw vs. poison. Success indicates that the imbibitor rejected the chaotic syrup and suffered only 2d6 points of damage from internal burning before vomiting it out. Failure of the saving throw means that the Navimas went straight to the creature's heart, causing it to explode in a splash of chaos-stuff. All within 10 feet of the imbibitor suffer 1d6 points damage, and the imbibitor dies, joining the roiling sea of chaos that is Limbo.



Furthermore, the solution works in Limbo only. Navimas becomes inert on any other plane. Only Terramanath, the rilmani argenach (see Tale 7) can help to alter its composition so that it may be used elsewhere.

THE SECRET OF THE SLAADI

If they follow the slaad through the chaotic miasma, the PCs suddenly come upon a strange scene—one of the secret nurseries of the slaadi. An area has been cleared of the randomly changing soup of Limbo, it's about 500 feet across. At least a hundred writhing and squirming figures, all tethered together by chains, lie here. Their fetters ultimately lead to a single shaft of greenish light that rises up (and down) and out of the clearing.

Upon closer examination, the squirming figures are slaadi, but unlike any other slaadi that the PCs have seen so far. Each has a different, mutated form—some possess four arms, others only one sprouting from the center of the chest. Some rise to a height of 20 feet, while others are small, squat, barrel-chested creatures with flat heads and wide slitted eyes. All vary in color and bodily configuration—none resemble the more common red, blue, or green slaadi.

As difficult as it may be to believe, these creatures are the *true* slaadi. Beings of ultimate chaos, their forms follow no set pattern whatsoever. Long ago, however, when the first Slaad Lords, Ssendam and Ygorl (themselves strange, bizarre creatures only slightly resembling other slaadi commonly seen today) rose to power, they did not want to someday face a creature spawned by random mutation that was greater than they. Taking a lesson from the evil lich-queen of the githyanki, they decided to limit the future competition—but unlike her, they don't simply kill those that attain too much power. Instead, they limit the race as a whole so that such power can never be attained. Thus, they altered the Spawning Stone itself and limited the slaadi race to the handful of forms that they now take—not to make the race more orderly, but to make them easier to rule. However, because of their inherently chaotic nature and the chaotic manner in which they breed, sometimes true slaadi are born. Some of the slaadi secret these "mutants" away in hidden nurseries where they develop in chains, feeding off the chaos of the plane and nothing else. Whether these true slaadi are hidden from the slaad lords or by them for some unknown purpose is still unclear.

In any event, Inmoun approaches the nearest true slaad and severs the chain that tethers it to others. This creature has orange skin and flexible tendrils ending in wide claws instead of arms. Its head has no eyes, but its body sprouts numerous boils, each with a bulbous eye. Once the true slaad is disconnected, Inmoun uses the chain like a leash and drags the true slaad toward the PCs. The still-bound creature writhes and seethes, lashing out at anyone coming close enough (THACO 9 due to its bound state, inflicting 2d8 points of damage per hit). Immediately, the blue slaad hands the chain-leash to the strongest-looking PC—enough length of chain stretches from the true slaad to keep out of its reach.

Characters wishing to feed the creature a droplet of Navimas must either come within striking distance or make a successful Dexterity check to fling a drop into the slaad's mouth (the vial holds more than 50 droplets of Navimas, so there should be more than enough with some left over to be used in later adventures). If the true slaad devours a drop of Navimas, its color begins to change rapidly and it screams with wide-eyed frenzy. Anyone wishing to guide it (via the leash) to the Spawning Stone must make a Strength check each round—and it takes six rounds to usher it there.

Once there, the true slaad bursts its bonds and begins cavorting around and atop the Spawning Stone. As the PCs watch, they'll see the slaadi around the stone shake themselves out of their malaise and return to normal. The chaos around the stone churns more fervently.

When it has completed its strange dance, the true slaad stops in the center of the Spawning Stone. Suddenly, following slaadi logic, the other slaadi fall upon it *en masse* and tear it apart. Canny planewalkers won't remain around the Stone long enough to see that for themselves, however, because the once-again-active slaad move to attack them too.

With at least 30 frenzied slaadi coming at them, the only chance at survival the PCs have is to flee. Fortunately, the mating instincts of the crazed slaadi won't let them leave sight of the Spawning Stone.



◆ LEAVING LIMBO ◆

Once finished with the adventure, PCs can leave Limbo as easily as they arrived.

Many PCs will wish to keep the *Dream Diver*, even after their trip in Limbo is completed. Able to travel through air or water at incredible speeds, its worth is immeasurable. Unfortunately, the *Dream Diver* won't fit through the doorway back into the Infinite Staircase. If they are determined to take the craft with them, the DM is encouraged to devise a difficult challenge for them to reach a portal large enough to fit the craft through. Keeping such a treasure should require many risks and dangers.

Three portals (at least) exist in the vicinity of the Spawning Stone. One leads to the githyanki city of TorNav'roc on the Astral Plane (see Tale 6), one provides access to Klictrik, a formian city on the plane of Arcadia (see Tale 2), and the third leads to the demiplane of Maelost (see Tale 3). The PCs can use any of them to leave Limbo, if they learn of their existence. Torpellin knows of all three, and even knows the dark of their keys (the portal to Arcadia requires a blue feather, the gate to the Astral is the whispered name of a loved one, and the gate to Maelost requires a container of rain water). All three portals, like many on Limbo, take the form of an ever-changing archway of varying matter. Also like other Limbo portals, none of the three is guaranteed to last forever.

Watch as a leaf falls from the tree outside your window. Watch as it flutters and flits, given temporary life and grace until it reaches the ground. What bestows this final blessing on the dying leaf?

The wind.

Nothing touched by the wind, by its tender caresses or its buffeting gales, ever remains the same. The wind brings change. It gives the birds the power of flight and washes the water back from the beach. The wind spreads the life-giving seeds of flowers and trees and gives motion to the tall grasses of the hill. At the heart of the wind, the realm of endless air stretches into infinity, a storehouse of potential that can give life and movement to all things.

If something exists that can take that power away from the wind itself, then that something is pure evil.

TALE 5: WINDS OF CHANGE

◆ OVERVIEW ◆

The PCs find themselves in the floating city of Blurophil on the Elemental Plane of Air. The onset of the Iron Shadow has brought the burg's great Festival of Lights to a standstill. As they explore, the PCs discover a powerful and wise Oracle that could help them on their information-gathering quest, but in the meantime they become involved in the search for a murderous strangler preying upon the people of the city. Finding this killer won't just help Blurophil, though, for the secret of the Strangler is tied to important information regarding the Iron Shadow as well.

"Winds of Change" is an adventure meant to challenge characters of 4th to 5th level. At least one character should be a hardy warrior able to withstand some physical challenges. Lots of divination magic or psionic powers in the hands of the PCs could disrupt the adventure (by eliminating too many challenges for the players), so the DM should pay particular attention to such things, perhaps countering them ahead of time by having the Gasping Strangler use *nondetection* (or an amulet of proof against detect and location).

PIKE OFF!
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING
ABOUT ANY METAL SHADOW.
I JUST KNOW
I CAME HERE FOR A FESTIVAL.
IT SODDING WELL SINKS,
SO I'M GOING BACK TO SIGIL.

— A DISGRUNTLED
FESTIVAL ATTENDEE

◆ ADVENTURE NOTES ◆

- ◆ If the PCs fought Rav the dao in Limbo and took his craft in Tale 4 but the dao still lives, he comes for revenge when the PCs arrive in the Elemental Plane of Air. Spies on the plane observe the planewalkers' arrival and word reaches his ears all the way on his home plane of Earth. The plane of Air presents many dangers to Rav, and he must remain a secretive foe, for the djinn of the plane war with his kind and would slay him on sight.

Rav arrives in Blurophil through a secret portal. He searches for his foes, using his *change self* ability, to appear as a djinn, or *invisibility*. Once he finds them, Rav waits to ambush the PCs when they are isolated, perhaps as they search for the Gasping Strangler. His attack may even lead them to believe that Rav himself is the killer—an interesting red herring tossed into the mystery.

Rav attacks with the intention to kill, but not before he makes his victims know clearly that he has tracked them down with great effort for the wrongs they have inflicted upon him. If it looks as though he's truly threatened with the dead-book, or if his enemy djinn show up somehow, he flees as quickly as he can.

- ♦ At Stage 2, Jazriul the hound archon arrives on the plane of Air to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow. He'll try not to be distracted from this duty by the Gasping Strangler murders, but he may be drawn into the investigation to find the killer, particularly if the PCs do. The archon's magical long sword has no bonuses here.
- ♦ If the PCs have been to the Outlands in Tale 7 and succeeded in helping the rilmani, their fame precedes them. The abiorach at Sorrow's Roost (see page 81) immediately agrees to help them and give them the information they need. Vassilon, the abiorach, regrets that he cannot help the characters more directly (he cannot enter the area affected by the Iron Shadow or his true neutrality will be compromised and he'll be reduced to his essential salts).
- ♦ If the PCs have been to Limbo and have brought the Navimas with them (see Tale 4), the knowledge gained from Ghuntomas of Thorn can lead to the formulation of a solution to the Iron Shadow. Technically, this means that the PCs might only have to travel to those two locations and can skip the others. However, the DM should keep this in mind: it's unlikely that the PCs will choose these two locations as their first two expeditions. And, even by Ghuntomas' own admissions, the planewalkers should still attempt to get hold of the book, *Ever-changing Order*. Further, even with the remedy for the Iron Shadow, they should still go to all the doorways given them by the lillendi to use the cure and dispel the affliction in those locations as well.

Of course, if the kytons tumble to the fact that the PCs have a cure, they launch an all-out offensive against the PCs. First, however, the DM must determine how the kytons discovered this fact, and if they know where the PCs are located. Most likely, they don't (they've probably had no reason to keep such close tabs on them unless the planewalkers went to Jangling Hiter and caused a lot of trouble).

Once the kytons know about the PCs and their ability to stop the Iron Shadow, the kytons scour the locations of all the Tales looking for them, probably eventually stumbling upon the Infinite Staircase. Thus, the DM can devise kyton encounters and ambushes in any location, even the Staircase.

If the PCs dispel the Iron Shadow in Blurophil, the artisans and performers immediately regain their will and creativity to perform and produce works of art for the festival. The people of the city rejoice in the wonders of their celebration, and quickly forget the dark period before. Unless the PCs stop the Gasping Strangler, however, he continues cutting his homicidal swath through the Twilight's Wall district, for his "mission" had nothing to do with the Iron Shadow.

- ♦ If the PCs have *Ever-changing Order* in their possession, they may have researched its author, Ghuntomas of Thorn, and discovered that he lives in the city of Blurophil on the plane of Air. Once they find themselves in Blurophil in this adventure, they may look him up.

If the characters make such an attempt, the DM should reward them by taking them directly to that portion of the adventure. Although the rest of this particular Tale may not then be "necessary," more than likely the PCs will be drawn in by lure of the missing oracle or the serial killer at large or both.

To facilitate this, Ghuntomas should refuse to help the PCs unless they help find his friend Deidarth.

- ♦ If Mulk the shad from Tale 4, or Hanoock Ringfinger from Tale 2 accompany the planewalkers, neither is likely to provide much help in Blurophil, particularly if the PCs search for the Strangler—neither has any experience in a manhunt of that type. Myess (the Gasping Strangler) will see Mulk as a particular abomination, however, as he comes from the Elemental Plane of Earth and has even less right to enter the plane of Air than the other non-natives.

If the DM desires, Myess sees Mulk as the group wanders around Blurophil and decides to break from his normal routine to kill the shad. If the PCs wake up to find their diminutive companion slain by the killer that stalks the city streets, they're even more likely to become involved in the search.

While the break from the killing pattern might throw off the PCs for a while, a careful consideration of Mulk's race and nature might indicate something about the Strangler's nature.

Further, if Mulk is with the PCs when Rav attacks (see above), Mulk can provide advice about his former master's capabilities and tactics as well as assistance in defeating the dao conclusively.

♦ To dispel the Iron Shadow and its horrible effects on the plane of Air, a character must take two drops of Navimas and mix them with pure, undiluted air. Such air can only be found in the substance of an air elemental or other native creature composed of air (even on the plane of Air, other elements and impurities have entered into the plane to dilute the air). This does not mean that the creature need be slain. The elemental in question can offer the air willingly (assuming it's convinced) or a portion of its substance can be stolen or trapped if a magical, airtight container is available.

Once mixed, the compound must be let free in the plane of Air at a spot where the character can see nothing but air in any direction (other than himself or his comrades). Research needed to determine this process takes (20 minus Intelligence score) days of reading *Ever-changing Order* or speaking and working with Ghuntomas.

PLANAR MAGIC— THE PLANE OF AIR

The relationship between the Inner Planes and the rest of the multiverse precludes the use of certain spells. Because there is no connection to the Astral Plane or the Outer Planes, a body can't count on using the *astral spell*, *duo-dimension*, or *find familiar* when on the Elemental Plane of Air (or any of the Inner Planes for that matter).

Other spells are affected depending on their schools:

CONJURATION/SUMMONING: These spells are only able to call forth creatures native to the planes of Air, Smoke, Ice, Lightning, and Vacuum. Further, while a creature native to the Elemental Plane of Air can be summoned with these spells, it is not bound by them. Thus, the caster must find some other way of controlling the subject once it arrives.

INVOCATION/EVOCATION: In cases where the spell being cast draws upon an aspect of smoke, ice, lightning, or vacuum, there is no change in the function of these spells. Those that are based upon elemental air function as if the level of the caster were increased by one. The reverse is true of those spells that tap the energies of any other elemental plane (including those paraelemental and quaselemental planes not mentioned above) as described under *Other Elemental Schools* below. Thus, a *lightning bolt* spell would function normally but a *fireball* would be reduced in effectiveness.

ELEMENTAL AIR: Any magic of this type acts as if the caster's level were increased by one.

OTHER ELEMENTAL SPELLS: In all cases, these spells function as if the caster's level were reduced by one.

A STRANGER ♦ AT THE DOOR ♦

The doorway leading to the plane of Air is made of darkened glass, as is the platform where it rests. The stairway that the characters must take to reach the landing is fashioned from polished steel that glitters like a mirror.

Just as the PCs arrive at the landing of the proper doorway, another figure comes out. This is Mosicaon, a tall, lithe elven woman who exudes confidence and power, but appears wracked with intense concern. Although she's on her way to another doorway (to her own prime world), Mosicaon could be willing to take the time to speak with the PCs if they approach her with friendliness and respect. "The city beyond," she tells them, "has fallen ill. It has no life, no breath, no energy. If I were you, my friends, I would stay away."

Mosicaon refers, of course, to the Iron Shadow, which has descended upon the city of Blurophil beyond the gate. If questioned, she can tell the PCs a little about the city, the flagging Festival of Lights, and the Iron Shadow—although she certainly doesn't call it that. She simply says that "even the greatest artisans of the city have lost all their spark and vitality. The greater the creator, the greater the loss."

Mosicaon is a planewalker who discovered the Infinite Staircase long ago and uses it to get around. It's doubtful that she'll ever return to Blurophil, however.

MOSICAON (Pr/♀ elf/F4, T5/N); AC 2 (leather armor, Dexterity bonus, *boots of striding and springing*); MV 12; hp 21; THACO 17 (14 with *long sword* +1 and bonuses for Strength and race; 14 with short bow and bonuses Dexterity and race); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8+2 (long sword +1 plus Strength bonus) or 1d6/1d6 (short bow); SZ M (5'2" tall); ML elite (14); AL N; XP 975.

S 17; D 18; C 13; I 9; W 10; Ch 12

LOOK, BIRDS!

—TINIUS WANN

Special Equipment: *long sword* +2 (Outlands forged, +1 here), *boots of striding and springing*, 15 10 gp gems, 3 pp, 19 gp, 27 sp.

Personality: Adventurous, outgoing, currently annoyed

Thief Abilities: PP 90, OL 20, F/RT 10, MS 40, HS 55, DN 35, CW 75, RL 45

◆ BEYOND THE DOOR ◆

On the other side, the doorway passes into a kennel of creatures known as hgaun. The product of some wizard's experimentation here on the Elemental Plane of Air, hgaun possess the bodies of medium-sized dogs, birdlike heads with multifaceted eyes, and feathered wings just large enough to allow them to get airborne. The doorway is in the back of the kennel, between two infrequently used cages, and appears to be made of rusted iron on the kennel side.

The appearance of the PCs causes the hgaun to bark (a high pitched sort of squawking sound), but since they are in cages, the creatures pose no threat—which they wouldn't in any case, since they are domesticated creatures used for hunting on this plane. If the PCs spend too long in the kennel area, the keeper, Tonner comes to investigate the barking. He won't bother the PCs much more than to give them a suspicious look regarding their presence (Tonner's not too bright).

TONNER (PI/3 human/O/NG): AC 10; MV 12; hp 4; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (club and Strength bonus); SZ M (5' 11" tall); ML average (8); AL NG; XP 7.

S 16; D 13; C 12; I 8; W 7; Ch 14

Personality: Cheerful, trusting

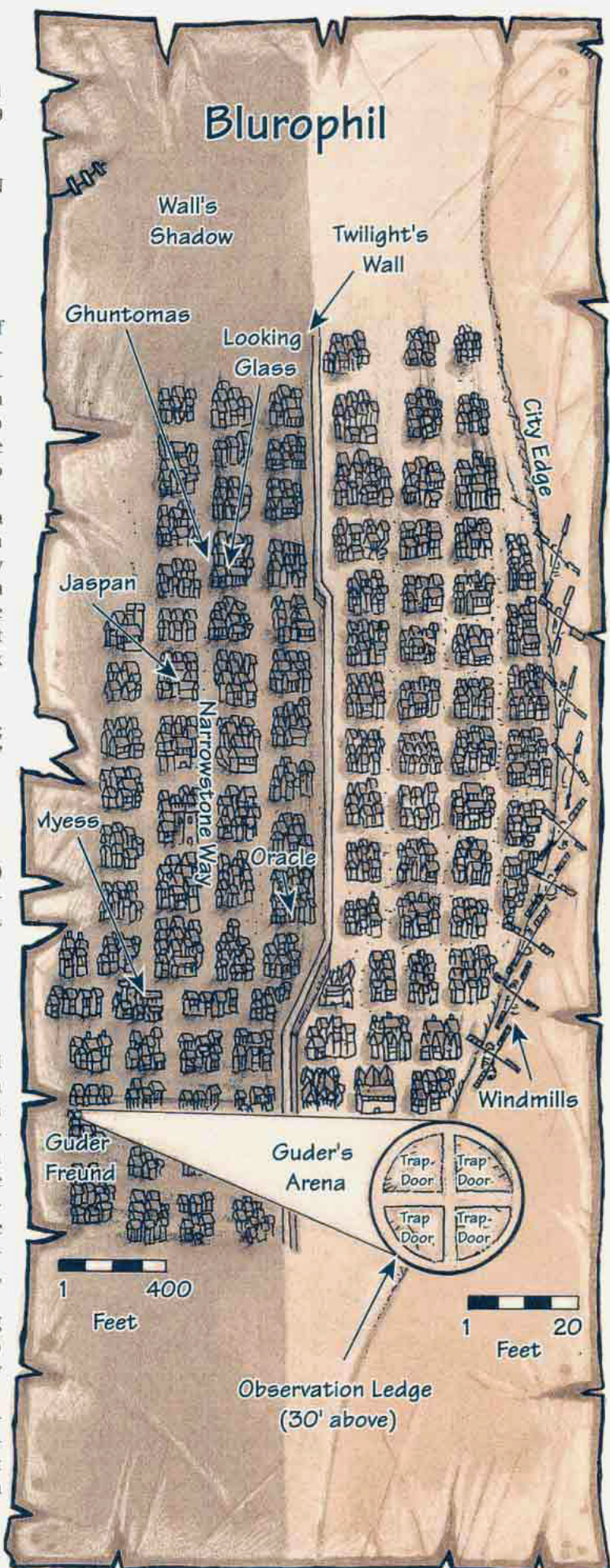
HGAUN: AC 6; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 2+1; hp 10 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite); SD Immune to illusions, gaze attacks, and other vision-related attacks; SZ S (4' long); ML steady (12); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 175.

◆ CITY OF AIR ◆

The Riven once were a people that lived on a prime world called Ortho. Centuries ago, a group called the Harmonium arose from Ortho, conquering much of the world with both force of arms and philosophy. They brought peace and harmony, but it was a peace through subjugation—at least from the point of view of those who disagreed. The dissenters were called the Riven. When the Harmonium saw that the dissenters would not join them, rather than slaughter an entire people, they offered the Riven exile. The Riven chose to accept and fled through a portal to the plane of Air (which, chant has it, the Harmonium promptly blocked afterward).

Traveling like nomads on airships and magically floating platforms, the Riven slowly gathered together materials to create a home for themselves on the plane. Eventually, they succeeded.

The Riven built Blurophil on a huge metal disk. They surrounded the entire city with a hemispherical *wall of force* except for the very edge of the disk, leaving a gap some 20 feet high. All along this exposed edge, windmills turn and turn in



the constant breezes of the plane. The turning of these magical windmills powers the sphere of force that protects the city.

Now Blurophil prospers in the peace and protection built around it. Planar travelers come to the city for trade as well as relaxation. Poets and artisans flocked to the city as it floats forever in tranquility.

The population of Blurophil reaches upward to 10,000 people. King Birus VI rules over the floating domain as did his Riven fathers before him. Although tall spires made of glass and shining metal rise up from the round base, the entire community surrounds a circular park filled with well-tended greenery and even animals (obviously, all of these are brought in from other planes).

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Every standard year the inhabitants of Blurophil hold a two-week celebration called the Festival of Lights in the city's center. Known throughout many planes, this gala event glorifies art, song, dance, food, and drink. The name comes from the traditional flashlamps carried by many of the attendees (and available for purchase throughout the festival) which reflect normal oil lamp light with a series of mirrors and colored lenses. The reflected light dances around the city center continually.

Except for this year. The Iron Shadow has infected Blurophil, and worse, it's come at the time of the festival. Artisans have lost all initiative and creativity, the performers have lost their skill and desire to sing and dance, and even the flashlamp vendors find few willing to purchase their wares. Visitors from other planes plan to head home soon (which means that they'll spread the Iron Shadow to their planes—a potentially disastrous situation), because the festival just isn't meeting anyone's expectations.

The player characters find, as they wander through town, that people are either in a stupor (usually, these are the creative types affected by the Iron Shadow) or they are angry or disgruntled at the disappointing festival. In short, Blurophil isn't a happy place.

If the PCs ask around regarding the events of late, many people describe what's happened as some sort of illness that has struck down the artists and performers. Some believe it to be a curse. After a time, a single PC hears the name of the Oracle of Forgotten Night bandied about regarding the curse (the coming of the Iron Shadow). The oracle should have foretold the curse, they say, but it didn't—and most people don't know why.

Virtually anyone in Blurophil can explain that the Oracle of Forgotten Night lies in the district known as Twilight's Wall. Most don't know exactly what it is, but usual chant regarding what the oracle has to say spreads through town, warning of coming calamity or predicting success.

TWILIGHT'S WALL

Light in the Elemental Plane of Air is all-pervasive, meaning that while no actual light source exists, there's light everywhere—enough for all to see. Twilight's Wall runs along one

part of town, near the edge. It stands 20 feet tall and extends for about 20 blocks. For reasons that no one completely understands, the wall yields a shadow across one area of town as though some bright light were cast outside town. The shadow is long (such as they are at twilight, hence the name), stretching across about five blocks of the city.

When the inhabitants of Blurophil speak of this area, they usually do so in whispers. It's thought to be cursed, some evil magic creating the shadow. They might be right. In any event, the district offers home to only those too poverty stricken to live elsewhere, or those wishing to stay out of sight—thieves and their ilk.

THE ORACLE OF FORGOTTEN NIGHT

Within the perpetually darkened slum of Twilight's Wall lies the Oracle of Forgotten Night. Most folks claim that the oracle lies in the darkest umbra of the wall's shadow, but that's really a matter of opinion rather than fact.

To a newcomer, all that's visible is a simple stone structure, starkly contrasted (along with many of the buildings of the district) against the metal towers of the other portions of Blurophil. Unmarked and unlit, this structure appears abandoned. It's not.

Within, Deidarth Three-Eye makes his home and watches over the "oracle." The oracle appears as a three-foot blue iron rod set on a tripod and topped with a red gem. According to Deidarth, the gem casts images on the ground around the tripod that only he can see (thus, "Three-Eye"). However, that's all a lie—Deidarth himself is the oracle, or perhaps it would be better to say that his sister is—but then, she's

dead. Evonia was Deidarth's twin sister who died when they were both very young. She remained, in death, with her brother as a restless spirit. She receives premonitions of the future regarding Deidarth, the city, and various people within it, which she reveals to Deidarth.

Now, however, Deidarth is missing. So, of course, is the oracle. But Evonia remains.

A thorough search of the place reveals little. Deidarth normally earns a better-than-meager living from the donations of those who he has helped through his prophecy. Unfortunately, he spends most of his earnings on drink and thus owns little in the way of real wealth. Two completely separate clues to Deidarth's disappearance await the PCs. The first is Evonia herself. As the PCs search the tiny home, Evonia attempts to evaluate their intentions and their overall outlook (alignment). If they seem interested in finding her missing brother with honest and respectable intentions, Evonia appears before them as an intelligent phantom. Unfortunately, this means that anyone seeing her must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic at a -2 penalty or flee in panic as though affected by a *fear* spell. Evonia's phantom looks like a ghostly apparition of an eight-year-old girl dressed in shabby clothes. If anyone resists the effects of the terrifying



sight Evonia speaks to them: "To find my brother and restore the Oracle of Forgotten Night, see Guder Fruend. He knows where Deidarth's kidnapper can be found." Evonia says nothing else, and promptly disappears.

The other clue that the PCs can find isn't quite so obvious—at least, it doesn't come right out and *speak* to them. Under the single, simple bed found in the back room lies a piece of paper with a number of names written on it. All the names have been crossed off except for one—Ghuntos of Thorn. There's even an address of a sort scribbled beside the name: Narrowstone Way.

The list is far more innocent than the PCs might assume. It is, in fact, a list of individuals in Blurophil that were willing to extend Deidarth credit to buy alcohol. Ghuntos is nothing more than Deidarth's drinking buddy—a fellow drunkard—who will help pay for Deidarth's nasty habit when they go to the ale-houses together. Looking up any of the other names simply results in the investigators meeting a former friend of Deidarth tired of lending him money, or a barkeep no longer willing to let the bubbler in his establishment.

Nevertheless, PCs who stumble upon Ghuntos might be surprised at the knowledge he has.

EVONIA, PHANTOM: AC n/a; MV n/a; hp n/a; THACO n/a; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA sight causes throw vs. death magic at a -2 penalty or flee in panic as though affected by a *fear* spell; SZ S (3' 1" tall); ML n/a; AL LG; XP nil.

GHUN+ΘMAS ΘF THORN

Down the street, still in the area of Twilight's Wall, lies Narrowstone Way and the tiny home of Ghuntos of Thorn. Ghuntos lives in a single-room dwelling above a disreputable tavern known by the unlikely name of *The Looking Glass*.

Long ago, Ghuntos—a prime from a place he referred to only as Thorn—lived in Sigil working as a respected sage and scholar. He belonged to the Fraternity of Order faction and studied the ways of Law and the nature of the multiverse. Ghuntos, in his years of work, developed a number of strange theories regarding Law and its opposite, Chaos. Ghuntos believed that rather than being opposed, the two forces were meant to work together—and in conjunction they made the multiverse work.

Various applications of this theory proved false, but enough of his alchemical experiments produced results to convince him of its truth. His theories angered his fellow fac-

tion members, who urged him to keep them to himself. He refused and eventually published his ideas and experiments in a book called *Ever-changing Order*. The Guvners expelled him from the faction and he left the City of Doors in disgrace. Although his publisher made a fair profit from his book, Ghuntos couldn't be found to receive his share. (Later, when his presence in

Blurophil became more widely known, his publisher claimed that Ghuntos had defaulted on his contract and no longer deserved his money. Although a Guvner defaulting on a contract is patently absurd, the story was accepted.)

Penniless and shamed, Ghuntos has remained in self-imposed exile here among the exiled Riven. He's unfortunately drowned his troubles in bub, becoming a well-known drunkard and fool not above accepting hand-outs.

Ghuntos and Deidarth Third-Eye became friends in a tavern, not surprisingly. Ghuntos, when he had jink to spend, was always generous and Deidarth was just the sort to take advantage. Still, the keeper of the oracle repaid his debts to his friend most of the time and the two got along well.

If the PCs find and question the almost-assuredly drunk Ghuntos, they're likely to hear his tale of woe. However, his background should be enough to draw their attention whether they've heard of *Ever-changing Order* in some of the other Tales or not. If they can sober him up, Ghuntos can tell them a great deal about dispelling the Iron Shadow (in fact, the whole thing intrigues and fascinates him). However, if the PCs don't have or know about the Navimas (see Tale 4), Ghuntos' instructions and advice are only theoretical, since he was never able to discover a catalyst for the processes he describes.

Eventually, Ghuntos grows tired of discussing the matter and just wants a drink. He advises the PCs to find a copy of *Ever-changing Order*. "It's all in there," he tells them, "and my mind was a lot clearer back then."

Ghuntos doesn't have much will left. Forceful PCs can make him do just about whatever they want him to, although he's good for nothing beyond the occasional bit of advice regarding esoteric and scholarly topics and consuming surprising amounts of alcohol.



WHAT AMazes ME IS
THAT EVEN THOSE PEOPLE
WHO BELIEVE THAT CHAOS
CAN BE ORDERED
CANNOT ADMIT
THAT ORDER CAN BE CHAOTIC.
HOW CAN PEOPLE WHO STUDY
THE MULTIVERSE SO CLOSELY
BE SO TERRIBLY BLIND?
I ASK YOU—
WHAT IS "UP" WITHOUT "DOWN"
OR "RIGHT" WITHOUT A "LEFT"
TO OPPOSE IT AS AN EQUAL
AND FOREVER-LINKED
COUNTERPART?

—GHUN+ΘMAS



GHUNTOMAS OF THORN (Pr/♂ human/WB): AC 10; MV 12; hp 18; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg Nil or 1d4 (if given a dagger); SZ M (5' 8" tall); ML Unreliable (3); AL N (was LG at one time).

S 7; D 8; C 8; I 16 (was 18 once); W 6; Ch 12

Spells: None memorized. Ghuntomas sold his spellbook long ago (to buy bub) and hasn't cast a spell in years.

THE GASPING ♦ STRANGLER ♦

All the while the PCs wander about Blurophil, the chant regarding someone called the Gasping Stranger spreads. It seems that seven people have fallen victim to this killer who stalks the streets—particularly in the area of Twilight's Wall.

While this doesn't appear to have anything to do with the PCs' goals or interests, in fact it's directly related. The Gasping Strangler is the very individual who has kidnapped Deidarth.

As they explore Blurophil, PCs might hear any or all the following rumors regarding the Strangler. Some of these are true (T) and some are false (F). The talk becomes more prevalent around Twilight's Wall, where it comprises most of the conversation.

- ♦ The killer's called the Gasping Strangler because those that've got away say he's always gasping as if out of breath. (T)
- ♦ The killer got his name because he steals the breath from his victims. (F)
- ♦ All the murdered victims were strangled. (T)
- ♦ The Gasping Strangler is a man-hating woman. (F)
- ♦ The Strangler is a fiend from the Abyss. (F)
- ♦ All the victims of the Strangler have been human. (T)
- ♦ The authorities believe the killer to be a wizard, based on his ability to escape and hide himself so well. (T)
- ♦ The victims' possessions were not disturbed, proving that the slayings were not motivated by greed. (F)
- ♦ The Gasping Strangler is actually a group of killers, rather than just one individual. (F)
- ♦ All the victims were killed in the Twilight's Wall district. (T)
- ♦ All the victims were from the Twilight's Wall district. (F)

CLUES

If the PCs try to find Gasping Strangler, they might discover a number of things about his victims, his method of operation, and his character. The party can obtain this information by speaking with (and probably bribing) the city's Royal Guard (the local constabulary), checking through back issues of a press sheet called *Windborne Chant*, which has been reporting

on the incidents, or speaking with people in the Twilight's Wall district. The last option, of course, leads to some of the misinformation listed above as well as the facts.

The Gasping Strangler follows two important precepts of the planes in general—the Rule of Threes and the Unity of Rings. As every planewalker knows, the Rule of

Threes is based around the idea that everything happens in threes (Law-Neutrality-Chaos,

Goodness-Neutrality-Evil, Prime-Planar-Petitioner, Inner Planes-Prime Material-Outer Planes, and so on). Further, the Unity of Rings concept says that everything in the multiverse resembles a ring—like the Great Ring of the Outer Planes themselves.

What goes around comes around.

The Strangler adheres to these precepts literally. The murders have all been spaced three days apart, in groups of threes, with six days between each group. Further, the victims have all been of different alignments, each corresponding to one of the Outer Planes, starting with Mount Celestia (Lawful Good) and moving around the Great Ring counterclockwise.

The killer's victims so far include (in order):

1. Riun Tonravel, a paladin (LG)
2. Biana Reddar, a scullery maid (LNG)
3. Onra the Bookman, a Guvner bookkeeper (LN)
4. Yuor Tinagethin, warrior from Acheron (LNE)
5. Taeris Nuyin, a priest of Set (LE)
6. Ghreniel K'del, a thief specializing in assassination (LNE)
7. Mearell, a mean-tempered thug (NE)

Any personal details of each of their lives are unimportant in regard to their murders—only their personal outlooks, general demeanors, and beliefs were important to the murderer.

Knowledge of these important facts gives an investigator the following information if he's able to figure out the pattern. The next victim will "represent" the plane of Carceri. That is to say, he will be of Neutral Evil alignment with chaotic tendencies. He'll also know that the murder will occur three days after the most recent slaying.

The Gasping Stranger's next victim will be a woman named Jaspan. She's well known in the Twilight's Wall area as a rabble rouser. Jaspan makes it no secret that she wants to gather enough of the Riven together so that she can and travel to the plane of Carceri where the Titans languish in



LOOK AT YOU,
FLOPPING YOUR FLESHY
BODIES AROUND,
SUCKING IN THE PURE,
UNBLEMISHED AIR OF THIS PLANE
JUST SO YOU CAN DO
SOMETHING AS INSIGNIFICANT
AS LIVE YOUR
PATHETIC LITTLE LIFE.
IT WILL BE SO MUCH
BETTER HERE WHEN
YOU ARE ALL GONE.
—MYESS



their eternal imprisonment. Once freed, Jaspan hopes they would help avenge the Riven against the Harmonium, allowing the exiles to return home. Practically worshipping the imprisoned titans, she fits the perfect definition of NCE.

PCs on the lookout for someone fitting such a definition (after tumbling to the Strangler's patterns) may very well learn about Jaspan and attempt to find her. They do, just in time, or just a little too late (see *On the Scene*, page 82).

A MURDERER'S MIND

Many people go insane on the planes. So many, in fact, that the Cagers in Sigil have a commonly used slang term for them. They call them barmies. Some folks just can't handle the scope of the planes or the mind-shattering things that they find there.

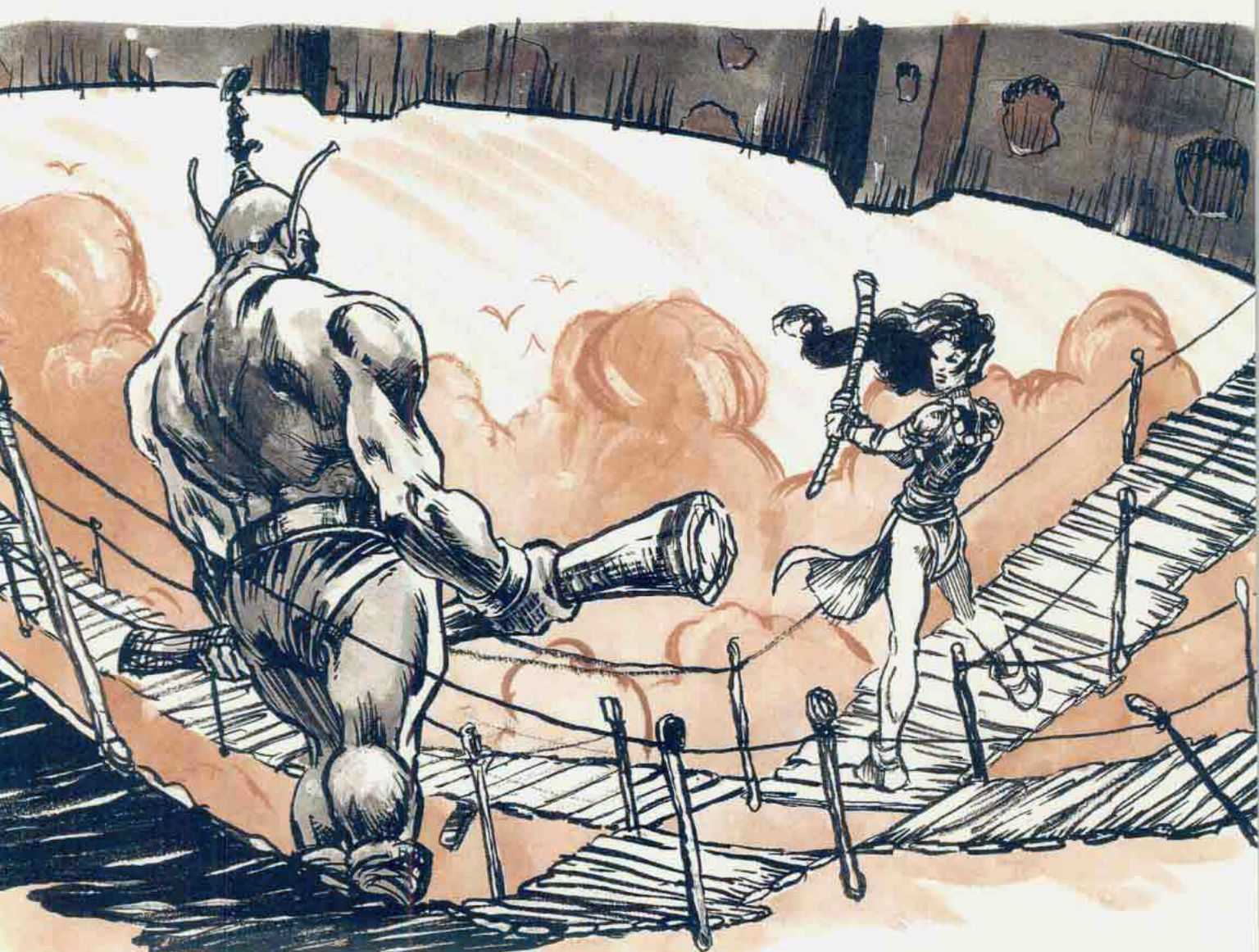
But then, some berks are born that way. Take Myess Breezewing. Only part human, Myess was born plane-touched. Sired by a djinn (who promptly left his human mother), Myess is an air genasi. His breathy, almost raspy voice and light blue hair are testament to his heritage.

Myess has always believed he was more than the mere mortals around him. So contemptuous were his feelings that he soon began to hate the presence of humans and other creatures not native to Air. After years of basking in his hatred,

Myess finally decided that it was his duty, because of his combined heritage, to rid the plane of all creatures not born of the winds. Humans and other creatures on the Elemental Plane of Air must die.

Thus, he began to kill them one by one. With the spells at his disposal, it became a simple matter of sneaking around, gaining information about his victims and then moving in undetected to strike at them with his strangling cord. As a final bit of justice, he believed, he sent them to the dead-book by robbing them of the air that they had no right to in the first place. Following the order of things that he thought proper, he found and slew his victims in a rigid system. It was the only way to efficiently see his goal come to fruition, his deluded mind told him.

Before he began, however, he had to eliminate anyone who could stop him. The only thing that he feared was the Oracle of Forgotten Night, which seemed to be so capable of accurately predicting the future that his enemies could surely use it against him. Instead, Myess decided, he would take the oracle for himself and use it to help him in his mission. At the last moment, he realized that he probably needed the oracle's interpreter Deidarth as well. Myess kidnapped him and brought him and the oracle to his home (see *The Villain's Lair*, page 83).



◆ GUDER FRUEND ◆

Even if the PCs don't visit Ghuntomas of Thorn or pursue the Gasping Strangler, they'll probably follow the phantom's lead and talk to Guder Fruend. He lives in Blurophil and finding him presents no more difficulty than asking a few locals. Many people know of him and his work.

Guder runs a training center for warriors, schooling others in the arts of brawling and close-quarter fighting for money. A tiefling, Guder stands well over 6 feet tall with a massive build and hands like hammers. His skin is a dark blue and red hair tops his large, imposing head.

The PCs will quickly tumble to the fact that Guder's not a great source of information—at least, not at first. He's not known for his loquaciousness or even his friendliness. If the PCs come to him with questions, all they'll get consists of a few grunts or the minimum sort of answer. He'll claim ignorance of whatever subject they inquire about, unless it regards fighting.

Guder won't *really* talk to anyone he hasn't met in the challenge of combat. Although he won't suggest it, if a PC offers to go into Guder's small arena, the big tiefling's bone-box gets a little looser—but not until the fight actually starts.

As a combat instructor, Guder uses the main room in his training center as a large arena. Metal walls and a bare stone floor appear stark—dents, scars, and bloodstains on the walls denote the many past fights that have taken place here.

If a challenger enters the arena with Guder, the tiefling explains that no magic of any kind beyond magical armor is allowed in the arena (*bracers of defense* and *rings of protection* are fine too). Combat is always one on one, and only bare fists or clubs are allowed.

Eight clubs with leather straps hang from pegs on the walls. Even the most ingenious basher can find nothing else to be used as a weapon in the room.

This is in no way a fight to the death. It lasts until one combatant yields. Guder yields when he is reduced to 5 hit points or lower. Due to his training, he is able to retain consciousness until he reaches -5 hit points.

If Guder notices anything that looks like cheating (in his own opinion—which includes spellcasting, psionics, a non-arming magical item, or any spell-like ability at all), he'll use his own concealed surprise. He knows of three particular spots on the floor that when depressed just right open four trap doors. These trap doors each reveal a shaft that extends down and eventually out of the city altogether. Anyone falling through them drops right out of Blurophil—straight down to an endless plunge through the plane of Air.

The open trapdoors leave only a five-foot-wide, cross-shaped portion of the floor intact. Anyone in the room when the doors open must make a Dexterity check to reach the stable area of the floor—with a +5 bonus if they know it's going to open (applicable only to Guder, most likely), and *another* +5 bonus, cumulative with the other bonus, if they're standing on the stable portion of the floor to begin with. Thing is, unless his life is threatened, Guder won't open the trapdoors with someone standing on them. He uses more as a scare tactic and a threat to those who appear to be cheating.

If the fight continues, any character taking damage in the area must make a Dexterity check to avoid falling—but this threat is just as real to Guder. Falling characters can make a second Dexterity check. If successful, they've managed to catch the edge of the floor. A Strength check at a +2 bonus is required each round to hang on. If this happens, Guder says the fight is over, and helps the character up immediately (if it's Guder hanging from the edge, he'll concede that he's lost and pull himself up). If an opponent misses *both* checks, Guder tries to grab hold of him, attempting a Dexterity check at -4 penalty and then an unmodified Strength check.

Once the fight begins, Guder asks the PC what it is that he wants to know, assuming that the planewalkers were asking the warrior questions before. He tries to get the PC talking to distract him, although he answers questions truthfully and completely.

Whether during the fight or afterward (no matter who won, assuming the PC put up a good fight and didn't cheat more than once),

Guder will tell his challenger that he doesn't know where Deidarth is, but he saw him with a fellow named Myess about a week ago. Myess, Guder explains, is a wizard (and therefore almost beneath notice, as far as the warrior's concerned) and a particularly unfriendly one at that. "He's got some air elemental somethin' or other for a father, and it gives him a big attitude," he says. "Real touchy, that one, especially about his raspy little voice. Doesn't like anyone—seems to think that nobody deserves to live on this plane but him and his elemental buddies."

To canny PCs who have paid attention to the local chant, this will probably suggest the possibility of having something to do with the Gasping Strangler. If not, the



BELIEF IS P⊕WER,
YEAH RIGH⊕.

I BELIEVE IN A FINELY ⊕NED B⊕DY
AND A WELL-BALANCED WEAP⊕N.
I BELIEVE A BERK WITH A BR⊕KEN SKULL
AIN'⊕ MUCH G⊕⊕D F⊕R ANY⊕HING.
D⊕ Y⊕U BELIEVE Y⊕U CAN BEAT ME
IN A FAIR FIGH⊕?

—GUDER FRUEND,
WAXING PHIL⊕S⊕PHICAL



investigating planewalkers aren't up against the blinds. Although Guder doesn't know where Myess calls kip, he

knows the location of someone who might—a "basher named Vassilon what lives up in that Sorrow's Roost."

The DM should manipulate Guder's level so that it's the same as the PC challenging him.

GUDER FREUND (Pl/♂ tiefling/F5): AC 5 (leather armor +1, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 43; THACO 16 (14 using Strength, 13 with club); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+4 (fist) or 1d6+6 (club, Strength bonus, specialization); SA Casts *darkness 10-foot radius* once per day; SD Half damage from fire and acid; SZ M (6' 6" long); ML champion (15); AL N; XP 175.

S 18/82; D 16; C 17; I 9; W 8; Ch 6

Special equipment: leather armor +1

SORROW'S ROOST†

High above Blurophil, suspended by some freakish application of the mysterious interactions of the Inner Planes, a chunk of earth—from the plane of Earth—rises just within sight of the Riven's sanctuary city. The rock provides a home for a variety of birds and an odd pair of individuals—an abiorach (the rilmani who watch over the balance on the Elemental Planes) named Vassilon and a peryton named Ert.

Sorrow's Roost gains its name from an old tale of an intelligent pair of owls that lived here, and were eventually slain by a small flock of evil perytons. Ironically, Ert was one of the murderous creatures who then attacked Vassilon as he passed by while wandering this plane. The rilmani slew all of his attackers but Ert. Wounded and dying, Ert struck a bargain with Vassilon. The peryton would serve and obey the rilmani for the rest of its life if only he would let Ert live. Vassilon agreed. In the years that have followed, the chaotic and evil Ert has attempted to escape or betray his "master," but has always failed due to Vassilon's power and his own lasting injuries from the battle.

Finding Sorrow's Roost presents no problem. Getting there does. Just about everyone in Blurophil knows about the floating rock, and some even know the story behind it, although no one the PCs speak with knows the current dark regarding Vassilon and Ert.

The PCs have a number of options for getting to Sorrow's Roost. For 15 gp per hour per person, they can rent trained hippogriffs for the journey from a female aarakocra named Saakrak (Pl/♀ aarakocra/HD 1+2/NG) who left her tribe on Elysium long ago to come to the plane of Air. These creatures are trained to return to their roost after a predetermined time (this prevents anyone from riding off with one permanently). Of course, without any airborne riding proficiencies, a hippogriff ride could be difficult and dangerous for the PCs. A trip to the roost on a hippogriff takes about a half hour.

For 60 gp each, the characters can pay one or more members of the Guild of Floating Sorcerers, a group of wizards specializing in the use of air-related spells, to cast *fly* spells that will get them to the roost. The duration, however, is only 10 turns plus 1d6 turns. The trip takes 5 turns one way, not leaving much time at the roost before the PCs have to leave.

For 30 gp (total), the PCs can hire a cutter named Tinious Wann to fly them to Sorrow's Roost in his hot-air balloon. The craft can

only take six passengers—including Wann—and takes two hours to reach the roost and three to get back. Worst of all, Wann's slightly barmy and likes to chase birds in his balloon, so he's likely to frequently take the group off-course. The distractions only get worse as they get closer to Sorrow's Roost.

Once at the roost, the planewalkers meet Vassilon, who constantly has a mass of churning air around him. He knows of Myess—the air genasi even came to Sorrow's Roost once to speak with him. He rattled his bone-box at length regarding his belief that no one belongs on the plane of Air except the natives, and Vassilon dismissed him. He can tell the PCs where Myess' home is, however, just on the edge of Twilight's Wall itself.

Whether Vassilon helps them or not depends in part on their prior activities on the Outlands or even their agreement to eventually travel to the Outlands "to help a rilmani city with a problem much like the one that has come upon Blurophil." He certainly seeks no garnish in the way of money and any pleas for justice, or wrongs to right, the PCs might make fall upon deaf ears. If the PCs attempt to convince him that they seek to put an end to the Iron Shadow, which currently causes an artificial imbalance in the multiverse (or a similar sort of reasoning based around the rilmani adherence to balance), they might be able to sway him.

After the characters speak to Vassilon, however, Ert approaches. In his grating, almost squawking yet whispering voice, he tells them, "You can go to Myess' home if you want, but if you're looking for him—my guess is that right about now he's paying a visit upon a woman named Jaspan." Ert's been watching the events in the city regarding the Gasping Strangler with interest, and long ago figured out that Myess was the murderer. Due to his nature, however, he's never let on to anyone what he's learned. Now, he tells the PCs simply because it strikes his fancy and he's grown bored of hearing about Myess' deeds.

TINIUS WANN (Pl/♂ human/F2/CN): AC 2 (chain mail, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 15; THACO 19 (17 with composite long bow and Dexterity Bonus); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2d4+1 (morning star plus Strength bonus) or 1d8+1/1d8+1 (composite long bow, sheaf arrow, and Strength bonus); SZ M (5'9" tall); ML elite (14); AL CN; XP 35.

S 16; D 17; C 16; I 9; W 11; Ch 13

Personality: Impulsive, uncultured

VASSILON, ABIORACH: AC 2; MV 15, Fl 18 (A); HD 5; hp 29; THACO 15 (12 with war fork); #AT 1; Dmg 3d4+4 (war fork +1, Strength bonus); SA Casts *continual light* or *darkness*, *detect alignment*, *dismissal*, *gaze reflection*, *glitterdust*, *hold monster*, *invisibility*, *know alignment*, *mirror image*, *poly-*

morph self, shocking grasp (Dmg 1d8+5) *teleport without error* (at will), *gust of wind* (3×/day), *wall of force* (1×/day), 25% chance to summon an air elemental (1×/day); SD +1 weapon to hit, immune to air-based attacks as an elemental; MR 25%; SZ M (5' tall); ML elite (13); Int high (13); AL N; XP 2,000.

Special Equipment: *war fork* +3 (forged on the Plane of Air), 3 50 gp gems and 7 gp

ERT, PERYTON: AC 7; MV 3, Fl 6 (C); HD 4; hp 14; THACO 17 (15 with racial bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 4d4 (horns); SA +2 to all attack rolls, can swoop down upon opponents from hundreds of feet above gaining +2 to attack roll and inflicting double damage; SD +1 weapon to hit; SZ M (5' tall); ML champion (16); Int avg (10); AL CE; XP 270.

Note: Ert's injuries have never healed correctly, and he can only fly and walk awkwardly and slowly.

HIPPOGRIFFS: AC 5; MV 18, Fl 36 (C); HD 3+3; hp 15 each; THACO 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d10 (claw/claw/bite); SZ L (10' long); ML average (9); Int semi (2-4); AL N; XP 175 each.

Notes: A hippogriff has a flying speed of 18 and class D maneuverability when carrying a rider.

ON THE SCENE

Following Vassilon's—or rather, Ert's—advice, the PCs should arrive at the scene of the latest Gasping Strangler murders. Alternatively, if the PCs were following up on the Strangler's activities and saw through the patterns of the slayings, they might very well have arrived here following their own investigative work.

The scene is just outside the home of Jaspan, the revenge-minded rabble rouser of the Twilight's Wall district. By the time the PCs arrive, Myess has already dragged Jaspan into the alleyway beside her teneament, having surprised her, and now begins to strangle her with a thick cord. She's unable to draw her weapon or do anything but try to break from his grip.

While he strangles Jaspan, Myess automatically inflicts 1d4 points of damage per round. Jaspan must make a successful Strength check at a -4 penalty to break free on her own. Others can attempt to pull Myess away from her by making an opposed Strength check against him (both Myess and his opponent make checks; if both succeed, the higher number prevails).

More than likely, though, if Myess is discovered, he attempts to use his spells to escape. Using *invisibility* and *dimension door*, that might be fairly easy. Of course, if the PCs have been to Sorrow's Roost, they probably know where Myess' home is located—and Myess doesn't know that.



If prevented from leaving, Myess fights to avoid capture or defeat. Desperate to succeed in his "mission," he won't willingly surrender. He'd rather die. If the PCs defeat him now, the threat may be over, but they still need to go to his "lair" to find Deidarth.

Either way, if Jaspan survives the attack thanks to the intervention of the PCs', she's surprisingly ungrateful. In fact, she's belligerent and condescending, for that is her nature. It explains why she's been so monumentally unsuccessful in gaining followers for her cause.

JASPAN (PI/♀ human/F2); AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; hp 15; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); SZ M (5' 9" tall); ML champion (15); AL CE; XP 35.

S 12; D 10; C 16; I 13; W 7; Ch 9

MYESS BREEZEWING, THE GASPING STRANGLER (PI/♂ air genasi/El(Air)7); AC 7 (*ring of protection* +1, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 16; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (dagger, Strength bonus); SA *levitate* (1x/day), spells; SD +2 on saving throws vs. air-related spells; SZ M (5' 5" tall); ML elite (13); AL CE; XP 2,000.

S 16; D 16; C 11; I 14; W 8; Ch 7

Special equipment: *ring of protection* +1 (forged on the plane of Air), strangling cord

Spells (5,4,3,2): 1st—*change self*, *color spray*, *feather fall*, *hold portal*, *sleep*; 2nd—*bind*, *blur*, *fog cloud*, *invisibility*, 3rd—*dispel magic*, *hold person*, *wind wall*; 4th—*dimension door*, *solid fog*.

THE VILLAIN'S LAIR

Myess lives, not surprisingly, in the Twilight's Wall district. His home is a simple two-room structure filled with books. Each book contains his own hand-written rants regarding the superiority of things of Air, the need for a cleansing of the plane of all things not native, and similar topics.

Myess lives in the front room, keeping Deidarth and the oracle in the back room, which also holds books and a few normal supplies. Deidarth hangs upside down, his legs tied to the rafters by ropes and his arms bound. Myess wants him to be able to see any images projected by the oracle (which sits on the floor near him). Of course, Deidarth and the oracle have been able to predict absolutely nothing, since Deidarth's story of how it all works is a lie. The premonitions come from his dead sister and she's unable to leave their house. Before the PCs arrived, Myess was threatening Deidarth with the dead-book if he didn't make a useful, accurate prediction soon.

If Myess currently occupies his lair, he bars the door both physically with an iron bar and with a *hold portal* spell. Then, if he believes that someone's coming for him, he hides in the rafters of the back room (using his innate *levitate* ability), readying spells and preparing to make an ambush. He'll even use Deidarth as a hostage if he thinks such a tactic will work.

Hidden in the rafters with him, he keeps the valuables that he's taken from his victims. In a locked iron box balanced on a rafter, he keeps 137 gp, 169 sp, a 5 gp gem, a 30 gp ring, a 50 gp bracelet, and a *potion of sweet water*. On top of the box, within easy grasp, is a small pouch with a single dose of *dust of sneezing and choking* that he'll use against attackers.

Lastly, while it's not a real escape hatch, Myess knows of a weak spot in the roof over the back room. If really threatened, he smashes his way through the thatch and wood (requiring a Strength check at a -2 penalty) and escapes onto the roof and away.

AFTER THE RESCUE

The rescued Deidarth is very grateful. So grateful, in fact, that once he returns to his home (and his sister), he uses the "oracle" to tell the PCs something about what they want to know:

"In a vast, open plain near a very tall and narrow mountain, there is a library filled with mirrors. Within the library is a book which tells of a cure for the disease that you've seen threaten so much."

and

"Beyond the swirling mists of matter and energy lies a temple with only one priest. This priest holds the secret to curing the ills of not only his own plane, but that which threatens them all, eventually."

and

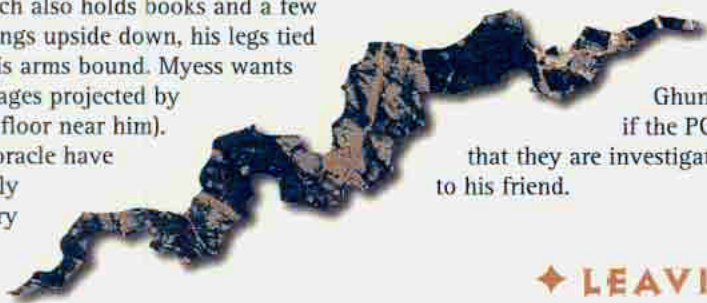
"In a jingling, rainswept city, a ruler, no ruler, broods in his citadel of chain. He rejoices in the death of invention, and strives to find the library and the temple to seize the knowledge you seek."

Unfortunately, Deidarth doesn't know much about Ghuntomas's prior history. Thus, even if the PCs describe in detail the problems that they are investigating, it never occurs to him to go to his friend.

◆ LEAVING AIR ◆

The local populace hails those who end the Gaspig Strangler's slayings as heroes. Although no official reward is presented, the PC heroes gain the gratitude and respect of all the city—in particular, the people around Twilight's Wall.

Many portals lie in Blurophil, through which the PCs could travel to a number of other planes, including Sigil. Of course, if the Iron Shadow still poses its threat, they run the danger of spreading the infection. Most likely, the player characters' best plan remains using the Infinite Staircase doorway that they used to arrive here.



*Sleep. Dream.
Escape.*

*You know—in your heart of hearts if not in your mind (of
minds?)—that while you dream you no longer hide within*

*your mortal shell. Dreams do not stay fettered to something so
mundane. They roam free into the endless Silver Void, where all
dreams meet and frolic,
carrying out their passion-
ate plays. In these tragedies
and comedies dreams have
a life of their own. This life
that almost goes beyond
you, for to the dream, you are but
the medium and it is the actor (all the actors ... the script and
the director). You—your memories, your hopes and
your fears—are its stage.*

TALE 6: THE DREAM WELL

◆ OVERVIEW ◆

When the player characters pass into the Astral Plane, they find themselves in the middle of a githyanki fortress-city devastated by war. The githyanki were savagely attacked by the wormlike psionic psurlons, only one of the race's long list of enemies. When a battle-damaged building collapses, sealing off the doorway to the Infinite Staircase, the PCs are—at least for a while—trapped. Making their way through the ruined, carnage-filled city, they discover a handful of githyanki survivors who don't seem hostile—at least at first.

In the heat of the recent battle, a construction called Dream Well became active. This strange artifact holds secrets that all those still within the city—including the PCs—must delve. The githyanki attempt to engineer the deaths of the player characters, and so keep the secrets of the Dream Well to themselves. The PCs must overcome them and the dream secrets of the Well to survive and to escape (alternatively, they can use the portal to Limbo and leave that way).

The arrival of the Iron Shadow here is not the main focus. The PCs might arrive before it does, and even if they don't, the Dream Well's powers and secrets remain virtually unchanged and just as significant. Appropriate PC levels for this adventure range from 4th to 6th, although as always, if the PCs pick a fight with the slaadi, or if

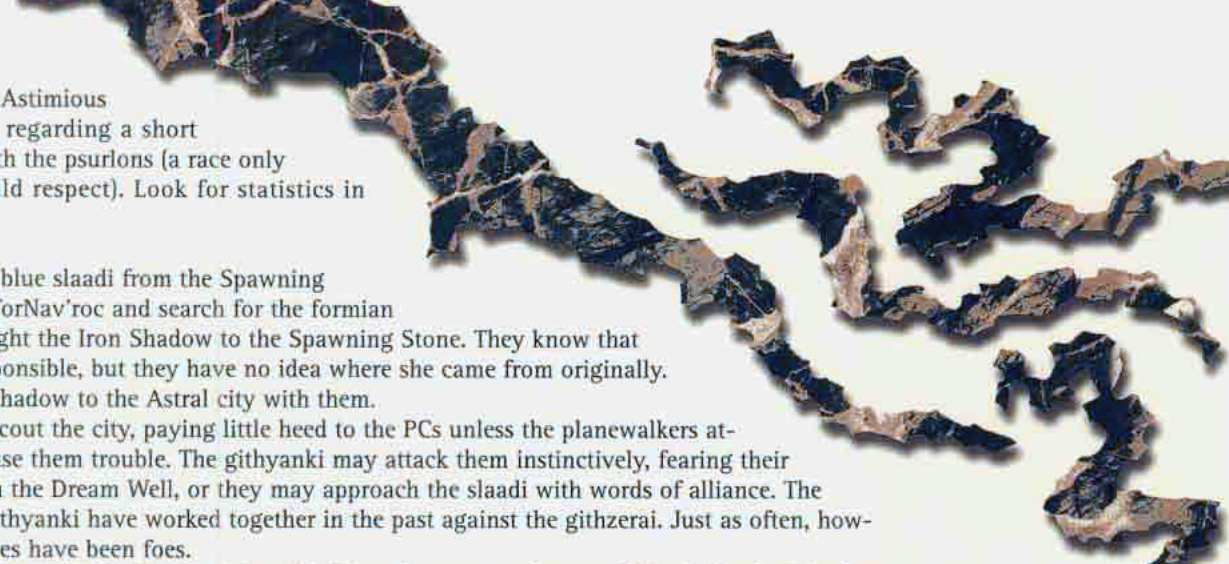
the DM makes the githyanki a little more powerful, this adventure can challenge even high-level characters.

◆ ADVENTURE NOTES ◆

- ◆ If the PCs attracted the attention of the illithids in Tale 1, the mind flayers eventually make their way to the Staircase and three eventually pass through the doorway to TorNav'roc, drawn by the hatred of their former slaves, the githyanki. The mind flayers gaze around in shock at the devastated city. After a little investigation, they discern that it was the psurlons who attacked and defeated the githyanki. With this information, they scuttle back to the Infinite Staircase and toward home. Most likely, they ignore the PCs if they cross paths, sending their nine grimlock bodyguards (see page 28) to deal with them while

THE ONLY THING
WORSE THAN A
CITY OF GITHYANKI
IS A RACE OF CREATURES
WITH THE POWER AND
THE Demeanor
TO WIPE IT OUT,
SPARING NONE.

— TARSHEVA LONGREACH,
PLANEWALKER



they get back to Astimious with a proposal regarding a short term alliance with the psurlons (a race only the illithids could respect). Look for statistics in Tale 1.

- ♦ At Stage 4, four blue slaadi from the Spawning Stone arrive in TorNav'roc and search for the formian queen who brought the Iron Shadow to the Spawning Stone. They know that the queen is responsible, but they have no idea where she came from originally. They bring the Shadow to the Astral city with them.

The slaadi scout the city, paying little heed to the PCs unless the planewalkers attack them or cause them trouble. The githyanki may attack them instinctively, fearing their interference with the Dream Well, or they may approach the slaadi with words of alliance. The slaadi and the githyanki have worked together in the past against the githzerai. Just as often, however, the two races have been foes.

If the slaadi are allied with the githyanki, things become much more difficult for the PCs (low level PCs should not be forced to deal with hostile blue slaadi). One slaad remains with the githyanki, while the others guard the Dream Well. With the slaad on their side, the githyanki attack the planewalking directly and immediately, fearing little chance of defeat.

Otherwise, the blue slaadi wander the city. Only if they find the queen and have trouble exacting their revenge will they attempt to call reinforcements. Use statistics found in Tale 2 for the slaadi.

The arrival of the Iron Shadow makes it very difficult for those in the city to come up with creative ideas and solutions, making the githyanki's task of mastering the secrets of the Dream Well even more difficult. It also stymies the efforts of two shedu (see page 89), who have come to investigate the city.

- ♦ By Stage 6, after wandering through Limbo for a time, the formian queen—for whom the slaadi search—comes through the portal to TorNav'roc.

Distraught and incensed after the onset of the Iron Shadow on Arcadia and the destruction of her city, the formian queen Hviz'mnac wandered through the same portal used by the slaadi. If the PCs explore the city after that point, they may find her sleeping in an alleyway.

Hviz'mnac regained much of her sanity as she rested in the desolate githyanki city, although she's still deeply morose. If she hears that the slaadi are looking for her, the queen asks for the PCs' help in keeping them away from her. In fact, she demands it—she is a queen, and is used to being served unquestioningly. If the PCs possess the Mantelavian scepter or the *helm of the insect*, the queen can influence them even if the characters aren't willing to help. Anyone carrying one (or both) of these items feels compelled to help Hviz'mnac unless the character makes a successful saving throw vs. spells at a -2 penalty. While she doesn't feel bound to obey the queen's every command, the character has a feeling of attachment and affection (not unlike a *charm person* spell).

Now more in charge of her faculties, the queen wants to get back to Klictrik, the formian city on Arcadia, to see what can be done about helping her people. She's intelligent enough to realize that if the slaadi have followed her here they've probably gone to Klictrik as well (and by Stage 6, they have). If she determines that the PCs have been there, she assumes that they know of a way back.

Hviz'mnac also tumbles to the fact that it is movement through portals—or just the activation of portals—that spreads the Iron Shadow. If she hears that the PCs have apparently traveled from place to place without spreading the Shadow, perhaps it has been the means of her travel. If the PCs explain the nature of the Staircase she realizes that the Staircase is immune to the Iron Shadow (a leap in reasoning that the PCs might very well come up with on their own).

Unlike many formian queens, Hviz'mnac retains her mobility—she is not so old and bloated that her legs have atrophied. She can also fight with her mandibles, although if she's presented with a weapon in a dangerous situation, she'll use it—and there're certainly many stray weapons lying about in the city.

HVIZ'MNAC, FORMIAN QUEEN: AC 7; MV 9; HD 9+9; hp 48; THACO 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (bite) or by weapon; MR 20%; SZ L (10' tall); ML fearless (20); Int supra (20); AL LN; XP 5,000.

- ♦ At Stage 8, Jazriul the hound archon comes to TorNav'roc. Once there, he speaks with several astral devas he knows to gain whatever local information he can. Then, he visits the infected area (the githyanki fortress city) to look around—if it is indeed still infected at all (by then, the heroes might have

dispelled it). If the PCs meet him, he is eager to ask them questions about the surrounding area, what they've seen, if they were here when the Shadow came, and so on. If the PCs have already encountered Jazriul, he'll most likely ignore them (unless he owes them a debt, such as if they helped him in Tale 4). No matter what, however, if good aligned PCs need assistance against the evil githyanki, or even the slaadi, he's sure to help if nearby.

Jazriul's magical long sword has no bonuses here.

Lastly, Jazriul would be very happy to meet and speak with the nearby shedu, but he's not at all curious or interested in the Dream Well.

- ♦ If Mulk (Tale 4) or Hannock Ringfinger (Tale 2) arrive in TorNav'roc, the DM should not allow these (or any) NPCs play a major part in the Dream Well portion of the adventure. Their dreams should present themselves as duplicates to dreams that the PCs have or circumstances should cause them to be far away while those events are happening, but these NPCs should not be allowed to figure into the dream sequence in an important way. Essentially, the players have to figure things out and experience them on their own.

- ♦ If the PCs bring the Navimas cure, using knowledge gained from *Ever-changing Order* or Ghuntomas (see Tales 7 and 6, respectively), they can dispel the Iron Shadow from the Astral Plane.

According to *Ever-changing Order*, dropping a bit of the Navimas into the Dream Well or sprinkling drops into a psychic windstorm will scatter the substance throughout the mental energies of the Astral Plane, ridding it of the Shadow. Research needed to determine this process takes (19 minus Intelligence score) days of reading the book.

If this occurs, the few afflicted individuals return to normal immediately. Although dispelling the Shadow is a good thing, the Shados is perhaps the main thing keeping the githyanki from delving into the secrets of the Dream Well. If this happens, the githyanki eventually learn the secrets of the Dream Well, free Aeryv'nir, and gain the *key of dreams* as well as information from the Dreamlost Delve. If the PCs oppose these githyanki, such a turn of events might make things much more difficult (it certainly means that a PC cannot gain the *key*, although they can still get information from the Dreamlost Delve).

The DM should assume that 1d4 days after the Iron Shadow is dispelled, the githyanki master the Well. She should also assume that the two stag-turning githyanki betray and kill the knight (see *Alone in the Void*, page 91).

USING THE ADVENTURE INDEPENDENTLY. Using this adventure by itself shouldn't be hard for the DM since the links to the other adventures are only tenuous. The action in the adventure doesn't hinge upon the Iron Shadow, and the intrusion of the slaadi and the formian queen are extraneous.

A high-ranking faction official in the City of Doors approaches the PCs in Sigil. She asks the planewalkers to deliver an immediate message to a city in the Astral Plane, telling the

people there that they're about to be attacked. Of course, the PCs are too late, and were never told that it was a githyanki city. As it turns out, the faction official is actually a githyanki spy gathering information in Sigil, magically disguised. The same starting point can be used on the Prime (or any plane), as long as it involves someone encouraging the PCs to go through a portal to the Astral Plane.

TRANSLATION +0+0+THE ♦ ASTRAL REALM ♦

The Astral Plane connects the Prime Material Plane and the Outer Planes. As the plane of the mind, it has no real physical space or substance. Those entering through portals (as opposed to methods allowing a body's mental or spiritual self to travel there on its own) have their bodies and equipment translated into mental energy. Physical matter is translated back when they leave, so the only effects are that a character moves and operates a little differently in the Astral Plane.

Movement rate is equal to Intelligence score (a few creatures the party meets in this Tale move even faster). Creatures move by willing it, and with no gravity (or orientation), that means that folks can flit about in any direction. Further, mental power is the only kind of important power, so on the Astral, a basher's Intelligence score is used as her Strength, and her Wisdom acts as her Dexterity for all things.

All weapons have a speed factor of 3, regardless of size—they're all mental energy now, not physical matter. A magical weapon's speed factor is only 1. Further, the Astral reduces spell casting times by 1, to a minimum of 1 (and no spell ever takes more than one full round to cast). The place's very conducive to magic. Lastly, a character's magical defense adjustment gained from high Wisdom becomes a helpful modifier to initiative rolls.

Non-natives (like githyanki) fire missile weapons with a -2 attack roll penalty, but the weightless environment doubles all effective ranges with a maximum range of 200 yards—the farthest a body can see on the Astral (so, for example, a short bow has no "long" range there).

The githyanki, while not native to the Astral Plane, have lived there a long, long time. Once human (the legends say), they were imprisoned by the mind flayers for eons before they rebelled and came to the Astral to build their ornate cities. The githyanki love magic and psionics and are known to be almost universally evil and decadent.

ARRIVAL

The doorway into the Astral from the Infinite Staircase is made of burnished bronze. The surface of the door oozes with intricate, baroque carvings. The landing on which the door rests is a small one, made of grayish-white stone like the stairway leading up to it.

Beyond the doorway, all is still. An empty stone building stretches out around the door, much of the grayish plaster on its walls covered by intricate tapestries and sculpture. A sharp eye catches numerous cracks in that plaster, however, and the signs of a recent struggle. The building lies within the githyanki fortress-city of TorNav'roc.

Like most githyanki communities, TorNav'roc served as both a military camp and an urban center of production and trade. Until recently, it was a small but prosperous settlement, fair in the sight of the githyanki lich-queen. Very recently, however, the psurlons—a race of worm-like things that seeks to wrest supremacy of the Astral Plane from the githyanki—attacked TorNav'roc and killed virtually all the githyanki within.

Despite their warlike nature, the githyanki were caught unaware and paid a heavy price for it. All-out war with the psurlons is assured now, and a smart cutter'll bet that the githyanki won't be caught so unprepared again. Nevertheless, very few inhabitants of the city survived the attack, and many of the structures were destroyed or weakened—including the one with the doorway leading to the Infinite Staircase.

Once through the doorway, the characters find a few slain githyanki (their heads burst open like dried melons—apparently from within). Close examination of these githwarriors show that their weapons remain sheathed and one had only managed to climb halfway into his baroque plate mail before he was sent to the dead-book.

A CLOSED DOOR

A few moments after the PCs pass through the doorway into the Astral city, they hear a rumbling sound. The battle-weakened building they came through begins to collapse. They can choose to retreat back through the doorway into the Infinite Staircase, but the doorway out of the building and into the city is much closer. The DM should inform the players that their characters can make it out of the building before it collapses, but to get back to the Staircase doorway requires Dexterity checks with a -2 penalty. The building collapses upon those failing the check, and they suffer 4d8 points of damage from falling debris (a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces the damage by half) and become trapped in the wreckage.

Trapped characters cannot move, their bodies pinned under support beams and rubble. Only spells (like *telekinesis* or even *unseen servant*) or outside help can free them. It takes three man-hours to dig out each trapped character, so if there are three characters working to free another, the task takes one hour. During this extended work time, the DM should probably engineer an encounter of some sort, either with the psurlon, one or more of the surviving githyanki, a spectral hound, or the shedu (see below).

Characters who made it through the doorway back onto the Infinite Staircase need not fear taking damage or becoming trapped. They are, however, unable to get back through the doorway and into the Astral Plane. Interestingly enough, if the PCs leave the Astral landing and come back at a later time—even just an hour later—they find that the doorway has moved to a different location within TorNav'roc.

If the PCs chose the easy (and probably smart) way and left the building through the door leading to the street, they are safe. However, they've still lost their access to the Infinite Staircase. No amount of digging or sifting through the rubble will allow them to find the doorway back. They are, at least for now, trapped on the Astral Plane.

THE GITHYANKI ◆ FORTRESS-CITY ◆

As githyanki communities go, TorNav'roc is a medium-sized city. It once served as home to around 800 individuals and was a center of trade where githyanki hunters and farmers (the githyanki g'lathk are able to grow food where nothing should be able to grow by harnessing strange Astral energies) could bring the fruits of their labors. Githyanki artisans created fabulous weapons, armor, and equipment as well as mundane objects, devices, and decor. All that the githyanki produce is resplendent in its ornate, baroque styling—they are a flamboyant people who enjoy material goods.

A militaristic people, the githyanki build their cities to be fortresses—as much as a body can have a fortress in the Astral. TorNav'roc was built upon a floating island of solid rock—on all sides of the roundish rock—and ten defensive towers protruded farther away from the stone base than any other buildings. From the “tops” of these towers, githyanki mages and warriors would hurl spells and missiles at oncoming foes.

Or at least that was the plan. The psurlons somehow used their psionic powers to catch the githyanki unaware, devastating both the buildings and the inhabitants of the city. Each one of the tall towers now stands topless as their focal defensive points were obliterated by psurlon attacks. The larger buildings (once all darkly beautiful constructs of stone and iron) lie in rubble or partial ruin. Many other buildings suffered damage. Corpses of dead githyanki litter the streets or float silently above them (since there's no gravity) and still-wet, dark blood runs in and out of each edifice, sometimes collecting in macabre globes of gore that drift like tiny satellites of horror around all the carnage.

It might be important for the DM to remember while describing the battle-ruined city that on the Astral things do not decay or age, so the corpses seem eternally fresh, never desiccating or rotting. Scavengers and carrion-eaters are rare on this plane as well, so the corpses draw no flies and host no necrophagic organisms to speed their decomposition.

ENCOUNTERS

An abandoned githyanki city doesn't stay abandoned for long. Any number of things making their way through the Astral're likely to pass by, if for no other reason than to investigate the recent disturbance. If the PCs poke around the city and explore at all, they're certain to come upon others eventually. An astral deva, githzerai spies, or even a foo lion might be looking around TorNav'roc just like the characters. Most such beings keep their own agendas and are unlikely to pay planewalking PCs any attention.

Although they should come into contact with the githyanki and the Dream Well eventually (see below), the DM may wish to engineer some or all the encounters listed below. These encounters can be used before or after (or both) they come across the Well and the githyanki near it.

SHEDU: TorNav'roc had two major foes (before the psurlons' surprise attack, that is)—a pair of shedu that hated the evil githyanki and took pains to observe and thwart any activities of the city's inhabitants. Wilcirel and Erecirel made their lair not

far (a relative, almost meaningless term in the Astral Plane) from TorNav'roc. As shedu, they can travel from the Prime to this plane by astral projection. These two, however, passed through a portal so that they could lair here "physically."

After TorNav'roc fell, the shedu came to explore the nearly ruined city. Although their hatred for the githyanki is very strong, they take little joy in seeing the carnage displayed before them. Instead, they see only the potential for further evil from the psurlons. This could have been a community of innocents rather than the fiendish githyanki, they remark to themselves.

Nevertheless, if they discover that githyanki survivors dwell in the ruins, they hunt them down mercilessly. While they don't rejoice in death and misery, they cannot suffer evil to live. They believe (rightly or wrongly) that the evil of creatures like githyanki is irredeemable, and that death is the only acceptable fate for them.

While these shedu probably give the PCs an easy out in a conflict with the githyanki, smart PCs might hesitate before throwing their lot in with the creatures. The githyanki apparently possess some information regarding the Dream Well—information that will be hard to get from them if they're in the dead-book.

When encountered, the shedu make their way around the city, examining the ruins and investigating the past conflict. They approach the PCs warily, but with respect, for they are polite and noble beings. The shedu seek to discover if the characters have any valuable information (including if they've seen any living githyanki or psurlons). In return, the shedu can share the information that they have—the fact that the attack occurred about four days ago, that the attackers were psurlons, and that the destruction of the city appears to be complete. Apparently, the psurlons attacked with surprise, and gathered up most of their own fallen—unless of course their attack was so successful that they suffered no casualties (it wasn't). The attackers apparently took most items of magical power that were once in the city. A few objects of value apparently remain here and there, but the shedu paid little attention to them.

WILCIREL AND ERECIREL, ♂ and ♀ Shedus AC 4; MV 24; HD 9+9; hp 60, 54; THACO 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (hoof/hoof); SA Psionics; MR 25%; SZ L (6' tall); Int exc (15); ML champion (15); AL LG; XP 8,000.

PLANAR MAGIC— THE ASTRAL

The Astral Plane does not affect magic as strongly as some planes, and in fact magic is generally easier to use here (some say its so conducive to magic that a caster can become addicted to her own spells here). Ranges increase by 50%. All mind-influencing spells' durations increase by 50% and saving throws against such spells and magical effects suffer a -1 penalty.

Aside from these changes and the shortening of casting times mentioned elsewhere, only three schools are affected (beyond the changes forced upon all Outer Planes):

ALTERATION: Spells that affect matter, space, or time won't work (in the Astral these things do not really exist). Spells that affect creature's bodies work normally; but their consequences can be reduced. For example, *slow* and *haste* can alter a creature's combat abilities, but Intelligence still governs the recipient's movement rate.

ILLUSION/PHANTASM: These spells have a 30% chance of being perverted into taking the shape of a stray thought (which fill the Astral Plane), making them utterly random in appearance.

WILD MAGIC: Spells of this school function as if they were cast by a wizard of one level higher than his actual level and saving throws against the school are modified by -1.

healing, ectoplasmic form, Telepathy—conceal thoughts, contact, empathy, invisibility, mind bar, mind link, Psychoportation—astral projection, dimensional door; Spell-like power replacement: *wraithform*, *animate object*, *telekinesis*, *push*, *cure serious wounds*, *mind blank*, *ESP*, *invisibility*, *astral spell*, *dimension door* (3×/day).

SPECTRAL HOUNDS: Once the psurlon attack was over, many of the beasts subservient to the githyanki were free and on their own. Coops of astral streakers, the strange, ultra-fast messenger birds of the githyanki, fled off into the Astral Plane to make their own homes. An entire kennel of spectral hounds also survived the battle and eventually broke free of their pens to roam the abandoned city. Even though the city fell only a few days ago, the hounds are already somewhat feral, feeding off the dead bodies of their fallen masters (eating the flesh of their subjugators more out of a sadistic need for revenge than an actual hunger; food isn't necessary on the Astral Plane).

To the PCs, the hounds are nothing but a straightforward threat. Rather than forcing it upon the PCs at a random time, the DM should use this encounter when the players least expect it, such as once they become enmeshed in exploring and investigating the Dream Well. The hounds approach the PCs using stealth, hiding in the dark alleys and fallen rubble of the city. Using a good bit of teamwork, the hounds spring upon their prey from all sides. If well matched, the hounds retreat in all directions, only to gather later to attack again.

The surviving githyanki face the same risks against these now-wild hounds as non-githyanki newcomers. In fact, they fear the hounds greatly—for few things instill more fear into

Wilcirel Psionics

Summary: Level 9; Dis/Sci/Dev 4/4/13; Attack/Defense All/All; Score 15; PSPs 100; Sciences and

Devotions: Psychometabolism—ectoplasmic form, biofeedback, displacement, double pain, life draining, Telepathy—contact, empathy, inflict pain, life detection, mass domination, mindlink, mindwipe, Psychoportation—astral projection; Spell-like power replacement: *wraithform*, *blur*, *blink*, *strength*, *vampiric touch*, *ESP*, *dominate*, *feeblemind*, *astral spell* (3×/day).

Erecirel Psionics Summary: Level 9; Dis/Sci/Dev 4/4/13; Attack/Defense All/All; Score 15; PSPs 100; Sciences and Devotions: Psychokinet-ics—animate object, project force, telekinesis, Psychometabolism—complete



an evil heart than something once subjugated and now free.

SPECTRAL HOUNDS (7): AC -2; MV 15; HD 5; hp 40, 34, 32, 30, 25, 21, 19; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 (bite); SA +2 to surprise, 50% chance to detect invisible foes; SD +1 or better or silver weapon to hit; SZ M (5' long); Int: semi (2-4); ML fearless (19); AL CE; XP 975 each.

TREASURE AND TREASURE HUNTERS: Some PCs may wish to loot the ruined city for valuables, for the githyanki have a reputation for jeweled finery and magical devices. This being the case, the DM should allow them to find a few items of worth, remembering that the psurlons took the time to uncover and remove any truly wondrous plunder.

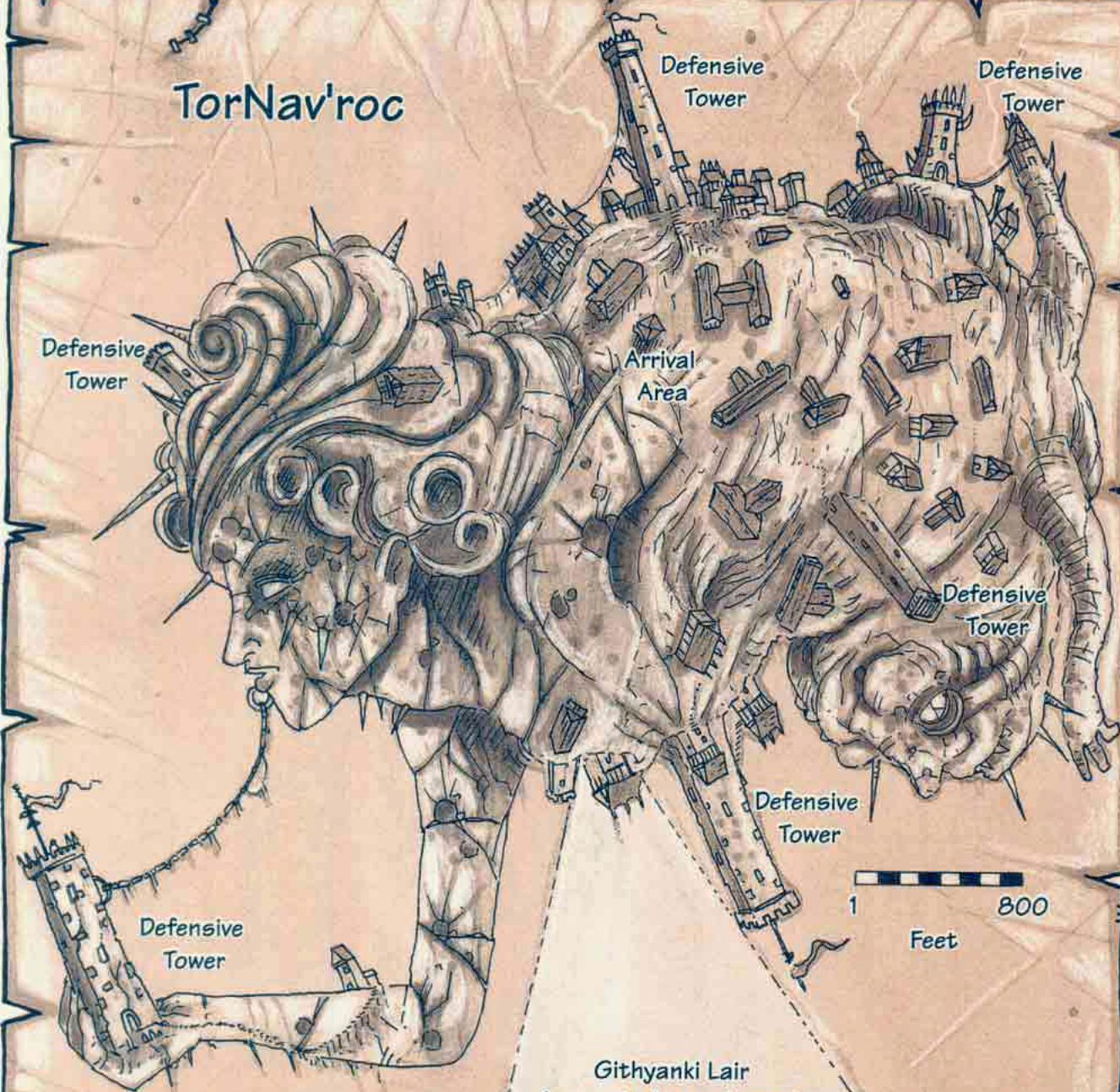
Further, if the PCs become such seekers of spoils, they should expect that others will too—and in this case the DM shouldn't disappoint. Aside from the other encounters listed above, treasure hunter PCs might run across a rather unexpected foe—sahuagin scavengers.

These sahuagin hail from the Living Sea, a huge shimmering globe of seawater seeped in from a prime world, floating in the weightless void of the Astral Plane. The Living Sea teems with aquatic life, some of which has discovered that it's free to leave the confines of the water since breathing is unnecessary in this mental realm.

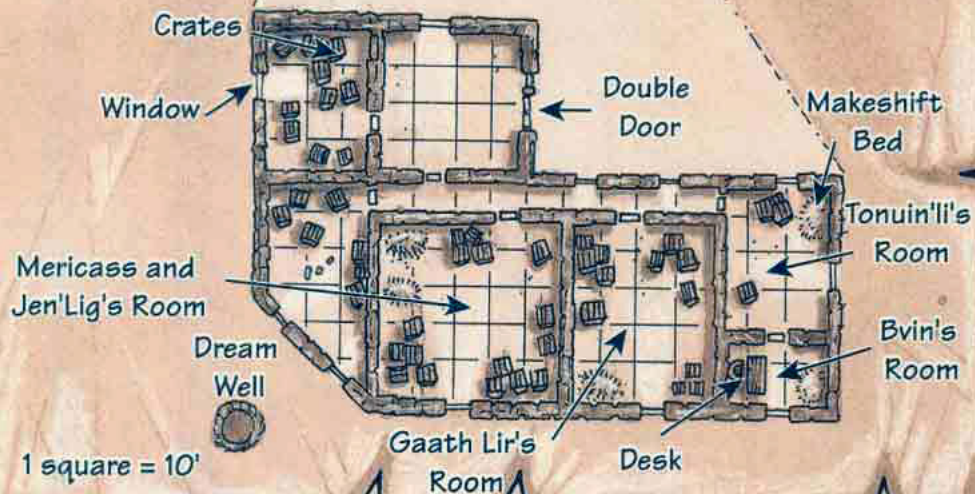
Ten sahuagin raiders roam the ruins of TorNav'roc, "swimming" through the Astral as easily as they normally swim in their natural underwater homes (and quickly, too, with their high intelligence). They search for valuables and meat—even though they don't need to eat, they still enjoy it.

The PCs, in the sahuagin's eyes, are at best competitors and at worst a potential meal, so they are likely to attack immediately. Accustomed to three-dimensional combat, the sahuagin pose as much a threat on the Astral as githyanki. They attack from as many sides as possible, throwing their javelins (each has three) and then moving in with tridents or talons. Unless their opponents have an advantage regarding range, they'll use their ranged weapons and take advantage of the long reach of their tridents as long as they can. In close-quarters fighting, though, they're resort to their efficient flurry of attacks—since they float freely all four talons as well as their toothy maws can be brought to bear against a foe.

TorNav'roc



Githyanki Lair (converted storehouse)



SAHUAGIN (10): AC 5; MV 14; HD 2+2; hp 14 each; THACO 19; #AT 5 or 1; Dmg 1d2/1d6+1/1d4/1d4/1d4 (claw/trident/bite/rake/rake) or 1d6 (javelin); SW bright light harms eyes, -2 saving throw penalty vs. magical fire, suffer one extra point per die of magical fire damage, -2 saving throw penalty vs. light-based attacks; SZ M (5' 10" tall); Int high (14); ML steady (12); AL LE; XP 175 each.

SAHUAGIN LEADER: AC 4; MV 16; HD 4+4; hp 26; THACO 15; #AT 5 or 1; Dmg 1d2/1d4+1/1d4/1d4/1d4 (claw/dagger plus Intelligence bonus/bite/rake/rake) or 1d8+1 (heavy crossbow); SW bright light harms eyes, -2 saving throw penalty vs. magical fire, suffer one extra point per die of magical fire damage, -2 saving throw penalty vs. light-based attacks; SZ M (6' 8" tall); Int exc (16); ML elite (13); AL LE; XP 650.

ALONE IN THE VOID

Seven githyanki were scouting out a potential astral whale pod for the community to hunt and returned home to find their comrades slain. To the best of their knowledge, only they survived the attack, simply because they weren't there when it occurred.

It is not, however, the githyanki way to shed tears for fallen friends. Instead, they gathered what valuables they could and prepared to leave for another githyanki citadel.

Then they encountered the Dream Well while they slept. Realizing that it was a valuable resource, the githyanki hunting party decided to remain in TorNav'roc, at least for as long as it took to learn how to tap into the Well's secrets more fully.

Two of the githyanki group, however, did not want to wait. Instead, they wanted to share the information with the githyanki of the community to which they would relocate. The others slew the dissenters and disposed of their bodies quietly. The githyanki do not commit acts of betrayal against their own kind lightly; rarely does a githwarrior raise her silver sword against another of her kind. The power of the Dream Well has created in these githyanki the greed of power that overwhelms their general nature.

Gaath Lir, a githyanki knight, fully believes that it is the will of his god/ruler the lich-queen that he explore the Dream Well completely and attain all of its power—to better serve her, of course. He leads the group, for they still respect his position and power. Mericass, a warlock (wizard) and Jen'Lig, a gish (fighter/wizard), are lovers. They scheme behind Gaath Lir's back, presuming that once they have mastered the Dream Well they will eliminate the knight and take it all for themselves. Tonuin'li, a githwarrior, and Bvin, a hr'a'cknir (a githyanki expert in astral energies), are not a part of the spellcasters' schemes, but the warlock and the gish do not think that they're needed, either. Once Gaath is dead, Mericass and Jen'Lig believe, the other two can join them or face the same fate.

Currently, the five githyanki inhabit a now-abandoned building next to the Dream Well itself. The building was once used as a storehouse and is still filled with crates, barrels, and other containers full of supplies—particularly raw materials like iron, wood, cloth, and more that the githyanki have difficulty in obtaining on the Astral.

If the githyanki group becomes aware of the presence of the PCs, they immediately assume that the newcomers know about the Dream Well and have come to TorNav'roc because

of it. If possible, they spy upon the characters for a while and draw conclusions based on what they observe. Eventually, one of the githyanki (only one—probably Jen'Lig—although the others watch from a short distance) approaches the PCs to find out more from them. Jen'Lig claims that she hid as the psurlons devastated her city, and attempts to play upon their sympathies, if possible.

If the PCs don't yet know about the Dream Well, Jen'Lig's questions probably make them suspicious. "Have you *slept* in the city yet?" "Have you ever dreamed of this city?" She creates a lie about the dangers in sleeping in a city of the dead on the Astral, claiming that githyanki ghosts will haunt the PCs' dreams. Ultimately, she'll leave them alone, for the githyanki plan to watch the PCs closely while they're on their own.

The githyanki want to see what happens to the PCs while they dream. Only after they believe they've learned all that they can from the PCs, or if the githyanki think that the PCs threaten their own chance at gaining the powers of the Dream Well, do they attack. When this time comes, the githyanki attempt to slay the PCs one by one to ensure that they can defeat them with minimum risk. They might even try to engineer "accidents" to kill one or two of them at first so that no blame points to them.

Even if the PCs learn that there are more githyanki than just Jen'Lig (she does not willingly reveal this), they show no hostility to the planewalkers. They might even promise to aid the PCs in whatever they do here in the Astral, but then attempt to stall so that the PCs will spend time asleep and thus testing the Dream Well for them.

If the PC party's total levels exceed 30, the DM should increase each githyanki by one level for every six that the party rises above the total of 30. Each of the individual githyanki presented below has psionic wild talents. If the DM's campaign does not use the optional psionic rules, the DM should award each githyanki the spell-like power "replacement" listed instead. The githyanki should not have both, however.

GAATH LIR (PL/♂ githyanki/F6): AC 0 (plate armor and Wisdom bonus); MV 96; hp 47; THACO 15 (14 with Intelligence, 13 with sword); #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+2 (*two-handed sword* +1, plus Intelligence); SA *protection from good* 10-foot radius continuously, *detect good* at will, *cause disease* twice per week, *cause wounds by touch* inflicting 12 points of damage once per day; SD immune to disease, +2 to all saving throws; SZ M (6' 4" tall); ML champion (16); AL LE; XP 2,000.

S 14; D 12; C 16; I 17; W 17; Ch 8

Special Equipment: *two-handed sword* +1 (forged on the Astral), *potion of healing*, 100 gp worth of jewelry, 34 gp

Psionics Summary: Level: 6; PSPs: 39; Wild Talent Devotion: Conceal Thoughts; Spell-like power replacement: *nondeception* (3x/day)

MERICASS (Pl/♂ githyanki/Inv5): AC 8 (*cloak of protection* +1, Wisdom bonus); MV 96; hp 15; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 1,400.

S 10; D 14; C 9; I 15; W 15; Ch 13

Special Equipment: *Cloak of protection* +1 (made on the Astral), 120 gp worth of jewelry, 8 gp

Spells (5,3,2) 1st—*hold portal*, *magic missile* (×2), *shield*,

wall of fog; 2nd—blur, Melf's acid arrow, web; 3rd—clairaudience, lightning bolt

Psionics Summary: Level: 5; PSPs: 44; Wild Talent Devotion: Invincible Foes; Spell-like power replacement: fear (2x/day)

JEN'LIG (Pl/♀ githyanki/F4, W4): AC 4 (bracers of defense AC 4); MV 96; hp 18; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); SA spells; SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (14); AL CE; XP 1,400.

S 15; D 12; C 12; I 14; W 12; Ch 14

Special Equipment: bracers of defense AC 4, 30 gp worth of jewelry, 2 50 gp gems

Spells (3,2) 1st—burning hands, magic missile (x2); 2nd— invisibility, Melf's acid arrow

Psionics Summary: Level: 4; PSPs: 44; Wild Talent Devotion: Invincible Foes; Spell-like power replacement: fear (2x/day)

TONUN'LI (Pl/♀ githyanki/F4): AC 3 (plate mail); MV 96; hp 25; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+1 (two-handed sword, Intelligence bonus); SZ M (6' 2" tall); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 650.

S 16; D 15; C 9; I 16; W 10; Ch 13

Special Equipment: *Potion of heroism*, 80 gp worth of jewelry, 3 gp

Psionics Summary: Level: 4; PSPs: 97; Wild Talent Devotion: Cell adjustment; Spell-like power replacement: *cure light wounds* (3x/day)

BVIN (Pl/♂ githyanki/ hr'a'cknir5): AC 10; MV 96; hp 14; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA *clairvoyance*, *clairaudience*, once per day each, *legend lore* once per week; SZ M (6' 1" tall); ML Steady (12); AL NE; XP 650.

S 10; D 14; C 8; I 15; W 11; Ch 16

Special Equipment: *Cloak of protection +1* (made on the Astral), 50 gp worth of jewelry, 7 gp

Psionics Summary: Level: 5; PSPs: 44; Wild Talent Devotion: Invincible Foes; Spell-like power replacement: *fear* (3x/day)

THE DREAM WELL

The Dream Well looks somewhat like a conventional well. A circle of mortar and stones stands about 12 feet in diameter and 3 high. A

body can lean over and look down into the well, noting that it has no water. In fact, it's only about 7 feet deep. The only things within are the pieces of what once was the cover for the well—a large stone disk etched with magical, spell-damping runes. The recent battle destroyed the cover.

Long ago, a githyanki warlock named Aertyv'nir built the Well in hopes that it would allow him to access the powers of the Astral dreamwinds. These powerful winds comprise the dreams of multitudes of sleepers on the Prime Material Plane whose mental energies leak onto the mental plane. The Well worked, at least to a point. It gathered the energies of the dreamwinds within it like pooled water, but using the power was much more difficult than Aertyv'nir had imagined. Eventually, he sealed his creation with the enruned cover, vowing that if he could not access the power he had tapped into, then no one could.

Aertyv'nir is long gone, but the Dream Well remains. With the cover



destroyed, the Dream Well can once again affect the dreams of those sleepers around it (meaning anyone within TorNav'roc).

THE PSURLON

When the psurlons attacked this city, one among them was horribly injured and left to die. It has partially recovered, and now prowls TorNav'roc, looking for prey to devour to help speed its recovery.

The encounter with this creature carries some importance to the adventure, since it provides a glaring clue to the PCs regarding who attacked the city (if they don't already know) and gives them an idea of what these beings are like and how they could have defeated the githyanki.

Additionally, if the psurlon somehow learns about the Dream Well, perhaps through ESP or something similar, it seeks to control it for itself. Thus, it attempts to capture the PCs or the githyanki (or both) to probe their minds and interrogate them for all their knowledge (and eventually, perhaps, force them to help it in the dream, since unlocking the secrets requires more than one dreamer).

The psurlon appears to be a horrid creature with a segmented, wormlike body given a vague humanoid form with wormlike arms and legs which end in nasty claws. Its head possesses no visible features except for a hideous, tooth-filled mouth.

Psurlon: AC 4; MV 18; HD 7; hp 50 (currently 39); THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 3d4/3d4/2d8; SA Psionics; MR 40%; SZ M (7' long); Int genius (18); ML elite (16); AL LE; XP 4,000.

Psionics Summary: Level 9; Dis/Sci/Dev 3/4/12; Attack/Defense EW, II, MT, PsC/IF, MB, Mbk, TS; Score 13; PSPs 50; Sciences and Devotions: Psychometabolism—body control, mind over body, enhanced strength, flesh armor, prolong, life draining, Telepathy—contact, id insinuation, psychic crush, mind thrust, ego whip, mass domination, mindlink, Psychoportation—banishment, time/space anchor, astral projection; Spell-like power replacement: *shield, blur, strength, vampiric touch, ESP, dispel good/evil, spook, dominate, feeblemind, confusion, astral spell* (3x/day).

◆ DREAMS OF THE LOST ◆

Once the PCs have situated themselves in TorNav'roc and take time to rest and eventually fall asleep, the power of the Dream Well begins to take effect. Each PC has an individual dream—each should be played separately without the other players present, if possible. The Dream Well creates four different dreams. If there are more characters than four, one or more of the characters have similar dreams. The DM *may* wish to alter the similar dreams slightly so that the characters do not have identical dreams—the basic idea of the dream should be the same, however, and more than one character dreaming identical dreams isn't necessarily bad.

The DM should attempt to conceal the fact that these events are dreams—at least at first. If the PC attempts to find her companions, she can't. In fact, she can't find anything alive at all except for herself. Moreover, no matter where she

goes in the city she keeps coming back to the Dream Well.

Characters who attempt to "wake themselves up" find that they cannot. They can, however, simply wait and not do anything throughout the dream. Eventually, they awaken, but they will have ruined their chance to explore the Dream Well.

DREAM ONE

The dreaming character finds herself at the edge of the Dream Well, all alone. If she's been to the Well already, she recognizes the area—but there's one difference. The well extends down at least 40 feet, and there appears to be a door of some kind at the bottom.

What may very well shock the character into realizing that it's a dream (if she has her wits about her) is that now there is gravity in the city as if it were a terrestrial town. This happens because concepts like up and down are rooted in the character's subconscious—if such is not true of the particular character, then the environment remains more like the normal Astral Plane.

If the character makes her way down into the Well, she finds the bottom of the shaft moist—even muddy. Moss and slime grows on the floor and walls as if it were a real well that was once filled with water.

The iron door is rusted shut. The stone walls around it are wet and crumbling, however. With a good deal of effort, a character can force open the door by pulling old metal from older stone. Beyond the door, a single silent chamber waits, measuring about 20 feet to a side. Like the Well, it is wet and musty, as it has been dredged up from the old, decaying memories of moldering, decomposing dreams.

Within the center of the room, a small child's rag doll lies, apparently tossed there haphazardly. Unlike the floor around it, it is dry and clean. It shows only slight wear—probably from an abundance of a child's love. At the far side of the room, the dreamer sees a shallow pool filled with stagnant water and partially covered in moss and slime.

If anyone or anything disturbs the doll, it speaks. "Have you forgotten me," it asks in a childish, high-pitched voice. "Where have you been all this time?" After this point, if the PC goes anywhere near the pool, she sees herself reflected within the water—appearing as she did when she was a child.

When this occurs, she suddenly hears what sounds like booming footsteps coming closer and closer. A feeling of urgency comes over the PC, although she's not sure why. A deep, thunderous voice from far off addresses the character by name and says, "You had better not be playing with those toys again. You're too old to hang on to such childish things...."

If the character wishes to hide the doll from whatever's coming, she can quickly determine that the pool is too shallow. However, in one of the far corners of the room lies a small dark hole—partially obscured by moss and slime. This hole can only be discovered once the dreaming character's player announces that she's going to make a careful search. The hole is dark—there's no clue as to where it goes as it passes through the wall. If the character reaches in, she discovers nothing but some disgusting wet slime. If she listens very carefully, however, she hears the far-distant voice of one

NO, THE AS+RAL'S NO+ THE REALM OF DREAMS—
IT'S WHERE DREAMS GO AFTER THEY'VE BEEN DREAM+,
JUST LIKE IDEAS AFTER THEY'VE BEEN CONCEIVED
AND THOUGH+S THA+ HAVE BEEN THOUGH+.

— FROM THE BOOK
MEMORY OF AN IDEA OF A DREAM
BY WU NAMUI+



of her friends (the DM should choose randomly from the other dreaming characters).

Despite this fact, she cannot quite make out what her comrade says, nor can she seem to make herself heard. After careful contemplation (which may not occur until after she's awoken and reflects upon the dream), she realizes that if she wanted to, she could pass something through the hole and the desired dreaming character would get it (see Putting it All Together, page 96).

If the character puts the doll in the hole, she wakes up. If she doesn't put the doll in the hole after 5 or 10 minutes of game time, the DM should tell her that a dark shadow looms across the doorway. The dreamer awakens, startled as if from a nightmare.

DREAM TWO

As in the first dream, the dreamer appears near the Dream Well, gazing down into it. Like the other dream, the character sees that the Well goes down much deeper than it seemed to in waking life (assuming that the character saw the Dream Well before). This time, the shaft plunges down almost 60 feet, and it's difficult to tell if anything lies at the distant bottom.

If the character descends the shaft, she'll discover a dry, dust-covered bottom filled with ancient cobwebs and the scattered bones of long-dead vermin. Only at the bottom will she discover a door set into the wall. This iron portal opens fairly easily, stirring up a cloud of dust.

Beyond the door lies a 30-foot by 30-foot chamber with a high vaulted ceiling. It, too, is filled with dust and webs. If she's quiet, the dreamer can hear a squeaking sound coming from an unlit portion of the room, as though someone is rocking in a chair.

Someone is, indeed, rocking. An old person of the opposite sex from the dreamer sits silently in a rocking chair staring off into space (not at the dreamer). No attempts at communicating with the person in the chair succeed, although the figure looks hauntingly familiar to the dreamer (the DM should never be more specific than that).

If the PC touches the figure in the chair or physically disturbs the figure in any way, the person looks at the dreamer longingly and desperately, and then vanishes. In figure's place, a book rests. It appears to be a diary, although no matter what the dreamer does, she cannot manage to read it (the light is too bad, the writing too small, the language foreign,

or all of them together).

Under the chair, which continues to rock unless stopped, a small hole, about a foot and a half across, extends down into darkness. In many ways,

it seems much like the hole described in the first dream—if the dreamer listens, she can hear the distant voices of one of her comrades. It's just big enough for the PC to push the book through, which is exactly what she should do (see Putting it All Together, page 96), giving it to one designated dreamer.

DREAM THREE

As in the previous dreams, the character finds herself standing over the Dream Well. Again, the well is much deeper in the dream than it appeared in reality, if the character saw it before. The bottom appears to be about 40 feet below.

If the dreamer descends, a wooden hatch presents itself on the dust- and debris-covered floor. It opens immediately when the PC reaches the bottom and a dove flies out, landing on the PC's shoulder. Unless the character shoos the bird away, it transforms into a fake dove of cloth and stuffing.

Through the hatch, a black iron ladder extends down into darkness. The room below is an almost perfect 20-foot cube, the walls and floor dripping with slime and bits of rotting wood, cloth, and other trash. Light from above just barely illuminates the chamber.

Like in the previous two dreams, a small hole in the wall can be found if the dreamer searches. This hole, about a foot in diameter, is near one corner of the room. Unlike the other holes, however, this one presents a danger, for a giant rat—particularly nasty and demonic in appearance—lives in the hole and lunges at anyone coming near. If the character puts her hand into the hole, the rat automatically bites the PC. If she merely comes close to the hole but remains near, the rat leaps out for a single attack (automatic surprise) and then retreats back into the hole.

The bite of this rat carries with a terrible sort of "mental poison." If the victim fails a saving throw vs. poison after suffering a bite from the rat, the dreamer is suddenly presented with an image from one of her own personal nightmares. This should be treated as a *phantasmal killer* spell. If the dreamer dies as a result of the nightmare, she awakens in a cold sweat. The shock of dying, even in her dream, shakes the character to the point that any die roll she makes for the next day is modified against her favor by -1. If the character successfully disbelieves in the nightmare (as per *phantasmal killer*), she avoids the effect but then awakens.

The rat must be slain and the character must not succumb to the nightmare poison before the hole can be used to push objects through (see Putting it All Together, below). In this dream, the cloth dove should be transferred to the other dreamer.

NIGHTMARE RAT: AC 7; MV 15; HD 1; hp 8; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA Poisonous bite; SZ T (2' long); ML unsteady (7); Int semi (2); AL NE; XP 35.

DREAM FOUR

Unlike the other dreamers, this character has no way of discerning that she's in familiar surroundings. She finds herself in the Dream Well, looking up toward the surface. Only should she climb up and out of the Well can she figure out where she is, assuming that she's been to this area of the city before. The Well is 30 feet deep and as dry and clean as the rest of Tor-Nav'roc.

At the bottom of the Well with the character lies a human man, withered with age. His head is bald and his shriveled face is clean shaven. He wears tattered brown clothing. The old man can barely lift his head, but he does his best to attract the attention of the dreamer, urging her to lean down to hear his quiet, tired voice.

"Power," he rasps, his voice dry and cracked. "There's power down here. Better'n magic. Better'n anything." With that, he collapses. A character with a healing (or similar) proficiency can determine that he's not dead, but there's no way she can revive him. In a pocket at his breast, just sticking out enough for the character to see, is a golden key.

A secret door can be found normally in the side of the Well should the dreamer search, but it is securely locked. A once-hidden keyhole presents itself, and not surprisingly, the key from the old man's pocket opens the lock.

Beyond this stone door, which swings open silently, is a small room only 10 feet to a side. Hanging on a rack of wooden pegs, three cloaks of different colors present themselves from the opposite side of the room. A red cloak with golden trim has many pockets, which seem, to the touch, to be filled with coins. The pockets can only be accessed by someone wearing the cloak, however. A total of 500 gp fill the bulging pockets of the cloak, but as soon as the dreamer puts it on, she awakens. She has a single gold coin (of ancient githyanki minting) in her mouth.

A black cloak also hangs on the wall. This is a cursed *cloak of poisonousness*. Anyone putting on this cloak instantly dies. The dreamer, upon "dying," actually just awakens, however. The shock of dying, even in her dream, shakes the character to the point that any die roll she makes for the next day is modified against her favor by -1.

The last cloak is green and soft. It functions as a *cloak of protection +2*, a fact that the wearer instantly knows as soon as she dons the garment. However, like with the other cloaks, when she puts this one on, she wakes. A tingle of magical power passes through her body, but that is all.

What the dreamer must realize (and it may take many dreamings of this dream to realize it) is that she must take what the old man said to heart. The power in the well is *better* than magic or anything else. She must bundle together all



three cloaks in the dream, without putting any of them on, and shove them into the hole (see Putting it All Together, below) that can be found in the corner if a search of the room is made (just like in the other rooms).

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The dreams come each night the sleeper sleeps, always identical to the one before. Only after all have awakened can the players confer as to what they saw while their characters experienced while they slept—and possibly coordinate their actions during the next sleep period, for that is exactly what they must do to tap into the power of the Dream Well.

The secret to accessing the power of the Dream Well, or at least to getting closer to that point is this: Three of the dreamers must take the key items in their dreams and pass them to a fourth (and each character passing an object must state specifically which "friend" receives the item), so that one dreamer has them all—the doll, the diary, the dove, and the three cloaks. Thus, one dreamer hangs onto her dream tokens while the others pass theirs to her.

When this happens, that fourth dreamer suddenly finds herself immersed in what seems like murky water of shifting colors. The liquid, however, is actually dreams made physical. The character floats within the true Dream Well—in the pool of collected dreams. This is called the Dreamlost Delve, or the Place of Dreamt Dreams.

Each item from another character, as well as those the character holds from her own dream, transform into shining jewels. They begin to float up and out of her grip, disappearing into the swirling colors all around her. A successful attack

roll against AC 6 is needed to grab one of the gems, and the PC can make one grab attempt for every 5 points of her Dexterity before the rest float away. Then, suddenly, a huge humanlike hand—at least 20 feet across—comes out of the murky colors toward the dreamer.

The hand has a THACO of 13 and attempts to grab the character. Meanwhile, however, the dreamer notices that the tip of each finger has a small indentation about the size of the gems in it. If a character places even one of the gems within these indentations, the hand disappears. This requires a successful attack roll against AC 3. Once the hand disappears, a large mouth, on the same scale as the hand, appears in front of the dreamer.

The mouth whispers to the dreamer in a tongue only she can understand—she is confronted by her own dreams given form. The mouth whispers “what do you wish to know?” The PC’s dreams act as a liaison with all the dreamt dreams of Dreamlost Delve, and can gather one bit of information for the character—she has but to ask. This works, in fact, much like the spell *contact other plane*, although the dream has a 99% chance of knowing the answer, assuming the DM agrees that it can be answered. This also assumes, of course, the answer is brief—just a few words, and perhaps tantalizingly vague or mysterious ones at that. For example, if the dreamer asks how the Iron Shadow can be dispelled (a very good question as far as this adventure goes), the dream might tell her “Navimas, used correctly,” or “with *Ever-changing Order*.”

Once the answer is given, all the dreaming characters wake up. See *The Awakening*, below.

If the hand manages to grab the dreamer, the effect is much the same as the spell *Bigby's grasping hand*. The victim is held relatively motionless. Also like the spell, this hand has an Armor Class of 0 and 34 hit points—it vanishes if destroyed.

The hand holds the grasped character for 10 rounds, during which time she sees her fellow dreamers slowly appear around her in the soupy dream “water.” Each appears to be in terrible agony. At the end of the 10 rounds, the character awakens. Shaken by the dream experience, she suffers a –1 penalty to all die rolls for the following day. Further, that character never again has a dream involving the Dream Well—and the affected character knows that she can no longer have such dreams.

The planewalkers will have to choose another character to be the central dreamer the next time, as they plan their next move in the waking world the next day.

The PCs have to either accomplish the correct solution by accident upon the first time they have the dreams, or—much more likely—after they wake up and discuss their individual dreams and then make a plan for the next sleep period. Of course, many planewalkers might not realize or assume that the dreams will come again the next time, so they may be caught unaware and not have a plan until the third time they have the dreams—and even then, it may take many tries until the PCs come up with the *right* plan, assuming that they do.

The DM should keep in mind that a character can't go to sleep upon command. Once a full “night's” sleep is done, the character finds herself unable to return to a state of sleep in which she'll have the dream until at least ten waking hours have passed. During this time, the characters will most likely have to contend with the githyanki who watch them closely,

attempting to gain a clue to the secret of the Dream Well from what the PCs say and do while awake. Eventually, the PCs will tumble to their spying attempts or the githyanki will determine that the PCs are too close. In either case, a confrontation in the waking world occurs.

Of course, if a PC purposefully does not go to sleep, then she does not dream. If a dreaming character tries to pass something to a waking character, the item vanishes, lost in the dream (but it will be present again the next time the character dreams).

If more than one character dreams the same dream, they don't both have to pass through their objects to access the final stage of the dream. It doesn't hurt anything if they do, however.

THE AWAKENING


Suddenly, all dreaming characters awaken. A githyanki of obviously advanced years appears before them, before even the cobwebs of sleep clear from their minds. He looks about him, and then at the characters. Opening his palm, he reveals a yellow gem about the size of a thumbnail. Finally, he speaks.

“You have dipped your hand into the Dream Well,” he says. “Now drink from its cool waters.” He hands the gem to the dreamer who destroyed or dispelled the hand. When the character takes the gem, the githyanki, Aeryv'nir, guides the hand with the gem to the character's temple, where the gem imbeds itself permanently. This is the *key of dreams*, a magical item of great power. The *key* ties the character to the Dream Well and to the dreams within it. The item is a naturally occurring artifact produced by the dreams themselves. It's not harmful or evil.

Aeryv'nir leaves, once again free in the world. He says nothing more to the PCs, using spells to transport himself away quickly. This great spellcaster created the Dream Well, but as even he plumbed its depths (much deeper into the strange realm of dreamt dreams than the PCs have gone), he became trapped. He sent the dreams to all those dreaming in TorNav'roc, hoping that someone would come and put all the dreaming tokens together in such a way so that he would be freed. The tokens took odd forms (the doll, the cloaks, the hand, and so forth), but he hoped that somehow some dreamers would tumble to what needed to be done. Aeryv'nir, in his time in the Dream Well, lost most of his evil focus, becoming only interested in dreams and the power within them. Like the *key of dreams*, he isn't as evil as the PCs might suspect.

The *key of dreams* has the following powers to be discovered by the blood who possesses it:

- ♦ +2 to Wisdom if current score is at or below 13, +1 to Wisdom if current score is above 13.
- ♦ Continual influx of information from the dreams in the Dream Well gives the character immediate and continual access to one of the following proficiencies (player's choice): ancient history, ancient languages, artistic ability, modern languages, reading/writing, dancing, musical instrument, or religion.
- ♦ Ability to focus the creativity and ideas of the dream into a doorway leading to the Infinite Staircase once a month; the door remains for 5 rounds.
- ♦ If the character dies, the *key* automatically *resurrects* the character. Unfortunately, the character's level is reduced



by one, and everything that has happened to her since gaining that level is hazy—as though it was all a dream. When the resurrected character returns to life, the *key of dreams* is gone.

- ♦ It cannot be removed from the temple of the possessor.

AERYV'NIR (Pl/♂ GITHYANKI/W16): AC 4 (*ring of protection* +2, Wisdom bonus); MV 96; hp 34; THACO 15 (12 with Intelligence); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+7 (dagger, plus Intelligence bonus); SA spells; SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (14); AL N; XP 10,000.

S 8; D 15; C 13; I 19; W 18; Ch 9

Special Equipment: *Ring of protection* +2 (forged on the Astral), 200 gp worth of jewelry

Spells (5/5/5/5/3/3/2) 1st—*armor*, *detect magic*, *magic missile* (x2), *shield*; 2nd—*blur*, *invisibility*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *strength*, *web*; 3rd—*clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *lightning bolt* (x2), *monster summoning I*; 4th—*confusion*, *detect scrying*, *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer*, *stoneskin*; 5th—*advanced illusion*, *dream*, *feeblemind*, *telekinesis*, *teleport*; 6th—*antimagic shell*, *eyebite*, *true seeing*; 7th—*finger of death*, *limited wish*, *vanish*; 8th—*demand*, *mind blank*

Psionics Summary: Level: 16; PSPs: 87; Wild Talent Devotion: Body Control; Spell-like power replacement: *protection from fire* (or cold) (2x/day)

♦ FLEEING THE VOID ♦

Obviously, the access to the Infinite Staircase granted by the *key of dreams* allows the PCs to escape the Astral and return to the Staircase (and possibly the rest of the adventures). In some campaigns, such frequent access to the Infinite Staircase, where a doorway leading to virtually everywhere exists, may not be appropriate. The DM is encouraged to then limit the number of times this power can be used before the *key* fades away. On the other hand, DMs wishing to use the Infinite Staircase as a springboard for more PLANESCAPE adventures will find this power grants the PCs the ability to continue exploring its reaches and using it to visit more interesting planar locations.

If the PCs don't end up with the *key of dreams*, a portal to Limbo obviously exists in TorNav'roc—where the slaadi and the formian queen came from. PCs can use this portal to leave, taking them straight into Tale 4. If the PCs have been to the Spawning Stone area already, then getting back to the Infinite Staircase through Limbo shouldn't be too hard.

Lastly, planewalkers wanting to leave the city can simply leave and travel through the Astral. The plane has a number of color pools leading to other planes (the Prime and the top layer of all the Outer Planes), which act as portals. The Astral holds many interesting adventures and encounters, if the DM wishes to use them before allowing the PCs to return to familiar territory (see *A Guide to the Astral Plane* for more information).

Look into the mirror. See yourself? Fine. See the room behind you? Good.

Wait! What was...?

Didn't see anything?

It was probably nothing.

So, then, do you—there it was again! There's something else in the room with you! Turn around!

No? Nothing?

If you're sure that you're all alone, what's that in the reflection of the mirror? Everything has a reflection—could it be that some things are nothing but reflection?

You live in the mirror as well as the real world—the proof's right there when you gaze at the reflection. But, does something live only in that mirror place? Stare into the mirror, my friend. Does something besides you look back?

TALE 7: REFLECTIONS

◆ OVERVIEW ◆

When the player characters arrive on the Outlands, they find themselves in the middle of a rilmani city. However, because of the Iron Shadow, the rilmani and most of the city have faded away—at least temporarily. All that remains is a vast library built by an ancient race; the library contains a copy of every book in the multiverse. Not long after their arrival, however, the PCs discover that with the rilmani gone,

the ancient creators of the library, called the kamerel, have returned—and they're not friendly. This initial exploration is referred to in this Tale as Part One.

Eventually, some rilmani outside the effect of the Iron Shadow attempt to contact the PCs, beginning Part Two of this Tale. Within the library, the rilmani tell the PCs, lies a book

(*Ever-changing Order*) that may help in coming up with a way to vanquish the Shadow. The rilmani cannot, however, get to the library because of the Iron Shadow's terrible effect on them, and so they beg the PCs to go in and retrieve it for them. The kamerel, however, have no intention of allowing anyone into their library, and so the PCs must overcome the challenges that they have set up to keep intruders out as well as make their way through the gigantic library to find the right tome.

A medium-sized group of 5th-level PCs should word perfectly for this adventure, though a group of 4th-level characters also will work. Wizards and clerics find their powers greatly diminished so near to the Spire of the Outlands, so the planewalking group should have a hearty complement of fighters and thieves or else the group will need to be even higher in level.

WE CANNOT EXIST,
EXCEPT IN THE
PERFECT, HARMONIOUS
BALANCE OF ALL THAT IS.
TO UPSET THAT
BALANCE IS TO
BRING ABOUT OUR END.

— TERRMANATH,
RILMANI

ADVENTURE ◆ NOTES ◆

- ◆ If the PCs have been to Limbo and have brought the Navimas with them (see Tale 4), the knowledge found in the book *Ever-changing Order* can lead to the formulation of a solution to the Iron Shadow. Technically, this means that the PCs might only have to travel to those two locations and can skip the others. However, the DM should keep this in mind: it's unlikely that the PCs will choose these two locations as their first two expeditions, and—more importantly—even if they do, they don't know that the solution is in their very grasp. The Oracle found in the plane of Air (Tale 5) can give the PCs an idea of what must be done, as can the Dream-lost Delve on the Astral (Tale 6). Further, even with the remedy for the Iron Shadow, they should still go to all the doorways the lillendi mentioned in Tale 1 to use the cure and dispel the affliction in those locations as well.

Of course, if the kytons tumble to the fact that the PCs have a cure, they will launch an all-out offensive against the PCs. First, however, the DM must determine how the kytons discovered this fact, and if they know where the PCs are located. Most likely, they don't; the kytons probably have had no reason to keep such close tabs on the planewalkers unless they went to Jangling Hiter (Tale 8) and caused a lot of trouble.

Once the kytons know about the PCs and their ability to stop the Iron Shadow, the kytons scour the locations of all the Tales looking for them, probably eventually stumbling upon the Infinite Staircase. Thus, the DM can devise kyton encounters and ambushes in any location, even the Staircase.

If the PCs dispel the Iron Shadow here on the Outlands, the city of Sum of All instantly reappears with all its rilmani residents. Unless the kamerel are ready for such overwhelming numbers of foes, the rilmani quickly dispatch these ancient enemies and re-take the Mirrored Library. Likewise, the kytons occupy the place in too few numbers (if they're still around at all) to fend off a city of rilmani, and they face immediate defeat as well.

The Iron Shadow can be dispelled from the area of Sum of All and all of the Outlands by sprinkling the Navimas on the Spire at the center of the plane. Four drops (one for good, one for evil, one for law, and one for chaos) must be placed on equidistant points around the Spire. These details can be found by reading *Ever-changing Order*. Research time needed involves (22 minus Intelligence score) days of reading.

- ◆ If Mulk the shad remains with the PCs from Tale 4, or Hannock Ringfinger from Tale 2, it's likely they'll have little problem working with the party in the Outlands. Mulk has little need (or even understanding) of books, so he won't be interested in anything in the library except to help his rescuers do whatever it is that they want to do. Hannock possesses a fair skill in reading languages and could prove to be a valuable asset. The DM may wish to have Mulk or Hannock captured by the kamerel traps rather than a PC so that no player is prevented from participating in part of the adventure.

- ◆ If the PCs leave the Outlands, go to another Tale, and then return here, things change considerably. The rings of the Outlands—which dictate what sort of magic can and cannot function—move and change. By the time the PCs return, the boundary for the base of the spire has stretched, canceling all magic in the area (this happens now and again for short periods, putting short gaps in the library's catalog and making most areas of the library—those accessible through mirrors—unattainable). This also temporarily cancels the Iron Shadow, bringing back both the city and the rilmani.

The scene before the returning planewalkers is that of the rilmani and the kamerel locked in deadly (and decidedly unmagical) combat around the Mirrored Library. By this point, the kamerel have garnered a fairly large force coming in through reflection—at least 1,000 individuals. The rilmani ferrumach soldiers outnumber them almost two-to-one, but the kamerel have the advantage of surprise—no rilmani expected to find their ancient enemies suddenly occupying their city.

The disoriented rilmani fight the kamerel in the streets, struggling in tiny skirmishes. Characters who want to get involved (but on whose side?), can easily jump into the fray without being overwhelmed in a mass combat. Eventually, the rilmani reinforcements from the nearby community of Centered Focus will arrive, and so their eventual victory is almost certainly assured—although if the borders change, the rilmani (as before) are rendered into nothing more than powder. No one will be left to oppose the kamerel. On the other hand, the kamerel would be affected by the Iron Shadow, a condition which will most likely slow down their initiative to conquer and gain revenge and will cer-

tainly curtail any sort of strategic planning on their part.

♦ If the PCs have already been to Jan-gling Hiter (see Tale 8) and Quimath is still alive, he will be among those kytons currently looting the Mirrored Library.

♦ PCs who have already been to the city of Blurophil on the plane of Air (see Tale 5) and met with Ghuntomas of Thorn may already be aware of the book, *Ever-changing Order*. However, it's unlikely that before this Tale the PCs knew to ask the scholar about the Iron Shadow. If they did, and were able to sober him up and jog his failing memory, then they potentially don't need to get *Ever-changing Order* or deal with

Terrmanath, the argenach. It's very possible, however, that if the PCs do talk to Ghuntomas and learn from him regarding the Iron Shadow, they'll still want the book—in fact, they'll provide their own motivation for retrieving it from the Mirrored Library. In such a case, the DM should skip the beginning of Part Two (contact with the rilmani), instead having the PCs go in to look for the book on their own (and dealing with the kamerel and kytons).

If the PCs learn about *Ever-changing Order* and the Mirrored Library before coming here, they might seek to enter the library without ever discovering that Sum of All is among the locations the lillendi asked them to explore.

This connection presents a danger to the adventure, in that the players may begin to feel that the course of events is contrived—that among the locations the lillendi sent them to investigate were also the locations needed to be found to uncover a solution to the problem. What the PCs probably don't know at this point is that the Shadow has spread to so many areas where the antidote (or clues to it) for it exists because of the kytons. By traveling to the places where the agents capable of banishing the Iron Shadow might be, they inadvertently bring the Shadow with them and (also inadvertently) create a sort of trail for the heroes to follow—even if the PCs don't realize that's what they're doing.

PLANAR MAGIC— THE OUTLANDS

Spellcasting on the Outlands can be a tricky business. In Sun of All, so close to the Spire, it's almost impossible. Spellslingers who rely heavily on their magic are in for a rude shock.

Because more and more magic and special powers lose their potency as a body gets to the Spire at the center of the Outlands, here in Sum of All, all spells of a higher level than 1st do not work. Psionics used by anyone short of a greater power do not work. Life-draining, poison, and illusions cannot work. Anything requiring contact with another plane (with the Infinite Staircase being a notable exception) does not function. Even the powers of lesser and intermediate gods do not work here.

Similarly, magical items with powers more potent than 1st-level effects do not function, either. All magical weapons and devices with "pluses" are +1 here. The Outlands puts a cap on the high end of magical plus depending on what ring the item's in—at Ring 4, +5 items become +4, at Ring 3, +4 and +5 items become +3, and so on. Likewise, creatures' immunity to weapons decreases in the same way, so that by the time one gets to the 1st ring, a creature that requires a magical weapon of any enchantment to hit it can be struck by +1 weapons. In the case of this adventure, the kytons, which can normally be struck only by +2 weapons, can be hurt by +1 weapons here.

♦ At Stage 3, Jazriul the hound archon leaves the plane of Air and travels to the Outlands to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow. He finds much of his power limited by the Spire and not much left to investigate, so he's unlikely to stay long. He has to leave by foot, and by Stage 4, he's gone off farther from the Spire so that he can eventually transport himself to Arcadia. His magical long sword has a +1 bonus here.

USING THE ADVENTURE INDEPENDENTLY: If the DM chooses to use this adventure without the connecting plot of the Iron Shadow or the Infinite Staircase, one possible way to get the player characters involved would be to have them on need

of one of the books in the Mirrored Library. The book might be one the PCs need themselves (as opposed to a work some NPC hires them to find). During another adventure, the PCs learn of a book that contains some spell or lost bit of lore vital (or at least useful) to them. When they look for the book, they find it has long since been destroyed. As they despair, they discover of the existence of the Mirrored Library and that somewhere within its halls there must be a copy of the book. They also learn that the rilmani rarely allow outsiders access to the library, but perhaps if the PCs petition them effectively or if they can somehow break in, they can get the book (of course, the course of this adventure will quickly change the PCs' focus, as they don't find any rilmani to prevent them from entering the Mirrored Library).

If this is the goal of the PCs, the DM should figure out where in the library the particular book that they seek lies, and tailor the events of the adventure so that they coincide with the party's search. Also, if the rilmani don't call on the PCs for help, the DM will need to figure out how quickly the kamerel and kytons become active threats to the party (thus initiating Part Two). In any event, the kyton and kamerel encounters, traps, and ambushes can be used as presented.

THE OUTLANDS ♦ AND THE RILMANI ♦

This Tale takes the player characters to the plane of the Outlands, also known to some prime material cultures as Concordant Opposition. This plane embodies True Neutrality, and the natives of the plane, the rilmani, further embody the concept through their adherence to the universal balance. They feel that no one force—good or evil, law or chaos—should ever gain the upper hand. They are a reclusive people that usually live near the Spire.

The Spire soars above the Outlands, rising up from the center of the plane and stretching into infinity. As a traveler gets closer and closer to the Spire, magic and other special powers lose their potency until finally all magic is annulled at the Spire itself—even the powers of gods. The borders where more and more power ceases working are called rings, of which nine exist.

ARRIVAL ♦ ON THE OUTLANDS ♦

The connection between the Infinite Staircase and the portion of the Outlands where this Tale takes place is an open archway (there's no door); anyone looking through sees a mostly empty plain where a dry, dusty wind blows.

The landing containing the archway is very small—just big enough for one basher to stand on—with narrow, creaking, wooden stairs leading to and from it.

After passing through the opening, the characters can see that the arch stands in the middle of nowhere, as though it was once within a structure but the entire structure disappeared around it—which is *exactly* what happened.

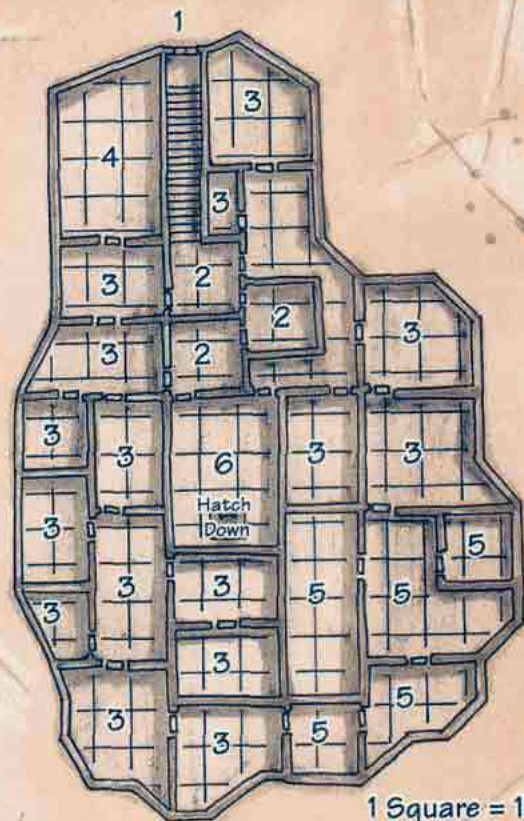
Canny bloods can see that the ground is flattened as though trod upon by many feet—a closer look reveals roads and streets and places where buildings once might have stood, but are gone now. Although the PCs have no way of knowing this yet, they stand within what was once a rilmani city called Sum of All.

Sum of All is (was) located near the border of the first ring of the Outlands and the edge of the Spire's base itself, meaning that most magic does not function there. The rilmani that chose to dwell there relinquished access to their own formidable inherent powers to make it their home. They found themselves willing to make such a sacrifice to dwell near what they believed to be the heart of the True Balance of All Things—the Spire.

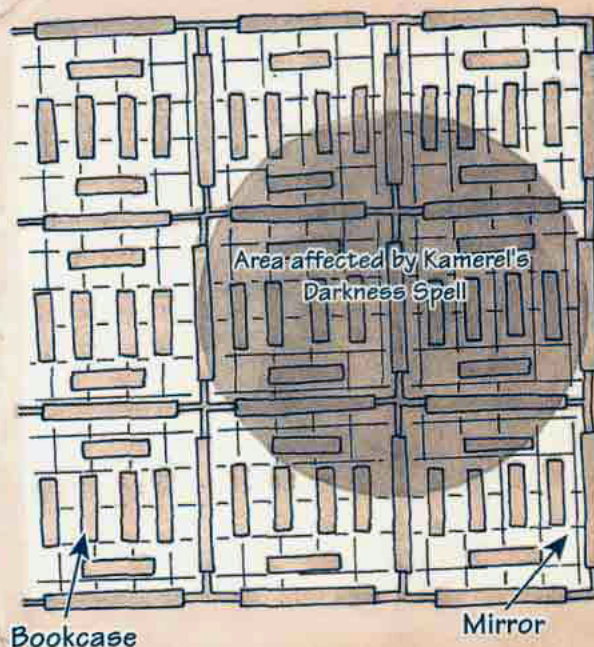
SUM OF ALL

Normally, Sum of All could be called one of the most remarkable of rilmani cities—remarkable even in its very existence, considering their reclusive nature. Normally, it stretches out almost a mile in every direction, providing home to 10,000 rilmani—mostly plumach, but many ferrumach, argenach, and even a few aurumach dwell there as well. Pearl-laced domes and gem-encrusted structures make the city a beautiful place to behold.

The Mirrored Library



Portion of the Main Library



Golden spires reach up toward the sky, dwarfed only by the Spire itself. Normally.
But not today.

THE IRON SHADOW

The Iron Shadow has descended upon the Outlands. Brought inadvertently by the diabolical kytons, the Shadow came to the rilmani city called Sum of All.

Being creatures of balance above all else, the infection of this law-based disease upon their city devastated the rilmani. Most of those within the area of the Iron Shadow simply ceased to exist, each rendered into their essential salts. As a body comes into the area, he's sure to see scattered piles of strangely colored (and odd smelling) salt—and little else. Even the buildings, infused with the power of the True Balance of All Things, faded away into nothingness.

Only the eradication of the Iron Shadow from the area can restore the rilmani city—buildings and inhabitants both. With Navimas, a substance found in Tale 4, and *Ever-changing Order*, a book found in the Mirrored Library, such a task is possible, but the PCs don't know about the book until Part Two of this Tale (unless they learned about it in Tale 5). When they first arrive, they are free to simply explore—that's Part One. In Part One, the current inhabitants of the library aren't well organized, giving the PCs a chance to get in and look around before they have to fight for their lives in Part Two.

◆ THE MIRRORRED LIBRARY ◆

Only one building stands now in what was once a bustling rilmani city. A strangely angled, odd-shaped structure, it stood in its spot in times ancient even as the rilmani reckon things. The building stood there long before the city arose around it. The rilmani have always called it the Mirrored Library. Its creators called it Timaresh, the Collection of Hated Lore.

The creators of Timaresh were a race of beings known as the kamerel (at least to themselves). Once, they ruled over a vast empire on the Outlands, rivaling the power and influence of even the rilmani—a race that they preyed upon for untold eons. But their empire had distinct differences.

The kamerel were beings of neutrality—befitting their home. Unlike the rilmani and their dedication to the balance, the kamerel embraced neutrality in their utter disregard and dispassion for anyone beyond themselves. Detached in the extreme, they barely realized that other living creatures existed in the multiverse.

In fact, as years passed, the kamerel developed a feeling of utter xenophobia. They avoided any sort of situation in which they might come across proof that other creatures existed. Fortunately for them, in those days there were

very few other creatures that came into the kamerel lands, so it was easy to remain isolated. Their empire came to them by default, not conquest.

The drawback to their sequestered paradise was that the kamerel had to deal with the almost complete lack of magic. They avoided the actual Spire so that at least first-level spells could function, and then developed a very minor sort of utility-centered magical craft called mirror magic. The subtlety of mirror magic allows it to function even this close to the Spire. Through mirror magic, they could scry other places to a limited degree, transport themselves (and other things) magically, and create magical space in reflections (for specifics on mirror magic, see page 111).

Self sufficient with their mirror magic, and self obsessed with their xenophobia, the kamerel existed at the center of the Outlands in peace for many years, controlling vast tracts of land that frankly, no one else wanted.

At least one kamerel, however, thought the detachment of her race would lead to their downfall. Her name was Hallonac. By ignoring all others, her people could not see potential threats that could be all around them. She sought to use her spells and enchantments to create a magical item that would allow her to spy upon the other races. Of course, being a kamerel, Hallonac desired a device that would do so in such a way that was utterly unobtrusive and required no interaction with the people of other races. Eventually, Hallonac created a strange and wondrous device. This mirrored machine captured the essence of any book, scroll, or other written work created anywhere in the multiverse and created a duplicate book (regardless of the work's original form, the device created reproduced it in book form).

The only requirement was that the written work be of significant length—a note passed to a lover or a list of things to purchase from the armorer would hardly count. Further, and more importantly, the author had to have desired the work to be read by others. The device would not copy some basher's journal, nor would it reproduce a wizard's personal spellbook.

Nevertheless, the magical device began producing copies of books at an incredible rate. Hallonac used mirror magic to create a place with enough room to hold all the books her magical creation could ever produce. She built the Mirrored Library.

When the other kamerel saw what Hallonac had created, they slew her in disgust and revulsion for what she had done. The idea of all these books written by non-kamerel was repugnant to them. Rather than even entering the storehouse of despised books, they set up guardians, determined that no one would ever enter. Meanwhile, the *bindery of Hallonac*, as the device was called, continued to create books, rapidly filling the shelves of the vast structure and all its many reflections. They named the place Timaresh because they hated all it represented and held.

The rilmani eventually came upon the site of the library and discovered the wonders that it held. They asked if they could be allowed inside, but the kamerel ignored them (as the kamerel were wont to do). When the rilmani attempted to enter anyway, however, the kamerel guardians stopped them.



Realizing how valuable the library was, the rilmani eventually drove the kamerel away from Timaresh by force. To the eyes of some, this might seem an evil act, yet the rilmani saw it as an action that would allow them best to serve the balance. The kamerel refused to share the information that they gathered, and the information, the rilmani decided, was crucial to the meeting of their goal.

This begot a series of conflicts between the two races. The kamerel, however, were sorely unprepared for such a war—the idea of mass battles with another race was unthinkable to them. To escape utter destruction as well as to flee from the hated contact of the rilmani, the kamerel eluded their foes through mirror magic. The rilmani don't know exactly how the kamerel fled, or where they went, but they haven't been seen or heard of since.

After the complete disappearance of the kamerel, the rilmani took over the Mirrored Library. Instead of despising all it held and all it represented, they used the lore within to become more powerful. The knowledge they gleaned from the books allowed them to better serve and preserve the balance. Until the coming of the Iron Shadow, they held the Mirrored Library among their greatest treasures—rarely allowing any non-rilmani access to the books within.

LAYOUT

Really, the library only has two parts—the main library and the support facilities. Paradoxically, the main library is far larger than the rest of the structure, but takes up virtually no room. The building that a body sees from the outside is almost entirely the support facilities.

1. ENTRANCE: Although many of the walls inside the Mirrored Library have mirrors on them, the most unusual mirrors hang in the entrance. The double doors that lead into the library reflect as mirrors, and if someone on the inside throws down the bar, the mirrored doors outside become a potent defense. Each time a basher attempts to open the now-barred doors, his reflection attacks him. The reflection makes a single attack, requiring an attack roll (modified by surprise almost certainly the first time). The attack is always physical (never a spell or magical item, although magical weapons are allowed), and the reflection uses the most efficient means possible. Use normal means to determine damage inflicted.

After one attack, the reflection returns to normal. The reflection cannot be harmed, spells have no effect upon it, and there's no way to keep it from attacking the door opener. The mirrors, actually polished metal, require 100 points of damage to destroy and they regenerate 1 hit point per round—characters can see dents they inflicted smooth out as the doors repair themselves. 'Course, if an intruder

destroys the mirrors, he destroys the doors, so he's really solved two problems at once. Subsequent attempts to open the doors (including attacks, battering attempts, pushing against the door, or searches for secret panels or doors) result in further attacks.

The dark of opening the doors lies in the mirrored surfaces themselves. Characters watching closely when a reflection attacks may notice (25% chance) the small outline of a panel on the door that faintly appears when an enchanted reflection comes to life. This panel, if opened, reveals a keyhole. If the key (long since lost) is inserted or the lock is picked, a mechanism activates to lift the bar. Opening the panel does not result in an attack, but a failed attempt at picking the lock does prompt the thief's reflection to attack him.

Once the kamerel have organized themselves within the library in Part Two they most certainly keep the doors locked—that should be more than enough to alert PCs who have gone into the library and come out again that something's changed. DMs should note that the doors regenerate even if completely destroyed or disintegrated.

Beyond the doors, an entryway gives way to a staircase leading upward. Mirrors serve as walls here, with the reflections becoming more and more distorted as a body ascends. These mirrors distort not only size and shape in their reflection, but color as well. Eventually, as a body almost reaches the top of the stairs, the reflections change the viewer's race, sex, demeanor, and even well-being in their images. Thus, a tall, evil, healthy female elf might appear to be a squat human male with angelic but sickly features—some mirrors change all, some just one feature.

2. STRANGE MIRROR ROOMS: Continuing the theme from the stairway, these rooms have all sorts of distorting mirrors on the walls, and little else. They serve little purpose, except perhaps in deciphering some of the books found in the Mirrored Collection (area 4).

3. SERVICE ROOMS: These are empty storage rooms, reading rooms, sitting rooms, studies, and the like. Except for a few bits of furniture, they contain nothing of importance.

4. MIRRORED COLLECTION: This is a special collection of books, not produced through the magical bindery at all, but instead created by the kamerel—many by the infamous Hallonac herself. As is fitting for the race, these books' pages are all mirrors rather than paper. The books, therefore, require many volumes as they quickly grow thick and heavy. The mirrored surfaces also make them difficult to read, at least for non-kamerel.



C'MON,
I+ WON'T TAKE LONG.
HOW BIG CAN
ONE LIBRARY BE?

— A PLANEWALKER
NEEDING THE LANN





Instead of printing on mirrors, a few of these books have text printed on paper or cloth but backwards—these were meant to be read in mirrors. The makers of these backwards books further distorted their text so that it is only readable in the various distorted mirrors found in the library.

Lastly, some really strange books sit on the shelves here; their mirrored pages contain only half the text—the script is literally missing portions of the letters. These must be held up to other books with the other half of the letters on them (printed backwards) so that in the mirrored pages' reflection, the entire text can be read at the same time. These books must be matched exactly (not only which book to which book, but which page to which page) for a body to read them.

Of course, the kamerel wrote all of their books in their now-forgotten tongue, so readers probably need to cast a *comprehend languages* spell. Before the language is deciphered, a body's not likely to even know that the text is distorted or partially missing.

Amid these strangest tomes a careful and meticulous search reveals a *tome of understanding* and a *manual of gainful exercise* (actually, these particular tomes are actually two books each because the text is split and must be deciphered in a reflection as described above). Finding these books requires the ability to decipher the kamerel tongue, a successful Intel-

ligence check to manipulate the writing, and six hours reading work each. Once found, the reader must follow the schedule of study outlined in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

As a further bane to searchers and researchers, one book that was once magical has since become corrupted—its poor creation resulted in a malfunction. This book now functions as a *vacuous grimoire*. As each hour of study passes, a 10% chance exists that the researcher comes upon this dreaded book.

Many of these books detail the mirror magic used by the kamerel. Although a portion of the spells and abilities involved in mirror magic are detailed near the end of this chapter, mirror magic works only for the kamerel. Other plane-walkers cannot fathom its mysteries any more than the kamerel could understand the secrets of standard AD&D magic.

5. MORE EMPTY ROOMS: Once, these were the bedchambers, workrooms, studies, and other chambers set up for Hallonac's use. After she was put in the dead-book, these rooms fell into disuse. Various bits of furniture still remain, none of it having aged well.

The kamerel use these rooms as a sort of base once Part Two of the adventure begins. Nen Itan, their overall leader,

watches through a *scry mirror* (he has many) to monitor the exits and the progress of any non-kamerel that he knows are within Timaresh. At least one other kamerel remains at his side at all times.

6. THE BINDERY: This room holds the book-making device itself. The *bindery of Hallonac* consists of a large mirror situated in front of an ever-scrolling roll of paper wrapped like a belt around two spinning rollers. As the paper scrolls, words appear very quickly over its surface at the rate of about one per second. The words on the papers are then reflected in the large mirror. Once the large mirror captures the complete text of a book, a copy then appears out of a second mirror located below the first. The entire thing sits atop a sturdy metal stand.

Each book produced by the bindery is bound in black, gray, or brown leather, and measures from 12 to 16 inches high and 10 to 12 inches wide. The thickness varies considerably, depending on the work. Each book's text appears in the language of the original writer—which means that there are almost as many languages represented in the library as books.

The room creates *unseen servants*, one per book. A *servant* then picks up the new book and carries it off to be shelved in the main library, exiting the bindery through a trap door in the floor. The room holds nothing else (although it appears to be filled with floating books as the servants cart off the books at such a rapid rate).

7. MAIN LIBRARY: The books created by the *bindery of Hallonac* are kept in the main library. *Unseen servants* carry the books down into the main library in a constant stream away from the device and then disseminate into the vast reaches of the shelves.

The main library contains an infinite number of rooms, all identical mirror images of each other, but filled with different books. Each room is a 20-foot cube. Upon all four walls hang mirrors 15 feet square. In the center of the room are six wooden bookcases with books shelved on either side. They extend almost all the way to the ceiling and are very sturdy. Each room is lit by a self-recasting *light spell* (*continual light* won't work).

A character gazing into one of the mirrors can see himself, everyone in the room, and the bookcases. If he looks carefully, however, he'll note that the books in the reflection are *different from the ones in the room he's in*. The reflection is a separate room, created by mirror magic. The character can step through the mirror (a process not unlike passing through a wall of thick, syrupy liquid—it takes a full round to do so) and into the next room. If he looks back into the mirror that he's stepped through, he sees his own reflection, the reflection of the bookcases, and the books from the room he just left behind. Likewise, if he left anything or anyone behind on the other side of the mirror, he can see them in the reflection as well.

This means that every time a body looks into one of the mirrors, he can see all the contents of the room where he stands (assuming that he's in line of sight and

not hiding behind a bookcase) except for the books—the only way to see the books in a room where a body stands is to look at them directly. The reflection also shows the books in the “next room over” and all the contents of the next room over (again, assuming that they're in line of sight and not hiding behind a bookcase). Seeing the contents of both rooms at once can at times be disconcerting. If the character stands in a room full of people and gazes into a mirrored wall that leads into a room full of people, he'll see images of people layered onto other people.

Under no circumstances, even if the bookcases are removed, can a cutter see through a mirror, into a room and then through a mirror in that room to see a room beyond. Range of sight is limited always to one adjoining room. So a body always sees two rooms at once gazing into a mirror—the next room and the one he's in.

Also, sound does *not* carry through the mirrors—only sight. This adds greatly to a thief's ability to sneak up on an enemy in the library—it also makes setting an ambush that much simpler.

The most common encounters in the main library are with the nearly numberless *unseen servants* moving about shelving new books. (DMs should note that because the library really is infinitely large, if a body walks far enough in it, he comes to a place where the bookshelves are empty because the *bindery* has yet to create books to fill them yet. However, it would take days to reach this empty section—which of course stretches out forever.) Like the Bindery room, the main library has the power to create *unseen servants* as well—this is necessary since sometimes the duration of the spell runs out long before the *servant* has managed to reach the spot where the book its carrying belongs. Many times, moving one book to one of these new shelves requires multiple *servants*.

The magically created *servants* also spend a fair amount of their time tidying up—which means that if a canny basher tries to leave behind markers to show where he's been (lots of folks think of this place like a maze—even though it's really not), there's about a 30% chance each hour that it'll get picked up by a cleaning servant, foiling his plan. The same holds for physically marking the shelves or walls with chalk, nicks, paint, or anything else. The *unseen servants* can repair any such damage. Even if bookcases are toppled or destroyed, books scattered, or the like by the time the bashers return to that area, the servants are likely to have repaired it all and tidied up.



Through some quirk in the magic of the reflections, only a few rooms actually contain the ceiling trap door to get out. Once within the main library, DMs should figure that about every twentieth room or so has an exit out, including a ladder to reach the hatch. Strangely enough, all of these exits lead up into the Bindery Room (area 6), although when a body goes down into the main library, it's always into the same room. Who can truly tumble as to why?

Once within the main library, the PCs can move about as they wish, but this is the location of most of the kamerel ambushes and traps that come in Part Two of the adventure. In Part One, however, the PCs have the place to themselves.

Combat that occurs in these small rooms presents a number of difficulties. With the sturdy bookcases in the way, weapons longer than four feet cannot be used. Further, no more than two foes can attack a single individual at a time, and only then if they've managed to get on both sides of him.

On the other hand, the environment gives a wonderful opportunity for thieves to sneak around (either around the bookcases or through some mirrors and all the way around from another room) and backstab. In situations where a thief attempts to hide his exact location in a room (but not conceal his presence), he gains a +10% to his chance of success because the multiple images in all the mirrors create confusion as to where he actually stands. If he is among a group of creatures (friend or foe), he gains an additional +10% chance to hide due to the increased confusing mirrored images. Conversely, if a thief attempts to conceal his entire presence, -20% is subtracted from his skill because of the lack of shadows and the fact that there are few places where someone can't see him in a mirror from some angle. Because sound does not carry through the mirrors, move silently checks are automatic (even for non-thieves!) unless or until the thief and his foes occupy the same room.

The other hazard is that combat can accidentally break mirrors. Quick, sharp movements (like swinging swords or whipping chains) can break the mirrors, even though normal movements pass through them (as detailed above). Spells always pass through the mirror as though it was simply an open doorway (but remember that sound does not).

The kamerel, with ages of experience around mirrors, never break them by accident. PCs and kytons, on the other hand, may. The DM should determine if a character is in a position to present a risk to a mirror and allow that player (or NPC) to make a Dexterity check to avoid smashing it—assuming that they don't want to. If a mirror is hit, damage is rolled normally for whatever type of weapon or attack the character uses. Any blow that inflicts at least 3 points of damage breaks a mirror, potentially cutting off forever a vast array of invaluable tomes. The wall behind the mirror appears to be made of iron.

When a mirror within the main library breaks, there is a 50% chance that room behind it ceases to exist—or at least cutters can no longer access the room and its contents, even from the other rooms next to it. The mirrors that should have led to it go black. If that happens, there's a 10% chance that each room adjoining the cut-off room (not the one containing the now-broken mirror) also disappears. This effect cascades

to the rooms that adjoin cut-off rooms. The DM just keeps rolling until the dice determine that no more rooms go away, keeping in mind that the room where the mirror was broken cannot be cutoff (that's just how the library works).

The contents of cut-off rooms are gone as well. If living creatures were in a room that was cut off, the DM is free to determine what happens. Harsh Dungeon Masters will strictly adhere to the fact that connection with the room is permanently severed—or at least until a new *spacial mirror* is created where the broken mirror hung. More generous DMs may, at least in the case of player characters, assume that those within the room are randomly flung into some distant portion of the main library—most likely completely lost.

A room can be temporarily cut off if the reflection is covered up. A simple drape hung over the mirror to a room effectively cuts it off from the room beyond, as does a *darkness* spell—unless that room happens to have an exit up and out. Where spacial existence is based on reflection, vision means everything—a blind basher cannot move through the main library.

◆ RILMANI CONTACT ◆

After the PCs have poked around a bit (DM's discretion), some rilmani not caught in the Iron Shadow manage to contact them. Nearby, a few rilmani call kip in a village named Centered Focus. When they heard that something had happened to Sum of All, they went to the scene. Through quick investigation (and the loss of a few rilmani), they've determined that Sum of All was consumed by some sort of alignment-focused curse. They knew that they couldn't get to the Mirrored Library, in which, their learned argenach sage believed, the dark of the affliction and its remedy lay.

Then, with inhuman vision, one of the ferrumachs saw the PCs in the area, far off in the distance.

Pooling the power of all present, the rilmani enhanced a *message* spell that could travel across the plains and reach the ears of the planewalkers who had somehow stumbled into the afflicted area. ("And how did they do that," asked the argenach. "A question for later," he was told.)

DMs should note that because of the power of the rilmani enhancement to this 1st-level spell, the *message* can reach the PCs even if they are within the library. DMs wishing to begin Part Two without forcing the PCs out of the library will find this useful.

The message requests that the PCs "please go into the Mirrored Library before you and retrieve a book called *Ever-changing Order*." Because the spell has a fair duration, the PCs can even manage to make replies—even asking for a slight retrieval fee, if they're so inclined. Or, they can travel to where the rilmani investigation party stands—a half-hour trip across the flat plains.

The investigators include an argenach named Termanath, the de facto leader, as well as four ferrumach warriors and two plumach attendants. Two piles of ferrumach dust lie on the ground at the border of the Iron Shadow. The rilmani stand just at the affliction's edge.

The rilmani don't know any details about what happened to Sum of All other than those stated above. They can tell the

PCs what Sum of All was like before. What is more important, they can give them detailed directions on how to find *Ever-changing Order*. "Once you get down into the main library, go spireward thirteen rooms, turn to your left and pass through eleven more rooms. It should be there, on one of the shelves. If not," the rilmani pauses a moment, almost forgetfully, "go three—no four—rooms edgeward (don't get turned around) and then twelve to your right." It sighs. "Sorry. It's been a while since I've been to the library."

The rilmani know nothing of the presence of the kamerel at this point, nor do they have any knowledge of the kytons who brought the Iron Shadow. Thus, they don't believe that the mission is at all difficult or dangerous (the PCs probably don't either). A modest reward, such as 100 gp in gems, is the most that they'd be willing to pay.

Once the PCs, assuming that they agree to fetch the book, break off communication, or leave the presence of the investigators, the rilmani wait. If the PCs take longer than two or three hours to bring the book to them, the rilmani return to Centered Focus to begin assembling a team composed of non-rilmani allies to go in after them. The team (brought together about five hours later) consists of three bariaur from a nearby tribe, a lizard man visiting from Semuanya's Bog, and a human Indep warrior from an Outlander village.

The members of the team go into the library looking for both the book and the PCs. These characters can be used by the DM as "rescuers" if the characters get in over their heads (or are captured by the kamerel). On the other hand, the PCs might also come upon this alternate group and find their numbers decimated by some trap or ambush.

TERRMANATH, ARGENACH ALCHEMIST: AC -1; MV 15; HD 9; hp 46; THACO 11 (10 with sword); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+8 (*long sword* +1, Strength bonus) or 1d10 (bare fist); SA Casts *detect magic* at will; SD +3 (+1) weapon to hit, immune to electricity, half damage from acid, gas and poison; MR 55%; SZ M (7' tall); ML champion (16); Int genius (18); AL N; XP 16,000.

Note: When not hampered by the spire, has *know alignment* always active; *fires two destructive rays* inflicting 1d20 points of damage each, cast *continual light/darkness*, *detect magic*, *dismissal*, *hold monster*, *polymorph self*, and *teleport without error* at will; casts *advanced illusion*, *cone of cold* (Dmg 9d4+9) 3×/day; *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, ESP, fly, and *geas* 1×/week; *hallucinatory terrain*, *invisibility*, *legend lore*, *mass charm*, *mirror image*, *prismatic spray*, *slow solid fog*, *suggestion*, and *wall of fire* 1×/day as well as *gating* 1d4 ferrumachs or 1 argenach with a 75% chance of success 1×/day.

Special Equipment: *ring of spell storing* (message ×2); *long sword* +3 (forged in the Outlands), 10 50 gp gems and 87 gp

FERRUMACH (4): AC -4; MV 12; HD 6; hp 25 each; THACO 15 (14 with halberd); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d10+9 (*halberd* +1, Strength and specialization); SD +1 weapon to hit, immune to electricity, half damage from acid, gas and poison; MR 35%; SZ M (6' 6" tall); ML fanatic (18); Int high (13-14); AL N; XP 4,000 each.

Notes: When not hampered by the spire has *know alignment* always active;

casts *blur*, *continual light or darkness*, *detect invisibility*, *dismissal*, *hold monster*, *know alignment*, *polymorph self*, *silence* 15-foot radius, *teleport without error*, *wall of fog* at will; *dispel magic* and *ice storm* 3×/day; lay on hands (*neutralize poison*, *cure disease*, and heal up to 18 points of damage) 1×/day; can *gate* 2d4 ferrumachs or 1 argenach with a 10% chance of success 1×/day.

Special Equipment: *halberd* +1 (Outlands forged), 10 gp each

PLUMACH (2): AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 16 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (footman's mace, Strength); SD +1 weapon to hit, immune to electricity, half damage from acid, gas and poison; MR 10%; SZ M (5' 6" tall); ML steady (12); Int very (11-12); AL N; XP 975 each.

Note: When not hampered by the Spire has *know alignment* always active; casts *chill touch*, *continual light or darkness*, *dismissal*, *heat metal*, *hold person*, *hold monster*, *know alignment*, *polymorph self*, *teleport without error* at will, and *solid fog* 1×/day

BARIAURS (3): AC 6; MV 15; HD 7; hp 30 each; THACO 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (special war club) or 1d8 (horns); SA Charge for 3d8 points damage and 50% chance to knock down foe of equal size or smaller; SD +2 to surprise rolls; MR 10%; SZ L (7' tall); ML steady (12); Int high (13); AL CG; XP 2,000 each.

Special equipment: War club, 8 gp each

LIZARD MAN: AC 5; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 2+1; hp 12; THACO 19; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d6 (spear) or 1d2/1d2/1d6; SZ M (7' tall); ML elite (14); Int avg (9); AL N; XP 65.

Special equipment: 12 sp

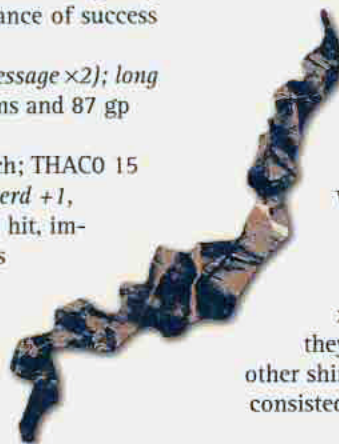
HERN (PI/♂ human/F4/Free League): AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; hp 20; THACO 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d6 (short sword or 1d6/1d6 (bow)); SZ M (6' tall); ML steady (11); AL N; XP 175.

Special equipment: *potion of hill giant strength*, 6 gp, 14 sp

THE KAMEREL STRIKE BACK

Ages ago, the kamerel, retreating from the advancing rilmani, passed into reflection. That is to say, they took their entire existence and placed it within an undefined, quasi-realm that existed only where a mirror or other reflective surface cast a reflection. And, by definition, this realm only exists when another being is looking into the reflection—for how can there be a reflection without someone to view it?

Thus, the kamerel's desperate attempt at escape put them in a position where they only existed when other beings looked at them. Their xenophobia drove them mad in this situation, and they've remained within the reflection of mirrors and other shiny places for centuries now. Their entire existence consisted of hiding their ever-so-slight movements so that





IT WAS EASY, ACTUALLY.
WE WERE UNHAPPY HERE.
IN THE OBJECTIVE WORLD,
WHICH TEEMED WITH THOSE WHO WOULD
PRY, POKE AND PROD INTO OUR EXISTENCE.
UNACCEPTABLE.
IN REFLECTION,
WE KAMEREL COULD REMAIN HIDDEN.
IT WAS THE PLACE EVERYONE LOOKED,
THEREFORE THE PLACE
NO ONE WOULD LOOK.
IN REFLECTION, THEY SAW THEMSELVES—
NEVER LOOKING FOR US.
SINCE THEY BELIEVED REFLECTION
HELD NOTHING UNIQUE,
THEY NEVER PRIED WITHIN.
THE IRONY, OF COURSE,
LIES IN THE FACT THAT
REFLECTION CANNOT EXIST
WITHOUT SOMETHING LOOKING AT IT—
AT LEAST.
THAT'S WHAT WE WHO DWELL
WITHIN THAT REFLECTION
HAVE LED YOU TO BELIEVE.

—NEN ITAN



they were nothing more than a brief flicker in the corner of some mirror-gazer's eye, so subtle that the viewer almost never noticed them. An unpleasant way to live to say the least.

The disappearance of the rilmani and the appearance of the kytons triggered a reaction within the kamerel. Sensing that things had changed, a few kamerel stepped out of the mirrors in the library—the place that they once had hated—and saw that the time was right for their return. And now the hated library would be their fortress. As time passes, more and more of them arrive.

The kamerel don't know where the rilmani went—but that knowledge is not their first priority. Their first priority is to secure the library as a safe headquarters, which entails driving out both the kytons and the PCs. After that, the order of the day is simple: revenge. Revenge upon the rilmani, revenge

upon anyone who they were forced to watch as they gazed into the reflection where the kamerel lived.

Kamerel look like short, white-skinned humans. They usually have long shocks of wild hair in which they weave greenery and flowers.

Kamerel teeth are slightly pointed. They favor clothing in blue, green, or white and carry short-bladed weapons and light crossbows (much of the time, these items carry Outlands-based enchantments, but never more than +1). For the most part they can be considered normal humans, advancing in levels as fighters, thieves, or wizards. They speak their own language, but have learned (reluctantly) the common trade language of the planes.

Kamerel name their sergeants "drivers." Usually, these individuals practice wizardry, but some train as warriors. Kamerel leaders, above the drivers in rank, are always wizards. Further, the leaders and drivers developed a special ability that allows them to memorize and prepare additional 1st-level spells instead of spells of other levels (which are useless here). Therefore, a 5th-level wizard, with four first-level spells, two second-level spells, and one of third level can memorize seven first-level spells instead—a distinct advantage here so near the Spire.

At the beginning of Part Two of this adventure, 19 kamerel have passed into the Mirrored Library and have organized. After that, they appear at a rate of about six an hour. The DM, however, should freely add or subtract kamerel to make the PCs' encounters with them work best. If the party's levels total more than 30, for example, the DM may wish to add one kamerel warrior for every three levels over 30. These additions should add to the total number of kamerel at the beginning.

Nen Itan, overall leader of the kamerel, stations himself in Hallonac's old chambers. This area functions as the kamerel base of operations until they've successfully cleared the entire library of hostile foes—PCs or kytons.

The following encounters represent the plans that the kamerel have to defend the library. Rather than sending troops to specific locations, Nen Itan or the other wizards use *scry mirrors* to find their foes and the kamerel spring the traps or ambushes where appropriate—although most assume that the encounter occurs in the main library.

The kamerel prepared the *scry* and *transport mirrors* called for in the following encounters long ago—they brought them along out of reflection, where they've spent the last few millennia.

KAMEREL TRAP 1—TRANSPORT: Using a special *transport mirror*, the kamerel replace one of the mirrors in the main library. When a character attempts to pass through the mirror, he instead is *reduced* down to 20% of his height if he fails his saving throw and then is immediately transported (no save) to the transport mirror associated with the first (see page 111). In this case, the kamerel keep the second mirror in their headquarters, where one kamerel warrior per level of the character waits to subdue him as he appears, disoriented and extremely small.

The kamerel gain free attacks upon the victim of the trap (although only three of them can attack at a time due to his small size), and *then* the victim must roll for surprise.

The kamerel attack with the intention to subdue—they wish to overbear their foe. Thus, they make a single attack roll at +6 (+4 for being larger, +2 for their numbers). If successful, they push him to the ground.

Once on the ground, a second successful attack roll means that they have the poor sod pinned—in which case they strip him of his weapons and equipment and bind his arms and legs with cord. The character will remain shrunk for 40 rounds after he was initially affected by the spell. Even if he's able to fight back, he only inflicts 20% normal damage due to his stature.

If this trap works (or even if it doesn't) the kamerel may try it again, in an attempt to scrag more prisoners. At this point, subduing all of the threats within the library is as good as killing them. Either way, the building becomes secure, allowing them to safely plan their next course of action.

Not knowing who the PCs and the kytons are and why they are here (and what happened to the rilmani), the kamerel are interested in capturing them—in the short term—to get some information. Prisoners are held in a locked room together until they can be questioned. After their questioning, the prisoners will almost certainly be slain by the barmy kamerel.

Of course, being kept in a room locked up alone or with a body's friends is one thing—being trapped with a kyton or two who were also captured by the kamerel is another. Captured kytons can simply will themselves to die—leaving behind nothing but a pile of chains and foul-smelling ichor—but an individual kyton may wait to see what's in store for him before he chooses that option.

Stripped of its chains, a kyton has no special abilities or weapons—except that it can still unnervingly take the appearance of a viewer's departed loved one or friend. That won't stop a bloodthirsty kyton from attacking fellow prisoners anyway if he's able. A trapped kyton could, conceivably, also attempt to control the chains he once wore (if they are within 20 feet) and use them to attempt to batter down the door or attack his captors. This situation may provide a PC with a possible diversion in which to attempt an escape. Assume that all the warriors present when the PC was captured now function as his guards.

It is to be hoped that the captured characters can escape or will be found and rescued them before the kamerel slay them. The captors will probably hold the prisoners at least a full day before killing them, and probably won't even question them until the library becomes secure.



KAMEREL TRAP 2—THE STRAIGHTFORWARD APPROACH: Not relying on magic at all, the kamerel rig tripwires amid the central two bookcases in a room that they hope the PCs go into (or one that they lead them into using *darkness* spells as outlined below or other means). A non-thief has only a 10% chance to spot the wire (a thief gains his normal chance to detect the trap). If a character goes to the room's middle and trips, the wires bring one of the central two bookcases crashing down inward, toward the center of the room. If this occurs, a shower of heavy books bombards the character, inflicting 1d6 points of damage (a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces the damage to half). Most likely (75% of the time), the falling bookcase lands upon one of the neighboring bookcases and stops. Sometimes, however, (25% of the time) the bookcase causes the other to fall. Now, the PC who triggered the trap must attempt a Dexterity check (–1 penalty to the check for each point of damage inflicted by the falling books). If the check fails, the heavy bookcase itself falls upon him inflicting 3d6 points of damage (no saving throw).

Creatures in the path of the other bookcase falling outward feel the brunt of the falling books now (as above), and there's a 25% chance that it brings the outer bookcase that it's fallen upon down. That means that the characters on the side of the falling bookcase now must make successful Dexterity checks or suffer the 3d6 points of damage. Those on the other side of the outer bookcase are bombarded by books and the bookcase has a 25% chance of breaking the mirror that it falls upon. A broken mirror can result in many rooms being cut off (see the main library description, page 105). Fortunately, the library is designed so that a falling bookcase cannot fall through a mirror into another room, for this could potentially set off a domino-like reaction throughout the entire infinitely large library.

KAMEREL TRAP 3—MONSTERS: This trap requires the most work and long-term effort on the part of the kamerel. It won't be used unless their foes prove extremely troublesome.

The kamerel secret a number of *transport mirrors* throughout the area around their foes. Then, a few of the spellcasters head out of the library and into the Outlands with the corresponding mirrors. Once in the wilds, they look for hostile creatures to cast *transport mirror* upon, sending them into the main library to attack their foes. If a beast is too large (often the case) they shrink it down using *reduce*.

In the Library, the kamerel's foes suddenly find themselves attacked by oddly small wild beasts, one at a time, usually coming from 15 minutes to 1 hour apart. The kamerel manage to find the following beasts, in this order:

LEUCROTTA, SHRUNK TO 20% SIZE: AC 4; MV 18; HD 6+1; hp 32; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6 (bite); SA Foes using shields must make a save or it bites through, mimics voices and sounds; SD When retreating, rear hooves inflict 1d6 points of damage; SW all damage divided by 5 (minimum of 1) due to reduced size; SZ T (2' long); ML elite (14); Int avg (10); AL CE; XP 650.

GIANT BOMBARDIER BEETLE, SHRUNK TO 50% SIZE: AC 4; MV 9; HD 2+2; hp 12; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bite); SA twice per hour fire an acidic cloud with a diameter of 4 feet, a creature in the cloud suffers 3d4 points of damage, the cloud also generates a boom that has a 20% chance to stun and deafen a creature for 2d4 rounds, plus 2d4 rounds of deafness afterward, creatures not stunned have a 20% chance to be deafened for 2d6 rounds instead; SW bite damage reduced by half due to reduced size; SZ S (2' long); ML elite (13); Int non (0); AL N; XP 120.

RUST MONSTER, SHRUNK TO 40% SIZE: AC 2; MV 18; HD 5; hp 18; THACO 15; #AT 2; Dmg Nil; SA metallic items touched are destroyed (magical items have a 10% chance to resist per "plus"); SZ S (2' long); ML average (9); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 270.

KYTON, CHAINLESS: AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; hp 48; THACO 13; #AT 2; Dmg pummel; SA control and even attack with any chains within 20 feet; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal rate, flee from blessed items; MR 25%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int low to avg (5-9); AL LE; XP 6,000.

KAMEREL AMBUSH 1—DARKNESS: Three kamerel mages, able to cast *darkness* (the kamerel version of *light* allows a mage to reverse the spell as a cleric could), cast their spells so that three of the rooms adjoining the room that the PCs occupy are dark (but not the room that the PCs are in), effectively making three of the mirrors leading out of the room useless (*darkness* means no reflection, which means no connection with the room). For the duration of the spell, these mirrors cannot be used, and the PCs are either trapped or forced to use the one exit left functioning—where one kamerel warrior for each PC waits in ambush (more if the PCs are high level—see above).

These kamerel use the bookcases in the room to their advantage. An incoming PC is allowed to move far enough into

the room so that two kamerel can surround him. Likewise, they try not to let the PCs get on both sides of them. Whenever possible, two kamerel attack a single foe—in an ambush situation like this, they know it is best to overwhelm the foes as quickly as possible, reducing their numbers so that the rest can be overcome by the remaining superior force. The three wizard kamerel (drivers all) can participate in the fight. Once the *darkness* spells are in place—it's key that they are cast in the right spots (they can only cast the spell one room away from them due to the range of sight and even then can only see the targeting spot in a reflection in a mirror—see the diagram on page 101) and at the same time. Due to their passing through numerous mirrors to reach the ambush site, two of the drivers arrive four rounds after they cast their spells and the third in ten rounds.

Conceivably, the kamerel could use the *darkness* spells to isolate one portion of their foes from the rest. Splitting the group in two with well-placed *darkness* spells is relatively easy. Once half the group has passed through a mirror they, cast a *darkness* spell in the room with the rest of the PCs, isolating the former and trapping the latter so that none of their exit mirrors function.

At this point, the ambushers strike, possibly attempting to subdue their foes (as detailed in the Kamerel Trap 1 description, although the PCs would presumably be normal sized) and carry them off to whatever room(s) they are using for cells in their headquarters. As with all such ambushes, the kamerel get free attacks unless the PCs were able to

somehow detect their presence, and then their foes must check for surprise.

KAMEREL AMBUSH 2—THE LURE: This ambush works only if one of the PCs or the PCs' allies was caught in Trap 1 and transported away. In this case, the kamerel scatter the equipment of the captured PC in a path through whatever part of the library they occupy. This, they hope, lures the captured foe's allies into a position where the kamerel are waiting to attack.

In this ambush, one warrior for each PC waits with a wizard driver and a warrior driver. The wizard uses *darkness* spells to cut off PC escape routes if possible (in the main library), while the warriors attempt to attack their foes from two sides.

KAMEREL WARRIOR, F3: AC 3 (banded mail and shield); MV 9; hp 17; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword) or 1d4 (small crossbow); SD immune to electricity, blinding or deafening attacks, and petrification; SZ S (4' tall); ML average (9); Int avg (10); AL N; XP 175.



WHAT'S THAT
RATTLING SOUND?

— A SOD ABOUT TO
DISCOVER THAT
KYTONS NOW INHABIT
THE MAIN LIBRARY



KAMEREL DRIVER, F6: AC 2 (plate mail and shield); MV 12; hp 40; THACO 15 (14 with sword); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (*short sword +1*) or 1d4 (small crossbow); SD Immune to electricity, blinding or deafening attacks, and petrification; SZ M (5' tall); ML champion (15); Int very (11); AL N; XP 975.

Special equipment: *short sword +1* (Outlands forged)

KAMEREL DRIVER, W6: AC 10; MV 12; hp 20; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD immune to electricity, blinding or deafening attacks, and petrification; SZ S (4' tall); ML elite (13); Int high (13); AL N; XP 1,400.

Spells (8): *darkness*, *detect magic*, *light*, *magic missile*, *reduce*, *scry mirror*, *shield*, *transport mirror*

NEN ITAN, KAMEREL LEADER, W10: AC 4 (bracers AC 4); MV 12; hp 28; THACO 17 (16 with dagger); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (*dagger +1*); SA spells; SD immune to electricity, blinding or deafening attacks, and petrification; SZ M (5' tall); ML champion (16); Int genius (17); AL N; XP 4,000.

Spells (15): *burning hands* (x2), *darkness*, *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *reduce* (x2), *scry mirror* (x4), *shield*, *transport mirror* (x2)

MIRROR MAGIC

Mirror magic only works in the skilled hands of the kamerel. The spells (which are more appropriately thought of as special abilities) presented here will not function for any non-kamerel caster. For purposes of the Outlands' cancellation of magic, all of these abilities should be considered to be the equivalent of 1st level spells.

SCRY MIRROR: Not nearly as powerful as a *magic mirror* spell, a *scry mirror* is limited to looking upon only an area already shown in a mirror somewhere. The target mirror must be within 10 miles per level of the mirror's creator and the user must be aware of its exact location and position.

No spells can be cast through a *scry mirror*. Once the scrying attempt is finished, the mirror shatters. It takes a full day to create a *scry mirror*—although once created, they last up to 3 weeks + 1 week per level or HD total of the creator.

TRANSPORT MIRROR: Using two different, specially prepared mirrors, kamerel can transport small items or creatures from one to the other. The item can be no more than two feet long or wide, and cannot weigh more than 50 pounds. The kamerel use a *reduce* spell (the



reverse of the *enlarge* spell) to make themselves or other items smaller, enabling them to be moved via a transport mirror. The distance that separates the two mirrors can be no greater than 1 mile per level or HD total of the creator of the mirrors.

Each transport mirror requires a week of preparation. Both mirrors must be created by the same sorcerer. Both shatter upon completion after use.

SPACIAL MIRROR: This ability allows the kamerel to create more space by making the area within a mirror's reflection real. This ability can create, at most, an extra 20-foot cube per mirror—which explains the layout of the main library.

When two or more spacial mirrors reflect each other, the reflections within the initial reflections also create extra space. Quickly, without even trying, an infinite amount of space comes into being. This represents the height of mirror magic development and the pinnacle of a mirror sorcerer's power. Unlike *scry mirror* or *transport mirror*, *spacial mirror* needs only be cast during the mirror's creation, and then works indefinitely.

Each spacial mirror needs a full year of preparation. Spacial mirrors reflecting each other must be created by the same sorcerer. Mirrors of different creators reflecting each other in this way shatter.



THE KY+ONS

The kytons that brought the Iron Shadow to the Outlands remain in the library. Currently, they represent the primary threat in the eyes of the kamerel. Six lesser kytons wander the main library. The DM should change one lesser kyton to a normal kyton for every three levels over 30 in the total combined levels of the PC party. At first, they are unaware of both the kamerel's return (they've never even heard of the kamerel) and the PCs' presence. They came to Sum of All to break into and loot the library. When the rest of the city went away (which delighted them), they spent little time wondering why and went straight for the library. Scattered in groups of one or two, they comb the shelves for books for their leader, Quimath, on the Iron Shadow or anything like it. They cannot return to Baator even if they wanted to now, however, for the portal they used was a part of Sum of All—a part that was destroyed by the Iron Shadow.

Later in the adventure, once they begin to encounter the kamerel, and possibly the PCs, the kytons band together in whatever numbers remain and attempt to fight back against whatever they see to be the major threat—probably the kamerel.



Like those presented above, the following encounters are not keyed to specific locations but instead allow the DM to place them where appropriate.

KYTON ENCOUNTER 1—ACCIDENT: As the name implies, this encounter occurs without any preplanning on the kytons' part. Make a normal surprise check for both sides. Also, roll a d20 to determine how many feet away the groups are when one side spots the other (most likely, the observer catches a glimpse of a reflection in a mirror rather than a direct line-of-sight spotting). Remember that sound cannot travel beyond the bounds of one room—unlike most situations, it's likely that a body'll see a foe before he hears him. Sneaky plane-walkers who gain awareness of the kytons ahead of time can possibly even move back to ambush them later.

When an accidental kyton encounter occurs, only one (two if the combined total levels of the PCs is over 30) kyton is present. He searches the shelves of the bookcases, looking for valuable magical tomes usable by Quimath (or herself). If attacked, he's likely to flee with the intention of finding his comrades. He might, however, speak with a basher that offers him sufficient garnish—that is to say, a good bribe. He might consider 100 gp in jink (coins) or gems enough to loosen his tongue, and a magical item of any type easily fits the bill. He would be willing to tell those who've bribed him that he's working for (he'll say "with") another kyton named Quimath, and that Quimath seeks to spread the Iron Shadow (if this is a secret, he's not aware of that fact). He doesn't know what happened to the rilmani, or anything about the kamerel. He's looking for a book that might help increase the Kytons' knowledge of how the Shadow works.

He won't be cowed by threats of any kind, and if captured simply destroys himself. He's definitely not interested in an alliance, although once he's talked with the PCs, he'll be happy to leave peaceably (only so that he can gather his fellows together to come back and put the bashers in the dead-book).

KYTON ENCOUNTER 2—WAR PARTY: This time, the kytons know that forces hostile to them have made their way into the library. Now, five of the kytons have gathered together (or all that remain, whichever is fewer) and seek to meet their opponents in force.

As in encounter 1, however, the kytons have not set up an ambush. They have the same potential to be surprised as the PCs when the two groups finally come together.

When encountered, the kytons fight immediately and to the death. They do not seek parley and they offer no quarter.

The kytons might try flinging some of their chains over the top of a bookcase (using their power to control the chains) so that they can attack a foe on the other side by surprise.

Kytons attacking in this way may hope to entangle the foe so that they can pull him up and over the bookcase.

To entangle an enemy, a kyton must make two successful attacks (each inflicting only half normal damage) and the victim must fail a Strength check. If this happens, the kyton can pull the victim up to the top of the bookcase, holding him there, incapacitated (a successful Strength check can break him free, but it results in an almost 20-foot drop for 2d6 points of damage). Or, the kyton can drag his opponent over the top of the shelf, inflicting 2d6 points of damage from the drop.

KAMEREL/KYTON ENCOUNTER: In this last sort of encounter, the PCs stumble upon both the kamerel and the kytons, but these two groups stumbled upon each other before that. The battle is heated and bloody, with four kytons (or all remaining, whichever is fewer) combating seven kamerel, including one warrior driver.

With no kamerel wizards present, the battle is very straightforward. The kytons attempt to keep their distance, fighting at a range with their whiplike chains. The kamerel make repeated attempts to close so they can use their melee weapons against their foes. The kytons have a slight advantage in physical power slightly, but the kamerel have their foes outnumbered.

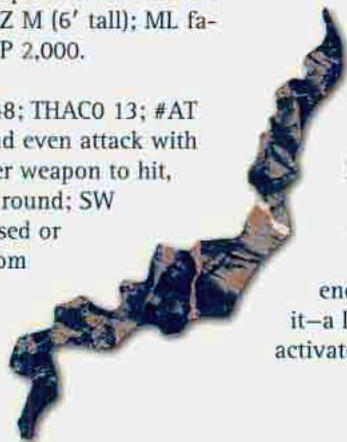
When the PCs arrive on the scene, neither of the opposing sides can take the time to deal with them. Whether the planewalkers get involved is up to them. If they decide to help one side over the other, they will clearly make a difference and turn the tide either way. The ultimate outcome remains in question, however.

If the PCs aid the kytons, the kytons fight until every last kamerel is dead. And then without missing a beat, turn upon the adventurers. They give no opportunity for parley or surrender.

On the other hand, if the PCs help the kamerel, the act is enough to give the neutrally-aligned (but barmy) planars pause. Rather than continuing the fight, the kamerel will then be ready to talk—assuming that the PCs treat them with respect. If the kamerel learn that all the intruders want is a single book, they're likely to let them take it if they promise to leave afterward.

KYTON, LESSER: AC 2; MV 12; HD 4; hp 24; THACO 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8 (chain); SA control and even attack with any chains within 20 feet; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal rate, flee from blessed items; MR 10%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int low to avg (5-9); AL LE; XP 2,000.

KYTON, NORMAL: AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; hp 48; THACO 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (chain); SA control and even attack with any chains within 20 feet; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal rate, flee from blessed items; MR 25%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int low to avg (5-9); AL LE; XP 6,000.



◆ EVER-CHANGING ORDER ◆

If the PCs manage to get the copy of *Ever-changing Order*, they'll find it to be an obtusely written text on the nature of law and chaos and how the two can paradoxically work together. Apparently written by Ghuntomas of Thorn, a Fraternity of Order sage, about 30 years ago (who was later kicked out of his faction for his heretical views), the book is probably too scholarly for the PCs to understand, unless they have a great deal of knowledge already pertaining to the metaphysics of order and chaos. Even if they do, it's a complicated tome.

Terrmanath, the rilmani argenach, can decipher it. He's the one who requested that they get the book in the first place. *Ever-changing Order* contains the details for overcoming an unbalance of law in a specific locale—in theory. These processes have never been tested because no one's ever been able to distill the catalyst for the entire process to begin—as far as Ghuntomas knew. In fact, Cahm'Fel the githzerai did just that when he produced the substance he calls Navimas on the plane of Limbo. With both *Ever-changing Order* and the Navimas, a well-learned alchemist can develop a remedy which will banish the Iron Shadow (Terrmanath is such an alchemist).

Interestingly enough, if the PCs find themselves in a position to do research regarding Ghuntomas of Thorn, they discover that he's still alive and living on the Elemental Plane of Air. Ghuntomas has fallen on some hard times of late ... (see Tale 5).

If the kytons get the copy of *Ever-changing Order*, Quimath will use it to learn more about the Iron Shadow and how it can be intentionally spread. This is very dangerous in the long term, although it will take the kyton many months to tumble to all the nuances of the book and probably more for him to implement what he's learned.

This also isn't the only copy of the book. Once the PCs learn that it's needed, a research trip (side adventure) to Sigil might result in someone finding it, or at least their learning of the whereabouts of the down-and-out author.

◆ LEAVING THE OUTLANDS ◆

Once the planewalkers decide to give the Outlands the laugh, they can simply use the doorway back to the Infinite Staircase. This doorway exists even here so near the Spire, for its magic is potent and yet subtle.

If the Iron Shadow is dispelled, either through the heroic actions of the PCs or through the moving of the rings of the Outlands (when the first ring of the Outlands moves toward the city it dispels the Shadow), the city returns. The secret portal within one of its towers, leading straight to Baator and the horrid city of Jangling Hiter, also returns. More kytons can come into the city, and likewise, the PCs—should they so choose—can use the portal to travel to the City of Chains. Few know the key to this magical gate, but enough asking around in Sum of All turns up the dark of it—a living cat activates the portal to Baator (and a dead cat activates the way back).

You think that you know evil. You think that you've seen evil. Death, torture ... you seen folks commit evil acts. You've probably even run across a fiend or two, or maybe you've been to the Infernal Regions themselves, and seen evil, and felt it in your hand.

But (there's always a but, isn't there?), it's just when you think you've got a grasp on true evil when it really slips through your fingers.

Is evil just the opposite of good? Is it hatred, pain, and murder? Is it ambivalence and disdain for others?

Sometimes, when you've seen a fiend up close, or traipsed through Gehenna's fiery peaks, you think to yourself, that's what evil is? Fire and brimstone, horns and claws? Is there more to it than just that?

Of course there is.

TALE 8: A DEVIL'S DREAM

◆ OVERVIEW ◆

Even a foul pestilence like the Iron Shadow has its supporters. Quimath, a rare kyton who has risen above the ranks of his kind to learn some of the lore regarding Order and Chaos, longs to foster the Iron Shadow. He hopes to spread its rigid, soul-numbing presence throughout the multiverse, to drain away all emotion and thought other than subservience and blind existence.

Quimath dwells in a minor fortress, Panos Qytel, within the Baatorian city of Jangling Hiter. There, he attempts to learn more of the nature of the Iron Shadow and how it spreads. The PCs arrive in the City of Chains to find that the Shadow festers here, ironically making it difficult for Quimath to think of a way to master it. Yet still the evil plans of the kyton leader must be stopped, for were he able to spread the foul infection to more realms, its expansion might never stop.

This adventure requires characters of at least 5th level to be successful, with those of higher level better equipped to face the challenges of Baator head-on, rather than with guile and subterfuge. If using this adventure with the others in this product, the PCs will need to have come upon some evidence of the kyton involvement in the larger scope of things in order to have a chance to fully complete the adventure. That may mean that the planewalkers come to Jangling Hiter, leave, and

return—a completely acceptable turn of events.

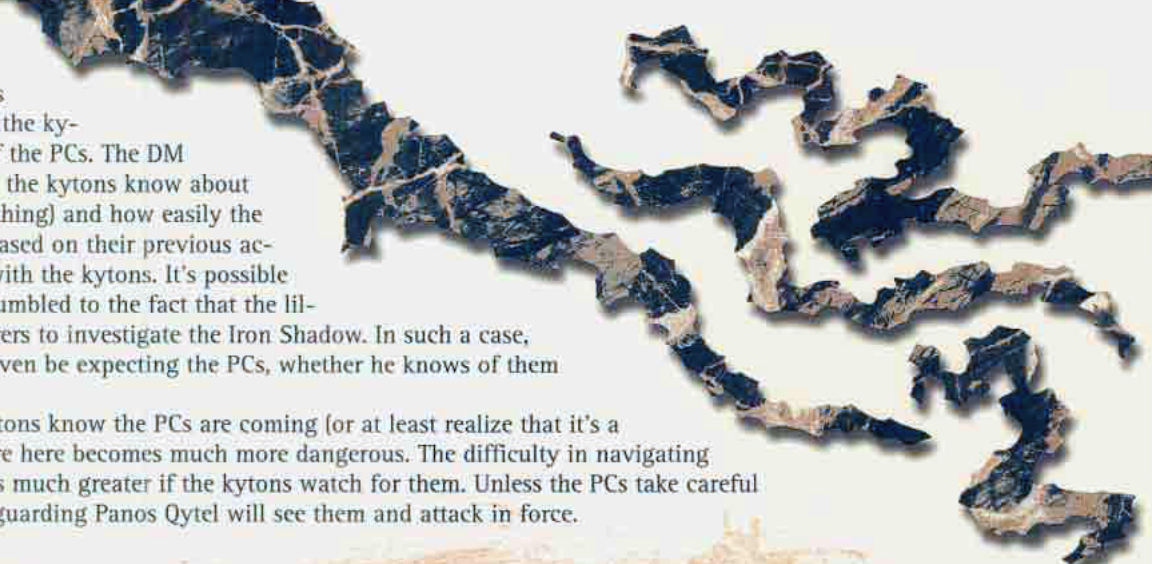
◆ ADVENTURE NOTES ◆

- ◆ If the PCs have encountered kytons in earlier tales, they probably know that the creatures are involved in a sinister way with the Iron Shadow. Although they're not directly responsible for it, they certainly seek to learn more about it (not unlike the PCs, after a fashion) and how it can be spread further. To allow the PCs to complete this entire adventure, they'll need to have heard of either Quimath or Panos Qytel—most likely in Tale 7 in the Mirrored Library, but potentially in Tale 4, after the kytons have killed Cahm'Fel the githzerai.

WELL, WE'RE HERE,
AREN'T WE?

— A PLANEWALKER

+RYING +O CONVINCING
HER COMPANION +HA+
NOT EVERYONE
IN JANGLING HITER'S
NECESSARILY EVIL
(BUT IT'S STILL A SAFE
ASSUMPTION +O MAKE)



Of course, if the PCs are aware of the kytons, the kytons most likely know of the PCs. The DM needs to determine what the kytons know about the planewalkers (if anything) and how easily the PCs will be recognized based on their previous activities and encounters with the kytons. It's possible that Quimath has even tumbled to the fact that the lil-lendi have sent adventurers to investigate the Iron Shadow. In such a case, the kyton leader might even be expecting the PCs, whether he knows of them specifically or not.

Obviously, if the kytons know the PCs are coming (or at least realize that it's a possibility), the adventure here becomes much more dangerous. The difficulty in navigating through Jangling Hiter is much greater if the kytons watch for them. Unless the PCs take careful precautions, the kytons guarding Panos Qytel will see them and attack in force.

Of course, Quimath doesn't hold sway over every kyton, or even every kyton in Jangling Hiter. Not every kyton on the city's streets will recognize the PCs or even know to look for them. Were it otherwise, the planewalkers wouldn't last more than a few minutes after entering the city.

- ♦ If the PCs have brought Navimas to other planes, using it as described in *Ever-changing Order* and ridding those planes of the Iron Shadow, the kytons almost certainly already search the multiverse for them in order to stop them. Coming here, to the heart of their power, throws off the search—Quimath certainly never thought that they'd come to *him* with the antidote—but also means that they'll be recognized by any of Quimath's kytons and attacked immediately. They've become the greatest threat to the kyton's plans, and he's informed all those loyal to him regarding their appearance and anything else he's learned.

Eventually, the kytons are bound to find the PCs, forcing a bloody confrontation (or a death-defying chase).

This turn of events makes things much harder. If the PCs get in over their heads in an attempt to rid the city of the Iron Shadow, a generous DM

PLANAR MAGIC—BAA+OR

The plane of Baator alters magic in various ways. Spells affected are listed by school.

CONJURATION/SUMMONING: To control a summoned creature, the caster must perform a special binding upon it. This entails a Spellcraft proficiency check or an Intelligence check at a -5 penalty to see if the caster makes the binding absolutely perfect. If the roll is failed, the creature isn't under the control of the caster and can do as it pleases.

DIVINATION: Although not entirely inaccurate, divinations on Baator always carry a dark, gloomy tone. Usually, the future is forecast in the worst possible light. Further, divinations draw attention to the caster, and increase the chance of a hostile encounter on the plane, making such an occurrence twice as likely.

NECROMANCY: Spells used to heal or grant life require a successful saving throw vs. spell to be made by the caster. Necromantic spells that bring pain and woe are cast as though the spell-slinger were one level higher.

WILD MAGIC: Wild mages operate as though one level lower per layer of Baator upon which they stand, so on Minauros they lose three levels in regard to casting and memorizing spells (a 1st-3rd level wild mage would cast no spells at all here).

ELEMENTAL: These spells are almost always changed on the Outer Planes, and Baator's no exception. The effects vary layer by layer, but on Minauros spells of water, wind and ooze (if applicable) function as though cast by a wizard one level higher than actual, while spells of fire and earth do not function at all without a spell key.

Spell keys on Baator are difficult to discover and require more and more of the caster the deeper a body goes into the Pit. On Minauros, nine different keys—objects, words, gestures, and so forth—are required for the affected spell to function properly. Most wizards are better off forgetting about them altogether unless they plan on staying a while (and who in their right mind would do that?).

will allow two or three lillendi from the Staircase attempt a rescue, having been alerted to the PCs' need when they themselves spied upon the doings of the evil kytons (see Tale 1 for lillendi statistics).

- ♦ If the PCs bring Navimas with them here to dispel the Iron Shadow (using the knowledge gained from *Ever-changing Order*), the chain artisans and craftsmen can once again return to their work (see page 122). Quimath is thrown into an almost insane rage if he's still alive and present. He won't rest until the PCs are dead.

The Iron Shadow cannot be dispelled from Jangling Hiter without the assistance of a baatezu. The characters need the express permission, in the form of a written contract sealed in Navimas, to banish the Shadow and its effects. Fortunately, most baatezu will be glad to be rid of the affliction, which makes it more difficult to creatively form plans and schemes (their forte). However, canny bashers'll watch the fiend and her contract with a peery eye (as they say in Sigil), for baatezu like to put nasty clauses and tricky addendums to their agreements. Details regarding this process can be found by reading *Ever-changing Order*. Research time needed involves (21 minus Intelligence score) days of reading.

- ♦ If the kytons have the Navimas, having taken it from Cahm'Fel after they put him in the dead-book during Stage 5 (see Tale 4), they've placed it in the rusted cask within the Stagnation Shrine in Panos Qytel. At least one kyton guards the hated substance at all times.

- ♦ At Stage 5, Jazruil the hound archon dares to come to Baator to investigate the spread of the Iron Shadow. Obviously, the place is inimical to him, presenting dangers at every turn. Should the kytons or the baatezu detect his presence, they would delight in his destruction which the fiends would stretch out to last many painful centuries.

In this Tale, Jazruil helps the PCs in any way he can if he comes upon them. They're obviously as out-of-place and threatened here as he is, and Jazruil holds the simple truth of safety in numbers dear to his soul.

Jazruil magical long sword has no bonuses here.

The hound archon travels the swaying streets of Jangling Hiter in the form of a mangy dog or, if that shape won't get him where he needs to go, he'll wrap his humanoid form tightly in a concealing, hooded cloak.

- ♦ If the exploring mind flayers from Tale 1 find their way to Jangling Hiter, they remain as nonchalant as possible, realizing quickly that even they do not have the power



to threaten the fiends and kytons that dwell here in such numbers. On the other hand, their presence isn't inimical here as it might be in other cities, so the illithids are able to explore at their leisure, perhaps even becoming frequent visitors or merchants.

USING THE ADVENTURE INDEPENDENTLY: To use the adventure presented here without the others in the product, the DUNGEON MASTER should probably focus on the nupperibo experiment being conducted in Panos Qytel (see page 126) rather than dealing with the Iron Shadow. Wherever the PCs begin the adventure, they come in contact with a tiefling woman named Gibbaren who claims to have a nasty bit of chant. She says that the kytons of Jangling Hiter have a mysterious prisoner within a tower of chains called Panos Qytel. This prisoner, she says, possesses forbidden secrets of Baator and should the kytons learn the secret, they will become a potent threat of evil.

Gibbaren is actually an erinyes baatezu. She secretly works for Pollus Windscreamer, the city's puppet baatezu ruler (see page 119). Pollus knows the kytons have the nupperibo prisoner and that they have discovered some of its secrets. He seeks to stop the experiment before the kytons become a threat even to the baatezu. He cannot, however, act directly because the kytons will kill him before he can do anything. Gibbaren has lured others into going into Panos Qytel, but so far all have failed (Gibbaren won't tell the PCs that, though).

The disguised erinyes offers the PCs 1,000 gp each if they'll help her get in and rescue the prisoner. If they accept, Gibbaren uses her abilities to their fullest to help the planewalkers infiltrate the fortress (even at the risk of exposing her true identity) and if they reach the Chamber of Ancient Horrors she'll do anything she can to destroy the nupperibo quickly and completely. After that, she will neither help the PCs escape nor explain her true motives. The duped gullies are on their own in theorizing why everyone's getting so concerned over such a minor fiend and in getting out of the fortress and city alive.

GIBBAREN, ERINYES: AC 2; MV 12, Fl 21 (C); HD 6+6; hp 41; THACO 13 (12 with sword); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (*long sword* +1); SA Anyone seeing the erinyes in its true form must save vs. wands or flee in *fear* for 1d6 rounds, gaze acts as *charm person* spell (victims save at half their level, can only charm one victim at a time), has *know alignment* always active, casts *advanced illusion*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *detect invisibility*, *infravision*, *invisibility*, *know alignment*, *locate object*, *polymorph self*, *produce flame* and *suggestion* at will, can *gate* 1d8 spinagons (50% chance of success) or 1d4 barbazu (35% chance of success) (1x/day); SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to fire and poison, half damage from cold and gas; MR 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML steady (12); Int high (14); AL LE; XP 7,000.

I WOULD NEVER
HAVE THOUGHT
YOU COULD DO
SO MUCH
WITH JUST SOME CHAIN.

— OCHUIMON,
A PRIME PLANEWALKER

Special equipment: *long sword* +1 (Baator forged), *rope of entanglement*

◆ PASSAGE TO BAATOR ◆

As the planewalkers descend a flight of iron steps, it grows darker and darker until even torchlight becomes shrouded in shadow. Only magical light can provide illumination in this cold region of the Staircase, and without it the PCs need to feel their way along the rusty iron steps to reach the tiny landing of clattering, corrosion-covered metal plates. A thick curtain of heavy iron chains serves as a doorway. Wind from the other side rattles the chains and the plates, making a cacophonous, irritating sound in the chill darkness.

Baator is to the multiverse what a piercing spike is to a body's ribcage. The heart of regimented order and compassionless evil, the plane holds the dubious distinction of being the home of the lawful evil fiends known as baatezu. These creatures occupy all nine layers of the plane some call Hell. (But really, how's a body really able to say that Baator's Hell but the Abyss or Gehenna's not? A canny planewalker knows that they're all Hell.)

The doorway leads to the third of Baator's layers, called Minauros. The whole of Minauros spans an infinite, fetid swamp of mire and pollution. Rusty, acrid rain and harsh cold winds rage more often than not above the level of the endless bog. At its center lies the city of Minauros, as big as an entire prime world. This huge metropolis of fiends spends eternity sinking into the muck and slime of the layer, with its inhabitants constantly attempting to keep it from succumbing to the swamp. Baatezu wander the fields of the layer looking for slaves that can be put to work helping in this effort.

Fortunately, those within the City of Jangling Hiter remain safe from kidnapping and conscription. Unfortunately, conditions within the city are probably worse than that horrible fate.



◆ CITY OF CHAINS ◆

Jangling Hiter, called the City of Chains or the City of Rattling Madness or the Place of Chain-Torn-Flesh (depending on who a body asks), hangs suspended from thick chains from the darkness above the infinite bog of Minauros. The level of the lower portion of the city lies just above the marsh, but the chains keep the mire from drawing Jangling Hiter down into it.

creators in eons past.

The city isn't large, particularly in comparison to the unimaginably huge sprawl of Minauros, the city. Only six or seven thousand creatures call it home. It once boasted many more visitors who came to the city to trade, but their numbers have decreased steadily as the City of Chain's reputation for danger and death—even by Baatorian standards—grew.

Jangling Hiter's ruler, at least in name, is an apathetic hamatula baatezu



THE SOONER +HA+ PEOPLE REALIZE
+HA+ +TRUE ORDER COMES FROM IMPOSED STRUCTURE.
+HE BETTER OFF +HE MULTIVERSE WILL BE.
STRENGTH, SUCH AS BAA+ORIAN STRENGTH,
COUPLED WITH EFFICIENT LEADERSHIP,
SUCH AS BAA+ORIAN LEADERSHIP,
IS NECESSARY FOR SURVIVAL.
INNOVATION, INDIVIDUALITY AND CREATIVITY
ONLY +HREATEN THE NECESSARY, ENFORCED ORDER.
SUCH THINGS ARE A DANGER TO OUR BELIEFS,
AND OUR BELIEFS ARE THE ONLY +RU+H.
THEREFORE, THE IRON SHADOW PAVES THE WAY FOR +RU+H.

—QUIMATH



Everything in Jangling Hiter—the streets, the buildings and all—is made from chain. The movement of the inhabitants and constant winds around the city keep the chains in almost continual motion. Toward the center, the movement is subtle, although the noise of the rattling chains remains ever-present. At the edges or near the tops of the chain-made towers, the swaying of the construction becomes much more prevalent and noticeable. Thus, most of the inhabitants crowd in the middle. The center also offers the most protection from the rain as well, although the dripping, corrosion-filled liquid permeates all of Jangling Hiter.

A few petitioners and off-plane mortals (humans, tieflings, goblins, orcs, half-orcs and others) make the city their home, but most of the inhabitants of Jangling Hiter are minor baatezu, other lower-planar creatures (mostly night hags and yugoloths), or kytons. The kytons are the true native population of the city, and chant has it that they were its original

named Pollus Windscreamer. A baatezu superior long ago assigned Pollus to oversee this small city and maintain order. Pollus knew that the commission was more a punishment than a promotion, for it would entail an eternity of boredom locked away in a city made of rusty chains. What he didn't realize was that the true natives of the city, the mysterious kytons, had other plans for him. They hold the real power in Jangling Hiter, quietly holding Pollus up as a figurehead. Most of the time, Pollus uncaringly lets them run things, but lately, he's begun to worry that the kytons have goals beyond control of this one city.

Chant has it that the kytons are beginning to spread throughout the planes, sometimes on some mysterious errand and sometimes to establish small settlements in places where no one thought to ever find kytons. Rumors also tell of the fact that more kytons exist, deep in the bowels of the City of Chains (and elsewhere) than anyone had ever really guessed.

KYTONS

Take a human—man or woman. Now, wrap her in thick iron chains spotted here and there with barbs and spikes until you can only see a hint of flesh, a glint of teeth, or a single gleaming eye. Though the creature's limbs are wrapped separately (they're not bound, in other words), the weight of the chains alone should render the poor human immobile.

But kytons are not human.

One sage, who wrote a book called *An Eternity in Chains*, believed that the kytons were undead creatures. Others think that they were petitioners from Baator altered somehow. These beliefs come from the (often muddled) reports that kytons resemble some deceased loved one of the living soul who lays eyes upon them. The dark of this is simply that that's a kyton's idea of a joke—they possess the ability to make a body think she's seeing some dead friend of relative underneath all those chains, but it just isn't true—it's just a mind dance.



Kytons serve as the police force, the militia, and the organized crime syndicate of Jangling Hiter all at once. They hold all the power there. Even baatezu become peery if they find themselves alone in the wrong part of town in Jangling Hiter. The kytons would never openly attack or threaten a baatezu (at least not yet), and in fact, pay the fiends the lip service of being their servants. Crossing the baatezu would mean certain doom for the kytons. Nevertheless, fiends disappear in the back streets of Jangling Hiter all the time.

CITY LAYOUT

The inhabitants of Jangling Hiter divide it into squarish wards, including the Merchants' Quarter, the Fiends' Quarter, the Kytons' Quarter, and the Visitors' Quarter, which the locals also name the Meat Quarter. Outsiders stick to the Merchant's Quarter at the heart of the city where most of the people crowd together in a noisy, stench-filled morass. The Visitors' Quarter, a body quickly realizes, has become nothing more than a joke—it's an empty, dangerous place where fiends and kytons prey upon anything they come across.

CITY ENCOUNTERS

As the planewalkers make their way around this Baatorian city, they'd be wise to keep their heads low and their mouths quiet. If they don't, they're likely to be attacked by some vicious predator (kytons, baatezu, hell hounds, and the like) as soon as they get away from the crowds. If they commit some monumentally foolish actions, they might even draw such attacks upon themselves while in the open streets. Sure ways to draw the unwanted attentions of the kytons or baatezu include unwarranted violence, theft, or property destruction.

Although an evil and terrifying place, Jangling Hiter lies within a lawful plane—the residents and high-ups here don't twig to disturbances. The DM (and the PCs) should keep the simple rule of thumb in mind: the authorities (the kytons) look down upon chaos, killing, and thievery. The first, the kytons consider to be dangerous; the second and third are activities within *their* right, not anyone else's.

While in the Jangling Hiter, the PCs can potentially encounter any of the following creatures (and more—and worse). Canny cutters won't actually get into a tussle with them, but with such an evil assortment of beings, the potential for danger and violence always exists.

KYTONS, LESSER (1d6): AC 2; MV 12; HD 4; hp 24 each; THACO 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8 (chain); SA Control and even attack with any chains within 20 feet; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal rate, flee from blessed items; MR 10%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int low to avg (5-9); AL LE; XP 2,000 each.

KYTONS, NORMAL (1d4): AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; hp 48 each; THACO 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (chain); SA Control and even attack with any chains within 20 feet; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal rate, flee from blessed items; MR 25%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int low to avg (5-9); AL LE; XP 6,000 each.

Lesser kytons wander around the city conducting their strange business and carrying out tasks that only their own twisted minds can truly understand. "Normal" kytons are their more common, mature counterparts that patrol Jangling Hiter, serving as both law enforcement and civil defense. The city has no codified law system—the kytons act as enforcer, sentencer, and executioner on the spot. Further, the kytons quietly travel around the city collecting money and favors from all within Jangling Hiter as the price for "protection."

NUPPERIBOS (1d12): AC 9; MV 6; HD 1; hp 5 each; THACO 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d2/1d2 (claw/claw) or 1d6 (club or short sword); SA Casts *cause fear* when united with at least nine others against a common foe and ordered to do so by a superior; SD Regenerate 1 hit point per round, immune to mind-affecting spells; SW Wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons do not regenerate; SZ M (5' tall); ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL LE; XP 120 each.

LEMURES (1d10): AC 7; MV 3; HD 2; hp 11 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SD Regenerate 1 hit point a round, immune to mind-affecting spells; SW Wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons do not regenerate; SZ M (5' tall); ML fearless (20); Int semi (2-4); AL LE; XP 120 each.

Nupperibos and lemures wander about in Jangling Hiter, sometimes as the entourage of a barbaz or kocrachon (see below), sometimes on their own, probably lost. They present

Panos Qytel

Side View

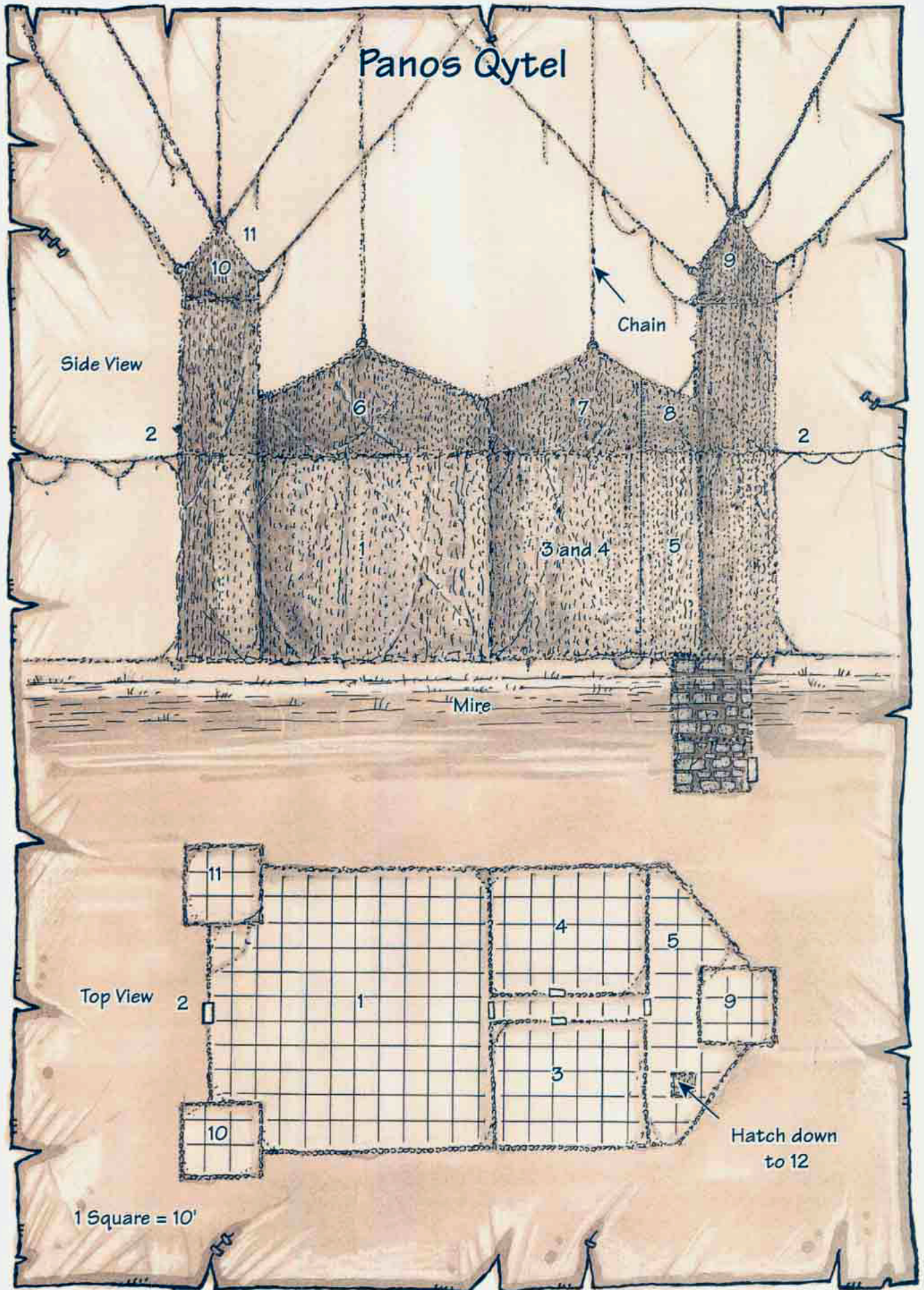
Chain

Mire

Top View

Hatch down
to 12

1 Square = 10'



more of a danger if they're on their own, since they're prone to attack non-baatezu (although in this context, kyttons are treated as baatezu). Fortunately for the PCs, both types of creatures provide new definitions for stupid, and the nupperibos are blind and deaf as well, so they're easy to avoid.

BARBAZU (1d3): AC 3; MV 15; HD 6+6; hp 42 each; THACO 13; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d2/1d2/1d8 (claw/claw/beard) or 2d6 (glaive); SA Wounds inflicted by glaive bleed 2 hit points a round until bound, if both claw attacks hit, beard attack automatically hits for maximum damage, 25% chance to give disease with beard attack, has *know alignment* always active, casts: *advanced illusion*, *affect normal fires*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *command*, *fear* (by touch), *infravision*, *produce flame* and *suggestion* at will can gate 2d6 abishai (50% chance of success) or 6 barbazu (35% chance of success) 1x/day; SD +1 weapon or better to hit, half damage from cold and gas attacks, immune to fire and poison; MR 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML steady (12); Int low (5-7); AL LE; XP 6,000 each.



KOCRACHON (2d2): AC 2 (0 from behind); MV 12, FI 12 (D); HD 6+6; hp 42 each; THACO 13; #AT 3 or 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6/2d6 (claw/claw/bite) or 1d8/1d8 (two scalpels); SA after three rounds of study, if only one attack is made in a round, can inflict pain which penalizes foe's attack and damage rolls by -4, movement by 3 and AC by 2 for 2d6 rounds (saving throw versus spells at -6 negates this effect), inflicts disease in victim by biting for three rounds (bend bars rolls to remove) which is fatal in 1d3 weeks, has *know alignment* always active, casts: *advanced illusion*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *infravision*, and *suggestion*; SD +1 weapon or better to hit, half damage from cold and gas attacks, immune to fire and poison; MR 30%; SZ M (5' tall); ML elite (14); Int high (13); AL LE; XP 5,000 each.

These lesser baatezu move about Jangling Hiter with their own individual agendas, sometimes with least baatezu servants (see above), sometimes not. Barbazu usually carry out the orders of higher-ranking fiends. Kocrachons serve as baatezu torturers, so their goals in the city might be particularly unpleasant. Leery of the kyttons' power in the city, they usually do not draw attention to themselves. However, if they come upon mortals alone—particularly in the Baatezu Quarter—they may attack hoping to feed upon or just torture their prey.

TIEFLINUS (1d6): AC 4; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 27 each; THACO 15; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d3 (punching) or 1d4/1d4 (two daggers) or 1d8 (long sword); SA Casts *darkness* 15-foot radius 1x/day, Type B poison coats weapon blades (inflicts 20 points of damage if saving throw is failed, 1d3 points if successful, onset time is 2d6 minutes); SD Half damage from cold, +2 to saving throws vs. fire, electricity and poison; SZ M (6' tall); ML steady (12); Int very (11); AL LE; XP 650 each.

These creatures hang about Baatorian cities looking for their place in things, hoping to be accepted by the fiendish side of their heritage after being rejected by the mortal side. Not surprisingly, the kyttons and baatezu abuse these hangers-on mercilessly. The abuse makes the tieflings even harder and meaner than before, and ironically focuses them more and more on gaining their tormentors' favor.

The DM should keep in mind that normal, mortal humans and humanoids—even including orcs and goblins—also walk the swaying streets of Jangling Hiter. While most of these bashers have evil outlooks (and motives for coming to such a place), some neutral and good-aligned mortals come to Jangling Hiter for various reasons—usually desperate need motivates such risk. The PCs won't be as alone as they think, although anyone expecting someone to come to their aid in a Baatorian city dreams wonderful but unrealistic dreams.

HELLCAT (1): AC 6; MV 15; HD 7+2; hp 44; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/2d6 (claw/claw/bite); SD immune to mind-controlling spells, +1 weapon to hit (magical bonuses do not count toward damage inflicted upon the hellcat), invisible in bright light; MR 20%; SZ L (7' long); ML elite (13); Int avg (9); AL LE; XP 5,000.

HELL HOUNDS (2d4): AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 24 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (bite); SA -5 to foes' surprise rolls, breathes fire for 4 points of damage (save versus breath weapon for half damage), on a natural 20 attack roll breathes fire and bites in the same round; SD Immune to fire, +1 to surprise rolls, 50% to detect hidden or invisible creatures; SZ M (5' long); ML elite (13); Int low (5-7); AL LE; XP 420 each.

These creatures wander the city on their own, although they may serve a dark master not present at this time. A hellcat won't attack unless the PCs look like easy prey. The hell hounds present a much more volatile threat, and virtually any action can provoke the belligerent creatures into a fight.

IMPS (1d3): AC 2; MV 6, FI 18 (A); HD 2+2; hp 10 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (sting); SA Tail stinger is poisoned (save or die), can *polymorph* into two different animal forms, casts *detect good*, *detect magic* and *invisibility* at will and *suggestion* once per day; SD +1 or silver weapon to hit, immune to cold, fire and electricity, saves versus spells as 7 HD, regenerates 1 hit point a round; MR 25%; SZ T (2' tall); ML average (8-10); Int avg (8-10); AL LE; XP 1,400 each.

If encountered alone, the imp carries out the task assigned its master. A group of imps indicates that they are unaffiliated and just seek to wreak evil. Woe to the planewalker who underestimates a group of imps out looking for fun.

THE MARKET QUARTER

The doorway from the Infinite Staircase opens into a small room in a high tower in the Merchants' Quarter of the city. Wind rattles the chains and causes the tower to sway violently. Rain beats down through the chain links, and the rust and wet slime on the chains indicates that the weather is probably commonplace.

A chain ladder guides the newly arrived characters down

into the crowded Merchants' Quarter, where mortals and fiends, monsters and madmen all mill about looking to profit from and to cheat the others, gaining something for little and staying alive doing it.

First-time visitors to the Lower Planes, particularly to the cities found there, always express surprise at how many outsiders travel there to conduct business with the fiendish inhabitants. The fact is, the fiends and other residents of the Lower Planes often have information (usually dark secrets) or items, substances, or goods that buyers cannot obtain anywhere else. Jangling Hiter's no exception. Within its rattling walls, the inhabitants hold keys to various secrets of Baator and beyond, magic and the powers, life and death. It's also a good place to buy chain. As absurd as it may seem to some, a body interested in procuring the best chain in the multiverse comes to Jangling Hiter. Fine decorative chain, virtually unyielding manacles, finely wrought chain mail armor, or just stout, unbreakable work-stock chain can be found here in great quantity. Additionally, the kytons produce magical chains, armor, bindings, and other accouterments as well.

Thus, the Merchants' Quarter teems with people bringing their wares to trade for the goods found only here. Despite the crowds, the numbers thin each month. Those who've been to Jangling Hiter know that something particularly bad and grandiose is coming. They've seen the kytons growing bolder, and in greater numbers—and they're wisely afraid to go back.

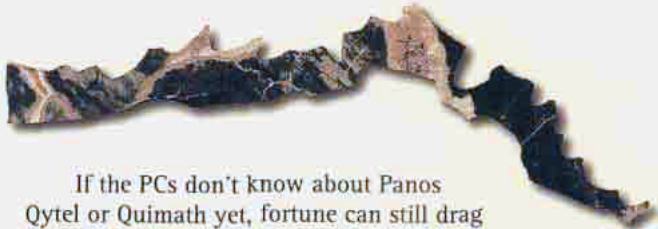
And now the Iron Shadow has descended upon the city. In many ways, in a place like this, no one can notice the change. Jangling Hiter was never a place of inspired free-willed thought anyway. Nevertheless, the Shadow drains away even the artistry of the chains, even the skilled touch of the torturer's knife, and even the creativity behind the plots and schemes of the baatezu.

The effect is such that, when the PCs arrive, they see and hear distraught people, moaning and gasping. Some think it's because of the curtailed production, others don't know why at all—some aren't even aware that they do it.

"No more chain," a dark-eyed vendor growls, closing a curtain-like door fashioned from rattling links of metal. When a night hag cackles angrily and retorts that she'll tear it from the walls of the shop if she has to, her gaze meets that of two kyton enforcers appearing as the gloomy crowd parts. The hag slinks away, and no one notices the PCs.

The planewalkers can make their way through the Merchants' Quarter without much trouble as long as they don't draw attention to themselves. Poking around the city, they can see the effects of the Iron Shadow here just as in the other Tales, but no one that they might speak with knows anything more about it than the PCs. Most non-natives are upset by the sudden lack of chain goods to buy and make plans to leave (which of course threatens to spread the Shadow). From these bashers, the PCs might learn the location of a few portals here in the city or nearby in the mire of Minauros, but little else.

Discreet inquiries, probably accompanied by a fair bit of garnish, easily produce directions to Panos Qytel (whether the PCs know the fortress by name or ask about Quimath, directions to his home is the most information that they'll obtain). Virtually everyone in the city at least knows of Quimath.



If the PCs don't know about Panos Qytel or Quimath yet, fortune can still drag them into the adventure using the set-up described under Using this Adventure Independently, near the beginning of the Tale. The erinyes comes to the PCs and enlists their help in getting into Panos Qytel in Jangling Hiter instead of Sigil.

The trip to the fortress is fraught with danger, for it means that the PCs must leave the relative safety of the Merchants' Quarter and enter the Kytons' Quarter. Most non-kytons are attacked on sight in this section of town (lone kytons scour the streets, hunting for interlopers). Unless the planewalkers are disguised as kytons (or something obviously more powerful than kytons) or move about invisibly, they will be attacked by at least one hungry, chain-wrapped hunter. They'll certainly not see any other non-kytons on the eerily quiet streets of the quarter.

Well, except maybe one.

While making their way through the Kyton Quarter, a hideously ugly woman approaches the out-of-place planewalkers. Named Kidkeki Tomi (Pl/♀ half-orc/T5/N), she attempts to persuade the PCs to retreat to safety to speak with her without running the risk of kyton attack.

She's been watching them, Kidkeki says, and can tell that they're not from around here and certainly don't belong. She assures them that she thinks this is a good thing, not a bad one, and attempts to put them at ease.

Kidkeki also tells them that they're obviously very brave, as they're wandering about the most dangerous part of one of the more dangerous cities in the multiverse (she's perhaps exaggerating slightly, and obviously assuming that they do such out of bravery and not ignorance). She needs such bravery to help her with a problem that she's having. She explains that she and some companions were hired by a priest of Isis named Evren Enchaft to recover a magical item taken by kyton raiders from his temple in Sigil. Unfortunately, soon after their arrival here, her comrades were slain by a group of foul-tempered baatezu. She tells them that if they recover the item, Priest Enchaft will certainly give them the reward he promised her—500 gp each and multiple blessings of his patron power.

The item in question is a shield that Enchaft's priesthood captured in battle against the forces of the evil god Set. The item itself isn't evil, despite its name and design. Called the *spider shield*, it has a black spider device on its front and provides great magical protection.

Now the kytons hold the shield in a fortress that lies ahead (Panos Qytel, although she doesn't know that's its name). She and her group were able to learn that a secret path (through the slime pit, see page 127) into the fortress exists, but it entails dropping down into the mire of Minauros and coming in from underneath. By search-



ing around, she says, the PCs can enter through a sliding panel found in a stone chamber hanging below the fortress.

Kidkeki can't continue any further with her quest because she has contracted a horrible disease from the bite of a kocrachon baatezu and seeks to leave Jangling Hiter altogether to find healing (even if the PCs offer a cure disease spell, she wants to leave this horrible place). Canny PCs caution her not to use a portal (which will spread the Iron Shadow) and tell her about the Infinite Staircase instead.

Kidkeki's story isn't a peel—it's all true. She's interested in seeing Evren's magical shield returned to him because she's in love with him (although he doesn't return her feelings). The PCs can agree or ignore her as they will, but her secret about getting in could prove helpful and if they head to Panos Qytel, they'll most likely come across the spider shield. Getting it out is another matter entirely.

PANOS QYTEL

Pale yellow light, flickering as it's filtered through layers of swaying chains, reveals this foul place as a triple-towered cathedral-like structure. It seems completely quiet. Except for some sinister shadows (ever-present in the city as the moving chains cause the shadows to flicker and move), nothing moves around Panos Qytel.

Originally, Panos Qytel was the home of Quimath and his nine brothers. While among kytons there is no hierarchy, Quimath and his siblings were always special. Taken under the wings of various baatezu and taught concepts involving plotting, scheming, research, and planning, these kytons quickly distinguished themselves as something special. Soon, the other kytons of the city recognized them, unofficially, as superiors—at least in the sense of determining action and planning for the future. With Jangling Hiter on the decline, the kytons needed all the brain power they could muster in the area of planning.

Being kytons, however, Quimath's many siblings began to grow envious, and eventually suspicious, of each other. One by one, the brothers betrayed and killed one another until only Quimath and his brother Quaheim survived. They kept their distance, for both had their own plots and schemes to tend.

Quimath's brother held a nupperibo captive and watched as the creature mutated into something wholly different—something he could not identify, but which obviously had some special, mysterious power to it. When Quimath slew his last brother, becoming sole master of Panos Qytel, he wasn't entirely sure why his sibling had this nupperibo imprisoned here, but he won't let it go until he learns the dark of it.

1. GREAT HALL: The main entrance to Panos Qytel appears to be open and unguarded, which is, of course, untrue. Passing through a fine chain curtain serving as a door to the outside, visitors come into a vast hall made of particularly rusty chains. While not noticeable at first, a body spending a few minutes here realizes that the rust on the chains forms intricate patterns on the chain walls, floors, and vaulted ceiling.

Exits from the Great Hall lead up to the galleries above, or to the barracks, kennel, and food stores in the rear of the fortress.

The kytons feel safe leaving the main entrance relatively unattended because of the horrible magical trap that waits for unauthorized intruders. Once an intruder has come 20 feet into the hall, the chains around her and underneath her animate and attack. The victim(s) must attempt three saving throws vs. paralyzation. Each failed saving throw indicates that a chain has wrapped around her, holding her fast. A Strength check wrenches the held character free of a single chain, but with the loss of 1 hit point from the barbs and hooks on the chains.

On the round following, each intruder is then attacked by another animated chain. This one whips at the character and has a razor-sharp blade at the end. The chain attacks with a THACO of 16; a character bound in place loses all Dexterity and shield bonuses to Armor Class. The whip-blade inflicts 1d8 points of damage and continues to attack until the character leaves the hall or ten rounds have passed, whichever comes first. The kytons in the barracks have a cumulative 10% chance per round of hearing the activated trap and coming to investigate.

A dispel magic spell sends all animated chains in the area of effect back to their proper positions and renders the trap inert for ten rounds.

2. SECOND-FLOOR ENTRANCES: These entrances to the fortress connect to chain bridges and thus to other parts of the Kyton Quarter. A kyton guard stands watch over each, hiding amidst the chains. Loyal to Quimath, these kytons fight to the death defending their posts.

3. KYTON BARRACKS: A total of ten lesser kytons and twelve normal kytons (beside Quimath) live in Panos Qytel. All of them rest here, when they need sleep, in chain hammocks. For the most part, however, most of them spend little waking time here. Usually, a body'll find no more than 1d4 lesser and probably one normal kyton in the barracks, with at least half of them asleep.

KYTON, LESSER: AC 2; MV 12; HD 4; hp 24; THACO 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8 (chain); SA control and even attack with any chains within 20 feet; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal rate, flee from blessed items; MR 10%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int low to avg (5-9); AL LE; XP 2,000.

KYTON, NORMAL: AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; hp 48; THACO 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (chain); SA control and even attack with any chains within 20 feet; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal rate, flee from blessed items; MR 25%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int low to avg (5-9); AL LE; XP 6,000.

4. HELL HOUND KENNEL: Quimath keeps a small force of hell hounds to serve him as hunting hounds or guardians. Each has a complex chain-link tattoo that covers its entire body. If something powerful threatens the fortress, the kytons release the hounds and tell them to defend the halls or hunt down intruders (whichever is appropriate). The hounds split up into two packs of four while following either command.



7. EMPTY CHAMBERS: These were the personal rooms of Quimath's brothers, now all dead—each one betrayed by another brother.

8. QUIMATH'S CHAMBER: This small chamber holds the chain hammock where Quimath sleeps and his personal food store (a rotting tiefling corpse lies tied in chains near the bed).

Underneath the corpse, Quimath keeps his personal treasury (obscured by the chains of the floor). Inside an iron urn stopped with a stone cap, intruders can find 534 gp, a 100 gp jeweled comb, a 150 gp silver headband, and six 100 gp gems.

Under the urn is a treasure recently uncovered by Quimath's agents infiltrating a temple in Sigil hoping to discover some information about the Iron Shadow.

The kennel holds eight hounds and is littered with gnawed bones and smatterings of dried blood.

HELL HOUNDS (8): AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 24 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (bite); SA -5 to foes' surprise rolls, breathes fire for 4 points of damage (save versus breath weapon for half damage), on a natural 20 attack roll breathes fire and bites in the same round; SD Immune to fire, +1 to surprise rolls, 50% to detect hidden or invisible creatures; SZ M (5' long); ML elite (13); Int low (5-7); AL LE; XP 420 each.

5. FOOD STORES: This grisly chamber holds food for the kytons of the fortress. Human and humanoid corpses, most still fairly fresh, hang from the high ceiling (20 feet from the floor), suspended by barbed chains. The kytons simply use their own chains to climb up and feast when they're hungry. Keeping the food suspended keeps it away from a hell hound that might get loose and come in, or from scavengers like rats, stray hounds, and so forth.

6. GALLERIES: These long halls display the lurid bone-and-gristle art of the kytons. On rare occasions, an inspired kyton takes its prey, rearranges the bones in an abstract way, covers it all in gore left over from the kill, and then wraps in it thin chain so that it all dries. The kytons of Panos Qytel hang their art projects here in the gallery—but not until they are very dry (or their comrades tend to tear them apart to eat them).

When they found no useful lore, they took a magical item instead—the *spider shield* told of by Kidkeki.

The *spider shield* acts as a *shield +1* no matter where in the multiverse it is located. Further and more importantly, it conveys 15% magic resistance upon the user. Unfortunately, it has a drawback. The shield draws spiders. In normal life, this means that the owner is plagued with pests. If near more dangerous sorts of spiders, however, they are drawn to the shield as well, attacking the owner in favor of other targets and gaining a +1 attack bonus. The range of this power extends immediately to about 500 feet, but can also (at the DM's discretion) draw spiders from farther away over time. Only an absolute addle-cove would bring this shield into the Demonweb Pits of Lolth on the Abyss.

9. TOWER ONE—THE STAGNATION SHRINE: The bottom of the tower is empty, with a chain ladder running up through it leading to a room at the top. The top room is a shrine constructed by Quimath to focus his energies toward his goal of mastering the Iron Shadow. He uses the room to meditate, contemplate, theorize, and study.

Quimath has placed three iron cobras within the chains of the floor, waiting and watching for intruders. These particular creations are unique to Jangling Hiter, for their bodies are animate chains topped with iron, snakelike heads sporting poisonous fangs. They attack any non-kyton entering the room, reducing the intruders' surprise rolls by -4 due to their

ability to blend in with the metallic chains.

In the room's center, the kyton has erected a sort of altar, although it's hardly recognizable as such to a non-kyton. Strands of barbed chain crisscross every which way; dark smelling incense burns in brazier suspended in the middle of the tangle of chain. A small, rusty cask lies below the brazier, but reaching the cask requires getting through the chains and their spikes. A Wisdom check at a -2 penalty provides a character with an idea of how to move the chains in such a way as to lay hands on the cask without cutting herself. Without the check, a character suffers 1d6 points of damage from the spikes and barbs before the cask can be pulled away.

The rusty iron cask is locked and Quimath has the only key. He's also poisoned the lock so that anyone attempting to pick or force it open is pricked by a tiny barb coated with Type B poison (onset time of 2d6 minutes, 20 points of damage inflicted if saving throw is failed, 1d3 points of damage if successful). Inside, the cask holds some of Quimath's most valued treasures: a wand of chaos detection (as the spell detect evil except that the wand detects chaos; it has 23 charges) and a flask of oil of devildeth (when coated on a weapon, the weapon becomes a +5 weapon inflicting double damage against baatezu, tanar'ri, or yugoloths—the oil rubs off after a successful strike, but the flask holds enough for twelve applications).

Shelves made of iron platforms suspended by chains hold a small collection of books. Close examination reveals their topics as dealing with the forces of order, of obedience and stagnation, and of the strong ruler over the weak. Additionally, if the kytons managed to seize the copy of *Ever-changing Order* in the Mirrored Library (see Tale 7), it will be here on these shelves now.

If Quimath is in Panos Qytel, he's more than likely here, in his sanctum. Perhaps studying or simply meditating, Quimath spends most of his time here rather than in his chambers.

IRON COBRAS (3): AC 0; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5, 4, 3; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SA Poisonous bite (enough for three bites; victim must save vs. poison or die in 1d6 rounds), SD Immune to mind-influencing spells, webs, nonmagical weapons inflict only half damage; SZ S (3' long); ML steady (12); Int non (0); AL N; XP 420 each.

QUIMATH: AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; hp 48; THACO 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (chain); SA Control and even attack with any chains within 20 feet; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal

rate, flee from blessed items; MR 25%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int high (14); AL LE; XP 7,000.

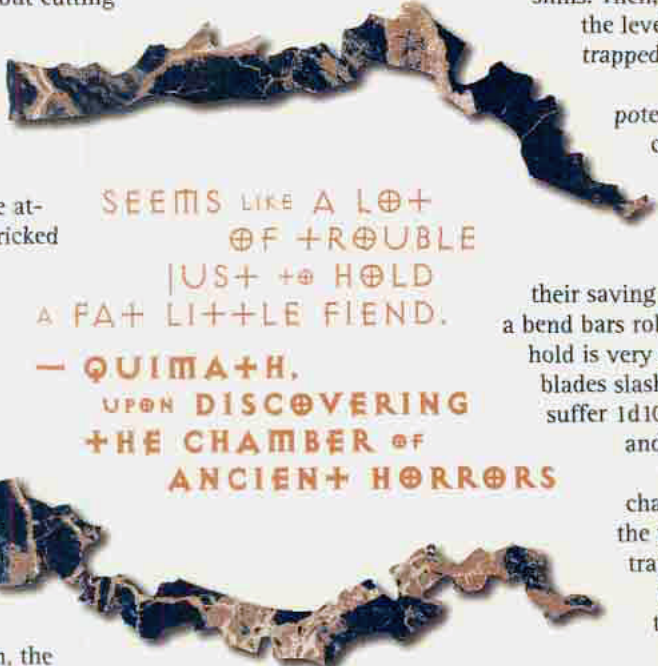
10. TOWER TWO—CHAMBER OF ANCIENT HORRORS: Like the other tower, most of this structure is empty, except for the top chamber. However, the stairs leading to that room have a trap placed upon them to ward off intruders. The trap simply loosens the chains under the climbers' feet so that they slip down between them up to their ankles or even shins. Then, horrible blades scythe under the level of the chains to slice at the trapped limbs.

When the trap activates, all potential victims must make successful saving throws vs. paralyzation to avoid slipping down into the chains that compose the stairs. Characters who fail their saving throws become trapped until a bend bars roll successfully frees them (the hold is very strong). Meanwhile, scything blades slash and cut. Trapped characters suffer 1d10 points of damage per round and must attempt saving throws vs. death magic. If a trapped character fails her saving throw, the poor sod loses her foot to the trap (but is freed). If the character makes a successful saving throw, the foot remains intact but the blade keeps cutting for another round, inflicting more damage and requiring another save. The trap continues until the victims are freed—one way or another.

A character with severed feet needs immediate attention. The victim must make a system shock roll or fall unconscious for 1d100 minutes. Bandaging the severed appendage must be accomplished within 3 rounds or the wounded character dies from shock and blood loss. Dexterity is reduced by 2 points and Constitution by 1, both permanently. The character faces a week of bed rest, although hardy and willful characters can push themselves for up to 10 minutes per point of (reduced) Constitution before they collapse from exhaustion and pain. During this time, they suffer a -4 penalty to all rolls (attack, damage, saving throws, ability checks, etc.) and cannot move faster than a movement rate of 3 without assistance.

After the proper amount of healing, the unfortunate basher can learn to walk at a movement rate of 6 (a prosthetic foot or peg, often made of wood, increases this to 9, but does not restore ability loss). A regeneration spell negates all of these penalties as it grows a new foot for the character.

The tower room holds a single nupperibo, trussed up in thick black chains of particularly strong construction. Planewalkers who know a little of the chant regarding baatezu can recognize that this is no ordinary nupperibo. For one thing, it mewls in pain and frustration at its predicament. Nupperibos are mute. Further, it looks at the PCs as they enter the room. Nupperibos are blind.



SEEMS LIKE A LOT
OF TROUBLE
JUST TO HOLD
A FA+ LI+LE FIEND.
— QUIMATH,
UPON DISCOVERING
THE CHAMBER OF
ANCIENT HORRORS

Quaheim was given this nupperibo by a nycaloth yugoloth as a mysterious gift. When the kyton saw that the creature exhibited extraordinary qualities for its kind, he believed that it was a slain baatezu high up accidentally put into the form of this least baatezu when its spirit was returned to Baator. He quickly hid it away in the tower, hoping to gain information or ransom for it.

Quaheim was wrong. What the yugoloths gave him was a maturing nupperibo. The baatezu covertly change nupperibos into lemures before they can mature. Nupperibos are neither real baatezu nor petitioners. Instead, they are a race indigenous to Baator, older than even the baatezu. Only a few of the highest ranking baatezu (the Lords of the Nine and perhaps some of the Dark Eight) know this secret, and seek to never let a nupperibo mature into one of these rival baatorians. Rumors exist of these creatures, sometimes called ancient baatorians, inhabiting far-flung and isolated portions of the plane.

And now one grows within Panos Qytel.

The maturation of a nupperibo, even to the stage that this one has reached, requires nearly uncountable centuries. The yugoloths have been holding this captive for a long time, and now they've given it to the kytons—perhaps hoping to see the kytons strike against the baatezu and create an internal war on Baator. Perhaps their motives are something else entirely. (No one ever really knows for sure...)

As the PCs enter, the creature turns toward them. After a few moments, it pleads with them to let it go, but in a tongue foreign to all ears. If they do not respond, it begins to alter its shape, proceeding to the next stage of its development. Suddenly, the pale, bloated stomach of the disgusting creature bursts open, and dozens of tiny, pinkish tendrils shoot out, attempting to grab the chains which confine it, the PCs, and anything else in the room.

Each round, the baatorian has a 10% chance to burst its bonds. Until it does so, it attacks everyone in the room. Once it's free, it attempts to flee the citadel. This actually works to the advantage of the PCs, because all of the kytons' attentions will be drawn to the escaping "nupperibo" rather than to them for at least the next 10 to 15 minutes (whether the kytons capture the creature, if there's no PC intervention, is left up to the DM).

THE "NUPPERIBO," MATURING BAATORIAN: AC 6 (10 while in chains); MV 12 (0 while in chains); HD 6; hp 35; THACO 15; #AT up to 10; Dmg 1d6 (×10); SA Touch drains 1 point of Constitution (recovered later at a rate of 1 per 10 minutes of rest); SD Immune to cold, fire, and electricity, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal rate; MR 15%; SZ M (5' tall); ML unsteady (5); Int low (7); AL LE; XP 2,000.

11. TOWER THREE—THE PRISON: The third tower, the largest of the three, holds the other, more conventional, prisoners of the kytons. Currently, there are two: a hill giant named Derm who simply wandered through the wrong portal by accident one day and found himself in this hellish city of chains, and a kyton named Temrian.

Derm's shackled here with particularly stout chains in the lower portion of the tower. If the PCs can communicate with him (he speaks only hill giant), he'll agree to almost anything they say if they'll only promise to set him free. He'll

keep the promise only as long as it takes to get out of Jangling Hiter, however—not that he's necessarily lying when he speaks to the PCs, but once out of danger, his inherent nature gets the better of him and he'll not be satisfied with helping or even hanging around a bunch of little creatures like the PCs.

Temrian is bound with good, strong rope (he could control chains) and suspended from the ceiling. He's blindfolded so that he cannot see the chains of the room he's in. Temrian was placed here because he works for the baatezu. He turned stag on his own kind for fiendish favors, agreeing to spy on the activities within Panos Qytel. He was caught. Quimath keeps him for questioning, hoping to get information out of the spy. So far, he's been unsuccessful, but eventually the kytons will learn that Temrian works for Pollus Windscreamer, figurehead ruler of the city, and that he was the source of the information fed to the erinyes Gibbaren.

Temrian also agrees to anything to be set free, but turns stag on the PCs (see the pattern in his behavior) to attempt to get in the good graces of Quimath once again. It won't work, but it may be the undoing of the PCs if they trust him too much. If freed, Temrian can gather chains to wrap himself in from those that make up the prison tower.

DERM, HILL GIANT: AC 5; MV 12; HD 12+1d2; 26 hp (down from 49); THACO 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 or by weapon +7 (if given a suitable weapon); SA Hurl rocks for 2d8 points of damage up to 200 yards away; SZ H (16' tall); ML elite (13); Int low (6); AL CE; XP 3,000.

TEMRIAN: AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; hp 45; THACO 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (chain); SA Control and even attack with any chains within 20 feet; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, regenerate 1 hit point a round; SW Recover from wounds inflicted from blessed or holy weapons at half normal rate, flee from blessed items; MR 25%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int low to avg (5-9); AL LE; XP 6,000.

12. THE SLIME PITS: Below the fortress, Quimath keeps a special, secret chamber not made of chains at all, but of stone. The chamber dips down into the mire of Minauros, but is sealed tight. This chamber, essentially a deep pit, has a few monsters inimical to Jangling Hiter and kytons in general—creatures that devour or corrode metal. Within this slimy pit, a black pudding and two gray oozes wait, imprisoned. Quimath sees that they are fed enough to stay alive, waiting for a time to use them to establish himself as master of all kytons—they would make potent threats. He's hoping to obtain one of the fabled rust monsters told of in kyton horror tales, but he's so far been unable to do so.

A sliding stone panel allows entrance (or exit) to this room from the surrounding bog.

BLACK PUDDING: AC 6; MV 6; HD 10; hp 54; THACO 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8 (corrosive attack); SA dissolves wood, metal, and flesh; SD immune to acid, cold, and poison, lightning and blows from weapons break the creature in two; SZ M (5' diameter); ML fearless (20); Int non- (0); AL N; XP 2,000.

Notes: Touch dissolves a 2-inch thickness of wood, cloth, or leather in one round. Chain mail dissolves in one round, plate mail in two rounds. Magical items last one extra round

per plus. Weapons striking the pudding must save vs. acid or be destroyed.

A blow from a weapon or a strike from a bolt of lightning divides the creature in two, each with the same hit dice, THACO and damage rating, but only half the original creature's hit points (round up).

GRAY Ooze (2): AC 8; MV 1; HD 3+3; hp 15, 14; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8(corrosive attack); SA

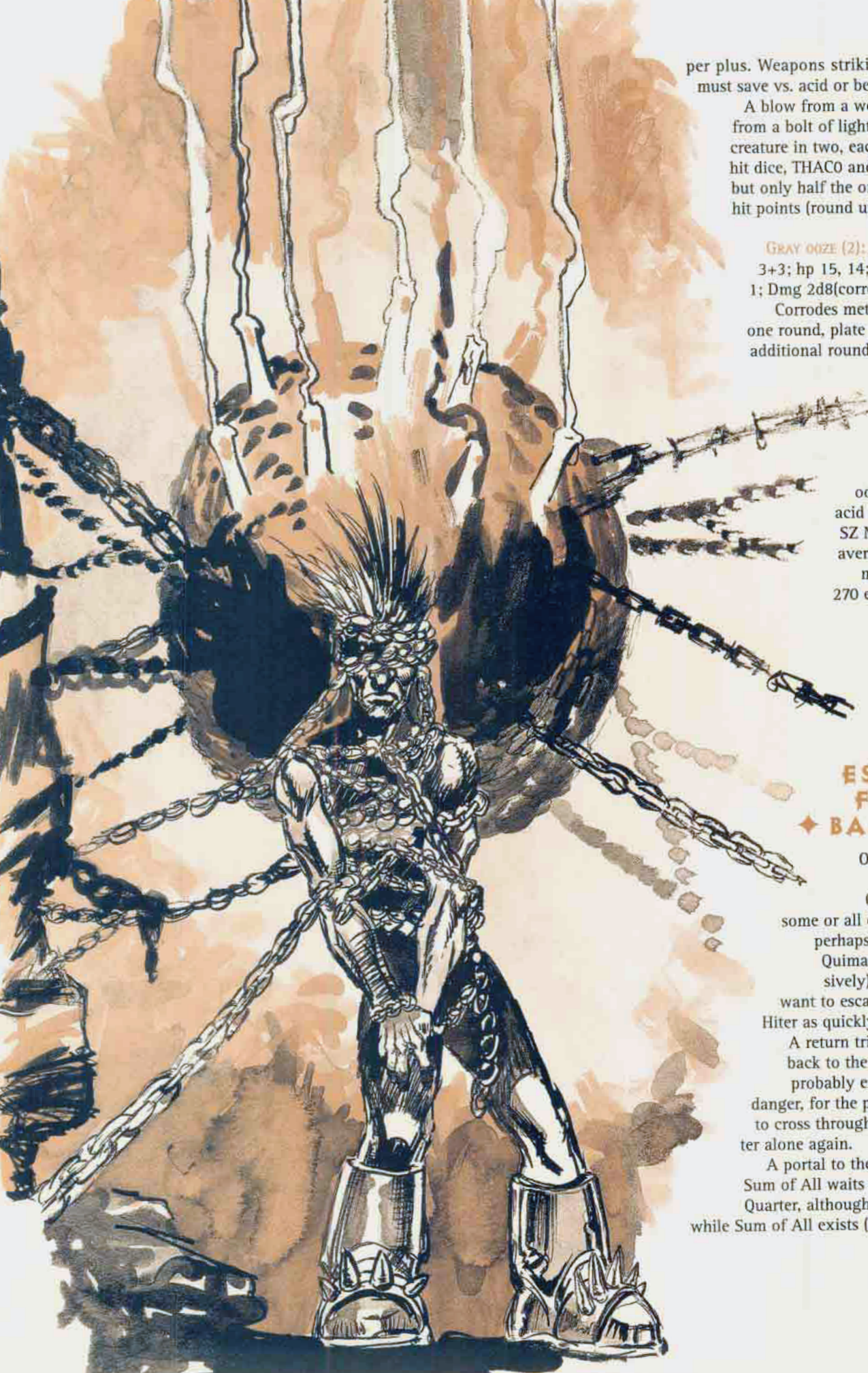
Corrodes metal (chain mail in one round, plate mail in two, one additional round for each plus of magical armor); SD Immune to spells, fire and cold, weapons striking the ooze must save vs. acid or be destroyed.; SZ M (6' across); ML average (10); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 270 each.

ESCAPE FROM ♦ BAA+OR ♦

Once the PCs have explored Panos Qytel and learned some or all of its secrets (and perhaps put the threat of Quimath to rest conclusively), they'll probably want to escape from Jangling Hiter as quickly as possible.

A return trip to the doorway back to the Infinite Staircase probably entails a fair bit of danger, for the planewalkers need to cross through the Kyton Quarter alone again.

A portal to the Outlands City of Sum of All waits in the Merchant's Quarter, although it functions only while Sum of All exists (see Tale 7).



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